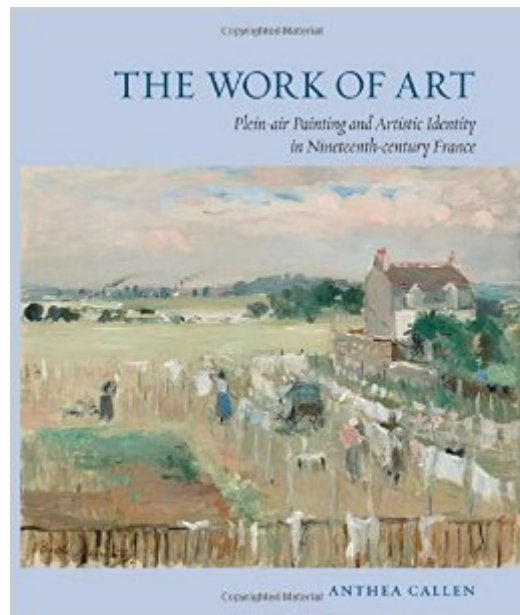


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The Work Of Art: Plein Air Painting And Artistic Identity In Nineteenth-Century France



Synopsis

In *The Work of Art*, Anthea Callen analyzes the self-portraits, portraits of fellow artists, photographs, prints, and studio images of prominent nineteenth-century French Impressionist painters, exploring the emergence of modern artistic identity and its relation to the idea of creative work. Landscape painting in general, she argues, and the *plein air* oil sketch in particular were the key drivers of change in artistic practice in the nineteenth century—leading to the Impressionist revolution. Putting the work of artists from Courbet and Cézanne to Pissarro under a microscope, Callen examines modes of self-representation and painting methods, paying particular attention to the painters' touch and mark-making. Using innovative methods of analysis, she provides new and intriguing ways of understanding material practice within its historical moment and the cultural meanings it generates. Richly illustrated with 180 color and black-and-white images, *The Work of Art* offers fresh insights into the development of avant-garde French painting and the concept of the modern artist.

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