

# NASJONALMUSEET FOR KUNST, ARKITEKTUR OG DESIGN

Édouard Manet  
(1832-1883)

**A View of the 1867 Exposition Universelle.**  
(*Vue de L'Exposition Universelle de 1867, esquisse*)

c.1867

Signed bottom right: 'Ed. Manet'  
(signature of Mme Édouard Manet)  
Oil on canvas  
H108 x 196.5 x 2.5 cm

NG.M.01293



## BRIEF REPORT

Édouard Manet's 'View of the 1867 Exposition Universelle' is essentially an unfinished study of the important world event which took place on *le champs de Mars* in Paris, from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1867. The painting appears to have been started in the early summer of 1867, yet was relatively quickly abandoned by Manet. The earliest surviving reference to it is the official inventory of the works found in the artist's studio after his death in 1883. The painting also features in Leon Köella Leenhoff's (Manet's stepson) studio inventory carried out later in that same year. Annotations concerning its size and a short description of the painting were recorded by Leon and the painting was also photographed by Fernand Lochard. It was then later exhibited and sold in the Manet Sale of February, 1884.

Manet's composition is painted on a fine pre-primed canvas support which has been later glue pasted-lined and attached to a larger, late 19th century wooden stretcher. All the original tacking margins and folder-over edges have been cut away and the visual similarities with Lochard's silver gelatin print from 1883 indicate that the painting was cropped, lined and stretched onto a new and larger stretcher for the sale of 1884. Two tears in the canvas, located in the region of the sky, appear to relate to typical damages often associated with canvas paintings that have been badly stacked against each other. This could have been the case in Manet's studio when the painting was documented after his death. The clusters of granular lumps throughout the paint surface are the result of a poor lining possibly executed hastily for the sale.

The contrived spatial rendering of Paris and the 1867 Exposition represents the view taken from the typical vantage point from the *Trocadéro* on the other side of the river Seine. Contemporary prints and early photographs depict similarities to the artist's juxtaposition with recognizable landmarks and particular details from the Exhibition buildings. Manet would have been extremely familiar with the daily progression of this event as his studio was located in close proximity to it, 81, rue Guyot, just behind *la place d'étoile*. Having had his works rejected by the Exhibition committee, Manet organized a solo exhibition in a private pavilion adjacent to *le champs de mars* in *l'avenue d'alma* between the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May.

Manet's preliminary sketching (*ébauche*), applied with round brush and in black shades, is still visible in the two unfinished areas to the left and right edges of composition. This reveals how the artist rapidly worked out forms and figures directly onto the canvas without the use of preliminary under drawing. The paint technique throughout has essentially been executed quickly, wet in wet, having been applied in few sessions and over a relatively short period of time. Areas of the background appear to have been first thinly blocked-in, followed by the mid ground sketching-in of the figures and finally the later colouring of the foreground. The manner of application varies from semi-opaque passages of green and yellow ochre paint in the foreground (foliage, grass & paths) to overlapping thinner transparent applications in the background. Saturated and mixed impasto brushstrokes and dabs have been used to render details whilst more fluid and diluted washes and scraping by the artist can be detected in the skyline.

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## Secondary Support:

Type: Wooden (pine) stretcher support with double-cross members (7 members in total)  
Half-mitered slot mortise & tenon joins with keys. Chamfered edges and straight corner joins.

Date: Late C19th French, not original to canvas.

Format: Horizontal

Size: H108 x 196 x 2.5 cm

Condition: Good stable condition, slight warp and minor splits present around joins & key holes.

Inscriptions, marks, labels: Inner side; white chalk inscription, '**No: 199 196 x 108**'.

Outer side; several exhibition labels, faded stamps and inscriptions:

### Top stretcher bar:

[label with readable inscription] **Galerie Matthiesen , Berlin...19128**  
**Vente Manet le 4 et 5 fevrier 1884** (pencil on wood)[Unreadable inscription] (red crayon on wood) [Unreadable circular stamp – probably Norwegian customs] .... **OSLO**.....(ink on wood)

[label with readable inscription] **Gallerie Paul Guill..me (**  
**Experts Durant Ruel et Georges Petit** (pencil on wood – same writing as & continuation from Vente Manet)

**No. 1** (black paint on wood)  
**PH** (blue crayon on wood)  
**NG 1293** (National Gallery inventory number - blue crayon on wood)

### Middle stretcher bar:

**NG. INV. 1293** (National Gallery inventory number - white paint on wood)  
[Unreadable/damaged label]  
**PHOTO** (blue ink inscription on wood)  
[Unreadable/damaged label]  
[label with readable inscription] (Royal Academy exhibition label)  
[label with readable inscription] (Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition label)

### Lower stretcher bar:

**2(4?)1** . (blue crayon on wood – possibly referring to numbering from exposition Manet of 1884? – No. 41)  
[Unreadable inscription] (red crayon on wood)  
[Unreadable circular stamp] (ink on wood – similar writing to top stretcher bar)

### Left-hand stretcher bar:

**126** (blue crayon on wood & possibly relating to; 126T. In the Leenhoff register)  
**197** (feint black crayon on wood – possibly relating to dimensions?)  
[label with readable inscription] (1979 Paris exhibition label)

### Mid left-hand stretcher bar:

Unreadable/damaged label]  
[Unreadable circular stamp] (ink on wood)  
[label with semi-readable inscription] (Similar label found on Manet's Barque Monet) **BERNHEIM JEUNE & CIE, Experts pres la Cour d'Appel, Boulevard de la Madeleine, 36, Avenue de l'Opera et 15, Rue Richepanse**  
**No 15968 M...l'exposition...4?....**  
[Unreadable circular stamp] (ink on wood)  
**15968** (blue crayon on wood)

### Right-hand stretcher bar:

[label with semi-readable inscription] Parisian exhibition label

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## Primary Support:

### Original picture support:

Material:	Canvas, linen.
Type:	Characteristics and appearance of a French ' <i>toile fine</i> ' quality artist's canvas, light brown in colour.
Weave:	Tabby weave, average thread count density: 32/36 horizontal, 30/32 vertical.
Size:	H105 x 193 cm, original turnover edge and tacking margins cut.
Damages:	Two major reversed L-shaped tears present in the region of the sky. Left tear: 5 & 3 cm, right tear: 5 & 6 cm. Distance between both tears is 152 cm. Irregular and unevenly spaced tack holes present around all four edges. <b>(X-RAY &amp; Transmitted Light)</b>
Condition:	The original canvas support is in a stable condition and securely adhered to its lining support. Irregular surface topography and horizontal marks (scoring) are present throughout and are a result from the lining procedure <b>(Raking light)</b>

## Lining Support:

Material:	Canvas, linen.
Weave:	Tabby – fine weave
Date:	C19th (1883?)
Lining adhesive:	Animal skin glue, containing a highly broken down particles of wheat starch <b>(Analysis FTIR &amp; PLM)</b>
Condition:	The lining canvas is clean and in good condition and functions an extra support to the original canvas. The tacking holes have with some corrosion from previous rusty tacks. Isolated darker patches/stains are present to reverse and the National Gallery inventory number (NG.1293) has been inscribed in the top left-hand corner.

## Strip lining:

Material:	Canvas, linen
Weave:	Tabby – fine weave
Date:	2011
Lining adhesive:	2 layers of Beva 371 film
Attachment:	4 edges attached with galvanized staples

## Ground:

Sizing:	Present <b>(Confirmed: PLM)</b>
Colour:	Off white
Application:	Single-layer, pre primed
Binding medium:	Walnut or poppy/linseed mixture. <b>(Analysed: fGC-MS)</b>
Type:	Lead carbonate type white, with some calcium carbonate, clay and barium sulphate. <b>(Analysed: PLM/SEM/EDX &amp; Raman)</b>
Texture:	Presumably applied thin ('a grain'), with the nubs of the canvas weave exposed & discernible. It remains unclear whether or not this is an intended texture from a smoothing tool after application or the result from abrasion from previous restoration treatments.

## Composition:

Medium/technique:	No evidence of under drawing. Dark <i>ébauche</i> , still visible in the unfinished areas (left & right edges of composition) and applied with round brush and in black shades.
Pentimenti:	Horizontal brush strokes in the left-hand region of the skyline (Palais des Tuilleries), in figure of the child, left mid-ground, and in the soldiers hats in the right-hand edge of painting. <b>(Confirmed: Raking Light &amp; X-Ray)</b>

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## Paint Layer

Paint application/technique:	<p>The combined forms of examination suggest an unfinished composition applied in few sessions and over a relatively short period of time with exposed areas of ground. The background appears to have been first thinly blocked-in, followed by the mid ground, with the sketching-in of the figures. Heavier colouring of the foreground was then applied. Manet's manner of application varies from semi-opaque passages of green &amp; yellow-ochre paint seen in the foreground (foliage, grass &amp; paths) to overlapping thinner transparent applications present in the background. Saturated and mixed impasto brushstrokes and dabs have been used to render details whilst more fluid and diluted washes and scraping by the artist can be detected in the skyline.</p> <p>The stratigraphy present from the cross-sections taken does not reflect any large scale alteration by the artist. For the most part, the layer structures are rather simple, and much wet on wet work is obvious. Evidence of re-working is predominately noticeable in the figure of the boy, Leon Köella Leenhoff, and to the immediate area to his left. Here, the paint film underneath was presumably touch dry before painted over. The composition of these re-worked areas are consistent enough to justify the supposition that they were not later additions but were the artist's own revision of superimposed layers applied before the complete drying of the oils. <b>(Confirmed: Raking, X-Ray, Transmitted &amp; PLM)</b></p>
Painting tools:	Flat- and round-ferrule brushes.
Surface structure:	Varying between very smooth to relief-like impasto with brush stroke marks recognizable throughout. The oil paint layers have suffered from the previous lining. Heat damages are present in the upper left-hand areas and various surface deformations throughout are the result of defects in the lining adhesive during drying. Evidence of crushed areas of impasto can be seen in yellow ochre region to the left of Leon as well as in the white cloud highlights in the sky. A degree of abrasion from previous over cleaning is also present in the sky.
Palette:	<p>The preliminary analysis of pigments resulted in the following identifications <b>(SEM/EDX and Raman)</b>:</p> <p><b>White</b>; Lead carbonate type white, Zinc white <b>Yellow</b>; Yellow iron earth, Lead chromate <b>Red</b>; Mercury sulphide (vermilion), Red iron earth with haematite in some samples <b>Blue</b>; Prussian blue, Ultramarine (synthetic) <b>Green</b>; Verdigris often associated with starch granules of wheat origin <b>Black</b>; Carbon black (possibly in part bone black or ivory black)</p>
Binding mediums:	<p>The analysis of the binding media indicated the use of linseed oil in two samples and the use of either a walnut or a poppy oil/linseed mix in two others. The use of linseed alone was found in the darker colours (red and green). A walnut or poppy/linseed oil was used for white and pale yellow areas, suggestive of paint made with less yellowing oil. <b>(Analysed: GC-MS)</b></p>
<b><u>Surface Finish:</u></b>	
Varnish:	<p>The existence of an original varnish was not detected. Current varnish: Isolating coat of Paraloid B72 with 2 thinner spray applications of Larapol A81</p>
Secondary additions:	<p>Filling with gesso. Inpainting with GAMBLIN conservation colours</p>

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## Frame:

Type: C19th gilt-wood oak frame with later upper and lower inner slip.  
Authenticity: Not original to the painting and restored in 2011.  
Glass: Non-reflective, laminated, miroguard protective glass.

## Condition:

Painting conserved in 2011 – good and stable condition

## Literature/Bibliography:

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## Examination Methods:

Painting:

Incident Light  
Raking Light  
Transmitted Light  
Ultraviolet Fluorescence  
Infrared Reflectography  
False-Colour Infrared Reflectography  
X-Ray  
Stereomicroscopy

Samples and Analysis  
(ArtAccess Research):

**PLM** - Polarized light microscopy  
**SEM-EDX** - Scanning electron microscopy and energy dispersive X-ray spectrometry  
**Raman** microscopy  
**GC-MS** – Gas chromatography – mass spectrometry  
**FTIR** - Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy

## Author of Report:

Thierry Ford, Nasjonalmuseet, 2011.



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