Derain’s **Charing Cross Bridge** 1906 shows the mid stage of Fauvism. It was commissioned by Vollard after the scandal of the 1905 Autumn Salon which earned the group their name. Vauxcelles identified the radical nature of this first movement of the new century by calling them ‘wild beasts’. In this work, the asymmetric composition is flattened, showing the view across the river to the Hungerford Bridge and the Houses of Parliament on the horizon. Modern factories on the left, lead the eye back to the red sky and steam of the train crossing the bridge, but show little respect for traditional academic perspective.

Derain’s colour is typically Fauve in its vibrant and unrealistic nature: Parliament is lime green, while the muddy Thames sparkles in slashes of yellow and orange. Here the mark-making is varied, showing the roots of the group in Pointillism, but also Derain’s influence of Gauguin in the outlining on the water’s edge and flat expanse of red colour on the bank. Bare canvas comes through and Derain’s replacement of light and tone with flat, unblended colour are typical of the group at this point.

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