Claude Monet was born on November 14, 1840, in Paris, France. Five years later, his father moved the family to the scenic city of Le Havre. In 1850, Monet described his childhood as “essentially one of freedom. I was born undisciplinable. No one was ever able to make me stick to rules even in my young days.”

During his teenage years, Monet decorated his textbooks’ margins with sketches, and by the time he reached 15 he received commissions for his caricatures. Also at this time he met Eugène Boudin, who invited and encouraged him to paint landscape outdoors. Monet resisted, but in time he would analyze forms with a pencil. “I would identify the contours.”

In 1859 Monet moved to Paris and enrolled in the Académie Suisse. During this time he visited the Louvre, however rather than paint the Old Masters as his fellow art students did. Instead, he painted what he saw on the window. Monet was drafted into the French army, and eventually returned to Le Havre after contracting typhoid fever. He resumed painting with Boudin, who introduced him to Johan Jongkind. He taught Monet how to select significant features of the scene, and Monet considered Jongkind his true master.

Eventually Monet returned to Paris and enrolled in Claude Gleyre’s studio. During this time, Monet lead excursions to the Fontainebleau Forest to paint outdoors. He focused on painting with rapid brush strokes while concentrating on the effects of light. Monet married Camille Doncieux in 1870 and they, along with their first son Jean, relocated to London when the Prussian army moved on Paris. When the war ended, Monet moved his family to Argenteuil in France using the money earned from selling his artworks through Paul Durand-Ruel’s gallery in London. His final home was in Giverny where he planted many of the flowers as well as built the Japanese bridge that is featured in numerous paintings.

Despite his failing eyesight, Monet started his water-lily project which he agreed to give to the French government. They occupied large panels to be called Grandes Décorations.

Monet’s paintings accepted for the Impressionism exhibit to come under the name of Impressionists. This led to the group’s name of Impressionists.

In 1890 National Gallery of Norway, Oslo becomes the first museum to purchase one of Monet’s artworks.

Monet’s national reputation and the advancement of his water-lily project, led to the creation of the Monet Foundation. The Foundation was established by Mona and Franco Monet in 1981 to preserve Claude Monet’s memory.

Monet’s Palette


Monet's paintings have brought him international fame. At first, his paintings were rejected by the traditional art world. He pursued beauty for its own sake, looked beyond the “high arts” of painting and sculpture to propose all of life with the beauty of good design and high-quality craftsmanship.

Impressionism and the late 19th century:

While Academic Art, with its classically proportioned figures, idealized subjects, precise details, and flawless surfaces, continued to be popular well into the twentieth century, Impressionism emerged in the last third of the nineteenth century as the dominant style of the avant-garde. Fascinated with sense perception, Impressionists such as Claude Monet sought to convey motion and to capture the changing effects of light and atmosphere. Free of the Academic style, they worked on plein-air (out-of-doors) and painted distinctly modern subjects: fashionable stockbrokers on the boulevards, landowners and farmhouses at work, cafés, train stations, vacation resorts. These themes, and the new painting style of unlined colors and patchy, spontaneous-looking brushstrokes, were soon adopted by legions of painters who flocked to Paris from all over the world, including America.

Soon, however, a new wave of artists became disillusioned with Impressionism’s lack of emotional depth and visual coherence and, like Camille Pissarro, developed stylistic variations which are collectively called Post-Impressionism. At the same time, a wider circle of painters adopted Impressionism’s vibrant colors and spirited brushwork to update otherwise traditional imagery. The sparkling society portraits of the Aesthetic Movement in England and America, like those by John Singer Sargent, are a case in point. "In the early 1880s," Art critic, Louis Leroy, wrote, “the only critical reviews the new artists received were those of the gallerists themselves. By the early 1890s, however, there was a vast public for their work… Impressionism was the public's pet.”

Impressionists in the United States:

Monet & Hassam

Claude Monet, French, 1840-1926

Small Country Farm at Bordighera (un coin de ferme à Bordighera), 1884

oil on canvas, 25 1/8 x 39 3/8 inches.

Joslyn Art Museum

Joslyn Art Museum presents the exhibition Impressionists in the United States: Monet & Hassam in New Art and Landscape in the 1880s. The exhibition is organized by the Art Institute of Chicago, with the cooperation of the Minneapolis Institute of Art. It is made possible by the generous support of the staff of the Joslyn Art Museum. The project is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Monet at the turn of the century:

Impressionism and the late 19th century:

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Monet, London. His final home was in Giverny through Paul Durand-Ruel’s gallery in London. His final home was in Giverny through Paul Durand-Ruel’s gallery in London. His final home was in Giverny through Paul Durand-Ruel’s gallery in London.

It was built in 1899 and it was a private collection.

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