

Tutor Notes for Monet:

Pronouncing Monet's name:

Oscar Claude Monet

Os-CAR Clow-d Mon-EY

But like Degas, Monet went by just his middle name, so that's all anyone needs to worry about.

"Claude" was named in honor of his father, Calude Adolphe Monet, who was REALLY unhappy that his son was fooling around with paints instead of the sensible work at the family store. In fact, shortly after the matriarch of the Monet family, Louise (Aubree) Monet died in 1857, 17 year old Monet moved to Paris to be with his aunt. Within a year, he was called to the military, and the only way out was to pay a fee. Monet couldn't but his father could, on one condition. That young Monet drop this ridiculous painting thing and return home to work.

Monet refused, showed up for his enlistment, and was shipped out to Algeria. He didn't draw much while he was enlisted (or at least, he didn't keep much that he drew during that time,) but he did manage to catch Typhoid. While recovering, he got a letter from the aunt he went to stay with: I'LL pay the fine to get you home, but on one condition:

Enroll in art school.

THAT opportunity, Monet jumped at.

After a semester, he jumped back out, and started experimenting with his buddies, but nonetheless, if things had worked out differently...

Notes for the Project:

Monet was an excellent draftsman (a person who draws well) but he doesn't seem to have done many drawings under his canvases. He simply set the canvases up, then began to set paint dabs and blobs wherever he saw color and however he saw color.

This project lists two types of paint for this project: watercolor and tempera. If I had a choice, I'd go with the bottled Tempera paint over cake tempera and watercolor. Bottled Tempera will act more closely to oil paint and be able to be "dabbed" more easily without running across previous marks.

If you have access to it, Acrylic paints would be similar.

Because this project relies on laying down layers, or adjacent layers of paints, having a thicker paint will help IMMENSELY. Thicker paint doesn't run, tends to stay put on the page or canvas/canvasboard, and will mix on the page without running everywhere. I'll write a bit about cake tempera and watercolors below.

The key here is to not care too much about getting anything "right".

Some Suggestions:

- If you are using Monet's works as a reference, look at how he laid down his brushstrokes:
 - Flowers are often dots or swirls. Even things like irises are more like two strokes down, and a stroke up. Waterlilies are three to seven slashes of color.
 - Leaves are often dots or dashes
 - Grasses or weeping willow branches are broken lines going up and down.
 - Buildings are rough squares of color.
 - Clouds are big swirls of paint

There is A TON of wiggle room here. Refer back to Monet's work—this is not a scientific illustration, precision is the opposite of the goal. Have fun with mixing paints on the paper, and see what happens.

- Do as little "mixing" of paint on your palette as possible. From what I've been reading, Monet, but would layer and mix them on the canvas. So if you think it should be a darker green, dry blobbing some blue or purple on the parts of the green you think should be "darker" rather than trying to mix a darker green somewhere
 - Shadows in the Impressionist world are not black—they are blue or purple or a bluer-shade of whatever color you were looking at. You will rarely find a black in Monet's work (he rarely purchased it) All the deep shadows are blues and purples.
 - Similarly, highlights will be white or yellow or something bright scumbled on the thing you are painting. So if I'm painting a tree, I might lay down a bunch of green, then pile on some blue and purple where I want dark shadows, then tap some yellow or white where I want some bright highlights. As the paint will be wet when I do this, it will mix on the canvas/paper.
- If you have trouble seeing what to do, try squinting at both your reference image and your own painting. Squinting is a time-valued technique to fuzz out details and help the artist focus on the larger segments of a painting, whether that's form, main color, ect.
- Keep LOTS of cups of water handy, as brushes will need to be cleaned frequently to keep the paints from being transferred from one bottle to another. You need to keep the source paint pure so you can use it for this project and any future ones.
 - A couple of way to help this: give every student TWO cups of water—one for the initial wash, and one for the rinse. The first cup will get very dirty very quickly, but the second cup will stay surprisingly clean for much longer, limiting how many trips to the sink you have to take to keep the brushes clean.
 - Squirt samples of pure color onto a makeshift palette (I like paper plates) or into egg cartons (foam, not cardboard—the paint just soaks into the cardboard. This will keep the source bottle paints clean and reusable. Nothing is worse than someone sticking a dirty brush into a white or yellow bottle and making that paint unusable for another project.

Regardless of what medium you are using, this painting may need more than one setting. Most artists have to work in several "sessions," allowing the paint to set, or even dry, between each session.

Monet himself once remarked that one of his "Poplar" paintings could only be painted for a MAXIMUM of 7 MINUTES on each sunny day. (The time it took for the sunlight to hit, pass over, and leave a

particular leaf on a particular branch) That painting took over 60 sessions to complete (not including cloudy days, rainy days, or days when Monet couldn't get out to paint!) So if the kids don't finish, that's fine. Let it dry, then come back and layer more on top at home!

Watercolors and Cake Tempera

Cake Tempera acts so much like Watercolors (especially pan watercolors, like the Crayola brand, which are very common for student work) so I'll deal with both here.

The problem with watercolor is even accomplished artists have to learn when to let the wet paint fully dry before trying to come up to the edge of anything with a second color. If I lay down some yellow dots, for example, then lay down some blue close to the yellow, and they touch, one is going to "bleed" into the other. As a watercolorist, I have to accept that as part of my medium. That unexpected nature gives watercolors their charm.

It's also a headache and a frustration, especially if you have an idea in your head but the watercolors are going everywhere but where you want them. Some people are going to be frustrated by this, if their "dabs" of color are now big blobs of who-knows-what-color-that-was-supposed-to-be.

Ways to help:

- Use as little water as possible. (Yes, I know, for the very young kids, this may be impossible, but they may care the least!) The more water you use, the longer it takes to dry. Some watercolor work is called "drybrushing" where you use the least amount of water you can to activate the paint and get it on the brush tips. Less water, less uncontrolled "bleeding."
- Try working on different corners in succession, leaving each one to dry for a few minutes in between colors. For example, maybe I lay down some yellows on one corner, then do another corner. Then I lay down some blues in the bottom corner, then some greens in a fourth corner. By then, the yellow in the top half will have had some time to dry, and is less likely to bleed, or bleed far.
- Keep Kleenex or paper towel (lots of it) handy and near each student. If you are using watercolor paper or multi-media paper, it will have "sizing," or a type of gelatin, in it or on the surface. The sizing's job is to help the water-based media "float" for a few minutes, before binding to the paper, and also to keep the paint from staining the paper. This means that if something goes sideways, you have a few minutes to "lift" the paint using the Kleenex or Paper Towel (some artists use a dry brush or a clean damp brush for this purpose as well.) If bleeding happens and you don't want it to, you can clean it up before it goes far.
- Dirty secret of most watercolorists: heat guns and hair dryers. As long as the heat gun won't scorch the page and the hair dryer isn't a gale-force wind, these devices can help dry the paint more quickly and let you lay down more layers. I have both. I use both. But in a 30-minute time section, with multiple kids, that may not be feasible. If you have enough assistants to help with kids who need some spot drying done, that is an option.
- Use the two-cup method of brush rinsing detailed above, and be vigilant about cleaning brushes between colors. If the paint pans are not clean when the project is done (happens a lot in my class of 4-7 year olds!) take a clean paper towel and try to soak up the wet paint off the surface

of the paint pan while everything is still wet. This should remove the incorrect color from the pain leaving most of the rest of the non-wetted color intact below.

For a short project like this...wax resist can be your friend.

If you did the Degas Wax Resist last week, you remember that oil and water still don't mix. It's true in salad dressings and art supplies. If you want to, and have access to crayons or oil pastels, you can take a few minutes to lay down some crayon lines on the paper.

Example: if I'm working on Monet's famous Japanese bridge, I might lay down the bridge itself, the lake edges, maybe a few lines showing me where the outlines of the lily patches will go.

Now as I begin my painting, the wax lines will not "disappear" and will act as walls and brakes to my paint. Any watercolor running across my paper will hit the crayon line (especially if it is heavy) and ball up on the edge there, giving me more time to either redirect it or soak it up with the paper towel.

Ideally, in a project like this, you would lay down lots of loose color, let it dry, lay down smaller, more detailed color, let it dry, then lay down details, let it dry, and then finally lay down any final highlights. I'm sure you see the "key" to this type of painting by now. LET. IT. DRY. FULLY!!!

Now, that may not be plausible inside 30 minutes, so in those cases, using crayon or Oil Pastels as a "brake" or a "guide" can be useful too.

Cleanup

Tempera and watercolor are both water soluble and should be easy to clean up with soap and water. Most child-friendly paints are washable, but don't assume. If possible, wear clothing that can be easily washed, or at least spot cleaned on-site. If the paint doesn't say "washable," that means the pigments could be staining pigments, so if it gets on clothes, the sooner spot-cleaned the better.

Enjoy Monet!