

Yan Pei-Ming / Courbet

PRESS RELEASE
July 2019

Face to face

12 October 2019 - 19 January 2020



Petit Palais
Musée des Beaux-Arts
de la Ville de Paris

Tuesday - Sunday, 10 am - 6 pm
Open late: Friday until 9 pm

INFORMATION

www.petitpalais.paris.fr

On the occasion of Courbet's Bicentenary, the Petit Palais is pleased to introduce *Yan Pei-Ming / Courbet, Face to face*, from the 12th of October 2019 to the 19th of January 2020, following the exhibition presented this summer at the Courbet Museum in Ornans. Around ten works by Gustave Courbet will be exhibited, all from the collection of the Petit Palais, facing fifteen monumental paintings by Yan Pei-Ming, mostly made in Courbet's workshop in Ornans.

The Petit Palais has one of the largest collections of paintings by Gustave Courbet thanks to purchases made by the City of Paris starting from the end of the 19th century, enriched at the beginning of the 20th century with the donations of his sister, Juliette Courbet and the art critic Théodore Duret. The exhibition includes major works by the leader of Realist artists such as *Le Sommeil*, *Les Demoiselles de Bord de Seine*, *Proudhon et ses enfants*, *L'Autoportrait au chien*, as well as *La sieste pendant la saison des foins...* Yan Pei-Ming discovered the work of the French painter in a black and white propaganda book during his first years of studies in China. Settled in France since 1980, he rediscovered the work of the artist for whom he has developed a great fascination. In this exhibition presented in the large formats gallery of the Petit Palais, the materiality of Yan Pei-Ming's and Gustave Courbet's paintings interact with each other.



Yan Pei-Ming, *L'artiste à 58 ans, Yan Pei-Ming*
2019, huile sur toile, 400 x 300 cm
Photographie : André Morin
© Yan Pei-Ming, ADAGP, Paris, 2019

Primarily, the thickness of Gustave Courbet's touch echoes Yan Pei-Ming's energetic brushstroke, which favours feeling rather than defined visualization. Then, through the choice of classical subjects such as portraits, nudes, landscapes and animals, themes that are also found in Courbet's work, the Franco-Chinese artist seeks to create contextual and allegorical connections with the master. Courbet sought to reveal mankind through its troubles, its memories and nostalgia with a precision that allowed an authentic sentimental gush. Yan Pei-Ming has a similar artistic approach, where memory and intimacy hold a significant role (*Oncle aveugle*, 2019).

The exhibited works have a strong emotional charge in the enlightenment of their respective personal stories. The work *L'artiste à 58 ans, Yan Pei-Ming* (2019) is a true *mise en abîme* of the artist's position in front of Courbet whom he considers as a revolutionary painter in his approach to subjects. In this self-portrait, he pays tribute to Courbet by reproducing a portrait from the artist's last known photograph before his death at 58 years old. "Every morning I took my coffee in my bathrobe in Courbet's workshop. I lived, like him, in the adjoining house. Courbet died at 58, I'm 58." By reinterpreting the works of the great master, Yan Pei-Ming began a deep questioning of classical painting while paying tribute to it.

Yan Pei-Ming is the first artist who has been in residence in Courbet's workshop where the presence of the artist is, according to him, still very strong. Represented in major public collections such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Centre Pompidou and the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris, his work will be shown for the first time at the Petit Palais. Known for his monochromatic palette and vigorous touch, Yan Pei-Ming now lives and works in Dijon. Former resident of the Villa Médicis in 1993, he gained international recognition after his distinguished participation at the Venice Biennale in 2003.

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