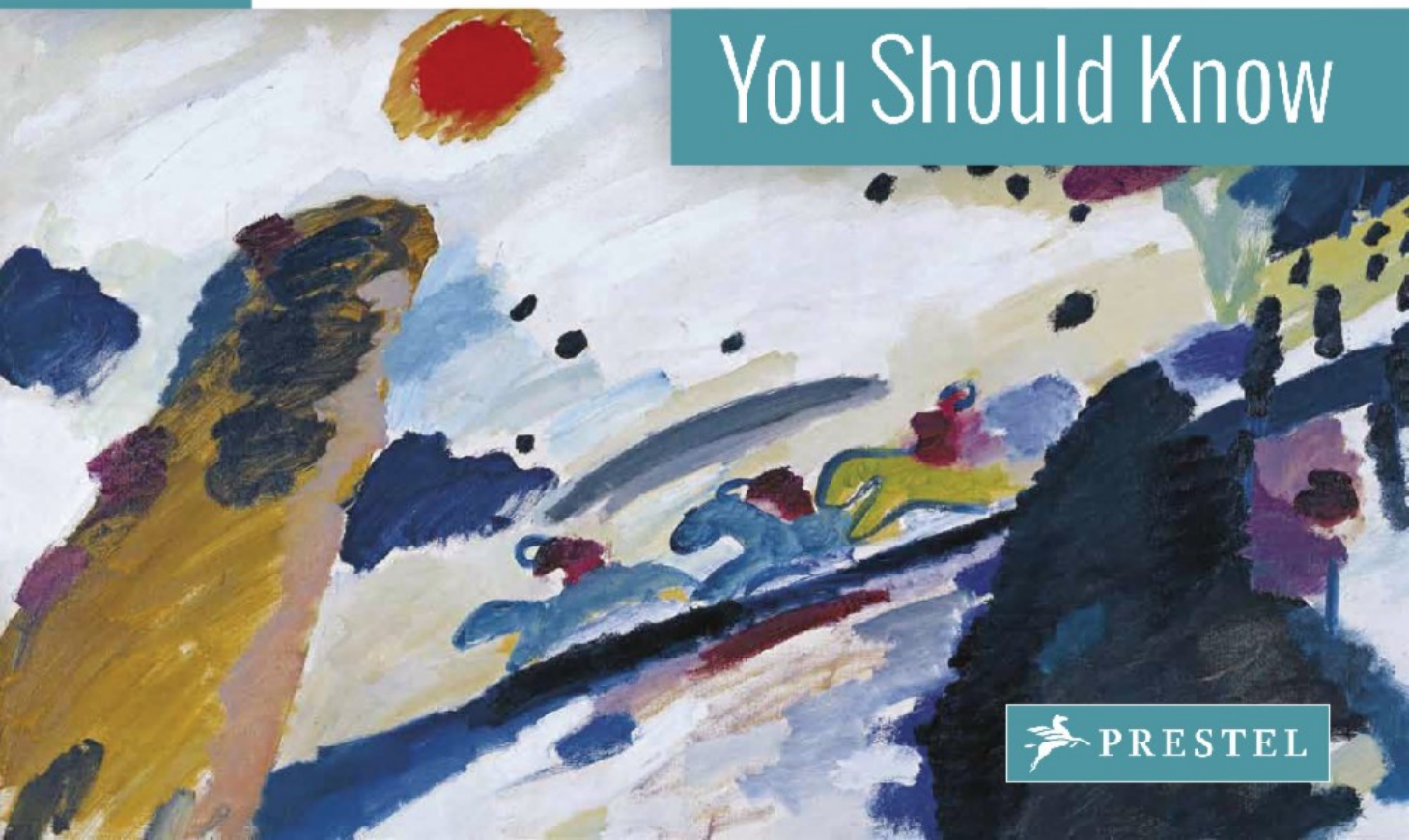


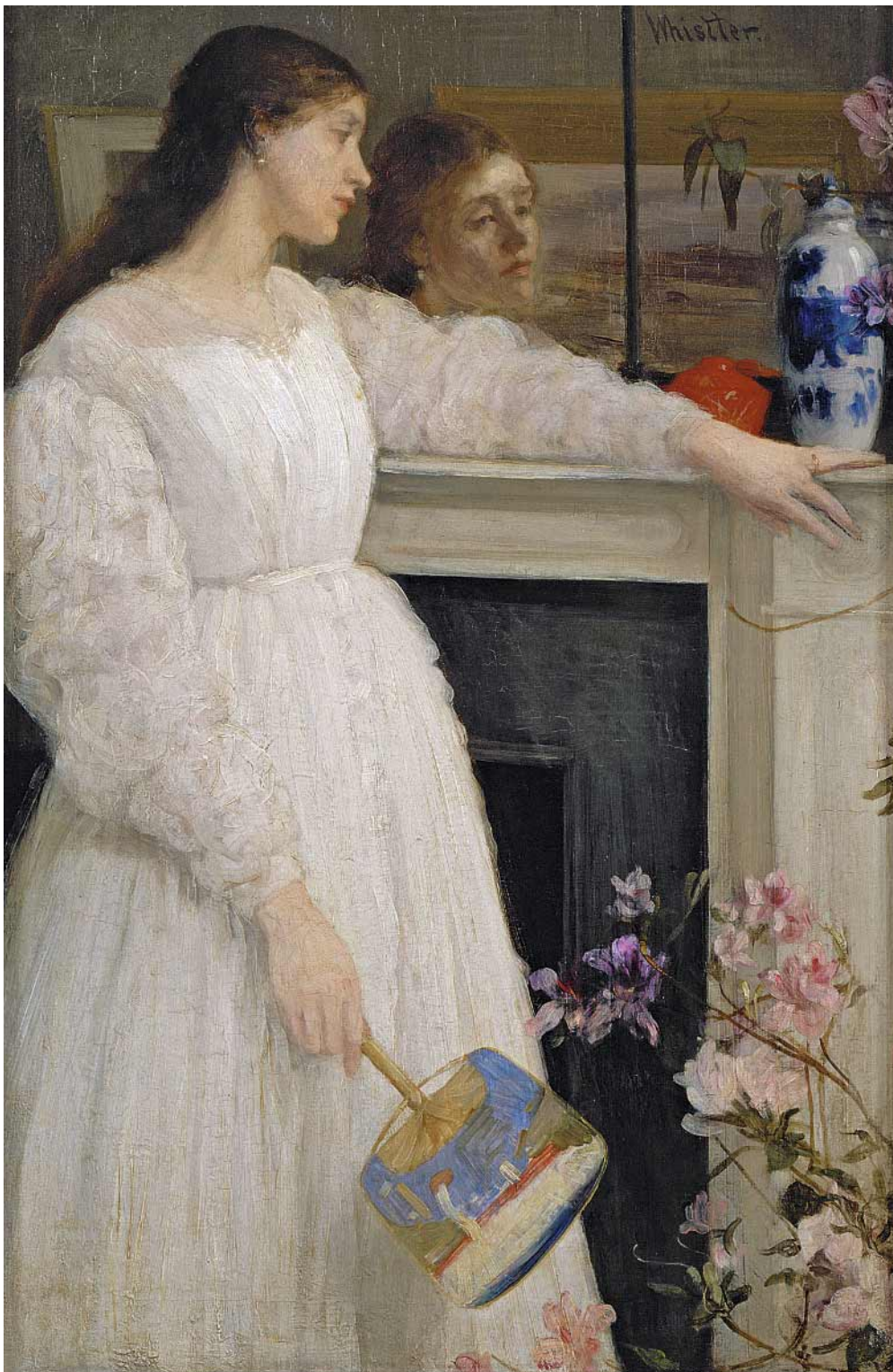


50 MODERN ARTISTS

You Should Know



 PRESTEL



Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl, 1884, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 51.1 cm, Tate Gallery, London

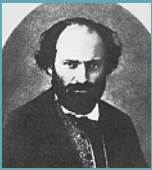


Nocturne in Blue and Gold: Old Battersea Bridge, 1872–77, oil on canvas, 68.3 x 51.1 cm, Tate Gallery, London

02

PAUL CÉZANNE

Paul Cézanne is considered the uncontested master of Post-Impressionism, and at the same time the crucial innovator to whom the Cubists, Fauves, and Expressionists owed the essential features of their art.



PAUL CÉZANNE

- 1839 Born on January 19 in Aix-en-Provence, France
- 1852 Makes friends with the future novelist Émile Zola
- 1861 Cézanne moves to Paris
- 1869 Meets his lover, Hortense Fiquet
- 1870 Lives in the fishing village of L'Estaque during the Franco-Prussian War
- 1872 Cézanne's son Paul born
- 1886 Breaks off contact with Émile Zola; marries Hortense in April
- 1895 Cézanne's first major exhibition held in Paris
- 1900 His pictures are also shown in Germany
- 1906 Dies on October 22 in his birthplace, Aix-en-Provence

After going to the lycée and art school in his hometown of Aix-en-Provence, in the south of France, Cézanne attended law school. He soon gave this up, however, to move to Paris in 1861 and enroll as a student at the Académie Suisse, an independent atelier that constituted an alternative to the official academy of art. His encounter there with Impressionists associated with Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, and Edgar Degas proved all-important. Cézanne changed his palette completely, and instead of the dark tones he had used to that point, he now experimented with light, brilliant colors. Unlike the Impressionist painters, however, he was not trying to record transitory visual moments, but rather to render the essence and permanence of visual phenomena. His application of paint was also less spontaneous than that of the Impressionists. Evolving a picture was much more of a persevering struggle for Cézanne, involving a decidedly time-consuming process.

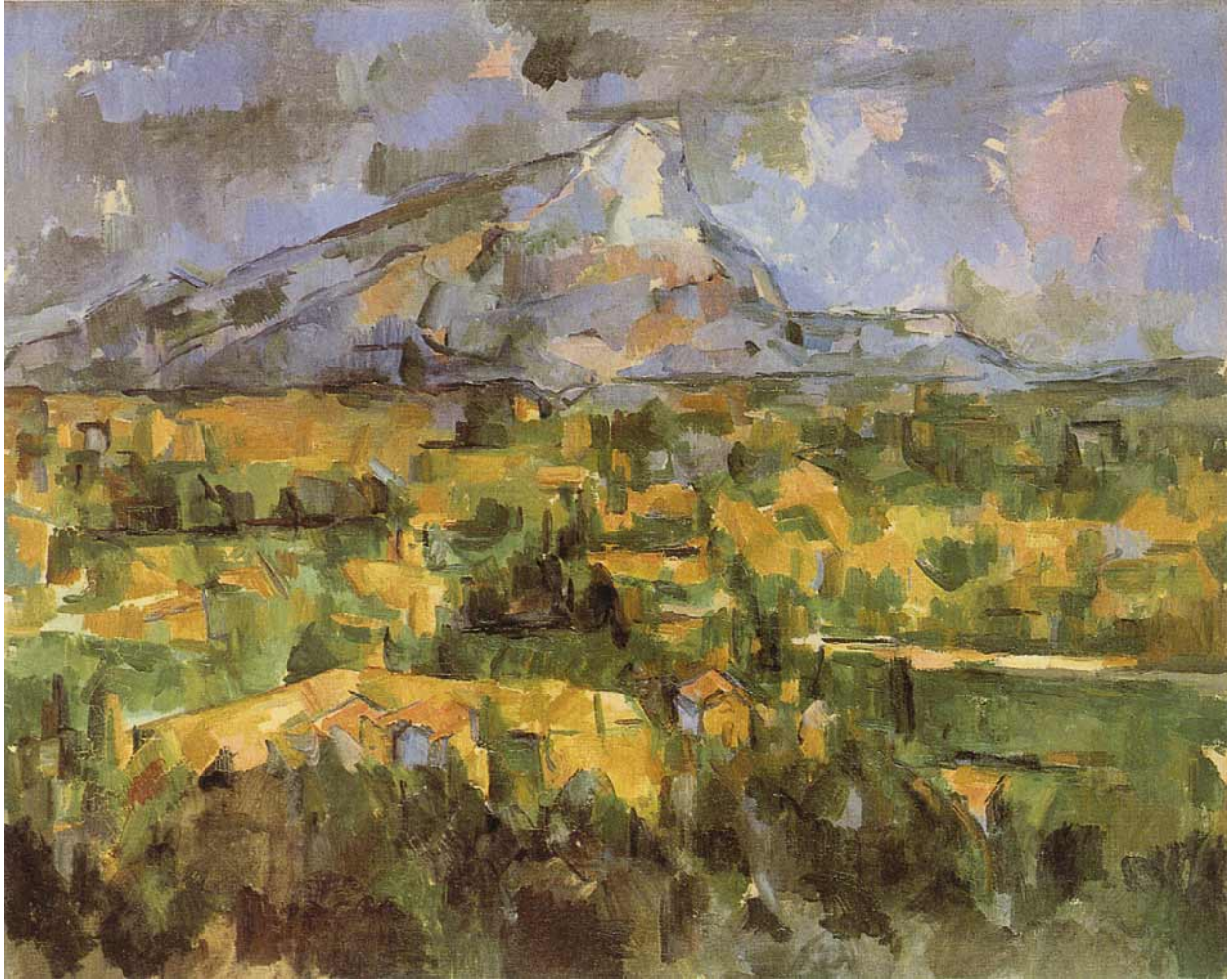
From the 1870s, Cézanne focused on landscapes and still lifes in which he sought to reduce visual objects to their basic geometric forms. In 1877, he abandoned Impressionist techniques in order to go his own way in the seclusion of Provence. Among his most famous subjects is Mont Sainte-Victoire, an impressive limestone ridge close to his hometown, which he painted directly from nature in drawings, oil paintings, and watercolors. Like his still lifes, the landscape paintings manifestly strive for a progressive simplification of elements, as Cézanne depicts houses as cubes, trees as cylinders, and the mountain as shapes layered on top of each other.

He produced the impression of depth not, as was customary, through lines and contours, but rather through the contrast between warm and cool colors. He defined objects with color, then gave them firm outlines.

Cézanne's painting *Les Grandes Baigneuses*, done shortly before his death, may be considered his intellectual legacy. The purely abstract approach adopted by artists later in the 20th century can already be discerned in the structure of facets and shapes in this work. For Cézanne, works of art were independent worlds of color and shape, "harmony parallel to nature"; he sought not to imitate his subjects but rather to represent them, so as to bring out their internal essence. This conviction would become an essential basis of modernism.



Hortense Fiquet in a Red Dress, 1888–90, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 89.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves, 1902–04, oil on canvas, 73 x 91.9 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The George W. Elkins Collection

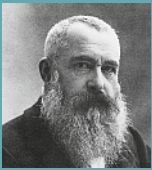


Still Life with a Curtain, 1895, oil on canvas, 55 x 74.5 cm, Hermitage, St. Petersburg

03

CLAUDE MONET

In his long artistic career, Claude Monet was an intermediary between tradition and modernism. While considered one of the main representatives of Impressionism, which he helped to establish, he also transcended the Impressionist style in his later work.



CLAUDE MONET

- 1840 Born on November 14 in Paris
- 1845 The Monet family moves to Le Havre
- 1856 Earns money with caricatures
- 1872 Paints river landscapes from his houseboat
- 1874 Monet's picture *Impression, Sunrise* features at the first Impressionist exhibition
- 1883 Rents a house in Giverny, where he lays out his famous garden
- 1897 Produces his first water-lily paintings in Giverny
- 1900 His eyesight declines increasingly through illness
- 1926 Dies on December 6 in Giverny

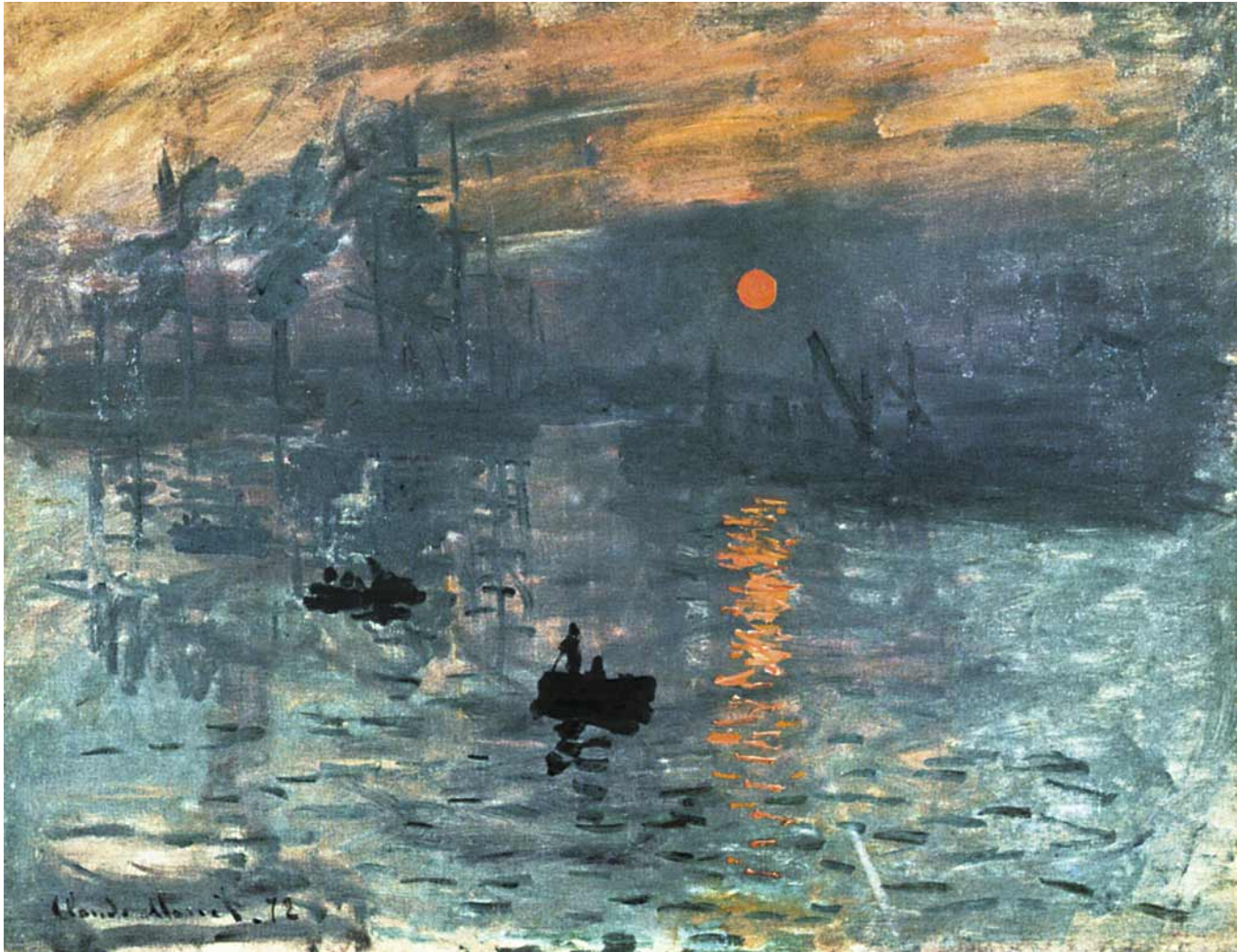
During the 19th century, it was repeatedly and emphatically asserted that artists could adequately render nature only by directly viewing it. But it was only the Impressionists, and in particular Monet, who managed to carry this through with conviction. Indeed, even during his training as a young artist in Le Havre (where he had grown up from 1845), in northwest France, and later in Paris, Monet was a champion of open-air painting. In this, he was united with Alfred Sisley, Auguste Renoir, and other like-minded artists who joined him for painting sessions in the forest of Fontainebleau, south of Paris. It was during this period (1865–66) that he created his famous painting *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

Monet's pursuit of a modern visual idiom in his early works resulted in Impressionism. In 1874, he showed his work *Impression, Sunrise* at the first group exhibition with his fellow artists. Critic Louis Leroy believed that "wallpapers at a very early stage [are] more finished than this seascape." (He also described all of the artists mockingly as "Impressionists," thereby giving the group its name.) The painting is an exemplary demonstration of the fundamental Impressionist principle of only aiming to render what is purely visible. In his view of the Seine estuary near Le Havre, Monet records not the objects themselves, but rather the impression he gets of them. He shows the port in a bluish haze so that ships and boats, cranes and chimneys can only be dimly perceived, just as they appeared at the moment of recording.

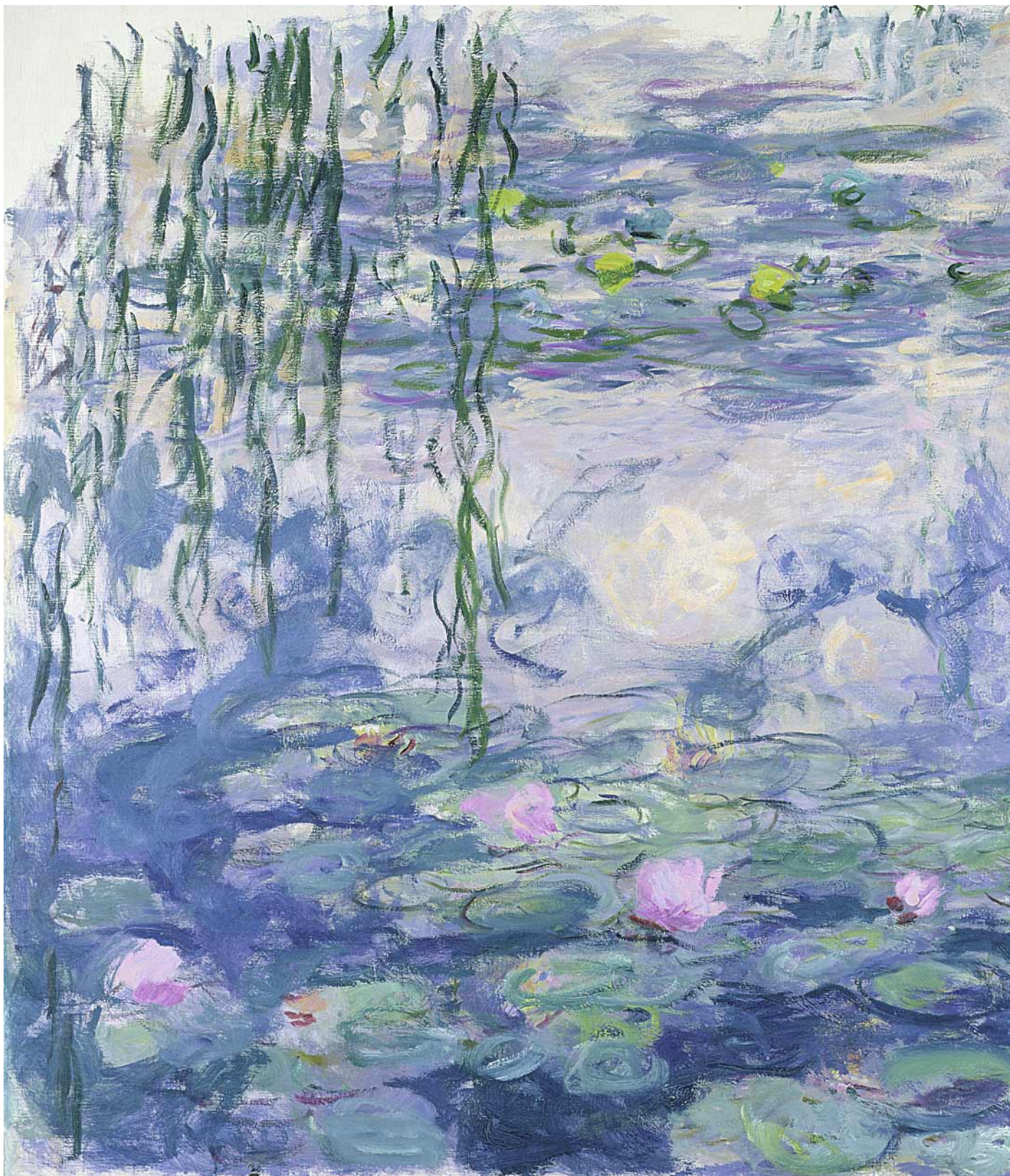
Monet was interested in light, color, and changing nature. From 1872 to 1878, he lived in Argenteuil-sur-Seine, where he did paintings of bridges and boats, views of town and country, and family scenes in the garden. Monet attributed an intrinsic importance to every object, and he selected the relevant shade of color without regard to the total effect of the work. He aimed to show how light changes colors and also influences the perception of reality.

Monet's efforts to do justice to the constantly changing impressions of reality led him to abandon Impressionist techniques from 1880. His light, bright paintings gave way to works in dark tones, often showing cliffs and coastal landscapes in extreme weather conditions. After the painter had settled in the small village of Giverny, near Paris, in 1883, he began to work on series involving a single subject at different times of day—haystacks, poplars, or Rouen Cathedral.

In the garden of his estate in Giverny, Monet also found the subject matter—water lilies—that would represent the greater part of his late work. As his eyesight steadily deteriorated, he often worked on canvases up to 6 meters wide, creating a radical rendering of what he saw in terms of pure surface. These landscapes lack a horizon and are devoid of an explicit outline or perspective, relaying a peaceful, ideal world. These works were long neglected by critics and other artists; it was only in the 1950s that they were rediscovered.



Impression, Sunrise, 1872, oil on canvas, 49.5 x 65 cm, Musée Marmottan, Paris





Water Lilies, 1916–19, oil on canvas, 150 x 197 cm, Musée Marmottan, Paris

04

AUGUSTE RODIN

Auguste Rodin is considered the most important representative of sculpture in the late 19th century. His concept of sculpture had considerable influence on the development of art in the 20th century, and can be compared with the advances his contemporaries Vincent van Gogh and Paul Cézanne achieved for painting.



AUGUSTE RODIN

- 1840 Born on November 12 in Paris
- 1854–57 Attends the state-run school of arts and crafts, the Petite École, in Paris
- 1862 After the death of his older sister, Maria, joins a Christian order for a few years and turns away from art
- 1866 Has a son with lifelong companion Rose Beuret
- 1875 First entry accepted into the Paris Salon: *Man with the Broken Nose*
- 1880 Receives his first major state commission for *The Gates of Hell*
- 1893 *The Kiss* brought to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago and rejected for being too erotic for public display
- 1917 Dies on November 18 in Meudon, France

When Rodin was commissioned in 1880 by the French state to design the monumental doorway for the future Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, he could not foresee the magnitude of the job.

The Gates of Hell, inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, would keep him busy for nearly 37 years. By his death, he had completed nearly 200 individual figures, yet still the job remained unfinished. Rodin succeeded in transferring Dante's depiction of the journey through the realms of the hereafter—Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise—into a fresco of human passions and emotions, thereby expanding the traditional concept of sculpture in a revolutionary fashion.

The Gates of Hell was an inexhaustible source of new ideas and works for its creator. Rodin created some of the figures as independent works, such as the sculpture *The Thinker*, representing the poet Dante. The cast of this figure was the first work by the artist to be erected in a public place—in front of the Pantheon in Paris, in 1906. Rodin was the first sculptor to deliberately produce fragmentary works, treating the torso as an autonomous form and elevating the incomplete to an artistic principle. In leaving the surface in various stages of modeling, he managed to create an impression of potential movement. *The Kiss*, one of the best-known creations by the French sculptor and an icon of fervent love between man and woman, also comes from the monumental work for *The Gates of Hell*.

The Burghers of Calais was another important monumental work by Rodin, which he began in 1884 and took many years to complete. It was to be a tribute to a group of citizens who, in 1347, had handed themselves over to Edward III to persuade him to abandon the siege of Calais. The composition emphasizes the individuality of the hostages, each of whom handles the situation quite differently. Rodin wanted to avoid the classic memorial setup and envisaged the work as devoid of a plinth, which triggered a lengthy controversy. It was an idea that anticipated fundamental changes in sculpture from the 1960s onward.

Though his studio in Meudon, near Paris, was fast taking on almost factory-like proportions—with more than 50 casters, masons, and marble workers making sculptures—the master also had time for works on paper, which he considered an autonomous part of his output. After his death in 1917, Rodin left numerous erotic sketches of female figures. Executing them using various drawing techniques, in these works he sought to capture the passing moment with dynamic lines and fluid colors.



The Burghers of Calais, 1889, gypsum, 231.5 x 248 x 200 cm, Musée Rodin, Paris