

### Reviews of the first “Impressionist” exhibition in 1874

In all justice, in approaching the exhibition on the boulevard des Capucines, one should divide it into two parts: one which cannot be too highly encouraged, the other against which one cannot react too strongly; the first which has every right to our praise, the second which should be very vigorously rejected; the latter despicable, the former worthy of great interest. ...This school does away with two things: line, without which it is impossible to reproduce any form, animate or inanimate, and colour, which gives the form the appearance of reality.”

- Review of the first exhibition of what was here called “The School of Impressionism,” written by Emile Cardon, La Presse, 29 April 1874.

Persecuted, hounded, shunned, banned by official art, the alleged anarchists formed a group. Durand-Ruel, who is untroubled by administrative prejudices, put one of his rooms at their disposal and for the first time the public was able to judge for itself the tendencies of those who, for some reason, were being referred to as the “Japanese” of painting. ....a collective force within our disintegrating age is their determination not to aim for perfection, but to be satisfied with a certain general aspect. Once the impression is captured, they declare their role finished. The term Japanese, which was given them first, made no sense. If one wishes to characterize and explain them with a single word, then one would have to coin the word impressionists. They are impressionists in that they do not render a landscape, but the sensation produced by the landscape. The word itself has passed into their language: in the catalogue the Sunrise by Monet is called not landscape, but impression. Thus they take leave of reality and enter the realms of idealism.

- Review by Jules Castagnary, Le Siecle, 29 April 1874

'Impression - I was certain of it. I was just telling myself that, since I was impressed, there had to be some impression in it . . . and what freedom, what ease of workmanship! Wallpaper in its embryonic state is more finished than that seascape.'

- Louis Leroy, Le Charivari, 25 April 1874

## SERIALISM AND SEMIOSIS:

### Lecture 9: Serial Impressions (Print and Eye)

- I. Negotiating “Impressionism” as an alternate vision
  - A. Review:
    1. Edgar Degas – the modern classicist, yet carrying on Manet’s psychologism
    2. Claude Monet – sensing apparatus, and man of propriety (“nothing but an eye, but what an eye!”\*)
    3. Both “branches” haunted by photography – ally in modernity, anxiety-provoking threat
  - B. Theorizing a split in Impressionist modes:
    1. Phenomenological (Monet) versus
    2. Psychological (Manet → Degas)
  - C. Other players: Gustave Caillebotte, Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt, Eugene Boudin – and the “father” of the group, Manet – followed by (Post-Impressionist) adherent who goes too far, Seurat.
  - D. The first exhibition of the “disciples of M. Manet....” in the photographer Nadar’s studio April 15, 1874 (See handout for contemporary press coverage)
- II. The sense of the Series
  - A. Photography and printing as reproductive concepts
  - B. Registration of *petits sensations*, minute sensations, on the well-tuned apparatus at a precise moment in the flux of experience and duration (Bergson ↔ Monet)
  - C. Production of slight variants, “unique objects,” in artisanal-industrial mode
- III. “Le High Life:” graphic art and the “painting” of *la vie moderne*
  - A. The market: Boudin’s wish that “these people who leave their offices and cubbyholes” should have a right “to be fixed upon canvas, to be brought to our attention...,” Manet, “What I want today is to make money...” and the visual market of the street
  - B. The audience: educated and prepared (like the artist) for a visual vocabulary of radical juxtapositions, partial views, fragmented perspectives.
  - C. The artworks: foregrounding the *sensibilité* of the producer / inventor? Or capturing the gaze with a two-second “icon” (the poster)?
- IV. The poster – putting the “Post” in Post-Impressionism?
  - A. Jules Chéret – from narrative (1870s) to iconic (1890s)
  - B. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and the theatrical demi-monde

\*“*Monet ce n'est qu'un oeil... Mais, bon Dieu, quel oeil !*” – comment attributed to Post-impressionist painter Paul Cézanne

See verso for images

## MIT 4.602, Modern Art and Mass Culture (HASS-CI)

### Images (selected) for **Lecture 9**

recall: Niepce, "sun-drawing" (heliograph of reproduction of a 17th century flemish engraving)

Monet, Terrace at Sainte-Adresse, 1867

} Phenomenological Impressionism?

Degas, Place de la Concorde 1875

} Psychological Impressionism?

Monet, Lady in the Garden, 1867

Monet, Dejeuner sur l'herbe, 1865-6 (and studies)

[compare: Courbet, Ladies by the Seine, 1856-57 and Manet, Dejeuner sur l'herbe, 1863]

Monet, La Grenouillère, 1869

Renoir, La Grenouillère, 1869

Monet, Impression, Sunrise 1872-73 (**gave the movement its name in 1<sup>st</sup> exhibition 1874**)

Daumier, Nadar Raising Photography to the level of Art, *Charivari*, 22 May 1862

Renoir, Ball at the Moulin Galette, Montmartre, 1876

Caillebotte, Le Pont de l'Europe, 1876-77 (and variant from same years)

Caillebotte, Rue de Paris, temps de pluie or Paris, Rainy Day, 1877

Monet, Haystacks 1891 (different positions, times of day)

Monet, Rouen Cathedral, 1894 (Dawn, Noon, Sunset, etc.)

Monet, Waterloo Bridge, 1900 ("Weather") and 1903 ("Sunlight Effect")

| Monet's series

Monet, Waterlilies/ Nymphs, 1905-1907 (series, through the end of his life)

Manet, Bar at the Folies-Bergère, 1882

Seurat, Bathers at Asnières, 1884

Pissarro, Factory on the Oise; 1873

Pissarro, portrait of Cézanne, 1874

reprise: image d'Epinal (the wandering Jew)

Manet, Chats, lithograph advertising Champfleury book, 1868

Cheret, poster for the Folies Bergère, Lithograph, 1875

Cheret, L'Etenard Français: Bicyclettes... Lithograph, 1891

Toulouse-Lautrec, Jane Avril oil study, then lithograph, 1893

Toulouse-Lautrec, Medical Inspection, rue Moulins, oil 1894

Toulouse-Lautrec, Englishman at Moulin Rouge, oil study and lithograph, 1892

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