Masterpiece: Flowering Arches, Giverny 1913
by Claude Monet

Overview of the Impressionism Art Movement:

Impressionism was a style of painting that became popular over 100 years ago mainly in France. Up to this point in the art world, artists painted people and scenery in a realistic manner. A famous 1872 painting by Claude Monet named “Impression: Sunrise” was the inspiration for the name given to this new form of painting: “Impressionism” by an art critic. Originally the term was meant as an insult, but Monet embraced the name. The art institutes of the day thought that the paintings

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Grade: 3rd

Activity:
“Trees on Water”
looked unfinished, or childlike.

Characteristics of Impressionist paintings include: visible brush strokes, open composition, light depicting the effects of the passage of time, ordinary subject matter, movement, and unusual visual angles. As a technique, impressionists used dabs of paint (often straight out of a paint tube) to recreate the impression they saw of the light and the effects the light had on color. Due to this, most Impressionistic artists painted in the “plein-air”, French for open air.

Meet the Artist:

- He was born in 1840 in Paris, France. His parents wanted him to grow up and work in their grocery store. He only wanted to paint, eventually going to art school.

- He was fascinated with what different light would do to colors. He noticed that the brighter the light, the more vibrant the color. He started to paint outdoors so that he could really see the vibrancy of the colors. At the time, artists exclusively painted indoors, in their studios.

- He married twice (his first wife died) and had several children.

- It took him until he was 50 to sell enough paintings to buy his first home. (Much of his life, he lived near
poverty. This house he bought was in Giverny (Zheevare-ney). It was there that he painted “Les Arceaux Fleuris” (Lays- Arko Flurees) in 1913.

He loved painting water, since light reflected off of it. He had a pond made and filled with water lilies in his back yard in Giverny.

He started going blind in 1908 due to cataracts. After having medication, he was able to regain much of his sight. Some of his most memorable paintings were at the end of his life, his water lily paintings. They actually started to border on abstract art. He died in 1926.

Possible Questions:

Is this painting realistic? Does it look real?

Do you like this kind of art? Why or why not?

Often, he painted the same thing over and over again. Why do you think he did that? (Different lighting, time of day, different seasons' colors)

What does the painting look like close up? Far away?

What time of day do you think it was painted?
Activity: “Trees on Water”

Materials needed:

9”x12” white construction paper, tempera paint, paper plates & cups for water, medium and large sized paintbrushes, mats for desks & art smocks.

Process:

1. Cover desks with mats and students with their art smock.

2. Provide each student with a piece of construction paper, medium and large paintbrush, and a paper plate.

3. Have a plate of paint (one plate for 2 students will work) with blue, green, yellow and brown paint. In the back have other color options such as pink, red, orange and white so students can add details as they wish.

4. Have students decide which season of trees they wish to paint and think about what colors they would use to reflect how trees would look in that season.

5. Have students follow along as you demonstrate: fold the construction paper in half along the 12” side (long side)

5. On the bottom half of the paper (the water), paint
with the blue watercolor. Note: remind students to not saturate their paper with watercolor as we need this to dry fairly quickly.

6. On the top half of paper (the sky), paint with whatever color they wish. Students can mix colors on an extra plate.

7. When both halves are fairly dry, use the brown tempera to paint the tree trunks.

8. Before the brown paint dries, fold the paper in half so the tree trunks make an image on the bottom (blue water) portion.

9. Open the paper and have students paint the leaves using a medium paint brush to dab the leaves on. Fold paper in half again to print leaves on bottom half.

10. Students can then use different colors to finish project depending on their season repeating the above steps.