

**IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING  
FOR BEGINNERS**

*HISTORICAL OVERVIEW*

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## A BRIEF HISTORY OF WESTERN EUROPEAN ART



Cave Paintings



Ancient Greek & Roman



Gothic (1303)



Italian Renaissance (1508-1512)



Northern Renaissance (1563)



Classical (1639)



Neoclassical & Romantic (1814)

Examples from: Cave Paintings 32,000 years ago (and more); Ancient Greek 4<sup>th</sup> century BC & Roman 200 BC; other examples are year of creation. Until 1600's most art was religious or portraits of wealthy patrons. Classical looks at notions of ancient Greek and Roman with an emphasis on form, simplicity, proportion, and precise execution. Neoclassicism & Romanticism build on the ancient themes with more emotion and sentimentality.

## REALISM MOVEMENT (1848-1874\*)



*The Artist's Studio: A Real Allegory...* (1855)  
GUSTAVE COURBET (1819-1877)



*The Gleaners* (1857)  
JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET (1814-1875)

In the mid-1800s, the young artists were moving toward the depiction of everyday people and settings. They were casting off the Classical and religious themes of the past, and in that way this was a revolution in art.

JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT (1796-1875)



*Stormy Weather (1870)*



*Seine and Old Bridge at Limay (1872)*

This was a period of technological innovation and a rising middle class that reached into the art world. With the advent of trains and oil paint being packaged in tubes, artists could travel to scenic places and paint outdoors. Their compositions were often inexpensive and were purchased for cafes, theaters, and homes.

## COROT INFLUENCE ON MONET



COROT: The Cliff at Étretat (1869)



MONET: The Cliff at Étretat (1885)

For example, both Corot and Monet traveled to the Normandy coast. But let's not get ahead of ourselves...

## PARIS SALON (1667-1881)



PARIS SALON 1867

For about 200 years, the Paris Salon set the standard for what was acceptable and popular in art. They clung to the old themes and rejected the new ideas and artists

## SALON DES REFUSÉS (1863)



*Luncheon on the Grass (Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe) 1863*

“The Salon of the Rejected” was an alternative to the Salon because there were so many rejections of emerging painters.

The most sensational work was by Édouard Manet (1832-1883).

"Salon of the Rejected" came about by popular demand when so many painters were rejected by the Salon. The Emperor insisted on the alternative.

Manet took the latest Realism movement and turned it into something completely new. By combining the Classical nymph in the background with the nude woman in the foreground, what was he implying. The contemporary men are typically Realist, but the combination makes a social commentary that is left to the viewer (and critics) to unravel.

## ÉDOUARD MANET (1832-1883)



Henri Fantin-Latour *A Studio at Les Batignolles* (1870)

Manet's studio, he is seated and painting. Standing figures include Pierre-Auguste Renoir (2<sup>nd</sup>), writer Émile Zola (3<sup>rd</sup>), Frédéric Bazille (5<sup>th</sup>), and Claude Monet (far right).

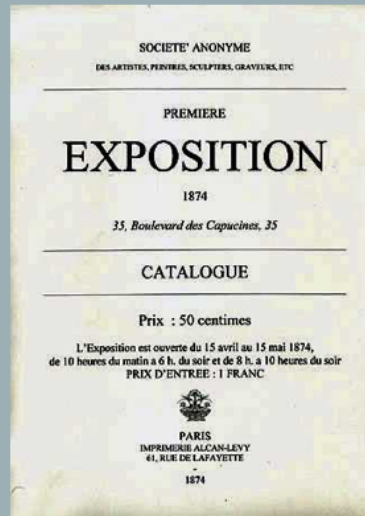
The next generation of painters were intrigued by the charismatic Manet, and he was a great supporter of their new approaches. However, he declined to join them in their own efforts to stand out apart from the Salon.



## FIRST IMPRESSIONIST EXHIBITION (1874)



First Impressionist exhibition at the photographer Nadar's former studio at 35 Boulevard des Capucines, 1874



ANONYMOUS SOCIETY OF  
ARTISTS, PAINTERS, SCULPTORS,  
ETCHERS, ETC.

CHARTER SIGNED BY:

- Paul Cézanne
- Edgar Degas
- Armand Guillaumin
- Berthe Morisot
- Claude Monet
- Camille Pissarro
- Pierre-Auguste Renoir
- Alfred Sisley

Those younger painters joined together to show their paintings apart from the Salon. Nadar was a renowned photographer who was known by one name, like Cher or Prince; and, his former studio was the site of the first exhibition. It was a perfect location because of its large rooms and walls of windows on the top floor.

## THE START OF "IMPRESSIONISM"



Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise* (1872)

The notorious critic Louis Leroy accused Monet's painting of being a sketch or "*impression*" – not a finished painting – in his derisive review, "The Exhibition of the Impressionists."

The most famous painting was *Impression, Sunrise*, not because it was the "best" painting, but because of its name and reception.

On display at the  
First Impressionist  
Exhibition



Cézanne



Guillaumin



Degas



Morisot



Renoir

On display at the  
First Impressionist  
Exhibition



Pissarro



Sisley

## EIGHT IMPRESSIONIST EXHIBITIONS

1874: First Impressionist Exhibition

1876: Second Impressionist Exhibition

1877: Third Exhibition

1879: Fourth Exhibition

1880: Fifth Exhibition

1881: Sixth Exhibition

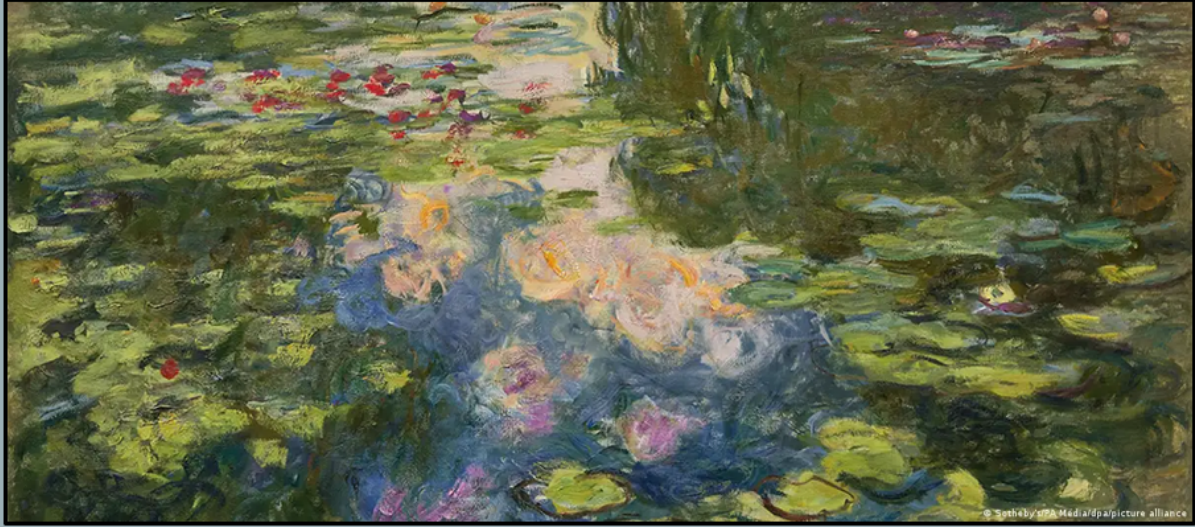
1882: Seventh Exhibition

1886: Eighth Exhibition

## OTHER KEY FIGURES

- Frédéric Bazille – *died 1870*
- Louis Eugène Boudin – *introduced Monet to Plein Air*
- Mary Cassatt – *notable woman*
- Gustave Caillebotte – *painter and patron*
- Paul Durand-Ruel – *Parisian art dealer*
- Paul Gauguin – *exhibited in 8<sup>th</sup>, “Post Impressionist”*
- Georges Seurat – *exhibited in 8<sup>th</sup>, “Post Impressionist,” “Pointillist”*
- Paul Signac – *exhibited in 8<sup>th</sup>, “Neo Impressionist,” “Pointillist”*
- Vincent Van Gogh – *“Post Impressionist”*

## EPILOGUE



MONET: *Water Lilies* (1917-19) – Sold at auction for \$70.4 million in 2021

The Impressionists established a new style of painting that led to many offshoots, like Post-Impressionism, that led to Modern Art in the 20th Century.

We'll explore the key figures and movements in future presentations, which will solo sessions on Manet and Van Gogh and three full lectures on Claude Monet.