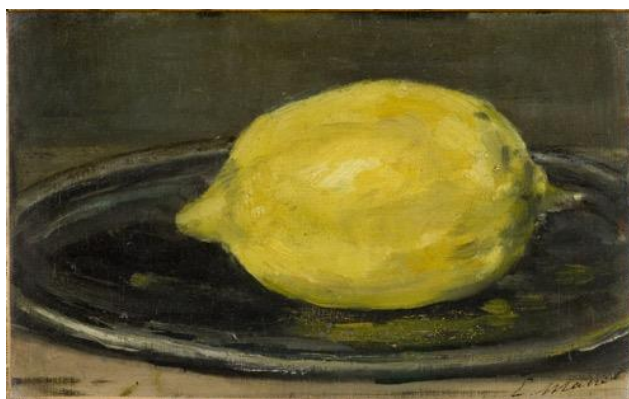


From Ferdinando de' Medici to Edouard Manet: The Lemon, the Object of All Passions

Le Citron by Edouard Manet: exceptional loan from the Musée d'Orsay exhibited at Villa Medici

March 1 to May 19, 2024



Édouard Manet, *Le Citron (The Lemon)*, 1880, oil on canvas, 14 x 22 cm. Paris, Musée d'Orsay. Bequest of Count Isaac de Camondo, 1911 © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Patrice Schmidt

An iconic citrus fruit of the Mediterranean landscape, the lemon is featured in Villa Medici's spring program thanks to the exceptional loan from the **Musée d'Orsay** of the work ***Le Citron (The Lemon)*** painted by **Edouard Manet** in 1880, exhibited for three months in the Cardinal de' Medici's historic rooms, the highlight of the guided tour of Villa Medici.

The silent presence of the *Lemon*, which seems to summon all the senses, will be part of a writing residency in April by French author and philosopher **Vinciane Despret** in pursuit of what the fruit may reveal.

This citrus-focused program will explore the fruit's historical, artistic, and culinary dimensions through multi-disciplinary events, including a research workshop on *The Power of Citrus*, organized by Villa Medici's Art History Department.

In the 16th century, orange, lemon, sour orange, and citron trees were abundant in the vast garden of the estate acquired by Ferdinando I de' Medici in 1576. Carefully tended by gardeners to preserve their size and flavor, citrus fruits supplied Ferdinando I de' Medici's table, while their blossoms and peels could be candied, pickled, or transformed into fragrant oils and distilled in the palace's *fonderia*. In particular, the citron, or *mala medica*, was cultivated for its pharmacological virtues: it relieved fevers and could neutralize poisons. Today, visitors to Villa

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Medici are reminded of the precious citrus fruit when they contemplate the painted vault of the *stanza degli uccelli* ("bird room"), Ferdinando's private study.

From Rome to Paris, from one citrus passion to another: three centuries after the birth of Ferdinando I de' Medici's fruit collection, Edouard Manet (Paris, 1832-1883) painted *Le Citron*. Despite its modest size (14 x 22 cm), this painting is one of the powerful still lifes by the painter who claimed to be the "Saint Francis of the still life." Here, the painter has isolated the yellow-hued fruit on a sober, black-glazed ceramic saucer that brings out the essential: its strident color, texture, and simplicity.

In 2024, the French Ministry of Culture and the Musée d'Orsay will be celebrating 150 years of Impressionism. In conjunction with the exhibition *Paris 1874. Inventer l'impressionnisme (Paris 1874: Inventing Impressionism)*, to be held in Paris, some 180 works exceptionally loaned by the Musée d'Orsay are to be discovered in over 30 museums in France. Manet's *Le Citron* will thus be in the spotlight at Villa Medici, forging a link with the Medici family's passion for citrus fruit.

Vinciane Despret, in writing residency at Villa Medici in April



Vinciane Despret is a philosopher, psychologist and professor at the University of Liège in Belgium. After discovering the work of ethologists, she turned her attention to the philosophy of science. Examining and questioning our relationship with animals is at the heart of her work.

Her many publications include *Quand le loup habitera avec l'agneau (When the Wolf Also Shall Dwell with the Lamb, 2004)*, *Penser comme un rat (To Think Like a Rat, 2009)*, *Le Chez-Soi des animaux (The Animals' Home, 2017)*, *Que diraient les animaux... si on leur posait les bonnes questions ? (What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?, 2018)* and *Habiter en oiseau (Living as a Bird, 2019)*. Vinciane Despret has joined forces with Bento Architects to curate Belgium's pavilion at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. Portrait of Vinciane Despret by Sylvère Petit.

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Villa Medici's citrus programming is supported by the Fondation G. Lambert, Amundi, and Van Cleef & Arpels.

The exhibition of Manet's *Le Citron* at Villa Medici is made possible thanks to an exceptional loan from the Musée d'Orsay:



About the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, founded in 1666 by King Louis XIV, is a French institution that has been housed since 1803 at the Villa Medici, a 16th-century villa surrounded by a seven-hectare park on Mount Pincio in the heart of Rome. A national public institution under the authority of the French Ministry of Culture, it fulfills three complementary missions: to welcome artists, creators, and art historians of the highest caliber in residence for long stays of one year or more; to set up a cultural and artistic program that integrates all fields of the arts and creation aimed at a broad public; to conserve, restore, study, and make its built and landscape heritage, as well as its collections, known to the public.

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