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TENNOJIYA, Chihiro. A Study of Gustave Courbet's *Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine (Summer)*

Gustave Courbet's *Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine (Summer)* (1856–57, Petit Palais Museum) was exhibited at the Salon of 1857 just after Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) announced his “Realism Manifesto” (1855) and was highly criticized for its straightforward representation of sex workers without resorting to mythological disguises. Although the socialist Proudhon's argument that Courbet's intention was to ironize women under the Second Empire is widely recognized, the artist's own discourse has not survived. This article clarifies the process by which this groundbreaking female representation was created and examines Courbet's artistic intentions.

First, I will cover the issue of visual sources. Literary works and popular prints have been considered the most likely sources of inspiration for this work; however, in addition to the resources of the same period, this paper will newly present the works of Jacques Jordaens (1593–1678). Seventeenth-century Flemish School's true-to-nature female figures, which Courbet saw firsthand in Belgium, were suited to the realistic representation of women that he aimed for and were used in several works, including *The Bathers* (1853, Fabre Museum). In *Young Ladies on the Banks of the Seine (Summer)*, the painter fully digested and absorbed the works of both Jordaens and Rubens. Courbet did not merely use superficial forms, but sophisticatedly combined the works of old masters and contemporary inspirations and reflected them together in his work.

Next, I will identify the social class of the women to determine the exact meaning that the work encompasses. In contemporary criticism, these women have been labeled with terms indicating various classes of sex workers while their actual social positions remained unidentified. In contrast, through detailed observation of their clothing and backgrounds, and by comparing them with contemporaneous historical documents, I will conduct a re-reading of the signifiers of the women's social statuses. I consequently identify these women as sex workers of the emerging Second Empire class known as “Lorette.” With analyses of the 19th century perception of Lorette, I point out that the rise of these women coincided with the development of capitalism and changes in the urban structure and that the Lorette was an existence that signified the social anxiety of the Second Empire such as the collapse of class society and an excessively consumerist society. In other words, Courbet saw through the social problems with a keen eye on the society of his time and presented a symbolic figure of that time.

Courbet used female representation from the Seventeenth-century Flemish school to represent life-sized Lorettes, who symbolized the social changes and latent anxieties of the Second Empire. Through this work, the painter achieved a dual *Réalisme* in terms of form and content and truly put the “Realism Manifesto” into action.

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