

IMPRESSIONISM



Eugène Boudin (1824 – 1898) was one of the first French landscape painters to paint outdoors. Boudin was a marine painter, and expert in the rendering of all that goes upon the sea and along its shores. His pastels, summary and economic, garnered the splendid eulogy of Baudelaire; and Corot called him the "king of the skies."

He opened a small picture framing shop in Le Havre and exhibited artists working in the area, such as Jean-François Millet, and Thomas Couture who encouraged young Boudin to follow an artistic career.

Boudin, *The Beach at Villerville* 1864

In 1857/58 Boudin befriended the young **Claude Monet**, then only 18, and persuaded him to give up his teenage caricature drawings and to become a landscape painter, instilling in the younger painter a love of bright hues and the play of light on water later evident in Monet's Impressionist paintings. They remained lifelong friends and Boudin joined Monet and his young friends in the first Impressionist exhibition in 1873.



Boudin, *Sailboats at Trouville* 1884



Jongkind, *View from the Quai d'Orsay* 1854

Johan Jongkind (1819 – 1891) was a Dutch painter and printmaker. He painted marine landscapes in a free manner and is regarded as a forerunner of Impressionism, introducing the painting of genre scenes from the tradition of the Dutch Golden Age.

From 1846 he moved to Paris, to further his studies. Two years later, he had work accepted for the Paris Salon, receiving acclaim from critic Charles Baudelaire and later on from Émile Zola. Returning to Rotterdam in 1865 he moved back to Paris in 1861, where he rented a studio in Montparnasse, the following year meeting in Honfleur Sisley, Boudin and the young Monet.

In the early 1860s, four young painters — **Claude Monet** (1840 – 1926), **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** (1841 – 1919), **Alfred Sisley** (1839 – 1899), and **Frédéric Bazille** (1841 – 1870) — met while studying under the academic artist **Charles Gleyre** (1806 – 1874). Gleyre became influential as a teacher, taking over the studio of Paul Delaroche (then the leading private teaching atelier in Paris) in 1843. His students included Gérôme, Whistler. He did not charge his students a fee, although he expected them to contribute towards the rent and the payment of models. They were also given a say in the running of the school. For a time, under Louis Philippe, his studio had been the rendezvous of a sort of liberal club. These young artists discovered that they shared an interest in painting landscape and contemporary life rather than historical or mythological scenes in the style of their teacher. Following a practice that had become increasingly popular by mid-century, they often ventured into the countryside together to paint in the open air, but not for the purpose of making sketches to be developed into carefully finished works in the studio, as was the usual custom. By painting in sunlight

directly from nature, and making bold use of the vivid synthetic pigments that had become available since the beginning of the century, they began to develop a lighter and brighter manner of painting that extended further the Realism of Gustave **Courbet** (1819 – 1877) Jean-Baptiste-Camille **Corot** (1796 – 1875), and the Barbizon school.

A favourite meeting place for the artists was the Café Guerbois on Avenue de Clichy in Paris, where the discussions were often led by Édouard **Manet** (1832 – 1883), whom the younger artists greatly admired. They were soon joined by Camille **Pissarro** (1830 – 1903), Paul **Cézanne** (1839 – 1906), Armand **Guillaumin** (1841 – 1927) and Berthe **Morisot** (1841 – 1895).

Salon des Refusés

Apart from selling through such places as the shops of picture framers' artists in those days had only one main showcase for their work; the Annual salon. During the 1860s, the Salon jury routinely rejected about half of the works submitted by Monet and his friends in favour of works by artists faithful to the approved style.

After Emperor Napoleon III saw the rejected works of 1863, he decreed that the public be allowed to judge the work themselves, and the Salon des Refusés (Salon of the Refused) was organised. While many viewers came only to laugh, the Salon des Refusés drew attention to the existence of a new tendency in art and attracted more visitors than the regular Salon.

The First Impressionist Exhibition, 1874

Artists' petitions requesting a new Salon des Refusés in 1867, and again in 1872, were denied. In December 1873, **Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Cézanne, Berthe Morisot, Edgar Degas** and several other artists founded a society (the "Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers") to exhibit their artworks independently. Members of the association were expected to forswear participation in the Salon. In total, thirty artists participated in their first exhibition, held in April 1874 at the studio of the photographer Nadar. Later known as the first Impressionist exhibition.



Monet, Boulevard des Capucines 1873



**Pissarro,
Chestnut Trees at Osny 1873**

Camille Pissarro's importance resides in his contributions to both Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, and was influenced by Courbet and Corot to paint *en plein air*.

Pissarro became the "pivotal" figure in encouraging the other members of the group and in holding them together, and is the only artist to have shown his work at all eight Paris Impressionist exhibitions, from 1874 to 1886. Art historian John Rewald called Pissarro the "dean of the Impressionist painters", not only because he was the oldest of the group, but also

"by virtue of his wisdom and his balanced, kind, and warmhearted personality". **Paul Cézanne** said "he was a father for me. A man to consult and a little like the good Lord", and he was also one of **Paul Gauguin's** masters. **Pierre-Auguste Renoir** referred to his work as "revolutionary", through his artistic portrayals of the "common man", as Pissarro insisted on painting individuals in natural settings without "artifice or grandeur".

In 1861 **Berthe Morisot** was introduced to Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, the pivotal landscape painter of the Barbizon school. Under Corot's influence she took up the *plein air* (outdoors) method of working. In 1864 she exhibited for the first time in the Salon de Paris. Her work was selected for exhibition in six subsequent Salons until, in 1874, she joined the "rejected" Impressionists in the first of their own exhibitions.



Morisot, *The Harbour at Lorient* 1869

While working as a copyist at the Louvre she met **Monet** and **Manet**, marrying the latter's brother.



Renoir, *La Loge* 1874

La Loge, was Renoir's principal exhibit in the first Impressionist exhibition. a depiction of an elegant couple on display in a loge, or box at the theatre, epitomises the Impressionists' interest in the spectacle of modern life, and The complexity of its subject matter and its virtuoso technique helped to establish the artist's reputation as one of the leaders of this radical new movement in French art. Renoir's brother Edmond and Nini Lopez, a model from Montmartre known as 'Fish-face', posed for this ambitious composition. At the heart of the painting is the complex play of gazes enacted by these two figures seated in a theatre box. The elegantly dressed woman lowers her opera glasses, revealing herself to admirers in the theatre, whilst her male companion trains his gaze elsewhere in the audience. In turning away from the performance, Renoir focused instead upon the theatre as a social stage where status and relationships were on public display.

Renoir's *La Loge* received enthusiastic reviews when it was first exhibited in Paris in 1874 and later that year it travelled to London for an exhibition organised by his dealer Durand-Ruel, making it one of the first major Impressionist paintings to be shown in Britain. However, the painting did not sell at either exhibition and was bought inexpensively the following year by the minor dealer 'Père' Martin for 425 francs, providing Renoir with much needed funds to pay the rent. Today *La Loge* is celebrated as one of the most important paintings of the Impressionist movement.

Alfred Sisley was the most consistent of the Impressionists in his dedication to painting landscape *en plein air*. He deviated into figure painting only rarely.

Born in Paris to affluent British parents, he retained British citizenship. At the age of 18, he was sent to London to study for a career in business, but he abandoned it after four years and returned to Paris in 1861.



Sisley, *Autumn, Banks of the Seine near Bougival* 1873

From 1862, Sisley studied at Gleyre's atelier, where he became acquainted with Bazille, Monet and Renoir. Together they would paint landscapes en plein air rather than in the studio, in order to capture the transient effects of sunlight realistically. This approach, innovative at the time, resulted in paintings more colourful and more broadly painted than the public was accustomed to seeing.

Paul Cézanne's work laid the foundations of the transition from the 19th-century to a new and radically different world of art in the 20th century. It is said to have formed the bridge between late 19th-century Impressionism and the early 20th century's new line of artistic enquiry, Cubism.

His 'Impressionist' period represents a transition from the heavily impastoed early works to the planes of colour and small light brushstrokes that distinguish his late period. Cézanne's paintings convey his intense study of his subjects.

He said "I want to make of impressionism something solid and lasting like the art in the museums"



Cézanne,
***The Hanged Man's House* 1873**

The Hanged Man's House was presented at the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 and was the first painting that Cézanne sold to a collector. The village depicted in the painting is Auvers-sur-Oise, 27 km north of Paris. There and in Pontoise, where Pissarro lived, the two painted landscapes together. For a long time afterwards, Cézanne described himself as Pissarro's pupil, referring to him as "God the Father", as well as saying: "We all stem from Pissarro." Under Pissarro's influence Cézanne began to abandon dark colours and his canvases grew much brighter.

Both Matisse and Picasso are said to have remarked that Cézanne "is the father of us all".

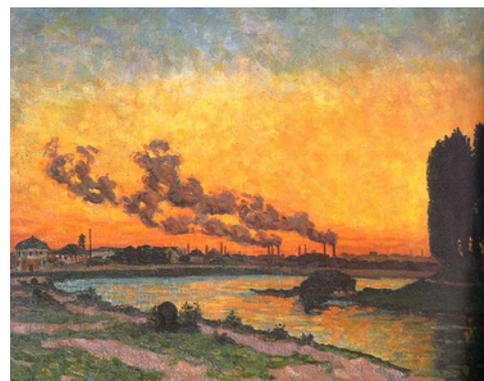


Degas, *At the Races in the Country* 1872

Edgar Degas (1834 – 1917) Regarded as one of the founders of Impressionism, Degas rejected the term, preferring to be called a realist. Nonetheless, he is described more accurately as an Impressionist than as a member of any other movement. His scenes of Parisian life, his off-center compositions influenced by photography, his experiments with colour and form, and his friendship with several key Impressionist artists—most notably Mary Cassatt and Édouard Manet—all relate him intimately to the Impressionist movement.

Armand Guillaumin exhibited in the salon des refuses in 1863, and with the Impressionists from 1874. The group often met for discussions in his studio, although he painted part time and was only finally able to quit his government job and concentrate on painting full-time in 1891, when he won 100,000 francs in the state lottery.

In 1886, he became a friend of Vincent van Gogh whose brother, Theo sold some of his works.



Guillaumin, *Sunset at Ivry* 1873

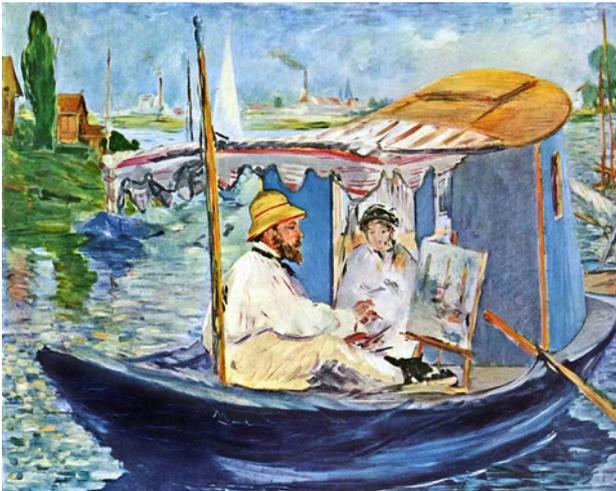


Monet, *Impression, soleil levant* (*Impression, Sunrise*) 1872

The critical response to the first exhibition was mixed. Monet and Cézanne received the harshest attacks. Critic and humorist Louis Leroy wrote a scathing review in the satirical newspaper *Le Charivari* in which, making wordplay with the title of Claude Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* he gave the artists the name by which they became known. Derisively titling his article *The Exhibition of the Impressionists*, Leroy declared that Monet's painting was at most, a sketch, and could hardly be termed a finished work. The label Impressionism was reluctantly adopted by the group in 1877.

Further Impressionist paintings

Édouard Manet was one of the first 19th-century artists to paint modern life, and a pivotal figure in the transition from Realism to Impressionism. Slightly older than the other artists associated with Impressionism, and regarded as a mentor, he was nevertheless influenced by them to lighten his pallet and paint in the open air, although not taking part in their exhibitions, preferring to continue submitting to the annual salon.



Manet, *Monet Painting in his Studio Boat* 1874

This is the boat on which Claude Monet used to paint at Argenteuil, where he lived in 1874. This work, executed rapidly and signed on the boat itself, raises for the historian the question whether Manet or Monet was the first to paint outdoor pictures in the Impressionist sense of the term, that is to say in the full light of day. It would seem that it was Monet with *The Picnic*, 1865-66, who first let the light play among the branches and outlined his figures with patches of sunlight.

While he was working in his floating studio, Monet was very short of money and was obliged to ask for help. "Here I am again without a soul," he wrote to Manet, asking for a loan of fifty francs one day, twenty francs another. "I have got into the hands of a bailiff who can cause me a lot of trouble. He has given me until midday." Manet was generous, as usual. Antonin Proust says that in his studio he placed his friend's canvases in a good light," being anxious to find buyers for them and not troubling about his own. Claude Monet's pictures enjoyed his special favor at these exhibitions. He had painted Monet on a boat and was particularly fond of this canvas, which he called *Monet in His Studio*.

Frédéric Bazille began studying medicine in 1859, and moved to Paris in 1862 to continue his studies. There he met Renoir and Sisley, was drawn to Impressionist painting, and began taking classes in Charles Gleyre's studio. After failing his medical exam in 1864, he began painting full-time.

Many of Bazille's major works are examples of figure painting in which he placed the subject figure within a landscape painted *en plein air*.



Bazille, *Portrait of Renoir* 1867



Bazille, *Studio in Rue de La Condamine* 1870

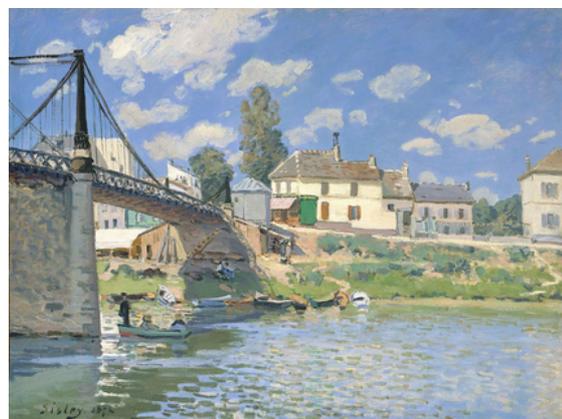
The Studio shows the tall artist himself surrounded by his friends in his studio, including painters **Manet** (talking to Bazille) and **Renoir** (sitting).

Bazille was generous with his wealth, and helped support his less fortunate associates by giving them space in his studio and materials to use.

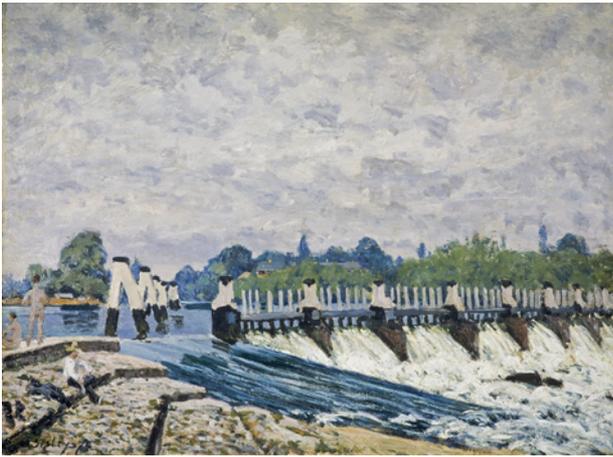
Although regarded as an Impressionist Bazille didn't live to see the first Impressionist exhibition. In August 1870, a month after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, he joined a Zouave regiment. On November 28 of that year, he was with his unit at the Battle of Beaune-la-Rolande when, his officer having been injured, he took command and led an assault on the German position. He was hit twice in the failed attack and died on the battlefield at the age of twenty-eight.

Sisley's work strongly invokes atmosphere, and his skies are always impressive. He concentrated on landscape more consistently than any other Impressionist painter.

In 1870, the Franco-Prussian War began; as a result, Sisley's father's business failed, and the painter's sole means of support became the sale of his works. For the remainder of his life he would live in poverty, as his paintings did not rise significantly in monetary value until after his death. Occasionally, however, Sisley would be backed by patrons, and this allowed him, among other things, to make a few brief trips to Britain.



Sisley, *Bridge at Villeneuve-la-Garenne* 1872



The first of his trips to England as a painter occurred in 1874, after the first independent Impressionist exhibition. The result of a few months spent near London was a series of nearly twenty paintings of the Upper Thames near Molesey, which was later described by art historian Kenneth Clark as "a perfect moment of Impressionism."

Sisley, *Molesey Weir, Hampton Court* 1874

Based in Marly-le-Roi from 1874 to 1877, Sisley executed a group of seven paintings on the flooding of the Seine in March 1876. The best known of the series depict the flood at its height, albeit expressed with a serenity and harmony more characteristic of a tranquil lagoon than the violent waters of the Seine. Sisley was able to give a marked emphasis to the movement of the clouds through the use of a low horizon line. As in the work of Constable, the sky becomes the true subject of the landscape and its reflection on the ground both unifies the composition and increases a sense of dynamic life.



Sisley, *Flood at Port-Marly* 1876



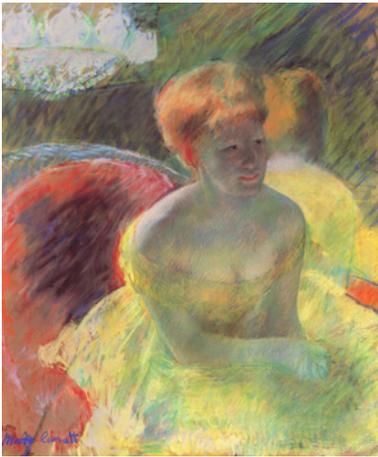
Berthe Morisot painted very quickly but did much sketching as preparation, so, it is said, that she could paint "a mouth, eyes, and a nose with a single brushstroke."

Morisot, *The Cradle* 1872

A typical outdoor, everyday scene beloved by Impressionists.

Morisot, *Reading* 1873





Mary Cassatt (1844 – 1926) was an American painter and printmaker. She lived much of her adult life in France, where she first befriended Edgar Degas and later exhibited among the Impressionists. This pastel study strongly betrays the influence of Degas

Cassatt, *Lydia Leaning on her Arms (in a theatre box)* 1879

Cassatt often created images of the social and private lives of women, with particular emphasis on the intimate bonds between mothers and children.

The subject matter and the overhead perspective were inspired by Japanese woodblocks. It shows dignity in motherhood and has a style similar to that of Degas.

She was drawn to the simplicity and clarity of the Japanese design, and the skilful use of blocks of colour.



Cassatt, *The Child's Bath (The Bath)* 1893



Guillaumin, *Landscape with Ruins* 1897

Guillaumin is best remembered for his landscapes of Paris, the Creuse département, and the area around Les Adrets-de-l'Estérel near the Mediterranean coast in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region of France, noted for their intense colours. Guillaumin was called the leader of the École de Crozant, a diverse group of painters who came to depict the landscape in the region of the Creuse around the village of Crozant.

The critic Felix Feneon called him a 'furious colourist.' This painting in its exaggerated intense colour is perhaps a harbinger of Fauvism a decade later.



PISSARRO, RENOIR and DEGAS:

Pissarro, *Jalais Hill, Pontoise* 1867

In 1869 Pissarro settled in Louveciennes and would often paint the road to Versailles in various seasons.

This study epitomises the Impressionist's methods of capturing the fleeting moment and the transient effects of light. However, although painted rapidly, Pissarro here demonstrates a keen eye for composition and the modulations of colour to suggest distance, and the blueness of shadows.

**Pissarro,
Road to Versailles at Louveciennes 1869**



Impressionist techniques

Short, thick strokes of paint quickly capture the essence of the subject, rather than its details. The paint is often applied impasto.

Colours are applied side-by-side with as little mixing as possible, a technique that exploits the principle of simultaneous contrast to make the colour appear more vivid to the viewer.

Greys and dark tones are produced by mixing complementary colours. Pure impressionism avoids the use of black paint.

Wet paint is placed into wet paint without waiting for successive applications to dry, producing softer edges and intermingling of colour.

Impressionist paintings do not exploit the transparency of thin paint films (glazes), which earlier artists manipulated carefully to produce effects. The impressionist painting surface is typically opaque.

The paint is applied to a white or light-coloured ground. Previously, painters often used dark grey or strongly coloured grounds.

The play of natural light is emphasized. Close attention is paid to the reflection of colours from object to object. Painters often worked in the evening to produce effets de soir—the shadowy effects of evening or twilight.

In paintings made en plein air (outdoors), shadows are boldly painted with the blue of the sky as it is reflected onto surfaces, giving a sense of freshness previously not represented in painting. (Blue shadows on snow inspired the technique.)

New technology played a role in the development of the style. Impressionists took advantage of the mid-century introduction of premixed paints in tin tubes (resembling modern toothpaste tubes), which allowed artists to work more spontaneously, both outdoors and indoors.[22] Previously, painters made their own paints individually, by grinding and mixing dry pigment powders with linseed oil, which were then stored in animal bladders.



Being of Danish nationality Pissarro was unable to join the army, after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, so he and his family took refuge in England, staying in Upper Norwood, at the time a village near London, for over a year.

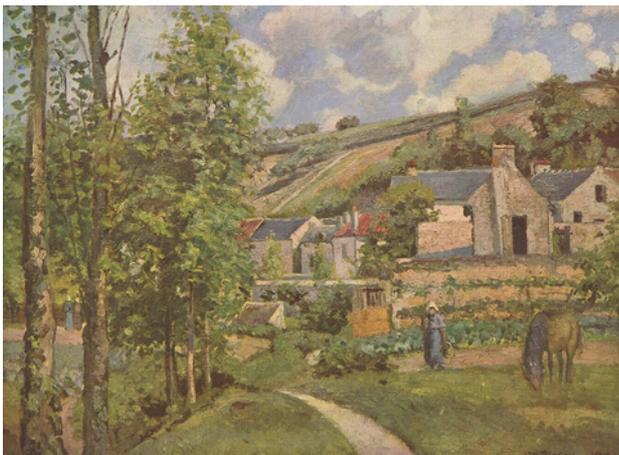
Pissarro, *Fox Hill, Upper Norwood* 1871

Corot, Pissarro's role model, would complete his own scenic paintings back in his studio where they would often be revised to his preconceptions. Pissarro, on the other hand, preferred to finish his paintings outdoors, often at one sitting, which gave his work a more realistic feel. He said "Work at the same time upon sky, water, branches, ground, keeping everything going on an equal basis and unceasingly rework until you have got it. Paint generously and unhesitatingly, for it is best not to lose the first impression."

As a result, his art was sometimes criticised as being "vulgar," because he painted what he saw: "ruttled and edged hodgepodge of bushes, mounds of earth, and trees in various stages of development." According to one source, details such as those were equivalent to today's art showing garbage cans or beer bottles on the side of a street scene. This difference in style created disagreements between Pissarro and Corot.



Pissarro, *Entrée du village de Voisins* 1872



Émile Zola, art critic and author, said: "Camille Pissarro is one of the three or four true painters of this day ... I have rarely encountered a technique that is so sure."

Another writer described elements of Pissarro's style: "The brightness of his palette envelops objects in atmosphere ... He paints the smell of the earth."

Pissarro, *Landscape at Pontoise* 1874

In 1885 Pissarro met **Georges Seurat** and **Paul Signac**, both of whom relied on a more "scientific" theory of painting by using very small patches of pure colours to create the illusion of blended colours and shading when viewed from a distance, referred to as pointillism. From then to 1888 he practised this more time-consuming and laborious technique. The paintings that resulted were distinctly different from his Impressionist works, and were on display in the 1886 Impressionist Exhibition, but under a separate section, along with works by Seurat, Signac, and his son Lucien.



Pissarro, *La Récolte des Foins, Eragny* 1887 Pissarro, *Children on a Farm* 1887

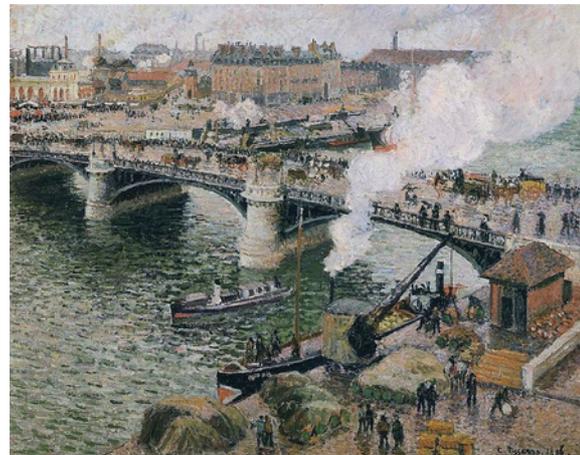
Of this new departure one critic wrote: "It is difficult to speak of Camille Pissarro ... What we have here is a fighter from way back, a master who continually grows and courageously adapts to new theories."

Pissarro explained the new art form as a "phase in the logical march of Impressionism", but he was alone among the other Impressionists with this attitude, however. Joachim Pissarro (the painter's grandson and art critic) states that Pissarro thereby became the "only artist who went from Impressionism to Neo-Impressionism".

Abandoning Neo-Impressionism

Pissarro eventually turned away from Neo-Impressionism, claiming its system was too artificial. He explains in a letter to a friend:

"Having tried this theory for four years and having then abandoned it ... I can no longer consider myself one of the neo-impressionists ... It was impossible to be true to my sensations and consequently to render life and movement, impossible to be faithful to the effects, so random and so admirable, of nature, impossible to give an individual character to my drawing, [that] I had to give up."



Pissarro, *Pont Boieldieu in Rouen, Rainy Weather* 1890



In his older age Pissarro suffered from a recurring eye infection that prevented him from working outdoors except in warm weather. As a result of this disability, he began painting outdoor scenes while sitting by the window of hotel rooms. He often chose hotel rooms on upper levels to get a broader view. He moved around northern France and painted from hotels in Rouen, Paris, Le Havre and Dieppe, doing the same on his visits to London.

Pissarro, *Boulevard Montmartre* 1897

But the change also added to Pissarro's continual financial hardship which he felt until his 60s. His "headstrong courage and a tenacity to undertake and sustain the career of an artist", writes Joachim Pissarro, was due to his "lack of fear of the immediate repercussions" of his stylistic decisions. In addition, his work was strong enough to "bolster his morale and keep him going", he writes. His Impressionist contemporaries, however, continued to view his independence as a "mark of integrity", and they turned to him for advice, referring to him as "Père Pissarro" (father Pissarro).



Pissarro, *Hay Harvest at Éragny* 1901

However, after reverting to his earlier style, his work became, according to Rewald, "more subtle, his colour scheme more refined, his drawing firmer ... So it was that Pissarro approached old age with an increased mastery."

Renoir: Impressionist and Salon artist

Auguste Renoir left school at the age of thirteen to pursue an apprenticeship at a porcelain factory. The owner of the factory recognised his talent and encouraged him to enter the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Before he enrolled in art school, he also painted hangings for overseas missionaries and decorations on fans.



In 1862, he began studying art under Charles Gleyer where he met Sisley, Bazille and Monet. Although Renoir first started exhibiting paintings at the Paris Salon in 1864, recognition was slow in coming, partly as a result of the turmoil of the Franco Prussian war. At times, during the 1860s, he did not have enough money to buy paint, but had his first success at the Salon of 1868 with his painting *Lise with a Parasol* (1867).

Renoir, *Lise with a Parasol* 1867

After a series of rejections by the Salon juries, he joined with Monet, Sisley, Pissarro, and others to mount the first Impressionist exhibition in April 1874, in which Renoir displayed six paintings. Although the critical response to the exhibition was largely unfavourable, Renoir's work was comparatively well received. That same year, two of his works were shown in London.

In the late 1860s, through the practice of painting light and water en plein air (outdoors), he and Monet discovered that the colour of shadows is not brown or black, but the reflected colour of the objects surrounding them, an effect known today as diffuse reflection.



Renoir, *Claude Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil* 1873

Several pairs of paintings exist in which Renoir and Monet worked side-by-side, depicting the same scenes.



Hoping to secure a livelihood by attracting portrait commissions, Renoir displayed mostly portraits at the second Impressionist exhibition in 1876. He contributed a more diverse range of paintings the next year when the group presented its third exhibition; they included *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette* and *The Swing*. Renoir did not exhibit in the fourth or fifth Impressionist exhibitions, and instead resumed submitting his works to the Salon.

Renoir, *Portrait of Claude Monet* 1875

Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette depicts a typical Sunday afternoon at the original Moulin de la Galette in the district of Montmartre in Paris. In the late 19th century, working class Parisians would dress up and spend time there dancing, drinking, and eating galettes into the evening.



Renoir, *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette* 1876

The Moulin de la Galette is a windmill and associated businesses situated near the top of the district of Montmartre in Paris. Since the 17th century the windmill has been known for more than just its milling capabilities.

Nineteenth-century owners and millers, the Debray family, made a brown bread, galette, which became popular and thus the name of the windmill and its businesses, which have included a famous guinguette and restaurant. In the 19th century, Le Moulin de la Galette represented diversion for Parisians seeking entertainment, a glass of wine and bread made from flour ground by the windmill. Artists, such as Renoir, van Gogh, and Pissarro have immortalized Le Moulin de la Galette; likely the most notable was Renoir's festive painting, *Bal du moulin de la Galette*.

Renoir rented an abandoned cottage near the Moulin to serve as a studio. The painting, for which friends and fellow artists posed, was painted on the spot, often in danger of being blown away.



Renoir's paintings are notable for their vibrant light and saturated colour, most often focusing on people in intimate and candid compositions. The female nude was one of his primary subjects. In characteristic Impressionist style, Renoir suggested the details of a scene through freely brushed touches of colour, so that his figures softly fuse with one another and their surroundings.

In this painting of a nude, set in a garden full of flowers, flashes of dappled light, suggesting that she is standing beneath a tree, contrast with the delicate tones of the flesh and the colour in the shadows.

Renoir, *Nude in the Sun* 1875

Renoir's people seem to stand on a forest floor of blossoms. The girl on the swing could be fifteen, her pink dress with a hat on head increases the charm of painting. The quivering light is rendered by the patches of pale colour, particularly on the clothing and the ground. This particularly annoyed the critics when the painting was shown at the Impressionist exhibition of 1877.



**Renoir,
The Swing
1876**

Renoir did not exhibit in the fourth or fifth Impressionist exhibitions, and instead resumed submitting his works to the Salon. Renoir became a successful and fashionable painter, by the end of the 1870s, particularly after the success of his painting *Mme Charpentier and her Children* (1878) at the Salon of 1879.



Renoir became a successful and fashionable painter of portraits.

Renoir, On the Terrace 1881

**Renoir,
Portrait of Mademoiselle
Irène Cahen d'Anvers
(La Petite Irène) 1880**



Included in the Seventh Impressionist Exhibition in 1882, *Luncheon of the Boating Party* was identified as the best painting in the show by three critics.

The painting, combining figures, still-life, and landscape in one work, depicts a group of Renoir's friends relaxing on a balcony at the Maison Fournaise restaurant along the Seine river in Chatou, France. The painter and art patron, Gustave Caillebotte, is seated in the lower right. Renoir's future wife, Aline Charigot, is in the foreground playing with a small dog.



Renoir, Luncheon of the Boating Party 1880-81

The diagonal of the railing serves to demarcate the two halves of the composition, one densely packed with figures, the other all but empty, save for the two figures of the proprietor's

daughter Louise-Alphonsine Fournaise and her brother, Alphonse Fournaise, Jr, which are made prominent by this contrast. In this painting Renoir has captured a great deal of light. The main focus of light is coming from the large opening in the balcony, beside the large singled man in the hat. The singlets of both men in the foreground and the table-cloth all work together to reflect this light and send it through the whole composition.



Renoir, *The Large Bathers* 1887

As a celebrator of beauty and especially feminine sensuality, it has been said that "Renoir is the final representative of a tradition which runs directly from Rubens to Watteau."

The figures in *The Large Bathers* have a sculptural quality, while the landscape behind them shimmers with impressionistic light. With this new style, Renoir's intention was to reconcile the modern forms of painting with the painting traditions of the 17th and 18th centuries, particularly those of Ingres and Raphael.

Renoir also admired Rubens and Titian's works, and tried to find a compromise between the styles of these old masters and the new Impressionist style.

Renoir worked on *The Bathers* for three years until he was content with its composition. During that time, he made numerous studies and sketches, including at least two full-sized figure drawings of the theme. *The Bathers* may be regarded as Renoir's pictorial testament. The models for the three bathers included two of his favourites: Aline Charigot, the blonde sitting behind, whom Renoir married in 1890, and Suzanne Valadon, on the right, herself a painter and the mother of Maurice Utrillo.

After completing *The Large Bathers*, Renoir received severe criticism because of his new style. Tired and disillusioned, he never again created paintings of this caliber

Degas, painter of modern life

At the beginning of his career, Degas wanted to be a history painter, a calling for which he was well prepared by his rigorous academic training and close study of classical art. In his early thirties, he changed course, and by bringing the traditional methods of a history painter to bear on contemporary subject matter, he became a classical painter of modern life.

Disenchanted with the Salon, he joined the Impressionists who were organizing an independent exhibiting society. Between 1874 and 1886 they mounted eight Impressionist Exhibitions. Degas took a leading role in organizing the exhibitions, and showed his work in all but one of them, despite his persistent conflicts with others in the group. He had little in common with Monet and the other landscape painters in the group, whom he mocked for painting outdoors.



**Degas,
A Woman Seated beside a Vase of Flowers 1865**

Conservative in his social attitudes, he abhorred the scandal created by the exhibitions, as well as the publicity and advertising that his colleagues sought. He also deeply disliked being associated with the term "Impressionist", which the press had coined and popularized, and insisted on including non-Impressionist artists such as Jean-Louis Forain and Jean-François Raffaëlli in the group's exhibitions. The resulting rancour within the group contributed to its disbanding in 1886.

Degas said "no art was ever less spontaneous than mine. What I do is the result of reflection and of the study of the great masters; of inspiration, spontaneity, temperament, I know nothing."



07b Degas, Ballet Rehearsal, 1873

He was a superb draftsman, and particularly masterly in depicting movement, as can be seen in his rendition of dancers, racecourse subjects and female nudes.

In many subsequent paintings dancers were shown backstage or in rehearsal, emphasizing their status as professionals doing a job. From 1870 Degas increasingly painted ballet subjects, partly because they sold well and provided him with needed income after his brother's debts had left the family bankrupt.