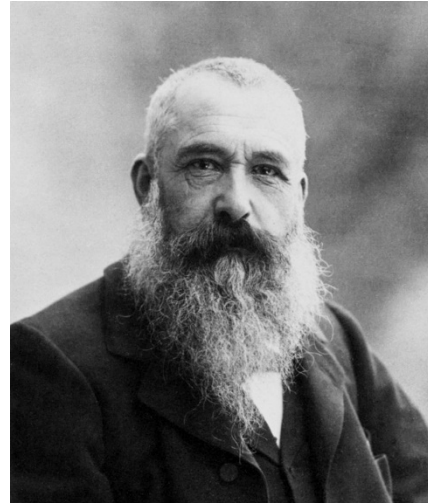


Oscar Claude Monet

“Clow-d Mow-NAY”

Impressionist Painter
Impressionist Period of Visual Arts

B 14 November 1840; Paris, France
D 5 December, 1926, Giverny France



Claude Monet

Claude Monet, like Gainsborough before him, showed early talent for drawing over daily schoolwork. He filled his school notebooks with sketches and caricatures of the local villagers and tourists, and he would sell these for extra pocket money. When he was a teenager, French artist Eugene Boudin (Boo-DEH) vacationed in Monet’s town of La Havre and taught the Monet how to paint with oil paints outside.

After a brief detour in the French military in Algeria, Monet, at the behest of his aunt, entered art school. He hated it. Instead, with a few friends, began to experiment with different styles of painting and capturing light on a canvas. Few people wanted to purchase these experiments, but one family, the Hoschedés, loved them and hired Monet to create a number of paintings for their home. This commission was a welcome relief to Monet, who was married with a son by this time.

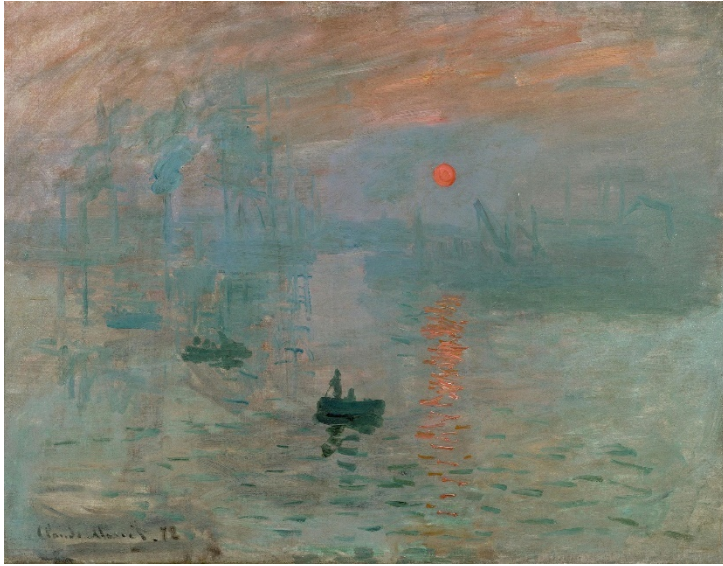
Monet’s painting “Impression: Sunrise” bears the root of the name he and his friends adopted for their style. The name “Impression” was initially an insult coined by art critic Louis Leroy, but later borne by Monet and his friends as their self-described technique: catching an “impression” of a single moment.

Financially, things were still rough for Monet and his family. His wife Camille had just given birth to their second son, and still felt weak and ill. Then, Monet and Camille heard their friends the Hoschedé family, were bankrupt and soon to be homeless. They offered to let the Hoschedes move in, and soon the little house rang with the sounds four adults and eight children. When Camille Monet died, Alice Hoschede kept house and mothered Monet’s sons so he could work and support them.

Shortly after this, Monet’s paintings became popular, and their sales meant Monet was able to afford a larger home. Mr. Hoschede moved to Belgium to look for work, promising to send for his family when he was settled—but never did. He died while far away, and Alice Hoschede and Claude Monet married and raised their blended family together. Monet’s new home in Giverny had enough land he could raise his own vegetables for his table and indulge in his other passion, gardening, with the help of his children and gardeners. This was where he began to grow waterlilies, the subject of most of his later works.

As WWI raged all too close to the home of the Monets, Claude proposed an idea to his good friend, Georges Clemenceau (Clem-en-SOW) the Prime Minister of France: Once this terrible event was over, what if Monet gave an immense painting to the nation, one that could surround an entire room, making a peaceful place where loved ones could sit and remember those lost in the war? Clemenceau agreed, and Monet spent his last decade working on these immense works. A month after his death, these 360-degree memorial paintings were unveiled to the world. But by that time, the world had moved on from Impressionism to Picasso’s edgy Cubism style, and few cared. It wasn’t until the 1950’s that Monet’s work was appreciated by a new audience, and today, he, and his paintings, are now treasured as some of the greatest works of art ever created.

Vocabulary:



IMPRESSIONISM (1870s – 1890s)

From the Latin “Impressionem” meaning “Pressing Into.” Impressionist paintings are generally marked by:

- short, thick, visible brushstrokes of pure color placed side-by-side,
- an emphasis on outdoor scenes, and even painting outdoors
- The play of light, color, and shadow
- The use of pure color straight from the tube, and rarely, black (Monet never used black from a tube-he layered paints on top of each other to get “black”)

Sometimes, Impressionists would paint the same subject over and over, but change canvases as the light changed. Monet is especially well-known for this. This style of loose paint strokes which represent realistic images epitomizes the Impressionist style, but there were also multiple style occurring at the same time: Neoclassical and Romantic styles were popular at the beginning of the Impressionist Period, and Modern/Expressionist by the end of Monet’s life.

BROKEN COLOR: An art technique introduced by Impressionists (like Monet) where pure color is dabbed in short strokes or broken lines on the canvas, and the eye blends the dabs of color into a complete picture.

Many of Monet’s paintings look abstract if looked at closely, but blend together into something recognizable once you back up far enough away.



Above: One of Monet’s waterlilies from 1906, currently in the Art Institute of Chicago. To the right, a detail of the two pink lilies in the lower right-hand corner. Note how our brain can easily pick out the lilies and their leaves in the above, but the detail looks more “smudgy” and “Abstract”

Monet Quotes

“It’s on the strength of observation and reflection that one finds a way. So we must dig and delve unceasingly.”

“For me, a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes at every moment; but the surrounding atmosphere brings it to life - the light and the air which vary continually. For me, it is only the surrounding atmosphere which gives subjects their true value.



Bridge over a Pond of Waterlilies 1899



Oil on Canvas
92.7 x 33.7 cm (36 ½ x
29 in)
Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York, USA

This is one of a number of paintings which Monet did of his Japanese bridge over a waterlily pond. You can still see this bridge today in his preserved house in Giverny.

Monet, like Degas, Van Gogh, and Mary Cassatt, loved the Japanese artwork which was entering Europe in the late 19th century, and Japanese art influenced both his painting and his gardening.

This footbridge is over Monet's Japanese-inspired garden at the end of his property. Unfortunately, that

property was across the railroad into Giverny, so the first thing Monet had to do was dig a tunnel UNDER the railroad so he and his workers, family, and paintings could safely cross to this lower garden any time they wanted. (The Rail company loved it: they even slowed the train down as it entered Giverny to allow the tourists to catch a sight of the beautiful garden and perhaps, if they were lucky, watch Monet at work.)

Monet even hired a Japanese gardener to join his staff at Giverny, in order to integrate some Japanese elements to his garden. This lower garden featured Asian plants like Bamboo, Ginkgo, Japanese Maple, Weeping Willow, Japanese Peonies, and the famous Japanese cherry trees. The bridge is a built in a traditional style, though Monet deliberately chose to paint it green, rather than the traditional red. The Giverny house is now protected by a Foundation, and tourists can visit ever year from April to November.

The Undergrowth in the Forest of Saint Germain; 1882



*Oil on Canvas
81 cm x 65 cm
Yamagata Art
Museum,
Yamagata,
Japan*

Monet's fascination with Japanese art and cultures wasn't a one-way interest; the Japanese were fascinated with Monet as well. Even during Monet's lifetime, Japanese businessmen and collectors would come to Giverny to purchase paintings directly from the painter. If they were lucky, and Monet was in a good mood, they might also get to spend the day touring

Monet's gardens, and eating sumptuous meals with the painter himself. (Monet's third passion was good food!)

Today, there is still a considerable collection of Monet paintings found in the institutions and private collections in Japan.

The Forest of Saint Germain was close to Giverny. During the Middle Ages, it was the hunting grounds of French Royalty. It is still preserved and the new highway that goes through it was even built partially underground to preserve the forest.

Series Paintings:

Monet loved to study one subject and paint it throughout the day, and, occasionally, throughout the year. His series paintings include:

- Houses of Parliament in London
- Poplars along the Seine River
- Rouen Cathedral in Rouen
- And the “Haystack Paintings,” (seen here)

“Haystacks” was the first of his series paintings. These haystacks belonged to the farming neighbor across the road, and Monet loved how the light played on them over the course of the day. At first, he thought he needed to paint only two canvases: one for sunny days and one for overcast. Soon, he felt he couldn’t capture the light correctly with just two canvases and so...every day, he and his step-daughter Blanche would cart whatever canvases looked like would match the day’s weather across the road, and they would paint side-by-side. As the sun or clouds moved across the sky, they switched canvases and kept painting. If the conditions changed, Blanche would dash across the street to grab whichever canvases they needed now, and bring them back.

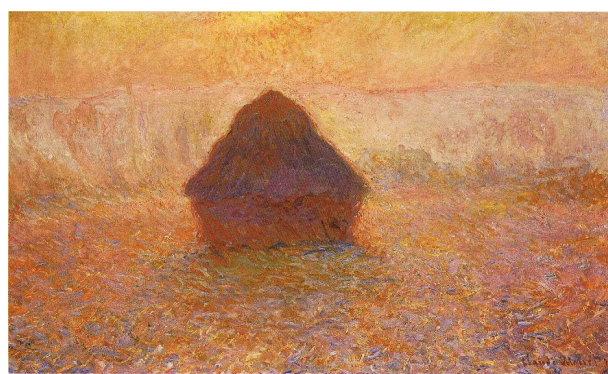
Over the course of the fall and winter, Monet painted over 25 canvases of haystacks. When he debuted them in Paris, they were extremely popular, and the money Monet earned from these canvases allowed him to purchase his home in Giverny. (He had been renting it.)

Whenever he painted a series, Monet was obsessed with getting (and keeping!) everything just so until he finished. While his neighbor didn’t need to move the haystacks in the fall and winter, the “Poplar” series in 1891 almost fell apart—literally. The man who owned the trees sold them to a lumber merchant, who came to fell the trees. Monet, half-way through his planned series, bought them from the lumber merchant so he could finish all his studies. Once he was done, he promptly sold the trees BACK to the lumberman, who felled them for lumber.

Today, most of Monet’s series paintings reside in various institutions and private collections. The Art Institute of Chicago owns at least six haystack paintings, making their collection the largest collection of haystacks in the world.



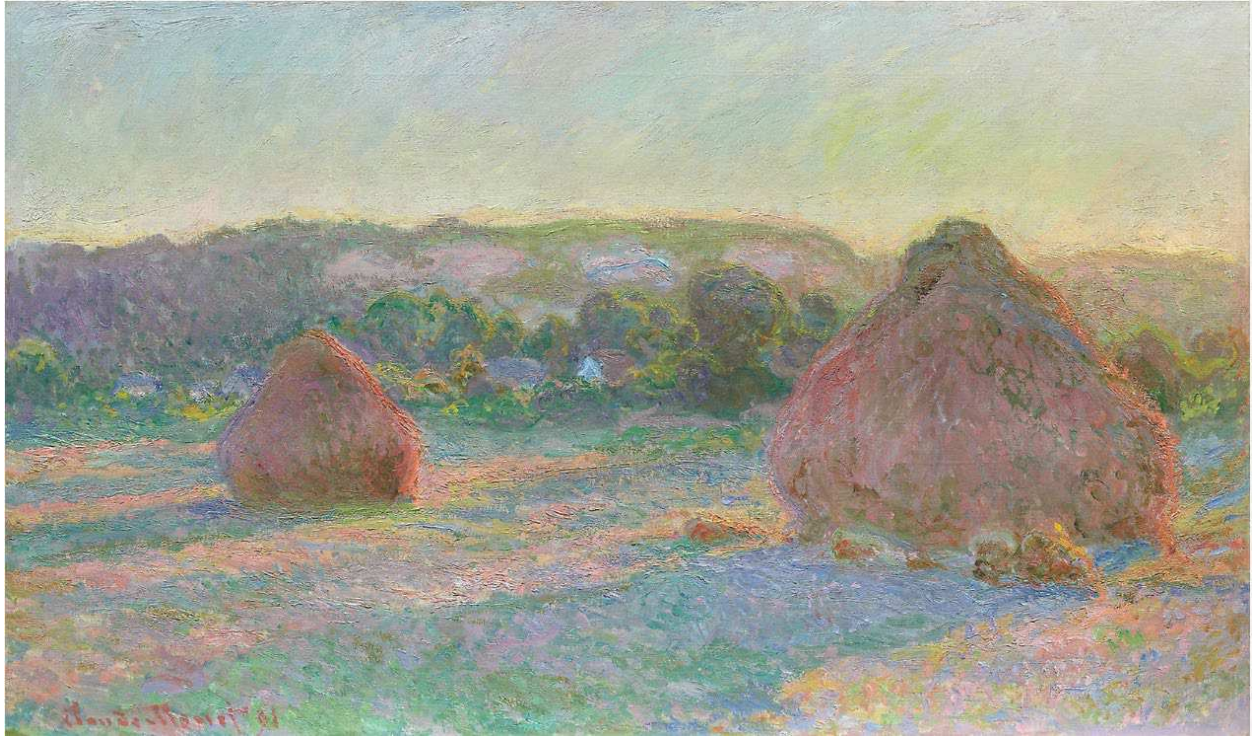
Wheatstacks (Snow Effect, Morning) 1891
Oil on Canvas
Getty Center, Los Angeles, USA



Wheatstacks (Sun in Mist) 1891
Oil on Canvas
Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minnesota, USA

Oscar Claude Monet (1840 -1917)
Impressionist Painter

19th – 20th century, France



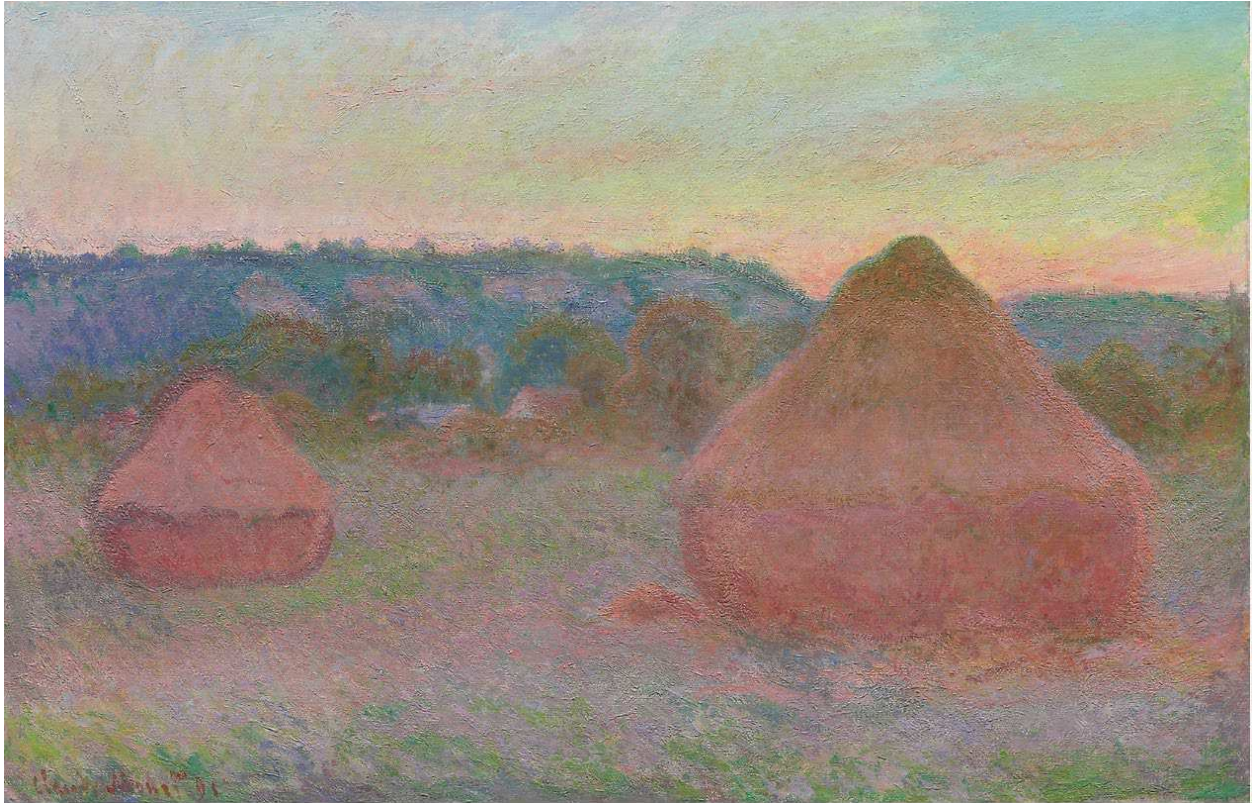
Stacks of Wheat (End of Summer) 1890-91 Oil on Canvas; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, USA



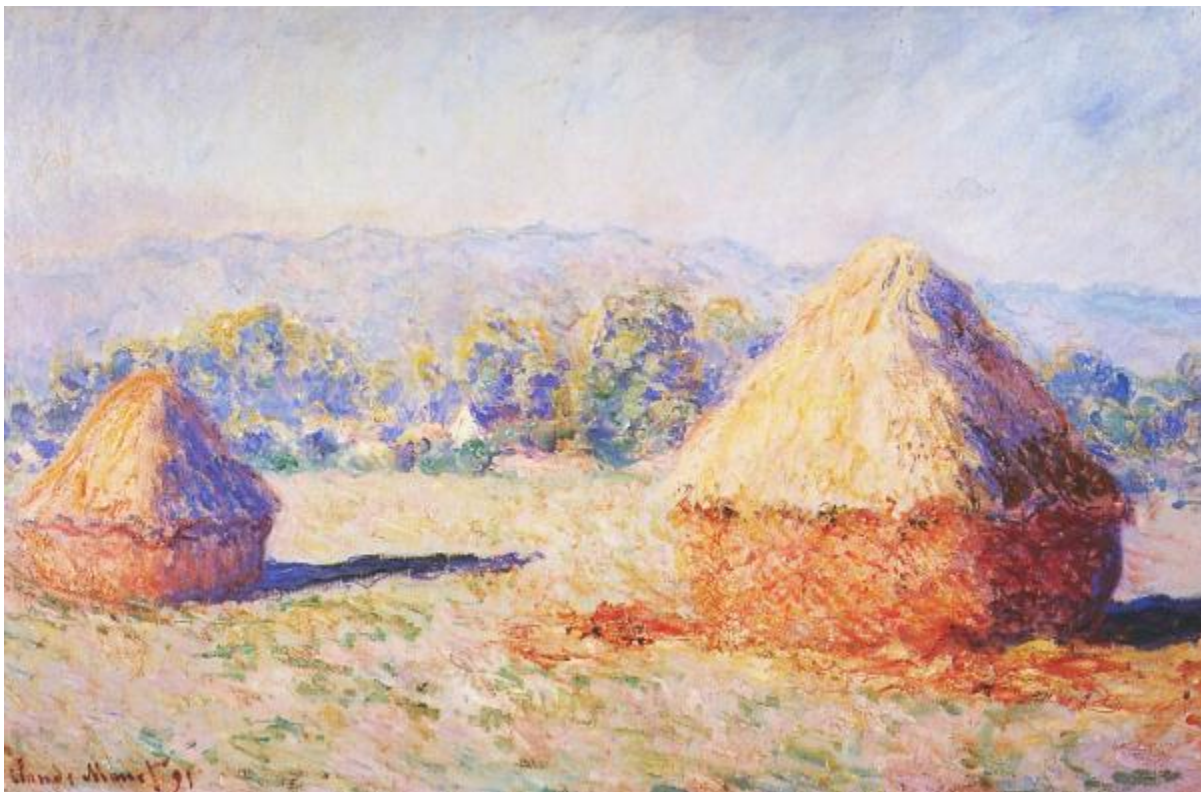
Stacks of Wheat (Sunset, Snow Effect) 1890 – 1891; Oil on Canvas; Art Institute of Chicago

Oscar Claude Monet (1840 -1917)
Impressionist Painter

19th – 20th century, France



Stacks of Wheat (End of Day, Autumn) 1891; Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, USA



Stack of Wheats (Sunlight, Morning Effect) 1891; Oil on Canvas; Private Collection

Blanche Horschede Monet

Impressionist Painter

Impresonit / Post-Impressionist Period

B 10 November, 1865, Paris, France

D. 8 December, 1947, Nice, France

Eleven-year old Blanche Horschede was simply the second daughter of wealthy parents when she first met Monet. Monet had been hired to paint a number of commissions for the Horchede's summer home. Blanche was enchanted with painting, and asked Monet for lessons, which he agreed to.

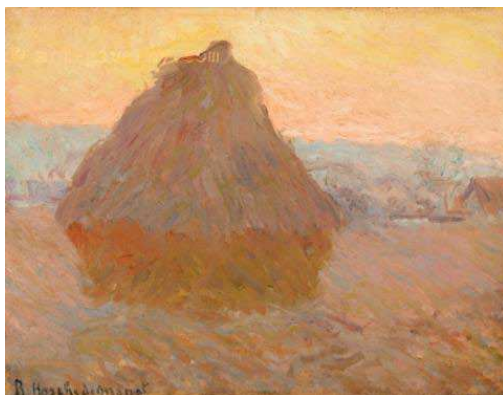
Two years later, disaster struck: Her family went bankrupt and in two days, everything Blanche had known, the houses, the artwork, the furniture, were sold, and the family nearly homeless. Then, a letter arrived from Monet. Despite the fact he and his wife only had a small, drafty house to offer, if the Hoschedes needed a place to stay, they were welcome.



Blanche now grew up in quite different surroundings, but at least she had art. She helped Monet whenever he painted at home, carting his supplies back and forth, helping to set up multiple easels and canvases on-site, and learning how to paint from Monet. She was the only student he ever worked with.

Blanche's father moved around, looking for work, but never seemed to stay in any location long enough to send for his family. Monet became a father-figure, supporting Blanche's artwork, and sponsoring her when she started to exhibit under her own name. When her father died, her mother married Monet, making Blanche officially a stepdaughter and member of the family.

Years later, when Blanche was thirty-two, she married Monet's oldest son, Jean ("ZhAWN-French for "John") becoming Monet's daughter-in-law. They moved to Rouen, where Jean worked as a chemist until he died of a stroke at the age of 47. Blanche moved back to Monet's house, where she cared for her now-widowed stepfather/father-in-law for the rest of his life.

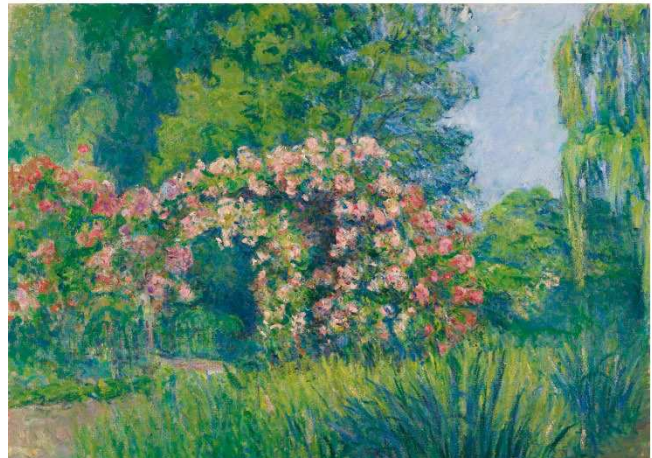


Following Monet's death, Blanche stayed in the house, painting all throughout WWII, and even teaching her nephew, Jean-Marie, how to paint using the paint and tools Monet left behind.

Blanche's own painting style has been described as "Pure Impressionism", and Henri Durand-Ruel, Monet's dealer, once told Blanche, that one day, her work could be mistaken for Monet's (with whom Blanche shared Canvases, paints, and locations!) He is right: while Blanche's work is slowly gaining favor and being

recognized, her canvases are often mistaken for Claude Monet's.

Works by Blanche Horchede Monet



Above: "Giverny Countryside with Poplars;" Oil on Canvas, Private Collection;

Top Right: Rose Garden of Monet, Oil on Canvas, Private Collection

Center right: "The Garden of Claude Monet at Giverny" Private Collection:

Below, right: The Garden and House of Claude Monet at Giverny; Oil on Canvas; Musee de Augustins, France

Preceding Page: Haystack; Oil on Canvas



Take Home:

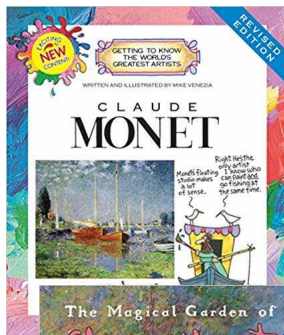
Videos/ Online:

The Life of Claude Monet by YouTube Channel “NowYouKnowAbout”. Done by the same people who did the Thomas Gainsborough video, this video follows Claude Monet’s life. One word of warning: in this version, Alice Hoschede and her children were abandoned by Alice’s husband Ernest, and Alice and the children were then taken in by the Monets. The story of the relationship between the Hoschede and Monet families is long and complicated and difficult to summarize. Eventually, Ernest did, apparently, abandon his family, but it took years, not instantly, and Ernest suffered a number of setbacks and job losses and may have had some depression. Alice initially moved in to help nurse Camille through her recovery from a difficult birth, but it was more likely cancer, and Camille died eighteen months later. Like most long-term human relationships, it is difficult and nearly impossible to accurately depict in a couple of sentences what all went into different things. Alice occasionally took Monet’s children and her own to the remaining Hoschede apartment in Paris, leaving both men free to pursue jobs to support their children. Abandonment is how they chose to deal with how Alice Hoschede and Claude Monet ended up together in this video, so if it comes up later, you may have to answer some questions.

“ A Visit to Claude Monet’s Garden at Giverny” by YouTube Channel **“Royal Academy of Arts”** This three minute video tours Monet’s garden and home as it appears today.

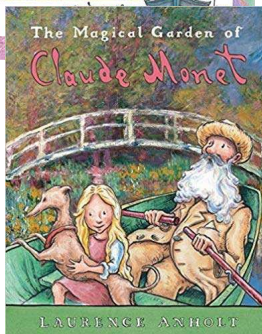
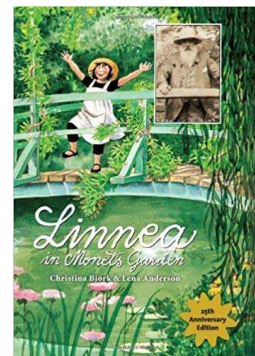
Online Gallery: Claude Monet created mostly landscapes and this website it a great place to look at several of his paintings: <https://www.claudemonetgallery.org/>

Books



Getting to Know the World’s Greatest Artists: Claude Monet by Mike Venezia. Yup, we’re back again! I love this series for its mix of humor, cartoons, real paintings, and easy-to-read biographies.

I just received this one for Christmas and love it: **Linnea in Monet’s Garden** by Christina Bjork. This book is longer, but tells a delightful story of visiting Monet’s house in Giverny, while telling a little bit about Monet’s house and life.



The Magical Garden of Claude Monet by Laurence Anholt. Written and illustrated by the same people who brought Degas and the Little Dancer, this book tells the story of a little girl who stumbles into a beautiful garden and befriends the man who, she thinks, is the gardener!