

The scenery of a painting by Henri Zuber (1844-1909) located above the *Gorge-aux-loups*



Henri Zuber, grandson of the founder of a wallpaper company passed down through the generations, developed an interest in drawing and painting at an early age. The far-away travels he undertook in Napoleon III's Imperial Navy provided him with numerous opportunities to practice his talents as a draftsman and a painter. Back on dry land, he entered the studio of famous Charles Gleyre, definitively embracing a career as a painter and illustrator. He was admitted to the Salon des Artistes Français in 1869. Zuber's practice was highly versatile and included watercolor, as well as oils, drawing, and pastel. He became famous for his landscape depictions and enjoyed great success at his annual exhibitions at the Salon des Artistes Français. Somewhat forgotten after his death, he was once again appreciated, particularly thanks to the work

of the [*Friends of the Painter Henri Zuber Association*](#).

One aspect of Zuber's life is of particular interest to Bourron-Marlotte: the stays he made there between 1885 and the early 1890s. During the summers of this period, he rented a house at 21 rue Marceau, which we will further discuss in the coming months.

Henri Zuber left several sketches, watercolors, and other depictions of our village. One of these, shared by the *Friends of the Painter Henri Zuber* and entitled "Pines and Oaks in Barbizon", is the subject of this short note. It depicts rocks, so characteristic of the Fontainebleau Forest. But wouldn't it be interesting to precisely locate this natural scene and imagine where Henri Zuber might have set up his easel? At least, that's the question that came to our mind!



In the broader Fontainebleau community, we are privileged to have access to a forest expert who can identify the sandstone masses depicted on old postcards or drawings like the one shown above. Indeed, Gérard Bayle-Labouré has made many such identifications, which can be seen [here](#). In particular, he once identified a rock at our request, where the great pianist [Berthe Marx had gone for a family walk!](#) Therefore, we contacted this identification wizard again, hoping to locate Zuber's painting in the Fontainebleau forest. Imagine our surprise when Gérard Bayle-Labouré gave us a very convincing answer, illustrated by the following photo!



No need to rephrase his very precise analysis: *This is the Belvédère de Corot, which overlooks the Gorge aux Loups (Mark L on Denecourt's blue trail #11). Henri Zuber set up camp, not along the blue trail which, in this sector, goes around a small rocky chaos to the north, but on the small shortcut (closed by a barrier which can be easily bypassed on the left), leading directly to the belvedere: (Lat: 48.35949°N – Long: 2.71240°E). The large block on the left in the background, which forms a sort of cube, is recognizable by its sharp vertical edge. The block on the right is a more complex block. Its front part is a plate slightly inclined to the left and its rear part forms a slightly domed summit. Two other blocks, located to the left of the painting, are also identifiable. The rock in the foreground on the right is now buried under a mass of ferns and dead leaves. The 19th-century trees have disappeared and have been replaced by new ones that shade the site.*

It is now certain that Henri Zuber depicted this scene in the Fontainebleau Forest during one of his stays in Bourron-Marlotte!