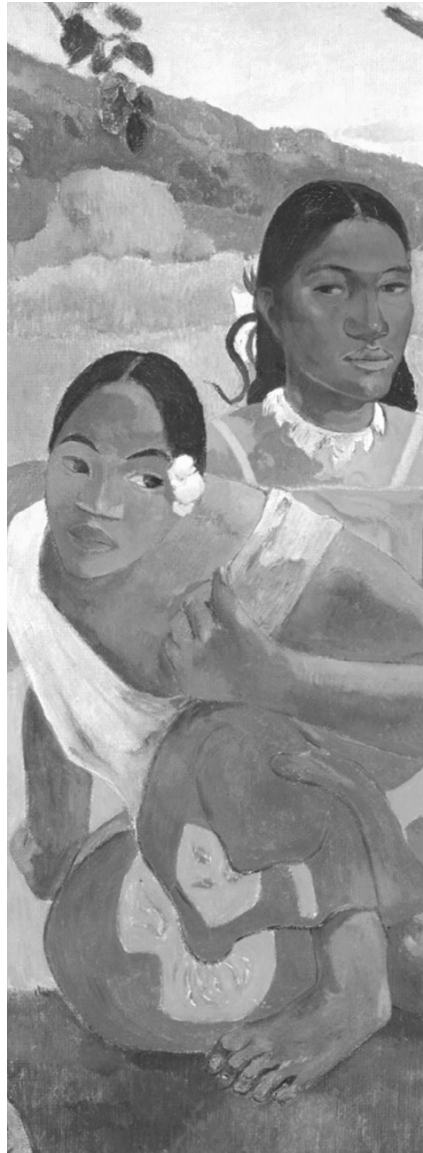


French Connections



9. Scent of the South

April 16, 2025

9. Scent of the South

THIS IS ADVERTISED AS A CLASS ABOUT FRENCH ARTISTS INFLUENCED BY CULTURES TO THE SOUTH AND EAST OF THEM. And it is that. But it is also about how what we imagine about a distant place and what we actually find when we go there are two quite different things.

Why these differences? Perhaps because the place we want to see is inaccessible to us on account of our sex or culture, as is the case with Western contact with the Islamic world. Perhaps because it is too far away to allow for easy travel, as used to be the case with India. Perhaps because the sounds, colors, and rhythms that attract us are only a part of a more humdrum whole, as is the case with the French experience of Spain. Perhaps because the corrupting aspects of the everyday world got there before we did, as with Gauguin in Tahiti. Or perhaps because we imagine other places, other paradises, that we half know will never exist in reality.... *rb.*

A. Women of Algiers

We begin with detailed study of a single picture, *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*, painted by Delacroix after visiting Algeria in 1832.

Delacroix: *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* (1834, Louvre)

Delacroix: Algerian sketchbooks

B. The East, Westernized

The scholar Edward W. Saïd coined the term *Orientalism* to cover European representations of the Arab world that are merely depictions of Western assumptions and fantasies, fleshed out by a few props.

Gérôme: *La danse de l'almée*

♪ **Mozart:** *Die Entführung* (Glyndebourne 2015; Franck Saurel, *Pasha*; Sally Matthews, *Konstanze*; David McVicar d.)

Regnault: *Summary Execution* [in] *Granada* (1870, Orsay)

Chasseriau: [title withheld] (1841, Louvre)

Chasseriau: *Nude in a Harem* (1852, pc.)

Ingres: *The Valpinçon baigneuse* (1808, Louvre)

Ingres: *La grande odalisque* (1814, Louvre)

Ingres: *The Turkish Bath* (1863, Louvre)

Delacroix: *Woman with a Parrot* (1827, Lyon)

♪ **Odalique montage** (music by Saint-Saens)

C. Musical Journeys

The remainder of this class will consist mainly of musical examples, with some visual artworks thrown in. We start where we left off, with musical depictions of the Islamic world.

♪ **Saint-Saens:** *Suite Algérienne*, excerpt

♪ **Bizet:** *Djamileh*, dance (Marie Gautrot, *Djamileh*)

D. Passage to India

Few 19th-century French artists actually traveled to India, but that did not stop a fantasy version being used as a setting for opera.

♪ **Delibes:** *Lakmé*, flower duet (Australian Opera)

♪ **Delage:** *Four Hindu Poems*, promo (Julia Bullock, Simon Rattle)

E. España

Representations of Spain were all the rage in the French musical world of the later 19th century. We sample an overture, a concerto, and a ballet.

Manet: Matador paintings

♪ **Chabrier:** *España*, opening (Alain Altinoglu, Frankfurt)

♪ **Lalo:** *Symphonie Espagnole*, last mvt. (Augustin Hadelich)

♪ **Ravel/Béjart:** *Boléro*, ending (Sylvie Guillem in Tokyo)

F. Some Distant Land...

Beginning at least with Baudelaire's 1857 poem *L'invitation au voyage*, later French Romantics have been inspired by a yearning for some distant Eden of their imagination. Some artists sought it in the South of France; Paul Gauguin looked in the South Pacific and, like Delacroix in Algeria, made up what he could not find.

Matisse: *Luxe, calme, et volupté* (1904, Paris Orsay)

♪ **Duparc:** *L'invitation au voyage* (Gérard Souzay)

♪ **Ferré:** *L'invitation au voyage*

Signac: *Port d'Antibes* (1917)

Signac: *In the Time of Harmony* (c.1895, Montreuil City Hall)

Gauguin: *By the Sea* (1887, pc.)

Gauguin: *The Yellow Christ* (1889, Buffalo)

Gauguin: *Two Tahitian Women on the Beach* (1891, Paris Orsay)

Gauguin: *Mahana no Atua* (Day of the God, 1894, Chicago)

♪ **Weill/Fernay:** *Youkali* (Barbara Hannigan)

Charles **Baudelaire** (1821–67, *French poet*), Maurice **Béjart** (1927–2007, *French choreographer*), Georges **Bizet** (1838–75, *French composer*), Emmanuel **Chabrier** (1841–94, *French composer*), Théodore **Chasseriau** (1819–56, *French painter*), Claude **Debussy** (1862–1918, *French composer*), Eugène **Delacroix** (1798–1863, *French painter*), Maurice **Delage** (1879–1961, *French composer*), Léo **Delibes** (1836–91, *French painter*), Léo **Ferré** (1916–93, *French singer-songwriter*), Paul **Gauguin** (1848–1903, *French painter*), Jean-Léon **Gérôme** (1824–1904, *French painter*), Antoine-Jean **Gros** (1771–1835, *French painter*), Jean-Auguste-Dominique **Ingres** (1780–1867, *French painter*), Édouard **Lalo** (1823–92, *French composer*), Édouard **Manet** (1832–83, *French painter*), Henri **Matisse** (1869–1954, *French painter*), Wolfgang Amadeus **Mozart** (1756–91, *Austrian composer*), Maurice **Ravel** (1875–1937, *French composer*), Henri **Regnault** (1843–71, *French painter*), Edward W. **Saïd** (1935–2003, *Palestinian-American writer*), Camille **Saint-Saëns** (1835–1931, *French composer*), Paul **Signac** (1863–1935, *French painter*), Kurt **Weill** (1900–50, *German composer*)