In the times of the impressionist exhibitions (1874-1886)

1. Definition

Impressionism may be defined according to a series of criteria that add up without constituting laws or dogmas.

Impression

The word “impressionism” was born out of a quip by Eugène Lévy, a journalist in Le Charivari, a satirical newspaper, in response to the first impressionist exhibition. He quoted the title of one of the paintings sent by Monet, Impression, soleil levant (Impression, Sunrise, 1872, Paris, Musée Marmottan). The painter, conscious of the allusive aspect of his style, justified it by his affirmation of the transposition of his vision, or impression, being more important than an illusionist faithfulness to the subject matter. Monet thus asserted the prevalence of his eye, what Émile Zola called the artist’s temperament. “An artwork is a piece of Creation seen through a temperament.” The adjective, meant as a joke, was taken over by the artists themselves from 1872 onwards. At the same time Zola offered the following definition of the group: “I think one has to understand impressionist painters as painters who paint reality and who presume to render the very impression of nature, who do not concentrate on details but on the whole. It is true that at twenty paces from the painting one cannot clearly distinguish the nose or the eyes of a character. To render him as one sees one, one must not paint him with his wrinkles, but in the life of his attitude, with the vibrating air that surrounds him.” (Le Sémaphore de Marseille, 1877).

The materiality of colour

Impressionism is also defined by the assertion of its pictorial processes (the stroke, traces, impasto, patches of naked canvas…). It can still shock proponents of smooth, finished, “léchée” painting. “The materiality of the impression, the desired effect, the vibration of the light, the surge of impasto… that can still shock proponents of smooth, finished, ‘leché’ painting. This is precisely what Mallarmé meant when he reproached Manet and his followers for not elevating the origin of this art made of unguents and colours” (1874). Thus, the essential worth of the impressionist painting is not to escape the eye of the beholder, but to be seen and talked about. The model of artists’ association and exhibitions independent from the Bara’s Arts administration tried out by the impressionists, soon helped by the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, progressively received recognition from the state and other artists from 1880 onwards, and it allowed the spread of all subsequent movements. But Manet, considered leader of the movement, never took part in the events organised by his friends. Cézanne, for his part, exhibited work only twice (1874 and 1877) with the impressionists and very early on he stood apart from the group. Renoir (in 1872) and Monet (in 1880) also preferred jointing, for a time, the Salon exhibitions.

Presentation

Impressionism no doubt constitutes the most popular pictorial movement in the history of painting. With its lively colours and simple subject matters, it appears to be particularly accessible. Yet it is a complex movement, from an historical perspective as well as from the point of view of its formal ambitions. It is all the more difficult to encompass since it united artists with strong and sometimes opposed personalities who developed styles that were so different that it may be thought far-bretched to brand them with a common label. This is the reason why the visit focuses on the twelve years during which the eight exhibitions by the group were held, when the exchanges between the painters were at their highest point. Between 1874, those who were to become members of the group, not yet officially founded, exhibited little and were not recognised by critics. After the founding exhibition that opened on 15 April 1874 at Nadar’s former address, Boulevard des Capucines, originating in the Société anonyme des artistes-peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs created in 1873, their statutes provided for the organisation of exhibitions without juries or awards and the publication of a journal. The painters meant to take full charge of the sale and promotion of their pictures. Though the impressionists exhibitions sometimes attracted violent reactions from the public and critics, they at last allowed painters to be seen and talked about. The model of artists’ association and exhibitions independent from the Bara’s Arts administration tried out by the impressionists, soon helped by the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, progressively received recognition from the state and other artists from 1880 onwards, and it allowed the spread of all subsequent movements. But Manet, considered leader of the movement, never took part in the events organised by his friends. Cézanne, for his part, exhibited work only twice (1874 and 1877) with the impressionists and very early on he stood apart from the group. Renoir (in 1872) and Monet (in 1880) also preferred jointing, for a time, the Salon exhibitions.
Preparation and follow-up to the visit

The visit in the times of the impressionist exhibitions (1874-1886) can be followed independently, but it was intended to part of a group of three visits on impressionism: The Taste of Art, Painters, the Salon and criticism (1867-1870) and after Impressionism (1881-1896). In addition to the educational information housed in the Fact Sheets, it may be useful to recall the information of the impressionist collections of other museums and in particular, in Paris, of those of the Musée d’Orsay and of the Musée d’Orsay.

List of artworks

This visit is reluctantly restricted to pieces shown at the impressionist exhibitions (1874-1886), without trying to draw from this factual event any conclusions as to the authorship of works or adjectives to the paintings. Belonging to a group by its nature diffuse and constantly evolving. The following list, in the same logic, is without being exhaustive, is that all the artworks housed in the Musée d’Orsay that belong to this category.

First impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1874)

• Paul Cézanne: La maison du pêcheur (The Hanged Man’s House), 1873; L’oeuvre moderne (A Modern Olympia) (Paris, 1874-1875).
• Edgar Degas: Répétition d’un ballet sur le quai (Ballet rehearsal on the quay), 1874; Une baigneuse (A Bather) also known as Une rosepoureuse (A Rose); 1879.
• Armand Guillaumin: Saint-sulpice à la fête (Saint Sulpice at the Festival) (As seen in the East), 1874.
• Claude Monet: Calendrier, devant des bœufs harnachés d’argenterie (Poppies, near Argenteuil), 1875.
• Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Portrait de Mme Port-de-Pont (Portrait of Mrs Port-de-Pont), pastel, 1873.
• Camille Pissarro: Garçon blanc (White Frost), 1877.

Second impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1876)

• Gustave Caillebotte: Les rabatteurs de parquet (The Parquet Scrapers), 1875.
• Edgar Degas: Dances au bord de la Seine (Dancers at the Seine), known as Dancers on the Bank (Dancers at the Bank), painting on paper, 1872.
• Claude Monet: La décharge du charbon (The Coal Unloaders) (The Lunch, decorative panel), circa 1875; Le pont d’Argenteuil (The Bridge at Argenteuil) (As seen in the West), 1874.
• Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Frédéric Bazille, 1867; Étude. Torse, effet de soleil (Study. Torso, sun effect), 1875-1876; Claude Monet, 1875.
• Alfred Sisley: L’inondation à Port-Marly (The Inundation at Port-Marly), 1877.

Third impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1877)

• Edgar Degas: Femmes devant un café, le soir (Women in front of a café, the evening), pastel, 1876; Étude. Torse, effet de soleil (Study. Torso, sun effect), circa 1875-1876; Edgar Degas, 1875-1876.
• Claude Monet: La gare Saint Lazare (Saint Lazare Station), 1875; Les Tuileries, étude; 1876; Désordre sur les toits (An apartment corner), 1875; Les londons (The Taxis), 1877.
• Camille Pissarro: Le lavoir du village, effet d’oi (The Wash House, Village scene, Oily Effect), 1877; La moisson (The Harvest), known as La moisson à Montfoucault (Mowing) (The Harvest in Montfoucault), 1877.
• Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Madame Georges Charpentier, 1874-1877; La Seine à Champs de Champs (The Seine in Champ de Champs), 1877; La balançoire (The Swing), 1877; Bois du Meudon de la Galerie (Montmartre at the Meudon of the Gallery), 1875; Madame Alphonse Daudet, 1876.

Fourth impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1879)

• Gustave Caillebotte: L’inondation à Port-Marly (The Inundation at Port-Marly), 1875; La rue Montmartre à Paris. Étude. Torse (The Montmartre Road in Paris. Study. Torso), 1875.
• Edgar Degas: Portrait of a Woman (Portrait of a Woman), pastel, 1873; Claude Monet: La gare Saint-Lazare (Saint-Lazare Station), 1875; Les Tuileries, étude, 1876; Désordre sur les toits (An apartment corner), 1875; Les londons (The Taxis), 1877.
• Camille Pissarro: Le lavoir du village, effet d’oi (The Wash House, Village scene, Oily Effect), 1877; La moisson (The Harvest), known as La moisson à Montfoucault (Mowing) (The Harvest in Montfoucault), 1877.

Fifth impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1880)

• Félix Bracquemond: Portrait de M. Edmont de Goncourt, chausseur en cuir, 1880.
• Édouard Manet: Nature morte, la feuille (Still Life, the Leaf) (Portrait of the Seine Exchanged), 1880.
• Armand Guillaumin: Place Valhubert, à Paris, 1880.
• Camille Pissarro: Femme dansant à l’arsenal (Woman dancing at the arsenal), 1880.

Sixth impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1881)

• Edgar Degas: Petite demoiselle de quatorze ans (Fourteen-year-old Dancing Girl), sculpture, 1881.

• Claude Monet: La gare Saint Lazare (Saint Lazare Station), 1875; Les Tuileries, étude; 1876; Désordre sur les toits (An apartment corner), 1875; Les londons (The Taxis), 1877.
• Camille Pissarro: Le lavoir du village, effet d’oi (The Wash House, Village scene, Oily Effect), 1877; La moisson (The Harvest), known as La moisson à Montfoucault (Mowing) (The Harvest in Montfoucault), 1877.
• Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Madame Georges Charpentier, 1874-1877; La Seine à Champs de Champs (The Seine in Champ de Champs), 1877; La balançoire (The Swing), 1877; Bois du Meudon de la Galerie (Montmartre at the Meudon of the Gallery), 1875; Madame Alphonse Daudet, 1876.

Eight impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1882)

• Mary Cassatt: Jeune fille au jardin (Young Woman in the Garden), also known as Jeune fille travaillant (Woman Working) on Femme ouvrière dans un jardin (Woman Working in a Garden), 1880-1882.
• Edgar Degas: Le tab (The Table), pastel, 1879.
• Armand Guillaumin: Les pécheurs (The Fishermen), circa 1885.
Open air - landscape

Open air painting was not an invention of impressionism. Since the 16th century, landscape painters commonly worked outside, studying the “impressionist” way of painting: a divided stroke among landscape painters, there were also two interests so to speak. It is no longer the particular finding everywhere a living horizon, with a human happy as hunters who enjoy the open air. They sit longer only of colours, but also of the slightest the general tone of the objects that are painted on the atmosphere that enlightens the painting, and they are closely intrinsically in order to create dense and complex spaces.

Modern life

If we can see in Monet’s or Renoir’s landscapes many images of a particular form of modern life - that of the suburbs and, most often, of “bourgeois,” the critic Duranty insisted in his essay on the necessary representation of urban life and of the modernisation. Their brand of impressionism is heavier, less flitting, less tributary to the variations of light, and they are closely intrinsically in order to create dense and complex spaces.

Preparation and follow-up to the visit

The visit is in the times of the impressionist exhibitions (1874-1886) can be followed independently, but it was intended to be part of a group of three visits on impressionism: The Taste of an Era. Painters, the Salon and criticism (1868- 1870) and (1883-1906). In addition to the educational information housed in the Fact Sheets, it may be useful to recall the activities of the impressionist collectors of many other museums and in particular, in Paris, of those of the Musée d’Orsay and of the Musée Marmottan.

List of artworks

The visit is reluctantly restricted to pieces shown at the impressionist exhibitions (1874-1886), without trying to draw from this factual event any conclusions as to the authorship or otherwise of the painters’ belonging to a group, by its nature diffuse and constantly evolving. The following list, in the same logic, without being exhaustive, is that of all the artworks housed in the Musée d’Orsay that belong to this category.

First impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1874)

• Paul Cézanne: Le matin, effets de neige; 1873
• Claude Monet: L’effet de neige à Vetheuil; 1876
• Edgar Degas: L’atelier de la danse; Paris, 1874
• Camille Pissarro: La gare Saint Lazare (La Gare Saint Lazare Station); 1875
• Ogden Minton Pleissner: L’effet de neige à Vetheuil; 1876
• Félix Bracquemond: La gare Saint Lazare (Le Stock Exchange); 1879

Second impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1876)

• Gustave Caillebotte: L’approche de la gare; 1874
• Edgar Degas: Une moderne Olympia (A Modern Olympia); 1875
• Armand Guillaumin: An Ironer; circa 1875
• Camille Pissarro: Étude. Torse, effet de soleil; 1876
• Edgar Degas: Woman by a Cafe, in the Evening; 1876
• Mary Cassatt: Le balançoire; 1877
• Edgar Degas: Une moderne Olympia (A Modern Olympia); 1878
• Armand Guillaumin: An Ironer; 1878
• Edgar Degas: Woman in a Café; 1878
• Armand Guillaumin: The Cradle; 1878
• Camille Pissarro: The Tub; 1878

Third impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1877)

• Edgar Degas: Femmes devant un café, le soir (Woman by a Cafe, in the Evening); pastel, 1875
• Étude. Torse, effet de soleil; 1877
• Armand Guillaumin: Le lac de Vichy; 1877
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1877
• Armand Guillaumin: An Ironer; 1878
• Edgar Degas: Flooding in Port-Marly; 1879
• Camille Pissarro: The Cradle; 1879
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1879
• Camille Pissarro: Le berceau; 1879
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1880
• Camille Pissarro: Flooding in Port-Marly; 1880
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1881

Fourth impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1879)

• Gustave Caillebotte: L’œuvre d’art (Room), 1879
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1879
• Camille Pissarro: Le pont de Argenteuil (The Bridge in Argenteuil); 1879
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1880
• Armand Guillaumin: The Cradle; 1880
• Camille Pissarro: Le berceau; 1880
• Edgar Degas: La toile de Corot; 1881
• Armand Guillaumin: The Cradle; 1881

Seventh impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1882)

• Camille Pissarro: La bergerie (The Shepherderd), also known as Jeanne-fille la laitière parmi les plantes (Young Woman with Nick, Nursing Plantain Woman); 1880, Champs montant à travers champs. Côte des Grottes; Postiac (Path Leading up through Fields. Côte des Grottes; Postiac), 1879
• Pierre-Auguste Renoir: Champs de drainers (Field of Banana Trees), 1881

Eight impressionist exhibition (Paris, 1883)

• Mary Cassatt: Jeanne-fille au jardin (Young Woman in the Garden), also known as Jeanne-fille travaillant (Woman Working) on Femme ouvrière dans un jardin (Woman Working in a Garden), 1880-1882
• Edgar Degas: Le tab (The Tub), pastel
• Armand Guillaumin: Les pecheurs (The Fishermen), circa 1885
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Presentation
Impressionism no doubt constitutes the most popular pictorial movement in the history of painting. With its lively colours and simple subject matters, it appears to be particularly accessible. Yet it is a complex movement, from an historical perspective as well as from the point of view of its formal ambitions. It is all the more difficult to encompass since it united artists with strong and sometimes opposed personalities who developed styles that were so different that it may be thought far-fetched to brand them with a common label. This is the reason why the visit focuses on the twelve years during which the eight exhibitions by the group were held, when the exchanges between the painters were at their highest point. Before 1874, those who were to become members of the group, not yet officially founded, exhibited little and were not recognised by critics. After 1886, the artists drew apart from one another, impressionism receding into new shores, explored by a new generation.

Impression
The word “impressionism” was born out of a quip by Eugène Lévy, a journalist in Le Charivari, a satirical newspaper, assigned to report on the first impressionist exhibition. He quoted the title of one of the paintings sent by Monet, Impression, soleil levant (Impression, Sunrise, 1872, Paris, Musée Marmottan). The painter, conscious of the allusive aspect of his style, justified it by his affirmation of the transparency of his vision, or impression, being more important than an illusory faithfulness to the subject matter. Manet thus asserted the prevails of his eye, what Émile Zola called the artist’s temperament. “An artwork is a piece of Creation seen through a temperament.” The adjective, meant as a joke, was taken over by the artists themselves from 1877 onwards. At the same time Zola offered the following definition of the group: “I think one has to understand impressionist painters as painters who paint reality and who presume to render the impression of nature, who do not concentrate on details but on the whole. It is true that at twenty paces from the painting one cannot clearly distinguish the nose or the eyes of a character. To render him as one sees it, one must not paint him with his wrinkles, but in the life of his attitude, with the vibrating air that surrounds him.” (Le Sénateur de Marseille, 1877).

The materiality of colour
Impressionism is also defined by the assertion of the pictorial processes (the stroke, traces, impasto, patches of naked canvas…). But can it shock proponents of smooth, finished, “félicité” painting. This is precisely what Mallarmé meant when he rejoiced in Manet and his friends rousing “to the origin of this art made of unguents and colours” (1874). Thus, the essential worth of the painting as medium itself is added to the existence of the subject matter and the strength of the artist’s temperament.

Result
In Zola’s words, impressionist painters are “painters who paint reality” and what unites them is the unanimously shared taste for representing their time. With the exception of Degas and Cézanne, who retained a liking for literary subjects, whether biblical or classical, all shared an interest from the beginning for the world that surrounded them. In their exploration of daily life, they followed the path of Courbet and later on Manet, that Baudelaire defined as “the essence of modern painting”. In 1846, the latter had already invited artists to paint their own times, “as less abundant in sublime motifs than ancient peoples, one man affirm that since all peoples had their beauty, we must certainly have ours.” If the impressionists’ eye emancipated itself from the strict strokes of realism from the late 1860’s onwards, these dominated their artistic production from 1874 to 1886. It was during these twelve years that they represented a time of deep mutations: industrialisation, urbanisation, social upheavals, appearance of leisure…

Independence
Impressionist painters exhibited together in order both to expose and circumvent the organisation of the Beaux-Arts in France that so often proved hostile to them. Since the mid-1840’s, Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Sisley, Degas, Cézanne and Bazille tried to enter the Salon, tenaciously guarded by a jury that did not wish to admit these young artists, judged too innovative. Besides, being accepted would most often have had the consequence of having one’s painting submerged in the sheer mass of exhibited paintings, lumped out of reach of critics’ eyes. Tired of the regular refusals that prevented critical and amateur recognition, they considered as early as 1867 organising a common and independent exhibition, as Courbet and Manet had already done before them, following the example of Gauvry and David. It was only in 1874, after the trauma of the war and the Paris Commune (1870-1871) that this plan was carried out.

The founding exhibition that opened on 15 April 1874 at Nadar’s former address, Boulevard des Capucines, originated in the Société anonyme des artistes-peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs created in 1873. Their statutes provided for the organisation of exhibitions without jurors or awards and the publication of a journal. The painters meant to take full charge of the sale and promotion of their pictures. Though the impressionists exhibitions sometimes attracted violent reactions from the public and critics, they at last allowed painters to be seen and talked about. The model of artists’ association and exhibitions independent from the Beaux-Arts administration tried out by the impressionists, soon helped by the art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, progressively received recognition from the state and other artists from 1883 onwards, and it allowed the spread of all subsequent movements. But Manet, considered leader of the movement, never took part in the events organised by his friends. Cézanne, for his part, exhibited work only twice (1874 and 1877) with the impressionists and very early on he stood apart from the group. Renoir (in 1879) and Manet (in 1880) also preferred joining, for a time, the Salon exhibitions.

After examining what drew the impressionists together, one must also consider what set them apart. As we have mentioned it above, diverging attitudes towards the Salon, for instance, underlined these differences and were the source of tensions. The critic Édmond Duranty’s brochure entitled Le Nouvel Art published on the occasion of the second exhibition of the group in...
11. Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919): Champ de bananiers (Field of Banana Trees), 1881

- Location: upper level, gallery 46
- Subject matter: the painting represents a landscape in the outskirts of Algiers.
- Observation: the luxuriant vegetation invading a large part of the canvas. The powerful colour of the painting, which nevertheless forms a very delicate harmony. The very soft, downy, almost compact austerity of his composition, in his clear and cold tones, Cézanne made a contradictory position, alternating vertical and horizontal lines.

13. Georges Seurat (1859-1891): Studies for the painting Un dimanche à la Grande Jatte (Sunday at the Grande Jatte), 1884

- Location: upper level, gallery 46
- Subject matter: Seurat’s paintings (studios housed at the Art Institute in Chicago) represents a scene of modern life. The place, an island on the river Seine, in the outskirts of Paris, the characters, from different parts of the petit bourgeois, the action (walking, angling, rowing, idleness...) evoke leisure, the moment, a Sunday, as many archetypal images of modernity. The very large format chosen by Seurat confirms his ambition to make an historical tableau out of a contemporary moment.

2. Claude Monet (1840-1926): Le Pont du chemin de fer à Argenteuil, 1875

- Location: upper level, gallery 30
- Subject matter: this painting constitutes one of the best Millets’. Whereas peasants (Giquot by Millet) or country ladies in lace (Eugénie) have often been shown, city workers had seldom been painted. Caillebotte, from a well-to-do background, could have observed the flotillas of working men and women on the Seine, moral or political message in his work. The skyscrapers at the left of the painting (impressionism: accessibility) justifies his position among the most accomplished artists. He answered with precision the critic Durand’s injunctions who exhorted the painters to find a better painter to represent what happened in the apartments.

2. Claude Monet (1840-1926): Le pont du chemin de fer à Argenteuil (The Railway Bridge in Argenteuil), circa 1874

- Location: upper level, gallery 30
- Subject matter: the painting was painted by Monet, as well as by Bellanger and Cassatt. He answered with precision the critic Durand’s injunctions who exhorted the painters to find a better painter to represent what happened in the apartments.

4. Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894): Les raborateurs de parquet (The Floor Planers), 1875

- Location: upper level, gallery 30
- Subject matter: this painting constitutes one of the best Millets’.

5. Camille Pissarro (1850-1903): Gelée blanche, ancienne route d’Ennery, Pontoise (White Frost, Old Road to Ennery, Pontoise), 1874

- Location: upper level, gallery 30
- Subject matter: this painting was made near Pontoise where the painter lived from 1875 to 1882. It was now the prefecture of the Val d’Oise department and its surroundings then offered Pissarro and his friends (Cézanne, Guillaumin and later Gauguin) various and most lucrative landscapes. Pissarro was also interested in other aspects of Pontoise and its surroundings: the factory, the town streets, research.


- Location: upper level, gallery 30
- Subject matter: this painting constitutes one of the best Millets’.
4. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): La classe de danse (The Dancing Class), begun in 1873, finished in 1878.

- location: upper level, gallery 32
- subject matter: this painting constitutes both an individual portrait, that of the ballet master Jules Perrot, and a reconstructed genre painting showing the end of a rehearsal.

- background: Degas was a regular attendant of the Paris Opera House (here it is the Opera in the Rue Le Peletier), as a spectator but also backstage, and in the foyer. From the early 1870’s onwards when they appeared for the first time in L’Héritier de l’Opéra, dancers became a favourite subject for the painter.

- observe: the highly constructed composition. The scene is set in a room of which the space, organised in a very accurate perspective, can be read clearly.

The difference between the representation of the ballet master, who can easily be recognised, and that of the dancing girls. The strokes are lighter, less accurate than for the master. But above all, their faces are indistinguishable, with only a few details (head dresses, ribbons, attitudes) providing for variations. Degas seems to represent the type of the dancing girl through the multitude of “petits ronds” surrounding the master.

5. Alfred Sisley (1839-1899): L’onodation à Port-Marly (Floodwing in Port-Marly), 1876

- location: upper level, gallery 32
- subject matter: in March 1876, the Seine flooded the village of Port-Marly. The painter, who then lived close by, in Marly-la-Ville, painted three different views of this event.

- background: the painting was exhibited at the second impressionist exhibition, in 1876. Sisley, who presented seven other landscapes, was relatively well received by critics. Zola, for instance, noted that “Sisley also is a very talented landscape painter who commands better balanced means than Pissarro… His painting Floodwing in Port-Marly is made up of wide brush strokes and a delicate coloration.”

- observe: Zola used two words to qualify Sisley’s work: “balancing” and “delicate”. They were constantly used about Sisley.

Balance: Sisley constructed his composition according to traditional rules for painting landscapes. The flooding Seine, for instance, occupies a horizontal third of the painting, the sky, the tree upper thirds. The scene formed on the site is a true cross section of how the water rose. This painting, like the other views prophesied by the telegram from Le Peletier, warned of the imminent flooding.

- Delacroix: the colours, all in tones of grey, answer each other without dissonance. A small red spot (crous of the building) plays at the limit of the vertical third of the composition, warms the whole.

6. Claude Monet (1840-1926): Les dinhons (The Turkeys), 1877

- location: upper level, gallery 32
- subject matter: in May of the same year Monet purchased a flock of turkeys peacefully moving about in a park with the white and pink façade of a castle in the background. Monet wanted to deliver, with his white birds absorbing light, a page of nature, simple and vivid.

- background: Monet made four panels – The Turkeys, Garden Corner in Montgeron, The Pond in Montgeron, The Hunt – for the decoration of the dining room of his sponsor Ernest Hoschedé at the Rottenbourg castle (Montgeron, Seine-et-Marne), the façade of which can be seen in the painting. It was the first time Monet practiced decoration. He had signed in 1875 at his sponsor’s to make his panels and he presented The Turkeys at the third impressionist exhibition in 1877, hoping to attract new commissions and find new patrons. The painting was all received and attributed “Wild laughter. People were in fits, creased up, holding their breves”, reported Scribe in 1877.

- observe: the painting is of a square format, a format Monet often adopted for his particularly decorative paintings. The highly green grass occupies two thirds of the composition, recalling the plant universe of the “maile-deux” tapiosses of the late mid-age. The painter sat in a centre pose, giving the impression the turkeys are on a hill behind which is castle partially hidden. The colours are vivid, playing on partly hidden. The colours are vivid, playing on

7. Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919): Bal au Moulin de la Galette at the Moulin de la Galette, Montmartre, (Dance at the Moulin de la Galette, Montmartre), 1876

- location: upper level, gallery 32
- subject matter: the Moulin de la Galette was a dancing café at the foot of Montmartre hill. The mill was then a suburb of the capital city where a few mills stood, together with their surrounding gardens, and where a working class population lived. It was also described by the poet Baudelaire as the “zone sacré” which he saw from 1872 onwards meant to be a sign of expiation of the “crimes of the Commune”.

- background: the painting was presented at the third impressionist exhibition in 1876. It depicts the dancer Camille Butterworth, a young woman, and four maidservants, all of whom are conspicuous by their bright, white birds absorbing light, a page of nature, simple and vivid.

- observe: the impression of open air: the irregularly-spaced spots of light that boldly colours and restless the effect of sun beams through the foliage. The impression of movement: given by the positions of dancers who quickly shrink, by the light that blurs the visions as well as by the dissolution of the drawing that tends quickly shrinks, by the light that blurs the vision as well as by the dissolution of the drawing that tends


- location: upper level, gallery 32
- subject matter: on June 30th, 1878, France celebrated the success of the World Fair that marked the renewal of France after the 1870 defeat and the victory of republicans after the 1878 and 1877 elections. Monet painted on the same day a second view of these decorated streets with a painting now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen: La rue Saint-Denis. He wrote in 1878 how he had made his painting: ‘I liked flags. The first national celebration of June 30th, I walked with my working instruments, Rue du Montorgueil; there were flags all over the street and it was crowded, I saw a balcony, went up and asked for the permission to paint, which was accorded.’ Then I left, incorrectly.”

- background: Monet had just left Arcueil to settle in Paris. Several years spent painting in the countryside, he turned to urban landscapes. In the previous year, he thus painted a dozen views of the Gare Saint-Lazare. At the time when he criticizes Durand and Zola, in particular, encouraged artists to paint their own times, Monet sought to diversify his inspiration and wanted to be considered as a painter of a modern life that found its prevailing expression in cities.

- observe: the violence of colours allowed by the profession of the new flag of the French nation. Only the sky introduces a more natural and delicate note.

The freedom of Monet’s stroke as he juxtaposed its prevailing expression in cities.

9. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): Portraits à la bourse (Portraits at the Stock Exchange), 1876-79

- location: upper level, gallery 32
- subject matter: Degas represented the banker Ernest May, one of his new admirers, in his professional occupation. As he did with his portrait of Emile Zola, the Commune (1880, Musée d’Orsay), originally the portrait of his friend Désiré Dihau, he broke the type, showing the man in the middle of action. He is not sitting for his portrait. Degas caught him in a group. The model appears to be an element of a larger story of which he is not the key character.

Yet, Degas gives him a special status. He is the only whose face can be seen clearly, he stands almost in the centre of the composition. The gestures of two characters (the man behind him and the one standing in front of him, whose face and above all whose hand holding a paper we cannot see) converge towards him and make him the centre of an action that nonetheless remains secondary.

The shape in the foreground to the right, hardly sketched, who, in a vague posing human shape, restitutes an impression of movement and action. The role of architecture that structures the composition, organises the development of a parallel story in the middle ground on the left, and conducts in the impression of the loneliness and panic.

The blacks blank and black tonces that accentuate the uniformity of a secular group organisation and differentiate it from the observer.

10. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): La petite danseuse de 14 ans (The 14-year-old Dancing Girl), 1881

- observe: the wax. The original model of this statue, exhibited in 1885, was made of polythene wax. It is housed in the Paul Mellon collection in the United States. The Musée d’Orsay exhibits a bronze cast in 1931. Wax as a material is flesh-coloured and it can be relatively easily modelled.

- observe: this piece is the result of numerous and varied research and concerns.

- the foundry. It is housed in the New Painting

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- observe: this piece is the result of numerous and varied research and concerns.
4. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): La classe de danse (The Dancing Class), begun in 1873, finished in 1875-1876

5. Alfred Sisley (1839-1899): L’invocation à Port-Marly (Flooding in Port-Marly), 1876

6. Claude Monet (1840-1926): Les dinandais (The Turkeys), 1877

7. Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919): Bal au Moulin de la Galette, Montmartre (Dance at the Moulin de la Galette, Montmartre), 1876

8. Claude Monet (1840-1926): La rue Montorgueil, fête du 30 juin 1878 (The Rue Montorgueil, celebration of June 30, 1878), 1878

9. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): Portraits à la bourse (Portraits at the Stock Exchange), 1876-79

10. Edgar Degas (1854-1917): La petite danseuse de 14 ans (The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer), 1881

11. Edgar Degas: Portraits à la bourse (1876-79)

12. Edgar Degas: Portrait of a Breton Fisherman, 1893

13. Claude Monet: La Rue Montorgueil et le Port (30 June 1878)

14. Claude Monet: Le Moulin de la Galette (1875-76)

15. Claude Monet: L’invocation à Port-Marly (1876)

16. Claude Monet: L’inondation à Port-Marly (1875-76)
•observe: the strokes, different according to the part of the painting, more regular than those of the impressionists. The mix of pure colours in the light painting hardly feasible.

1. Camille Pissarro (1850-1903):

| Subject: the railway bridge in Argenteuil was one of five pieces (207 x 308 cm, i.e. 6'9" x 10'1") that made any open-air painting hardly feasible. The painting that is so accurate that it makes it possible to represent what happened in apartments.
| Location: upper level, gallery 30
| Subject matter: this painting constitutes one of the masterpieces of the collection. Whereas peasants (Glory of Millet) or country scenes (a small road near Pontoise) have been shown, city workers had seldom been painted. Caillaud has a well-defined and clearly defined background, could have observed the floor planers working in one of the rooms of the family mansion. At the Avenue de Miramion. Unlike Courbet or Millet, in fact part of the monuments (impressionist and accessory) justifies his position among the most profound realists, in a very precise way: represents Caillaud's in his Lamastre piece, White Frost, as it captured a particular moment in a winter day, parables in impressionist paintings.

2. Claude Monet (1840-1926):

Le Pont du chemin de fer à Argenteuil (The Railway Bridge in Argenteuil), circa 1874

| Location: upper level, gallery 29
| Subject matter: the painting is one of five pieces (207 x 308 cm, i.e. 6'9" x 10'1") that make any open-air painting hardly feasible. The mix of pure colours in the light painting hardly feasible.
| The bridge are painted full length and their massive shape is not undated. They plunge in the Seine and contrast the sensibility of outward movement created by the diagonal of the railway.

3. Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894):

Les raboteurs de parquet (The Floor Planers), 1875

| Location: upper level, gallery 30
| Subject matter: this painting constitutes one of the masterpieces of the collection. Whereas peasants (Glory of Millet) or country scenes (a small road near Pontoise) have been shown, city workers had seldom been painted. Caillaud has a well-defined and clearly defined background, could have observed the floor planers working in one of the rooms of the family mansion. At the Avenue de Miramion. Unlike Courbet or Millet, in fact part of the monuments (impressionist and accessory) justifies his position among the most profound realists, in a very precise way: represents Caillaud's in his Lamastre piece, White Frost, as it captured a particular moment in a winter day, parables in impressionist paintings.

In the times of the impressionists exhibitions (1874-1886)

• The visit: the artworks

The following selection of artworks is just one possible proposal. The teacher, guide or group leader remains free to choose according to the expectations and composition of the group, availability of pieces and galleries, etc.