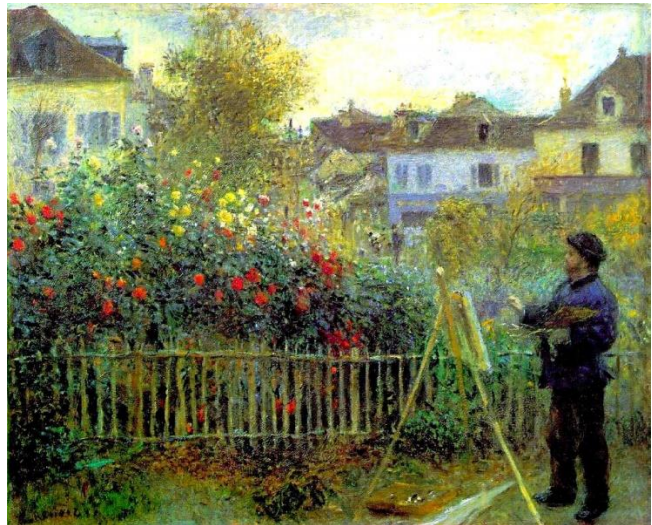

Art Masterpiece: *Claude Monet Painting In His Garden At Argenteuil, by Pierre-Auguste Renoir**

Keywords: Impressionism, *en plein air*

Grade(s): 5th and 6th

Activity: Impressionistic landscape sponge painting

**Other landscape paintings by Renoir, done in the Impressionism style, can be substituted.*



About the Artist:

- Pierre-Auguste Renoir was born in Limoges on February 25, 1841.
- As a child he worked in a porcelain factory in Paris, painting designs on china.
- When he was 17-years-old, Renoir copied paintings on fans, lamp shades, and blinds.
- Renoir studied painting formally in 1862-63 at the academy of the Swiss painter Charles Gabriel Gleyre in Paris.
- Renoir's early work was influenced by two French artists, Édouard Manet in his treatment of light, and the romantic painter Eugène Delacroix, in his treatment of color.
- Renoir first exhibited his paintings in Paris in 1864, but he did not gain recognition until 1874, at the first exhibition of painters of the new Impressionist school.

- One of the most famous of all Impressionist works is Renoir's *Le Bal au Moulin de la Galette*. It is an open-air scene of a café, in which his mastery in figure painting and in representing light is evident.
- During the last 20 years of his life Renoir was crippled by arthritis; unable to move his hands freely. Renoir continued to paint, however, by using a brush strapped to his arm. A prolific artist, he created several thousand paintings during his lifetime.
- Renoir died at Cagnes, a village in the south of France, on December 3, 1919, at the age of 78.

About Impressionism:

- Impressionism is a 19th-century art movement that originated with a group of Paris-based artists. Their style of painting received harsh opposition from the conventional art community in France. The name “Impressionism” comes from the title of a Claude Monet work, *Impression, Sunrise*, which provoked the critic Louis Leroy to coin the term. Leroy declared that Monet's painting was at most, a sketch, and could hardly be termed a finished work. “Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape.” In other words, *Impression, Sunrise* was more of an “impression” of a sunrise than an actual painting of one.
- Even though it was meant as a criticism, the term “impressionism” quickly gained favor with the public. It was also accepted by the artists themselves.
- The Impressionists' style can be broadly characterized as not having a lot of detail. If looked at up close, or only in part, the style may seem to be abstract. The edges of objects are softly defined and blurry. Specifically, Impressionism is characterized by loose, spontaneous brushstrokes, which are relatively small, thin, yet visible. There is an emphasis on accurate depiction of light in its changing qualities. Impressionists often painted outdoors (called *en plein air*), rather than an artist studio, so they could capture how the natural light changes with the passage of time. Impressionists painted ordinary (everyday) subject matter instead of more traditional (at the time) paintings of Christian religious scenes and people, or Greek and Roman mythological themes.

- Renoir was a French impressionist painter noted for his radiant, intimate paintings, particularly of women.
- Renoir's paintings are notable for their vibrant light and saturated color, most often focusing on people in intimate and candid compositions. In characteristic Impressionist style, Renoir suggested the details of a scene through freely brushed touches of color, so that his figures softly fuse with one another and their surroundings.
- In the late 1860s, through the practice of painting light and water en plein air (outdoors), he and his friend Claude Monet discovered that the color of shadows is not brown or black, but the reflected color of the objects surrounding them, an effect known today as diffuse reflection.

Activity: Impressionistic Landscape done with sponge and tempera paint

Materials Needed:

- White construction paper, 9" X 13," one per student.
- Sponges, cut into pieces.
- Tempera paints, all colors except black.
- Disposable plates or plastic palettes
- Paper towels

Preparation: Paint should be poured onto plates and arranged in sets, with the sponge pieces, prior to the lesson. (See step #4 below.) They can be prepared during the presentation, if there are a few adults to help out while one person is presenting.

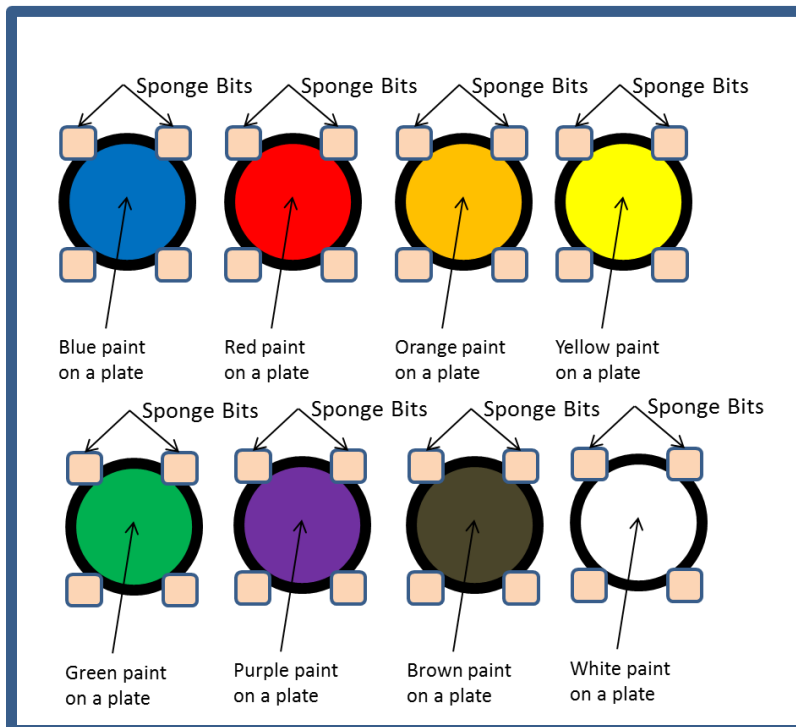
Process:

1. Explain that the students will be painting a landscape in an Impressionistic style. Some landscape ideas are: a desert, an ocean or beach, a lake or river, a forest, a jungle, or a mountain. Have students think for a moment about what their landscape will be.
2. Pass out paper and remind students to write their name on the back.
3. Students can lightly and *quickly* sketch a landscape. Remind them that they should not be sketching any small details because Impressionism is softly

defined. In other words, no individual leaves on trees, no eyeballs on birds, no individual petals on flowers. Don't let students have a lot of time to sketch as most of the project time should be on the painting process.

4. Students will work in small groups and share paints and sponge bits.
5. Each group of students will have a set of paint colors with three or four sponge pieces for each color. Don't include black since Renoir didn't use black but instead mixed several colors to create a dark hue.

How to set up paints and sponges that will be shared by a small group of students.



6. Students will use a bit of sponge to daub paint onto their landscape. This will help them paint in an Impressionistic style because they won't be able to capture tiny details with a sponge. There are multiple sponge bits for each color so when a student wants to use green; they pick up a sponge in the green paint. When they want to switch colors, they switch sponges. This should minimize colors getting mixed and muddled.
7. If students want to mix colors (such as adding white to lighten a color) remind them that Impressionistic artists would "mix" their colors on their canvases and not their palettes. So in this example, white would be daubed on the paper first, then the color on top of the white, and the effect should be that the color is lighter than it is right off of the plate.

8. If sponges get “muddied,” students can rinse off the accumulated color, squeeze out as much water as possible, then roll in a paper towel and squeeze again.
9. When paintings are finished, allow them to dry and then display.

Example:

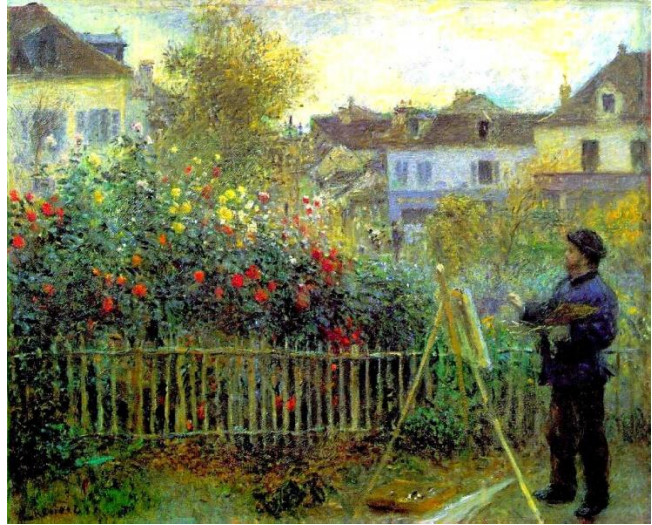


Parent Note:

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841 – 1919) was a French impressionist painter noted for his radiant, intimate paintings, particularly of women. In characteristic Impressionist style, Renoir suggested the details of a scene through freely brushed touches of color, so that his figures softly fuse with one another and their surroundings.

Today in Art Masterpiece, students painted a landscape in an Impressionistic style, using sponges and tempera paint.

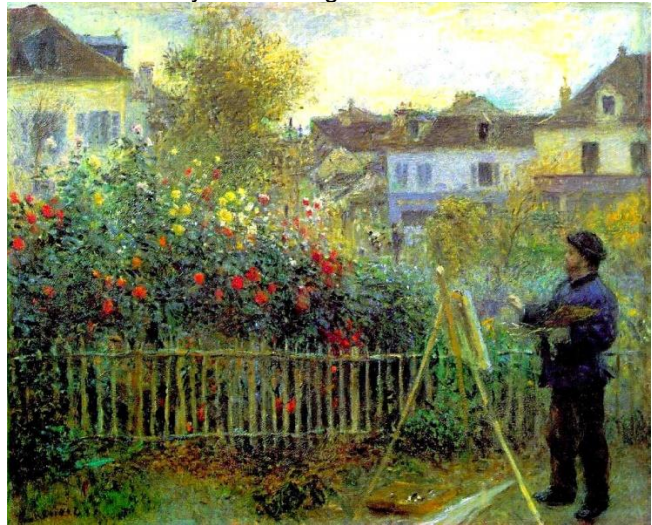
Claude Monet Painting In His Garden At Argenteuil
by Pierre-Auguste Renoir.



Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841 – 1919) was a French impressionist painter noted for his radiant, intimate paintings, particularly of women. In characteristic Impressionist style, Renoir suggested the details of a scene through freely brushed touches of color, so that his figures softly fuse with one another and their surroundings.

Today in Art Masterpiece, students painted a landscape in an Impressionistic style, using sponges and tempera paint.

Claude Monet Painting In His Garden At Argenteuil
by Pierre-Auguste Renoir.



“Messy Art” Note:

Our next Art Masterpiece lesson might be a little messy.
We will be using _____. Most art
media is “washable” but it still might leave a faint stain.
Please don’t send your child to school in new clothes on
this day: _____ at _____.
(date) *(time)*

Our next Art Masterpiece lesson might be a little messy.
We will be using _____. Most art
media is “washable” but it still might leave a faint stain.
Please don’t send your child to school in new clothes on
this day: _____ at _____.
(date) *(time)*

Our next Art Masterpiece lesson might be a little messy.
We will be using _____. Most art
media is “washable” but it still might leave a faint stain.
Please don’t send your child to school in new clothes on
this day: _____ at _____.
(date) *(time)*

Extra Help Needed Note:

We need extra hands!!

The next Art Masterpiece lesson could use some extra helping hands. If you can, please come and lend your hands on _____ at _____.
(date) (time)

Thanks so much!

We need extra hands!!

The next Art Masterpiece lesson could use some extra helping hands. If you can, please come and lend your hands on _____ at _____.
(date) (time)

Thanks so much!