

Impressionism: A World View

March 19 – July 10, 2022

A Guide to Looking

This guide offers a selection of works from the exhibition.

Look at the included artwork and then use the text to help build a deeper understanding of the artists, their process, and their works.



Introduction to Impressionism

Impressionism, the first distinctly modern movement in the history of painting, emerged in Paris in the 1860s. Its founding members include Monet, Renoir, Degas, Cézanne, and Pissarro. Their vastly new approach to painting rebelled against the tight realism popular in Paris in the mid to late 19th century. The movement officially began with the infamous *Salon des Refusés* ("exhibition of rejects") in 1863, comprised of over 800 paintings and sculptures rejected by the jury of the official Paris Salon.

In Europe, the revolutionary innovations of artists like Rubens, J.M.W. Turner, Courbet, and the Dutch Golden Age painter Frans Hals, laid the foundation for Impressionism. Their depictions of natural environments and scenes of everyday life, employed some of the same signature features we associate with the movement including prismatic colors and loose brushstrokes to capture the atmospheric qualities of their subjects. Members of the Barbizon school, which started in Paris, were drawn together by their passion for painting *en plein air* (outside) and their desire to elevate landscape painting from mere backgrounds. This group included artists Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot and Theodore Rousseau. In the United States, a group of American landscape painters, the Luminists, working in the mid 1800s, sought to portray the qualities of light observed in nature.

Today's warm embrace and enduring love of the movement of Impressionism stands in stark contrast to the initial reception and acceptance of what was, in the 19th century, a fundamental change to the medium of painting. The general public was mystified by what they saw, baffled by the paintings' lack of finish, bright colors and scenes of everyday subject matter. Critics shunned the work which they considered outrageous, unfinished, and unskilled. The term "Impressionism" comes from a review written by Parisian art critic M. Louis Leroy who after attending a group exhibition which included Monet's painting, *Impression – Sunrise*, referred to the show as "The Exhibition of the Impressionists" deriding the unfinished quality of the works on view. Despite the fact that Leroy had used the word satirically, the group decided to adopt it and painters such as Renoir and Degas were happy to be called "Impressionists."

Ending around 1886, Impressionism gave rise to a number of new art movements. The most renowned artist of the Post-Impressionism movement in France, Vincent Van Gogh is seen as a pioneer of 20th century Expressionism. His use of color, rough brushwork and primitivistic composition, anticipated Fauvism (1905) as well as German Expressionism (1905-13). Georges Seurat's exploration of the optics of color using tiny dots of various pure colors that become blended in the viewer's eye, gave way to Pointillism (1888). The gestural paint strokes of Monet's compositions from Giverny portrayed the waterlilies in his garden as refracted forms suggesting the play of light reflected on water, and moved the medium of painting towards abstraction.

"Impressionism became more than just a way of painting—it was a way of seeing that swept the world. Instead of attempting to depict the landscape itself, the Impressionists captured the 'envelope' of air between the eye and the motif, such as a cathedral or haystack, using a loose style of brushwork typified by the comma stroke and bright patches of pure color. In the hands of Renoir, Degas, Cézanne and others in the show, this profound new idea about the relationship between the painting and the world took on individual characteristics."

- Dr. Charles Riley, Exhibition Curator

The curatorial vision for *Impressionism: A World View*, is as the title suggests, an exploration of how the movement traveled across time and geography. Works included in the exhibition represent artists across the globe including France, the United States, Vietnam, Poland, Hungary, Russia, Poland, England, and Israel. While the artists most often associated with the movement are predominately male, this exhibition celebrates the immense contributions of twelve woman artists (both past and present) including two pioneers of the movement, Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot.

The exhibition also includes the work of contemporary artists who work in the style of Impressionism. In this postmodern era of art history, in which artists have the option to paint in any style they choose, three featured contemporary artists, Mark Innerst, Flora Yukhnovich and Yvonne Jacquette continue to work in this style, their artistic practice employing some of the same features of the pioneering artists of the movement.

Johan Barthold Jongkind (1819-1891)

Canal Scene in Holland, 1862, Oil on canvas, 16 5/8 x 21 15/16 inches, Hofstra University Museum of Art, Gift of The Arthur M. Sackler Foundation

Inspiration

Johan Barthold Jongkind was a Dutch painter and printmaker regarded as a forerunner of the Impressionism movement. In 1861 Jongkind rented a studio in Montparnasse, France where some of his paintings began to show glimpses of the Impressionist style to come. In 1862 he traveled to Normandy with some of his artist friends, including Alfred Sisley, Eugène Boudin, and the young Claude Monet, all to whom Jongkind served as a mentor.



In an Artist's Words

Claude Monet later referred to Jongkind as "...a quiet man with such a talent that is beyond words" and credited the "definitive education" of his own eye to the artist.

Take a Closer Look

Jongkind's most frequent subject was the marine landscape, which he painted both in the Netherlands and in France. Many of his works depict the Seine, particularly the area near Notre-Dame Cathedral. He painted watercolors out-of-doors, and used them as sketches for oil paintings made in his studio. His paintings are characterized by vigorous brushwork and strong contrasts. Like the 17th-century Dutch landscape painters of the Golden Age of Dutch painting, he typically composed his landscapes with a low horizon, allowing the sky to dominate.

Something to Talk About

The art movement of Impressionism influenced many artists around the world, a selection of whom are represented in the exhibition *Impressionism: A World View*. What may come as a surprise is that Claude Monet, often credited with being one of the founders of the movement, cited Jongkind as the artist who inspired his impressionist style. Inspiration can come from many places, people and experiences. Who in your life has encouraged or motivated you to seek new paths in your life?

Childe Hassam (1859-1935)

Italian Day, May 1918, 1918, Oil on canvas, 36 x 26 inches,
Courtesy of ArtBridges, Bentonville, Arkansas

Inspiration

Born to the family of an upper-middle-class merchant in Dorchester, Massachusetts, Hassam developed an interest in art at a young age. His father collected Americana, and one of Hassam's earliest memories was hiding in his father's antique carriage so he could paint undisturbed. His childhood talent was recognized by an aunt, who encouraged his artistic pursuits by introducing him to local artists. Hassam subsequently traveled to Paris, where he was uncommon among his American contemporaries in his attraction to French Impressionism, which was just starting to find favor among American collectors.

In the Artist's Words

"I painted the flag series after we went into the war. There was that Preparedness Day, and I looked up the avenue and saw these wonderful flags waving, and I painted the series of flag pictures after that."

Take a Closer Look

In 1916, Childe Hassam began a series of about 30 paintings depicting Manhattan's Fifth Avenue decorated with flags. The city frequently held parades in response to World War I, and the artist's studio on West 57th Street afforded him an opportunity to observe these festive displays. Hassam studied French impressionism in Paris during the 1880s, and was directly influenced by Claude Monet's depictions of Bastille Day. The pageantry recorded in *Italian Day, 1918* commemorated the third anniversary of the Italian declaration of war against Austria-Hungary in May 1915. American, Italian and Red Cross flags are painted side by side in Hassam's image, representing the cooperation of Allied forces. The vertical thrust of skyscrapers asserts America's formidable ambition and modernity. The biplane painted near the top edge of the composition might be a memorial to Emilio Resnati, a captain from the Italian Army, who died in an aeronautics accident a few days before Italy-American Day.

Something to Talk About

Hassam's depictions of a NYC parade sought to capture the spirit and soul of a time and place. What "place" inspires you? What are the qualities of that environment that you connect with?



Gallery Two

Hugó Poll (1867-1931)

Margaret Bridge, Budapest, 1914, Pastel on canvas 17 3/4 x 23 3/4 inches, Courtesy of Mark Murray Fine Paintings, New York

Inspiration

Born to a Jewish family in pre-war Pest (eastern Budapest), Hugó Poll was drawn to the tenants of Impressionism early in his career. The ideas emanating from France served as a beacon of modernity, offering an elixir to the staunch conservatism of Hungarian painting. He moved to Munich in 1886 to study painting at the private school of Simon Hollósy, later making his way to Paris to study at the world-famous Académie Julian. He returned to Budapest sometime after 1889, where he established a workshop and began creating pastel, plein-air studies of Lake Balaton and the village of Dömsöd.



In a Critic's Words

In 1907, Gerő Ödön, a journalist and art critic, said this of Hugó Poll's compositions: "In his pastels, light is carried and spread by the air. . . colors prevail, tones prevail, and local pigments resurface."

Take a Closer Look

This work belongs to a larger series of scenes from the Danube River that Poll created in pastels. Margaret Bridge (completed in 1876), spans the Danube, connecting Buda (western Budapest), Pest (eastern Budapest), and Margaret Island. It was designed by French engineer Ernest Goüin in the French Neo-Baroque style, which may have appealed to Poll's fascination with Parisian modalities. Here we see a view through one of the arches, with the Hungarian Parliament building (completed in 1904) visible on the eastern bank of the river. The artist was likely working from Margaret Island itself, looking southward as the sun set over the western portion of the city.

Something to Talk About

Hugó Poll created this composition in pastels, a medium consisting of pigments and binding agents compressed into sticks. The resulting colors are closer to natural dry pigments than any other medium. What do you think were some of the advantages and disadvantages of pastels in comparison to paint? How do you think Poll's use of pastel affected this composition?

Flora Yukhnovich (b. 1990)

Both Sides Now, 2018, Oil on linen, 63 x 59 1/10 inches, Private collection, New York, Courtesy of the Artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Inspiration

Flora Yukhnovich's work is distinctly art historical, filtering familiar concepts, forms, and styles through an entirely new, abstract lens. Quoting French and Italian Rococo, one can catch glimpses of François Boucher, Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. In *Both Sides Now*, we can see not only the color palette of Tiepolo, but also his use of cloud formations and figural groupings to construct cohesive, pyramidal compositions. Through this process, she invites the viewer to think on the formal qualities of paint, evoking the loose brushstrokes of the early Impressionists.



In the Artist's Words

"I always want people to have an 'a-ha' moment, where you recognise something, but you can't quite place it. A familiarity that offers you access to the work."

Take a Closer Look

Recognizable forms melt into bold patches of color, subverting our understanding of the body in space. A hint of an arm, a turned head, and a wing, compel us to look closer in an attempt to decipher the image, to make order out of chaos. There is a strong sense of foreground, midground, and background—a depth and recession—despite the fact that nothing is clearly defined or rendered. This push-pull effect creates a tension across the surface of the canvas, as elements jostle for prominence and position. It is equal parts frenetic and calm, with cascading, tumbling forms clashing with a rich, sugary palette.

Something to Talk About

Yukhnovich began her art career long after the Impressionist movement had taken hold of Europe (and the larger art world). With this in mind, what are some of the similarities between *Both Sides Now* and early Impressionist compositions? How does Yukhnovich fit into the larger conversation about what Impressionism is (or isn't)?

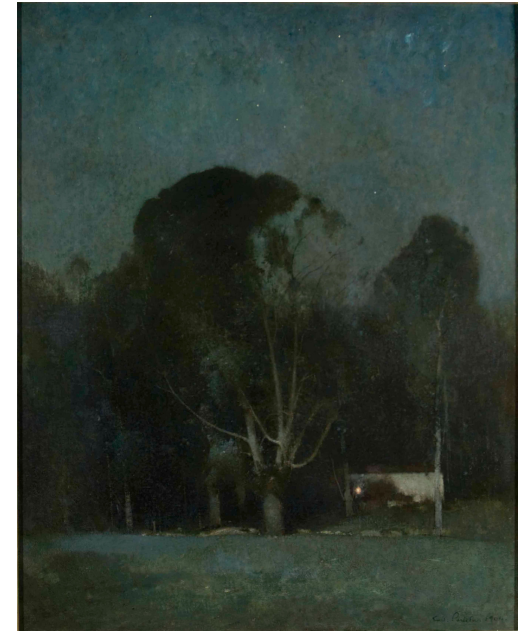
Gallery Three

Emil Carlsen (1853-1932)

Night, Old Windham, 1904, Oil on canvas 50 1/2 x 40 inches (Framed: 60 x 49 5/8 x 1 3/4 inches) Florence Griswold Museum, Gift of the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company (2002.1.25)

Inspiration

Emil Carlsen was an American Impressionist painter, best known for his still life painting. NCMA's piece, one of Carlsen's later landscapes, is a beautiful example of the artist's mastery of light, atmosphere, and mood. Exploring the effects of light and various forms of nature, Carlsen created land, sea and skiescapes inspired by his native country as well as the area surrounding his country home in New England, where, in addition to his Manhattan apartment, he lived with his wife and son. Carlsen's landscapes are often quiet and contemplative, just like the artist himself. Capturing the mood and atmosphere of a setting was just as important, if not more so, than the details of the setting itself. Carlsen enjoyed a very successful career as both an artist and a teacher, painting and working until his death in 1932.



In the Artist's Words

In an essay to his students, Carlsen mused, "The arrangement well spaced, the objects good in color and form, the background simple and neutral, the key chosen, and half the work is done." He found inspiration everywhere: "Beauty is ever present like the light of the sun-even in the most humble object, it only takes an artist's vision to detect it, and an artist's skill to reproduce it."

Take a Closer Look

Night, Old Windham exemplifies Carlsen's ability to depict night scenes using a subdued palette that simultaneously captures the softness of the moonlit evening air and the intensity of a single light shining from the home on the lower right of the canvas. Unlike the loose, rapidly applied brushstrokes of the French Impressionists, Carlsen's work is the result of careful, deliberate work, stroke by stroke.

Something to Talk About

Carlsen was a master at capturing the atmosphere of a particular moment. How does Carlsen use color and composition (the placement of objects) to achieve a specific mood and allow the viewer to experience this night scene through a variety of senses?

Jane Wilson (1924-2015)

Stop Light, 1966, Oil on canvas 44 x 50 inches, Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York and the Estate of Jane Wilson.

Inspiration

Jane Wilson began her career as a painter just as the Abstract Expressionist movement was taking hold of the American art world. In 1949 Wilson moved to Greenwich village and quickly became immersed in NYC's downtown art scene. Her career began to take off when her focus shifted from pure abstraction to expressionist landscapes that hovered between representation and abstraction. Wilson attributes her interest in landscapes to her deep relationship with the natural world as a child. Born and raised on a farm in Iowa,

Wilson was constantly aware of the vast space around her, always attuned to weather, and this appreciation was just as strong in her paintings of the sea near her cottage on the East End of Long Island, of the Great Plains from her youth, or the views of Thompson Square Park near East 10th Street where she lived in her early years in the city.



In the Artist's Words

"On a farm you're very aware of weather because so much of your life is dependent on it. And in a place like Iowa the weather can be so extreme you learn to feel the weather coming. The animals do it as well. Weather is not just visual, you can feel it with all your senses. That's what I'd like to get at in my painting—that full-body feeling. You sniff the weather, and a complicated rush of feelings runs through you."

Take a Closer Look

Stop Light achieves this sense of *full body feeling*. As in many of her works, the horizon is slightly off center and the light on this dreary, wet day is rendered with remarkable clarity while she provides less detail to the figures and forms.

Something to Talk About

While a clear depiction of a city corner, the true subject of Wilson's work is light, connecting her to the early Impressionist artists. How does Wilson use light to get across the feeling of a damp, dreary day? Talk about what Wilson pays great attention to and what she chooses to ignore.

Yvonne Jacquette (b. 1934)

Lawry Pond Basin, 1976 Oil on linen 60 x 44 inches Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York

Inspiration

Yvonne Jacquette charts airplanes to facilitate an elevated vantage point, and *Lawry Pond Basin* is one of the first major works resulting from this exploration. In doing so, Jacquette takes the concept of *en plein air* (a French expression meaning "outside," translating directly to "in full air") to a new level, bringing the viewer into the sky alongside her. Using a pointillist technique and palette, *Lawry Pond Basin* is reminiscent of the paintings of Maximilien Luce (featured in Gallery 2), reflecting a masterful study of light and color.

In the Artist's Words

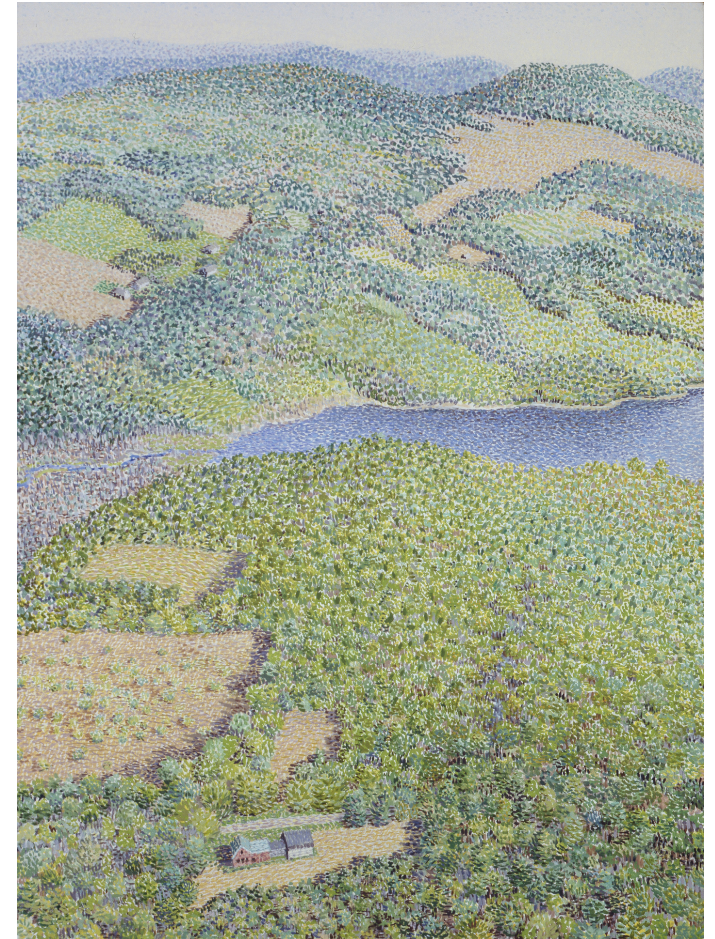
"I try to make the viewer have an experience where they can stay in the picture, make a place on the canvas that one could explore, go from one color to another, from one texture to another."

Take a Closer Look

With Jacquette's pointillist technique, we can almost decipher the handwriting of the artist, our eyes filling in the gaps between dashes and commas of color as though we're reading familiar prose. She employs atmospheric perspective to create a sense of recession, with tightly packed marks at the bottom slowly fading to evenly spaced lines at the top. Moreover, Jacquette provides the viewer with an angled bird's-eye view of the scene, rather than having us look straight down at the tops of the natural elements and man-made structures. In doing so, she's able to capture the experience of gazing at a landscape through an airplane window without providing any direct clues. This feeling of weightlessness is accompanied by the airy color palette and brushstrokes that seem to float above the surface of the linen.

Something to Talk About

If you could charter a plane to give you a bird's-eye view of any place in the world, where would you choose to go and why? How do you think this viewpoint would change your perception of that place?

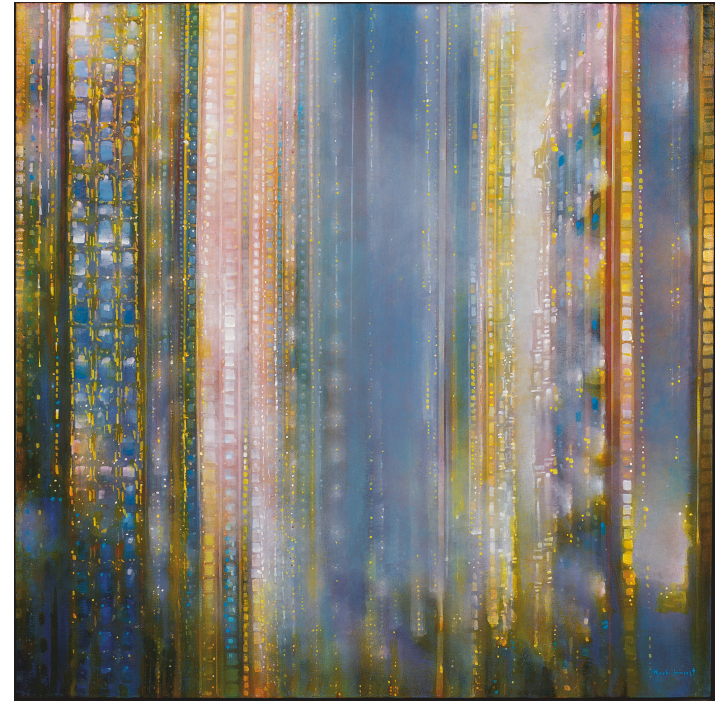


Mark Innerst (b. 1957)

Mirage, 2018, Oil on panel, 30 x 30 inches (Framed: 37 1/2 x 37 1/2 inches), Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York

Inspiration

Mark Innerst explores the urban landscape in all its beauty, complexity, and luminosity. His cities appear majestic, immense and serene, all at once. Human activity is reduced to blurs of light and movement while the buildings morph into skyward shooting lines or stacked, layered blocks of color. Innerst hovers between representation and abstraction and his commitment to exploring light, atmosphere and the impression of modern urban life connects him to the Impressionist movement that took hold of the European and American art world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



In the Artist's Words

"Over the years I've seen a pattern where my subjects, through repetition, evolve and become simplified and more abstract."

Take a Closer Look

Innerst is a formalist painter who loves the patterns of urban facades. He is framing the world he observes, but transforming what he sees into glowing fields of color. The perspective he offers the viewer coupled with the hints of architecture provides us with a city without end. Once referred to as "cascading liquid light," Innerst's cities are composed of wondrous buildings that tower above minimized streets. Vertical bands of color patterned with windows and doors dissolve into tiny, dazzling dots of hypnotic light. Innerst's emphasis on grand vistas, shadows, and light confirm that the artist's true subject matter is paint, and how light, shadow, and brushwork can define form.

Something to Talk About

Innerst follows in the footsteps of the Impressionist greats like Monet, Renoir and others, offering us impressions of a city and its surroundings. How would you describe Innerst's impression of the city? Does it match with your own, personal impression of the city? How so?

Thank You

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