

A Study and Appreciation of Claude Monet's Artistic Creation and Life Experience

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ABSTRACT

Claude Monet an outstanding Impressionist painter in the 19th century, is one of the founders of Impressionist painting, known as the "father of Impressionism". His representative works include Impression of Sunrise, Cathedral of Rouen, Haystack, and Water Lily. Many artists and scholars in the study of Monet's works, summed up the artist Monet can be famous for the reason: thanks to his unique insight and innovation in painting creation. Every seemingly insignificant change over time will eventually add up and change things qualitatively. This paper makes a correlation analysis between Monet's painting style and his life experience to explore the influence of the painter's life experience on the painting methods adopted at that time, to study and appreciate his representative works which have achieved periodic success. When people not only stop to appreciate the color surface of the work, but also understand the story behind the creation of art, this will more vividly and truly restore the character image of a writer, and further explore the connotation, historical status, and influence on the development history of painting. At the same time, it is beneficial to broaden the richness of the history of art painting and is also of great benefit to the field of art education and academic research. Claude Monet (1840-1926) was a French Impressionist artist known for his innovative methods of painting as well as his iconic landscapes and seascapes. Considered one of the most influential artists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, he is often hailed as a master of capturing the fleeting effect of light and atmosphere in his work.

Keywords: Claude Monet; Impressionism; Art history; Appreciation of painting



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1. GRADUALLY CLEAR PAINTING IDEAS

Monet was born in Paris on October 14, 1840, and at the age of five, his family moved to Saint-Adres, near the seaside town of Le Havre, to trade in groceries. He was the eldest son of a grocer. When Monet was a teenager, he was very interested in painting. In school, he often used a pencil to draw the teacher walking back and forth. Because of the resemblance, he was praised by his classmates. Every day after school Monet would dash to the beach to paint the passing ships. Monet loved the sea very much. He once said: "I would always stand before the sea or on the top of the waves. He was tutored by Francois Hauchard, a professional painter, and was soon able to paint accurately boats and people passing by in the harbor.

At the age of 18, Monet was inspired by the painter Eugene Louis Boudin, who saw his talent and invited him to sketch outdoors with him. (Pipe paint had only just been invented, so outdoor painting

was a novelty.) So Monet began to paint outside and later defined outdoor sketch work as the best way to work as a landscape painter, which was a very important step in introducing Monet to the school of impressionism.

As a young man, Monet studied in Paris on the recommendation of Eugene Louis Boudin and under the auspices of his father, but the young man was rebellious and loyal to himself, rejecting the dominant academic education and often gathering with anti-academic youths to talk loudly. In 1860, Monet attended an unofficial art exhibition where he was inspired by the brilliant colors and power of the paintings. He later returned home and met Johan Barthold Jongkind, a painter who loved nature. "From then on he became my true teacher," Monet said. "He completed my education in seeing things with eyes."

In 1862, at the age of 22, Monet entered the studio of the classicist academic painter Marc Gabriel Charles Gleyre, where he met fellow students Pierre Renoir, Alfred Sisley, and Frederic Bazille. They formed a "group of four friends", together out of the studio, into the nature of painting. When Monet finished his studies, he turned to the Fontainebleau forest and the nature of his hometown. At this time, Monet believed that everything in nature exists for man, and the magnificence of nature highlights the magnificence of man.

2. THE CORE OF IMPRESSIONISM



Figure 1 Frog Pond Island, 1869

Renoir and Monet visited Croissy's Frog Pond Island in 1869 to sketch. One of Monet's paintings, "Frog Pond Island", depicts a ROWING cafe with the slogan "ROWING-BOATS FOR HIRE" and an island with a small tree called "Pot" (also known as "Camembur"). There are two footbridges on the island, one leading to the cafe and the other to Cloissy Island, both of which are used by tourists.

The most remarkable detail in the painting is the movement of the swimmers and the boat bobbing in the water, which makes the surface of the lake ripple with the waves, and the reflection in the water becomes intermittent and flickering. Monet was attracted by the sparkling water, and to capture the beauty of the moment, he created rapid, swift, bold strokes and brilliant mottled colors on the canvas, thus acquiring an effective way to capture the impression of the moment in a quick stroke. This vivid oil painting shows that Monet, during his long observation of outdoor sketching on Frogpond Island, finally mastered the expression of light and shadow in the water, which is different from the light and shadow of the calm river he painted in Bennicott or the magnificent sea he painted in Manneporte. Renoir and Monet helped develop the technique of light and shadow in the water, and it was at the heart of Impressionist painting.

3. THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME IMPRESSIONISM

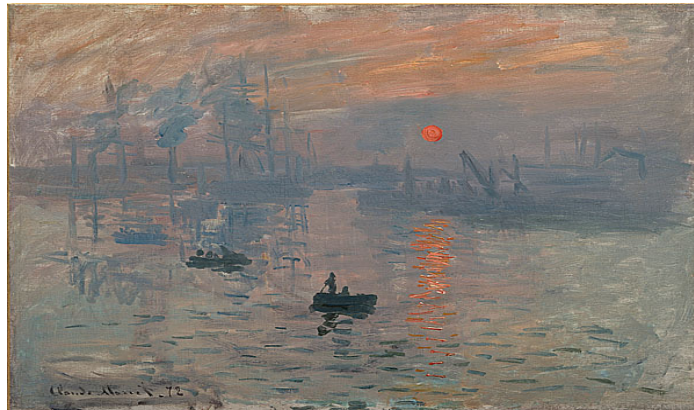


Figure 2 Impression, Sunrise, 1873

In his middle age, Monet was the backbone of Impressionism. In 1874, Monet showed a seascape for the first time at a Paris exhibition, but it was widely mocked. To mock painters like Monet, a critic called them "Impressionists". To show his resistance, Monet named his painting "Impression, Sunrise", which became known as Impressionism, and soon after, he became the leader of the painting school.

"Impression, Sunrise" is Monet's representative work. It depicts a foggy morning in the port of Le Havre. In the sky light composed of blue-gray, orange-yellow, lavender, and reddish tones, a red sun rises slowly, reflecting a ray of orange waves in the sea. The sea, sky, and scenery are interleaved and permeated under easy strokes to become whole. Three small boats in the sea, gradually become blurred in the mist, and distant buildings, ports, ships, and masts are also looming in the morning light, giving people a hazy visual impression.

At first glance, Impression, Sunrise seems to be a simple painting of a harbor, with boats and buildings emerging from the murky waters. A closer look, however, reveals that what Monet cared about was the display of light and color on water and in the sky. He uses vibrant oranges and reds to convey the fleeting moments of sunrise, capturing the ever-changing nature of light and atmosphere. He chose loose, broken, and spontaneous brushstrokes to present the whole of the scene rather than the details. The rough texture of the brushstrokes also adds depth and dimension to the picture, creating a vibrant feeling that truly depicts the visual impression given to the artist by the light and color of the French seaport city at sunrise.

The exhibition of Impression, Sunrise drew strong reactions from critics and the public, but the painting received mixed reviews, with some critics praising Monet's innovative approach to capturing the essence of nature, while other traditional critics criticized the painting for its lack of detail. Although the painting was controversial in its original exhibition, it has since become one of Monet's most famous and influential works and is regarded as the beginning of Impressionism.

The significance of "Impression, Sunrise" goes far beyond its artistic merit. It marked a turning point in art history because it challenged the established norms and traditions of the time and paved the way for the modern art movement that followed. Monet's revolutionary way of capturing the ever-changing effects of light and atmosphere in nature had a profound impact on the development of modern art, inspiring generations of artists to shake off traditional artistic norms and explore new ways of depicting the world.

4. A SERIES OF MASTERFUL WORKS



Figure 3 Rouen Cathedral series

Monet started his Rouen Cathedral series in February 1892, following the classic works of the Haystack series in 1888 and the Poplar series in June 1891. Rouen Cathedral, located in the city of Rouen in Normandy, France, is a medieval Gothic masterpiece that has stood for centuries as a symbol of religious piety and architectural brilliance. During a visit to Rouen in 1892, Monet was fascinated by the interaction of light on the facade of the church building, which inspired him to create more than 30 paintings.

Looking at the paintings, Monet tried to capture the visual impression of light striking Rouen Cathedral from different angles, distances, and times. In some works, Monet zoomed in on the concrete details of the church, such as the ornate porches or the elaborate tracery of the stained glass windows, while in others, his main idea was to show the building in its entirety, to reveal its towering glory. This composition adds depth and a sense of dimension to the series, making each painting a unique exploration to achieve visual magnificence.

This series of paintings also show that Monet's choice and application of color have reached a very mature stage. He employed a vibrant and bold palette, using rich tones to convey the changing atmospheric conditions observed during the painting process. Monet's use of color, from warm golden sunny tones to somber blue coolness, brilliantly captures the changing mood of Rouen Cathedral and its surroundings. At the same time, his loose brushstrokes add a sense of spontaneity and vitality to the paintings, further enhancing the visual impact of the work.

In addition to marking Monet's mature grasp of the core techniques of impressionist painting, the oil paintings of the Rouen Cathedral series laid the foundation for the large-frame oil paintings of the Water Lily series, which also showed that Monet used painting as the medium to convey the deeper emotion and symbolic significance behind the oil paintings of Rouen Cathedral series to the viewer. He does not just depict an architectural structure but also explores broader themes of spirituality, faith, and the passage of time. Rouen Cathedral, with its rich historical and religious connotations, is a metaphor for the permanence of human existence and the transience of life. Monet's paintings evoke people's meditation on eternity and the moment.

5. MONET'S PEAK WORK, A MASTERPIECE OF IMPRESSIONISM



Figure 4 Water Lily series

Monet once confessed to a studio visitor: "It took me a little while to get to know my water lilies. I started purely for the pleasure of the eye and never thought to record them with a paintbrush. However, the landscape gradually became ingrained in my bones. It was as if I had a sudden awakening and realized the beauty of the lily pond in front of me, so I picked up my palette and painted. From that moment on, I painted almost nothing new."

In 1899, Monet began a new series of paintings based on water lilies in his garden. In 1914, Monet began to create a series of large-scale decorative paintings based on this, taking the water lily series to an unprecedented level. He first created a large garden where he sketched outdoors, making sure he was surrounded by the garden when he painted, and then came up with a set of paintings in which the viewer could stand. He conceived a scale large enough to surround the viewer's line of sight, making it look like a lily pond. The almost abstract shadows of water and light reflect the changing colors of water lilies at different times of the day.

As for the abstract features of Monet's paintings in this period, it is worth mentioning here: Monet often went outdoors to paint. To capture the effects of stone cliffs in the rain and ice in the snow, Monet suffered from arthritis after standing in harsh weather for a long time. He also suffered from cataracts due to the intense ultraviolet radiation from observing things with his eyes for a long time. So Duke Edward, an acquaintance of Monet, recalled Monet's work on a large decorative series of water lilies: "The related colors were intertwined in a strange, floating ball of wool that only his eye could untangle."

In his later years, Monet's series of water lily pond paintings broke through the limitations of the existing frame and presented the superficial images of the pool in an almost abstract way, which was regarded as an important transition between Impressionism and abstract expressionism. His creative achievements in his later years had a far-reaching impact. Later generations of abstract expressionists, such as Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still, Jackson Pollock, and Sam Francis, whose inventive blocks of color, There is also a move away from figurative depictions, which can be seen in Monet's water lilies.

6. THE INTEGRATION OF MAN AND NATURE

Impressionist painter Monet once told the viewer, "For me, the scenery is only meaningful when it is constantly changing, and the ever-changing air and sunlight can reflect the beauty of the scenery in life." This unique artistic thought and form of expression no longer followed the norms of the time that emphasized the plot and theme as the main purpose of painting but moved the easel, walked out of the studio, integrated into nature, studied the subtle changes of light and color, and quickly captured the instant beauty created by objects in a specific environment and time. This innovation in the development of Western painting in history added a strong brush.

From the perspective of the artist's style, Monet loved nature very much. He was good at capturing the beauty of the moment in the light and color of nature and recording the scenery full of vitality and movement in a moment.

From the perspective of his physical deconstruction of the object of painting, his concept was quite different from that of the mainstream academy at that time. Compared with the clear composition of the academy which focused on lines and contours, Monet was more inclined to treat the object of painting as a flat color pattern and largely ignored the weight and volume of things. In Monet's eyes, all objects only appear in the form of color blocks, all objects exist only for color and light, and the rest can be ignored, this is one of his painting characteristics.

From the perspective of Monet's color concept, when we appreciate his paintings, we can find that most of his works give people a very bright feeling. This is because Monet is committed to the study of the environment and light changes in nature, breaking through the traditional tone of the brown painting, and using bright colors and brushstrokes to directly depict objects under the sun. In addition, Monet no longer relies on light and shade, and lines to form a sense of space in the picture, but based on the principle of light reflection, using cold and warm colors to show a sense of space, vivid scenery. Therefore, Monet's description of scenery breaks the limitation of "natural color" on objects and interprets the color language and style of "conditional color", which is a special embodiment of Monet's color art and fully demonstrates the dynamic beauty of things given by nature.

Monet is concerned with the integration of human beings and nature in the changing light. His artistic creation comes from his observation and capture of the surrounding environment, which is a reflection of the elements surrounding his life. His impressionistic painting technique lies not only in the use of brilliant colors but also in the depiction of landscape paintings that can reveal a wave of human warmth. It is not only a simple picture record but also rich in the painter's emotional colors and thoughts. There is always something comforting about looking at a Monet painting from the inside out as if the heart is beating with the rhythm of light.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST / KONFLIK KEPENTINGAN

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