

**Jean-Victor Macaire-Warnod and Angelo Maris Alessio Caccia**

France, 1812–after 1886; Italy, 1802–1877

*Le Havre, Tower of Francis the First from the South Jetty*

*(Le Havre, Tour François I depuis la jetée sud, légèrement plongeante)*

Undated (before October 1861)

Albumen print

Archives municipales, Le Havre, 7fi41

Jean-Victor Macaire-Warnod's firm was joined in 1861 by the Italian sculptor and photographer Angelo Caccia. Following Macaire-Warnod's death in 1871, Caccia continued photographing in Le Havre, amassing an archive that included negatives taken by Macaire-Warnod and possibly negatives belonging to his brothers, Louis-Cyrus and Hippolyte Macaire.

This view of the city was taken from the south jetty, looking across to the Tower of Francis I on the north jetty—and where four photographers had established studios in the 1850s. Photographers were stationed where they could command a view of the famous landmark tower that dated to the 1517 fortifications of the city.

**Eugène Boudin**

French, 1824–1898

*Le Havre, the City Hall and Tower of Francis I, the Port  
of Perrey (Le Havre, l'Hôtel de Ville et la tour François Ier, la port de Perrey)*

1852

Oil on wood

Musée Malraux, Le Havre

A native of nearby Honfleur, Eugène Boudin worked in a framer's shop in Le Havre where he came to know influential artists visiting the area, such as Thomas Couture, Jean-François Millet, and Eugène Isabey. This view of the city hall provides a glimpse of the area adjacent to where the photographers had their booths; the Tower of Francis I, which is visible in the Macaire brothers' photographs of the harbor entrance, is visible on the right as well as the masts of ships at anchor in the harbor beyond. The plume of smoke from a tugboat, a symbol of Le Havre's shipping economy, features prominently in the painter's work. The accurate depiction of steam plumes was a focus for Boudin in his painting, just as it was for photographers.

**Henri Le Secq**

French, 1818–1882

*Dieppe, Ship's Masts (Dieppe, mâts de navire)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original paper negative, 1971

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Henri Le Secq often experimented with innovative framing devices in his photographs as evidenced in this image. The ostensible subject is the complex of ropes and lines of a sailing ship but Le Secq's chosen point of view reveals this mundane object in a completely surprising way. Instead of fitting the entire ship into the frame, Le Secq focused on the ship's horizontal bowsprit and, in so doing, decontextualized it from the vessel it served, not as an object with a job to perform, but rather as an object whose imposing physicality allowed the photographer to conceive of new ways of picturing it.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*The Great Wave, Sète (La grande vague, Sète)*

1857

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Le Gray staked his reputation as a photographer on his ability to capture the atmospheric effects of the sky and the ocean within one cohesive image. Perhaps the best known of Le Gray's photographs, *The Great Wave* is actually composed of two separate negatives, one for the water, and the other for the sky, which Le Gray pieced together along the horizon and then re-photographed to yield the final, singular image. This photograph was publicly exhibited soon after it was published and was widely remarked upon in the press. In particular, Le Gray's photograph was understood as a remarkable technical achievement because of its ability to capture the movement of the water through the frozen medium of photography, although Le Gray actually strengthened the effect of the water by manipulating the image with a brush. As one critic noted in 1858, "The time it required to catch and fix this little scene without human characters on glass is, so to speak, inappreciable: it's a 20th of a second. Such a marvel of promptitude and dexterity has not ever been accomplished."

**Claude Monet**

France, 1840–1926

*Seascape: Storm*

1866

Oil on canvas

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts

Monet tackled the problem of portraying a ship under sail on the open water, a subject attempted several years earlier by Eugène Colliau, by conveying no trace of land as the boat cuts through the dark choppy water of the foreground. In the distance the sunlight on the water creates a bright green strip near the horizon line, creating the impression that Monet himself was painting in an open boat on the water. The palette is reminiscent of Courbet's paintings of breaking waves done around the same time; however, Monet's broken brushstrokes and impasto of the surface of the water differ from that of the older artist.

**Eugène Colliau**

France, active 1859–1867

*Break in the Clouds (L'éclaircie)*

1859–1861

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Building upon the advances made by the Macaire brothers in photographing water, Colliau, presumably in a boat himself, was able to successfully capture images of boats on open water, as opposed to being towed out of the safety of harbor. When these works were shown in an exhibition at the Société française de photographie in 1859, they were applauded as skilled and accomplished works by a student of Gustave Le Gray, showing the influence of a master teacher.

**Eugène Colliau**

France, active 1859–1867

*Sailboats on the Coast (La côte aux voiliers)*

circa 1861

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Colliau's view of boats off the coast captures the vigorous movement of boats sailing at great speed under strong winds. The rich dappled view of the clouds and the choppy surface of the water indicate the blustery weather further underscored by the boat at right. This sailboat seems to have been caught by Colliau just as it was about to sail out of the frame to the right, heightening the sense of speed. The accidents of framing presented by photography would soon be exploited by the painters, who used asymmetry and cropping to capture the sense of the momentary.

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 9. *Étretat, “Needle”* (N° 9. *Étretat, aiguille*)

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

This heroic view of the “Needle” demonstrates photographer Davanne’s technical skill while providing an iconic image of the celebrated and instantly recognizable rock forms in and around Étretat. The movement of water is kept to a minimum by the artist’s decision to shoot the formation at low tide; the dark accent of the seaweed in the foreground anchors the image while the sky, which is overexposed relative to the rocks and seaweed, and becomes a neutral backdrop.



**Henri Le Secq**

France, 1818–1882

*Dieppe, the Harbor at Low Tide (Dieppe, le port à marée basse)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original negative, 1972

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The constant modulation between high and low tide captivated nineteenth-century image makers, including Henri Le Secq. The temporal aspect of the rise and fall of the water tempted photographers to fix the tide in a frozen state, here seen at low tide. The photographic process of the calotype, based on a paper negative, complimented the photographer's choice of subject. Here, the sandy ground of the port finds its material expression in the fine grain of the paper that the image was printed on. The subtle variation between black and white in this image provided the photographer with ample occasions for exploring the tonal possibilities of the calotype process.

**Henri Le Secq**

France, 1818–1882

*Dieppe, Fishing Boats at Low Tide (Dieppe, bateaux de pêche à sec)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original negative, 1971

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

This landscape's temporal location, low tide, is hinted at in the title "à sec," meaning "dry." The two large boats dominate the foreground: one rocks gently to the side, exposing its deck and some of the maritime accessories contained onboard, such as coiled rope. Next to the boat tilting out toward the viewer is a boat rocking in the other direction, away from the viewer. This seemingly incidental arrangement of two boats tilting in opposite directions provided Le Secq with the opportunity to depict two different parts of a boat in the same shot, exposing their inside and outside at the same time.

The border between land and water is similarly explored by the lens: in the immediate foreground, we see dry land but further back, the grainy texture of the calotype reveals the presence of a body of water. In the background, the stone walls of the harbor and its surrounding buildings contrast with the harbor water.

**Henri Le Secq**

France, 1818–1882

*Dieppe, Boats along the Wharf (Dieppe, bateaux à quai)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original negative, 1972

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Le Secq's chosen photographic process, the paper calotype, permitted him to achieve a range of subtle tonal modulations. In contrast to the daguerreotype's high degree of clear detail, the calotype yielded a grainier and less crisp image that was considered to be more "artistic." In this calotype, Le Secq explores the subtle variations in texture that the process made possible. The boat, pictured in the center of the composition, is framed on both sides by the richly textured brick wall whose scratchy surface is complimented by the grain of the paper. But perhaps more notable in this calotype is Le Secq's choice of framing: as in other images of Dieppe, Le Secq has chosen to take a close-up shot of his subject, forcing the viewer to contend with the ship as an object deserving of complete attention.

**Alexandre Eugène Nicolas**

France, 1814–1862

*Cliffs, Le Tréport (Falaises, Le Tréport)*

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The dramatic cliffs that surround many of the local beaches along the Normandy coast provided image makers with a dynamic formal challenge. When represented in close up, the high cliffs completely cut off the horizon line, eliminating the visual marker that is critical for depicting a believable recession into space. In marine paintings and photographs, the horizon line establishes a visual clue to the vastness of the sea. But here, with no horizon line, the landscape appears compressed and truncated. Instead of representing vastness, the removal of the horizon line in favor of the steep rocky surfaces demonstrates the towering height of the cliffs. Moreover, Nicolas has exploited the rough surface of the rocks in his works, shown here in the contrasting tones of white, gray and black along the cliffs, to yield an elegantly textured photograph that successfully depicts tactility.

**Gustave Le Gray**

French, 1820–1884

*Seascape with Ship Leaving Port*

1856–1857

Albumen print

Roger Thérond Collection

This photograph appears to be a view of a ship leaving port, but in fact it is a composite of at least two different collodion-on-glass negatives. The clouds are from a well-known seascape that Le Gray took at the Mediterranean beach of Sète, while the beach in the foreground is taken from a negative of another image of Normandy. The chief technical problem of photographic seascapes was that the exposure times required for capturing clouds and the sea varied. Le Gray was a masterful technician whose expertise allowed him to recombine negatives to yield completely different positive prints that achieved his desired affect for sky, sea, and land.

This practice complicates the idea of photography as a direct representation of nature. Rather it was the cultural expectations of what nature “should” look like that photographers strived to replicate in their work—cultural expectations that were in many cases furnished by older, more traditional methods of depiction, notably painting.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*Napoleon III's Fleet Leaving the Port of Le Havre*

1858

Albumen print

Roger Thérond Collection

France, allied with England, defeated Russia in the Crimean War (1853–56). This victory bolstered the political power of Emperor Napoleon III, who had come to power after a series of bloody revolutions and a coup d'état. Emperor Napoleon was eager to exploit the victory for political gain and did so through a savvy program of spending on works of art that represented him favorably. As part of his effort at stoking the flames of French nationalism, he charged Gustave Le Gray with documenting the military maneuvers at the Camp de Chalons in 1857. A lavish photographic album was presented to the Emperor and widely commented upon in the press.

Le Gray subsequently obtained permission to follow the Emperor's naval voyage to Brittany and Normandy where the French and British fleets were to meet in formal recognition of the new alliance. Although not an official commission, this series is an important part of Le Gray's seascape work.

**Henri Le Secq**

France, 1818–1882

*Cliffs near Dieppe (Falaises près de Dieppe)*

circa 1855

Modern print by the Bibliothèque nationale after the original negative, 1966

*Cliffs near Dieppe (Falaises près de Dieppe)*

circa 1855

Paper negative

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Photographs such as this one could serve to confirm expectations of Normandy as a natural, beautiful, untouched space in opposition to the modernity of cosmopolitan centers like Paris. The towering cliffs were represented by painters and photographers; for photographers, they were an ideal, immobile subject that could be easily captured free of some of the technical challenges of marine photography. In this image, the calotype process, with its longer exposure time compared to the collodion, allowed Le Secq to create a landscape with penetrating depth. The rocky cliffs pop out of the composition, with their tactile crevasses and contrasting shadows prominently featured. Le Secq has succeeded in transforming a mundane rock formation into a dynamic, almost foreboding monument.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*The Imperial Yacht, La Reine Hortense, Le Havre (La Reine Hortense—Yacht de l'empereur—Havre, no. 20)*

1856

Albumen print

Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Paris, on deposit to the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Troyes

Le Gray depicted *La Reine Hortense*, Napoleon III's imperial yacht, as an object of eminent grandeur in the harbor of Le Havre. The ship was to set sail for Greenland and Spitzbergen on an Imperial expedition, led by Prince Napoleon, the son of Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie.

In contrast to Le Gray's photographs of moving ocean water, this representation of the yacht is incredibly placid. This is due to his use of a different and innovative technique, an albumen-silver print and a glass plate negative that complimented the crystalline reflection of the boat into [onto] the surface of the water. Le Gray's treatment of the boat is also notable for its dedication to an exacting description of its surfaces. In the manner of a still-life painter, Le Gray framed his scene to emphasize the horizontal expanse of the yacht, allowing the eye to take in all of the sumptuous details of the enormous vessel. In the background it is possible to glimpse the captain and some of his crew guarding the important ship.



**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*Lighthouse and Jetty, Le Havre*

1856–1857

Albumen silver print

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Compared to Davanne's placid and matter-of-fact depiction of the lighthouses at the Cap de la Hève, Le Gray's lighthouse has a rich mood, evoked by the dark jetty and the richly described bank of clouds that mass on the left side of the composition. Davanne's considerable skills as a photographer seem to pale in comparison with the poetry and drama inherent in Le Gray's view, which has all the complexity and nuance of a painting.

**Auguste Autin**

France, 1809–1889

*Sunset. View Taken in October at 5 p.m. (Un coucher du soleil. Vue prise en octobre à 5 heures du soir)*

1861

Albumen print

Société française de photographie, Paris

Auguste Autin was reportedly the first photographer to establish a commercial enterprise in Le Havre, as early as 1841. He was followed by the Macaire Brothers at the beginning of the 1850s. Autin took an acute interest in understanding how the camera recorded atmospheric effects. In this photograph, Autin went so far as to indicate the month and time of day that the image was taken. Whether or not this was completely accurate, what matters more is the claim being made by Autin that photography could indeed depict an exact moment in time. For many, the technological wonder of the nascent medium rested in its power of capturing and freezing a particular instant. Three elements stand out in this photograph: the sky, the sea, and the unfurling wave in the foreground. To combine all three into one seamless image was no small achievement.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*The Beach at Sainte-Adresse, View of the Cliffs*

*(La plage de Sainte-Adresse, vue de la falaise)*

1856

Albumen print

Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Paris, on deposit to the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Troyes

Le Gray photographed the beach at Sainte-Adresse looking both north towards the Cap de la Hève and, as here, towards the Frescati Baths and the port of Le Havre to the south. Looking south, Le Gray shot the beach at both low tide and high, which we see here. The print is particularly rich in its depiction of the dark recessed areas, whereas the evidence of touristic pursuits is present, but muted. Claude Monet used this stretch of coast in the 1870s to portray regattas off shore as well as the awkward mingling of both local residents and urbane and sophisticated visitors.

**Claude Monet**

French, 1840–1926

*The Sea at Le Havre*

1868

Oil on canvas

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Purchase, 53.22

Monet's view of a sailboat off the shore has a composition similar to Le Gray's view of the beach of Sainte-Adresse at high tide. Le Gray chose to photograph at a moment of calm, in order to arrest the gentle movement of the water at the shoreline, whereas Monet placed his solitary craft under an overcast sky, which is mirrored in the color and texture of the water, and used a breaking wave running diagonally through the lower portion of the canvas to interrupt the mass of the sea. There is no evidence in the painting that the sailboat was, in fact, adjacent to a portion of the coast that was highly developed with hotels, resorts, and tourist activity.

**Gustave Courbet**

France, 1819–1877

*The Calm Sea*

1869

Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929

Courbet's marine views have frequently been compared to Le Gray's photographs of the sea off the coast of Normandy. He shares the use of a low horizon line with a number of other artists, including Boudin and Whistler, but a truer kinship seems to exist between his work and that of Le Gray. Courbet's views straight out to sea set his pictures apart from early views by artists ranging from Davanne to Noël and Le Poittevin, whose focus was always on human activity set against the dramatic headlands along the coast. The severe simplicity of Courbet's view, which includes two boats pulled up on the beach, avoiding the drama of breaking waves, seem to move these seascapes into a new realm of pure painting devoid of narrative.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*Seascape, Cloud Study (Marine, étude de nuages)*

1856–1857

Albumen print

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

This photograph of clouds over the ocean, as the critic Champfleury noted in reference to Courbet's seascapes, captures a "drama of immensities." The sea stretching out to infinity at the bottom of the image is met at the horizon line by dramatic cloud formations that take on the role of the protagonist. Charles Baudelaire would describe such seascapes in his *Salon* of 1859 as "such a poetic genre." The absence of man (which Baudelaire cautioned against) removes any narrative component to the work.

That Le Gray has achieved so much depicting so little is a testament to the photographer's tremendous skill. His limitless seascape with a rich configuration of clouds might have inspired painters like Courbet, Whistler, and Monet to attempt views of the sea that contained no reference to human presence, and surely must have informed the cloud studies of Boudin.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*The Sun at Its Zenith*

1856

Albumen print

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Gustave Le Gray began the difficult technical endeavor of photographing the sea in 1856. Perhaps spurred on by the commercial success of seascapes by the Macaire Brothers, which had been purchased by the French government, Le Gray sought both to exploit the fashion for photographs of the sea and to find a new means of creating a body of work that was both commercially and artistically viable.

Having just opened his photographic studio on the fashionable Boulevard des Capucines in Paris, Le Gray could easily sell his images to an eager public. This photograph dates from the period of Le Gray's first series of seascapes, which was met with an enthusiastic public reception and ensured the photographer's renown. One critic who viewed them in 1857 wrote: "We are not in the least surprised that these enchanted scenes are all the rage, to the point that their gifted creator has already received more than 50,000 francs in important orders." But after three years of great success, Le Gray was on the brink of financial ruin in 1859 and was forced to close his Parisian studio due to financial pressures.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*The Tugboat (Le vapeur)*

1857

Albumen print

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

The appearance of a solitary tugboat on the water permitted Le Gray to direct his photographic attention upon the horizon line, which cuts directly across the photograph to create a stunning contrast between sky and ocean. The smoke released by the tiny boat keeps the composition dynamic: our eye wanders over the horizon line only to come upon the puffs of smoke, signaling the boat's motion. Le Gray's representation of the smoke also thematizes the modernity of the image: as a new industrial technology, steam ships were crucially important for France's economic development and like the railroads that the Impressionists would take so much interest in, marked the France's new modern landscape.



## **Eugène Boudin**

France, 1824–1898

*Vacationers on the Beach at Trouville*

1864

Oil on canvas

Minneapolis Institute of Arts, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund

*Vacationers on the Beach at Trouville* shows Boudin varying the formula of his beach pictures. While dogs and children animate the foreground of the painting, most of the figures are contained within the horizon line that extends beyond. Boudin was declared the “king of the skies;” the large proportion of his canvas devoted to the skyscape demonstrates how Boudin’s careful meteorological *plein-air* studies of cloud formations found their place in his finished canvases. The luminous afternoon sun glistening on the water in the background has its analog in Le Gray’s sea-view photographs. Félix Buhot gave an apt assessment of Boudin’s skills in an article in the *Journal des Arts* in 1900:

Boudin’s art is the kind of art which wins you over, not by its audacity of expression or the obtrusive violence of its touch but by its beauty, which combines intimacy, delicacy and truth; innovative in a way because it developed towards the open air, towards impression.

**Edgar Degas**

France, 1834–1917

*Seascape (Marine)*

circa 1869

Pastel on chamois paper

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Bequest of the Baroness Eva Gebhard-Gougaud, 1965

As with Courbet, Boudin, and Whistler before him, Degas also looked straight out to sea and this delicate and subtle view is full of closely observed detail, including the beautiful cloudscape and evocations of shipping along the horizon. This view shares with Boudin the use of pastel to capture the evanescent effects of light and humidity—in fact Degas owned two Boudin pastel landscapes. Along with works by Whistler and Courbet, Degas' marine pastel shares qualities of the limitless space and atmospheric nuance of the photographs of Le Gray.

**Édouard Manet**

France, 1832–1883

*The Beach at Berck*

1873

Oil on canvas

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT., The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

Manet's view of boats pulled up on the beach at Berck-sur-Mer, a health resort along the northern French coast, is a tour de force of understatement. His observation of fishermen's boats on the sand flats at Berck resulted in a number of paintings executed rapidly on both wood panel and on canvas. Summarily indicating the leaden sky and blustery clouds, Manet executes this painting with a subdued palette restricted to a very few colors. Beautifully composed and realized, Manet's canvas evokes the effect of a scene caught quickly—an arresting of movement and time that he shares with early photographers working along the coastline of Normandy.

**Benjamin French & Company**

United States, 1860–1880

*Wet Plate Camera*

1860–1880

Wood body, fabric bellows, brass lens, ground glass view screen

From The Collections of The Henry Ford, Dearborn, Michigan

Although this wet plate camera is American, it features a high quality brass lens made by the French lens maker and businessman Alphonse Darlot (1828–1895). The Boston-based Benjamin French company imported many Darlot lenses to fit their American camera bodies. After apprenticing with a Paris optician, Darlot joined the firm of Jean Théodore Jamin, which specialized in selling cameras and optical equipment. Darlot took over the firm in 1860 and manufactured a wide variety of cameras and accessories. Darlot was awarded a silver medal by the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris for a successful landscape lens.

## **Guillaume de L'Isle**

France, 1675–1726

*Map of Normandy (Carte de Normandie: ou sont marquez exactement les pays ou contrées enfermées da[n]s cette province aussi bien que les villes, bourgs, paroisses et autres lieux)*

1716

Engraving with hand coloring on paper

Map Library, University of Michigan

This early eighteenth-century map of Normandy provides a view of the region prior to Normandy's rise as a destination for artists and, later, tourists. Roads from the center of the country to the coast were still quite rudimentary and it could be argued that it was easier to approach the Norman coast by ship than coach or carriage. The picturesque towns along the coast became an attraction for both English and French travelers whose shared cultural background was represented in Normandy. Between the time the railroad was laid in 1847 and Norman resorts reached their height of fame in the 1860s and 1870s, a comprehensive network of roads had been constructed.

Guillaume de L'Isle was a prominent cartographer in Paris. He drew maps not only of France, but also of the New World, including the interior of North America, and Africa.

**Richard Parkes Bonington**

England, 1802–1828

*Beached Vessels and a Wagon, near Trouville, France*

circa 1825

Oil on canvas

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (B1986.29.1)

Many of Bonington's paintings of the Normandy coast show ships at sea or, as in this instance, drawn up on shore to off-load the catch. Not yet a fashionable mecca for vacationers from Paris, this placid view near Trouville looking across the Seine estuary recalls its modest origins as a fishing village. The immense sky, light tonality of the painting—accented by the rich browns, blacks, and reds of the group on the beach—and the picturesque treatment of the labor of fishing families all influenced the paintings of Eugène Isabey, whose work is on view nearby.

**Richard Parkes Bonington**

England, 1802–1828

*The Harbor, Le Havre*

circa 1821–1822

Watercolor over graphite on paper

Private collection

Bonington was one of a group of English painters and draftsmen who recorded the historical beauties of Norman towns in the first decades of the nineteenth century.

This site, recently determined to be the harbor of Le Havre, includes the tower of Francis I in the distance. The presence of fishing boats and the silhouetted figures looking out to sea beyond the tower all illustrate the attractions of the region.

Bonington's characteristically limpid handling of light is in evidence in this work.

**Richard Parkes Bonington**

England, 1802–1828

*The Inner Port, Dieppe*

1824

Watercolor and bodycolor with scraping on paper

Musée d'art et d'histoire, Narbonne, LB 848

Dieppe became the first town known for the fashion of sea-bathing following the visit of the duchess of Berry's visit for that purpose in 1824. Bonington himself visited Dieppe in the same year, producing this watercolor featuring the wharves and harbor, with the town visible in the distance. The Normandy coast is visited by some of the most extreme tidal fluctuations in Europe; during particular low tides, the harbor empties and boats are left lying on their sides, as seen at the left, until the returning waters refloat them. The subject of boats at their berths, Dieppe harbor at low tide, and the picturesque town wrapping around the inner harbor will be investigated decades later by Henri Le Secq whose calotype views of Dieppe harbor recall works of earlier artists such as Bonington.



**Eugène Isabey**

France, 1803–1886

*A Norman Fishing Village*

circa 1831

Oil on canvas

Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire. Bequest of Florence Andrews Todd in memory of her mother, Sally W. Andrews

Isabey's romantic view of a coastal town in Normandy evokes the region's medieval past, seen in the weathered half-timbered buildings perched just above the shore. The town shown here is not identified and may well be a pastiche drawn from Isabey's travels in the region.

Isabey remained an important influence in portrayals of Normandy; he continued to paint there and frequented the Ferme Saint-Siméon outside Honfleur, an inn set on a bluff overlooking the coast that served as a gathering place for artists working in the region. During the 1840s, Isabey met both Eugène Boudin and Johan Barthold Jongkind, other artists in the exhibition who worked extensively in the area around Le Havre and Honfleur.

**Eugène Isabey**

France, 1803–1886

*Boat Dashing against a Jetty*

circa 1850s

Oil on canvas

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, Charlotte E. W. Buffington Fund

The perils of a seafaring existence, long celebrated in literature, is the subject of this painting of a foundering vessel that is driven by wind and seas up against the sea wall. Like artists before him, Isabey made a name portraying disasters at sea, and the inherently narrative aspect of this painting—with its dramatic stormy sky and clusters of local inhabitants watching helplessly as the vessel pounds against the seawall—made such works tremendously appealing to contemporary audiences.

**Johan Barthold Jongkind**

The Netherlands, 1819–1891

*Chapel of Notre-Dame de Grâce, Honfleur (La Chapelle de Grâce, Honfleur)*

1864

Watercolor, with some gouache, over black chalk, on paper

Thaw Collection, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Acc. no. 1998.28

Nineteenth-century guidebooks for Normandy frequently mention the small church on top of the hill in Honfleur. Built in 1606, Notre-Dame de Grâce attracted pilgrims and tourists alike. The main attraction for tourists was the spectacular view from the hill adjacent to the church, though photographers and painters were just as interested in the picturesque qualities of the actual church. In Jongkind's watercolor it is the church that takes precedence over the view touted in the guidebooks.

At the time, Jongkind had a great influence on the twenty-four-year-old Claude Monet. A view of Notre-Dame de Grâce painted by Monet the same year, presumably also in the early autumn, shows the chapel from almost the identical vantage point.

## **Gustave Courbet**

France, 1819–1877

*View of Honfleur (Vue prise à Honfleur)*

1859

Oil on canvas

Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille

Courbet visited the region around Le Havre and Honfleur a number of times, frequently staying at the local establishment that catered to artists, the inn called the Ferme Saint-Siméon. This canvas was painted from the region just adjacent to the inn. The addition of the couple seated below the brow of the hill is a picturesque touch that links this canvas to more conventional depictions of the region.

Just a few years later, Courbet's views of the sea and the coastline in Normandy will shift dramatically. In his paintings of the 1860s, he positioned himself on the beach itself and focused his efforts on rendering the dramatic cliff formations at Étretat and the ephemeral moment of waves breaking at Trouville. The new direction of his subject matter mirrors closely the subjects that photographer Gustave Le Gray captured along the coast in the mid-1850s; it is possible that Courbet's later seascapes reflect some knowledge of Le Gray's photographs, whose new Paris studio had opened in 1856, receiving extensive coverage in the press.

**Leitch Ritchie**

Scotland, 1800?–1865

*Rocks of Étretat* from *Travelling Sketches in the Sea-Coasts of France for Heath's*

*Picturesque Annual for 1834*

1834

Engraving

Courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Ritchie's images in this volume of the towns along the Norman coast predate the arrival of the railroad. For travelers at this time, Normandy was still largely untouched by tourism, except for Dieppe, where sea-bathing had been first introduced to France in 1824.

The view of the Porte d'Aval at Étretat touches on the tropes that shape the experience of Normandy: soaring cliffs, local inhabitants clustered along the beach, and the requisite shipwreck to connote the difficulties of livelihoods earned from the sea.

**John Murray**

Scotland, 1808–1892

*The River Seine, Paris to Havre, Railroads, from A Handbook for Travellers in France: Being a Guide to Normandy, Brittany; the Rivers Seine, Loire, Rhône, and Garonne; the French Alps, Dauphiné, the Pyrenees, Provence, and Nice, &c. &c. &c.; the Railways and Principal Roads* (10th edition)

1867

Engraving

University of Michigan Libraries

In 1836 the family of John Murray began a series of travel guides known as “Murray’s Handbooks.” These guides, along with those of Thomas Cook and Karl Baedeker, dominated the travel industry. This edition, which includes a large portion of France, provides useful information for middle-class travelers, including train information, hotel recommendations and pertinent background regarding sites and inhabitants.

**Eugène Chapus**

France, 1800–1877

*The Lighthouses (Les Phares)*, from *From Paris to Le Havre (De Paris au Havre)*, from the series *Itinerary Guides (Guides-itinéraires)*

1855

Wood engraving

Seely G. Mudd Library, Yale University Library

The twin lighthouses that stand at the Cap de la Hève, north of Le Havre, were popular monuments in the area and figure prominently in guidebooks. The couple seen in the foreground of this print is representative of the tourists who traveled to the coast during the summer months. The lighthouses, the first in France to be electrified, were also photographed by photographers such as Davanne and Kaiser.

**Jules Gabriel Janin**

France, 1804–1874

*Hill of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Montagne de Notre-Dame-de-Grâce) from Journey from Paris to the Sea via Rouen and Le Havre (Voyage de Paris à la mer par Rouen et le Havre; description historique des villes, bourgs, villages et sites sur le parcours du chemin de fer et des bords de la Seine, orné de 75 gravures et 7 vignettes dessinées sur les lieux par M. Morel-Fatio de quatre cartes et plans graves par M. P. Tardieu)*

1847

Engraving

University of Michigan Libraries

This book was written the year that the rail line connected Paris to the coast.

Organized by station stops along the route, it emphasized the engineering marvels—the viaducts and tunnels—that the traveler encountered on his or her passage to the coast.

The chapel and the nearby Calvary cross in this engraving stand on a point of land overlooking the Seine estuary. The beauty of the site assured that it appeared in all the guidebooks as a point of interest where, “...the sea is the principal object, and the imagination is lost in its immensity,” a response to the sea that will shape the work of later painters and photographers working in the region.



**Félix Santallier**

France, 1830–1885

*Lighthouses at la Hève (Phares de la Hève)*, from *On the Jetty, a Foreign Boat Pilot in Le Havre and Its Environs (Sur la jetée, pilote de l'étranger dans Le Havre et ses environs)*

1858

Two-color lithograph

Le Havre, Archives municipales (Tour 102)

This guidebook published in Le Havre presents the essential information regarding the city and its port. The lighthouses located at the Cap de la Hève dated from 1775 and were the first beacons in France to be electrified in the mid-1860s. Here, the twin lighthouses stand silhouetted against the sky and nestled among trees. A group of figures, most likely tourists visiting the area, approach at lower right.

**Firmin Kaiser**

Germany, 1828–1897

*Lighthouses, Cape de la Hève (Phares, Cap du Hève)* from *Le Havre, Tourist Guide to Le Havre and Its Environs (Le Havre, guide du touriste au Havre et dans ses environs)*

1860

Albumen print

Le Havre, Archives municipales (Tour 018)

Kaiser photographed the harbor at Le Havre and also contributed the albumen prints that are included in this guidebook, which ranks as one of the earliest to contain photographs as illustrations rather than lithographs or engravings. Despite the modern twist that this book features photographs, the selection of views conforms to the canon of standard views of Le Havre and the surrounding area that is found in the Santallier book of the same period. The commercial application of photography to inform and provide suitable souvenirs to visitors finds a new application in the field of publishing.

**Gustave Courbet**

France, 1819–1877

*The Villa of Madame de Morny at Deauville*

1865

Oil on canvas

Private collection

The duc de Morny was an important figure to the development of the town of Deauville, situated across the Toques river from its sister city, Trouville. Morny, the half-brother of Napoleon III, teamed with another speculator in 1859 to purchase the swampy land on the bank of the Toques where they built what was to become one of the most exclusive resort towns along the coast. The villas that face the water are occupied by wealthy vacationers to this day. Morny was also responsible for building the racetrack at Deauville which catered to summer visitors looking for amusement.

Madame de Morny was a Russian princess who married Morny during his visit to Russia in 1857. Courbet's view of Madame de Morny's home at Deauville was painted several months after her husband's death in March of 1865. This early morning view shows the beach unpopulated except for a few figures out by the water's edge and the elegiac quality of the depiction may reflect the widow's recent loss.

**Johan Barthold Jongkind**

The Netherlands, 1819–1891

*The Harbor at Honfleur*

1863

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Like the Parisian tourists who could afford to, Jongkind traveled to Normandy for the summer. Jongkind spent several summers in Honfleur and represented the animated life of the small seaside town. The harbor was one of Jongkind's main areas of focus and provided the painter with a seemingly endless supply of subjects, including the entry and departure of ships, a frequent motif in his paintings, drawings, and watercolors. He painted alongside Eugène Boudin and a young Claude Monet.

In *The Harbor at Honfleur*, Jongkind focused on the atmospheric effects of the mobile water and the maritime activities of the harbor. Everything is painted with a quick brush and a heavy application of paint, qualities that we now recognize as "Impressionist."

**Johan Barthold Jongkind**

The Netherlands, 1819–1891

*Along the Quays, Honfleur (Sur les quais à Honfleur)*

1864

Graphite and watercolor on white wove paper

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Edgar A. Kahn, 2002/2.115

The older painter Eugène Isabey encouraged Jongkind to paint in Normandy, as Isabey himself had done for years. Together, Jongkind, Boudin, and Monet spent considerable time together in the areas of Honfleur and Trouville during the mid-1860s.

This drawing of the quays in the inner harbor at Honfleur depicts a scene very similar to the canvas of nearly the identical view dating two years later. Both views at Honfleur focus on the expanse of the quay and the labor of workers attending to the vessels. The cropped view of ships at their docks is found in photographs of ships at their berths by Le Secq.

**Johan Barthold Jongkind**

The Netherlands, 1819–1891

*Quay at Honfleur (Quai à Honfleur)*

1866

Oil on canvas

Senn Collection, Musée Malraux, Le Havre

During one of his summers spent in Honfleur, Jongkind wrote to his Parisian dealer F. Martin asking for money: “I would love stay a couple more weeks in Honfleur but I have run out of funds...Without money, there is no way for me to make more beautiful paintings, *after nature* [d’après nature].” Jongkind’s request for more funds from his Paris dealer highlights the extent to which the painter perceived that the value of his work stemmed from its faithful and innovative descriptions of the coast made from direct observation. Claude Monet, who worked alongside Jongkind during the 1860s, continued to valorize direct observation of nature and made it the basis of his experimentation with landscape painting. In *Quai à Honfleur*, Jongkind displays his penchant for composing his landscape as a register of quickly painted atmospheric effects that would later become the hallmark of Impressionism.

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 1. *Étretat, The Chapel* (N° 1. *Étretat, la chapelle*)

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Louis-Alphonse Davanne, a chemist and founding member of the Société française de la photographie, took many photographs along the Normandy coast that focused on the untouched beauty of the landmarks. This photograph is notable for two compositional elements—the sweeping view of the cliff and the fishing boats in the foreground. Along with other seaside towns on the coast, Étretat became a popular tourist destination and its fishing industry soon died out.

Unlike Gustave Le Gray, Davanne was more interested in the chemical perfection of photographic processes than in the aesthetic triumph of the medium. Whereas Le Gray focused on producing sharp tonal contrasts that were in keeping with contemporary expectations of a sharp separation of land from sea in marine subjects, No. 1 *Étretat* depicts the coast in an almost uniform brown tone.

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 4. *Le Havre, the Lighthouses* (N° 4. *Le Havre, les phares*)

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

The eighteenth-century lighthouses at the Cap de la Hève served as an important site for visitors to the region, as can be seen in the illustrations in two Le Havre guidebooks from the early 1860s—one illustrated with lithographs and the other with photographs. These beacons were the first in France to be electrified; the south tower (the one closer to the viewer) in 1863, the year before Davanne photographed the pair, and the second in 1865.



**Jules-Achille Noël**

France, 1815–1881

*Crinolines on the Beach at Fécamp (Crinolines sur la plage de Fécamp)*

1871

Oil on canvas

Musée des Arts et de l'Enfance, Fécamp

The burgeoning tourist industry was soon reflected in staple images of the region. Many of the towns had distinctive cliff formations that, for those in the know, allowed immediate identification. Such was the case at Fécamp where the grassy cliff to the north of the harbor, which we see in this view of the beach, is easily recognized. The early resorts located in towns above the Seine estuary, such as Dieppe and Étretat, had beaches that were pebbly rather than covered with sand as was found at Trouville and Deauville.

**Eugène Le Poittevin**

France, 1806–1870

*Bathing at Étretat (Bains de mer à Étretat)*

1866

Oil on panel

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Troyes

Le Poittevin's works appealed to those with a taste for exacting realism, a bourgeois audience readymade for paintings of the new leisure pursuits along the coast. He was the uncle of the writer Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893), and had a house in Étretat, which he rented to Courbet during the artist's visit to Étretat.

In this painting, one of the easily identified headlands at Étretat serves as a backdrop for the figures. The details of the modern pursuit of sea-bathing are recounted in great detail.

**Édouard Manet**

France, 1832–1883

*On the Beach (Sur la plage)*

circa 1868

Oil on canvas

The Detroit Institute of Arts, Bequest of Robert H. Tannahill

Manet's family made several excursions to Boulogne-sur-Mer and Berck-sur-Mer in northern France, in the 1860s and possibly into the 1870s. This canvas of women on the beach is related to drawings by the artist of swimmers in the water. The sea behind the women appears as a flat backdrop with little depth although the surface of the painting is enlivened through Manet's brushwork. The two women on the shore dominate the scene. The standing figure looks towards the viewer, suggesting a self-conscious awareness of the viewer's gaze, while the other woman luxuriously reclines, gazing out to sea. Manet frequently borrowed poses from the work of other artists and the monumentality of these two bathers may derive, in part, from Manet's references to the paintings of earlier masters.

**Félix-Hilaire Buhot**

France, 1847–1898

*A Squall at Trouville (Un grain à Trouville)*

1874

Etching

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Bequest of Margaret Watson Parker,  
1954/1.270

Buhot was a native of Normandy, although he moved to Paris as a young man to study painting. He was also an influential and popular printmaker. This view of a storm blowing onto the beach at Trouville, upending chairs and forcing vacationers to flee, captures the same approach used by Boudin: a frieze-like arrangement of figures enjoying the leisure pursuits along the beach. Here the wind-whipped flags that animate Monet's view of the Hôtel des Roches Noires seen nearby are employed to presage a storm.

**Eva Gonzalès**

French, 1849–1883

*The Beach at Dieppe Seen from the West Cliff (Plage de Dieppe vue depuis la falaise ouest)*  
circa 1871–72

Oil on canvas

Le Château-musée, Dieppe

The career of Eva Gonzalès is closely linked to that of her teacher, Édouard Manet. Gonzalès came from an artistic family and her work generally focused on domestic portrayals of women. She painted few landscapes such as this view of Dieppe seen from the present-day Château-musée, a castle that dates back to the twelfth century and had already been designated an historical monument nearly ten years before Gonzalès' painting. Rather than depicting the coast from the beach as so many of her contemporaries did, Gonzalès employed a bird's-eye view panorama.

**Eugène Boudin**

France, 1824–1898

*Beach Study, Deauville (Étude de plage, Deauville)*

1866

Watercolor, graphite, and black chalk on paper

Senn Collection, Musée Malraux, Le Havre

Whereas Boudin's use of pastel creates layers of dense, opaque medium, Boudin's watercolors, such as this executed at Deauville during the summer of 1866, emphasizes the dappled light and flickering local color of costumes. It has been suggested that Boudin came to use watercolor through the example of Jongkind, whom he met in 1862. The beach scene shows Boudin carefully laying in the graphite structure of figures, hills, bathing cabins, which is then overlaid with largely flat applications of watercolor.

**Eugène Boudin**

France, 1824–1898

*The Horse Races at Deauville (Les courses à Deauville)*

1866

Watercolor and black chalk on paper

Senn Collection, Musée Malraux, Le Havre

The study at the Deauville racetrack, built by the duc de Morny, shows two registers: the upper register includes the distant hills and a general view of the crowd whereas the drawing on the bottom shows Boudin focusing on the accents in the women's fashions.

**Eugène Boudin**

France, 1824–1898

*Bathing Time at Deauville*

1865

Oil on wood

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1983.1.8

Boudin made his reputation painting scenes of holiday-makers along the beaches of the Normandy coastline, particularly in chic Deauville and Trouville. Usually Boudin does not place the viewer in the midst of the action, but rather at a slight remove; the figures gather in small conversational groupings seen at a middle distance. This lack of direct engagement creates a psychological distance from the figures and their activities.

Here, the vacationers at Deauville stand or sit, either on hard-backed chairs or on the sand. Behind them are white bathing machines, small cabins used for changing into bathing costumes, which horses draw into the water to facilitate bathing. These modest-sized paintings found a willing market among bourgeois patrons.



**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

*No. 7. Trouville, Beach (N°7. Trouville, Plage)*

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Trouville became one of the most fashionable destinations in Normandy for affluent Parisians soon after the railroad came in. In 1868, one writer likened the seaside town to the most fashionable district in Paris to see and be seen. Davanne represented the beach at Trouville without the throngs of tourists that would have been there in the high season, though there are still people present on the beach. On the left side of the composition, a woman's skirt blows in the wind, producing an indistinct mass of black fabric. A faint shadow of a man in a top hat is visible in the middle of the image, letting us know that he moved during the exposure to yield this ghostly trace. Behind him, the small private bathing cabins sit unused.

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 16. *Honfleur, Notre-Dame de Grâce*

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Davanne began to practice photography in 1852 and became one of its most important technical innovators. He constructed a viable field camera that made it easier for photographers to travel to distant locales and take photographs such as the one seen here. This print was part of a larger series of views taken in Normandy for which Davanne was awarded several prizes.

Notre-Dame de Grâce, a picturesque church on the top of a hill in the seaside town of Honfleur, had long attracted the attention of painters such as Jongkind, whose representation of it is featured in this exhibition. Soon after the introduction of photography, such sites, which had been the purview of painters and draftsmen, attracted photographers. Davanne's interest in Notre-Dame de Grâce was both touristic as well as artistic.

**Edmond Bacot**

France, 1814–1875

*First Print of the Sea on Dry Albumen, May 1850*

*(Première épreuve de la mer sur albuminé sèche, mai 1850)*

1850

Albumen print

Société française de photographie, Paris

Bacot, like a number of other photographers, came to the new medium after having studied painting. This image, shot in the Calvados region of Normandy, near Caen, is an early attempt at capturing the movement of water. The breakers rolling in towards shore resulted in the water appearing out of focus, as are several of the figures whose movement affected the sharpness of the image. However, it is interesting that on this print Bacot noted the month and year, indicating that his approach may have been more scientific than aesthetic.

Prints of Bacot's sea views were presented at an 1851 meeting of the Académie des Sciences, at which members of the Académie acknowledged that although Bacot had not yet succeeded in stopping the movement, they applauded his efforts.

Bacot's lack of success led him to undertake other subjects and subsequent works do not include views of the sea. His efforts to arrest the movement of water will be realized six years later in the work of Gustave Le Gray.

**Eugène Colliau**

France, active 1859–1867

*Ten Cartes-de-Visite with Views of Le Havre*

circa 1860s

Albumen prints

Frame: 19 11/16 x 25 5/8 in. (50 x 65 cm)

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Practically unknown today, Eugène Colliau was a student of Gustave Le Gray's and photographed some of the same subjects as many of his contemporaries, notably seascapes off the coast in Normandy. These small albumen photographic prints were intended to be used as souvenirs of the port city of Le Havre. They picture some of the same sites of interest represented at the time by painters and photographers in Le Havre such as the jetty and the port.

These *cartes-de-visite* of sites of touristic interest were made alongside Colliau's more serious seascape photographs. When one examines them more closely, it is apparent that these small images are actually lithographs that have been photographed and set on cardstock. Colliau's innovative "translation" of lithographs into photographs was common in the 1850s and 1860s, a period when photographers were looking for new ways to disseminate and profit from their images.

**Anonymous**

France, 19th century

*Souvenir Folding Fan from the Exposition Maritime Internationale du Havre, June–October*

1868

1868

Lithograph on paper with wooden sticks

Printed by E. Rabiet, l'ainé

Le Havre, Archives municipales (16 fi 1)

The Exposition Maritime Internationale, held in 1868 in the port city of Le Havre, featured both art and industrial exhibits. Not only was Le Havre an important city for French maritime trade but it was also a major rail hub for vacationers arriving from Paris. The opening of the exhibition coincided with the debut of the bathing season, thus ensuring that the greatest number of tourists could see it.

This fan was one of the many souvenir objects that visitors could have purchased at the fair. In contrast to the centuries old French artisanal craft of hand-made and hand-painted fans, this fan was a mass-produced object, printed by an established lithographic printer in Paris. The front of the fan features a map of the fair grounds and the official emblems of the event. On the back of the fan is advertising for a Parisian travel agency specializing in trips to Normandy.

**Charles Ségoffin**

France, 19th century

*Carte-de-visite with Twelve Views of Le Havre*

1860

Albumen print

Le Havre, Archives municipales (4 fi 1033)

The *carte-de-visite* photograph was invented and commercialized by the Parisian studio photographer Eugène Disdéri in the 1850s. Usually *carte-de-visite* photographs consisted of a small photograph of a sitter pasted onto a larger card. These objects could be distributed among friends or acquaintances and became a fashionable accessory throughout Europe in the 1850s and 1860s.

This object ingeniously combined the craze for *cartes-de-visite* with the craze for Normandy tourism. Just as a *carte-de-visite* was ostensibly for the purpose of displaying yourself to others, the purpose of this touristic *carte-de-visite* was made for showing off the city of Le Havre to visitors who would have been eager to possess a physical reminder of their time in the port city. Ségoffin's *carte-de-visite* represented the most important physical landmarks in the city including the old and new city halls, ships entering and exiting the harbor, and the Tower of François I.

**Eugène Andriveau-Goujon**

France, 1832–1897

*Map of the Railways and Waterways of France According to the Best Documents (Carte spéciale des chemins de fer des routes et des voies navigables de la France d'après les meilleurs documents)*

1878

Steel engraving with hand coloring, mounted on linen

Map Library, University of Michigan

This map of France shows the extensive webbing of rail lines that had been laid by 1878. The first line between Paris and Le Havre, completed in 1847, had been expanded to other parts of the coasts, including the important spur built to link the fashionable towns of Trouville and Deauville with the main line to the capital. The construction of railroads was a subject of celebration and national pride, particularly given the engineering feats required to build viaducts and tunnels through the countryside.

The ease with which travelers could reach the coast opened up the Norman coast to rapid development. Towns that had been enclaves of fishing families for generations were no longer quiet hamlets. The bourgeoisie now could reach the coast in four to five hours from Paris and fishermen's families were edged out by well-heeled Parisians seeking respite and relaxation among their peers in towns that were described as "Paris-by-the-Sea."

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 5. *Étretat, Fishermen's Storage Sheds (N° 5. Étretat, Cabestan)*

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Using the headland known as the Porte d'Aval as a foil in the distance, Davanne photographed the remaining traces of the local fishermen to perpetuate the romantic notion that Étretat was still a small fishing hamlet. The truth was that the resort town grew behind the beach, including large hotels and a casino. The quaint structures on the beach were old fishing boats with thatched roofs attached, which were used as storage sheds.



**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 2. *Étretat, Cliffs (N° 2. Étretat, falaise d'aval)*

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Étretat attracted its share of important visitors. The composer Jacques Offenbach had a house in Étretat and his music was frequently played during the tourist season. Writer Guy de Maupassant, who was the nephew of the painter Le Poittevin, also regularly visited this small town.

**Louis-Auguste Bisson and Auguste-Rosalie Bisson**

France, 1814–1876; France, 1826–1900

*Étretat*

1853

Salted paper print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
The Bisson brothers began making daguerreotype photographs in 1841 and were founding members of the Société française de photographie. They eventually moved towards different processes, finding commercial success with wet collodion-plate negatives and they specialized in large-format images. The album of calotype prints they shot at Étretat capitalizes on the canonical imagery afforded by the cliffs at Étretat and surrounding views.

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 8. *Étretat, Large Cliffs* (N° 8. *Étretat, grosse falaise*)

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

**Paul Huet**

France, 1804–1869

*Boats at Étretat, Pulled Up on Shore* (*Barques à Étretat, échouées sur la grève*)

undated

Graphite and watercolor

Department of Graphic Arts, Musée du Louvre, Paris

Paul Huet was one of the earliest painters, along with Bonington and Isabey, to be working along the Normandy coast. The iconic view of the cliffs at Étretat, particularly the famous sea-arch of the Porte d'Aval, frequently included foreground references to the indigenous fishing trade. Here, Davanne frames his view of the cliff in a manner that is almost identical to that of Huet, a trope that continued to depict the town as a rustic haven of fishermen and that persisted in postcards of the early twentieth century.

**Gustave Courbet**

France, 1819–1877

*A Bay with Cliffs*

circa 1869

Oil on canvas

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund

The rocky cliffs that surrounded many beaches in Normandy are for Courbet the occasion to invent a dynamic and unusual composition. In the right part of the composition, the cliff dominates. The texture of the rock, a favored motif in Courbet's landscapes, is rendered with rich, thick scrapes of white paint, interspersed with gray and green notes to give the object a sense of volume. Two boats sit on the pebbly beach in the foreground and lend the painting a sense of depth.

As Davanne's photographs of just a few years earlier attest, Étretat was not a deserted part of the coast but a flourishing town. The dramatic cliffs at either end of the beach drew artists for over four decades, including not only Courbet, but Paul Huet, Eugène Delacroix and Claude Monet—none of whom portrayed the headlands as anything other than remote, untouched rock formations.

**Gustave LeGray**

France, 1820–1884

*The Breaking Wave (La vague brisée)*

1857

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Early on, photographers enthusiastically took up the problem of transforming a constantly moving wave into an immobile photographic image. For photographers, waves presented a technical challenge that revolved around the issue of temporality: to capture a fast-moving, fleeting object without rendering the wave illegible. The momentary fleeting character of waves was the perfect testing grounds for the technical achievement of instantaneity. Le Gray used the newly perfected collodion process that provided photographers with a means of creating images with shorter exposure times than the outmoded daguerreotype process but greater precision than the calotype process. Le Gray sought to produce seascapes that represented a clear sky as well as the detailed, sharply focused waves.

**Gustave Courbet**

France, 1819–1877

*The Wave (La vague)*

1869

Oil on canvas

Musée Malraux, Le Havre

Courbet painted 35 canvases of breaking waves during his time in Normandy. This body of work allowed the painter to eschew traditional conventions of representation such as recession into space, horizon lines, and scale. For Courbet, a breaking wave posed a classical painterly challenge—it provided an opportunity to give material permanence to a form that is inherently ephemeral. Courbet imbues the wave with a sense of temporal impermanence by showing the breaking white top in the process of unfurling. And yet, the heavy application of paint on the bottom part of the wave and even on the whitecap provide the painting with a high degree of material presence. The effect of the painting is to render the impermanent and constantly changing wave as a fixture of permanence through the materially indelible marks of paint. This parallels the challenges that Le Gray set for himself photographing waves breaking along the shore at Sète.

**Hippolyte Macaire, Louis-Cyrus Macaire, and Jean-Victor Macaire-Warnod  
(known as “les frères Macaire”)**

France, 1804–1852; France, 1807–1871; France, 1812–after 1886

*Ship Entering the Port of Le Havre (Navire entrant dans le port du Havre)*

1851

Daguerreotype

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

This daguerreotype is one of the earliest examples of a successful photographic representation of a harbor view. What is all the more incredible is that the process of the daguerreotype required a long exposure time. In the hands of an inexperienced practitioner, this image could have easily become an illegible blur of moving shapes. As one government report noted soon after this daguerreotype and others like it were revealed to the public in Le Havre, “They produced views of rough seas, skies, moving ships, etc., which aroused astonishment and extreme interest.” News soon spread to Paris, where the Minister of Fine Arts acquired over thirty of them; all but this example are presumably lost. This remarkable daguerreotype depicts a crowd of onlookers, who appear as ghostly black silhouettes on the jetty in Le Havre, watching a ship enter the port.





**Alexandre Eugène Nicolas**

France, 1814–1862

*Dieppe Casino, No. 8 (Le casino de Dieppe, n°8)*

1851–55

Paper negative

*Dieppe Casino, No. 8 (Le casino de Dieppe, n°8)*

1851–55

Modern salted paper print from original paper negative

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Practically unknown today, Nicolas specialized in making seascapes on salted paper negatives. Like many of his contemporaries such as Gustave Le Gray, Nicolas was adept at combining and altering negatives to yield a seamless final image. While photography is often thought of as a directly transparent depiction of nature, photographers like Nicolas had to adjust their photographs to fit cultural expectations of what an image of a landscape looked like, with obvious visual distinctions between horizon, land and sea. On the salted paper negative of the Dieppe Casino, Nicolas painted the entire space over the horizon with black ink in order to produce a strong tonal contrast between the ocean and the sky. The painted black area on the negative, when developed into the final, positive image, appears as a bright white sky. Without the manipulation of the negative, the resulting image would have lacked the sufficient contrast to be judged as a successful photograph. Surprisingly, nineteenth century photography as practiced by Nicolas required a hand adept at using the ink brush as well as the mechanical apparatus of the camera. It is no coincidence that many nineteenth century photographers were, as Baudelaire famously stated, “failed painters,” meaning that they had given up fledgling careers as painters to take up the practice of photography.

**Hippolyte Macaire, Louis-Cyrus Macaire, and Jean-Victor Macaire-Warnod  
(known as “les frères Macaire”)**

France, 1804–1852; France, 1807–1871; France, 1812–after 1886

*Departure from the Port of Le Havre (Sortie du port du Havre)*

1851

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

**Anonymous**

France, 1807–1871

*Boats Leaving the Port of Le Havre (Bateau sortant du  
port du Havre)*

Undated (before 1862)

Albumen print

Archives municipales, Le Havre, 7fi82

The Macaire Brothers specialized in views of ships leaving and entering the Le Havre harbor, a vantage point also employed by other photographers. These crisply rendered albumen prints represent the commotion of departure, complete with a tugboat in the front towing a large vessel behind it. The smoke appears somewhat out of focus in the *Departure from the Port of Le Havre*, a likely indication that it was a windy day, while the image captures the evanescent element. The presence of the smoke in this image should not be interpreted as a technical blunder, but rather as a powerful indication of the climatic conditions and of photography’s ability to indicate time. *Boats Leaving the Port of Le Havre* shows the port in slightly calmer circumstances as two ships leave the protection of the port under their own power—the nearer ship under steam and the other under sail. The port appears as a crowded, busy space with little room between ships; in each image, minuscule solitary figures on the Tower of François I look out at the spectacle and mirror our own gaze at the scene.

**Gustave Le Gray**

French, 1820–1884

*The Beach at Sainte-Adresse with the Dumont Baths (La plage de Sainte-Adresse, avec les bains Dumont)*

1856–1857

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

**Johan Barthold Jongkind**

Dutch, 1819–1891

*Beach at Sainte-Adresse (Sur la plage de Sainte-Adresse)*

1862

Oil on canvas

Phoenix Art Museum, Mrs. Oliver B. James Bequest

A continuing theme in portrayals of the Normandy coastline was the tension between the differing ways in which the region was portrayed by painters and photographers. Painters had the advantage of being able to exclude aspects of a view that did not fit their intentions, whereas photographers were tied to what was before their lens. This ongoing disparity is evident from a comparison of Jongkind's painting of the beach at Sainte-Adresse and Le Gray's photograph of the same location about five years earlier.

In Le Gray's view, commercial development is evident, including large hotels and bathing establishments. Jongkind's painting, on the other hand, perpetuates the expectation that an untarnished landscape awaited vacationers from Paris. The painting shares a sense of light and a palette with Corot's views in Normandy, but Jongkind has edited out the hotels and resorts, preferring to portray the region as it would have been before the tourists arrived. Portraying traditional activities, such as women and children gathered on the beach next to local fishing boats—subjects that appear at the bottom of some of Le Gray seascapes and in canvases by Jongkind and Monet—belies the reality of development along the coast.

**Henri Le Secq**

France, 1818–1882

*Dieppe, the Harbor and Jetties (Dieppe, le port et les jetées)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original negative, 1972

*Dieppe, the Harbor and Jetties (Dieppe, le port et les jetées)*

circa 1854

Paper negative

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Originally trained as a painter in the studio of the history painter Paul Delaroche, Henri Le Secq picked up photography in the 1840s and quickly became one of the most prolific early experimenters of the medium along with his friend and fellow Delaroche pupil, Charles Nègre. Like many French photographers of the 1840s and 1850s, he gained exposure to photography from Gustave Le Gray, another photographer of the Normandy coast. In 1851, Le Secq was appointed by the French government, along with four other photographers including Le Gray, to photograph France's crumbling medieval and gothic architecture in what has become known as the *Mission Héliographique*. The photographers were directed to use the paper negative calotype process from which positive copies could be printed instead of the unique positive daguerreotype process. Le Secq became one of the foremost calotype practitioners, as evidenced by this extraordinary photograph and accompanying paper negative, taken a few years after his participation in the *Mission Héliographique*.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*Solar Effect in the Clouds—Ocean (Effet de soleil dans les nuages—Océan)*

1856

Albumen print

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Museum purchase made possible by the W. Hawkins Ferry Fund, 2008/2.1

Gustave Le Gray understood that in the early stages of its development, photography was regarded more as an industrial process than as an artistic one. The painter-turned-photographer sought to change that perception, and he self-consciously positioned himself as an artist. He wrote in 1852, “For me, instead of falling into the domain of industry or commerce, I wish for photography to enter into the domain of art; it is in this direction that I will always seek to advance it”. Le Gray’s use of a “solar effect” can be understood as the photographer’s attempt to position photography as a medium capable of reproducing picturesque beauty in a manner similar to painting but with a set of formal characteristics all its own. Here, Le Gray demonstrates his mastery of the medium with a tour de force combination of clouds, ocean and sun. Le Gray has frozen these mobile forces of nature on the glass plate and in so doing, staked a claim for photography as a medium capable of producing atmospheric effects similar to those achieved in landscape painting.

**James McNeill Whistler**

United States, 1834–1903

*Sea and Rain*

1865

Oil on canvas

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Bequest of Margaret Watson Parker, 1955/1.89

During the late summer of 1865, Gustave Courbet and Whistler, whose early training and orientation as a painter had been in the realist style, spent some weeks at the fashionable seaside resort town of Trouville, accompanied by Whistler's mistress Joanna Hiffernan. Years later, Courbet recalled fondly the time the trio spent at Trouville and claimed the youthful Whistler as a student—an assertion that Whistler vigorously denied. The mature Courbet, whose canvases show paint thickly laid in with a palette knife, could not have contrasted more sharply with the approach of the younger American painter, whose canvases evidence a thinner and more gossamer surface.

Both Courbet and Whistler painted marine views during this sojourn to the Atlantic shore. Whereas the older artist's seascapes tend to emphasize dramatic elements of the coast—breaking waves and billowing clouds—Whistler's work had already begun to depart from the tenets of realism in favor of a more evanescent and aesthetic response to the motif of the sea. The understated depiction of the water on a misty and overcast day is quite different from Courbet's more muscular portrayals from this date.

**Gustave Le Gray**

French, 1820–1884

*The Brig (Le brick or Le brick au clair de lune)*

circa 1856

Albumen print

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

In photographing a brig on the water, Le Gray made use of a technique that he had been instrumental in developing: the glass plate collodion negative and the albumen print made from it. Unlike the grainy, more atmospheric effect of the paper negative calotype process, glass plate negatives lent themselves to the detailed, shimmering surface of the water that Le Gray sought to capture. Le Gray's achievement derives from the high degree of tonal contrast that he was able to achieve between the sea and the sky, a contrast that most photographers of the period could not achieve, having to settle for a uniformly grey or brown image. After 1857, Le Gray began altering his negatives, cutting them apart and recomposing them to produce a more reliable contrast between sea and sky. The great achievement of *The Brig* was that Le Gray successfully created a marine view from a single negative. This tonal contrast, in combination with the subtle movement of the water, allowed Le Gray's photographs to be valued for their fidelity to depicting the natural world as well as their aesthetic merits. He has carefully composed this photograph with the brig illuminated by a halo of surrounding light in the midst of a vast seascape. The scene is anchored by the inclusion of land in foreground, covered in seaweed and featuring horses, a detail that references the traditional pursuits of collecting seaweed or shellfish. The incredible contrast that Le Gray was able to create in this image gained it a high degree of critical acclaim when it was exhibited soon after it was made.

## Claude Monet

France, 1840–1926

*Hôtel des Roches Noires, Trouville*

1870

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Gift of Jacques Laroche, 1947

Artists who worked along the coast in Normandy developed painterly strategies to convey the immediacy of the tourist experience, particularly in the tony resort towns of Trouville and Deauville. Although far from affluent, in 1870 Monet married Camille Doncieux, his mistress and the mother of their son, and spent several days at Trouville with Boudin and his wife. The paintings he executed at Trouville that summer are either portraits of Camille as a vacationer on the beach or views of the famous promenades and boardwalks where the chic hotels meet the strand.

One of the most famous of the Trouville establishments was the Hôtel des Roches Noires. Shown in bright morning light from the hotel's seaside terrace, the mass of the hotel rises up at the right to fill canvas while fashionably dressed figures stroll, chat, and relax at the left—Parisian *boulevardiers* transplanted to the Normandy coast. The modernity of the subject matter (tourism and leisure) is paired with an equally contemporary attempt to convey the essence of the instant. Monet's brushwork captures the figures with a highly notational approach, while above them fluttering and snapping in the wind are flags that adorn the terrace. Monet makes no attempt at completing the American flag that is closest to the viewer; it is allowed to evoke the stiff breeze by appearing like the blurred flags that one sees in Davanne's photograph of the Trouville boardwalk.



## **Eugène Boudin**

France, 1824–1898

*Study of Sky with Setting Sun (Étude de ciel au soleil couchant)*

1862–1870

Pastel on rough beige paper

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Bequest of Comte Isaac de Camondo, 1911

When the poet and critic Charles Baudelaire met Boudin during a visit with his mother to Le Havre in the summer of 1859, he visited the painter in his studio and was greatly impressed by a series of pastel skylscapes that the poet saw in the studio. So impressed was he by these sketches that he added a section to his Salon of 1859 praising them. He described seeing “several hundred pastel-studies, improvised in front of the sea and sky,” all of which contained notations as to date, time, and wind condition, each so faithful that you could cover the inscriptions with your hand and accurately describe from the drawings what had been the weather and time. He went on to describe “all these clouds, with their fantastic and luminous forms; these ferments of gloom; these immensities of green and pink, suspended and added one upon another; these gaping furnaces; these firmaments of black or purple satin, crumpled, rolled or torn; these horizons in mourning, or streaming with molten metal—in short, all these depths and all these splendors rose to my brain like a heady drink or like the eloquence of opium.”

Boudin's pastels and small oil sketches of skies and the sea earned him the name of “king of the skies,” and even Courbet declared to Boudin, “My dear fellow you must be a seraph; you're the only person to really know the sky.” The emphasis on clouds that is common to the work of Boudin and Courbet may well have taken some form from the cloud studies executed in Normandy by photographer Gustave Le Gray, which had been themselves celebrated in artistic circles when they were first exhibited.

## Edgar Degas

France, 1834–1917

*Cliffs by the Sea (Falaise au bord de la mer)*

1869

Pastel on grey paper

Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Bequest of the Baroness Eva Gebhard-Gougaud, 1965

Degas' landscape pastels of 1869 are comparatively unknown works by a major artist and had been presumed to be imaginary landscapes executed in his studio in Paris—an assumption that turns out to be untrue. This sheet, drawn from the tidal flats near Dives-sur-Mer and looking towards the new and fashionable town of Houlgate, was probably drawn (or at least begun) out of doors at Dives-sur-Mer and depicts a stretch of the coastline that is still identifiable. It matches up exactly with a second pastel, also in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay, which continues the view looking further up the coast, creating a dyptich. Degas' work in pastel in this region may have been inspired by his friendship with the Morisot family, including Berthe and her sister Edma, both of whose landscapes were executed *en plein-air* and who were vacationing that summer at the adjacent town of Beuzeval. Although Le Secq seems not to have exhibited his calotype photographs that he executed around Le Tréport and Dieppe, Degas' closely modulated and tonal landscapes have an aesthetic that is analogous to Le Secq's views of Normandy executed more than ten years earlier.

**Louis-Alphonse Davanne**

France, 1824–1912

No. 12. *Étretat, the Manneporte* (N° 12. *Étretat, la Manneporte*)

1864

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
All along the Norman coast, the soaring limestone cliffs provided a dramatic backdrop to human activity, but the cliff formations at Étretat are particularly striking. Davanne's large-format photographs of the cliffs demonstrate his skill in depicting these remarkable natural features; the movement of the water and the undifferentiated quality of the sky act as a foil for the rich texture of the arch of the Manneporte.

To place his camera where he did, Davanne had to navigate around the rocky headlands during low tide, a trek that Claude Monet made some years later. Davanne's composition employs the Manneporte arch to frame the freestanding "Needle" and an arm of the Porte d'Aval, another arch caused by erosion. Monet's canvas depicting the major headland at the opposite end of the beach at Étretat concentrates, as did Davanne (and Henri Le Secq nearly a decade before him), on the strata of the rock in the foreground.

Claude Monet, France, 1840–1926, *The Porte d'Amont, Étretat*, ca. 1868–69, oil on canvas, Fogg Art Museum, The Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1957.163)

**Henri Le Secq**

France, 1818–1882

*Dieppe, View of the Port (Dieppe, vue du port)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original negative, 1972

*Ship in the Harbor (Bateau au port)*

circa 1854

Modern print by Claudine Sudre after the original negative, 1972

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris  
Dieppe, much like other coastal towns in Normandy, became a fashionable tourist destination after 1840. The harbor, photographed by Henri Le Secq on paper negatives and printed on salted paper, was a locus of traditional, maritime activity that captivated artists and tourists alike. The contrast between the fashionable seaside resort and its traditional way of life was remarked upon in guidebooks: This town has not lost the favor of high society, and to best understand, if you go to Dieppe, all you have to do is go to the Grand Hotel Royal...The beach becomes the favored promenade of high society, and the dazzling outfits signal the presence of queens of fashion. And you see these famous fishermen, who live among themselves like a population apart, and who keep, despite everything, the purity and the goodness of old customs. *Guide-Souvenir, Le Havre, Exposition Maritime Internationale*, Paris, 1868

The fishermen discussed in the guidebook are understood as a distinct population, living in harmony with the sea and separate from the new economy of tourism. Accordingly, in these two photographs, Henri Le Secq depicted the harbor as a space of traditional Norman seafaring with no sign of the burgeoning economy of tourism. The harbor is represented by Le Secq as set apart from the spectacle of modern tourism but at the same time, these images of traditional seaside activity were an integral part of what attracted tourists to the Norman coast to begin with.

**Gustave Le Gray**

French, 1820–1884

*The French and English Fleets, Cherbourg*

(*Flotte franco-anglaise, Cherbourg*)

1858

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

*Salvos of the French Fleet at Cherbourg (Salves de la flotte*

*française à Cherbourg)*

1858

Albumen print

Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Paris, on deposit to the

Musée des Beaux-Arts, Troyes

In the series of photographs that Le Gray executed in Cherbourg and Brest in August 1858, he took an interest in depicting France's rediscovered sense of military power through the symbol of its fleet. The fleet's arrival at Cherbourg in 1858 coincided with the inauguration of a new harbor at Cherbourg, part of Napoleon III's massive program of building projects that took place during the 1850s and 1860s. A visit by Queen Victoria and the English fleet was part of the celebration.

Le Gray's photographs of the harbor at Cherbourg participate in memorializing England and France's important political and military alliance in a visually dazzling, aestheticized manner. Through technical mastery of his medium, Le Gray made military power appear beautiful and even picturesque, an effect that had long been a preoccupation of marine painters specializing in painting naval battles in France and Holland. Le Gray's photographs of the French fleet would have likely invited comparisons with this well-known and historic genre of painting. Le Gray's innovation was to demonstrate that photography was capable of producing an image that could be celebrated for its historical, documentary and artistic values.

**Anonymous**

France, 19th century

*Three-Masted Ship Returning to Port, Jetty and Man at Right (Trois-mâts reentrant au port, jetée et marin assis en amorce droite)*

Undated

Albumen print

Le Havre, Archives municipales

The proximity of photographic studios to the harbor at Le Havre meant that travelers arriving at or departing from this important port would have easy access to photographs that could be purchased as souvenirs of the city. The city was also the terminus of the rail line from Paris and artists coming to Normandy from the capital would also naturally converge in Le Havre. In the case of the Macaire photography studio, works by contemporary painters and printmakers were on display as well as the studio's own images. This nexus of visual artists—photographers and painters—begs the question about reciprocal influence. It seems likely that this photograph served as a visual source for a painting executed by Claude Monet in 1867 depicting ships approaching the harbor. Both focus on the two vessels, a small private sailboat and a larger three-masted ship, as they race to the harbor ahead of a squall. If the youthful Monet did borrow the composition of the two ships, he adapted it to his own purposes: placing the jetty in the foreground, he increased the space between the two ships, and heightened the drama by augmenting the wake produced by both craft and added the threatening weather. Even if Monet has borrowed elements of a composition from an existing photograph, his own invention and skill certainly prevent the incorporation of a photograph from seeming derivative.

**Gustave Le Gray**

France, 1820–1884

*The French Fleet, Cherbourg (La flotte française, Cherbourg)*

1858

Albumen print

Department of Prints and Photographs, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

**James McNeill Whistler**

United States, 1834–1903

*Nocturne*, from *The First Venice Set*

1879–80

Etching and drypoint

University of Michigan Museum of Art, Bequest of Margaret Watson Parker,

1954/1.372

The profoundly influential aestheticized painting style James McNeill Whistler pioneered in the mid-1860s may owe something to photographs taken by Gustave Le Gray years earlier. Among the photographer's views of the 1858 visit of Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie to Cherbourg is this of the French fleet resting quietly at anchor, made from Le Gray's collodion-on-glass negative. In the foreground, the water undulates in gentle swells while imposing three-masted ships dominate the image; the photograph combines an ethereal brightness near the horizon line with a gloomy darkness in the upper and lower portions of the image.

It is possible that Whistler may have had this or comparable images in mind when he created the series of etchings executed in Venice during his visit in 1879–80. Whether directly evoking Le Gray's images of the French fleet or not, Whistler's *Nocturne* bears a striking resemblance to Le Gray's photograph. At the time he was working on the etchings of Venice, Whistler had begun to manipulate the ink on the etching plate to better achieve the sense of palpable atmosphere so inherent in his views of Venice, an approach known as "artistic printing." Similarities between the two include the relative brightness at the horizon and the treatment of the water in the bottom of the image, particularly the way the faintest of etched lines describes the eddying movement of water. He also uses warm black ink with a tonality comparable to the albumen print. If Whistler did have Le Gray in mind, he has transformed the photograph into the most evocative and exquisite portrayal of ships at anchor.

This impression of the *Nocturne* was owned by the photographer Henri Le Secq.