

**Family Activity | National Gallery of Art**

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# **Forest of Fontainebleau GUIDEBOOK**





## ENTRANCE

# Welcome to the Forest of Fontainebleau

> Find *Bazille and Camille (Study for "Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe")* by Claude Monet.

This picture shows tourists enjoying a day in the Forest of Fontainebleau (pronounced **fawn-ten-bloh**). Located 35 miles southeast of Paris, it was a popular place for both tourists and artists to visit in the nineteenth century.

To explore this magnificent forest, turn the page and enter the exhibition *In the Forest of Fontainebleau: Painters and Photographers from Corot to Monet*.

**Remember: Explore the paintings with your eyes only, and do not touch them. (If you stand about three feet away from the art, you'll actually have a better view!)**

This guidebook is designed for children (ages 6 and up) and adults to use together. The center spread has an activity specifically designed for younger children.

ROOM 1: DISCOVERY OF THE FOREST



### Guidebooks

> Find the guidebooks and maps in the case in the center of the room.

Beginning in 1849, travelers could take an hour-long train ride from the bustling streets of Paris to the Forest of Fontainebleau. There they could spend the day surrounded by nature. Using guidebooks like these, visitors followed carefully marked trails, which led them past the forest’s most beloved sites: ancient trees, massive rock formations, mossy ponds, and scenic cliffs. Along the paths were clearings where visitors could relax underneath shade trees to sketch, read, or eat a picnic lunch.

**Discuss:** What are some of the items that you might need to take with you on a hike into the forest?

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### Artistic Explorations

In the nineteenth century more than seven hundred artists went to the forest to work **en plein air** (outdoors). New tools—including portable easels and already-mixed paint in metal tubes—made it possible for artists to carry their equipment deep into the rugged woods. Fontainebleau became an “open-air studio” where artists could study a unique landscape and experiment with new techniques and subjects. Photographers and painters often worked together in the forest, sharing ideas about their art and inspiring one another.



**Wander** around this room and stop at these examples of painting and photography.

> Find *An Artist Painting in the Forest of Fontainebleau* by Augustin Entantin.

**Think about:** What might this artist be painting? Why do you think he chose to stop in this location?



> Find *Fontainebleau* by Alphonse Jeanrenaud.

**Imagine** walking along this trail: Where might it lead? What might you see along the way?

## A Varied Landscape

Fontainebleau was a diverse place, with dense woods, stark plateaus, bogs, ravines, caves, and boulders. The forest had little water, with the exception of a few streams and standing pools. At the highest elevations, dry limestone plateaus came to be known as “deserts.”



➤ Find *Rocks at Fontainebleau* by Théodore Claude Félix Caruelle d'Aligny.

Large boulders and fantastic rock formations could be found in many places in the forest. Guidebooks and postcards documented some of the most interesting ones, including rocks that appeared in the shapes of an elephant, hippopotamus, tortoise, pear, and dragon.



➤ Find *Beech Tree, Forest of Fontainebleau* by Gustave Le Gray.

The forest was filled with a variety of trees, including ash, birch, chestnut, juniper, maple, and pine, but the most prized species were the beech and great oaks. These majestic trees, some as much as six hundred years old, were a source of national pride for the French people.

## Enjoying Nature

**Wander** around this room and explore the rocks and trees depicted in the paintings and photographs.

**Choose** the work of art that you think depicts:

the tree that would be most fun to climb

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

the best rock for sitting and reading a book

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

the place that would be most challenging to hike

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

the best spot for a picnic lunch with your family

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

the best tree to nap under

Artist: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_



### ROOM 3: NATURE AND OBSERVATION



## Weather

The artists observed changes in the forest landscape during different seasons and types of weather—from sunny summer days to gray, wintry ones.

> Find *The Storm* by Narcisse Diaz de la Peña.

**Look carefully** at this painting and fill in the spaces below to create a weather report.

Today's forecast for Fontainebleau is \_\_\_\_\_.

The sky is \_\_\_\_\_.

If you visit the forest today, be sure to bring \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

If you go hiking today, make sure to wear \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Is today a good day for hiking? Picnicking? Painting?

**Search** this room for another picture showing a stormy day. Then find pictures of the forest on a sunny day and on a snowy day.



## Time of Day

Artists carefully observed how the colors of the forest landscape changed during different times of day—from the soft pinks and yellows of sunrise to the blazing reds and oranges of sunset.

> Find *The Sheepfold, Moonlight* by Jean-François Millet.

Under the moonlight, a shepherd brings home a flock of sheep.

**Look closely:** What colors were used to paint the night sky?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Predict:** What colors might you see in the sky in the morning?

\_\_\_\_\_

What colors might you see at sunset? \_\_\_\_\_

**Imagine** this place during the day: How would it look different?

\_\_\_\_\_

**List** three activities that you might see happening in the afternoon:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Search** this room for another picture showing nighttime. Then find two paintings showing the forest at sunset.

ROOM 4: FONTAINEBLEAU ON A GRAND SCALE



### Large Landscapes

> Find *The Forest of Fontainebleau* by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot.

Large paintings, such as the ones in this room, were painted in a studio, not outdoors. To create these larger compositions, artists relied on their memory and imagination as well as sketches and photographs they made while visiting the forest.

**Imagine** yourself sitting along the bank of this pond.

**Listen!** List four sounds that you might hear:

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**Wonder:** What do you think will happen next?

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### Imaginary Landscapes

> Find *The Gust of Wind* by Gustave Courbet

This painting does not represent an actual place in Fontainebleau; instead, Courbet combined some of the most dramatic elements of the forest to paint a fantasy landscape. He created a richly textured surface by using quick brushstrokes and applying thick dabs of paint with a palette knife.

**Examine** the painting.

List three colors Courbet used to paint the land:

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List three colors Courbet used to paint the sky:

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**Think about:** What clues in the painting tell you that it is windy?

**Share:** Do you think a storm is coming or going? Why?

**Consider** how it would feel to be in this landscape. Circle the words below that you think describe this scene:

- grand                      mysterious                      welcoming
- calm                        lonely                              wild
- exciting                    frightening                      eerie

## ROOM 5: VILLAGE LIFE

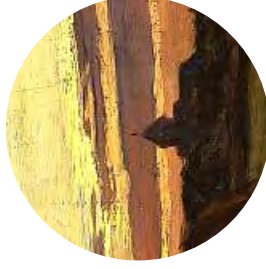
### Matching Game

ages 3 to 6

**Find** details in the works in this room. A **detail** is a close-up of a part of a work of art.

**Look** closely at the work and draw a line connecting details from the same painting.

*Each detail in the left column will match a detail in the right column.*



## ROOM 5: VILLAGE LIFE



### Visitors

At the edges of the forest there were small villages with inns where visitors could pay for a room and meals. Artists would often spend an entire season living and working in the forest. In the evenings they would gather to relax, catch up on news, and discuss ideas about their art.

> Find *The Inn of Mother Anthony* by Auguste Renoir.

**Imagine** you have joined this group of artists for dinner at the inn. What three questions would you like to ask them?

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**Search** this room for postcards and other souvenirs that visitors could purchase when visiting Fontainebleau.



### Villagers

The villages surrounding Fontainebleau were rural communities, and most local people earned their living by farming.

> Find *Going to Work* by Jean-François Millet.

Millet was one of the few artists in Fontainebleau who focused on people in addition to nature. He depicted peasants going about their daily routine, from farmers working in the fields to shepherdesses tending their flocks.

**Look** for works of art in this room that show these activities:

- sowing (planting seeds)
- knitting
- chopping wood
- shoveling earth
- harvesting potatoes
- tending sheep
- resting





### Favorite Sites: The Bodmer Oak

> Find *The Bodmer Oak, Fontainebleau Forest* by Claude Monet.

The Bodmer Oak was one of the most famous trees in the forest. This knotty oak's distinctive curling, twisting branches fascinated many artists. Here Monet carefully observed how light filtered through its canopy of leaves, creating patches of light and shadow on the ground.

**Examine** the painting.

List three colors Monet used to paint the sunlight:

\_\_\_\_\_

List three colors Monet used to paint shadows:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Imagine** sitting under this tree. Circle the words below that describe how you might feel:

- |         |        |        |
|---------|--------|--------|
| relaxed | happy  | angry  |
| calm    | lonely | scared |
| warm    | bored  | cool   |



### Favorite Sites: The Route to Chailly

> Find the painting *The Route to Chailly (Pavé de Chailly)* by Claude Monet.

The route to Chailly was part of the main road linking Paris to Fontainebleau. In the years before the train, visitors to the forest would travel by horse-drawn coach over this route. Even after the railroad was built, the road remained popular because it went by many of the most famous sites. Artists also admired the tall trees that lined its flat, open stretch.

> Find the photograph *The Road to Chailly, Forest of Fontainebleau (Pavé de Chailly)* by Gustave Le Gray.

**Examine** both pictures carefully, then compare and contrast them by listing elements that are similar and different.

Similarities:

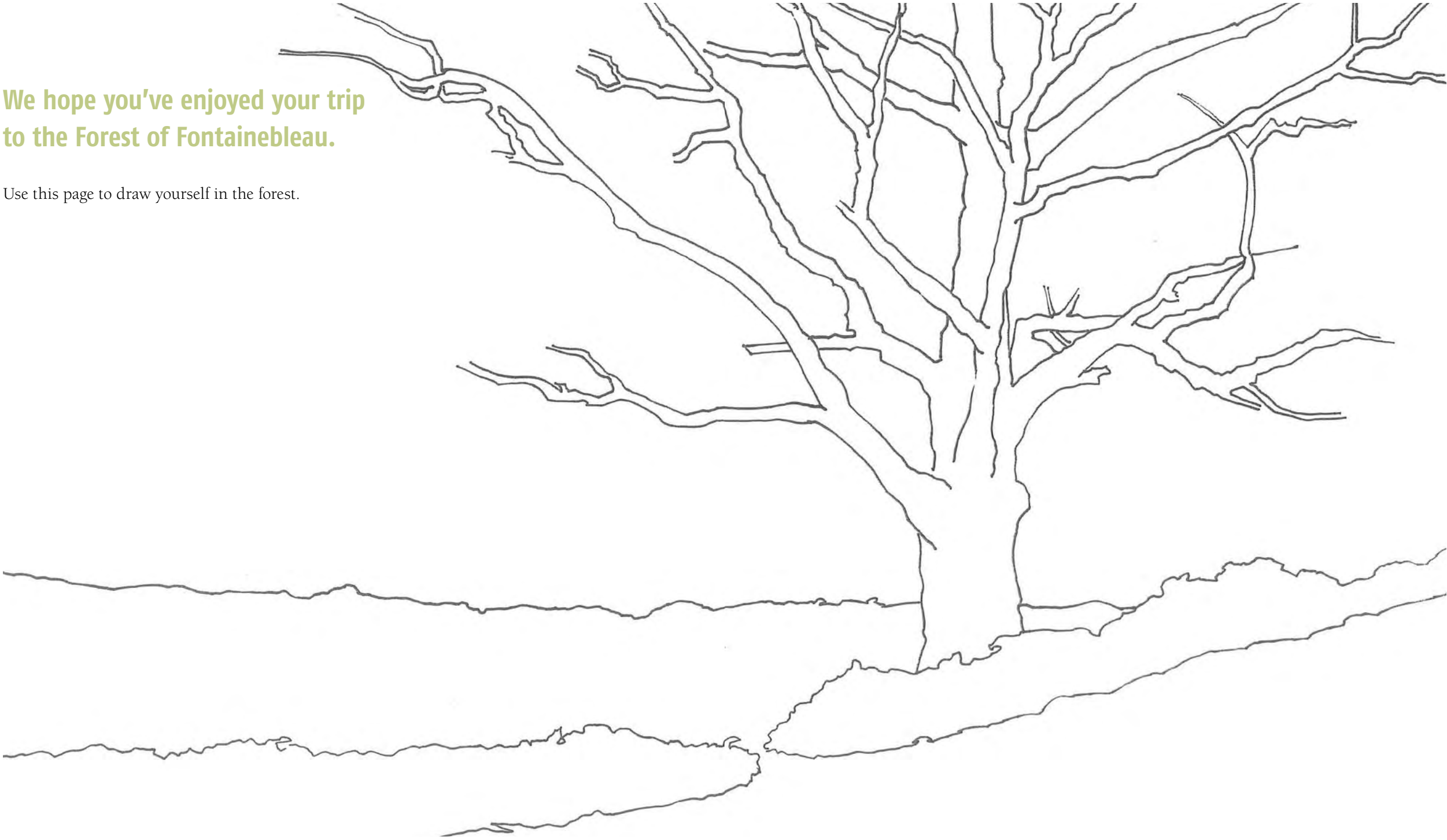
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Differences:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We hope you've enjoyed your trip to the Forest of Fontainebleau.

Use this page to draw yourself in the forest.



## Poetry Activity

**Reflect:** What makes this forest unique? What was the thing that you liked best on your journey today?

**Pretend** you are an artist visiting Fontainebleau: Which aspects of the forest would you want to include in your painting or photograph?

**Write** an acrostic poem inspired by the Forest of Fontainebleau. In an acrostic poem the first letter of each line forms a word or phrase. The vertical word is usually the poem's subject. The lines can describe this subject or even tell a brief story about it. Each line may contain a single word or an entire phrase.

F \_\_\_\_\_

O \_\_\_\_\_

R \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

T \_\_\_\_\_

We'd like to read your poem. If you'd like to share it, e-mail it to us at [family@nga.gov](mailto:family@nga.gov).



## Notes about the Forest of Fontainebleau

The forest is home to deer, fox, wild boar, and an especially rich diversity of insects, including 1,700 species of butterfly.

Quarries in the forest supplied many of the cobbles used to pave the streets of Paris.

By the eleventh century the forest was a hunting preserve for French kings. A succession of ever-grander hunting lodges evolved into the magnificent castle in the town of Fontainebleau, where François I (1494–1547) introduced Italian Renaissance art and architecture to northern Europe.

By the late eighteenth century some areas of the forest were devoted to the planting and harvesting of pine.

By the 1820s three villages had begun to attract painters: Marlotte, Chailly, and Barbizon.

By the late 1840s photographers joined the ranks of painters, making seasonal pilgrimages to the forest to experiment with the new invention of photography.

In 1849 the first direct railway from Paris to Fontainebleau brought larger numbers of visitors to the forest.

In 1852 painter Théodore Rousseau and other artists, concerned that the ancient oaks were being cut down in logging operations, appealed to emperor Napoleon III, who then decreed in 1861 that part of Fontainebleau be protected as a nature preserve—the first in history. In 1872 Yellowstone became the first American national park.

Today the Forest of Fontainebleau encompasses more than 69,000 acres and has been a part of the UNESCO Man and Biosphere preserve since 1986. Its current tree population is approximately 45 percent oak, 40 percent pine, and 10 percent beech.

Visited by about 13 million people each year, the forest is a world-class site for boulder climbing.

## Captions

**All illustrations in this booklet are details from the following works of art:**

### cover

Rosa Bonheur, *Forest of Fontainebleau: Spring in the Woods*, 1860–1865, Private Collection

### page 1

Claude Monet, *Bazille and Camille (Study for “Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe”)*, 1865, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection

### page 2

Claude-François Denecourt, *Carte indiquant les sites et points de vue remarquables de la Forêt de Fontainebleau*, 1839, Private Collection

### page 3

Alphonse Jeanrenaud, *Fontainebleau*, c. 1860s, National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Amy Rose Silverman Fund and Funds from an Anonymous Donor

Augustin Enfantin, *An Artist Painting in the Forest of Fontainebleau*, c. 1825, Private Collection

### page 4

Théodore Claude Félix Caruelle d’Aligny, *Rocks at Fontainebleau*, c. 1842, Musée du Louvre, Paris, Gift of Maurice Bourdot-Lamotte, 1951

Gustave Le Gray, *Beech Tree, Forest of Fontainebleau*, c. 1856, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Patrons’ Permanent Fund

### page 6

Narcisse Diaz de la Peña, *The Storm*, 1871, The National Gallery, London, Salting Bequest, 1910

### page 7

Jean-François Millet, *The Sheepfold, Moonlight*, 1856–1860, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

### page 8

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *The Forest of Fontainebleau*, 1846, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Mrs. Samuel Dennis Warren

### page 9

Gustave Courbet, *The Gust of Wind*, c. 1865, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Gift of Caroline Wiess Law

### pages 10 and 11

Auguste Renoir, *The Inn of Mother Anthony*, 1866, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Jean-François Millet, *Two Men Turning over the Soil*, 1866, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of Quincy Adams Shaw through Quincy Adams Shaw, Jr., and Mrs. Marian Shaw Haughton

Charles Émile Jacque, *The Departure of the Flock*, 1860, Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, 1917

Alfred Sisley, *Rural Guardsman in the Fontainebleau Forest*, 1870, Mr. and Mrs. Marsh Gibson

Claude Monet, *Haystacks near Chailly*, 1865, San Diego Museum of Art, Museum purchase

### page 12

Auguste Renoir, *The Inn of Mother Anthony*, 1866, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

### page 13

Jean-François Millet, *Going to Work*, 1851–1853, Cincinnati Art Museum, Bequest of Mary M. Emery

### page 14

Claude Monet, *The Bodmer Oak, Fontainebleau Forest*, 1865, Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Sam Salz and Bequest of Julia W. Emmons, by exchange

### page 15

Claude Monet, *The Route to Chailly (Pavé de Chailly)*, 1865, Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen

Gustave Le Gray, *The Road to Chailly, Forest of Fontainebleau (Pavé de Chailly)*, c. 1852, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Part of the Townsend Bequest

**In the Forest of Fontainebleau:  
Painters and Photographers from  
Corot to Monet**

March 2–June 8, 2008

**This exhibition is organized by the National  
Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with  
the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.**

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