

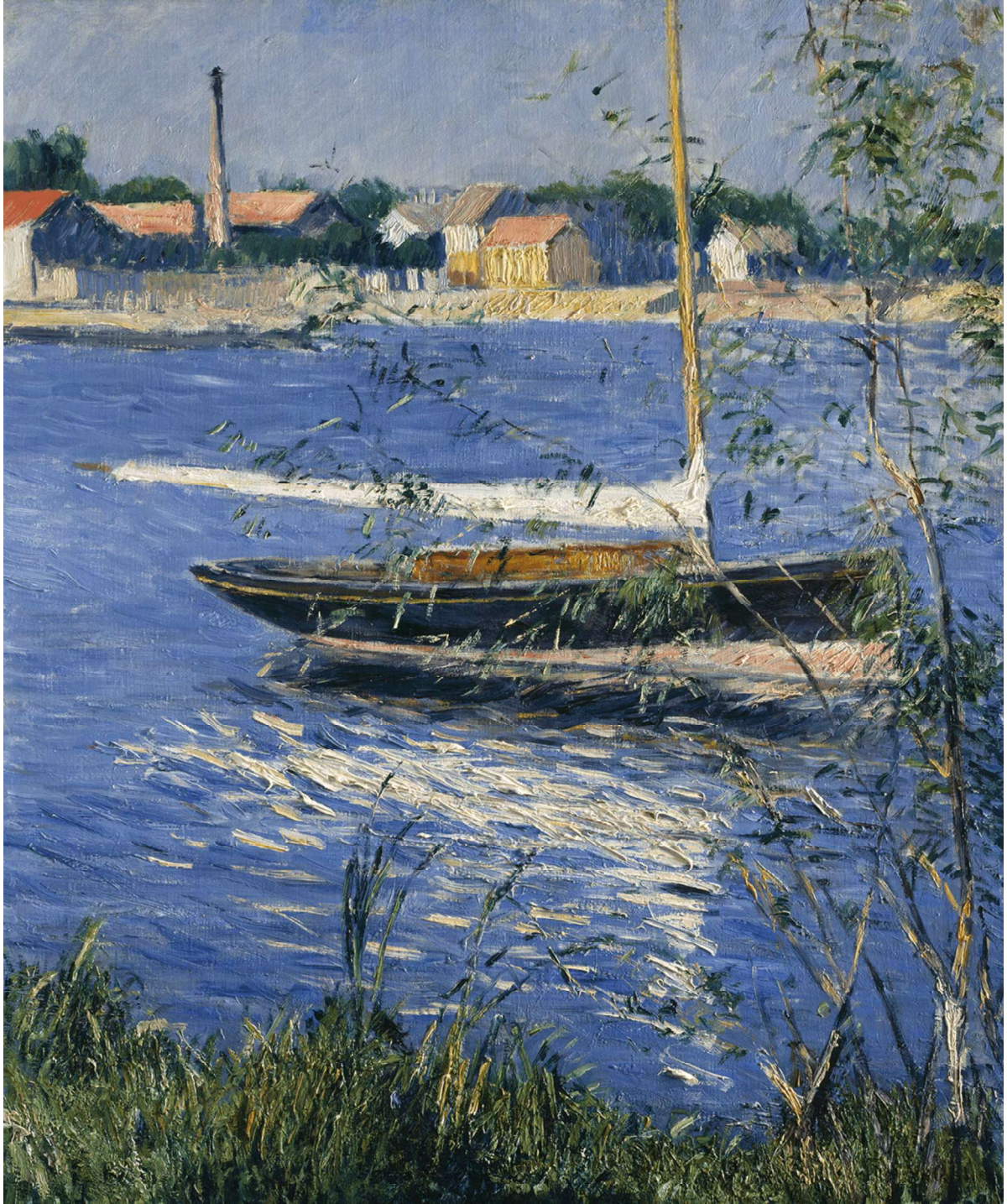
French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945

The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Editor



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Gustave Caillebotte, *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil*, ca. 1886-1891

Artist	Gustave Caillebotte, French, 1848–1894
Title	<i>Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil</i>
Object Date	ca. 1886–1891
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Bateau au mouillage sur la Seine, à Argenteuil</i>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (Unframed)	25 3/4 x 21 3/8 in. (65.4 x 54.3 cm)
Signature	Signed lower right: Caillebotte
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Gift of Henry W. and Marion H. Bloch, 2015.13.5

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Catalogue Entry

Citation

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The epithet "urban Impressionist" has been affixed to Gustave Caillebotte's (1848–1894) name ever since 1995, when the Art Institute of Chicago selected it as the subtitle for their monumental retrospective on the painter.¹ Caillebotte was born in Paris, maintained an apartment on the ritzy Boulevard Haussmann with his younger brother Martial (1853–1910), and painted many scenes of city life during the first decade of his career, yet this sobriquet arguably mischaracterizes his artistic legacy. After Caillebotte and his brother jointly purchased a riverfront property in Petit Gennevilliers, a town northwest of Paris, in 1881, the artist began retreating from the capital. He would eventually relinquish his Parisian flat in 1887 and settle in Petit Gennevilliers full-time.² During this transitional period, Caillebotte's primary subject matter shifted from bourgeois city-dwellers and urban workers to riverscapes and garden vistas. He produced more than thirty paintings of sailboats in the environs of his suburban home between 1881 and 1893, including *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil*. Intended for private enjoyment, these works were never exhibited during Caillebotte's lifetime.³

The Nelson-Atkins canvas made its public debut in June 1894 at the Galeries Durand-Ruel, four months after Caillebotte's untimely death.⁴ Organized in collaboration with the artist's close friends Claude Monet (1840–1926) and Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), who helped select the paintings and pastels for display, this exhibition was reviewed favorably in the French press.⁵ A critic for *Le Petit Parisien* pronounced many of Caillebotte's pictures "masterpieces," and the *Revue du nord* journalist Martin Gayant said they showcased "a delightful originality."⁶ Firmin Javal, a commentator for the literary periodical *Gil Blas*, extolled Caillebotte as "an innovator, a free thinker, a breaker of barriers."⁷ Of particular interest here is a front-page article in *La Justice* by Gustave Geffroy, an early champion of the Impressionists. Geffroy mentioned Caillebotte's "passion for boats" and attributed his success in capturing "the precise feeling of [both] the sites around Paris and the banks of rivers and tributaries" to him having one foot in each realm.⁸ Since Caillebotte divided his time between the city and the countryside, Geffroy reasoned, he understood the middle-class lifestyles of both domains, and that personal sympathy manifested itself in his paintings.

This dual existence dated to Caillebotte's childhood. When the future artist was twelve years old, his father purchased a riverside estate in Yerres, just south of Paris. Caillebotte and his siblings spent several summers there.⁹ Daniel Charles, a biographer of Caillebotte and authority on French maritime history, speculates that the artist's well-to-do family possessed a "fleet of pleasure rowing boats" at Yerres.¹⁰ These youthful experiences on the water proved formative for Caillebotte. They gave rise to several paintings of *canotiers*, or nonprofessional boatmen, canoeing the Yerres River during the 1870s, and they inspired Caillebotte and his brother Martial to construct their own littoral retreat at Petit Gennevilliers a few years after selling the property at Yerres.¹¹ Once established in this suburb, both men—but especially Gustave—immersed themselves in the world of competitive sailing.

Petit Gennevilliers was ideally situated for hosting regattas in the late nineteenth century. Located opposite the town of Argenteuil at the Seine's deepest and widest expanse, it lacked any bridges or protruding land masses that could interfere with a racecourse.¹² Because of these natural advantages, La Société des Régates Parisiennes chose to headquarter its sailing club, Le Cercle de la Voile de Paris, at Petit Gennevilliers. The club operated from a pontoon stationed along the Seine, as



Fig. 1. Gustave Caillebotte, *The Pontoon at Argenteuil*, 1886–1887, oil on canvas, 29 1/8 x 39 3/8 in. (74 x 100 cm), private collection. Photo: Private collection / Bridgeman Images

seen in another painting by Caillebotte (Fig. 1). Connected to the shore by a narrow footbridge, this floating platform offered a convenient landing stage for vessels. In Caillebotte's rendering, four sailboats are tethered to the pontoon's southern façade, and a sign advertising boat rentals (*location de canots*) is clearly legible. Caillebotte was very familiar with this docking area, since his Italian-style mansion was located right next door.¹³ This proximity was deliberate: after learning to sail in 1876, Caillebotte joined Le Cercle de la Voile and became one of its most active members.¹⁴ By the time Caillebotte took up residence in Petit Gennevilliers in 1881, he had already owned four sailboats and was serving as one of two vice presidents of Le Cercle de la Voile.¹⁵ In a span of less than twenty years, he would purchase fourteen vessels of varying sizes and design an even greater number of them for fellow yachtsmen.¹⁶

The Nelson-Atkins picture attests to Caillebotte's zeal for sailing, a hobby that some art historians claim he pursued "to the detriment of his painting."¹⁷ While it is true that Caillebotte devoted significant time and resources to sailing, this pastime also opened up new directions in his artistic production. In the Kansas City canvas, a vessel suited to inland waters is berthed close to the picture plane.¹⁸ The midday sun casts a brilliant reflection on the water, which Caillebotte rendered with thick strokes of yellow-white paint. Verdant grasses in the foreground counterbalance the smokestack and manufacturing buildings lining the Argenteuil shorefront in the background, creating a fragile equilibrium between nature and industry. Since the mid-1860s, Argenteuil had undergone rapid commercial growth.

Town leaders, seeking to establish Argenteuil as a center for trade, welcomed the construction of an iron forge, a sawmill, two chemical plants, distilleries, and several factories.¹⁹ Caillebotte, like Monet and others who painted in the vicinity of Argenteuil, represented these developments truthfully in his pictures. Argenteuil's industrial edifices appear in the backgrounds of many paintings, and they are the focus of Caillebotte's *Factories in Argenteuil* (Fig. 2), in which half a dozen smokestacks and their reflections anchor the scene. Caillebotte's pictorial references to the region's commercial expansion were oddly prescient, for his own estate in Petit Gennevilliers was acquired by the proprietors of a motor works company sixteen years after his death.²⁰



Fig. 2. Gustave Caillebotte, *Factories in Argenteuil*, 1888, oil on canvas, 25 9/16 x 32 5/16 in. (65 x 82 cm), private collection, France. Photo: akg-images

In the Nelson-Atkins composition, *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil*, the threat of industrialization is present but not overpowering. Our attention is drawn instead to the unpiloted craft resting calmly on the water. Caillebotte's yachts are generally well documented, and much of the scholarship on his riverscapes centers around identifying the vessels he depicted. Here, however, that task is complicated by two factors: the picture's uncertain date and the creative license that Caillebotte exercised when painting the boat. Marie Berhaut originally proposed a date of 1888 for *Boat Moored on the Seine* but amended it to 1886 in her revised catalogue raisonné of Caillebotte's oeuvre, despite a nineteenth-century exhibition catalogue dating the work to 1891.²¹ Neither provenance research nor discussions with maritime experts have narrowed this

range, so I have adopted a date of circa 1886–1891. Additionally, Anne Distel reminds us that Caillebotte often portrayed sailboats “with a painter’s eye” rather than striving for technical precision, notwithstanding his training as a naval architect.²² As discussed below, he sometimes omitted or obscured identifying features of boats if he thought they detracted from the overall composition.

Charles, the aforementioned scholar of French maritime heritage, believes that the vessel in *Boat Moored on the Seine* is a clipper, a type of *dériveur* that dominated French regattas during the 1870s and early 1880s.²³ Modeled on American boats known as sandbaggers, clippers were distinguished by their wide, flat hulls, pivoting iron centerboards, interior ballasts, long bowsprits, and massive sails. These attributes were ill adapted to the open sea but perfectly tailored to the conditions of the Seine.²⁴ When navigating upwind, clippers tacked by alternately releasing the jib and mainsail, rather than using the rudder to maneuver.²⁵ Although clippers declined in popularity after 1885, some models remained in operation until the 1910s. Caillebotte personally owned and designed several clippers, the most famous of which was the *Condor*. Outfitted with silk sails, which were exceedingly light and aerodynamic, the *Condor* won countless prizes at domestic and international competitions.²⁶ Caillebotte published the plans for its hull and sails in *Le Yacht*, enabling others to build on his success (Fig. 3).

Unlike the *Condor*, Charles contends, the clipper pictured in *Boat Moored on the Seine* was used for cruising, not racing. It was primarily a day boat, but it could accommodate overnight trips thanks to its cabin, which was probably equipped with two or three bunks. The top of this compartment is indicated by a horizontal band of orange paint directly beneath the mainsail in the Nelson-Atkins painting. Caillebotte may have used this clipper to travel to Le Havre, which Charles estimates would have taken eight to ten days. Since the boat is at rest in the Kansas City canvas, its jib is unlashed and stowed inside the cabin, while its mainsail remains furled on the boom. The lengthy bowsprit typical of clippers is missing altogether. Normally, one would see a spar extending from the bow, but here no spar is in evidence. This omission is one example of Caillebotte taking certain liberties for the sake of the composition as a whole.²⁷

Other scholars consider the vessel in *Boat Moored on the Seine* to be a cutter, another type of *dériveur* that gradually superseded the clipper in French regattas

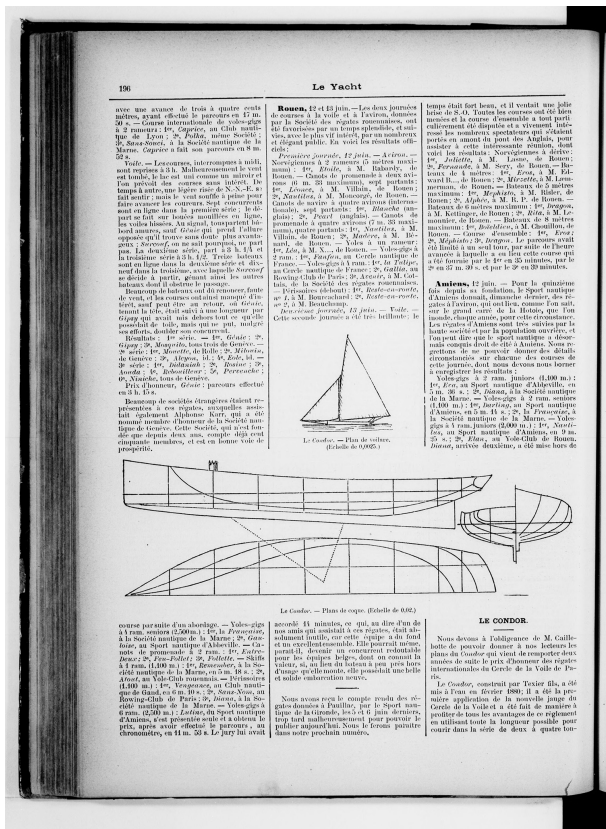


Fig. 3. *Le Condor*, in *Le Yacht*, no. 171 (June 18, 1881): 196. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

during the 1880s. Cutters were single-masted boats furnished with fore-and-aft sails that consisted of a quadrangular mainsail (*voile aurique*), a triangular topsail (*voile flèche*), and two jibs.²⁸ Like clippers, cutters often possessed an elongated bowsprit along which the jib tack could be slid when plotting a course upwind, as seen in Caillebotte's painting of the cutter *Turquoise* (Fig. 4). This vessel, which belonged to another prominent member of *Le Cercle de la Voile*, Émile Michelet, is shown with a bowsprit that intersects the right margin of the canvas. Similar to the boat in the Nelson-Atkins picture, the mainsail is fastened to the boom, and the jibs are out of sight.²⁹

Caillebotte grew interested in cutters around 1880, when he and engineer Maurice Brault co-designed the *Jack*. François Chevalier and Jacques Taglang argue that *Boat Moored on the Seine* depicts this ten-ton, ten-meter-long cutter, the largest sailboat that Caillebotte ever owned.³⁰ Like Charles, they note the absent bowsprit and propose several reasons for its non-appearance. When the *Jack* first launched on June 4, 1882, it was not armed with a bowsprit; only after the *Jack* yielded disappointing race



Fig. 4. Gustave Caillebotte, *Bateau à l'ancre sur la Seine à Argenteuil*, 1891, oil on canvas, 25 9/16 x 19 11/16 in. (65 x 50 cm), dépôt au Château d'Auvers, collection du Conseil départemental du Val d'Oise, Auvers-sur-Oise, France

results did Caillebotte instruct Texier fils, a shipbuilder in Argenteuil, to add one. Caillebotte may have wished to represent the *Jack* at this early stage in its evolution. Another possibility is that veracity was not Caillebotte's primary concern. Had he raised the sails and included the bowsprit, identifying the boat would be a simpler task, but these compositional changes would have obstructed the view of the opposite shore and crowded the right side of the canvas. Caillebotte's goal, it seems, was not to produce a faithful portrait of the *Jack* but to record his impressions of a fleeting moment.³¹

Jean-Louis Lenhof, a maritime historian at the Université de Caen-Normandie, believes that the stationary vessel in the Nelson-Atkins canvas is either a cutter or a sloop, but more likely the latter. Similar to cutters, sloops were single-masted boats with fore-and-aft sails; however, they possessed one jib instead of two. Lenhof tentatively associates the yacht in *Boat Moored on the Seine* with the *Thomas*, a craft designed for Caillebotte by naval architect Maurice Chevreux in 1887.³² Built to compete with the *Condor*, which Caillebotte had just sold, the *Thomas* could handle both open seas and inland rivers thanks to its adjustable rigging. When navigating off the

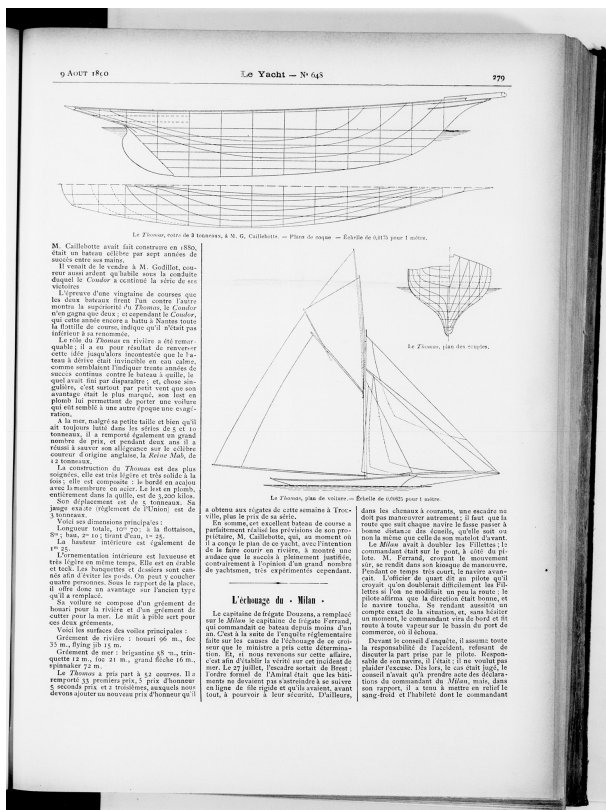


Fig. 5. *Le Thomas*, in *Le Yacht*, no. 648 (August 9, 1890): 279. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

coast, the *Thomas* was outfitted with a cutter's sails; when racing on the Seine, it was rigged as a sloop.³³ This adaptability received special emphasis in *Le Yacht's* 1890 profile of the *Thomas* (Fig. 5). An image caption describes the *Thomas* as a “three-ton cutter” (*cotre de 3 tonneaux*), but the author explains that the boat could accommodate different sails in different waters. Over time, the *Thomas* proved to be the fastest sailboat that Caillebotte ever owned.³⁴ The shape of the hull in the Nelson-Atkins painting suggests a vessel conceived for speed, whether the *Thomas* or another high-performing racer.³⁵

Ultimately, both the uncertainty surrounding the date of *Boat Moored on the Seine* and the artistic license that Caillebotte frequently allowed himself preclude us from definitively identifying the titular vessel. Nevertheless, the above-cited opinions highlight many of the boat's key features and help to unpack Caillebotte's creative process. In doing so, they shed light on the final decade of Caillebotte's career, during which he withdrew from Paris and nurtured his passion for sailing in Petit Gennevilliers, both as a participant and as an observer.

Notes

1. Anne Distel et al., *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux in association with Abbeville Press, NY, 1995). Co-organized with the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, this international exhibition opened in Paris in 1994 as *Gustave Caillebotte, 1848–1894*. When the show traveled to Chicago and Los Angeles in 1995, it was rebranded as *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*. The following year, the Royal Academy of Arts, London, mounted a smaller version of the retrospective using the variant title *Gustave Caillebotte: The Unknown Impressionist*.
2. Anne-Birgitte Fonsmark, Dorothee Hansen, and Gry Hedin, *Gustave Caillebotte*, exh. cat. (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz, 2008), 16.
3. *Gustave Caillebotte, 1848–1894: Voiliers sur la Seine à Argenteuil, 1886* (New York: Simon C. Dickinson, 2016), 7, 24, <https://www.simondickinson.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CAILLEBOTTE.pdf>.
4. Also on view was *Portrait of Richard Gallo*, which Caillebotte had unveiled at the 1882 Impressionist exhibition.
5. Distel et al., *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, 24.
6. “Échos et nouvelles,” *Le Petit Parisien*, no. 6482 (June 7, 1894): unpaginated (“Plusieurs sont des chefs-d’œuvre”); Martin Gayant, “Échos du Nord,” *La Revue du Nord*, no. 13 (July 1, 1894): 32 (“Une savoureuse originalité”). All translations are by the author.
7. Firmin Javal, “Les Expositions: G. Caillebotte,” *Gil Blas*, no. 5316 (June 8, 1894): 3 (“Je trouve en lui un novateur, un affranchi, un briseur d’entraves”).
8. Gustave Geffroy, “Notre temps: Gustave Caillebotte,” *La Justice*, no. 5263 (June 13, 1894): 1. Caillebotte had “la passion des bateaux.” He captured “le sens particulier des sites des environs de Paris et des bords de fleuves et de rivières.”

9. Caillebotte had two younger brothers: Martial, mentioned above, and René (1851–1876), who famously appears in *Young Man at his Window*, 1875, oil on canvas, 46 x 32 in. (117 x 82 cm), private collection.
10. Daniel Charles, “Caillebotte and Boating,” in Fonsmark, Hansen, and Hedin, *Gustave Caillebotte*, 111.
11. Gustave and Martial Caillebotte sold the Yerres estate in 1879, following the death of their mother on October 20, 1878. Gilles Chardeau, “Caillebotte: A Biographical Chronology,” in Mary Morton and George T. M. Shackelford, *Gustave Caillebotte: The Painter’s Eye*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2015), 236.
12. Paul Hayes Tucker, *The Impressionists at Argenteuil*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2000), 14.
13. Bernhard Trieb, François Chevalier, and François Casalis, “Impressions de bateaux: Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894),” *Chasse-marée*, no. 116 (May 1998): 29–30. For a map of the Petit Gennevilliers shorefront, see Noëlle Gérôme, “Le quai du Petit-Gennevilliers, de la campagne à la banlieue: La continuité d’un rêve,” in Patrice Bachelard, ed., *De Manet à Caillebotte: Les impressionnistes à Gennevilliers* (Paris: Éditions Plume, 1993), 78–79.
14. Alfred Sisley (1839–1899) taught Caillebotte to sail. See Daniel Charles and Eric Vibart, “L’architecte et son double,” in Bachelard, *De Manet à Caillebotte*, 91.
15. Caillebotte’s election as vice president was announced in “Communications des sociétés nautiques,” *Le Yacht*, no. 97 (January 17, 1880): 18.
16. For a chronological list of Caillebotte’s boats, see Daniel Charles, *Le mystère Caillebotte: L’Œuvre architecturale de Gustave Caillebotte, peintre impressionniste, jardinier, philatéliste et régatier* (Grenoble: Grenat, 1994), 121.
17. For example, Anne Distel, “Introduction: Caillebotte as Painter, Benefactor, and Collector,” in *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, 22.
18. Jean-Louis Lenhof to Brigid M. Boyle, September 5, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
19. Tucker, *The Impressionists at Argenteuil*, 19–21, 38.
20. Dorothee Hansen, “Impressionist Style: Motifs Along the Seine,” in Fonsmark, Hansen, and Hedin, *Gustave Caillebotte*, 86–87.
21. See Marie Berhaut, *Caillebotte, Sa vie et son œuvre: Catalogue raisonné des peintures et pastels* (Paris: Fondation Wildenstein, 1978), no. 360, p. 202; Marie Berhaut, *Gustave Caillebotte: Catalogue raisonné des peintures et pastels*, rev. ed. (Paris: Wildenstein Institute, 1994), no. 348, p. 203; and *Exposition rétrospective d’œuvres de G. Caillebotte*, exh. cat. (Paris: Galeries Durand-Ruel, 1894), no. 24, p. 4.
22. See Distel’s entry on no. 109 in *Gustave Caillebotte: Urban Impressionist*, 288.
23. Daniel Charles to Brigid M. Boyle, September 6, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
24. Charles, *Le mystère Caillebotte*, 23; and Trieb, Chevalier, and Casalis, “Impressions de bateaux,” 30. The Seine is known for its feeble winds.
25. Daniel Charles to Brigid M. Boyle, September 6, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
26. Trieb, Chevalier, and Casalis, “Impressions de bateaux,” 30.
27. For this paragraph, see Daniel Charles to Brigid M. Boyle, September 6, 9, and 10, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
28. Jean-Louis Lenhof to Brigid M. Boyle, September 16, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
29. For another rendering of the *Turquoise* alongside several other boats, see *Le Yacht*, no. 274 (June 9, 1883): 191.
30. For the *Jack’s* plans and dimensions, see Trieb, Chevalier, and Casalis, “Impressions de bateaux,” 38. Daniel Finamore, Russell W. Knight Curator of Maritime Art and History at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA, agrees that the Nelson-Atkins painting portrays a cutter but not the *Jack* specifically; he posits a smaller vessel. Daniel Finamore to Brigid M. Boyle, September 8, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
31. For this paragraph, see François Chevalier and Jacques Taglang, *Les Impressionnistes et la plaisance* (forthcoming in 2022).

32. Tentatively, because the *Thomas's* bow was more pointed than that seen in the Nelson-Atkins painting. Jean-Louis Lenhof to Brigid M. Boyle, September 5, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
33. Jean-Louis Lenhof to Brigid M. Boyle, September 5, 9, and 16, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
34. Trieb, Chevalier, and Casalis, "Impressions de bateaux," 33.
35. Jean-Louis Lenhof to Brigid M. Boyle, September 5, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.

Technical Entry

Citation

Chicago:

Diana M. Jaskierny, "Gustave Caillebotte, *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil*, ca. 1886–1891," technical entry in ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan *French Paintings, 1600–1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art* (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.612.2088>

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Painted by Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), *Boat Moored on the Seine* exemplifies the artist's Impressionist style, with expressive brushwork and vibrant colors forming the composition. Executed on plain-weave canvas, this painting corresponds with a standard-size format no. 15 figure.¹ The tacking margins on all four sides remain extant and confirm that the painting's dimensions have not been altered. A subtle cusping pattern is present on all picture plane perimeter edges and relates to tack holes that are no longer in use.²

The canvas was commercially prepared, with the thinly applied, white or slightly off-white ground layer extending to the edges and within the folds of the tacking margins. This ground layer remains visible in many places, such as where the shore and the water

meet, around the building roofs, and between skips in the brushstrokes of the water (Fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Detail of exposed ground in the water and background in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)



Fig. 7. Photomicrograph of underdrawing at the top of the sail in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891). Underdrawing charcoal on top of the ground layer is indicated with a red arrow, while displaced charcoal from the underdrawing is indicated with a yellow arrow.

In some of these paint openings, a charcoal underdrawing is visible directly above the ground layer. This preparatory step appears to be composed of few lines, simply marking the placement of objects such as the boat and sail.³ In many cases, the charcoal of this drawing has been displaced or smudged as the brushstrokes pulled across it, picking up charcoal particles (Fig. 7).⁴ With glimpses of exposed ground across the composition, it appears no imprimatura was included as further preparation. Beneath the distant smokestack, a soft blue-gray shape emerges behind the finished form, possibly an indication that the artist sketched in the building on top of the scumbled sky with paint before rendering it in blue and pink (Fig. 8). The final brushstrokes of the smokestack are primarily a wet-over-dry application, suggesting there was some time between completing the sky, the brief underpainting, and the structure.



Fig. 8. Photograph of underpainting related to the smokestack in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886-1891)

Throughout the painting there is predominantly wet-over-wet paint application, indicating that the various compositional elements were painted in unison, likely en plein air. This is especially noticeable with areas of heavy impasto, such as the tall grass over the boat's reflection in the water. Here the brushstroke for the grass pulls and displaces the thickly applied white paint underneath (Fig. 9). In comparison, the hull of the boat was formed using a brush loaded with an array of unmixed colors, creating stripes through a wet-into-wet technique (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9. Photomicrograph of wet-over-wet brushwork of the grass in the water in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886-1891)

It is clear the artist was working rapidly, overlapping previous brushstrokes as he built the scene. While the boat was painted before the water was in place, refinements were made to the boat's edges, with blue paint from the water overlapping the boat ever so slightly. To the right, a branch was added after much of

the water was painted but then was partially covered in the background as Caillebotte finalized the distant shore (Fig. 11). Similarly, the mast of the boat was painted over some leaves, confusing which compositional element is in front of which (Fig. 12).



Fig. 10. Photomicrograph of wet-into-wet brushwork in the boat hull in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)



Fig. 11. Detail of the right tree and shore overlapping one another in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)



Fig. 12. Photomicrograph of leaves behind the sailboat mast in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)

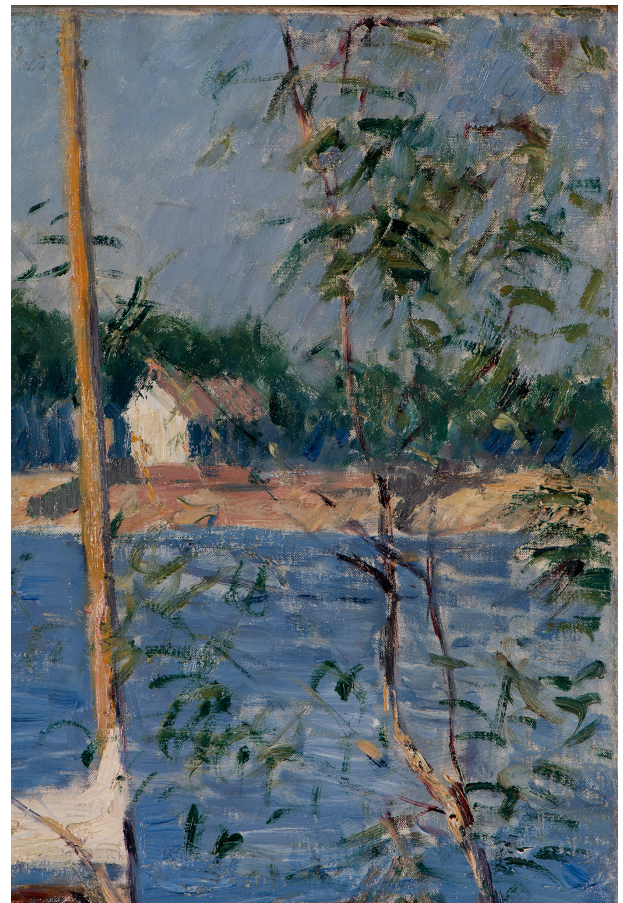


Fig. 13. Details of leaves over the water and in the sky in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)

Across the composition, the artist utilized a wide variation of brushstrokes, each with a different purpose. The sky was formed through thin scumbles, allowing the ground layer to shine through. The tree's leaves were formed with curved flicks, skimming across the paint in the water and weaving within the brushstrokes of the

right-side sky (Fig. 13). As the background buildings were formed, often with short, vertical strokes, in one building Caillebotte again used a brush with multiple colors, creating a feeling of movement in the distance (Fig. 14). While the boat is the central object, the eye is frequently drawn to the horizontal hatching of the reflection in the water and the repetitive brushwork in the foreground grass, both evoking glimmering motion and vibration (Fig. 15).



Fig. 14. Detail of buildings along the shore, formed with short vertical brushstrokes in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)



Fig. 15. Detail of foreground grass and the reflection in the water in *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil* (ca. 1886–1891)

The painting is in excellent condition. A glue lining was added before the painting's history at the Nelson-Atkins. The lining canvas has a slightly open weave and remains in stable condition, with good adhesion between the lining and original canvas. The original heavy impasto remains in excellent condition, despite the lining process. In 1988, the painting was treated at the Nelson-Atkins to remove a discolored, aged varnish.⁵ During this campaign, paint losses were filled and retouched; however, these are relatively minimal and located mostly

along the painting's edges. The painting currently has a synthetic varnish that is overly glossy for the period.

Diana M. Jaskierny
April 2022

Notes

1. David Bomford, Jo Kirby, John Leighton, and Ashok Roy, *Art in the Making: Impressionism* (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 46.
2. The canvas is affixed to the stretcher with tacks that were inserted into new holes during a lining that predates the painting's history at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.
3. No drawing was found for the placement of the foreground or trees through microscopy or infrared reflectography.
4. This displacement of underdrawing particles was similarly found in *Paris Street; Rainy Day* (1877; Art Institute of Chicago). Antoinette Owen, "Cat. 1: Study for 'Paris Street; Rainy Day,' 1877: Technical Report," in *Caillebotte Paintings and Drawings at the Art Institute of Chicago*, ed. Gloria Groom and Genevieve Westerby (Art Institute of Chicago, 2015), para 33.
5. Forrest R. Bailey, December 20, 1988, treatment report, Nelson-Atkins conservation file, 2015.13.5.

Documentation

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Provenance

Gustave Caillebotte (1848–1894), Paris and Petit Gennevilliers, France, ca. 1886–February 21, 1894;

Inherited by his brother, Martial Caillebotte (1853–1910), February 21–June 15, 1894;

Purchased from Martial Caillebotte by Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, stock no. 3072, as *Bateau à Argenteuil*, June 15–16, 1894 [1];

Purchased from Durand-Ruel by Jean Blum, June 16, 1894–1967;

Purchased from Blum by Wildenstein and Co., New York, 1967 [2];

Purchased from Wildenstein by George I. Friedland (1901–1984), Philadelphia, 1967–1984;

Purchased from his posthumous sale, *Impressionist and Modern Paintings and Sculpture, Part 1*, Sotheby's, New York, May 14, 1985, lot 16, by Marion (née Helzberg, 1931–2013) and Henry (1922–2019) Bloch, Shawnee Mission, KS, 1985–June 15, 2015;

Their gift to The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 2015.

Notes

[1] See email from Paul-Louis Durand-Ruel and Flavie Durand-Ruel, Durand-Ruel et Cie, Paris, to Nicole Myers, Nelson-Atkins, January 11, 2016, NAMA curatorial files. See also label fixed to backing board verso: “Dur[an]d-R[uel]/ Paris 16 Rue La[ffit]te/ [Ne]w York 315, Fifth Avenue/ [Caille]botte N° 3[072] / Bateau [Argenteuil ?] / [SS ?]”

[2] See letter from Eliot Rowlands, Wildenstein and Co., New York, to Meghan L. Gray, Nelson-Atkins, May 12, 2011, NAMA curatorial files.

Related Works

Gustave Caillebotte, *Sailboats on the Seine at Argenteuil*, 1886, oil on canvas, 25 9/16 x 21 5/16 in. (65 x 54 cm), private collection.

Gustave Caillebotte, *The River Bank at Petit Gennevilliers and the Seine*, 1890, oil on canvas, 60 1/4 x 50 in. (153 x

127 cm), private collection.

Gustave Caillebotte, *Boats on the Seine in Argenteuil*, 1890, oil on canvas, 23 5/8 x 28 3/4 in. (60 x 73 cm), private collection.

Gustave Caillebotte, *Boat Anchored on the Seine, Argenteuil*, 1891, oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 19 11/16 in. (65 x 50 cm), Château d’Auvers, Collection of the General Council of Val d’Oise, Auvers-sur-Oise, France.

Exhibitions

Exposition Rétrospective d’Œuvres de G. Caillebotte, Galerie Durand-Ruel, Paris, June 1894, no. 24, as *Bateau à Argenteuil*.

Probably *Ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, dessin, gravure, architecture et art décoratif* [*Salon d’Automne: Caillebotte Exposition Rétrospective*], Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées, Paris, November 1–December 20, 1921, no. 2734 or 2735, as *Bateau*.

Rétrospective Gustave Caillebotte au Profit du Musée de Rennes, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, Paris, May 25–July 25, 1951, no. 68, as *Bateaux à Argenteuil*.

Gustave Caillebotte, 1848–1894: a loan exhibition of paintings, Wildenstein and Co., New York, September 18–October 19, 1968, no. 61, as *Le Bateau*.

Manet to Matisse: Impressionist Masters from the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, June 9–September 9, 2007, no. 13, as *Boat Moored on the Seine at Argenteuil*.

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