



**NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS
AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE**

VOLUME TWO

Edited by Sarah Lees

With an essay by Richard Rand
and technical reports by Sandra L. Webber

With contributions by Katharine J. Albert, Philippe Bordes, Dan Cohen,
Kathryn Calley Galitz, Alexis Goodin, Marc Gotlieb, John House,
Simon Kelly, Richard Kendall, Kathleen M. Morris, Leslie Hill Paisley,
Kelly Pask, Elizabeth A. Pergam, Kathryn A. Price, Mark A. Roglán,
James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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Details:

TITLE PAGE: Camille Pissarro, *The Louvre from the Pont Neuf* (cat. 253)

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PRECEDING PAGE 474: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Onions* (cat. 280)

PAGES 890–91: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Women of Amphisa* (cat. 3)

the old mounting were preserved. The original strainer was adjusted with a thin solid support layer, covered in linen. The natural resin varnish was also removed. New varnish was applied and inpainting was done to correct the abrasions and a number of small damages to the surface.

The paper support appears to be grounded and has striations running horizontally across the surface, which may reflect the ground application technique, a smoothing tool's marks, or the weave impression. During the last treatment, a graphite inscription "39" was noted on the reverse of the paper support. Under low magnification, a slight graphite line is visible along the ridge of the hill at right. No other underdrawing lines were seen. The paint is applied in thin, vehicular strokes, with tiny, very low impastos.

1. Huntington–Baltimore–Memphis 1990, p. 55.
2. Simon Kelly, e-mail message to the author, 4 Jan. 2006.
3. Schulman 1997–99, vol. 2, p. 46.
4. F. and J. Tempelaere considered the "TH. R" in the lower left to be an estate stamp. Michel Schulman, e-mail message to the author, 23 Dec. 2005, stated not only that the monogram, which is badly abraded, is a false one but that the way the painting is made is not consistent with Rousseau's method. Countering this opinion is that of Sandra Webber, who treated the painting in 2005. Although a number of works Robert Sterling Clark bought have signatures that were added by hands other than the artist's, this painting, in Webber's opinion, does not fall into that category. Webber, e-mail message to the author, 5 Jan. 2006.
5. Quoted in Burty 1868, p. 317; name of student courtesy of Thomas 2000, p. 95, and translation taken in part from Thomas 2000, p. 102. The original French reads: "Ce qui finit un tableau, ce n'est point la quantité des détails, c'est la justesse de l'ensemble. Un tableau n'est pas seulement limité par le cadre. N'importe dans quel sujet, il y a un objet principal sur lequel vos yeux se reposent continuellement; les autres objets n'en sont que le complément; ils vous intéressent moins; après cela, il n'y a plus rien pour votre oeil; voilà la vraie limite du tableau."
6. Paris 1967–68, p. 4, no. 4.
7. None of the 92 paintings individually listed in the artist's posthumous sale catalogue (Lugt 30487) seems to match this one, though no. 92 bis is described as "some studies and sketches painted on paper" (quelques études et esquisses peint sur papier) and might include this work.

298 | Farm in the Landes (La maison du garde)

1844–67

Oil on canvas, 64.8 x 99.1 cm

Lower right: TH · Rousseau

2009.8

In the summer of 1844, Theodore Rousseau visited the remote region of the Landes in southwestern France. This visit inspired one of his most important paintings, *Farm in the Landes*, on which he worked intermittently for approximately two decades until his death in 1867. The artist's biographer, Alfred Sensier, described the picture as "the most elevated expression of his [Rousseau's] art."¹ *Farm in the Landes* served as a crucible for the artist's experimentation with facture and particularly his concept of "universal modeling" whereby the modeling of form, and especially tree form, was placed within a broader metaphysical context. Although Rousseau visited the south of France only on this single six-month visit from April to October 1844, the painting serves as luminous testament to his fascination with the intense light of the region and complicates the view of the artist as a "northern landscape-painter," as first articulated by Charles Baudelaire.² Despite its significance within Rousseau's career, *Farm in the Landes* had been thought to be lost, until it was rediscovered in a Portuguese private collection in 2000.³

Farm in the Landes represents a farm complex (known within the Landes region as an *airial*) in the vicinity of the small village of Bégaar, just a few kilometers north of the Pyrenees and the border with Spain. Although the Landes was best known in the mid-nineteenth century for its desolate marshy expanses, Rousseau focused here on the extreme south of the region where he found more fertile land populated by scattered farms and impressive oak trees. A path leads the eye toward a red-tiled farmhouse past a tall, thatched barn, probably used as a hayloft, in the foreground right. A peasant woman tends cows in the farmyard while, close by, a man fixes a wagon wheel alongside a child. Two ducks and a dog provide further picturesque additions. According to Sensier, Rousseau was impressed by this "rustic Eden" where "man, animals, trees, pastures, fields abounded in a primitive beatitude."⁴ The subject of the work has been discussed as reflecting the artist's "general tenor of conservative nostalgia for a vanishing rustic



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ideal.”⁵ Certainly, Rousseau evokes an idyllic, pastoral vision of rural life at a time when the region of the Landes was, in fact, experiencing rapid change as a result of the establishment of extensive pine plantations. Yet the picture also shows the farm as a working site and alludes, in the inclusion of cows and poultry, to the production of Chalosse beef, cheese, and foie gras for which the region was well known. Rousseau’s composition is dominated by two enormous oaks which stand out sharply against the bright azure sky. Their outlines create a complex and intricate tracery while Rousseau renders their foliage with meticulous, uniform touches. The painting, indeed, serves as an important example of Rousseau’s late “pointillist” touch, which anticipates the later experiments of Seurat and the neo-Impressionists in the 1880s. In

his early career, Rousseau had courted controversy through the vigorous gestural touch of paintings such as *Descent of the Cattle* (c. 1834–36; The Mesdag Collection, The Hague) which had led to his repeated rejection from the Salon. Rousseau’s late style, as embodied by his rendering of tree foliage in *Farm in the Landes*, can be seen as equally controversial.

Farm in the Landes is underpinned by at least two preparatory studies. The earlier is a pencil study (private collection), probably drawn *en plein air* in 1844. The artist then produced a far more ambitious full-scale grisaille oil sketch (fig. 298.1), probably on his return to Paris and perhaps as late as 1847.⁶ Rousseau here carefully rendered the structure of the two large oaks, as well as the subtle tonal range of their foliage, contrasting the slightly darker right-hand

oak with the lighter tree to the foreground left. This grisaille provided a precise compositional foundation for his final picture, and Rousseau later alluded to its value in noting the importance of his “finely gradated sketch” which had allowed him to create a painting that he could choose to make either “conscientiously meditated” or “extremely picturesque.”⁷

In February 1852, *Farm in the Landes* was purchased for three thousand francs by the Alsatian textile industrialist Frédéric Hartmann, who would become Rousseau’s most loyal and important patron of the Second Empire. At the same time, Hartmann also bought a second Landes view, *Marsh in the Landes* (c. 1852; Musée du Louvre, Paris), and considered these two works as pendant pieces. *Marsh in the Landes* was delivered in 1855, but Rousseau worked on *Farm in the Landes* throughout the 1850s, intending to exhibit it at the Salon of 1857 before putting off this plan.⁸ His pupil in the early 1850s, Ludovic Letrône, later remembered that it was intended to show the effect of light at three o’clock in the afternoon.⁹ The painting attracted the praise of his close friend Jean-François Millet, who noted in June 1858 that it was “becoming more and more beautiful.”¹⁰ The artist’s slow progress and refusal to hand over his picture, however, caused growing frustration to Hartmann.¹¹ Rousseau responded to his patron’s concerns in a long letter on 7 September 1858, which explained in some detail the aesthetic behind the work:

Don’t worry about the Farm, my dear Monsieur Hartmann, I insist on establishing in this painting such resolved forms that it can exist independently of caprices of light and the variable effects of the hours of the day. I am refining it absolutely, just as a watchmaker fine tunes a watch after having finished it. . . . This work is for me the subject of serious thought and study both bitter and sweet: sweet in that it results from the most harmonious agreement of my faculties and logically leads me, based on my faith in a first impression, to the realization of form; bitter in that it is out of step with the rapidity of production of our age, and the lightweight judgments that people make of works of art, and also because I have to ask myself for whom I will make such pictures without experiencing the pain of revealing my contemplations for the benefit of any random collector of paintings.¹²



Fig. 298.1 Théodore Rousseau, *Farm in the Landes* (*Grisaille*), c. 1844–47. Oil on canvas, 64 x 98 cm. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (inv. SMK 3269)

Rousseau’s words indicate his aim in *Farm in the Landes* to create “resolved” forms which would have a timeless quality, transcending reference to the specific moment. Such an approach indeed contrasted with much of his earlier work where he had sought to capture transient light effects. Rousseau also compared his meditated and slow progress with the more rapid production of much contemporary art. His protracted efforts also caused him, with Hartmann’s agreement, to increase the price of the work threefold to nine thousand francs.

Rousseau exhibited *Farm in the Landes* at the 1859 Salon and the work was engraved at this time, although the print was given the incorrect title of another of Rousseau’s Salon exhibits, the *Bornage de Barbizon* (Boundary of Barbizon). The artist’s established reputation ensured that he continued to receive some praise—the prominent critic Jules-Antoine Castagnary described him as the “king of landscape”¹³—but the dominant critical reaction was hostile. Most attacked his “pointillist” facture. Henri Delaborde, for example, compared his handling to the “stitches of a tapestry,” a comparison which would be frequently repeated in the discourse around his late work.¹⁴ Others attacked the garish color and “flatness” of the composition. The critic Charles Perrier noted that the central trees “stand out against the blue sky with a harsh green silhouette which is an affront to truth and good taste at the same time” and went on that they had “no consistency. These are sheets of paper cut out with jagged edges.”¹⁵ The

nineteen-year-old Claude Monet, visiting the Salon for the first time, praised the detail of Rousseau's painting but felt that this was at the expense of the overall compositional ensemble.¹⁶ The young critic Zacharie Astruc was one of the few positive voices, describing the criticism of the artist as "extremely unfair" and "malicious" and noting that Rousseau had "the meticulous patience of a brush magisterially worked but not yet in full possession of its future power," a quality that might be exemplified by *Farm in the Landes*, which he called "an experimental work."¹⁷

Rousseau continued to revise the picture after the Salon and, in the early 1860s, focused his experiment not only on *Farm in the Landes* but also on the *The Village of Becquigny* (1857–67; The Frick Collection, New York) and *The Communal Oven in the Landes* (1844–67; Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts). Sensier called these three works his "trinity of torments" and described their development as an "aerial tragedy" as Rousseau's paintings shifted from dark to light and back again.¹⁸ Hartmann remained the artist's most important financial backer of the early 1860s and a loyal supporter, but his correspondence between 1860 and 1865 consists of a remarkable litany of rebukes around Rousseau's progress on these pictures.¹⁹ Hartmann wanted to see *Farm in the Landes* with "an overall luminous tone"²⁰ and attacked Rousseau's reworking and particularly, as he noted on at least two occasions, the "excessively uniform" touch. He also reiterated that Rousseau's obsessive revisions had caused a loss of the painting's original sense of freshness, a loss of the "first impression . . . under the monotony of work."²¹ Rousseau, for his part, chose largely to ignore these criticisms and instead stubbornly pursued his experiment, retaining his meticulous finish. Shut away in his studio, he obsessively revised the *Farm in the Landes* and even noted that it would be worth spending his entire career on this single painting, were he to fully realize his aims.²² Over time, indeed, he developed an overall blondness of color and tone in the treatment of tree foliage which is rather different from the wider range of tones in the grisaille study. Rousseau's obsession with capturing an effect of intense light was not simply a formal concern but reflected a broader understanding of light as having a metaphysical dimension. In modeling his trees, he emphasized his aim to create "the modeled form of the universal."²³ For Rousseau, the careful representation of atmospheric luminosity referenced a universal truth behind appearances. This deeply

meditated, spiritual quality to Rousseau's approach sets his landscapes apart from those of his colleagues such as Camille Corot or Charles-François Daubigny and provides another layer of resonance to *Farm in the Landes* beyond its picturesque subject matter and qualities of formal innovation.

Farm in the Landes remained in Rousseau's studio until his death. Sensier noted that it appeared there "as an unfinished work" (perhaps it was still on Rousseau's easel) but that, for everyone else, it was "a work on which the final accent had been placed."²⁴ At the artist's death, the patient Hartmann was finally able to collect a painting which he had first purchased some fifteen years before. Soon after, he commissioned Jean-François Millet to make some finishing touches to the picture, as well as to *The Communal Oven in the Landes* and *The Village de Becquigny*.²⁵ Although Millet's correspondence later references his work on the latter two paintings, it remains impossible to verify whether Millet also worked on *Farm in the Landes*.²⁶ The picture was subsequently regularly referenced in the literature around Rousseau and was even included in an exhibition that traveled in South and North America for nearly seven years during World War II, before its subsequent disappearance in the latter part of the twentieth century. Its reemergence ensures that *Farm in the Landes* can now be fully appreciated as a seminal work within Rousseau's career which complicates the received idea of the artist as a pre-Impressionist, spontaneous, plein-air painter and instead presents him as a far more complex and obsessive artist. SK

PROVENANCE The artist (sold to Hartmann, Feb. 1852); Jacques-Félix-Frédéric Hartmann, Münster and Paris (1852–d. 1880, his sale, 18 rue de Courcelles, Paris, 7 May 1881, no. 16, ill. [print by Masson after the painting], sold to or bought in by Julie Hartmann); Julie Hartmann (Julie-Aimée Sanson-Davillier), his wife (1881–1907, sold to Brame, 24 Dec. 1907); [Galerie Brame, Paris, 1907–9, sold to Baillehache, 6 May 1909]; Alfred Baillehache (from 1909); vicomte de Curel, Paris (his sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 3 May 1918, no. 16, as *La Maison du garde*, possibly sold to Gerard);²⁷ L. Tauber, Paris (by 1938–d. before 1945); Baveret, Paris, by descent from Tauber (from c. 1945);²⁸ private collection, Paris; private collection, Portugal (sale, Christie's, London, 26 June 2007, no. 206, sold to Matthiesen); [The Matthiesen Gallery, London, 2007–9, sold to the Clark, 30 Sept. 2009]; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2009.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1859, no. 2637, as *Ferme dans les Landes*; Paris 1885a, no. 421, as *Forêt de Fontainebleau*; la

Maison du garde, lent by Hartmann; Paris 1889b, no. 600, as *Maison de garde dans la forêt de Fontainebleau*;²⁹ Paris 1892c, p. 165, no. 92, ill. opposite p. 12, as *La maison du garde*, lent by Mme Hartmann; Fontainebleau 1938, no. 39, as *La maison du garde (forêt de Fontainebleau)*, lent by Tauber; Paris 1939, no. 53, as *Dépendance de la ferme*; Buenos Aires and others 1939–46, no. 120, as *La Granja en las Landas*, lent by Tauber (San Francisco ed., no. 95, as *The Forester's House*, lent by Tauber; Chicago ed., no. 140, as *The Forester's House*, lent by Tauber; Los Angeles ed., no. 119, as *The Forester's House*, lent by Tauber; Portland ed., no. 98, as *The Forester's House*, lent by Tauber).

REFERENCES Baschet 1854, p. 98, as *Scène de ferme des Landes*; Astruc 1859, p. 245; Bernard 1859, p. 165, ill. (print by Charles Maurand after the painting), as *Bornage de Barbizon (forêt de Fontainebleau)*;³⁰ Cantrel 1859, pp. 33–34; Castagnary 1859, pp. 84–85; Dumesnil 1859, pp. 29–30; Du Pays 1859, p. 340; Gautier 1859, pp. 195, 422n17, fig. 164 (print after the painting), as *Bornage de Barbizon (forêt de Fontainebleau)*; Habeneck 1859, p. 239; Jourdan 1859, p. 136; Dumas 1859, pp. 82–85; Lépineois 1859, pp. 213–14; Perrier 1859, p. 319; Thierray 1859, p. 261; Paris 1867d, p. 33, as *Bornage de Barbizon*; Sensier 1872, pp. 145, 219, 221, 241–42, 281, 285–86, 289, 292–93, 306, 368; Amand-Durand and Sensier 1876, pl. 20; Dayot 1890, p. 106; Mollett 1890, pp. 80–82, 121; Lafenestre 1900, p. 385; Gensel 1902, p. 86, fig. 6; Tomson 1903, pp. 198–200; Dorbec 1910, pp. 83, 85, 100, ill.; Moreau-Nélaton 1921, vol. 2, pp. 35, 51; Miquel 1975, vol. 3, pp. 465–67; Schulman 1997–99, vol. 2, pp. 183, 367, no. 271, ill.; Thomas 2000, pp. 61, 109–10, 143, 145–47, 206, fig. 62; Kelly 2000, pp. 551–54, 558–60, fig. 10; Kelly 2001, pp. 687–90, fig. 24; Matthiesen Fine Art 2009, pp. 14–35, ill.; Miller 2010; Sargos 2010, p. 133, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a moderately coarse linen whose thread count is inaccessible. It has an old glue lining with a fine-weight canvas having a weave of 25 x 31 threads per cm. The mortise-and-tenon stretcher may be original. A slight bulge occurs at the lower left edge, and the bottom edge of paint has a furrow from tight early framing. There are a few transferred flakes of paint and a few rough, disturbed paint areas, probably earlier damages, one just above the signature and another at the right edge, in the building's roof. There is an unfilled loss in the left tree. Long, primarily vertical, cupped age cracks cover the surface. The foliage and foreground have numerous short, branched traction cracks which all appear dark brown, possibly revealing a brown toner layer below the paint, which may have been further darkened by the lining glue. The painting has been unevenly cleaned, and the surface has an irregular sheen, with the lower two-thirds being quite shiny and yellow. Where the varnish is untouched, it retains a separate crackle network, suggesting that this varnish may be original to the painting. The upper portions of the foliage have been damaged by solvent, which has removed several thin glaze col-

ors. The painting's edges are retouched, along with a spot in the upper left sky. There are deposits of cotton lint stuck in the partially cleaned surface.

There appear to be several layers of white oil-based ground, visible only in the sky. The upper ground layer may be artist-applied, as it forms a pattern of coarse uneven strokes in parts of the sky. Alternately, this visible white layer may be part of a first version of the sky colors, as the sky has been changed several times. No underdrawing was detected. There may be a brown imprimatura or sketch layer below the foliage areas. The sky is very heavily applied and shows several thick color changes at the edges of brushstrokes. One set of brush marks in the upper sky layer fluoresces in ultraviolet light as if it contains zinc white or yellow, and this does not seem to be a pigment used elsewhere. The foliage appears to be built up with resinous layers and glazes. There is also evidence that the dog in the center foreground was reworked before the present varnish was applied. All of these alterations happened before the paint cracked, so they appear to be contemporary with the artist.

1. Sensier 1872, p. 286: "l'expression la plus haute de son art."
2. Baudelaire 1846; translation from Mayne 1965, p. 109.
3. See Kelly 2001, p. 687–90.
4. Sensier 1872, p. 144: "Eden rustique . . . L'homme, les animaux, les arbres, les pâturages, les jardins y foisonnaient dans une béatitude primitive."
5. See Thomas 2000, p. 146.
6. The sketch is dated 1847 and described as the basis for the present painting in Paris 1867d, pp. 32–33, no. 61. This catalogue was written by Philippe Burty although Rousseau provided some assistance. If the dating is correct, Rousseau may not have begun his painting of *Farm in the Landes* until at least 1847. We cannot be sure of the exact date that Rousseau began the painting; the dating of the work to 1844 depends principally on Sensier's commentary on the Landes trip. See Sensier 1872, p. 145: "It is then he began to paint the *Farm* and the *Communal Oven*, two motifs that he had before him" ("C'est alors qu'il se mit à peindre la *Ferme* et le *Four communal*, deux motifs qu'il avait sous la main").
7. Théodore Rousseau to Frédéric Hartmann, 19 April 1859, in Sensier 1872, p. 289: "ébauche bien graduée"; "extrêmement pittoresque"; "consciencieusement réfléchi." The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 408, A 3661).
8. See Jean-François Millet to Théodore Rousseau, 22 April 1857, in Moreau-Nélaton 1921, vol. 2, p. 35: "Your painting *The Farm* will no doubt be finished" ("Votre tableau *la Ferme* sera sans doute fini"). The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 239, A 1783). See also Baschet 1854, p. 98: "Next year you will see . . . a Farm Scene in the Landes" ("Vous verrez l'année prochaine . . . une *Scène de ferme des Landes*"). This

- suggests that it was considered almost finished even earlier.
9. Ludovic Letrône to Philippe Burty, 1868: “Effet trois heures du soir.” For a reproduction of this letter, see Chillaz 1997, p. 420. The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, pp. 419–21, A 3832).
 10. Jean-François Millet to Théodore Rousseau, June 1858, in Moreau-Nélaton 1921, vol. 2, p. 51: “Il paraît que votre *Ferme* devient de plus en plus belle.” The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 243, A1828).
 11. See Frédéric Hartmann to Théodore Rousseau, 18 Aug. 1858. Hartmann asked Rousseau to deliver the completed *Ferme dans les Landes*, “which was almost finished at the time of my hurried departure from Paris,” to the patron’s Boulevard Poissonnière apartment (“livrer à mon appartement du Boulevard Poissonnière, no. 23, la ferme dans les Landes, qui était presque terminé lors de mon départ précipité de Paris”). The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 155, A 1014).
 12. Théodore Rousseau to Frédéric Hartmann, 7 Sept. 1858: “Ne soyez pas inquiet de la Ferme, mon cher monsieur Hartmann, je tiens à établir dans ce tableau une telle décision de formes, qu’elle puisse exister indépendante des caprices de la lumière et de l’inégalité de l’influence des heures du jour. Je la règle absolument comme un horloger règle une montre après l’avoir finie. . . . Cet ouvrage est pour moi l’objet d’une pensée sérieuse et d’une étude à la fois douce et amère; douce en ce qu’elle émane de l’accord la plus harmonique de mes facultés, et m’entraîne logiquement, sur la foi d’une impression première, à la réalisation de la forme; amère en ce qu’elle est en désaccord avec la rapidité de la production de notre époque, avec le jugement léger que l’on fait des oeuvres d’art, et aussi parce que j’ai à me demander pour qui je ferai désormais de pareils tableaux sans éprouver la peine de livrer tout mon recueillement de n’importe quel collectionneur de tableaux.” The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 408, A 3656).
 13. Castagnary 1859, p. 81: “le roi du paysage.”
 14. Delaborde 1859, p. 518: “Mr. Rousseau who, thanks to his preoccupation with insignificant tones, has come to proceed invariably with small touches, juxtaposed like the stitches of a tapestry” (“M. Rousseau, qui, à force de se préoccuper des tons de détail, en est venu à procéder invariablement par petites touches, juxtaposés comme des points de tapisserie”).
 15. Perrier 1859, p. 319: “découpent sur le ciel bleu une silhouette verte d’une crudité qui choque à la fois la vérité et le bon goût”; “aucune consistance. Ce sont des feuilles de papier déchiquetées et dentelées.”
 16. Claude Monet to Eugène Boudin, 3 June 1859, in Wildenstein 1974–91, vol. 1, p. 419, letter 2: “Rousseau’s large painting, [The Oaks], is too big. It’s a bit muddled. It’s better in the details than overall” (“Le grand tableau de Rousseau, *Les Chiens [sic]*, est trop grand. Il est un peu confus. Il est mieux en détail qu’en ensemble”).
 17. Astruc 1859, p. 244: “fort injuste . . . malveillante . . . la minutieuse patience d’un pinceau magistralement exercé—mais non encore en complète possession de sa future puissance . . . Une œuvre de recherche.”
 18. Sensier 1872, p. 292–93: “trinité de tourments”; “tragédie aérienne.”
 19. For Hartmann’s correspondence with Rousseau, see Kelly 2000.
 20. Frédéric Hartmann to Théodore Rousseau, 5 August 1862: “un ton lumineux général.” The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (A 1025). See also Kelly 2000, p. 559.
 21. Frédéric Hartmann to Théodore Rousseau, 9 Oct. 1860 and 7 March 1861: “travail uniforme et trop égal”; “l’impression première . . . sous la monotonie du travail.” The letters are now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 155, A 1019–20). See also Kelly, 2000, p. 559.
 22. Sensier 1872, pp. 286–87.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 280: “modelé de l’universel.”
 24. Amand-Durand and Sensier 1876, no. 20: “A sa mort ce tableau était encore dans son atelier comme une oeuvre non terminée. Et cependant il apparaît à tous comme une peinture à laquelle on a mis le dernier accent.”
 25. Frédéric Hartmann to Jean-François Millet, 25 March, 1868: “It’s understood, moreover, that for the price mentioned above [25,000 francs for Millet’s series of *Four Seasons* paintings], you would give to my three paintings by Rousseau as much the appearance of finished works as is possible” (“Il a été de plus entendu que pour la somme ci-dessus mentionnée vous donneriez autant que faire se peut à mes 3 tableaux de Rousseau l’aspect d’oeuvres terminées”). The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre (Chillaz, 1997, p. 154, A 1007). Millet responded shortly after: “I will do for the paintings of Théodore Rousseau, have no doubt, everything that I think I can do” (“Je ferai aux tableaux de Théodore Rousseau, n’en doutez point. tout ce que je croirai pouvoir y faire”). The letter is now in the Musée du Louvre (Chillaz 1997, p. 278, A 2209).
 26. Jean-François Millet to Alfred Sensier, 31 Dec. 1868: “I have done to two pictures of Rousseau, Le Four and Le Village, more or less everything I dared to do. It seems to me that they are now acceptable” (“J’ai fait aux deux tableaux de Rousseau, le Four et Le Village à peu près tout ce que j’ose y faire. Il me semble qu’ils sont devenus passable”). This letter is also in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Chillaz 1997, p. 281, A 2240). See also Kelly 2000, p. 558n48. Millet does not, however, mention *Farm in the Landes*, the third picture in Rousseau’s “trinity of torments.” The current physical state of the *Farm in the Landes* does allow for the possibility of some reworking by another hand contemporary with the artist, but the proof is inconclusive (see Technical Report).
 27. The 1918 sale has been identified as the collection of Marie-Albert, vicomte de Curel (1827–1908). See online information from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, which owns three paintings from his collection.

The owner up to 1918, however, has been identified by the Matthiesen Gallery as François, vicomte de Curel (1854–1928), Marie-Albert’s son. This suggests that Marie-Albert never owned the painting, but that François de Curel included it in the 1918 sale of his father’s collection. Note that the sale was postponed from 3 May to 25 Nov. 1918.

28. Tauber lent this painting to the exhibition organized by the French government in 1939 that traveled to South and then North American museums (Buenos Aires and others 1939–46). Tauber died before the end of World War II, and when the painting returned from Washington, it was restituted to his heir, Monsieur Baveret. For further details see Matthiesen Fine Art 2009.
29. No. 600 in Paris 1889b is titled *Maison de garde* while no. 611 is titled *La Ferme dans les Landes*. Dayot 1890, p. 107 and Lafenestre 1900, p. 385, annotate no. 611 as having been in the Salon of 1859, but they also state that no. 611 was lent to Paris 1889b by Tabourier, while no. 600 was lent by Mme Hartmann. Based on this information, the Clark painting is likely to be no. 600 and not no. 611.
30. Misidentified as no. 2640 in the 1859 Salon, which is the source of the title *Bornage de Barbizon*.

299 | The Farm (Cottage at the Edge of a Marsh)
c. 1860

Oil on panel, 21.8 x 29.2 cm
Lower left: TH. Rousseau
1955.849

It has become a commonplace to invoke landscapes of seventeenth-century Holland when discussing the paintings of Théodore Rousseau, Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña, and Constant Troyon, and for good reason. In their interest in depicting their native countries, both groups of artists validated the local at the expense of the foreign and the present at the expense of the past or the imaginary. Because the seventeenth-century model was ever present for the nineteenth-century painters, pictures like *The Farm* must be seen through a scrim of precedent.

Rousseau owned a painting by Jan van Goyen, which he had his pupil Ludovic Letrône copy before allowing him to paint out of doors. Rousseau spoke often of Rembrandt van Rijn, Meindert Hobbema, and Claude Lorrain, Letrône reported to Philippe Burty. The painting by Van Goyen was used to teach the student about space. Van Goyen, Rousseau said, “did not

need a lot of color to give the idea of space.”¹ Nor did Rousseau. Like the seventeenth-century Dutch, Rousseau was able to suggest a vast expanse of undistinguished marshy terrain. The enormous sky makes everything beneath it seem small. The thin paint in the fore- and middle ground functions as an analogue for the equally thin, watery ground, more mud than soil. A path cuts across the foreground, skirting open water. Along it walks a solitary woman, her small size emphasizing the immensity of the space.

The woman’s destination is the cottage with smoking chimney to the left, sheltered among trees. It is the end of the day. Clouds are tinged pink by the setting sun, which backlights the tree in the left foreground. Although it is a peaceful scene, the enormity of the space, the tininess of the woman, and the isolation of the cottage suggest the inconsequence of human presence on earth. This is what Greg Thomas calls Rousseau’s “ecological vision,” wherein “people appear to be peripheral participants in an ideal, self-ordering, organic network of interdependent natural processes.”² Even when people are present in Rousseau’s paintings, they serve a symbolic rather than a narrative function. The woman here, in conjunction with the cottage and its smoking chimney, represents domesticity. The tiny size of her person and the position of the cottage among trees underscore the elements that are truly important, the huge vault of the sky and the breadth and depth of the land. Mankind and the built environment find their places in the immensity of nature as best they can.

Such a removal of humankind from the center of artistic and intellectual focus was necessarily melancholic. Charles Baudelaire understood the emotion Rousseau’s landscapes evoked:

*It is as difficult to interpret M. Rousseau’s talent in words as it is to interpret that of Delacroix, with whom he has other affinities also. M. Rousseau is a northern landscape-painter. His painting breathes a great sigh of melancholy. He loves nature in her bluish moments—twilight effects—strange and moisture-laden sunsets—massive, breeze-haunted shades—great plays of light and shadow.*³

But whereas Baudelaire appreciated the sadness implicit in Rousseau’s depiction of the inexorability of nature, he sometimes failed to see the radicalness of Rousseau’s achievement: