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A Courbet for the Musée de la Chasse

Julie Demarle — Wednesday 12 March 2025 — All the versions of this article: English , français

12/3/25 - *Acquisition - Paris, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature* - It took its place in the Cabinet du Loup on the first floor of the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature at the beginning of March: *Hunting Scene in the Snow* is the first work by Courbet to join the Parisian institution. The previously unseen canvas, from a private collection in Besançon, was acquired through the Parisian art dealer Hubert Duchemin. As stated in the acquisition notice written by Rémy Provendier-Commenne [1], the canvas was presented in June 2024 to the expertise and authentication commission of the Institut Gustave Courbet, and was certified and added to the artist's catalogue raisonné.



Gustave Courbet (1819-1877)
Hunting Scene in the Snow 1864
Oil on canvas - 46 x 55 cm
Paris, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature
Photo: Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature

[See the image in its page](#)

This is all the more important given that our colleague Vincent Noce simultaneously revealed in *La Gazette Drouot* the case of a controversial new attribution to Courbet, that of a painting with a similar subject, *Two Roe Deer in the Snow*, of which around ten autograph versions are listed. He explains that the sale of the painting was, before its public auction in March 2022, orchestrated by the gallery owner Johann Naldi and the experts Thomas Morin-Williams and Niklaus Manuel Güdel, protagonists already mentioned in the problematic case of the *Great Bathe* (news item of 8/5/23). Like this painting, the *Two Roe Deer in the Snow* had been presented at the Courbet Museum in Ornans in the "Courbet/Hodler" exhibition (see the [article](#)) which was criticised for having included works of dubious attribution that were not recognised in the catalogue raisonné. In July 2023, the Courbet Committee, to which the winter landscape had not been submitted before its sale, concluded that it was not by the painter. The successful bidder has since requested the cancellation of the sale, which is currently under investigation by the courts according to the article.

The *Hunting Scene in the Snow*, dated 1864, which has been acquired by the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, is a new addition to Gustave Courbet's extensive hunting corpus, which consists of more than 130 paintings depicting hunting, hunters or game. A late period of his work - presented to the public for the first time at the Salon of 1857 [2] - long disdained by art historians who associated it with the painter's submission to the tastes of art lovers. The first publication entirely devoted to the subject by Margaret Robinson dates from 1990, *Courbet's Hunt Scenes - The End of Tradition*, while the first exhibition specifically dedicated to him was the one presented by the Musée d'Ornans in 2012, *Les chasses de Monsieur Courbet*. As his extensive correspondence shows, the artist was a great hunter, mainly in his native Franche-Comté - to which he always returned even after moving to Paris - but also in Germany, during his stay in Frankfurt am Main with the German painter Victor Müller in the winter of 1858-1859. This is an important detail because, as Rémy Provendier-Commenne explains, at the time the *Hunting Scene in the Snow* was painted, the deer seem to have disappeared from the Ornans area since the beginning of the century. The local wild game was then limited to a great many hares, a few roe deer, wild boars, wolves and foxes, the subjects of many other compositions.

The painting in the Musée de la Chasse, like the numerous other recorded depictions of stags, would therefore be less the result of direct observations in Franche-Comté than of recompositions in a familiar landscape of scenes experienced across the Rhine. The artist's correspondence relating to this trip attests to the numerous deer hunts and depictions of deer that were undertaken at the time, such as *The Stag at the Water*, known as *The Forced Stag* from the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Marseille, exhibited at the Salon of 1861 with two other stag scenes, *The Spring Rut* from the Musée d'Orsay and *The Stag-Hunter* from the Neue Pinakothek in Munich, which the artist considered to be part of a series. In his desire to describe the different stages of the hunt in detail, Courbet depicts in this *Hunting Scene in the Snow* the cornered stag stepping out of the woods onto a frozen pond, just seconds before the moment of the battue, when, forced to, the animal takes refuge in the water in the hope of erasing its olfactory trail and escaping from the dogs that are chasing it. This stage is illustrated in a tighter framing in the aforementioned Marseille canvas. The hallali, the killing of the animal, will follow, as represented in the last monumental format executed by the artist, the famous painting from the 1861 Salon conserved by the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Besançon. Finally, let us mention a final detail provided by the notice at the Musée de la Chasse: this winter hunting scene, which is far from being the only one in the artist's oeuvre, bears witness to his freedom from the law enacted twenty years earlier, in May 1844, which prohibited hunting at night, in snowy weather or even the use of greyhounds.

— Julie Demarle

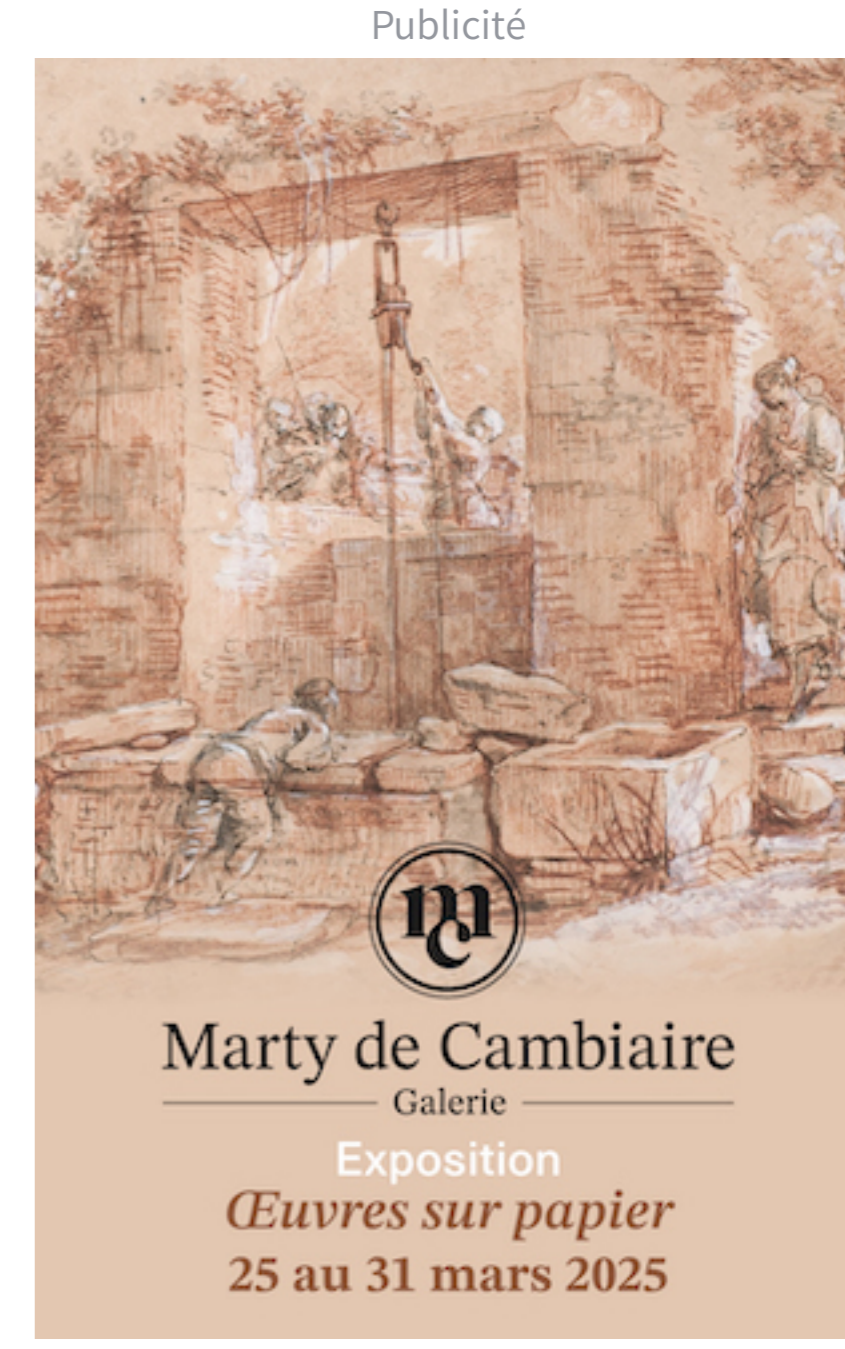
Footnotes

[1] We would like to thank Rémy Provendier-Commenne, head of collections at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, for the precise information he has provided us with.

[2] With *Deer Hunting in the Forests of the Grand Jura: The Feast* at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and *Forced Doe, Snow Effect* in a private collection in New York.

Keywords

[Gustave Courbet \(1819-1877\) - Paris, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature - Acquisitions](#)



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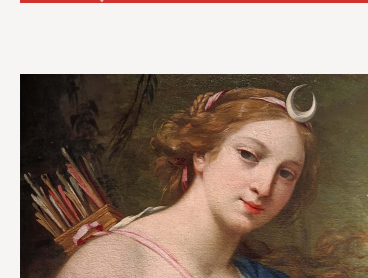
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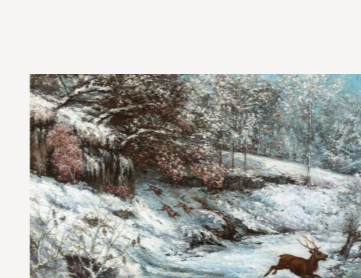


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