Manet and Modern Beauty

Edited by

Scott Allan
Emily A. Beeny
Gloria Groom

Manet and Modern Beauty

The Artist's Last Years

Edited by

Scott Allan
Emily A. Beeny
Gloria Groom

Essays by

Scott Allan
Bridget Alsdorf
Carol Armstrong
Emily A. Beeny
Helen Burnham
Gloria Groom
Leah Lehmbeck
Devi Ormond
Catherine Schmidt Patterson
Samuel Rodary

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
The Art Institute of Chicago

Contents

viii Foreword
x Acknowledgments
xv Lenders to the Exhibition

1 **Introduction: Beauty, Fashion, and Happiness**
Scott Allan, Emily A. Beeny, and Gloria Groom

9 **Chronology**

15 ***Faux Frère*: Manet and the Salon, 1879–82**
Scott Allan

43 **"The Type of an Era": Manet and the *Parisienne***
Helen Burnham

55 **All the World's a Stage: Manet's Images of Model-Actresses**
Leah Lehmbeck

71 **Foregrounding Manet's Backgrounds**
Gloria Groom

89 **Manet and the Eighteenth Century**
Emily A. Beeny

113 **Manet's Little Nothings**
Carol Armstrong

129 **Manet's *Fleurs du mal***
Bridget Alsdorf

147 **The Making of a *Parisienne*: Manet's Methods and Materials**
Devi Ormond and Catherine Schmidt Patterson
with Douglas MacLennan and Nathan Daly

161 **Édouard Manet: A Selection of Letters, 1878–83**
Samuel Rodary

184 **Plates**

273 **Catalogue of the Exhibition**
Scott Allan and Emily A. Beeny
with Jamie Kwan

324 **Exhibitions Cited**
343 **References Cited**
372 **Archival Sources**
373 **Contributors**
374 **Illustration Credits**
376 **Index**

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Bridget Alsdorf

Manet's *Fleurs du mal*

In "La mort des artistes" ("The Death of Artists"), the poet and critic Charles Baudelaire describes the desperation of the artistic enterprise as a struggle to realize creative dreams within the limits of earthly life. The poem ends with a morbid hope: "That Death, hovering like a new sun, / Will make the flowers of their brains bloom!"[1] For artists unappreciated in their time, death represents the possibility of a posthumous resurrection, giving new life to their creations, a life fertilized by the decay of their physical brains. This earthy and macabre floral emblem of artistic immortality would have struck readers of Baudelaire's time as a novel deployment of flowers in poetry. Indeed, one line before he invokes Death's transfiguring power, he grants that this mechanism of his hopes is "strange" and "dark."[2] This bloom of Baudelaire's has left pastoral expectations of sweetness and innocence behind. He wanted a poetry of modern life—urban life—and in his art criticism encouraged a manner of painting to match.

"The Death of Artists" was the hundredth and final poem in the original edition of *Les fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*), published in 1857, closing the volume with an image of flowers growing out of death, cultivated in an artist exhausted by soul-crushing schemes and "infernal desire."[3] It is an image that captures the rich irony of Baudelaire's flower poetics, combining beauty and death, hope and despair, the material and the ideal. Édouard Manet's treatment of flowers shares this sensibility. Throughout his oeuvre, and especially in his later work, his blooms are imbued with tones of decadence and urban ennui.

Manet's early death at the age of fifty-one has always shadowed the posthumous reception of his work. The artist's syphilis can be framed as a biographical parallel to the dissolution and dissembling of modern life that so many writers have seen thematized in his paintings, as if the painful death of this most elegant of artists embodied

Two Roses
(cat. 82, detail)

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

the hidden suffering of the marginal figures that his paintings so brazenly represent. Many writers have also cited his sickly condition in the early 1880s as the primary reason for his focus on still-life painting and flowers in particular, pointing to his limited mobility and his access to a parade of bouquets brought by well-wishing friends.[4] Suffering the symptoms of a cruel degenerative disease, he was acutely aware of his mortality. This context is no doubt significant, but the pathos of Manet's late flower paintings is much more than a matter of bodily and psychological circumstance. It is a feature of the flowers themselves, in their painterly form and in their allusions to the artist's modern, urban world.[5]

Flowers play a key role in three of Manet's last major Salon paintings—*In the Conservatory*, *Jeanne (Spring)*, and *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*—and he painted a profusion of floral still lifes between 1880 and his death in 1883. These works' affinities with Baudelaire's poetry can be traced back to the crucial role played by flowers in the artist's most recognizably Baudelairean painting, *Olympia*, first exhibited in 1865. For both painter and poet, flowers appear as virtuosic celebrations of sensuous life complicated by a negative aesthetics of performative illusion, urban corruption, and death.

Manet's late flower paintings are some of the most vibrant and spontaneous in his oeuvre, straightforward in composition yet sumptuous in execution. Staged on a marble table and dramatically lit, they are far from morbid or funereal. On the contrary, they are full of performative brio and resist the clichés of the *vanitas* genre. And yet Manet's flowers embody a dialectics of beauty and death, spleen and *idéal*, that is Baudelairean at heart. In *Flowers in a Crystal Vase* (cat. 85), three pink roses in various stages of bloom and a spray of white lilacs float buoyantly above their container on a bed of curling and tilting, almost animate leaves. The vase and the flowers are bright, with streaks and dabs of white impasto that lend a flickering light, a light that appears to come both from above and from the water below. And yet a strange, inexplicably black mass anchors the bouquet in its vase, an ambiguous, organic shape echoed by the dark shadow connecting the table to the background. The blacks, grays, and browns surrounding the flowers and darkening their water, as if seeping through the glass or sinking like rot from the floral mass, make the blooms appear all the more vivid, fleeting, and light. A similar dialectic animates *Two Roses* (cat. 82), in which the clipped flowers lie side by side in a horizontal tangle of stems, leaves, and shadows. While the roses' prone position, out of water, evokes the imminent death of any plant cut from the earth as an object of beauty, their petals and leaves appear to tremble with life. There is no sign of thorns—perhaps they have been removed—but their sharpness is suggested by the tendril shooting out and up from the large leaf at right near the upper edge of the table, its vertical point bridging the black depth and white surface that form the cool interior landscape of the picture. The green stem of the pink rose rests atop the browner stem of the yellow rose at a perpendicular angle, but a shadow stem painted in tones of gray extends diagonally from the yellow bloom toward Manet's signature, tricking the eye into seeing the two blooms in parallel. And yet the "actual," perpendicular stem of the yellow rose has a shadow too—a more sensible one. What is shadow and what is plant matter? What is paint and what is life? Which is primary for the artist? Often praised as "simple," Manet's flowers are anything but.[6]

The close friendship between Manet and Baudelaire is well known.[7] Manet was an avid reader of Baudelaire's poetry and criticism,[8] and Baudelaire took a great interest in Manet's art. They were confidants, "constant companions,"[9] intimately familiar with each other's work, and they bolstered each other behind the scenes. Scholars have long debated why Baudelaire did not praise Manet publicly, in print, as he did

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Eugène Delacroix and Constantin Guys,[10] but no one was more important than Baudelaire to Manet's ideas about art. The two men shared an aesthetic and sociological fascination with modern Paris and its inhabitants, especially women and the demimonde. Both were dandies with a keen interest in fashion, and both assumed—in their art as in life—the role of the flaneur.[11] In 1862 Manet included Baudelaire's portrait in the gathering of Parisian society pictured in *Music in the Tuileries Gardens* (RW I 51; National Gallery, London)—a contemporaneous etching renders this same profile portrait in isolation (Harris 21)—and he painted a portrait of Baudelaire's mistress, Jeanne Duval, the same year (RW I 48; Szépmüvészeti Museum, Budapest).[12] While Baudelaire was in Brussels from 1864 to 1866, Manet helped to manage his affairs in Paris and wrote him letters full of affection and concern. In March 1866 the poet suffered a massive syphilitic stroke that left him paralyzed and largely confined to his bed, prompting his return to Paris. The same month he sent Manet his *Épaves*, a book of twenty-three poems including the six "condemned works" censored from the original edition of *Les fleurs du mal* as well as the quatrain he wrote to accompany Manet's portrait of the Spanish dancer Lola de Valence.[13] In the last year of Baudelaire's life Manet and his wife, Suzanne, visited the poet faithfully in his nursing home on the rue du Dôme, where Suzanne played Wagner for him on the piano and two of Manet's paintings hung in his room.[14] After Baudelaire's death in August 1867, Manet made another etching of the writer after a photograph by Nadar (Harris 61), and most scholars now agree that the unfinished painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (RW I 162), represents Baudelaire's funeral at the foot of the Butte Mouffetard (an event that Manet was one of the few to attend) with the cityscape of central Paris in the background. Eager to honor his friend publicly, Manet donated both his etched portraits to a memorial biography by Charles Asselineau, the first monograph on the poet's life and work, published in 1869.[15]

An allegorical drawing traced on the margins of a print of the later etched portrait demonstrates how significant *Les fleurs du mal* was to Manet's memory of Baudelaire. The original drawing, sketched around 1860, was probably designed as a frontispiece for the second edition of *Les fleurs du mal* but was never published (fig. 77).[16] (For *Les épaves*, Baudelaire chose instead a more elaborate and flamboyantly morbid allegory by Félicien Rops.) Manet's sketch depicts a figure of death looking toward a young

Fig. 77
Édouard Manet, Sketch of a frontispiece design for *Les Fleurs du Mal*, ca. 1860. Pen and ink. Lost. Photograph by Fernand Lochard, ca. 1883. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, BnF Est., DC 300 G, p. 195

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Fig. 78a
Édouard Manet, *Luncheon on the Grass,* 1863. Oil on canvas, 208 × 264.5 cm (81⅞ × 104⅛ in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay, RF 1668

woman by his side, while surrounding them are enormous bats, a serpent, a hissing cat, and, on a batwing-shaped scroll, the poet's name. Flowerlike shapes in the foreground complete this collection of motifs from *Les fleurs du mal*, demonstrating Manet's grasp of Baudelairean femininity as a merging of beauty and death, the floral and the macabre.

Manet's flower paintings were not conceived as Baudelairean *fleurs du mal*,[17] but Paul Valéry was right when he pointed to "some profound correspondence" between the painter and the poet that went well beyond their friendship and Parisian bourgeois milieu. For Valéry, they had "a real affinity of anxieties." In their work he saw a shared taste for shock value, on the one hand, and the mysterious subtleties of poetic suggestion, on the other.[18] Many scholars have explored the Manet-Baudelaire connection with a focus on the 1860s, but this "profound correspondence" is just as vital to the significance of flowers in Manet's oeuvre, both in the burst of floral still lifes that occupied him in his final years and in several of his major Salon paintings, from *Olympia* to *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*.

The Language of Flowers

Flowers serve a variety of purposes in Manet's work and appear in different mediums and formats, from small-scale still lifes in oil and watercolor, to delicate pastels, to monumental figure paintings meant for public exhibition. Although he painted a few pictures of gardens in the country, flowers are primarily urban, and more specifically, *urbane*, in his oeuvre. They are a meaningful feature of *Olympia*, *In the Conservatory*, *Jeanne (Spring)*, and *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*—all city scenes—and yet only a minimal, barely noticeable element of *Luncheon on the Grass* (first exhibited in 1863),

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Fig. 78b
Detail of *Luncheon on the Grass*
(fig. 78a)

in which one might most expect to find them. In the latter painting (fig. 78a), a single pale pink rose appears near the center point of the bottom of the canvas, below the juxtaposition of the nude's bare foot and her male companion's outstretched leg, as if floating in the marginal space between painting and frame (78b). In Manet's oeuvre flowers appear most often in glass vases, on marble tables, or adorning the clothing or hair of courtesans and fashionable women. They grow in hothouses and city parks, and he sketched them in letters to friends. In Baudelaire's poetry flowers grow out of artists' brains. Manet's solitary rose at the base of *Luncheon on the Grass* appears to grow out of the painting's frame, an ornament of art—and an elegant accessory of the city dwellers' picnic—as much as an element of nature. Likely adapted from the flowers in the bottom center of Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving of the Judgment of Paris (ca. 1510–20; based on a design by Raphael), one of Manet's most important sources for the painting, the rose is likewise positioned directly below the feet of a female nude. Its symbolic relationship to this scandalously naked woman is Baudelairean through and through, rooted in an aesthetics of irony and an unabashed assertion of beauty's entanglement with sexuality and debased material experience.[19]

Flowers have been used as a means of coded communication for thousands of years, but it was in the nineteenth century that *le langage des fleurs* (the language of flowers) became a central feature of literature and social life in France, England, and the United States. The phenomenon can be traced to the publication of *Le langage des fleurs* (ca. 1819) by Charlotte de Latour, a guide to flowers' emblematic meanings featuring sumptuous hand-colored illustrations.[20] This enormously popular book was immediately translated into English and inspired many other books on floriography throughout the century. Every floral variety (and many plants) had a particular symbolism that could be deployed throughout the many stages of a love affair, providing a coded floral palette to readers wishing to paint their desires in bouquets and corsages. J. J. Grandville's colored prints of "personified flowers" (i.e., women in elaborate, flowerlike fashions) were anthologized in 1847 as *Les fleurs animées*, popularizing the idea of the *femme-fleur* in France.[21] Romantic poets seized on the metaphoric potential of flower imagery to convey themes of love, passion, beauty, and femininity, assimilating traditional floral metaphors of transience to a new sensibility of artistic freedom and sentimental idealization.[22]

The publication of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* in 1857 represents an epochal turn in poetry in which the conventions of *le langage des fleurs* were reimagined with an ironic, antipastoral wit, overturning flowers' association with idyllic innocence, pastoral nostalgia, and health without losing the transcendent sensual power of the flower as trope.[23] As the title of Baudelaire's famous volume makes clear, his subversion of Romantic flower poetics is at the heart of his modernity. The book's dedication to Théophile Gautier refers to the poems themselves as "these sickly flowers" ("ces fleurs maladives"), Baudelaire's avowal that he cultivates his blooms under the sign of Decadence.[24] With *Les fleurs du mal*, he made them the keystone metaphor of his art.

Baudelaire's flowers are paradoxical and insistently impure, their beauty always containing some ironic qualification, some strain of corruption, bitterness, or filth. In "Une charogne" ("A Carcass"), a particularly pungent example, the maturation of a flower is an analogy for rancid death. The poem describes a rotting, repulsive corpse that "blooms like a flower," its stench so strong on the grass that it causes passersby to faint.[25] Here the pastoral image of a flower in a meadow is reimagined as a dead woman's body, and the romance of fainting is transformed into a gruesomely realist physical reaction to decaying flesh. The rest of the poem describes the rot of this body in ghastly detail, an image of "horrible infection," which the poet contrasts to the dazzling, "divine" beauty of his still-living love in order to render this beauty all

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

the more precious by foretelling its decomposition. For Baudelaire, beauty cannot exist without its horrid opposite, gaining power from this negative relation.

"Une charogne" shows how morbid Baudelaire's flower imagery could be. The flower blooming out of the artist's interred brain in "La mort des artistes" is an image of cynical yet sun-warmed hope. In "Une charogne," however, instead of a pale new sun coaxing an artist's brain flowers to grow, the sun is hot enough to "cook" decaying flesh all the way through.[26] The body is offensively female, "sweating out poisonous fumes," the flower metaphor referring back to "her fetid and festering womb."[27] Here again Baudelaire takes a traditional literary metaphor—the flower as a figure of femininity, sexuality, and fertility—and recasts it as repellent and corrupt.

Manet's art never descended to this level of gruesome realism. Although audacious and shocking to nineteenth-century viewers, his paintings' gestures to Paris's dark underbelly are more discreet and genteel. Indeed this veneer of gentility was, for many, precisely the outrage. The rose at the base of *Luncheon on the Grass* has an ironic, Baudelairean inflection, but its relationship to the scandalous sexual politics of the scene is far more oblique, certainly more delicate than Baudelaire's rotting "flower" in the grass in "Une charogne." Still, the subversive representation of flowers and the female body are key points of correspondence between painter and poet, both of whom used their art to perform their irreverence toward the aesthetic conventions shaping these forms in order to give them new, modern meanings.

Olympia's Perfume

When Manet exhibited *Olympia* (fig. 79), a reclining nude widely recognized as a prostitute, at the Salon of 1865, critics cited her "dirty," "cadaverous" skin as visible evidence of her low social status and moral corruption.[28] Although this was a far cry from the "black battalions of maggots" fervently described in "Une charogne," the outrage was similar. Four critics invoked the morgue to express their discomfort with the picture.[29] Jean Ravenel responded to Manet's scandalous nude by invoking Goya and the poet of *Les fleurs du mal*. (This was not the first time that Manet and Baudelaire were publicly aligned,[30] but it was the first time the association stuck.) Ravenel's extraordinary description is worth revisiting with an eye to its Baudelairean theme:

> Painting of the school of Baudelaire, freely executed by a student of Goya; the vicious strangeness of the little faubourienne, a woman of the night from Paul Niquet's, from the mysteries of Paris and the nightmares of Edgar Poe. Her look has the sourness of someone prematurely aged, her face the disturbing perfume of a *fleur du mal*; her body fatigued, corrupted, but painted under a single, transparent light, with the shadows light and fine, the bed and pillows put down in a velvet, modulated grey. Negress and flowers insufficient in execution, but with a real harmony to them.[31]

Ravenel proceeds to quote two poems from *Les fleurs du mal*, "Un chat" ("The Cat") and "Les phares" ("The Beacons"), to further develop the Baudelairean qualities of Manet's nude and the black cat arching its back at her feet.[32] The critic also suggests that Manet should have taken as his epigraph for the painting the quatrain in "Les phares" describing Goya's nightmarish genius, linking the Spanish painter's scenes of perverse, demonic seduction in *Los caprichos* to *Olympia* and calling Baudelaire "the most *advanced* painter of our epoch," here reversing the polarity of the art/poetry analogy, with Baudelaire both inspiring and being inspired by modern painting.[33]

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Fig. 79
Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 130.5 × 191 cm (51⅜ × 75³⁄₁₆ in.). Paris, Musée d'Orsay, RF 644

For Ravenel, Manet's "woman of the night" had "the disturbing perfume of a *fleur du mal*," a fragrance that the critic locates, somewhat oddly, in her face. In addition to her infamous deadpan expression, Ravenel was likely responding to the prominent pink flower adorning her hair, one of a flamboyant assortment of accessories that set off her nakedness with hints of color and chic. His citation of *Les fleurs du mal* likewise frames the "sourness" of her aging face and the "corruption" of her body as Baudelairean in their decadence as well as in their "fine" and "harmonious" execution, aligning the friction between the painting's content and form with Baudelaire's astonishing ability to capture the most disturbing imagery in the most enchanting and rhythmically eloquent verse.

Besides the nude itself, flowers are the painting's most pervasive motif, appearing in Olympia's hair, on her elegant shawl, and in the bouquet held over her body. Manet plays with this floral imagery in characteristic ways. For example, the closer one looks at the pink bloom tucked behind her left ear, the more it looks like a pink ribbon rather than a flower, especially given its proximity to the black velvet ribbon around her neck, tied in a similar shape rotated ninety degrees. Scholars have differed over what kind of flower Olympia wears—some see it as an orchid, others a hibiscus or camellia—but its shape could just as easily correspond to a loosely tied bow, a duality already apparent in the first critical responses to the painting.[34] This dissimulation of petals, fabric, and paint is typical of the entwining of flowers and fashion throughout Manet's oeuvre. Like ribbons, flowers are a stylish accessory, plucked from nature to serve as wearable signs of flirtation and seduction within an urban semiotics.

The mixed bouquet wrapped in paper and presented to Olympia by a servant likewise represents an absent suitor or client beyond the frame. As a metaphor for the artist's palette[35] and a sign of the corruption of romantic love in a world of sexual commerce, these flowers align Manet's practice as an artist with the demimonde that he and Baudelaire were both keen to represent. It is characteristic of Manet's

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

fascination with painting's collapse of the figural world onto a two-dimensional surface to play with the thin margin of difference between these "actual" flowers painted in hues of white, blue, and red, with green foliage and ferns, and those embroidered onto Olympia's cream-colored shawl: the flower-patterned fabric that wraps and reveals her naked body is a striking inversion of the stark white paper that wraps and presents the flowers within.[36] Like Baudelaire in his essay "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), Manet portrayed the contemporary prostitute with a canny awareness of her commodity status.[37]

The flowers in *Olympia* were read by some of the painting's first viewers as corrupted by the women who receive them—both the black maid who handles them and the courtesan to whom they are given—because of their transactional value in the demimonde's economy of sex. The critic Amédée Cantaloube described Olympia's flowers as "spring in the form of a bouquet that hardly appears to flatter the sense of smell" after an especially ugly characterization of Olympia as "a sort of female gorilla."[38] The unflattering smell to which Cantaloube alludes sounds like a more noxious version of Ravenel's "disturbing perfume" but is still subtler than the revolting stench of Baudelaire's "Charogne," and again this is typical of the difference in sensibility between painter and poet. Although Manet depicted dead bodies at several points throughout his career—in *The Dead Christ with Angels* (RW I 74; Metropolitan Museum of Art) and *Incident in a Bullfight*, first exhibited in 1864 (RW I 72, 73; fragments in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and the Frick Collection, New York); in his lithograph of slaughtered soldiers, *Civil War* (Harris 72); and in *The Suicide* (RW I 258; Foundation E. G. Bührle Collection, Zurich)—he never painted a female corpse or a nude one, and he never depicted a scene as revolting as that presented by Baudelaire in "Une charogne." But this is a difference less of substance than of degree, and perhaps also a function of painting's unique capacity to shock as a visual medium displayed in public space. Both Manet and Baudelaire elicited outrage for their perceived perversion of the feminine ideal, and both used flowers as a figure of this aesthetic rebellion.[39]

The Modern *Femme-fleur*

In three of Manet's late Salon paintings, flowers again take center stage. *In the Conservatory* (cat. 4), *Jeanne (Spring)* (cat. 69), and *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (see fig. 2) all explore the relationship between flowers and femininity in the modern world of fashion, seduction, and self-display, giving the trope of the *femme-fleur* a modern, Baudelairean twist. *In the Conservatory*, exhibited at the Salon of 1879, depicts Jules Guillemet and his wife, friends of the artist who were in the fashion business in Paris. The painting was staged in Manet's studio, with the artist presumably creating the look of a winter garden with plants and props, making the conservatory, an artificial environment for the cultivation of plants and flowers, doubly artificial. Indeed, as a Salon picture put on view the day after the close of the fourth Impressionist exhibition,[40] *In the Conservatory* seems to make a point of its artificiality, capturing nature, fashion, and modern life in the highly controlled environment of the hothouse rather than *en plein air*, with a tightness of technique and stiffness of decorum unusual for Manet.[41] Mme Guillemet, wearing an elegant Parisian ensemble, is surrounded by flowers and foliage. A pink orchid echoes the blushing tones and delicate curves of her ear, cheek, and lips. Flowers—potted and pruned—serve as a metaphor for her meticulous toilette, and the conservatory as a whole is a figure not only for the artificial manipulations of the artist's studio but also for the social codes and confinement of passion governing nineteenth-century bourgeois romance.

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Manet makes his analogy of flowers, fashion, and femininity material and overt: the pink blooms and lemon yellow ostrich feathers are painted with similarly luscious, rounding strokes—the most vibrant passages in the painting. Mme Guillemet's hand is strangely positioned to look like a petrified flower—with her fingers as curling petals or tendrils—emerging from a lace cuff whose open, circular shape mimes the neck of a vase. Flowerlike hands proliferated in nineteenth-century literature,[42] and the performative stillness and awkwardness of Manet's rendition embraces the satirical flavor of the *fleur animée*. Note the series of V-shaped forms echoing one another in a horizontal line beginning to the left of Mme Guillemet's head, articulating in paint the equation of flowers to fashion to woman: between the two petals closest to her shoulder, between the ribbons extending below the navy blue bow at her breast (as well as those tying the yellow bow at her neck), and between her delicately shaped forefinger and thumb. The viewer is cued to this formal repetition by M. Guillemet's pointing gesture, as if prompting us to see petals, ribbons, and feminine fingers as painterly variations on a theme.

Like Baudelaire's "Sonnet d'automne" ("Autumn Sonnet"), *In the Conservatory* is a witty conflation of *femme* and *fleur*, meant not to idealize Mme Guillemet but rather to make her an image of fashion and, perhaps, passionless love. Baudelaire's sonnet ends with an apostrophe to a beloved woman, Marguerite, that plays with her name's double meaning as the French word for daisy: "Are you not, / Pale marguerite, an autumn sun, as I am too, So white and O so cold, my Marguerite?"[43] Incidentally, the year after he exhibited *In the Conservatory*, Manet wrote twice to Mme Guillemet's younger sister, Marguerite, inviting her to visit him in the country in Bellevue, in the hopes that he could paint her in his garden (which he did). One of these letters is illustrated with a watercolor sketch of two daisies (cat. 45), a playful visual pun that brings the *femme-fleur* metaphor of *In the Conservatory* full circle.

The deep significance of flowers to Manet's depiction of women and modern Paris is best exemplified by his last two Salon paintings: *Jeanne (Spring)*, a portrait of a young model and future actress made as part of an unfinished series of allegorical portraits of the four seasons, and *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, the iconic image of a barmaid at a Parisian nightclub, modeled by an actual employee of the Folies-Bergère named Suzon.[44] When *Jeanne (Spring)* was exhibited at the Salon of 1882, the critic Maurice Du Seigneur referred to the sitter as a "living flower": "She is not a woman, she is a bouquet, truly a visual perfume."[45] This was a more positive version of Ravenel's remark that Olympia's face exuded the "disturbing perfume of a fleur du mal" but draws on the same Baudelairean synesthesia. Seigneur's characterization of *Jeanne* speaks to the ways in which Manet exploited the rich metaphorics of flower imagery to convey painting's transformation of life into aesthetic matter. By representing flowers as plants, wearable accessories, and two-dimensional motifs in fashion, all in one painting, Manet deflated their traditional poetic value while at the same time allegorizing the stilling of nature—of life—into artifice as paint. When he painted *Autumn* (cat. 75), a portrait of Méry Laurent, he took this deflation further: the floral-patterned wallpaper surrounding Laurent's figure is actually a Japanese robe pinned to the wall.[46]

Like *Olympia*, *Jeanne (Spring)* plays with the relationship between flowers as decorative pattern and flowers as organic, three-dimensional forms, using the dissembling operations of paint to confuse distinctions between the two. The pink flower/ribbon worn by Olympia reappears on the same side of Jeanne Demarsy's head as a decorative flourish attached to her bonnet. Olympia's floral cashmere shawl is likewise echoed in the patterned dress showing off Jeanne's figure, transposed to a key of blue and green. And the profusion of foliage and flowers providing

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

the backdrop for the portrait, compressed into a canvas-thin layer of space, appears to issue forth from the actress's head and parasol like an all-consuming, self-reproducing bouquet. Du Seigneur's curious characterization of Jeanne as a "living flower"—curious because flowers are usually thought of as living if not animate beings—captures the artist's gambit concisely, for it is precisely in the slippage between animate femininity and *nature morte* that this painting's fascination resides, at the permeable boundary between portraiture and still life, person and fashion, *Jeanne* and *Spring*, *femme* and *fleur*. (If Du Seigneur were writing a century later, he might have remarked that the dress, with its abundance of organic accessories, was wearing her.) If Jeanne is a "living flower," an embodiment of spring, the artificial flowers that adorn her are uncannily lifelike too, so much so that it does not matter whether the ones on the bonnet are "real," for their translation into paint obviates the difference. The yellow and ivory blooms near the crown of Jeanne's head appear to belong to the bonnet but could also be seen as attached to the foliage behind, head and plant growing together, while at the bottom edge of the canvas loose strokes of cornflower blue froth up around the perimeter of her dress as a literal, painterly obfuscation of the boundaries between nature, fashion, and woman.

Flowers are all fashion and commercial appeal in *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, *Jeanne*'s notoriously blasé companion at the Salon of 1882. Again the centrality of flowers to the composition is clear: the barmaid has a *bouquet de corsage* pinned to the lace collar of her dress, which marks the midpoint of the painting, and her figure frames a still life of two roses in a glass embellishing the bar. The petals adorning her breast—painted with rapid, centripetal strokes—precisely obscure her cleavage, playfully calling attention to her décolleté. Their ivory and pink tones reflect the glint of the medallion worn around her neck, the warm flush of her face (overheated or overrouged), her alabaster breast, her carefully painted lips, and the soigné gloss of her strawberry blond hair, as well as the pink streaks animating her bare wrists pressed against the cold marble bar and the bottles of pink aperitif that anchor it, the one on the left bearing Manet's signature and the date 1882. Like the flower/ribbon and bouquet in *Olympia* and the rose in *Luncheon on the Grass*, flowers signal the woman's beauty with a Baudelairean undertow of decadent modernity.

Flowers mark the barmaid's femininity, an enduring cliché: not only her breast but also her cinched waist and the curve of her hip. Like the patterned lace with which they are aligned, the flowers in Manet's *Bar* are artful decoration, adding a note of luxury and hospitality. The roses in the glass are the only item on the bar that is not for sale, but they nonetheless appear commercial in their role as window dressing, and their synecdochic relationship to the barmaid with her corsage points to the decorative purpose and market value of women's bodies in such establishments. Even the buttons securing the barmaid's bodice are floral in design (*boutons fleurettes*). The reflection of the yellow rose in the mirror at the far right edge of the painting is the only element separating Suzon's figure from that of the man approaching her in front of the bar, yet again emblematizing a certain sexual commerce, feminine availability, and self-display. The romantic *langage des fleurs* is ironized, modernized, turned on its head.

At the same Salon, Manet's friend Henri Fantin-Latour exhibited three portraits of women bearing roses at their breasts—*Portrait of Madame Léon Maître* (fig. 80), *Madame Lerolle* (fig. 81), and the pastel *Study of Charlotte Dubourg* (Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo), all dated 1882—a striking departure for a painter who was best known for his floral still lifes and group portraits of men. The first two portraits appeared in the painting section of the Salon along with *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* and *Jeanne (Spring)*, serving as a counterpoint to Manet's modernization of the

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Fig. 80
Henri Fantin-Latour (French, 1836–1904), *Portrait of Madame Léon Maître*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 127 × 140 cm (50 × 55⅛ in.). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of A. Augustus Healy and George A. Hearn, 06.69

Fig. 81
Henri Fantin-Latour (French, 1836–1904), *Madame Lerolle*, 1882. Oil on canvas, 108.2 × 78.9 cm (42⁹⁄₁₆ × 31¹⁄₁₆ in.). Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund and the Fanny Tewksbury King Collection by exchange, 1969.54

femme-fleur. Both artists drew on Baudelairean themes defining women in relationship to flowers, fashion, and urban ennui while also playing with art historical conventions tying floral still life to femininity.[47]

The subject of Fantin's *Portrait of Madame Léon Maître* wears an evening dress very similar in style to Suzon's, with a plunging neckline that is square in shape, lace trim, and three-quarter sleeves. Her corsage of pink and yellow roses mirrors the roses displayed on the bar in Manet's painting with almost uncanny precision: the larger and more open yellow bloom resting just above the pink one, at an angle that guides the eye toward the woman's breast and the center of the composition. But Fantin's portrait depicts a woman in his social circle—the sister-in-law of one of his dearest friends, the musician Edmond Maître—and because of her demure placement, seated on a red velvet settee rather than standing behind a bar, she was perceived in wholly different terms. Critics described her portrait in terms of "grace," "elegance," and "distinction,"[48] in stark contrast to Manet's barmaid, who was broadly presumed to be selling more than drinks. The famous caricature of Manet's painting by Stop renames the painting "A Merchant of Consolation at the Folies-Bergère,"[49] and the critic Ernest Chesneau wrote, "It is not possible to be more of a 'fille' than this creature the artist has installed behind the marble of the bar laden with fruit and flowers,"[50] a description that ties Suzon's social status to the decorative accoutrements of commercial display. Manet's *Bar* was a sensation at the 1882 Salon, his last of several *succès de scandale*, while Fantin's portraits were more quietly appreciated. And yet their submissions share a reliance on the *femme-fleur* trope: both artists bring it up to date, modernizing it à la Baudelaire, with dramatically different results.

Edgar Degas was impressed by the portrait of Mme Maître, but the corsage left him cold: "Fantin has a great deal of talent," he reportedly said, "but I doubt he's ever really looked at the flowers on a woman's bodice."[51] The failure, in Degas's eyes, of Fantin's effort to capture the seductive allure of roses as an appendage of the

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

female body was not only a failure of masculine experience but also, and more importantly, a failure to bridge the distance between flower painting and female portraiture, however closely the two were conventionally aligned. The former was Fantin's calling card, while the latter was a source of anxiety and frustration, largely avoided with occasional exceptions. Nonetheless Fantin tried to merge the two explicitly in *Madame Lerolle*, a commissioned portrait of the wife of the painter Henry Lerolle wearing an ivory dress with white chiffon trim. This portrait—more than the one of Mme Maître—plays knowingly with the *femme-fleur* trope by juxtaposing the woman wearing a corsage with a bouquet of roses in a vase, including a bunch of roses lying next to the vase to suggest that Mme Lerolle is in the midst of arranging them for our view. With one hand holding a rose to the elaborately pleated bow modestly shielding her breasts and the other hand grazing the foliage of the unarranged flowers, Mme Lerolle plays the part of the virginal muse while standing in for the artist who arranged the still life depicted (her husband painted many floral still lifes too). Manet's barmaid similarly performs a dual role, transposed to a scene of modern capitalism and entertainment: posing as a salesperson managing the attractive display of bottles, fruit, and flowers that are the material elements of her job (and Manet's too), while also posing as an alluring, purchasable product herself. While the comparison underscores the radicality of Manet's painting—for he situates his *femme-fleur* in the context of urban, public life and its corrupt sexual politics—both Fantin and Manet were rethinking the *femme-fleur* in relationship to contemporary art and fashion and giving it a melancholy cast, and both of them approached their Salon portraits of women through the lens of flower painting. Neither could have separated such an approach from their intimate knowledge of Baudelaire's poetry.[52]

Critics praised Fantin's portraits of women in the 1882 Salon as "profoundly honest" and "sincere," linking this moral characterization to flowers. Louis de Fourcaud wrote: "His exquisite delicacy excels in capturing them on the canvas in the most delicate flower of their reserve and pure charm. . . . No one expresses like Monsieur Fantin-Latour the freshness of flowers and the natural gentleness of women of good solid bourgeois stock."[53] Here the relationship between flowers and feminine virtue is axiomatic, derived from the literary tradition of the *langage des fleurs*. Much less obvious is Fourcaud's linkage of such virtue with "bourgeois stock," suggesting an implicit comparison with Manet's barmaid hanging in the same Salon. For it was clear to everyone that Manet's barmaid was not of this breed. The roses adorning her breast and the bar appeared less as figures of "freshness" and "natural gentleness" than as accessories of urban fashion and window dressing for commercial appeal. Fantin's *langage des fleurs* communicated in terms of candor and bourgeois virtue, while Manet's flowers operated as emblems of commodified femininity, dubious sexual morality, and social dissimulation.

Ultimately, modernizing the *femme-fleur* required a sophisticated synthesis of still life and modern portraiture along the lines of Manet's *Bar* and *Jeanne*,[54] a synthesis that emulated the radical subversion of flower imagery in *Les fleurs du mal*. Like Baudelaire, Manet repeatedly invoked flowers and all their conventional symbolic associations with beauty, fecundity, and transience, not to mention their use by painters and poets as self-reflexive figures for art itself. Also like Baudelaire, albeit more obliquely, Manet used flowers to hint at the sensual pleasures and dissimulations of modern life, often through the coded language of fashion and still life. An early still life of around 1860, *Still Life with Flowers, Fan, and Pearls* (RW I 89; Metropolitan Museum of Art), perhaps the first of Manet's flower paintings, combines peonies, a fan, and an abundant string of pearls. One of the blooms rests on top of the fan, removed from the bouquet, while the pearls tumble out of the dish holding the vase,

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

a composition that proposes the entanglement of flowers, fashion, and flirtation. Without moralizing, this is as close as Manet comes to an allegorical still life in the Dutch tradition. The Baudelairean inflection of Manet's flowers is only more obvious in the early still lifes, apparent in their iconography of urban elegance and threat: the juxtaposition of a bouquet and fashionable luxuries or of cut flowers and sharp pruning shears.[55] The visual poetics of the later flowers are present in these works too: the play of vibrant petals and limp, blackening leaves against deeply shadowed black and brown backgrounds. For Manet, as for Baudelaire, it was the corruption, suffering, or apathy underneath the surface seductions of modern life that made that world so exquisite. In the floral still lifes painted in the last years of his life, these negative dialectics were further sublimated but not erased.

The Last Flowers

In the last ten years of his life Manet grew very close to another poet and critic, Stéphane Mallarmé, who visited his studio almost daily when the two were in Paris. Like Manet, Mallarmé was deeply indebted to Baudelaire's poetics, including his floral rhetoric, and crafted flowers out of language that transcend material substance. For Mallarmé roses were not nature but rather "a false ideal," a characterization rooted in Baudelaire's negative aesthetics.[56] A flower is an idea, a word, an utterance, not a material thing: "Je dis: une fleur."[57] It is tempting to imagine that this extension of the poem-as-flower trope, toward an ideal of the autonomous verbal flower that replaces the one embedded in soil, was important to Manet's understanding of his transformation of flowers into paint. But even though the painter's flowers (with the exception of a few garden scenes) appear distant from their earthy beginnings, neither their materiality as organic forms nor their connection to his physical and personal experience is in question.

Like Mallarmé—who wrote verses on stones, Easter eggs, and fans as gifts to friends and loved ones[58]—Manet conceived his still lifes as objects of sociability and

Fig. 82
Édouard Manet, *Bouquet of Violets*, 1872. Oil on canvas, 22 × 27 cm (8¾ × 10¾ in.). Private collection

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Fig. 83
Édouard Manet, *Lilacs in a Glass*, ca. 1882. Oil on canvas, 27 × 21 cm (10⅝ × 8¼ in.). Private collection

affection. In these works flowers serve as souvenirs of relationships, friendly solace, and private visits, and yet their display on white marble—the same studio prop Manet used to stage *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*—invokes urban public space. Bouquets brought by loved ones as gestures of good cheer when the artist was ill became painted thank-you gifts in the form of small still lifes that would endure after his imminent death. Manet had made artistic gestures of this kind before, most famously in *Bouquet of Violets* (fig. 82), sent to Berthe Morisot in 1872, in which the painted forms of flowers, letter, and fan stand in for their referents in a gracious gift that is meant to be looked at instead of worn, smelled, opened, or read. The late flowers, painted between 1880 and 1883, are similarly gallant in spirit and virtuosic in form, but the great majority of them also include notes of darkness and drama.

In *Lilacs in a Glass* (fig. 83), for example, the lilacs' soft, small blooms are so ethereal that they seem to dissolve into vapor, then reassert themselves as a patchwork of strokes in blue, white, violet, and green. But at the bottom of a footed glass, a coil of murky black folds in on itself within a mere inch of water—rotting leaves fallen from the clipped blooms, their slimy surface seeping into the water, giving it a gray, murky film. The smokelike shadow extending beyond the container just above

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

Fig. 84
Édouard Manet, *Still Life with Roses and Tulips in a Dragon Vase,* 1882. Oil on canvas, 54 × 33 cm (21¼ × 13 in.). Private collection

Manet's signature echoes the decaying plant matter in the glass, a blackened echo of the airy lilacs that gives their freshness an ironic twist. *Vase of White Lilacs and Roses* (cat. 89) has a similarly remarkable depiction of the decomposing tangle of leaves and stems—painted in tones of brown, orange, yellow ocher, black, and blue, with only a modicum of green—tainting the purity of the water and obscuring the clarity of the vase.

Not all of Manet's floral still lifes have Baudelairean undertones. Some, like *Flowers in a Crystal Vase* (cat. 88), are sparkling, multicolored gems with only a hint of tonal darkening in the upper background to set off the colors to best effect. But the majority of them have ominous shadows, inky black backdrops, or a tangle of underwater leaves and stems in which tones of brown, gray, or yellow suggest their inevitable decay. Blackening leaves mark the center point in *Roses and Lilacs in a Crystal Vase* (cat. 87), with one placed as if pinning together the pink and yellow rose and more floating in the water. The black is a brilliant tonal contrast to the vibrant, almost too candied colors of the flowers, giving the bouquet something like a leaded weight in its center that acts as a visual ballast to the fluffy ascension of the lilacs above. The flowers are showpieces of the artist's bravura technique, but the most intriguing part of the painting is the depiction of the vase and its contents, with the prismatic effects of glass and water giving the artist license to render light, water, leaves, and stems in abstract, summary strokes.

Manet's consistent use of glass vases allowed his unusual attention to the muck in the bottom of the container or, as in *Moss Roses in a Vase* (cat. 83), the compression of plant matter in the neck. Two vases that reappear have gold decoration etched onto the surface, and Manet uses this extra representational layer to play with the relationship between interior and exterior, surface and depth, nature and art. In *Still Life with Roses and Tulips in a Dragon Vase* (fig. 84), a dragon, etched in gold on the surface of a columnar vase, appears as a living, slithering creature coiling itself around the flowers' stems. One stem appears to slide through the dragon's open jaws, and its serpentine shape—which we know to be flat—appears to infiltrate the small volume of water, paradoxically filling out its depth and animating this still, watery environment with flickering gilded strokes.[59] We know this chimera is a visual trick—Manet's pictorial wit—but it nonetheless infuses the richly colored bouquet with a sinister flavor that is a fantastical counterpoint to the vivid realism of the blooms. Theatrical lighting and a pitch-black backdrop similarly dramatize *Bouquet of Peonies* (cat. 84), representing another gold-etched vase featuring a *japoniste* scene with a figure holding a parasol. Once again the flowers are exquisitely painted and vibrant with life, while underneath, stems and leaves tangle with the decorative scheme on the vase, whose solidity, smooth surface, and shine are defined in contrast, both inside and outside, with shadows.

In two paintings of white lilacs alone in a rectangular vase (cat. 86 and RW I 427 [Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin]), the drama is almost entirely tonal, with brownish black backgrounds and cold lighting keying up the whiteness of the lilacs, as if spotlighted on stage.[60] The contrast of darkness and light and the coolness of the marble slab, the glass vase, and the black backdrop, coupled with the softness and delicacy of the lilacs, show an expansive understanding of flower poetics and an enduring affinity for Baudelaire's negative aesthetics. These are not soft, sentimental images, but neither are they *vanitas*, for they celebrate their subjects' sensual pleasures unreservedly. For the painter of *Olympia*, *In the Conservatory*, and *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, flowers carried massive metaphoric weight, a poetic range and complexity that the last flowers sublimate in contrasts of darkness and light, fullness and flatness, growth and decay.

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

In his embrace of irony, paradox, and degradation, Baudelaire did not do away with the traditional tropology of flowers as images of artistic or literary beauty or of poetry itself. *Les fleurs du mal* consists of poems, first and foremost, for Baudelaire. Likewise for Manet, floral still lifes are metaphors for art, for painterly composition and the arrangement of colors.[61] But the ubiquity and multivalence of flowers in Manet's oeuvre, as well as their proliferation as still lifes in his final years, have more expansive layers of meaning that can be understood only through the lens of Baudelaire's radical subversion of flower poetics. Manet's flowers were part of a broader resurgence of flower painting in avant-garde French art in the late nineteenth century, as evidenced by the dramatic increase in floral still lifes exhibited at the seventh Impressionist exhibition of 1882.[62] No doubt various factors drove this efflorescence, but the tremendous importance of flower imagery to the most controversial French poetry in this period surely played a role, especially for artists like Manet and Fantin-Latour, who read and witnessed these debates firsthand, from Baudelaire's scandalous *Fleurs du mal*, to Arthur Rimbaud's parodic attack on conventional floral formalism in "Ce qu'on dit au poète à propos de fleurs" ("To the Poet on the Subject of Flowers," 1871), to Mallarmé's denaturalization of the flower as word and abstraction.[63] As age-old images of art, love, and beauty in literature, flowers became the figure through which some of the most fervent and rancorous debates about poetry's modern form and purpose were played out. Manet brought these poetics to paint.

Notes

My thanks to Jeff Alsdorf, whose *baudelairisme* inspired this essay and who helped me refine it, and to the graduate students in my Manet and Methods seminar, including Lucy Partman, whose essay on *In the Conservatory* informed my reading of this picture.

1 "C'est que la Mort, planant comme un soleil nouveau, / Fera s'épanouir les fleurs de leur cerveau!" "La mort des artistes," Baudelaire 2016, 262–63.

2 "Un espoir, étrange et sombre Capitole!" Baudelaire 2016, 262–63.

3 "Nous userons notre âme en de subtils complots / Et nous démolirons mainte lourde armature, / Avant de contempler la grande Créature / Dont l'infernal désir nous remplit de sanglots!" Baudelaire 2016, 262–63.

4 Gordon and Forge 1986, 5; Paris–Baltimore 2000–2001, 144.

5 James Rubin has written eloquently about the importance of still life and flowers in particular in Manet's oeuvre, but for him Stéphane Mallarmé is the crucial poet and critic for understanding the painter's approach to depicting modern "lived experience." Rubin 1994, 137. This essay proposes an alternative view of Manet's flowers by focusing on their Baudelairean poetics.

6 Matthew Armstrong describes *Two Roses* as a painting of "simple sensual delight." Armstrong, entry in San Francisco etc. 2012–14, 76.

7 For documentation of their friendship and moments when they were (and were not) publicly aligned, see Hyslop 1969, updated in Hyslop 1980, 47–61; and Paris 2011a, 135–37 ("Le moment Baudelaire").

8 "I wish our newspapers and journals would give us more of your work, for example some of the poetry you must have written over this last year." Manet to Baudelaire in Brussels, early May 1865, translated in Wilson-Bareau 1991a, 33. "My mouth has been watering at the thought of having something new of yours to read." Manet to Baudelaire in Brussels, March 27, 1866, translated in Wilson-Bareau 1991a, 38.

9 The phrase is Antonin Proust's, cited in Hyslop 1980, 48.

10 A succinct assessment of this debate can be found in Hyslop 1980, 55–61.

11 On parallels between Baudelaire's and Manet's expressions of modern urban experience by way of the flaneur, see Golsan 1996.

12 For an analysis of the latter painting that draws connections between its imagery and the cycle of poems dedicated to Duval in *Les fleurs du mal*, see Dolan 1997. See also Murrell 2018, 27–38.

13 Baudelaire's four-line verse accompanied the painted (RW I 53; Musée d'Orsay, Paris) and etched (Harris 33) versions of *Lola de Valence* when they were first exhibited in 1863.

14 "The chief ornaments on the walls were two canvases by Manet, one a copy of Goya's portrait of the duchess of Alba [*Clothed Maja*], which he so much admired." Eugène Crépet, *Étude biographique* (1906), translated in Paris–New York 1983, 102.

15 Asselineau 1869, including five etched portraits, two by Manet.

16 On this drawing—both the original and the tracing on the etched portrait—and its sources in Goya's *Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, plate 43 from *Los caprichos* (1797–99), and Dürer's *Melencolia I* (1514), see Nördstrom 1967 (for a reproduction of the drawing on the etched portrait, see p. 150). The original drawing is reproduced and documented in Rouart and Wildenstein 1975, 2: no. 677. The whereabouts of the original drawing and the drawing on the print are presently unknown, but a photograph of the original drawing by Fernand Lochard, taken ca. 1883 for the posthumous sale of Manet's work, survives in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF Est., DC 300 G, p. 195).

17 According to Robert Lethbridge (1994, 150), "to treat with extreme caution that certain works by Manet 'illustrate' some of Baudelaire's texts (with the implication that the latter afford interpretive purchase on the paintings themselves) is not to devalue the critical interchange between artist and poet." Although I do believe that Baudelaire's poetry helps us to understand Manet's treatment of flowers, I make no claim that the painter conceived his flowers as homages to Baudelaire, much less as illustrations.

18 "Il suffit de feuilleter le mince recueil des *Fleurs du mal* . . . pour conclure assez aisément à une affinité réelle des inquiétudes du poète et du peintre. / Un homme qui écrit *Bénédiction, Les Tableaux parisiens, les Bijoux*, et le *Vin des Chiffonniers*, et un homme qui peint tour à tour le *Christ aux anges* et l'*Olympia*, *Lola* et le *Buveur d'Absinthe*, ne sont pas sans quelque profonde correspondance." Valéry 1932, 1333.

19 For an illuminating recent analysis of the sexual underpinnings of Baudelaire's signature motif of *Les fleurs du mal*, see Marder 2016. Carol Armstrong has argued that the depiction of the nude Victorine Meurent in *Luncheon on the Grass* presents a "Baudelairean conception of femininity. Surrounded by a world of nature that is patently not-nature, Victorine's place is in the world

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19

of art." Armstrong does not mention the flower at the base of the painting, but her reading accommodates it nonetheless. Armstrong 1998, 111–12.

20 Latour ca. 1819, with hand-colored botanical illustrations by Pancrace Bassa. See also Seaton 1995.

21 Grandville 1847. On the *femme-fleur*, see Syme 2010, 31–35 and passim.

22 For a deeply researched study of flower poetics in the Romantic period and in the work of Baudelaire, see P. Knight 1986. This particular point is made on pages 60–61.

23 P. Knight 1986, 94–130. This shift is also discussed in Meslay 2014.

24 "Au poète impeccable . . . Théophile Gautier . . . je dédie ces fleurs maladives. C.B." Baudelaire 2016, 2–3.

25 "Et le ciel regardait la carcasse superbe / Comme une fleur s'épanouir. / La puanteur était si forte, que sur l'herbe / Vous crûtes évanouir." Baudelaire 2016, 58.

26 "Le soleil rayonnait sur cette pourriture, / Comme afin de la cuire à point." Baudelaire 2016, 58.

27 "Les jambes en l'air, comme une femme lubrique, / Brûlante et suant les poisons, / Ouvrait d'une façon nonchalante et cynique / Son ventre plein d'exhalaisons." Baudelaire 2016, 58.

28 T. Clark 1984, 288–89.

29 On the relationship between the newly public Paris morgue and Manet's *Olympia* and *Christ and the Angels*, see Beeny 2013.

30 In 1863 the critic Charles Monselet called Manet "a student of Goya and of Charles Baudelaire" in *Le Figaro* in response to *Luncheon on the Grass*, and in 1864 a caricature of the painter and the poet was published in *Le Charivari*. Tabarant 1942, 68.

31 Jean Ravenel (pseudonym of Alfred Sensier), cited in T. Clark 1984, 139–40 (original French provided on p. 296). Clark's close reading of this remarkable piece of criticism, including its invocation of Baudelaire, is central to his influential reading of *Olympia* as a picture of the materialism of social class. By revisiting Ravenel's response, I wish to focus specifically on his characterization of *Olympia* as akin to a *fleur du mal* and on the role of flower imagery in his account of Manet's painting as a subversive, "disturbing" female nude.

32 Writers since Ravenel have most often linked *Olympia* to Baudelaire's "Les bijoux" ("The Jewels"). In 1983 Françoise Cachin wrote, "That Olympia herself seems literally to illustrate certain poems in [*Les fleurs du mal*] is now generally accepted." Paris–New York 1983, 180.

33 "M. Manet, au lieu des vers de M. Astruc, aurait peut-être bien fait de prendre pour épigraphe le quatrain consacré à Goya par le peintre le plus *avancé* de notre époque." Cited in T. Clark 1984, 296.

34 Reff 1977b, 101–11; Armstrong 2002, 221; Floyd 2017. Manet's contemporaries differed over whether Olympia's hair ornament was a ribbon or a flower. See Reff 1977b, 108.

35 Baudelaire described Eugène Delacroix's palette as "a bouquet of flowers, expertly assorted." Baudelaire 1975–76, 2:748.

36 For an analysis of Olympia's shawl as "a supplementary signifier of class status in the specularity of feminine allure" that "fixed her body with a price tag," and as an allusion to "the painting as an artificially colored surface that reflects [Manet's] own awareness of his canvas as circulating in a market driven by fashion and finance," see Dolan 2015.

37 On the treatment of commodities in "The Painter of Modern Life," particularly their "living instances, the prostitute and the flâneur," see Smith 2016, 73.

38 Cantaloube, "Le Salon de 1865," *Le Grand Journal* (May 21, 1865), 2; quoted in T. Clark 1984, 287–88.

39 Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby has described Cantaloube's extreme response to *Olympia*, in particular his description of the nude as a "female gorilla," as one of many examples of critics displacing the painting's "colonial imagery of racial difference" (the often overlooked presence of a black maid) onto the white nude. Grigsby 2015, 437. The stinking bouquet that the maid holds, to which Cantaloube alludes, is part of the foul ideology underpinning the painting. For another perspective on the black maid, see Murrell 2018.

40 The Salon of 1879 opened on May 12, immediately following the fourth Impressionist exhibition, which ran from April 10 through May 11.

41 Regarding the tight facture of *In the Conservatory*, see Scott Allan's essay in this volume. On the possibility that Manet seriously considered joining the Impressionist exhibition of 1879, see Pickvance 1986, 261, 265n114.

42 Syme 2010, 71.

43 "Ô pâle marguerite! / Comme moi n'es-tu pas un soleil automnal, / Ô ma si blanche, ô ma si froide Marguerite?" Baudelaire 2016, 130–31.

44 Tabarant 1931, 412.

45 Du Seigneur 1882, translated in Hamilton 1954, 249.

46 Leenhoff register, 20.

47 On the association of flower painting with femininity and women artists and Manet's clever play with this association in his portrait of Eva Gonzalès (1870), which I do not have space to address here, see Tamar Garb's chapter "Framing Femininity in Manet's *Portrait of Mlle E.G.*," in Garb 2007, 59–99; and Armstrong 2002, 190–93. Fantin-Latour, a longtime friend of Manet's, probably had *A Bar* in mind as he worked on his three female portraits for the Salon of 1882. Many artists visited Manet's studio as he worked on the picture.

48 Paris etc. 1982–83, 323 (English ed., 327).

49 Stop 1882.

50 Ernest Chesneau, quoted in T. Clark 1984, 243.

51 Edgar Degas, quoted in Vollard 1937, 91, and in Paris etc. 1982–83, 323 (English ed., 327).

52 Like Manet, Fantin was an avid reader and admirer of Baudelaire. In a letter of December 30, 1871, he indicates his knowledge of Baudelaire's poetry, and his particular affinity for *Les fleurs du mal*. "Copies de lettres de Fantin à ses parents et amis, par Victoria Fantin-Latour," Bibliothèque Municipale de Grenoble, R.8867 Réserve, fasc. 2, 181. His best-known group portrait, *Corner of a Table* (1872), began as an homage to the deceased poet featuring his portrait "surrounded by foliage and flowers." For more on this painting and its beginnings as an homage to Baudelaire, see Alsdorf 2013, 168–70. Fantin's still lifes, in all their realist precision, have become the textbook point of contrast to the still lifes of his more avant-garde friends and colleagues, namely Manet and the Impressionists. For example, Robert Gordon and Andrew Forge (1986, 13) praise Manet's flower paintings as "marvelously alive," arguing that they "make the famous flower paintings of Fantin-Latour look stiff and dead, as if painted from accurate paper replicas of flowers." This stylistic distinction has masked the deep affinity that Fantin and Manet shared for Baudelaire and his flower poetics.

53 Paris etc. 1982–83, English ed., 367–69.

54 On the significance of still life to Manet's *Bar*, see Armstrong 2002, 269–85; and Iskin 1995. Degas attempted a similar synthesis in four paintings pairing women with floral arrangements: *A Woman Seated beside a Vase of Flowers (Madame Paul Valpinçon?)* (1865; Metropolitan Museum of Art, 29.100.128); *Woman beside a Vase* (1872; Musée d'Orsay, RF 1983); *Portrait of Estelle Musson Degas* (1872; New Orleans Museum of Art, 65.1); and *Mme De Rutté* (1875; private collection).

55 See *Branch of White Peonies and Shears* (RW I 88) and *Peony Stem and Shears* (RW I 91), both in the Musée d'Orsay.

56 "Je m'offrais / pour Triomphe la faute idéale des roses." Mallarmé 1876a.

57 Mallarmé 1886; P. Knight 1986, 218–20, 239.

58 Arnar 2001, 4–5.

59 This six-sided vase with an "Asian motif" appears in several of Manet's paintings (for example, cat. 89), but in *Vase of Flowers, White Lilacs* (RW I 427; Alte Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) he omits the dragon, perhaps showing the vase from the other side. Paris–Baltimore 2000–2001, 144.

60 Robert Gordon and Andrew Forge (1986, 15) have called the Berlin picture "a tragic, pitiless image."

61 This is a key thread of James Rubin's argument in Rubin 1994, 170, 174, 185, and passim. For Rubin still life was Manet's signature, "a code for his presence" in the picture as artist and an "alter ego" that reflects his "ordering consciousness."

62 Dallas etc. 2014–15, 131.

63 Arthur Rimbaud, "Ce qu'on dit au poète à propos des fleurs," to Théodore de Banville, August 15, 1871, in Rimbaud 2005, 108–19; Mallarmé 1886.

FINAL PAGES 02.12.19