

OSCAR-CLAUDE MONET

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Background

Oscar-Claude Monet was one of the founders of the Impressionist Art Movement in the mid to late 19th century. Born in 1840, he grew up wanting to become an artist, and learned how to paint through art school and various other artists. Through his artistic foundations, he along with several other painters made various works “en plein air” (outdoors) by using broken color and varying brushstroke sizes. He is best known for his paintings of nature, including landscapes featuring the House of Parliament and the Rouen Cathedral, as well as his *Water Lilies* collection. He died of lung cancer at 86. Since then, his technique has inspired countless artists and his paintings are considered some of the greatest artistic masterpieces.

Critics Because the style was so vastly different to anything people had seen before, Monet’s work received a lot of criticism, both when he was producing them and now. According to one critic, Monsieur Gillet, Monet’s impressionist style showed “the world as a kind of dream play”, an unrealistic rendering that uses too many compound colors and not enough simple color. His work is *avant-garde* because of his use of complementary colors, which many critics point out. Although his works received harsh rejection initially, Monet’s popularity grew and his paintings soon were revered and greatly coveted.

Water Lilies

Water Lilies was a collection of nearly 250 paintings of the water lilies outside of Monet’s home. His collection was a reaction to the Armistice of World War I. *Water Lilies and Reflections of a Weeping Willow* works were painted to honor the fallen soldiers of the war. Given to the French State, many of the paintings reside in museums all over the world, as well as in private collections. Monet’s use of dimensions and the prominent nature of the lilies and all encompassing vegetation serves to be his signature style and which distinguishes him from many of his other fellow Impressionist painters.

Later Years

As Monet grew older, he developed cataracts around his eyes, which forced him to undergo surgery. As a result, his vision changed, which is evident through his use of color and through his later paintings becoming more abstract. In the beginning, his paintings were much clearer, with lines of subjects much more distinct and colors were sharper. In his later works, the colors are more muddled, and shapes and designs in the paintings are freer, with less boundary than his earlier works.



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