



CONSTANTIN KLUGE

(1912 - 2003)

The Pictorial Poetry of Paris

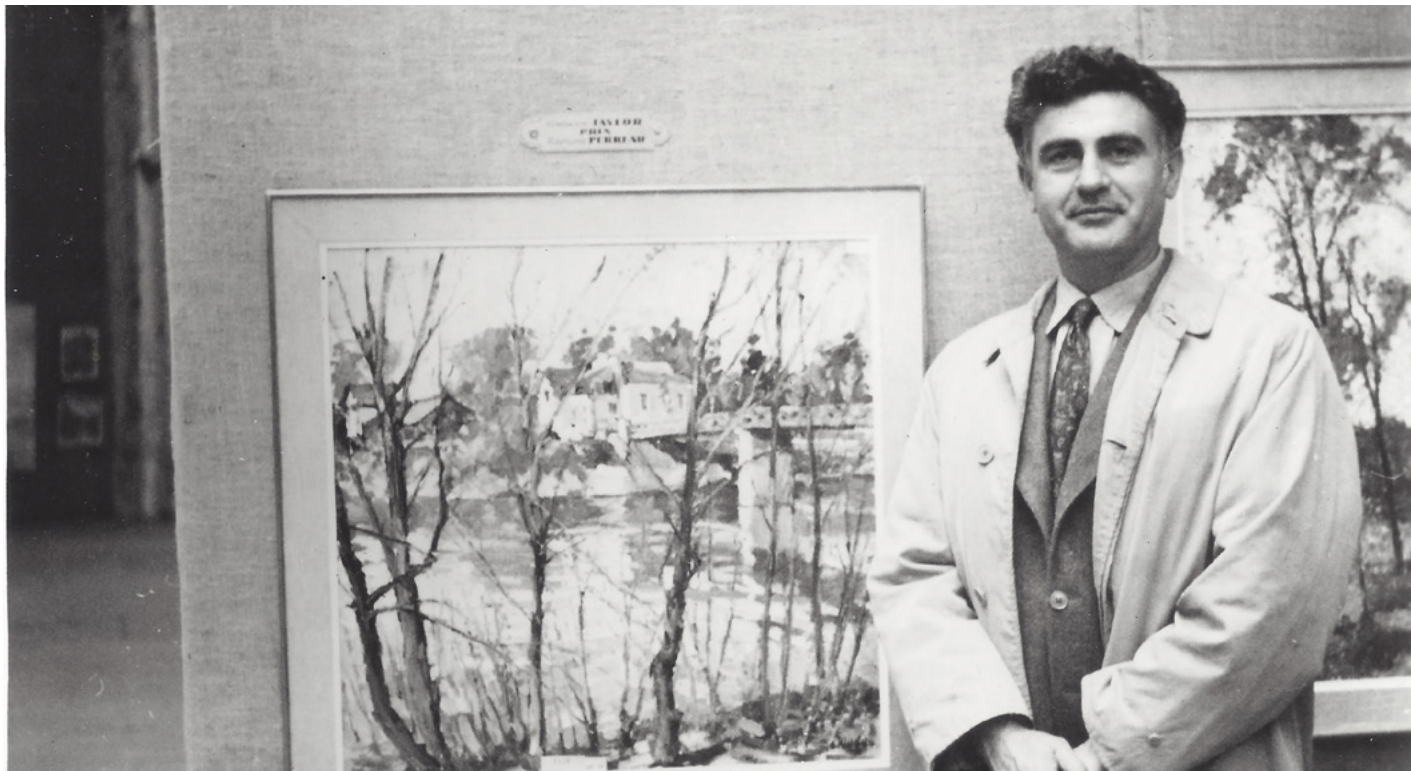
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Constantin Kluge

The Pictorial Poetry of Paris

150 DISTINGUISHED YEARS IN THE ART BUSINESS



Constantin Kluge in front of his picture of Bougival which won the *Raymond Perreau* prize in 1961

Though born in Riga, Latvia, in 1912, Constantin Kluge grew up in China, spending his adolescent years in Shanghai, where his family was forced to migrate during the Bolshevik Revolution. There, among his studies of Mandarin and the art of calligraphy, Kluge found excitement in visual art as an active member of the Shanghai Art Club. As a young adult, his parents urged him to study something more pragmatic than fine art. Kluge found a compromise in architecture, but it was ultimately his exceptional drawing skill that secured his place at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts as a student of Architecture in 1931. He spent six years studying and in 1937, graduated with the title, French Government Architect. His passion for the city of lights grew exponentially in his short time there. Kluge was so profoundly moved and deeply in love with the city that he remained for several months after completing his studies. He stayed to paint views of Paris in oils, purely to portray and preserve the scenes he cherished so much.

Kluge returned to China and practiced architecture in Shanghai. After persuasion from friends, he also began exhibiting his paintings, which reared great success to Kluge's surprise. However, his painting career paused during World War II. Beginning in 1950, Kluge worked as an architect in Hong Kong. Supported fervently by friends, and urged by his heart, he returned to his dear Paris due to rumors of the Communist invasion. Unsurprisingly as an already mature and successful painter, in 1951, Kluge won an award at the Paris Salon. After, he frequently exhibited in the Salon shows, which proved to be his gateway to ever-increasing public attention. Kluge then also became a member of the Société des Artistes Français and received the Médaille d'Argent and the special Raymond Perreau prize given by the Salon's Taylor Foundation.

By the late 1950s, Kluge's paintings caught the eye of the world-renowned art dealer, Wally Findlay, Jr., who immediately presented Kluge's Parisian paintings to the American market and consolidated his stature in Europe. He launched his career by the 1960s with exhibitions in all Findlay Galleries locations, including Paris, New York, Palm Beach, Chicago, and Beverly Hills. Today, Kluges estate is exclusively represented by the Findlay Galleries after more than 60 years of representation, and his works are a highlight of the galleries roster of highly valued artists. In 1990, after many critical successful years, French president François Mitterand awarded him the highest French order of merit for military and civil merits of honor, Chevalier de la Légion D'Honneur. Throughout the nineties and until his passing in 2003, Kluge continued to paint Paris's poetic landscapes and exhibit his renowned and masterfully detailed paintings at the Findlay Galleries worldwide.

Each Kluge painting is a love letter to Paris and its inhabitants. In the iconic streets, buildings, and public landmarks of Paris, Kluge found his paintings' true protagonists. It was from those elements that he both understood and captured the spirit of the city. He painted Paris and its environs as a cherished memory, as an iconic moment in time, as a treasure for everyone to enjoy and have a part of.

an, Paris, Tour Eiffel





Detail Image



Cafe de la Paix et l'Opera | oil on canvas | 32 x 32 in. | FG© 135520



Avenue Gabriel et Avenue Matignon | oil on canvas | 39 3/8 x 39 3/8 in. | FG© 139418



rue Saint-Antoine | oil on canvas | 28 3/4 x 39 3/8 in. | FG© 136050



Le boulevard Saint Martin | oil on canvas | 28 3/4 x 36 1/4 in. | FG© 135757



Boulevard Saint Germain | oil on canvas | 29 x 29 in. | FG© 138647



Detail Image



Le Carrefour Soufflot | oil on canvas | 28 3/4 x 36 1/4 in. | FG©135706



Avenue Carnot et Arc de Triomphe

oil on canvas
25 5/8 x 36 1/4 in.
FG© 137135

Kluge's relationship with buildings and structures began long before his painting career did. He was a student of architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and worked as an architect for several years before dedicating to painting full-time. His intimate understanding of Parisian buildings' anatomy gave him the insight to depict them with a unique combination of fidelity and charm. Kluge imbued his buildings with as much life as any other artist might give to figures. To him, they are ultimately living structures, aging with the years, and changing with the light of day. Kluge knew that each detail told a piece of the story.

*Avenue Carnot
et Arc de Triomphe*

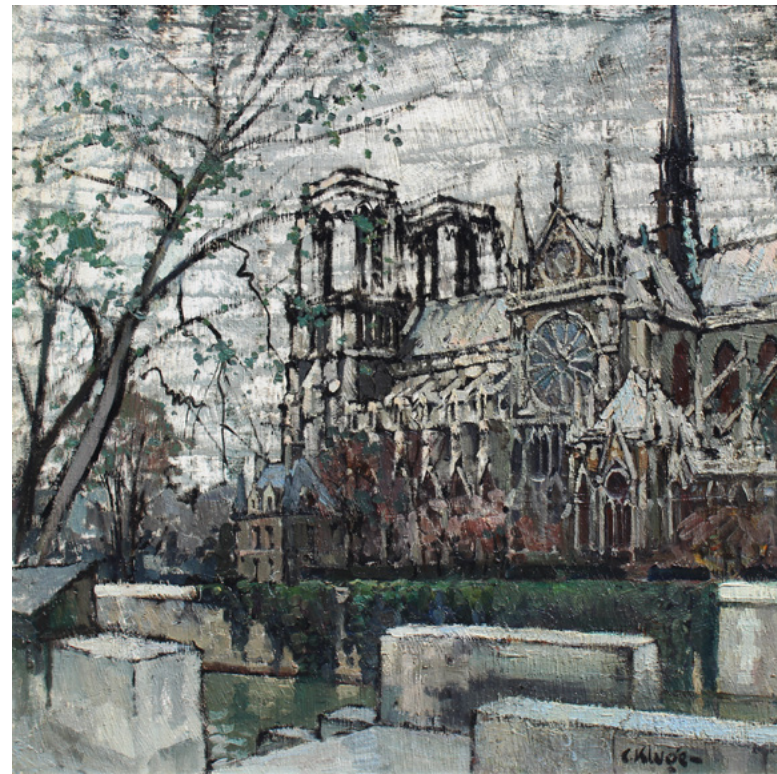


Detail Image



Detail Image

Notre



Notre Dame | oil on canvas | 28 3/4 x 28 3/4 in. | FG©138465

Dame

Kluge adored and was so innately devoted to his city; as a viewer, there has never been a love clearer to see. Kluge once said,

"When I was 18, my professor[...] told me that the only way to paint a good portrait of a pretty woman is to, previously, fall in love with her. Be that as it may, years have gone by, and fate led me to paint Paris. Whenever it happens, I notice that the moment I start painting, preferably the banks of the Seine with antique structures reflected in its slowly gliding flow, I find myself whistling or humming some happy tune, while all the daily stress would vanish from my subconscious mind leaving me guessing at such a fortunate change of my mood. Could it be that I am permanently in love with Paris? My professor, back in China, never told me about anything like that."





Le Magasin du Printemps

oil on canvas

25 9/16 x 36 1/4 in.

FG© 137284

Before falling in love with buildings, Kluge loved the brush. There is a calligraphic weight to his lines that is evident in every tree branch and building outline. Like he once said in an interview, "[...], I sketch the skeleton of the subject in my usual black paint, [and] it is almost against my will that I begin to apply colors." His childhood in the Tung-Pei region of China, where he was taught the ancient art of Chinese calligraphy at a young age, had a long-lasting influence in his artistic career.

Le Magasin du Printemps



Le Château de Chantilly | oil on canvas | 28 3/4 x 39 3/8 in. | FG©134137



Detail Image

25

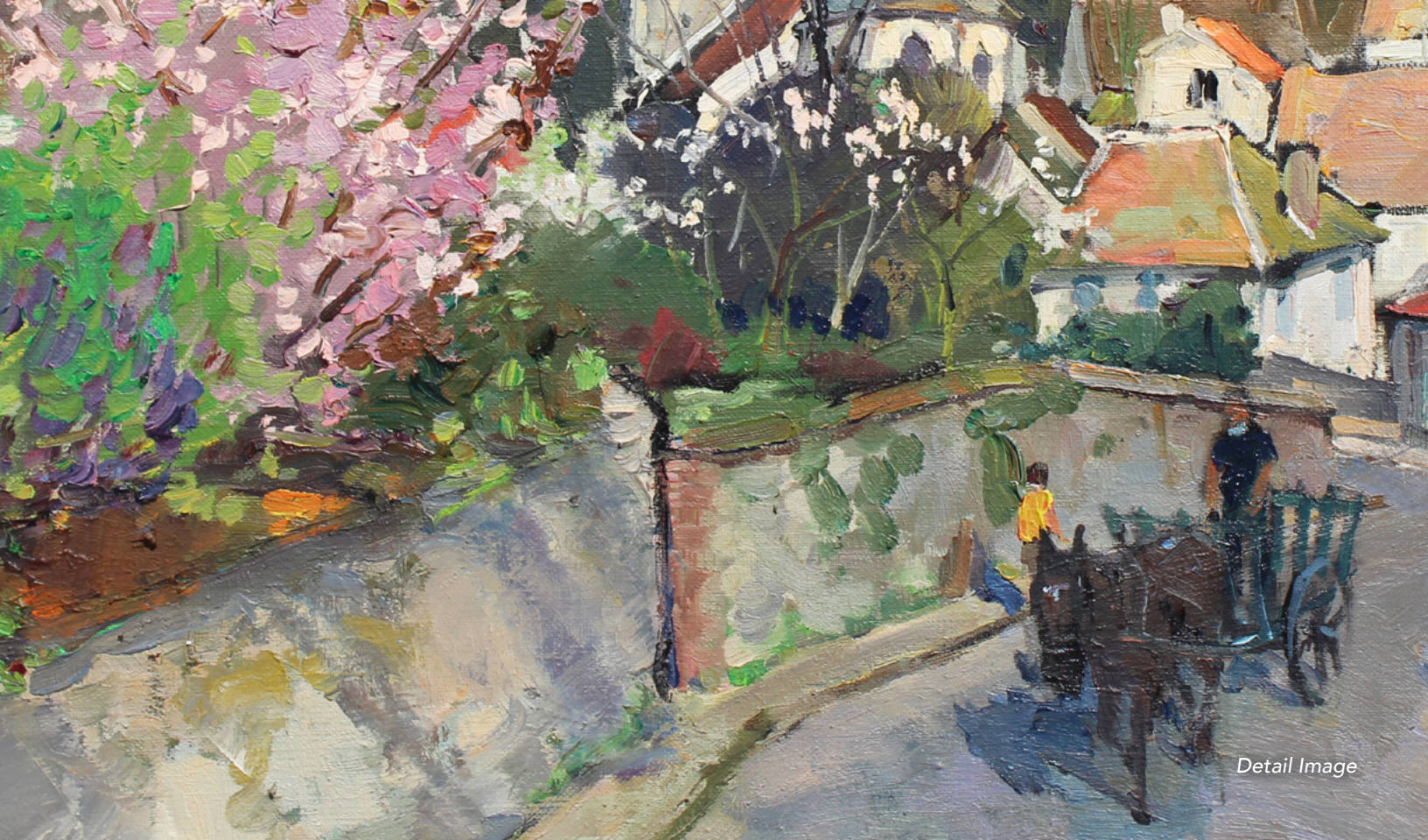


Le jardin de Luxembourg | oil on canvas | 23 5/8 x 36 1/4 in. | FG©138667



Le Château de Pont l'Eveque | oil on canvas | 23 5/8 x 28 3/4 in. | FG©133871

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Detail Image



Mortefontaine et le Cerisier | oil on canvas | 21 1/4 x 28 3/4 in. | FG©137088



Le Pont Marie | oil on canvas | 23 5/8 x 36 1/4 in. | FG©136270



Quai Conti | oil on canvas | 23 5/8 x 36 1/4 in. | FG©133861



Le pont Louis Philippe

Le pont Louis Philippe
oil on canvas
38 x 77 in.
FG© 135942



Constantin Kluge wins the coveted Medaille d'Or at the 1962 Salon.



Notre Dame de Paris | oil on canvas | 23 5/8 x 36 1/4 in. | FG©138659



Detail Image



Place de la Concorde
 oil on canvas
 23 5/8 x 28 3/4 in.
 FG© 138698

In Kluge's work, each element is given balance with space to tell its own part of the story. The sky is given ample room to provide an uninterrupted display of summer clouds or winter hues. Every reflection of light from a tree leaf is given as much voice as architectural detail in a beloved Parisian bridge. There is balance and harmony in each composition supported by a beautifully crafted foundation made of precise proportions, perspective, and form.

Place de la Concorde



La Seine a Paris | oil on canvas | 31 7/8 x 45 11/16 in. | FG©134847

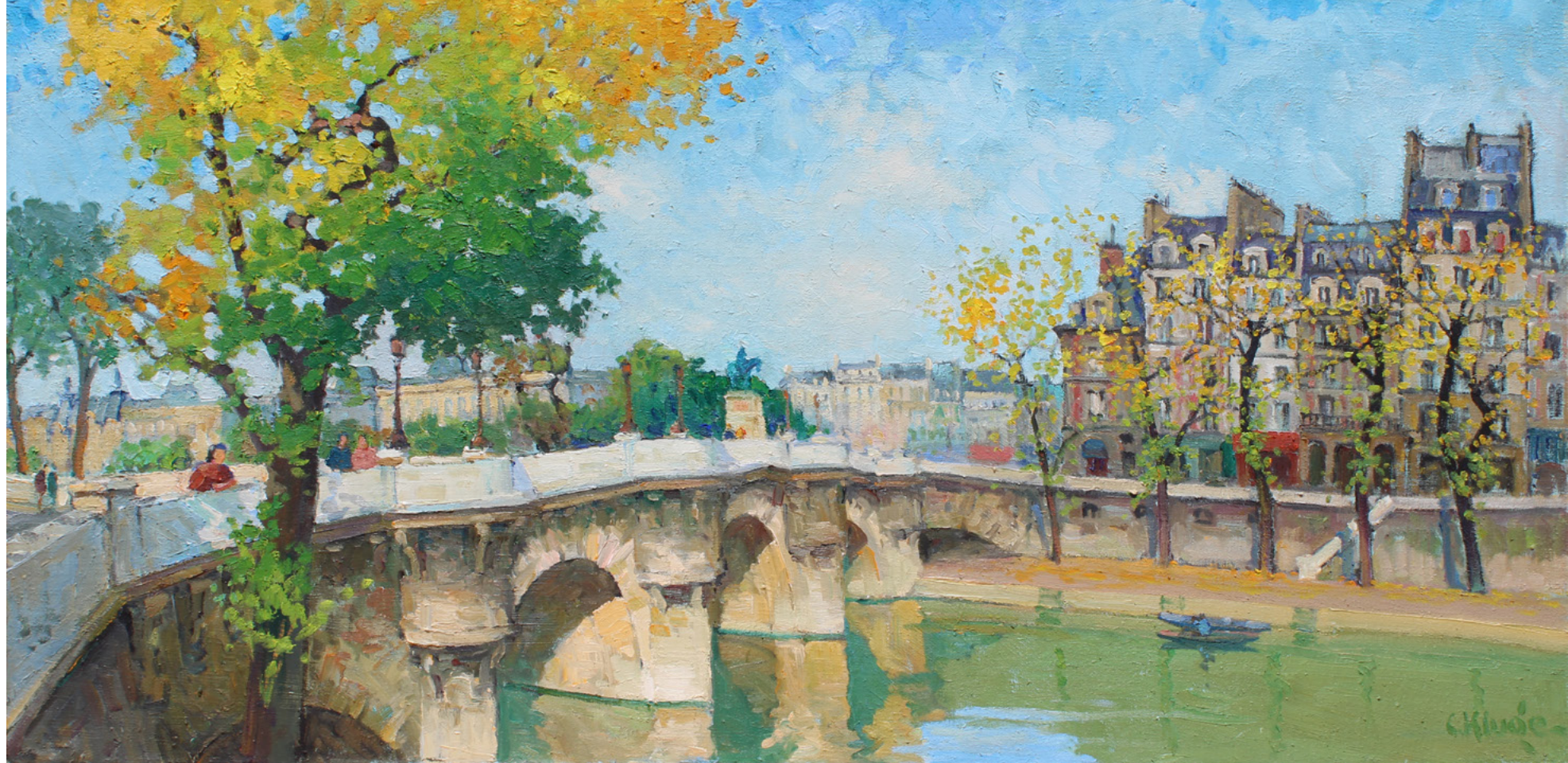


Le Pont Neuf | oil on canvas | 28 3/4 x 36 1/4 in. | FG© 139606

Kluge's works carry enough honesty to evoke nostalgia, and equally enough beauty to evoke fantasy. He achieves excellent nuance without becoming overly formal. Paris's magic is evident in his oeuvre; the scenes could be found in an architectural review book or one's family album; they are the vistas everyone wants to savor and remember. Art historian, Raymond Charment referred to Kluge's paintings as, "A calm mirror, a beautiful clear lake, where the appearances of the world are reflected in their permanent and always comprehensible form." It is precisely Kluge's ability to tell the real story while so delicately emphasizing its beauty that makes his work timeless.

Le Pont Neuf

oil on canvas
31 1/2 x 62 15/16 in.
FG© 139411





Quai du Louvre, Paris | oil on canvas | 44 7/8 x 76 3/4 in. | FG©135406

Kluge-



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For further information and pricing of
these artworks please contact the gallery:

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