

PRESS RELEASE



Claude Monet, *La Falaise et la Porte d'Aval*, 1885
Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
Museum Barberini, Potsdam. Hasso Plattner Collection / Sammlung Hasso Plattner

Travelling Artworks

A painting by Claude Monet travels to the Cerruti Collection

Curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Fabio Cafagna

The painting from the Museum Barberini in Potsdam, home of the Hasso Plattner Collection, will be hosted from 25 November 2023 to 18 August 2024 at the Cerruti Villa and house-museum in Rivoli

With the exhibition of *La Falaise et la Porte d'Aval*, 1885, by **Claude Monet** (Paris, 1840 – Giverny, 1926), a new program of cultural exchanges begins for the Cerruti Collection. In addition to exhibiting the works of art of the Collection in national and international exhibitions of a highly scholarly nature, the Cerruti Collection now becomes a new venue that offers the Turin public the opportunity to see in person great works of art from important public and private art collections worldwide.

The first collaboration of the *Travelling Artworks* program involves an exchange with **Museum Barberini in Potsdam** and with the **Staatsgalerie Stuttgart**: while the Cerruti Collection painting by Amedeo Modigliani, *Jeune femme à la robe jaune (Renée Modot)*, 1918, oil on canvas, 92 x 60 cm, will travel to Germany on the occasion of the exhibition *Modigliani: Modern Gazes*, curated by Ortrud Westheider and Christiane Lange with Nathalie Frensch, at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and at the Museum Barberini in Potsdam, the work by Claude Monet *La Falaise et la Porte d'Aval* will be hosted in its place at the Cerruti Collection.

The Barberini Museum, inaugurated in 2017 in the historic centre of Potsdam by the entrepreneur, collector and patron Hasso Plattner, founder of the German SAP, one of the world's largest software companies, hosts an extraordinary collection, which includes ancient sculptures, baroque paintings and Impressionists, as well as works by Rembrandt van Rijn, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Gerhard Richter, showing, in a similar spirit to the Cerruti Collection, a notion of private collecting that crosses different eras and styles.

In exchange for the loan of the Cerruti Collection work by Amedeo Modigliani, the Museum Barberini is loaning the painting by Claude Monet, *La Falaise et la Porte d'Aval*, 1885. The presence at the Cerruti Collection of an important work by Monet, an artist never purchased by Cerruti, complements the collector's interest in the Impressionist movement, as exemplified by Cerruti's acquisition of works by Alfred Sisley, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Cézanne and the Italian Federico Zandomenighi.

Monet is counted among the greatest artists of the French Impressionist movement, of which he was a founder and probably the most resolute and coherent artist. Throughout his life, he remained faithful to the innovative principles of the movement, for example always painting *en plein air* - in the open air - and practicing landscape painting made through small touches of colour and rapid brushstrokes with which he was able to fully capture the moving reflections of sunlight on water and to transform the solidity of a cliff into a fluid mass of vibrant impressions of the world. Tireless, Monet travelled with brushes to capture atmospheric variations, the changing skies and clouds, working on a motif in series that became famous, from Rouen Cathedral to haystacks, and to this cliff on the seaside in Normandy. He moved to his house in the nearby Giverny in 1883, two years prior to this painting, transforming it in his old age into a private paradise with water lilies and a Japanese bridge, designed for his tired eyes, now threatened by blindness.

The painting *La Falaise et la Porte d'Aval* by Monet, chosen for the Rivoli house-museum of the Cerruti Collection (a short walk from Castello di Rivoli), was created in the mid-1880s, a period in which the artist travelled extensively, visiting the northern coasts of France several times and, in particular, the site of Étretat, in Normandy, famous for its spectacular cliffs and the characteristic natural stone arch of the Porte d'Aval. Of all the regions visited in that period, the Normandy coast, with its seaside resorts, was undoubtedly the one that fascinated the artist the most. It was during an excursion to Étretat at the beginning of 1883 that, in front of the dramatic rock formations of the Porte d'Aval, Monet began to be interested in the motif of the cliff, also drawing inspiration from the earlier painting by **Gustave Courbet** (Ornans, 1819 - La Tour-de-Peilz, 1877) *La Falaise d'Étretat après l'orage*, 1870, a work well received by critics at the Paris Salon of 1870 and today displayed at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. In fact, Monet wrote to his future wife Alice Hoschedé: "I want to paint a large picture of the cliffs of Étretat, even if it is rather audacious of me to do it after Courbet, who did it in such an admirable way; but I will try to do it differently." Monet dedicated many paintings to the Étretat cliffs, all made between 1883 and 1885, in which he methodically chose to vary not only the time of day and the meteorological conditions of the view, but also the observation point.

Étretat was the place where Monet met the writer Guy de Maupassant (Tourville-sur-Arques, 1850 – Paris, 1893), who later wrote a dazzling portrait of the artist: “I often followed Monet in search of ‘impressions,’ but in truth, he was no longer a painter, but a hunter. He walked, followed by some children who carried his canvases [...]. He took them or left them, following every change in the sky and waited, he spied the sun and the shadows, with a few strokes of the brush he captured the perpendicular ray or the wandering cloud and, having eliminated any delay, he quickly transferred them onto the canvas. Thus I saw him capture a sparkling cascade of light on the white cliff and fix it with a flood of yellow tones that strangely rendered the surprising and fleeting effect of that elusive and blinding reverberation. Another time he took a storm that hit the sea with both hands and threw it onto the canvas. And it was really the rain that he had painted, nothing other than the rain that penetrated the waves, the rocks and the sky barely identifiable under that deluge.”

In *La Falaise et la Porte d’Aval* on view at the Cerruti Collection, the observer’s gaze moves along an arc-shaped trajectory, from the sunlit cliffs in the foreground on the left towards the centre of the composition. A material brushstroke of intense pink marks the gap in the cliff and creates a suggestive chromatic accent, subtly echoed by the reflections that spread on the surface of the water. As in most of the canvases dedicated to the coast, also in this case the painter chose a deserted scene, devoid of human beings, in order to evoke an absolute feeling of contemplative observation of nature. If in Courbet’s painting the elements were clearly traced and rendered figuratively in detail, Monet’s canvas is characterised by the loose brushwork and the rendering of the iridescent luminous effects typical of his work of the 1880s. This movement towards ever greater expressive freedom, accompanied by a progressive detachment from the figurative, would be fully accomplished in the painter’s last canvases, those which, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the now elderly artist dedicated to the water lilies of the Giverny garden.

This painting belonged to the Parisian opera singer Jean-Baptiste Faure (Moulins, 1830 – Paris, 1914), one of the most important and first supporters of the Impressionists, who purchased it in 1886 directly from the artist. At the beginning of the new century, it belonged to the Durand-Ruel gallery in Paris. After passing through various Parisian collections, in the 1970s it was acquired by a private American collector and finally entered the Hasso Plattner Collection in 2010.

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PRESS CONTACTS

Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea Press Office

Manuela Vasco | press@castellodirivoli.org | tel. +39.0119565209 | mob. +39.3930649067

International Communications Advisor for Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea and the Cerruti Collection

Sarah Greenberg | sgreenberg@evergreen-arts.com | tel. +44.7866543242

For press images, please contact: ppanagopoulos@evergreen-arts.com



Partner

INTESA SANBIOLO

