



Carnival Evening (Un Soir de Carnaval), 1886. Oil, 45 x 31¼ inches. Collection Louis E. Stern.

42.328

Henri Rousseau

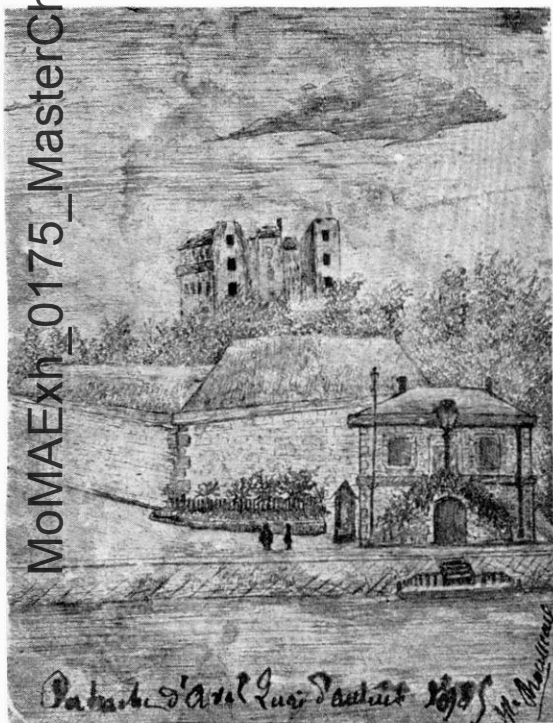
BY DANIEL CATTON RICH

"I have been told that my work is not of this century. As you will understand, I cannot now change my manner which I have acquired as the result of obstinate toil"

Henri Rousseau in a letter to the art critic, André Dupont, 1910.

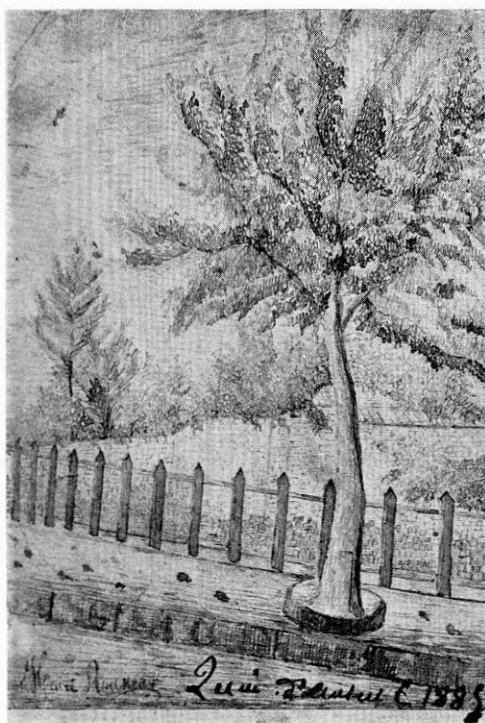
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK



River Scene, Quai d'Auteuil. 1885 (dated). Ink on tan paper, 6½ x 4⅞ inches. Collection Max Weber.

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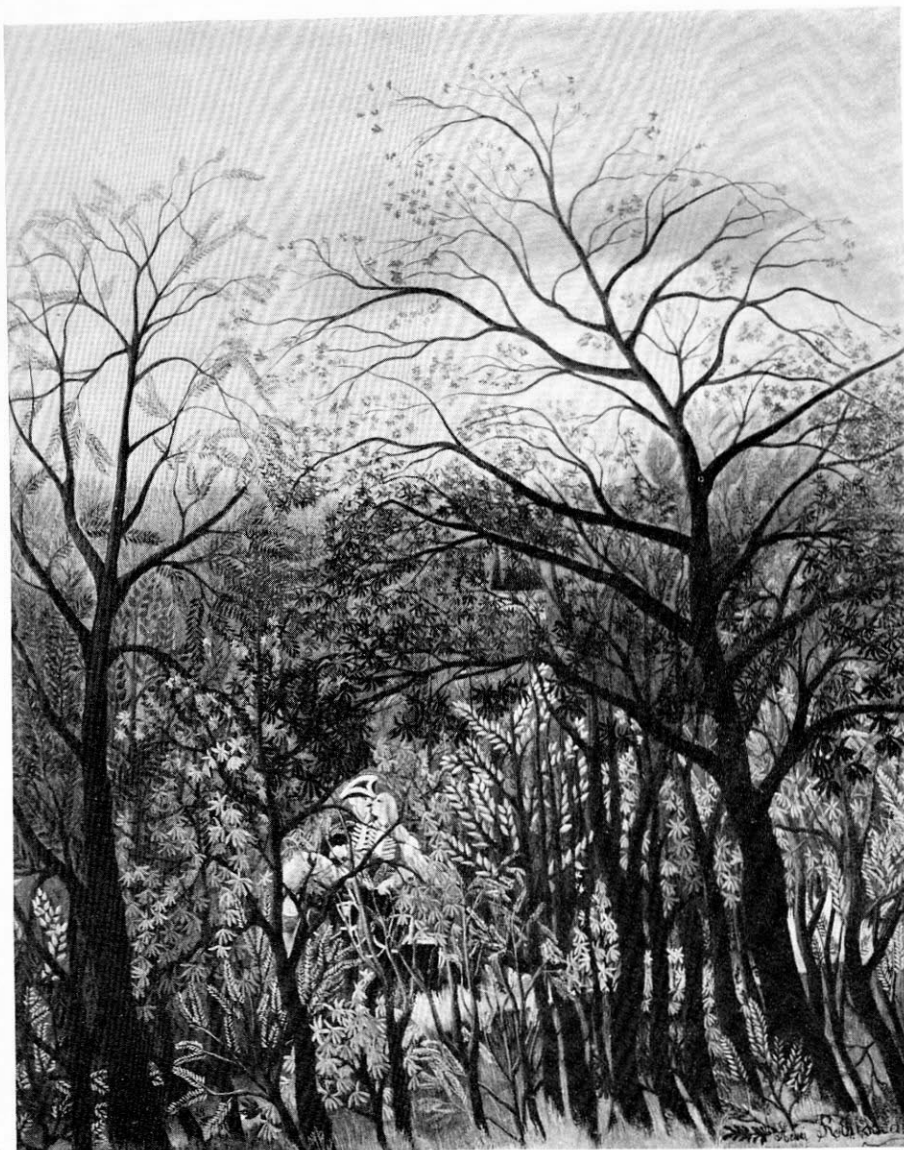
Quai d'Auteuil. 1885 (dated). Ink on tan paper, 6 x 4½ inches. Collection Max Weber.

42.337

public indignation was running high against Signac, and Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* was the scandal of the exhibition.

1886–1891

In *Carnival Evening* the artist poses a problem to which he will return again and again. Two small figures in the foreground are designed against a screen of trees or foliage through which the eye is led, plane by plane, into deep, lighted space. What strikes us at once about this work of 1886 is Rousseau's extraordinary progress in the space of a few years. No longer is his vocabulary confined to a few handed-down forms. The delicate nerve-like branches of the trees are rendered with an authority which springs from a wider experience with nature. Only the sharpest observation could account for the shapes and tones of the cloud bands. And yet all that he takes from the objective world is fastidiously transformed and organized through a system of silhouette and clear light. Inventions of rhythm, correspondences of line abound. To make his vision more compelling, the artist gives every inch of his canvas the same scrupulous and sensitive execution. With a greater liberation of form comes a new sentiment. Rousseau intended *Carnival Evening* as a night poem and in the masquerading figures, the face at the



A Rendez-vous in the Forest. 1889. Oil, 36½ x 28¾ inches. Lent by The Marie Harriman Gallery.

42.314

window, the bare, towering trees and moonlit sky there first appears that note of strangeness so marked in all his imaginative painting.

In the two drawings (page 15) done a year before, Rousseau continues to analyze, with great delicacy, two motifs from nature. Before 1895 Rousseau admits that he made more than "200 drawings in pen and pencil," which must have played an important role in the formation of his style.



Medieval Castle (Le Château-Fort). 1889 (dated). Oil, $36\frac{1}{2} \times 28\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Lent by The Marie Harriman Gallery. 42.313

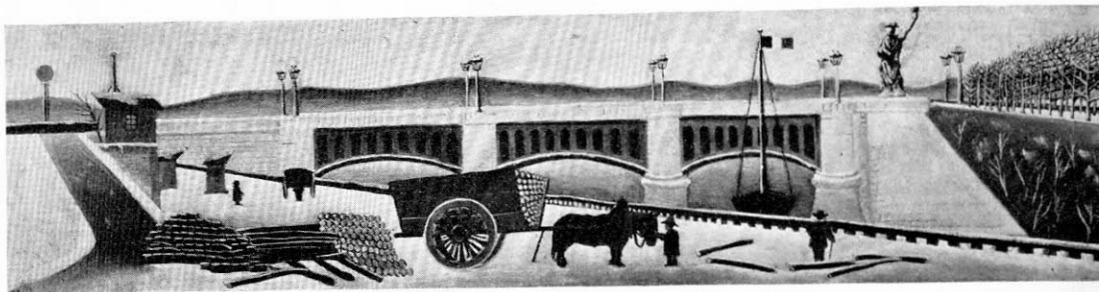
A Rendez-vous in the Forest (page 16) is full of the same intense observation. The plan of *Carnival Evening* is reversed and the figures, instead of occupying the frontal plane, are seen through a complicated lattice of spring trees. Rousseau ornaments the lower half of the picture with the loving, detailed care of the folk-painter, but when it was finished and each leaf and twig had been woven into the pattern, he may have been dissatisfied with the result. In spite of its highly romantic theme—lovers in eighteenth-century costume meeting in the depths of



Storm in the Jungle. 1891 (dated). Oil, ^{51 1/4}50 1/2 x 63 1/2 inches. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clifford.
42,300

over a large picture, *Storm in the Jungle* (above). It represents the height of his romanticism and the first use of exotic material. Here he subdued his delight in elaboration of detail to a more general movement of the forms. All is still conceived in planes but the artist now twists and entwines them. Light not only defines but contributes atmosphere to the dramatic theme. The complex color, with contrasts of browns, greens and red, results in part from the artist's almost literal rendering of plant forms. His chief concession to surface lies in striping the entire canvas with lines of thin rain.

Friends of Rousseau once explained his jungle pictures as memories of his Mexican journey. But today we know they were inspired by trips to the Paris zoo and botanical gardens. In a vaudeville sketch written about this time and entitled *A Visit to the Exposition of 1889* (page 76) one of the ten scenes is significantly set in the *Jardin des Plantes*. On his walks round Paris the artist used to pick up leaves and grasses to treasure in his studio. From such sources—transfigured by imagination and design—grew his exotic flora.



Pont de Grenelle, Paris. 1891-93. Oil, 8 x 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Private Collection. (Goldschmidt-Rothschild)
42.302

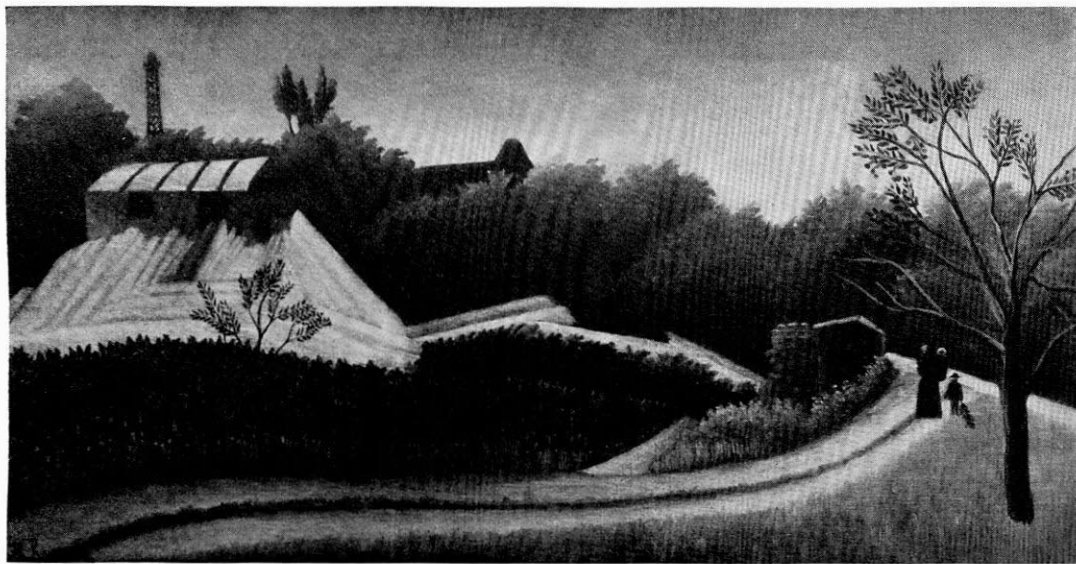
1892-1897

During the next few years Rousseau strives constantly to broaden and simplify his style. In such a canvas as *Pont de Grenelle* (above) he sternly limits the number of planes and reduces the color to a few tones. Against the stark areas of snow and the stone bridge, the shapes of figures and lumber-cart are silhouetted with extraordinary force. With complete freedom he combines various perspectives and adjusts space to fill the long, narrow format. Unlike the Impressionists, who preferred the colorful and gay life along the river at La Grenouillère, Chatou or Bougival, Rousseau seldom went far from home for his landscape motifs. He loved the heart of the city with its iron bridges, boats and quais or the quiet suburbs where, as in *Sawmill, Outskirts of Paris* (page 21), he enjoyed painting factory buildings surrounded by trees and foliage. By this time Rousseau is learning not only to bind his forms more strongly into a single geometric unit but to vary his textures. His technique has the same fineness of touch but the touch itself is less uniform or labored.

Color so far had been distinctly subordinate to tone and draughtsmanship. The night pieces of the 'eighties and the detailed color of *Storm in the Jungle* do not prepare us for the bright hues and luminous atmosphere of *The Carmagnole* (below). To the Salon of the Independents in 1892 the artist sent as his exhibition piece a large canvas, *The Centenary of Independence*. *The Carmagnole* is perhaps the first sketch for the big painting. For Rousseau the centenary



The Carmagnole. 1891-92. Oil, 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 30 inches. Collection Dr. and Mrs. Frank Conroy.



Sawmill, Outskirts of Paris. 1893-95 (?). Oil, 10 x 18 inches. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Walter S. Brewster.

42.306

was a genuinely inspiring event. He wrote an explanation for the catalog: "The people, holding hands, dance round the two Republics, those of 1792 and 1892, to the tune of *Auprès de ma blonde qu'il fait bon, fait bon dormir*." A year later he addressed a second picture to Liberty ("Oh, Liberty, be forever the guide of those who by their labor wish to contribute to the glory and grandeur of France!"). Such sentiments show Rousseau's genuine and simple love of his country but they also indicate his firm belief that as one of the most important artists of the day he must commemorate for the citizens of France the anniversary of their Republic.

Behind the composition may lie a suggestion of some *kermess* by Bruegel or Teniers, but the spirit is gaily French. Notes of color are repeated in the circling figures and in the fluttering banners (all arranged to blow in the same direction), while space is clearly marked off by the reiterated vertical of the flagpoles. When Rousseau came to paint the final version, he changed the format and completely re-designed the whole picture—an indication of how much he continued to respect the relation of a painting to its surface and frame.

But if the artist hoped to win public acclaim by such patriotic subjects he was doomed to disappointment. Indeed, there was even talk on the part of some of the more arbitrary members of the Committee of the Independents of banishing altogether those artists whose work brought nothing but laughter in the annual Salon. Fortunately tolerance won, the painter of *The Carmagnole* being well defended by Toulouse-Lautrec. It is said that Rousseau was in favor of the exclusion, never dreaming for a moment that it was aimed at him.

The still life, *Poet's Bouquet* (page 23), carries on his interest in color and more simplified



Poet's Bouquet (Fleurs de poète). 1890–95. Oil, 15 x 18 inches. Collection William S. Paley.

42.320



The Horrors of War. 1895. Lithograph on red paper, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches. (Reproduced as the end sheets of this catalog.) Lent by Jean Goriany.

42.310

In the 'nineties Rousseau also met Alfred Jarry, the Bohemian author of *Ubu-Roi*. They were both natives of Laval, where Rousseau had known Jarry's father. The meeting is said to have taken place at the Independents, where Rousseau was standing beside his pictures. Instantly impressed by their strangeness, Jarry commissioned a portrait. Complete with parrot and chameleon the picture made its appearance in the Independents of 1894. (As early as 1891 Rousseau had exhibited a portrait of Pierre Loti with a cat, but since there is no record that he knew Loti, the picture may have been done from a photograph or newspaper cut.)

Through Jarry, Rousseau was introduced to Rémy de Gourmont who ordered a lithograph for the magazine, *L'Imagier*. This—his only print—is connected with a canvas of *War* (since lost) shown in 1894. For the catalog Rousseau wrote the following legend: "Frightful, she passes, leaving in her wake, despair, tears and ruin." Though once a soldier, Rousseau hated war. "If a King wants to wage war let a mother go to him and forbid it," he often remarked.

This lithograph, with its strongly Expressionist tendencies, continues the sense of movement first attempted in *Storm in the Jungle* (page 19).

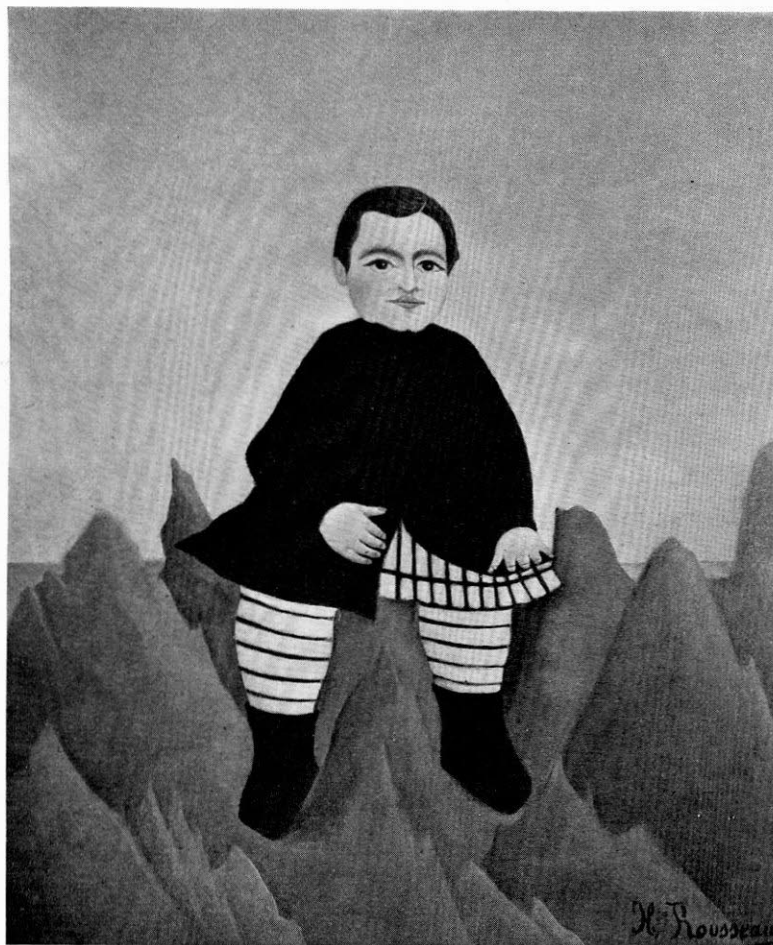
At times this desire for movement within the canvas is abandoned for an intensified striving toward the monumental. The severely frontal *Portrait of a Young Girl* (page 26) shows him



Portrait of a Young Girl. 1893-95. Oil, 24 x 18 inches. Collection Philadelphia Museum of Art.

42.321

seeking to bind figure and landscape into firmer union. The straight up and down pose is repeated again and again in the tree trunks, giving the composition a primitive verticality. Undoubtedly the model belonged to the *petit bourgeois* circles of the Plaisance quarter but as was his custom in portraits he devised a special out-of-door setting. There is something touching in Rousseau's struggle to surround this maiden with the symbols of pastoralism. The sheep at her feet, the trees in young leaf, the distant, lighted sky are painted with the same exactitude as the yellow boots and impassive face. At about this period the artist exhibited several portraits of children in the Independents. *Boy on Rocks* (page 27) may be one of them. Rousseau had a particular fondness for children, whom he portrayed in all their dignity and intensity.

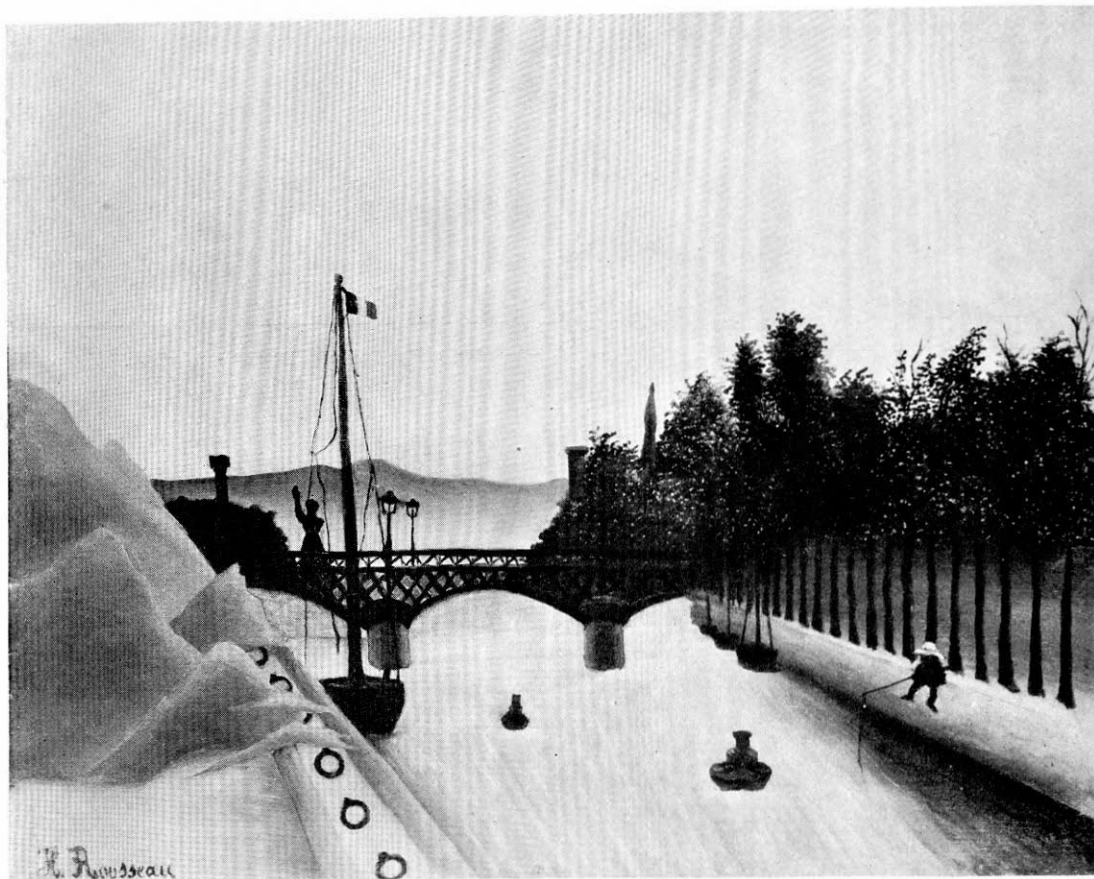


Boy on Rocks. 1895-97. Oil, 21½ x 17¾ inches. Lent by The Chester Dale Collection.

42.303

Undoubtedly he was influenced by the cabinet photograph, but nothing is less photographic than the result. The artist's increasing interest in a few clear forms turns the velvet suit, striped dress, and stockings into a striking pattern. The "Alpine" landscape repeating the lines of the figure may derive from the fortifications around Paris. In another portrait such "rocks" were so explained by Rousseau.

In a series of landscapes Rousseau now attempts to paint with a broader touch. One of his heritages from the folk tradition was the linear marking-off of a canvas. Strong lines divide the surface into areas to be filled with color, almost in the manner of a mosaic. But the more he probed nature and came in contact with other paintings, the more Rousseau realized that too



Footbridge at Passy (La Passerelle de Passy). 1895. Oil, $17\frac{1}{2} \times 20$ inches. Collection Morton R. Goldsmith.

42.309

much of the linear, like too much ornamentation, may reduce the force of a picture. Unconsciously, perhaps, he was working towards that sustained unity found in the background of *The Sleeping Gypsy* of 1897 (page 33).

In some of his views of the Parc Montsouris done about this time, he strives for a more painter-like approach. Instead of defining each leaf he indicates a tree as a mass, then builds up its modeling with a broad stroke or stipple. Edges tend to lose their crispness, and a generalized shape replaces the once complicated detail.

Unconsciously but definitely Rousseau begins to obtain more feeling of depth. Painting in superimposed flat planes remained always his favorite way of composing but at this period he explores various devices of perspective. The tilting plane of the river in *Footbridge at Passy* (above) adds a dimension that many of his early landscapes lacked. He avoids exact balance, learning better how to echo a dark mass with a light or to return movement with counter-movement. Broader zones of color are made to answer their complements.



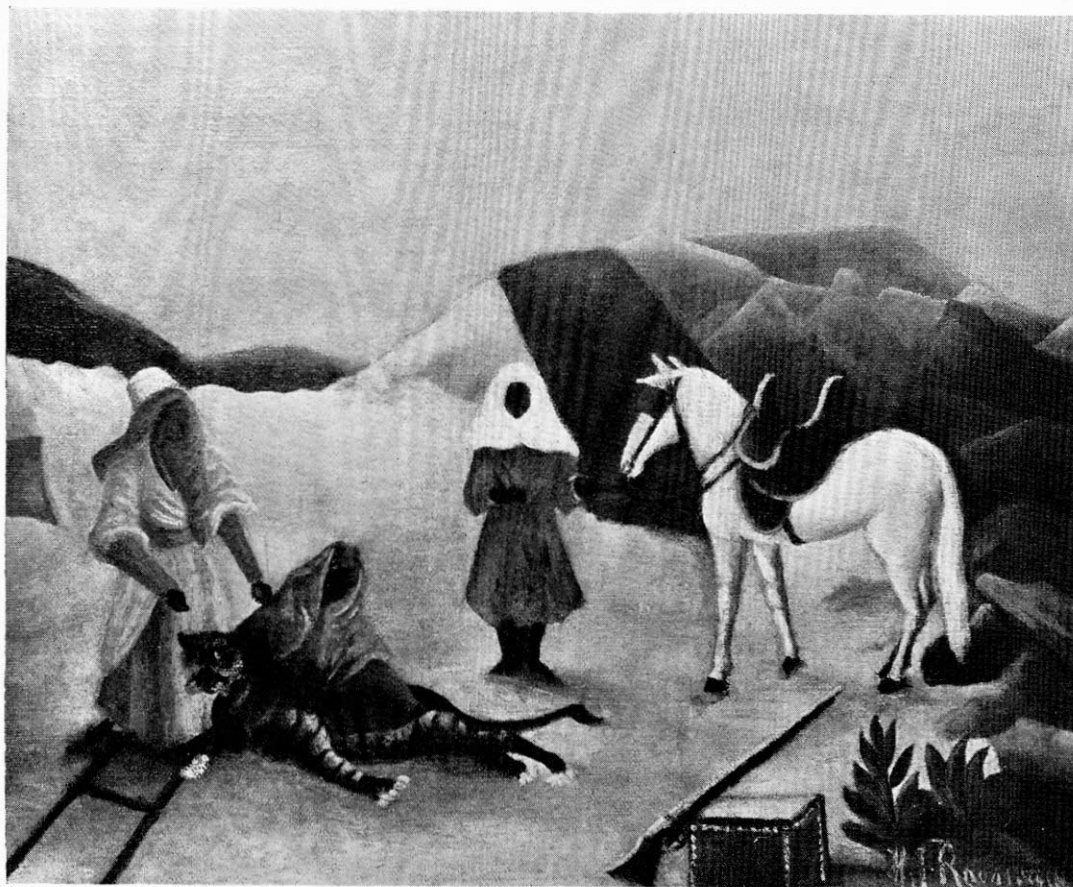
Artillerymen. c. 1895. Oil, 32 x 39¹/₂ inches. Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

42.311

Artillerymen (above) belongs with the lost canvases of *War* (exhibited 1894) and *The Last of the 51st* (exhibited 1893) to that brief period when Rousseau turned towards military themes. One suspects a group photograph as the basis for the picture. But the set arrangement of the soldiers and the stressed darks and lights are employed by Rousseau with a wholly fresh insight. The landscape, as usual, is carefully keyed to the pattern of figures.

All the knowledge that Rousseau had added to his natural gift, all the freedoms he had gained by ten years of intense labor are incorporated into his greatest painting of the 'nineties, *The Sleeping Gypsy* (page 33), exhibited at the Independents in 1897. For such works "he had perfected himself more and more in the original manner which he adopted" and such a picture was intended to prove him "one of our best realist painters."

Realism is not the first quality one attributes to *The Sleeping Gypsy*. But its painter consciously meant it to be a naturalistic work. Here, I believe, he tried to rival his mentor, Gérôme, famous for African subjects with wild animals portrayed in bare stretches of landscape.



Tiger Hunt. 1895–97. Oil, 15 x 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Collection The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts. Ferdinand Howald Collection.

42.304

Tuileries Gardens. His prospectus advertises courses in music, diction, painting and drawing for children and adults. On Thursday evenings he conducted a sketch class from the model. The fee was eight francs a month, later raised to ten. He occasionally received commissions for portraits, even trading pictures to his baker or grocer.

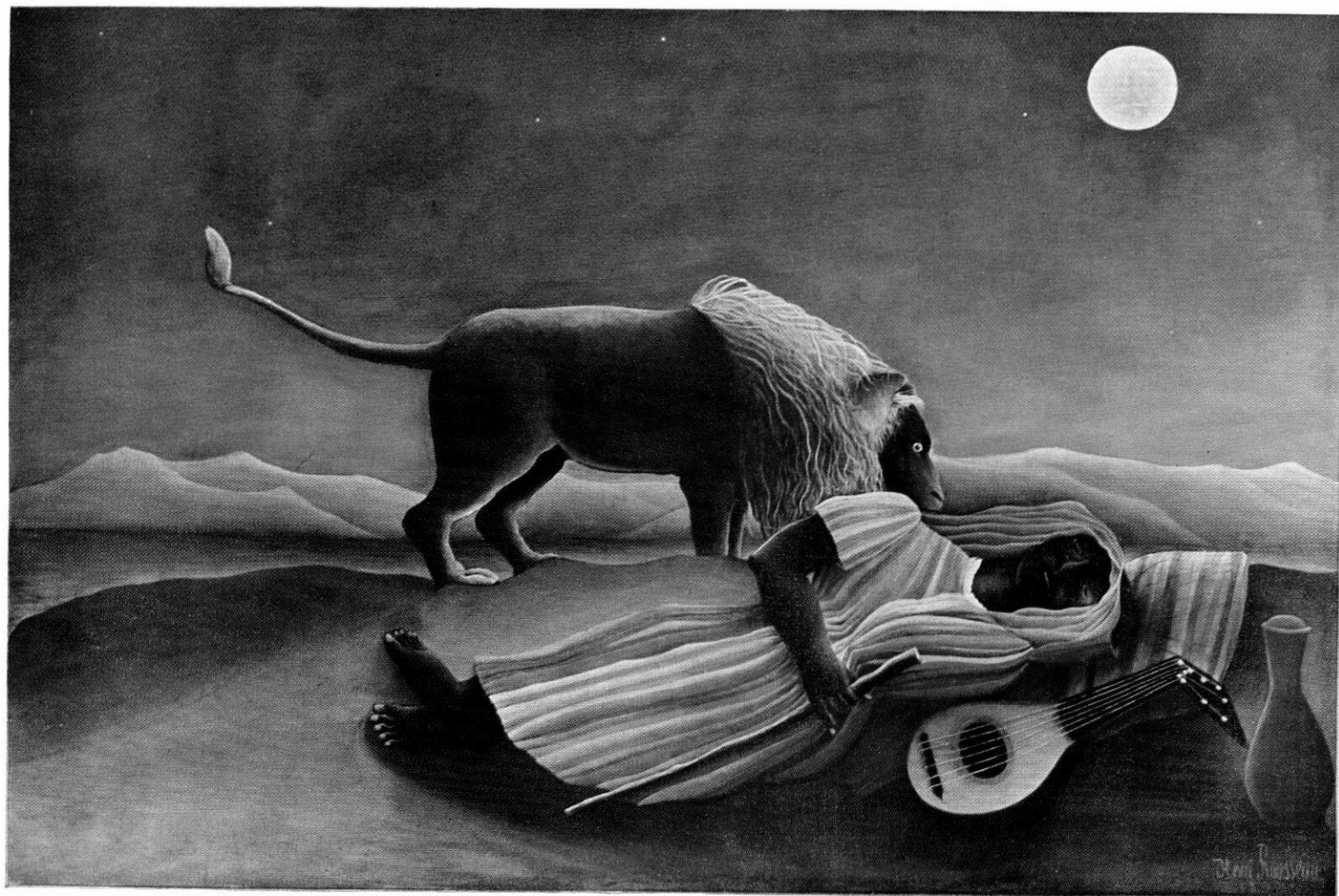
1898–1906

The Sleeping Gypsy marks a turning point in Rousseau's career. In it he finally joined the geometry of the folk style to his own freer conventions of drawing and color. The expressional content of folk painting has been merged into an individual expression. Starting with a limited repertory of visual symbols, the artist, with infinite patience and intuitive understanding, has finally developed his personal language. From now on there is no longer that sign of struggle



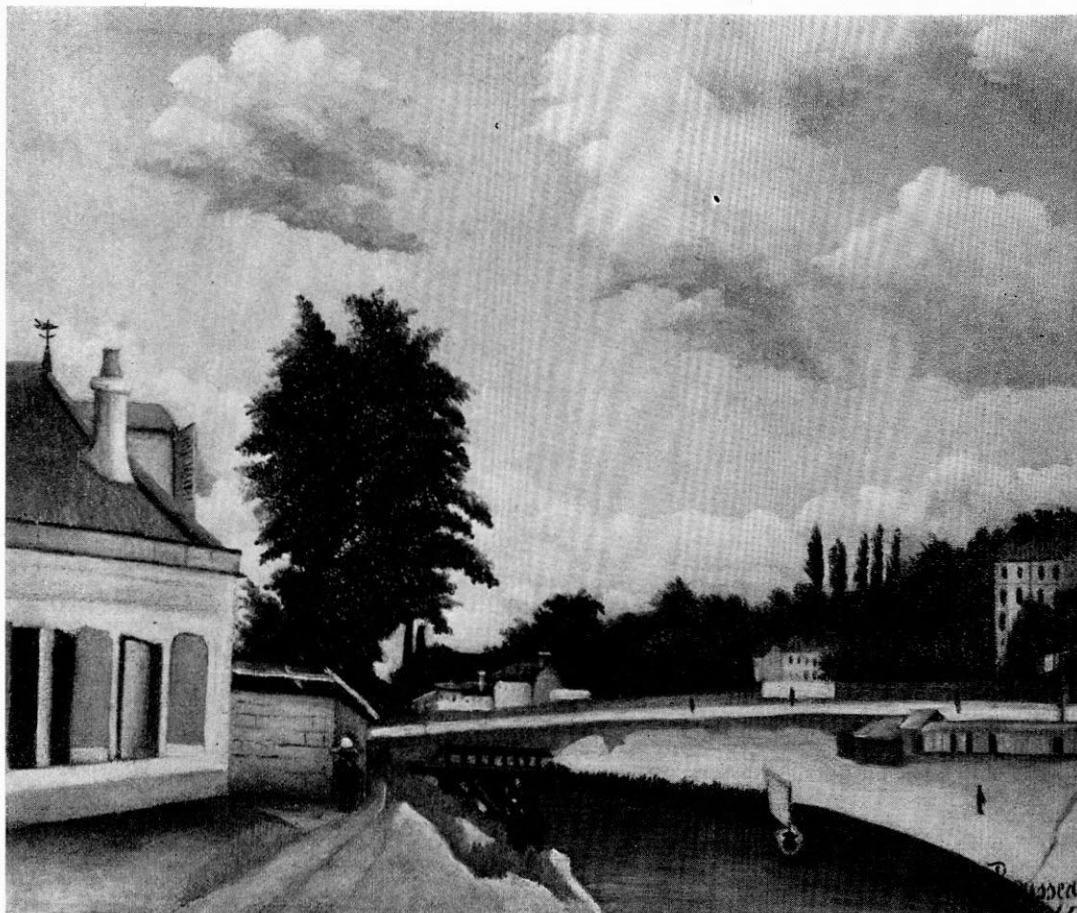
Mandolin and Vase, detail from The Sleeping Gypsy. This section of the canvas points forward to certain Cubist still lifes by Picasso and Braque.

6 46.39 - Detail



The Sleeping Gypsy. 1897 (dated). Oil, 51 x 70 inches. Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim.

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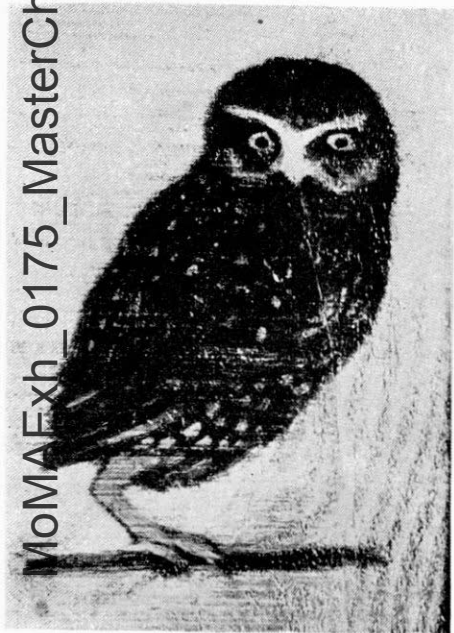


Landscape, Outskirts of Paris (Paysage de Banlieue, Environs de Paris). 1898–1900. Oil, 15 x 18 inches. Collection The Cleveland Museum of Art.

42.305

with architectonics or poetry, often found in preceding works. Rousseau moves easily in the world of his creation, *realizing* (in the sense that Cézanne used the word) as easily and clearly as he imagines.

With a few notable exceptions this period is one of resting. After the intense effort of carrying through a few large paintings, Rousseau turns to smaller things. To the Independents he sends chiefly little landscapes and portraits. The landscapes are apt to include in their titles the time of year (*View of the Bois de Boulogne [autumn]*) or refer to some effect of light (*Lake Dumesnil [setting sun]*). The best of them, like the *Landscape, Outskirts of Paris* (above), contain clear blue skies, fluttering clouds, green trees, rose and red and gray houses, but though Rousseau remains faithful to local colors, there is an atmospheric envelopment very different from the earlier concentration on a few flat tones and severe boundaries. If, in their muted harmonies



Owl. c. 1905. Oil on wood, $9\frac{3}{4} \times 6$ inches. Collection Paul Petit, Paris.



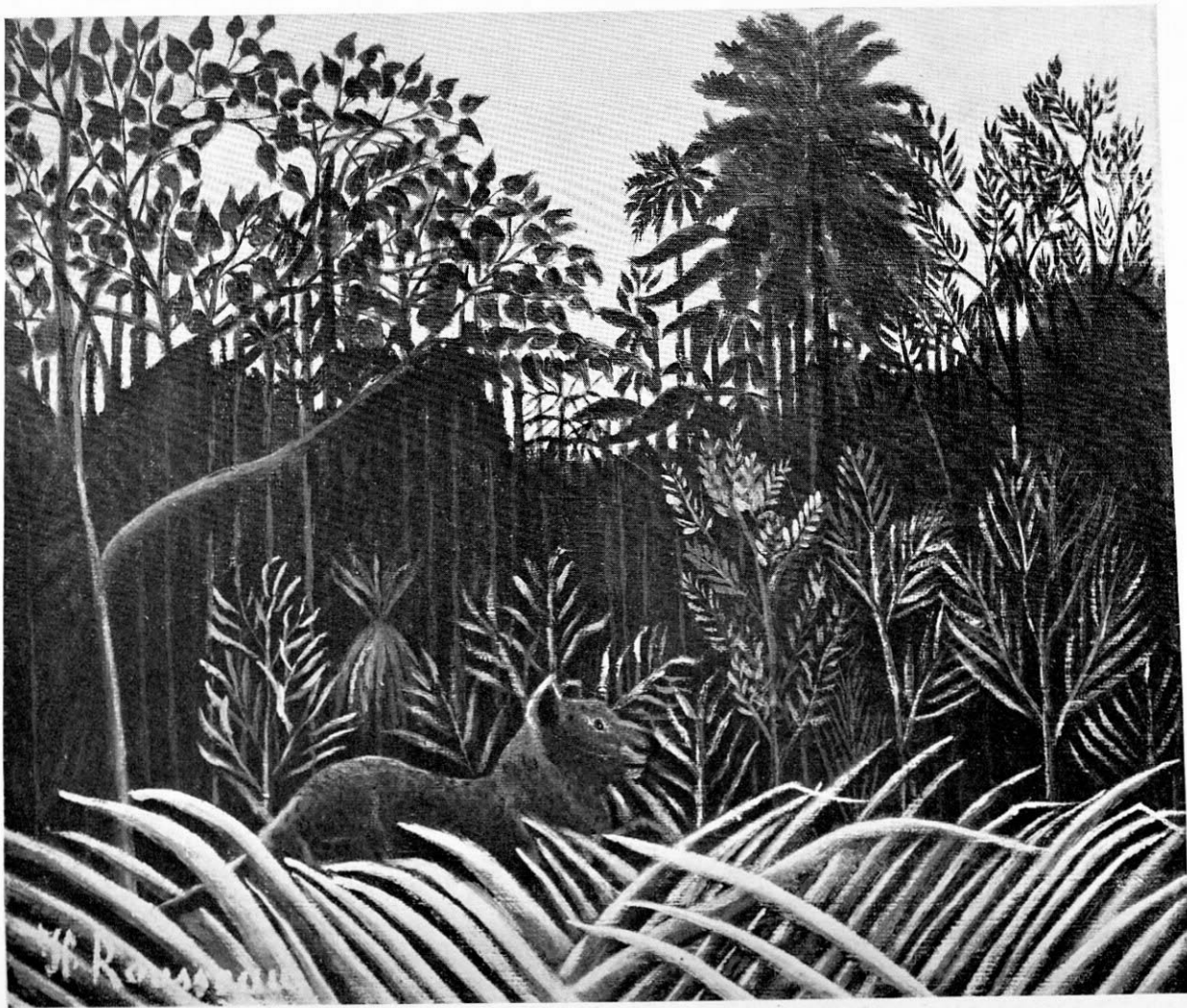
Bird of Prey, detail of The Hungry Lion...
Collection Dr. Franz Meyer, Zürich.

(Comparison from Egger, bibl. 19.)

their own conscious experiment. At first they treated him with a half-loving condescension. Max Weber recalls Rousseau's appearance at the elder Madame Delaunay's salon, a small, modest figure, with a sweet piping voice and the simplicity of a child. This was the man who represented in the flesh what the young sophisticates had named *le style concierge*.

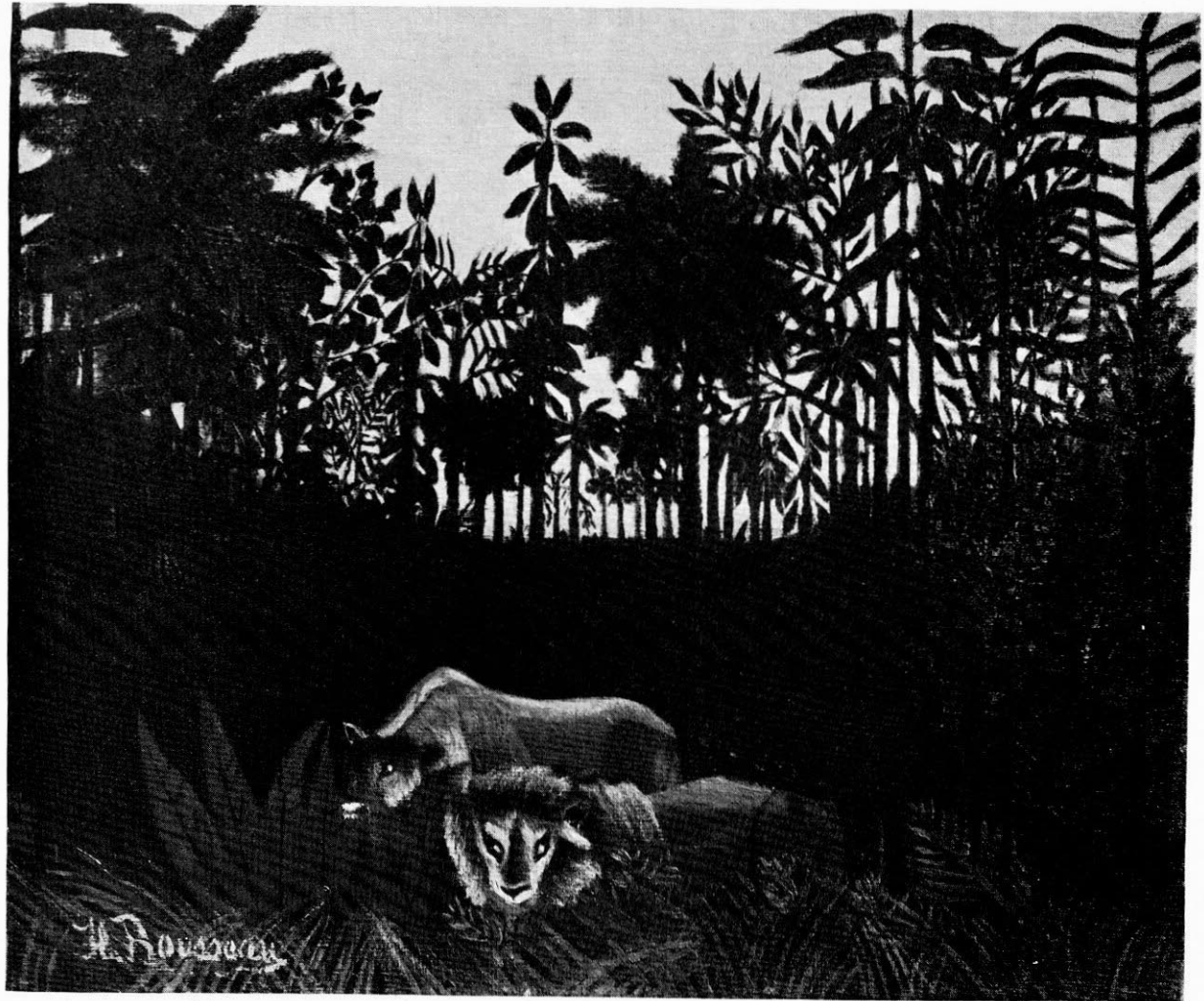
Aside from establishing his reputation and marking the theme which was to engross Rousseau for the last five years of his life, *The Hungry Lion...* has a deeper interest, for it furnishes another clue to his method. A sketch of an owl (evidently made from life) has survived (above) which Rousseau later made over into a bird of prey and set among the leaves of his great composition (detail, above). It is instructive to follow the subtle changes in design and feeling by which this transformation took place.

In later landscapes the note of fantasy, ever stronger, expresses itself in a freer association of forms and in richer implications of color and texture. In addition *Banks of the Oise* (page 42) and *House, Outskirts of Paris* (page 44) possess the dream-like serenity of some of the jungle compositions. (A preliminary sketch from nature for the latter picture belongs to Professor E. R. Weiss of Berlin.) The vibrant stippling of the trees in *Landscape, Pontoise* (page 45) reminds one of the dotted touch of the Pointillists, without their broken color. Perhaps Rousseau responded, unconsciously, to some such influence, but he put it to far different use. He was still strongly moved to objectify, having such unyielding respect for every object in nature that he wished to convey the sense of each leaf, if only by the briefest indication. Such late land-



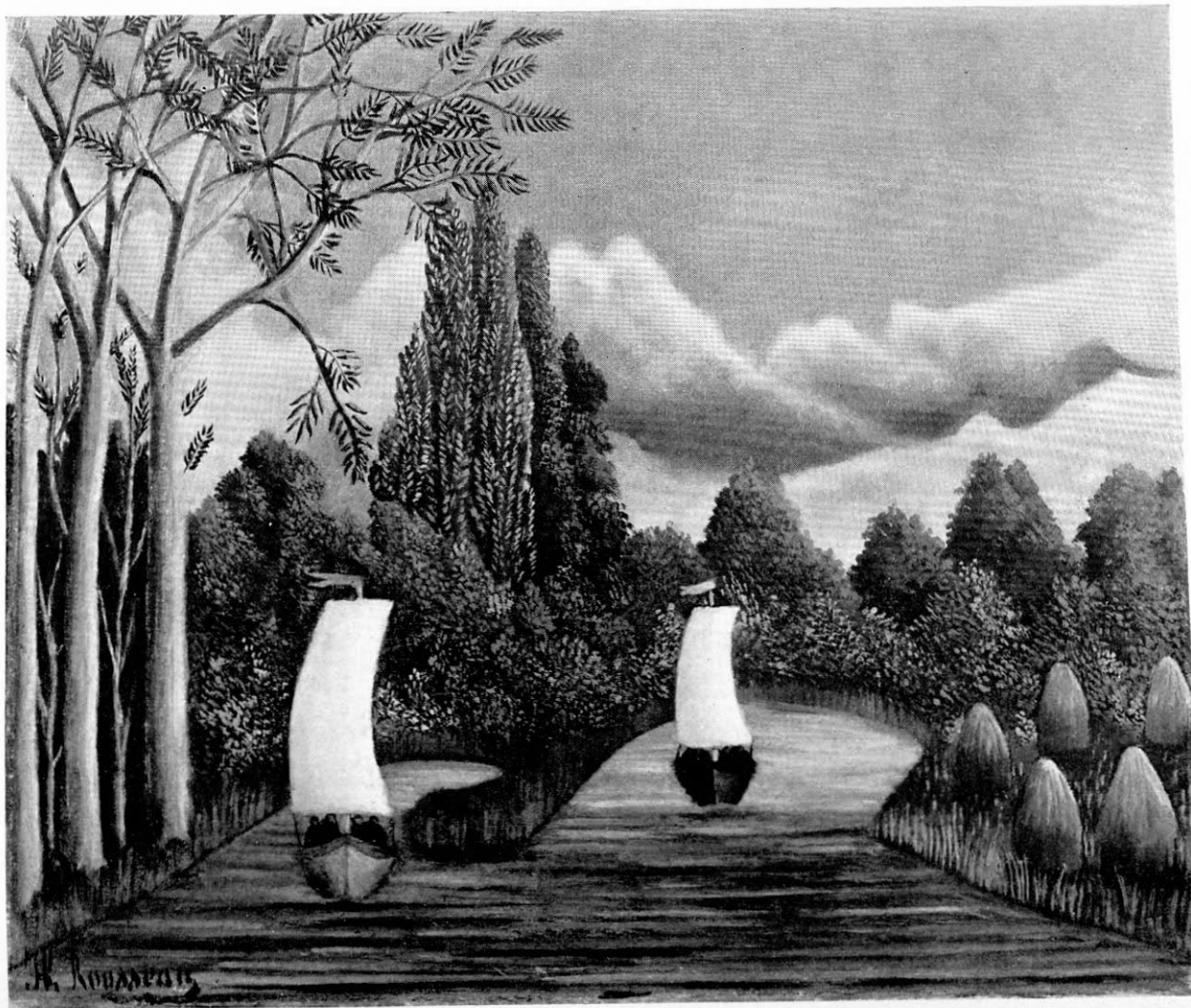
Jungle with a Lion. 1904-06. Oil, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 inches. Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Lillie P. Bliss Collection.

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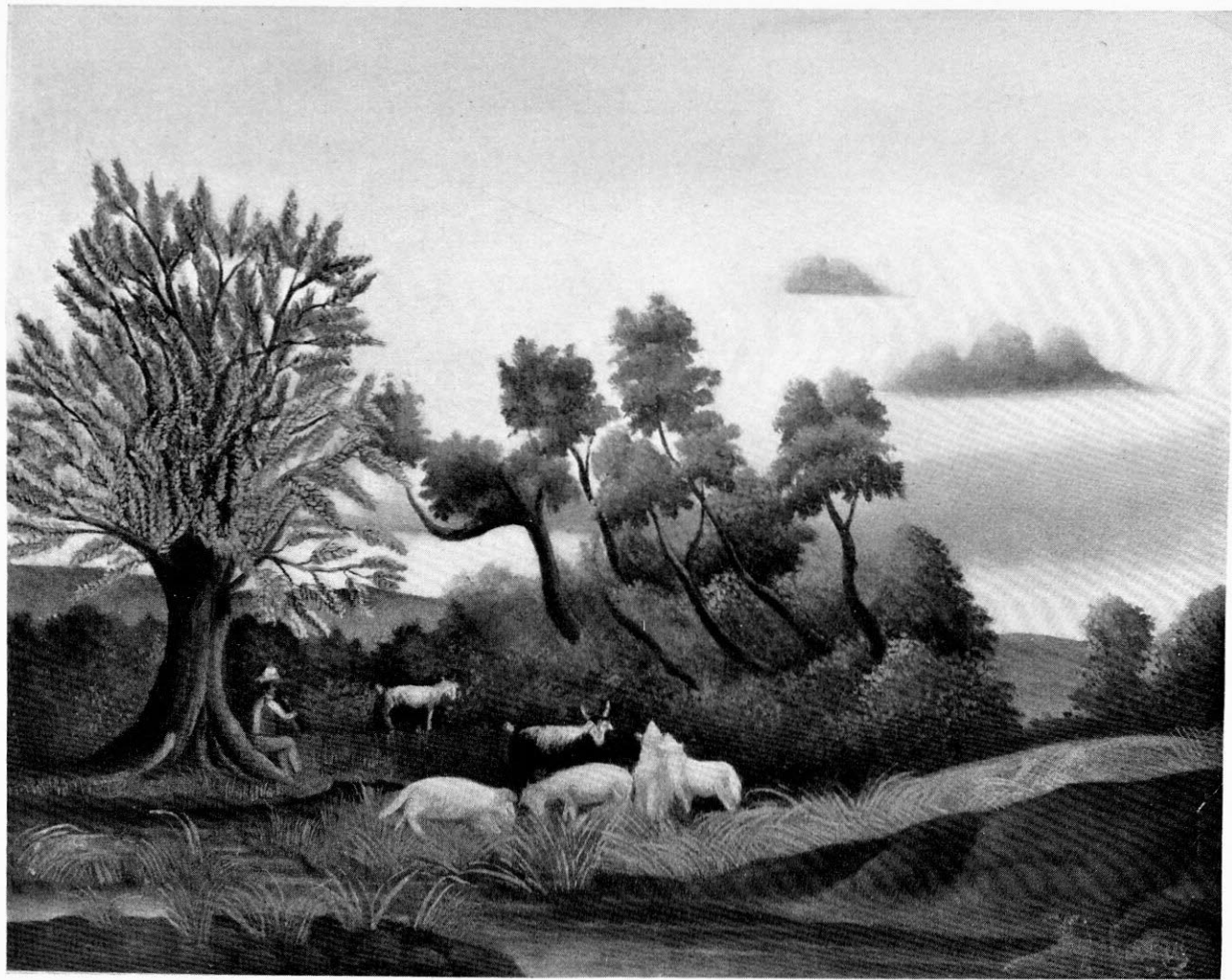
The Jungle: Lion and Buffalo. 1904–06. Oil, $14\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Sam A. Lewisohn.

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Banks of the Oise. 1905. 18 x 22 inches. Collection The Smith College Museum of Art.
Oil,

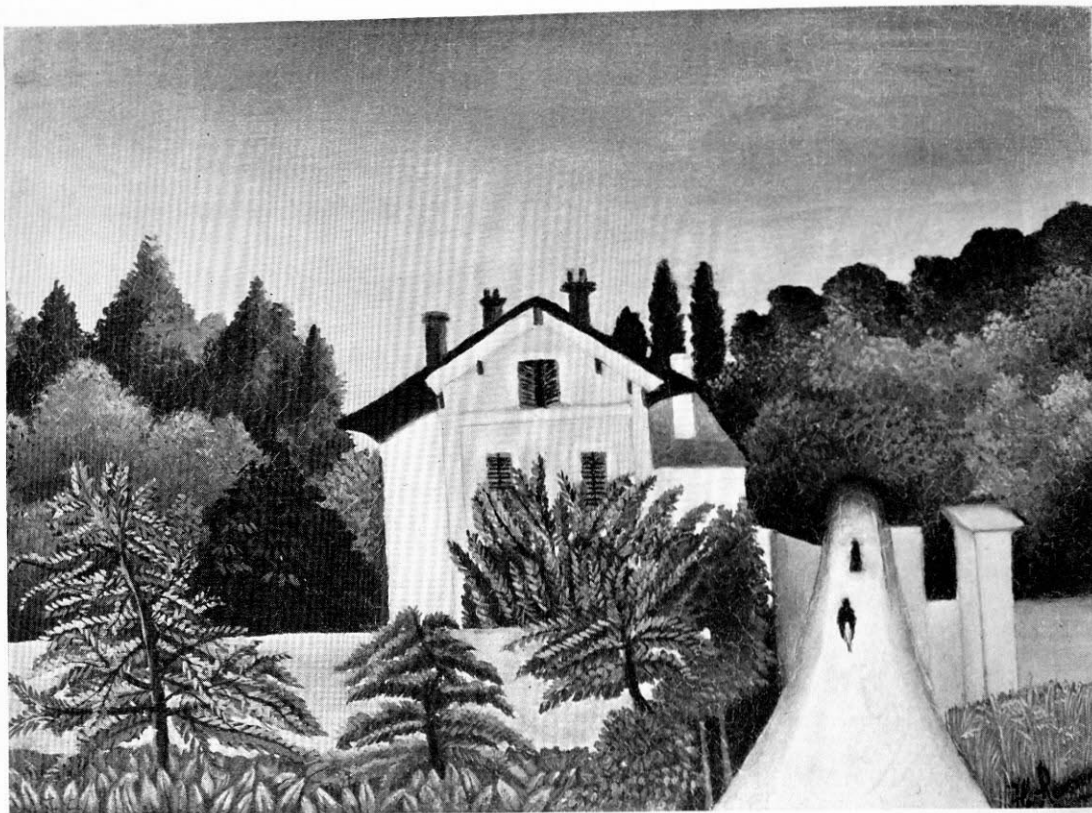
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The Goatherd. 1905-07 (?). Oil, $16\frac{1}{4} \times 21\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Collection James Thrall Soby.

42.327



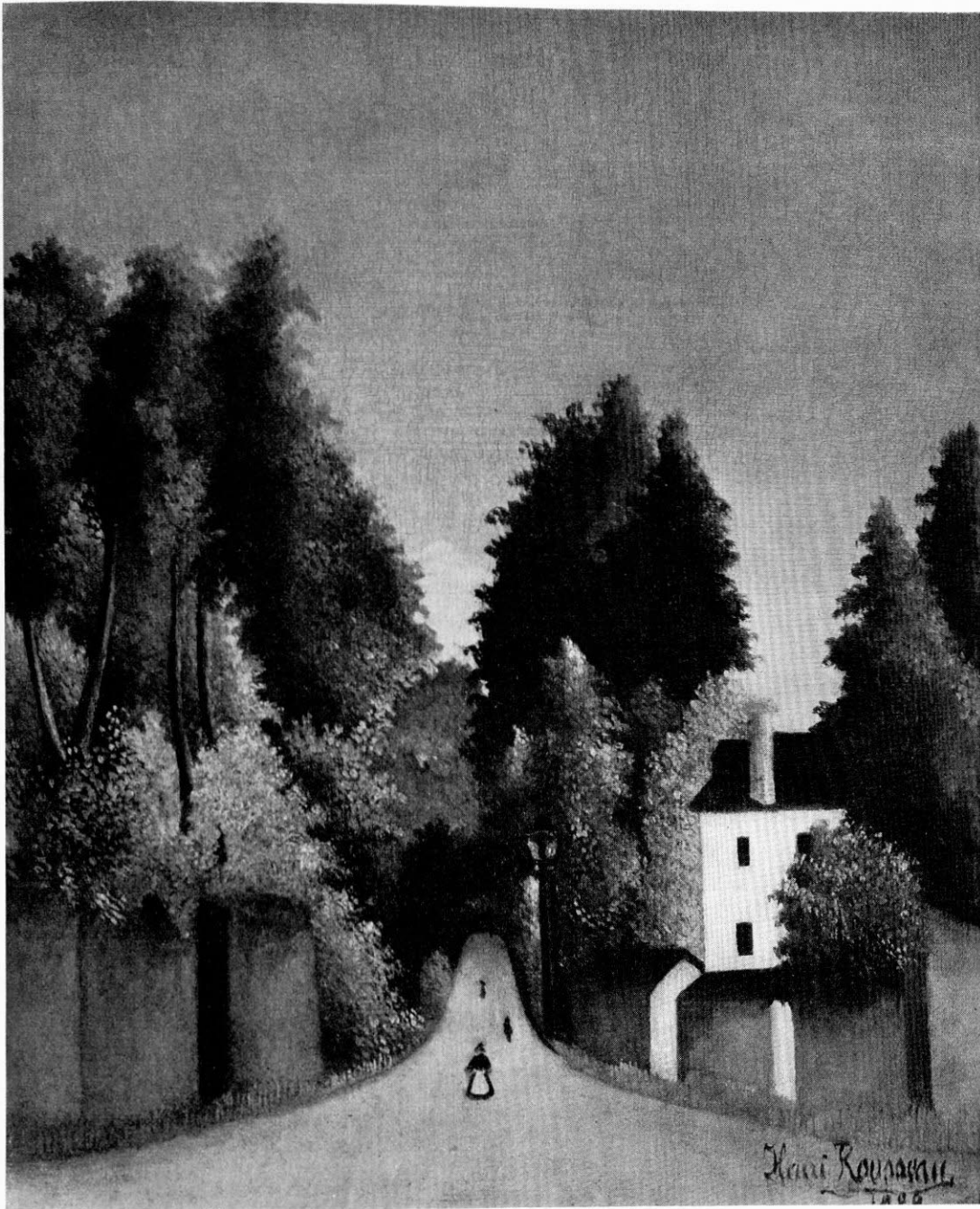
House, Outskirts of Paris. 1905-07. Oil 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Collection Max Weber.

42.329

scapes, lit with romantic light and exquisite in color, contrast markedly with the spare and geometricized city views of the 'nineties. *Banks of the Oise*, moreover, contains a curious telescoping of several motifs, combined into an imaginative unity which leads directly on to the artist's last phase.

1907-1910

Now commenced the fullest period of Rousseau's life. His dream had come true. At the age of sixty-three he found himself in the center of the most advanced group of artists and writers in Paris, admired and recognized by the intellectual world. In 1907 he received his first large commission from Madame Delaunay for the *Snake-Charmer*, now in the Louvre. Its exhibition in the Autumn Salon brought him wide fame. But nothing turned his head. He still remained the ingenuous "artist-painter," accepting applause with the same tranquillity with which he had met abuse. Though he had acquired a dealer, Joseph Brummer, who was able to sell a few works for him now and then for small sums, he remained poor all his life, hardly knowing (as his



Landscape, Pontoise. 1906 (dated). Oil, $15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection Mrs. William Hale Harkness.

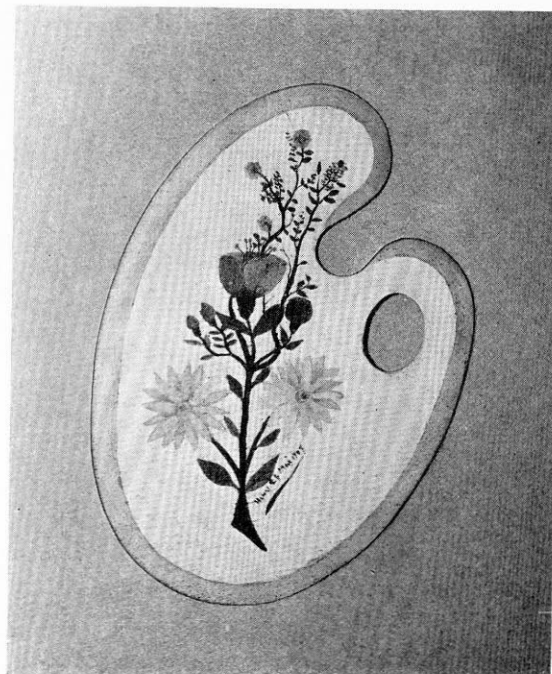
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spirit of his departed wife. When Uhde met Rousseau for the first time, the *Snake-Charmer* was on his easel. "I realized already that the legend of his artistic 'naïveté' was unjustified. He was concerned with the general harmony and balance of the large composition and asked my advice whether to make a tone darker or lighter, whether to suppress something here or add something there."

Occasionally Rousseau visited the Louvre and discussed the paintings afterward with nice understanding. "Which ones did you like best?" he was asked. "You see there are so many of them I forget the names," Rousseau replied. Brummer recalls that he mentioned only Courbet with admiration. (*Boat by a Cliff*, formerly in the collection of Paul Guillaume, Paris, seems to recall Courbet.) He conscientiously attended the official Salon where he led his pupils before the most academic examples. To the end of his life Bouguereau remained his idol and Bouguereau's death is said to have affected him deeply. At the Cézanne Memorial of 1907 his comment was, "You know, I could finish all these pictures."

The artist loved festivity and during the years 1908 and 1909 organized a series of musical soirées in his studio. Special invitations were sent out and a hand-decorated program given to each guest. Several descriptions of these events have appeared in print, of which the most precise is Adolph Basler's (translated from bibl. 8):

It was with Max Weber that I sometimes went to the soirées in the rue Perrel. This American, a tenor who apparently had sung in synagogues, was the chief soloist of these friendly affairs where



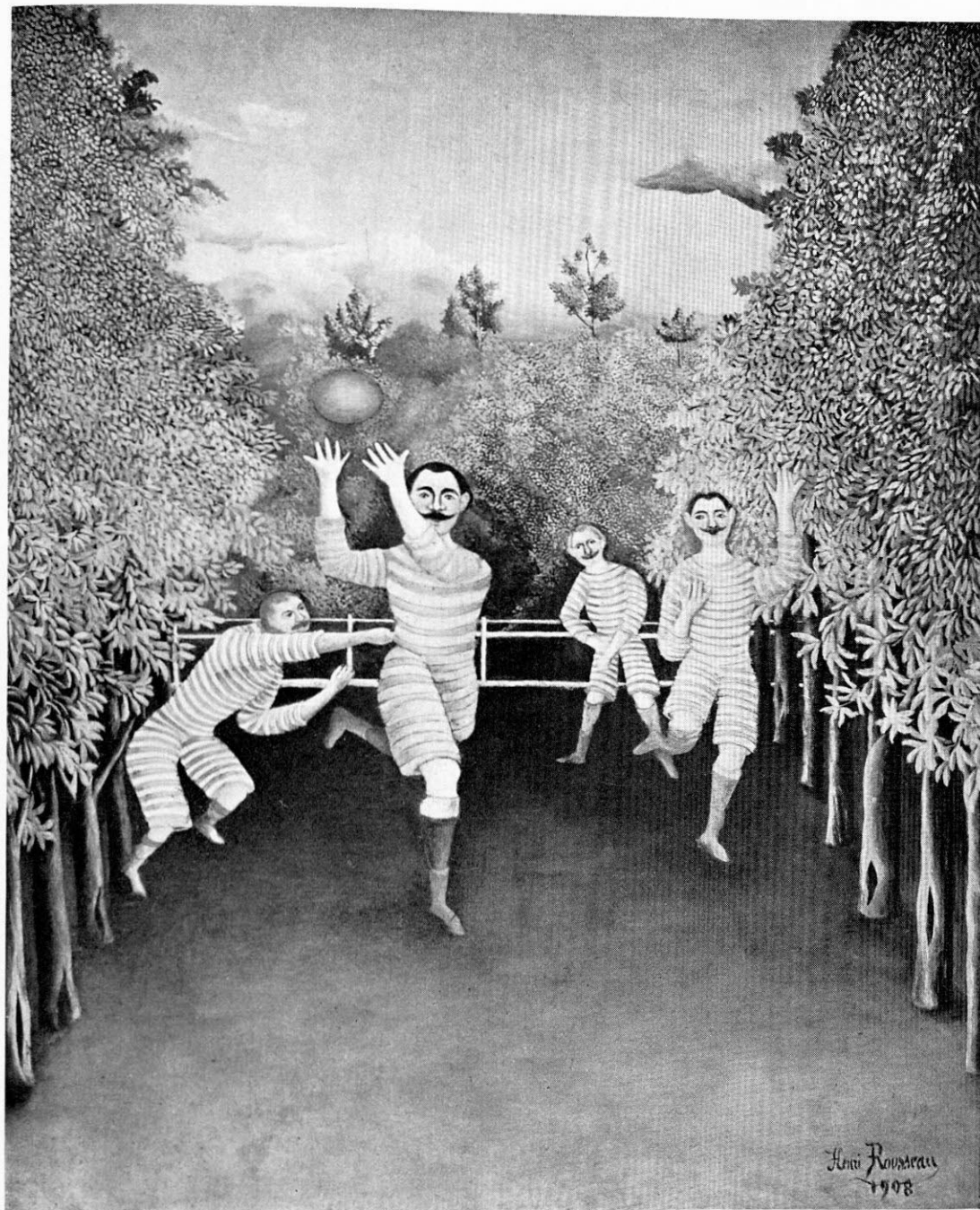
Rousseau's Palette. 1907 (dated). Wood, 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Collection Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.



The Jungle: Tiger Attacking a Buffalo. 1908 (dated). Oil, 67½ x 75 inches. Lent by Mrs. Patrick C. Hill to the Joseph Winterbotham Collection of The Art Institute of Chicago.

42.315

artists elbowed the people of the neighborhood. I noticed, among the guests, the baker with his daughter who was taking mandolin lessons from the Douanier, the little grocer round the corner, flanked by his son to whom Rousseau taught violin and drawing; the daughters of the milkman, some small business-men, a few retired inspectors from the customs and even the old eccentrics who passed their days painting by the side of their good-natured Patron. An old architect's clerk, the most persistent habitué of the place, boasted of representing the intellectual element. He teased the poor Douanier and his humble public continually. But he was the one who started the stupidest songs of the evening, particularly one threadbare old piece of the Second Empire in which all the company joined in the chorus: "Ah, Ah, Joséphine . . ."



39 1/2 x 31 5/8"

A Game of Football (Joueurs de Football). 1908 (dated). Oil, 40 x 32 inches. Lent by Paul Rosenberg and Co.

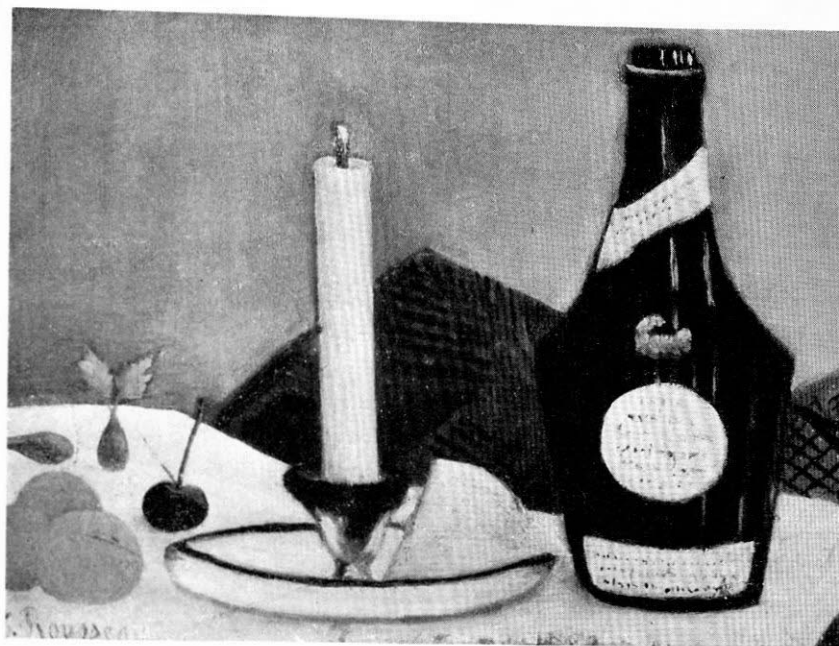
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Mother and Child. 1905–08 (?). Oil, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection Max Weber.

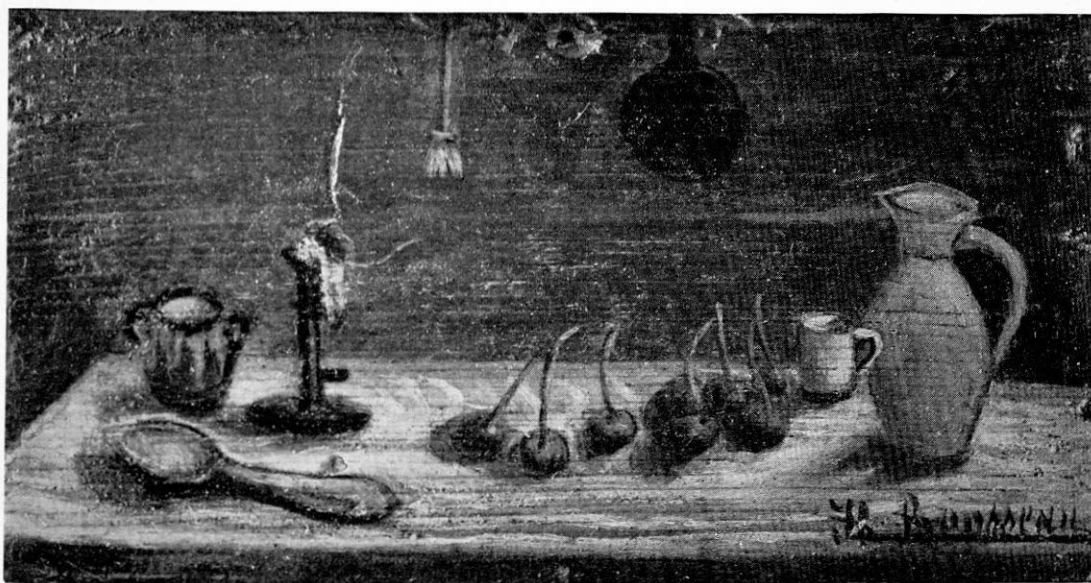
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Rousseau's incredible naïveté. But such an obeisance to reality liberated him for his significant problem: how to objectify the figure before him and still harmonize it with those strict pictorial laws which his intuition demanded. Except in the little sketches before nature, his method was never instantaneous. It was a slow, additive exploration. Organizing his impressions into broad planes, he continually strove for greater clarity. To Uhde he remarked of a picture in process, "Don't you believe I ought to make the leaves in the first plane a little clearer?" His feeling for the permanent made him seek out a severe linear pattern to which he



The Pink Candle. 1905–08 (?). Oil, $6\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection The Phillips Memorial Gallery.

42.322



Still Life. 1900–08 (?). Oil on wood, $2\frac{7}{8} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection Max Weber.

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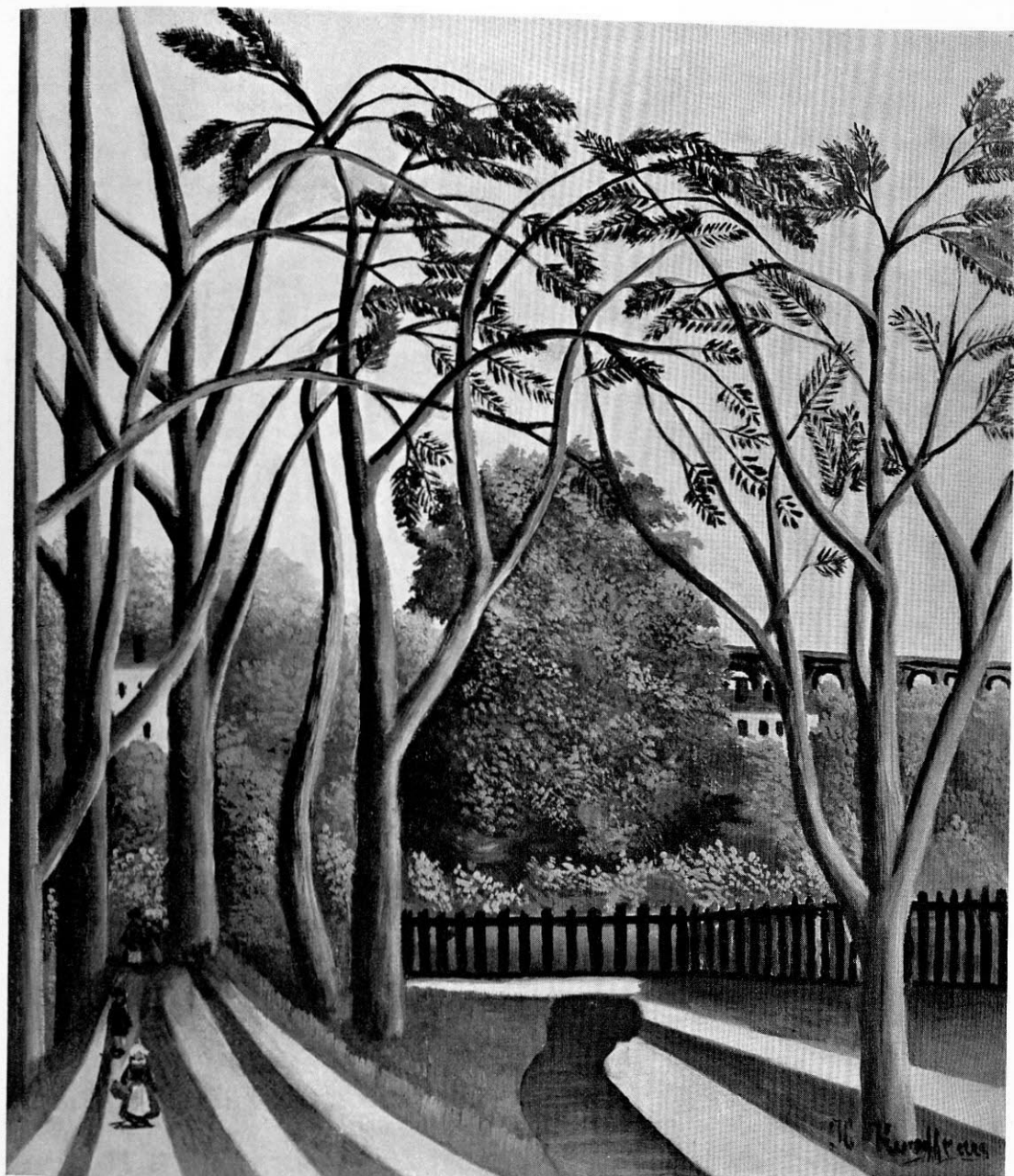


Fisherman. 1909–10. Oil, $14\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection Dr. and Mrs. Harry Bakwin.
42.307

constantly opposed passages of invented color and relieving areas of gray and black. The picture was not finished until every form had its proper stability and tension.

In a way he was as lost as Cézanne without nature. During the course of the portrait his letters to Apollinaire implore him to come to the studio to pose. The background is done but the figure needs more attention; the paint will dry in and then it will be double the work. "I have had many difficulties . . . You didn't come back to pose and I was bothered about certain tones but I finished it, nevertheless, from memory." (Letter of August 3, 1909, page 76.) He demanded the model before him to check and control his vision. Lacking it, he could not realize the individuality of forms, the special sense of their character. "Never forget nature, Weber," he used to remark again and again to the young painter.

By the time he portrayed Joseph Brummer he knew just how to proceed. Compare the reworked face of the *Portrait of a Young Girl* (page 26) with the broadly designed features in this later example. The feeling for grandeur which permeates his final style condenses the



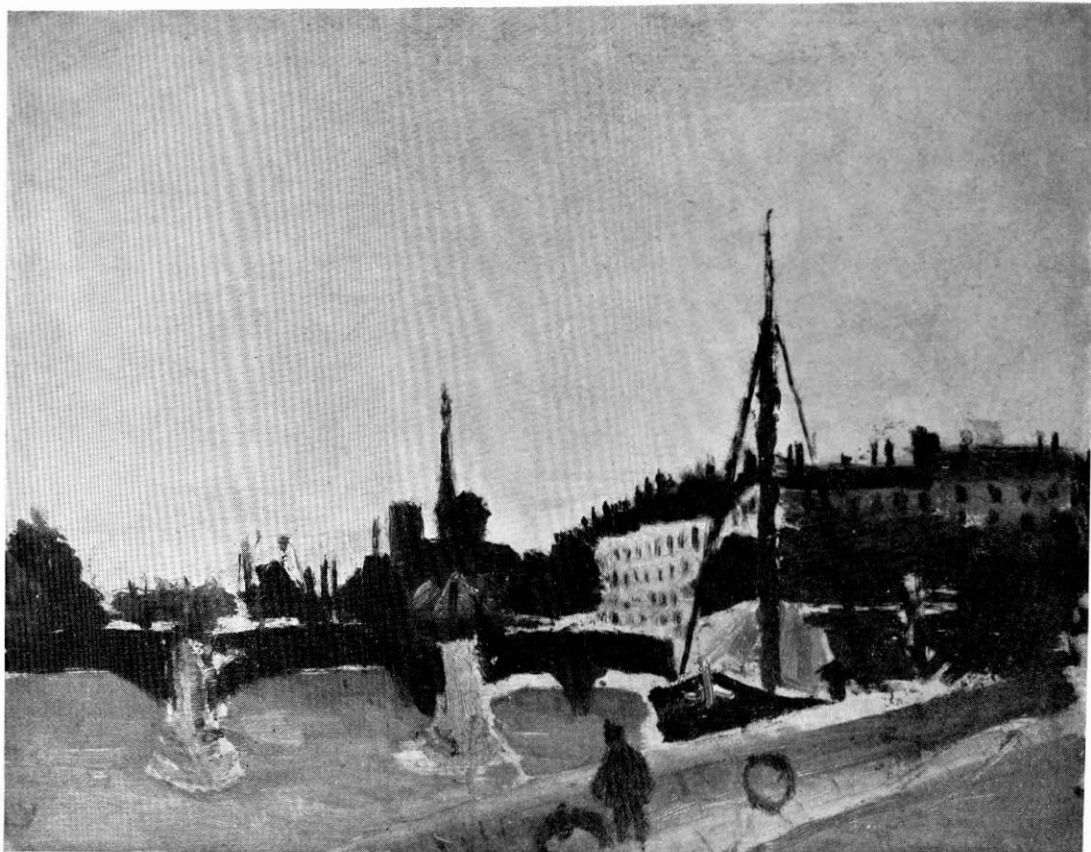
Spring in the Valley of the Bièvre. 1908–10 (?). Oil, 21½ x 18 inches. Collection The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

42.318



Portrait of Joseph Brummer. 1909 (dated). Oil, 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 inches. Collection Dr. Franz Meyer, Zürich. On extended loan to The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

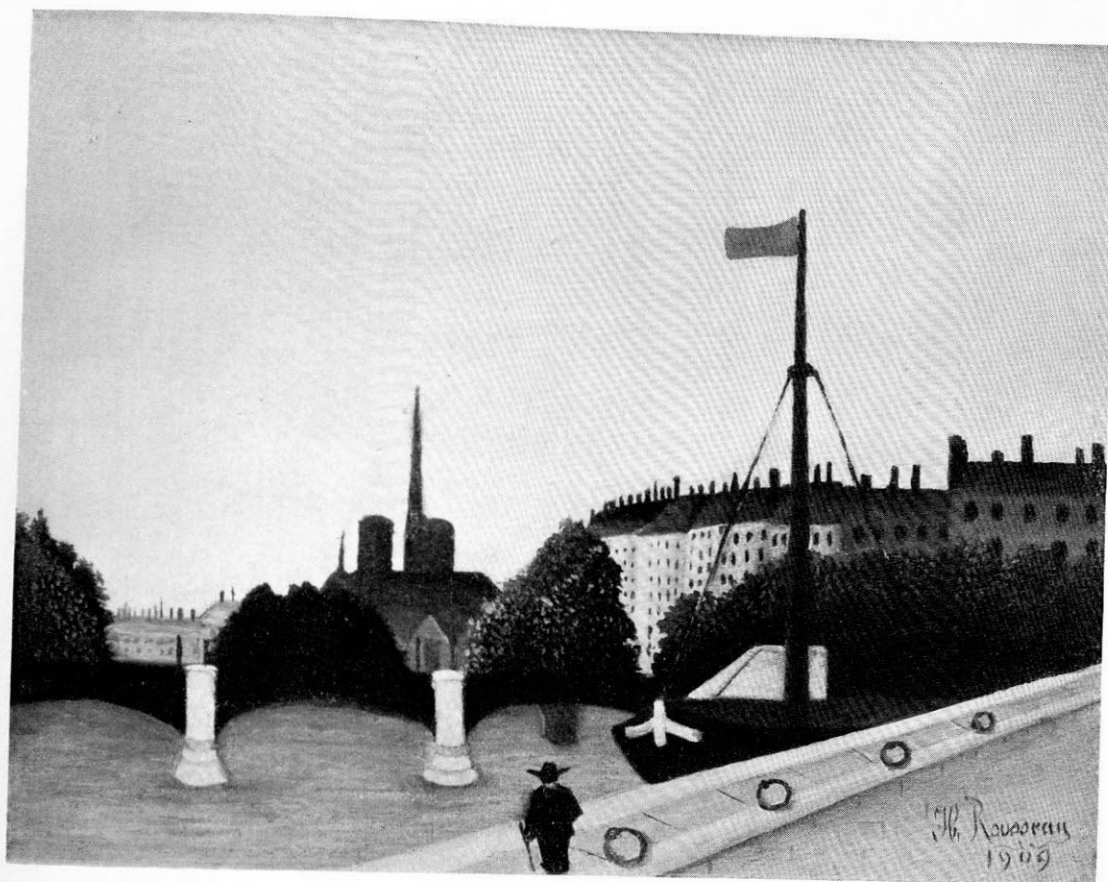
E.L. 39.260



Notre Dame from the Quai Henri-Quatre. 1909. Oil, 8½ x 11 inches. Lent by Julius H. Weitzner.

42. 934

time and established his later fame. The subjects are curiously savage. For *The Hungry Lion* . . . Rousseau wrote a poetic explanation printed in the catalog of the Autumn Salon of 1905: "The hungry lion, throwing himself upon the antelope, devours him; the panther stands by, anxiously waiting the moment when he can claim his share. Birds of prey have ripped out pieces of flesh from the poor animal who pours forth his death-cry! Setting sun." In other pictures a tiger rushes at natives or an ape attacks an Indian (page 67). It would seem that a lingering strain of Delacroix' fierce animal combats—a strain repeated in Salon painting of African and Oriental subjects down the century—makes its reappearance in Rousseau. But if the theme is the law of the jungle, the artist's development is detached and remote. The incident of the struggle is overwhelmed by a luxuriant flora which completely dominates the picture. In some of these works Rousseau treats monkeys at play (pages 48 and 72) but the effect is strange and sub-humorous. His conception answers the reality of imagination rather than of nature.



Notre Dame, 1909 (dated). Oil, 13 x 16 inches. Collection The Phillips Memorial Gallery.

42.328

In stressing Rousseau's method of composition it would be unwise to overlook his early impressions of Mexico. While he seldom mentioned his years in America, he did remark that the French soldiers were forbidden to eat the tempting fruits. Does the profusion of oranges and bananas in many pictures recall some such injunction? Rousseau referred to his jungles as "Mexican pictures" and Max Weber relates that when the Mexican Ambassador was in Paris, the painter vainly tried to reach him in an effort to sell one of his works. Furthermore one can imagine that behind the curious enlargement of leaves and flowers lie half-forgotten memories of the extraordinary landscape round Vera Cruz.

But if the impulse came to him across the years, it came not as total recall but as a feeling to be verified by nature. Scientists have identified a number of the plants in these canvases, all of them probably available at the Paris conservatory, suggesting that Rousseau studied his exotic flora firsthand. Weber came upon him one day when he was painting. Around his palette



Vase of Flowers. 1901-02. Oil, 13 x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Collection William S. Paley.

62

18 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{1}{4}$

42.319



Flowers in a Vase. 1909 (dated). Oil, $18\frac{3}{8} \times 13\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Collection The Buffalo Fine Arts Academy, Albright Art Gallery.

42.308



The Waterfall. 1910 (dated). Oil, 45½ x 59 inches. Collection The Art Institute of Chicago. Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial.

42. 297



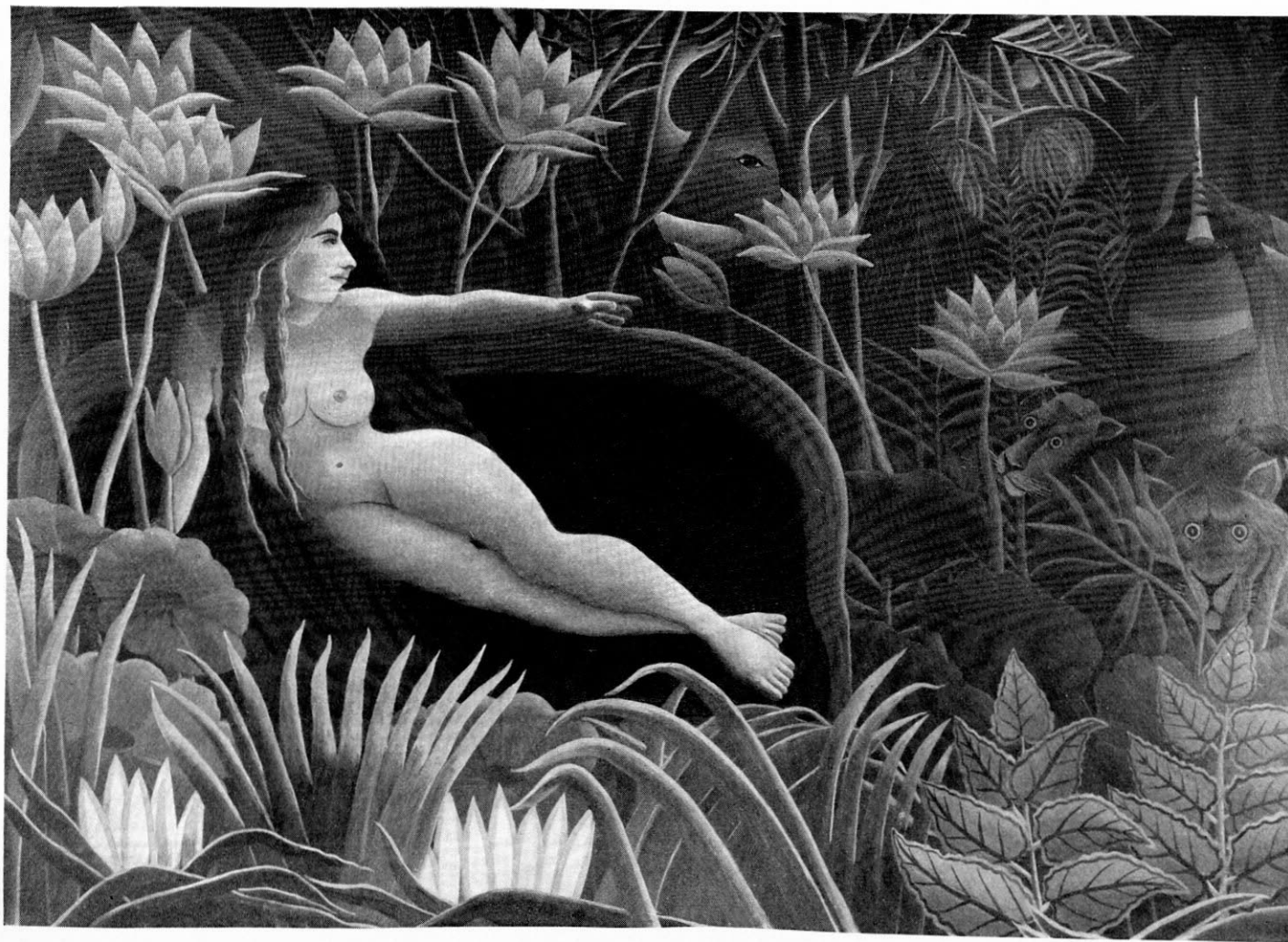
2 *Exotic Landscape: Ape and Indian. 1910 (dated). Oil, 45 x 64 inches. Lent by Wildenstein & Co., Inc.*

42.301



The Dream. 1910 (dated). Oil, 80 x 118¹/₂ inches. Collection Sidney Janis.

42.316



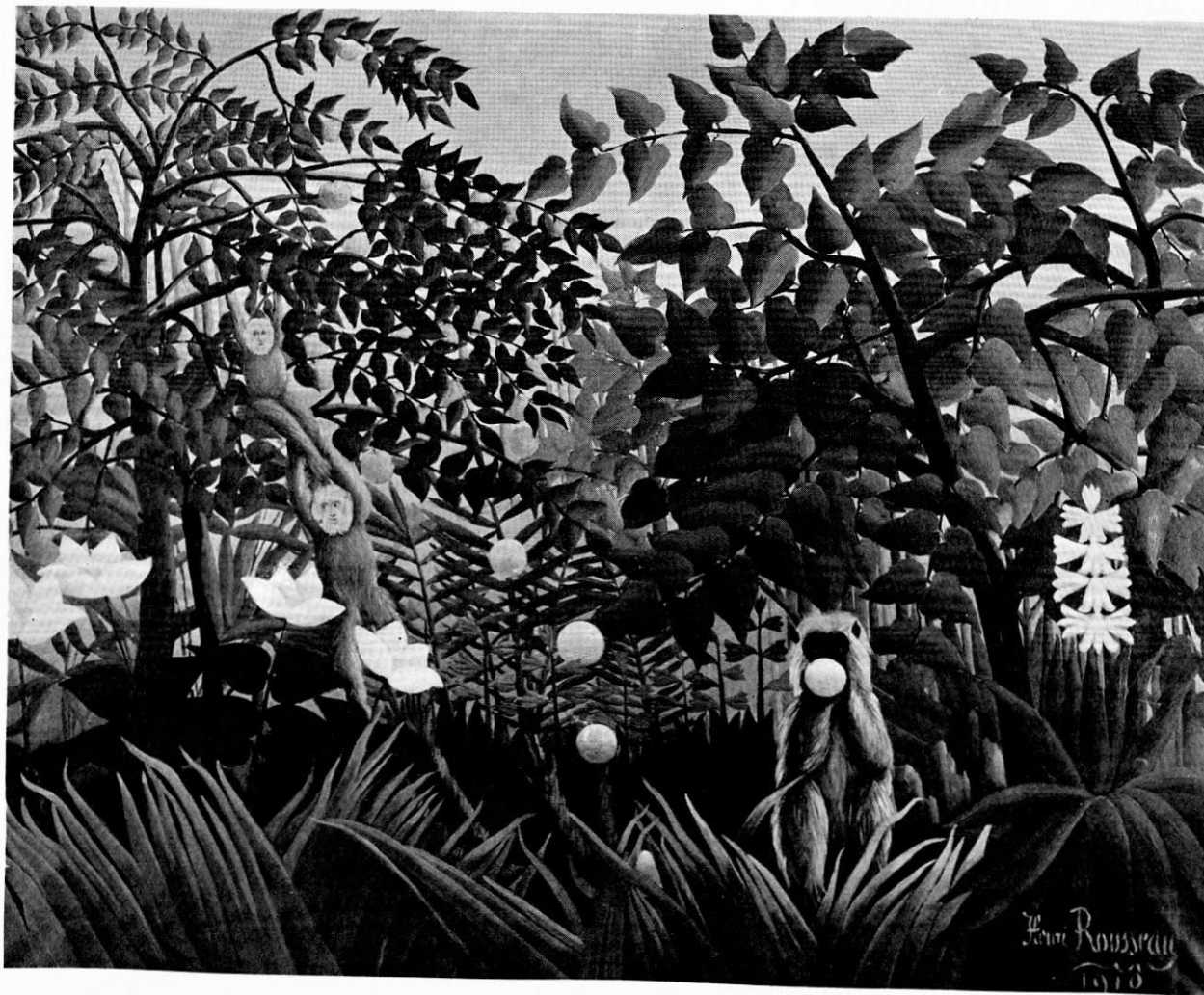
Detail of The Dream. Collection Sidney Janis.

42.316 - detail



12 Detail of *The Dream*. Collection Sidney Janis.

42.316 Detail



Exotic Landscape. 1910 (dated). Oil, 51 x 64 inches. Collection Colonel Robert R. McCormick.

42.298