



Musée
Marmottan
Monet

ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS

14 September 2022
29 January 2023

FACING THE SUN

The Celestial Body in the Arts

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FACING THE SUN

The Celestial Body in the Arts

CURATORS

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Carlo Saraceni,
The Flight of Icarus,
Oil on copper, 1606-
1607, 41 x 53 cm,
Naples, Museo nazionale di Capodimonte

On 13 November 1872, from the window of his hotel in Le Havre, Claude Monet painted a view of the port through the mist. Exhibited two years later under the title *Impression, soleil levant* [Impression, Sunrise] (1872, Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet), the work inspired critic Louis Leroy to coin the term "Impressionist", thus giving a name to the group formed by Monet and his friends.

In 2022, the Musée Marmottan Monet celebrates the 150th anniversary of the centrepiece of its collections, *Impression, soleil levant* [Impression, Sunrise] and pays tribute to it through the exhibition *Facing the Sun: The Celestial Body in the Arts* from 14 September 2022 to 29 January 2023.

Albrecht Dürer, Luca Giordano, Pierre-Paul Rubens, Claude Gellée known as "Le Lorrain", Joseph Vernet, Mallord William Turner, Gaspar David Friedrich, Gustave Courbet, Eugène Boudin, Camille Pissarro, Paul Signac, André Derain, Maurice Denis, Félix Vallotton, Laurits Tuxen, Edvard Munch, Otto Dix, Otto Freundlich, Sonia Delaunay, Wladimir Baranov-Rossiné, Joan Miró, Alexander Calder, Otto Piene, Gérard Fromanger, and Vicky Colombet are just some of the masters featured in this exhibition, in honour of the most illustrious sunrise ever known in art history.

With almost one hundred works, coming from fifty-three lenders, this exhibition retraces the history of the representation of the sun in the arts from antiquity to the present day. A unique ensemble of drawings, paintings, photographs, and measuring instruments from the Paris

Observatory, illustrate the developments in astronomy over the centuries, in resonance with the evolution of landscape and atmospheric painting.

**Atelier de Claude
Joseph Vernet**

*Port de mer au soleil
levant (matin), 1760-
1800, Oil on wood, 67.6
x 99.7 cm, Dulwich
Picture Gallery, London
© Dulwich Picture
Gallery, London*

Early depictions of the sun as a red orb by the Egyptians, as a male figure called Helios, Apollo, and Phoebus by the Greeks, and as a sun-god in Ancient Rome—the incarnation of an essential vital impetus—open the exhibition. An ivory plate, precious illuminations, and some remarkable tarot cards, are followed by paintings from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, where viewers are presented with an alternative type of sun. Once monotheism reigned in the Christian West, this celestial body lost its importance. The sun was no longer a creator, but the creation of a god in the likeness of man (cf. The Holy Bible, The Creation of the Sky and the Moon). The representation of the sun, reduced to a circle with a human face, became rare and, with its complement the moon, formed the backdrop to certain illustrations, such as that of the crucifixion (Anonymous, Master of Valencia, Crucifixion, 1450/1460, Thyssen Bornemisza Museum, Madrid).





Caspar David Friedrich,
Easter Morning,
 c. 1828/1835, Madrid,
 Museo Nacional Thyssen-
 Bornemisza, Madrid
 © Museo Nacional Thyssen-
 Bornemisza, Madrid

The falls of Icarus and Phaeton portrayed in the 17th century by the Italian Saraceni (Capodimonte Museum, Naples) and Dutchman Goltzius (BNF, Paris), and in the 18th century by Frenchman Henri-Antoine de Favanne (Musée des beaux-arts, Tours) bear witness to the durability of the mythological themes that had become the prerogative of leading sovereigns, such as the Sun King, Louis XIV. The French monarch had a sunrise with the chariot of Apollo (*Le lever du Soleil*, Charles de La Fosse, Musée des beaux-arts, Rouen) painted as a decoration for his apartments at Versailles. This same monarch founded the Observatoire Astronomique de Paris in 1667, which would become an important centre of scientific research. In fact, the figure of the astronomer proliferated after Copernicus's discoveries, and can be seen in this exhibition in a painting by Luca Giordano (Musée des beaux-arts, Chambéry). By demonstrating that the earth turned on its own axis and around the sun (and not the other way around), the astronomer was at the origin of a veritable revolution that had similar repercussions on the arts. The desire to represent the world as it really was found an echo in the emergence and development of landscape painting. The theme of nature bathed in the light of the sun, with sunrises and sunsets, also appeared. The works of Pierre-Paul Rubens (Musée du Louvre, Paris), Claude Gellée known as Le Lorrain (Musée du Louvre, Paris), Joseph Vernet (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London), William Turner, Caspar David Friedrich, Gustave Courbet, and Eugène Boudin all depict this evolution, of which Monet's *Impression, soleil levant* is one of the leading examples.

The years 1880-1914 marked a new stage. In addition to the science of observation that was

astronomy, came astrophysics, which now made it possible to study the physical nature of celestial bodies. These major scientific developments, widely reported in the press of the day, resulted in increasing knowledge of the sun, whose chemical composition was now known. Thus, the sun became a subject of study in its own right and a theme in itself for many artists, who no longer painted just a landscape dominated in the distance by the sun, but the actual sun itself, even in the smallest of compositions. Each artistic movement offered its own distinct vision of the celestial body: naturalist and harmonious for Nordic painters Valdemar Schønheyder Møller, Laurits Tuxen, Anna Ancher; symbolist for Félix Vallotton; and poetic for Fauvist artist André Derain, the Orphist Delaunay, and Futurist Wladimir Baranov-Rossiné. It was depicted in an expressionist, even tragic vein by Albert Trachsel, Otto Dix, and Edvard Munch...

Circa 1920, there was yet another revolution: Einstein's theory of general relativity established

Camille Pissarro *Bazincourt, effet de neige. Coucher du soleil*, 1892, Oil on canvas, 32 x 41 cm, Hasso Plattner Collection / Sammlung Hasso Plattner



that the universe was in perpetual expansion, and disrupted this artistic confrontation with the sun.

The poetic constellations of Miró and the mobiles by Calder reflect this expansion of space. In this immensity that is perpetually growing, the sun was now nothing more than a modest star, albeit still dazzling in Richard Warren Poussette-Dart's work, or destined to disappear in Piené's. Gérard Fromanger's *L'Impression soleil levant*, 2019 reflects this change, by renewing from space, the point of view offered by Monet one hundred-and-fifty years previously. This piece by Fromanger closes the exhibition.

Richard Poussette-Dart
Golden Center

1964
Oil on canvas, 152.4 x 142.2 cm
Munich, private collection
© Courtesy: American Contemporary Art Gallery, Munich

PRESS VISUALS



Curved funerary stela in honour of Lady Tahy
7th – 6th centuries BC
Wood, stucco, and polychrome pigments
24.7 cm x 20.5 cm x 2.2 cm
Geneva, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art
© Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Genève. André Longchamp



Amulet in the form of a child, image of the rising sun
3rd quarter of the 2nd millennium BC
Earthenware, 7.1 x 3 x 0.5 cm
Geneva, Fondation Gandur pour l'Art
© Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Genève



Crucifixion, bookbinding plate
Circa the year one thousand, Cologne
Ivory carved in bas-relief
17.4 x 11.7 x 0.8 cm
Paris, Musée de Cluny - Musée national du Moyen Âge
Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée de Cluny - Musée national du Moyen Âge) / René-Gabriel Ojeda



Coucher de soleil sur la ville
Splendor Solis, alchemy treatise, 16th century
Folio 35 v (left) – vellum manuscript, 50 pages
30.8 x 22 x 3.8 cm
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscripts Department
© Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscripts Department



Carlo Saraceni

Icarus-Trilogy

1606/07

1- *The Flight of Icarus*, Oil on copper, 41 x 53 cm

2- *The Fall of Icarus*, Oil on copper, 41 x 53 cm

3- *The Burial of Icarus*, Oil on copper, 41 x 53 cm

Naples, Museonazionale di Capodimonte

© Courtesy of Ministero della Cultura - Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte



Luca Giordano

The astronomer

1655

Oil on canvas, 118 x 97.5

Chambéry, Musée de Chambéry

© Musée de Chambéry / Grand Palais - Thierry Olivier



Pierre Paul Rubens

Landscape with bird catcher

c. 1635–1640

Oil on wood, 45.8 x 84.6 cm

Paris, Musée du Louvre, Paintings Department

Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Thierry Ollivier



Joachim von Sandrart

Allegory of day

1643

Oil on canvas, 148 x 123 cm

Schleissheim, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen,

Staatsgalerie im Neuen © Schleissheim, Bayerische

Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie im Neuen



Charles de la Fosse

Le Lever du soleil

Also known as *Le Char d'Apollon*

1672

Oil on canvas, 100 cm diameter

Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts

© C. Lancien, C. Loisel / Réunion des Musées Métropolitains
Rouen Normandie



Johann Melchior Dinglinger

Sun jewellery

1709

Copper body, chiselled, gilded, stamped, pierced; inlaid with crystal
gemstones

18.5 x 15.2 cm

Rüstkammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

© Rüstkammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Photo: Jürgen
Karpinski



Studio of Claude Joseph Vernet

Port de mer au soleil levant (matin)

1760-1800

Oil on wood, 676 x 99.7 cm

Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

© Dulwich Picture Gallery, London



William Turner

The Sun Setting Through Vapour

c. 1809

Oil on canvas, 69.2 x 101.6 cm

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

© The Henry Barber Trust, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of
Birmingham



William Turner
Mortlake Terrace
 1827
 Oil on canvas, 92.1 x 122.2 cm
 National Gallery of Art, Washington, Patrons' Permanent Fund, 1990.1.1
 © Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington



Caspar David Friedrich
Easter Morning
 c. 1828/1835
 Oil on canvas, 43.7 x 34.4 cm
 Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid ©
 Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid



Claude Monet
Impression, soleil levant
 1872
 Oil on canvas, 50 cm x 65 cm
 Paris, Musée Marmottan Monet
 © Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris / Studio Christian Baraja SLB



Eugène Boudin
Le Havre: Coucher de soleil sur la mer
 1885
 Oil on canvas, 65 x 92.5 cm
 Potsdam, Museen der Hasso Plattner Foundation gGmbH
 © Hasso Plattner Collection



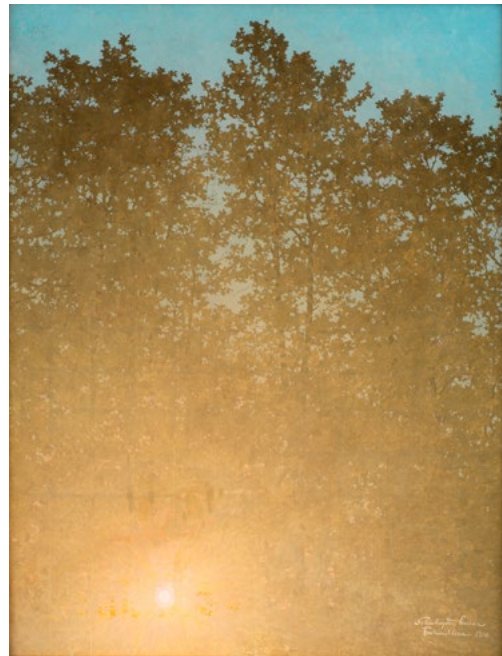
Paul Signac
Le Port au soleil couchant, Opus 236 (Saint-Tropez)
 1892
 Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
 Potsdam, Museen der Hasso Plattner Foundation
 gGmbH
 © Hasso Plattner Collection



Camille Pissarro
Bazincourt, effet de neige. Coucher du soleil
 1892
 Oil on canvas, 32 x 41 cm
 Potsdam, Museen der Hasso Plattner Foundation
 gGmbH
 © Hasso Plattner Collection



Charles Marie Dulac
Soleil levant à Assise
 1897
 Oil on canvas, 41.5 x 54 x 3 cm
 Collection Lucile Audouy
 © Collection Lucile Audouy, photo Thomas Hennocque



Valdemar Schønheyder Møller
Sunset, Fontainebleau, c. 1900
 Oil on canvas, 116.2 x 88.3 cm
 SKM, National Gallery of Denmark
 © SKM Photo / Jakob Skou-Hansen



Maurice Denis
Saint-François recevant les stigmates
 1904
 Oil on panel, 60.5 x 115.5 cm
 Paris, private collection
 © Christian Baraja SLB



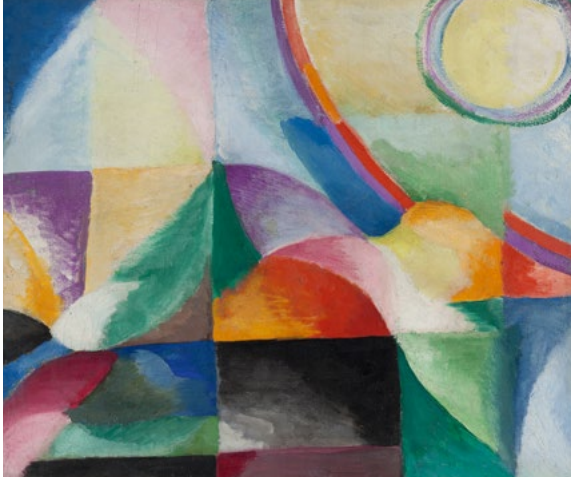
André Derain
Big Ben
 1906
 Oil on canvas, 79 x 98 cm
 Troyes, Musée d'art moderne de Troyes, collections
 nationales Pierre et Denise Levy
 © Photo: Olivier Frajman



Albert Trachsel
Soleil
 1909
 Oil on canvas
 57 x 73 cm
 République et Canton du Jura, Collection jurassienne
 des beaux-arts © République et Canton du Jura,
 Collection jurassienne des beaux-arts. Jacques Bélat



Edward Munch
The Sun
 1910–1913
 Oil on canvas, 162 x 205 cm
 Oslo, Munchmuseet
 © BY-NC-SA 4.0 Munchmuseet



Sonia Delaunay

Contrastes simultanés

1913

Oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm

Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

© Pracusa S.A. Courtesy Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid



Arthur G. Dove

Red Sun

1935

Oil on canvas, 51.4 x 71.12 cm

Washington, DC, 20009, The Phillips Collection

© Courtesy of The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, 20009



Richard Pousette-Dart

Golden Center

1964

Oil on canvas, 152,4 x 152,2 cm

Munich, private collection

© Courtesy: American Contemporary Art Gallery, Munich



Gérard Fromanger

Le soleil inonde ma toile, Série « Le tableau en question »

1966

Glycero, acrylic on cut wood,

145 x 115 cm

Collection Fanny Deleuze

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Gérard Fromanger

Impression, soleil levant

2019

Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 300 cm

Collection Anna Kamp

© Studio Christian Baraja SLB



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