ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

Monet, Manet, and Pissarro: Collaborative Forces Behind the Birth of Impressionism

Joon Seok Sean Lee[1]

[1]Blair Academy

Publication Date: 2025/09/04

Abstract: This essay examines how Impressionism became a collective endeavor due to the interaction between Claude Monet, Édouard Manet, and Camille Pissarro. Although the emblem of Impressionism is believed to be Monet, this essay argues that its existence and survival were dependent on a greater group of artists whose discussion and experimentation were to reshape modern art. In the context of nineteenth-century industrialism and social change, the essay stresses how technologies such as easels and paint tubes permitted plein air painting and focused on light, air, and contemporary subjects. Monet's experimentation with color and perception, Manet's difficult modern realism, and Pissarro's discreet leadership and open-ended themes reveal contrasting yet complementary styles. By comparing their works, this study shows that Impressionism was not the result of a stroke of genius but a product of ongoing artistic sharing, with lasting effects on education about how innovation emerges from co-laboration.

How to Cite: Joon Seok Sean Lee (2025) Monet, Manet, and Pissarro: Collaborative Forces Behind the Birth of Impressionism. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(8), 2140-2148. https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of impressionism during the late nineteenth century marked a decisive break from the academic traditions that had dominated European art for centuries. The movement reflected both optimism and instability of modern life. Traditional salons favored historical, mythological, and biblical subjects executed with realism; however, Impressionist painters sought to depict the immediacy of lived experience—fleeting light, movement, and everyday subjects. This shift became possible by technical innovations – portable easels, paint in tubes, and synthetic pigments – allowing artists to have greater freedom to paint en plein air and experiment with color.

While the works of Claude Monet, Édouard Manet, and Camille Pissarro are often grouped under the broad label of Impressionism, each artist approached the movement with their own unique method. Scholarships frequently emphasize Monet as the face of Impressionism, sometimes overshadowing the roles of Manet and Pissarro in shaping the movement's aesthetics and sustaining its cohesion.

Therefore, there remains a need to examine how the interplay between these three figures – through stylistic exchange, collaboration, and ideological differences – formed the core identity of Impressionism and set the stage for modern art.

By comparing Monet, Manet, and Pissarro within the context of Impressionism, this study illuminates the multi-aspect of the movement, showing that its success was not the result of a single figure but of a dynamic interaction of artists.

Understanding the complementary roles of these three painters not only deepens our appreciation of Impressionism as a collaborative movement but also highlights the ways in which artistic innovation emerges through dialogue and exchange. This approach underscores the continuing relevance of Impressionist values—experimentation, immediacy, and the democratization of subject matter—in contemporary art.

II. CLAUDE MONET

Claude Monet (1840–1926) was a pioneering French painter and the leading figure of the Impressionist movement. Born in Paris but raised in Le Havre, Normandy, he demonstrated artistic talent early in life, particularly in drawing caricatures. His early artistic education was shaped by painters like Eugène Boudin, who introduced him to plein air painting, and Johan Barthold Jongkind, who influenced his understanding of color and light. These formative experiences, combined with his exposure to the works of J.M.W. Turner and John Constable during his time in London, played a crucial role in shaping his unique approach to painting.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

Monet's career developed against the backdrop of 19th-century France, a period marked by rapid industrialization, political upheavals, and advancements in science and technology. The Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) forced him to flee to London, where he encountered Turner's atmospheric landscapes, further reinforcing his interest in capturing transient light effects. The rise of the bourgeoisie also transformed the art world, shifting demand toward contemporary subjects rather than traditional historical or religious themes. Technological advances, such as the invention of paint in tubes, allowed Monet and his fellow Impressionists to work outdoors with greater ease, a practice that became central to their artistic philosophy. By the 1870s, Monet had fully embraced the principles of Impressionism, a movement that sought to depict the fleeting effects of light, movement, and atmosphere. His groundbreaking painting Impression, Sunrise (1872) gave the movement its name and established its core aesthetic principles. Unlike academic painters who sought precise detail and smooth finishes, Monet used quick, loose brushstrokes and vibrant colors to convey the sensation of a moment rather than a fixed reality. Over the following decades, he painted modern life with unparalleled energy, capturing bustling Parisian streets, serene countryside scenes, and shimmering reflections on water. Key works from this period, such as La Grenouillère (1869), Boulevard des Capucines (1873), and Women in the Garden (1866), demonstrated his fascination with light and atmosphere.

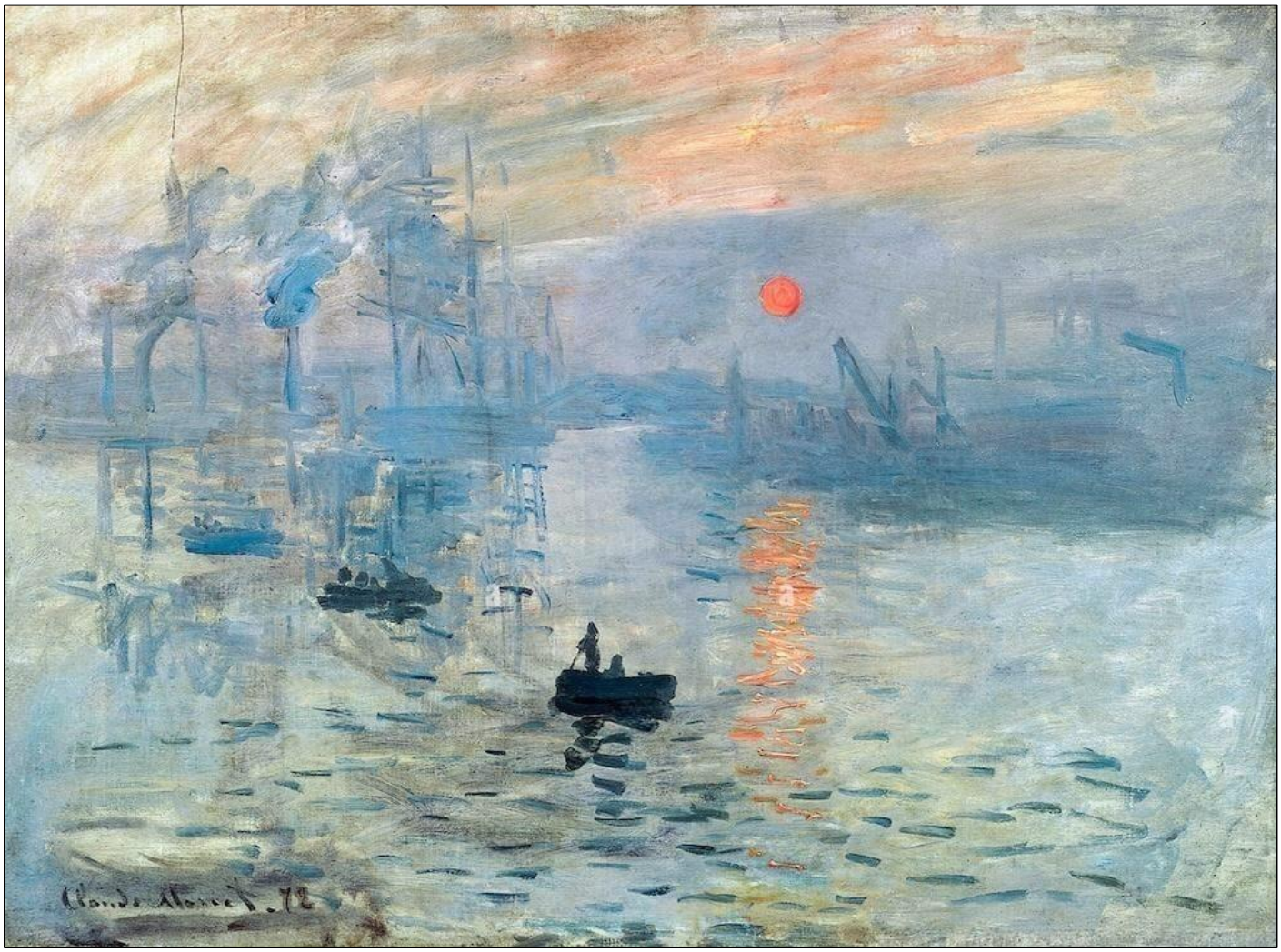

Fig 1 (Sunrise)

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

Fig 2 (Women in Garden)

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

Fig 3 (Boulesvard Des Capucines)

As Monet's career progressed, he became increasingly interested in exploring how different lighting conditions transformed a single subject. This led to his famous series of paintings, in which he depicted haystacks, poplars, and the facade of Rouen Cathedral under varying weather and times of day. These series, painted throughout the 1890s, showcased his ability to turn ordinary subjects into profound studies of color and perception. In 1890, he settled in Giverny, where he designed a Japanese-inspired water garden that would become the central focus of his later works.

Monet's Water Lilies series, created between 1895 and his death in 1926, marked a radical shift toward abstraction. His obsession with the interplay of water, light, and reflections led him to create large-scale compositions that abandoned traditional perspective, immersing the viewer in a nearly limitless space of color and form. His later paintings, such as Nymphéas (1919–1926) and The Orangerie Murals (1914–1926), were initially misunderstood but later recognized as precursors to modern abstract art. By focusing purely on visual sensation, Monet's work laid the groundwork for Abstract Expressionists like Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko, who admired his approach to color and immersive compositions.

Despite facing skepticism from critics and even younger artists toward the end of his life, Monet's contributions to art remained undeniable. His work redefined painting by shifting the focus from storytelling to pure visual experience, fundamentally altering how artists approached composition, light, and perception. His relentless pursuit of capturing fleeting

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

moments and his constant experimentation with technique ensured that his influence extended far beyond Impressionism. Today, his paintings are celebrated worldwide as masterpieces that not only defined a movement but also reshaped the course of modern art.

III. EDOUARD MANET

Edouard Manet was one of the French painters who led the Impressionist movement. With Claude Monet he did a lot of work to transition from Realism to Impressionism. Two of the most famous paintings are *Luncheon on the Grass* and *Olympia*. Manet was associated with a lot of impressionists and maintained a more structured and refined technique, which later made him a key bridge to connect the traditional art world and the avant-garde.

Manet's early works shocked critics and audiences. When paintings such as *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) and *Olympia* (1865) were revealed, they met harsh criticism. It was not just for their content, but for their bold stylistic choices. In *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, for instance, Manet portrayed a nude woman casually sitting among fully dressed men in a modern setting. This took away the notion of mythological and allegorical justification. The flatness of his figures – expressed in abrupt lighting and disregard for traditional perspective – created a visual tension that many found unsettling. Yet these qualities marked a radical departure from the academic ideal of illusionistic realism.

In "Manet, Effects of Black," Claude Imbert argues that Manet's radical use of black redefined the foundations of modern painting by transforming it from a mere color into a visual force of intensity. Instead of using black as a traditional color, Manet used it to manipulate texture, light absorption, and surface dynamics. This created a visual language more aligned with photography than with classical representation. This innovation marked a departure from the "Aristotelian or Kantian ideals of beauty and narrative", shifting painting toward the configuration of desire and perceptual impact (Imbert, 187). Works like Olympia, Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe, and Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère exemplify how black, grey, and white tones became compositional colors that emphasized mood, texture, and presence. Many critics and contemporaries initially misunderstood or condemned his black as obscene or bizarre. However, figures like Baudelaire or Pissarro came to recognize black as the seal of modernity. Through his focus on the surface – for instance, velvets, silks, wools, and the everyday garments of modern life – Manet endowed painting with a new cognitive and analytical power, breaking from the theatrical traditions of Delacroix or the melancholic realism of Courbet. Therefore, he opened a space for painting to explore fleeting impressions, visual memory, and modern existence, turning black into a generator of light, emotion, and meaning.

Manet's art blended classical reference with modern life. It often reinterprets themes from the Old Masters, but places them within contemporary Parisian society. His colors were brighter than those of his predecessors, and most critics of that time claimed that the brushstroke Manet emphasized was unfinished. However, this technique profoundly influenced the younger generation of artists who later became the leaders of the Impressionist movement.

Manet never exhibited with other Impressionists in their independent shows. He was rather closely associated with key figures like Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Berthe Morisot. Thus, his studio became a gathering place for avant-garde artists, encouraging them to paint the world around them with intensity and honesty. While the Impressionists focused on capturing light, fleeting moments, and outdoor scenes, it was Manet who broke the first barriers to take art out of the past and into the present.

Manet's influence on Impressionism lies not just in style but in his philosophy for creating his work. He validated the idea that modern life was a worthy subject for high art. He redefined what and how it could be painted. Refusing to idealize his subjects and by foregrounding the act of painting, he paved the way for impressionists to explore new perceptions of light, color, and time.

Edouard Manet was more than a painter. As a catalyst for impressionism, his works stand at the threshold between tradition and innovation, and his daring spirit helped create one of the most transformative movements in Western art. Today, he is celebrated not only as a master of impressionism but also as an artist who made the movement possible.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

Fig 4 Edouard Manet, The Races at Longchamp, 1866

IV. CAMILLE PASSARRO

Camille Pissarro produced a wide range of works throughout his career, including rural landscapes, urban scenes, and studies of peasants and workers. His paintings of Louveciennes, Pontoise, and later the Paris boulevards reflect his dedication to capturing both the natural world and the evolving modern city. Pissarro viewed drawing as an essential practice rather than merely preparatory, producing a large body of monotypes, etchings, and sketches that emphasized immediacy and honesty in observation. Even during his exile in London, he continued to paint actively, depicting the suburban areas of Upper Norwood and exploring the effects of light and weather. Throughout his life, Pissarro's commitment to consistent, disciplined daily work led to an output that was uneven in quality but always rooted in a sincere engagement with his subjects.

Pissarro made significant contributions to the development of Impressionism. As the only artist to exhibit in all eight Impressionist exhibitions, he played a central role in shaping the movement's identity and ensuring its continuity. He used plein air painting and direct observation, encouraging artists to engage sincerely with their environments. His radical view that "anything is worth drawing" challenged traditional hierarchies in art and aligned with his anarchist beliefs, democratizing the subjects deemed worthy of artistic representation. Pissarro's focus on tonal harmony and the truthful rendering of light and color became foundational elements of the Impressionist approach, influencing younger artists and contemporaries alike.

Pissarro's artwork is characterized by loose, broken brushwork paired with structural stability and careful composition. While his palette was often more subdued than Monet's, his emphasis on capturing the atmosphere and tonal relationships of a scene remained central to his work. His drawings were direct and unembellished, reflecting his commitment to simplicity and the essential qualities of a subject. Critics described his work as "direct and naive," yet also noted its profound presence and durability, setting his paintings apart from those focused solely on fleeting optical effects. Pissarro's works maintained a quiet radicalism, integrating social consciousness into his depictions of peasants and laborers without sentimentality or idealization.

Pissarro maintained strong relationships with other Impressionist artists, collaborating closely with Monet during their time in London and later in France. He served as a mentor to Cézanne, influencing his shift towards structured compositions, and supported Gauguin during his early artistic development. Pissarro participated in discussions with artists

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

such as Manet, Renoir, Sisley, and Degas, fostering a collaborative spirit while preserving artistic independence within the group. His public advocacy for Monet's talent, even while maintaining his distinct vision, demonstrated his commitment to supporting his peers without compromising his own artistic path.

Throughout his career, Pissarro's art style developed in response to changing artistic concerns while maintaining a core focus on truth and sincerity. In the 1860s, he produced naturalistic landscapes influenced by Corot and Courbet, emphasizing careful observation and tonal harmony. During the 1870s, Pissarro fully embraced the Impressionist style, adopting brighter palettes and rapid brushwork to capture atmosphere and light. In the 1880s, he briefly experimented with Neo-Impressionism and Pointillism under Seurat's influence, adapting these techniques to suit his vision. By the 1890s, he returned to free brushwork, focusing on urban scenes while maintaining the structural stability and observational clarity that defined his work. Throughout these shifts, Pissarro's disciplined approach to daily painting and his commitment to perceptual honesty remained constants, shaping a body of work that was deeply engaged with the social and natural worlds he sought to represent.

Though Camille Pissarro did not command the spotlight in the way that Monet or Manet often did, his role in the Impressionist movement was quietly foundational. As the only artist to exhibit in all eight Impressionist exhibitions from 1874 to 1886, Pissarro provided continuity and cohesion to a group often marked by internal differences. His leadership was less about dominance and more about influence: he fostered dialogue among artists, encouraged individual experimentation, and defended the movement's collective spirit. While Monet may have been its face, Pissarro was its anchor.

His mentorship of younger artists further demonstrates his understated leadership. He welcomed them into his house, shared his methods, and guided them in plein air technique and compositional structure. In doing so, Pissarro helped seed the evolution of both Post-Impressionism and modernism. Philosophically, his anarchist views translated into a democratization of subject matter and technique. He supported the idea that anything, such as peasants, fields, factory workers, urban streets were worthy of representation. Thereby broadening the scope of Impressionist subject matter and aligning the movement with a socially conscious ethos.

Though he never sought the spotlight, Pissarro's steady presence, open-minded collaboration, and ideological consistency allowed him to guide the Impressionist movement. Through this silent method, he did not merely participate in Impressionism. Instead, he shaped its core values.

Fig 5 Camille Pissarro, The Boulevard Montmartre at Night, 1897

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

While the works of Claude Monet, Édouard Manet, and Camille Pissarro are often grouped under the broad label of Impressionism, each artist made a contribution with their own unique artistic technique.

Claude Monet painted *En Plein Air* with experimental coloring reflecting lights. Later he exhibited a series of Haystacks(1890–91), Poplars(1891), and the Facade of Rouen Cathedral(1892–94)—what the Metropolitan Museum of Art calls "captur[ing] on canvas the very act of perceiving nature" (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). As Claude Monet said, "I want to paint the air in which the bridge, house or boat exists" — a line that clarifies his unique drawing style (Maison et jardins de Claude Monet; The Economist).

Édouard Manet, by contrast, blended Old-Master structures into modern Parisian scenes (cafés, races, studio nudes). Manet did not participate in exhibitions with Impressionists in their eight independent shows. He stayed Salon-oriented, and built planar, cropped designs; in his own words, he had "no intention of overthrowing old methods of painting, or creating new ones," even as his tonal architecture gave black an active force (The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Camille Pissarro produced a wide range of works throughout his career, including rural landscapes, urban scenes, and studies of peasants and workers —fourteen views of the Boulevard Montmartre—while remaining the only artist to exhibit in all eight group shows, playing a central role in shaping the movement's identity and ensuring its continuity.

V. CONCLUSION

In the end, Monet, Manet, and Pissarro advanced modern painting along distinct paths—perceptual *Plein-Air* Inquiry, depicting modern life, and naturalism that later opened onto serial city views—yet their constant dialogue and shared networks forged something larger than any one style. Their interplay shows that innovation grows from exchange: debates in cafés and studios, experiments with subjects and methods, and parallel responses to a changing city. Understanding the complementary roles of these three painters not only deepens our appreciation of Impressionism as a collaborative movement but also highlights the ways in which artistic innovation emerges through dialogue and exchange.

REFERENCES

[1]. FitzGerald, Desmond. "Claude Monet: Master of Impressionism." Brush and Pencil, vol. 15, no. 3, March 1905, pp. 181–95. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25503805.
[2]. Greenberg, Susan D. "The Face of Impressionism in 1870: Claude Monet's 'Camille on the Beach at Trouville.'" Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin, 2001, pp. 66–73. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40514596.
[3]. Snider, Lindsay. "A Lasting Impression: French Painters Revolutionize the Art World." The History Teacher, vol. 35, no. 1, Nov. 2001, pp. 89–102. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3054513.
[4]. Riechel, D. C. "Monet and Keyserling: Toward a Grammar of Literary…" (title truncated due to source limitations) JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23980036.
[5]. Francis, Henry S. "Claude Monet: Water Lilies." The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art, vol. 47, no. 8, Oct. 1960, pp. 192–98. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25142411.
[6]. Rewald, John. "Camille Pissarro: His Work and Influence." The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs, vol. 72, no. 423, June 1938, pp. 280 + 284–86 + 288–91. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/867339.
[7]. DeLue, Rachael Ziady. "Pissarro, Landscape, Vision, and Tradition." The Art Bulletin, vol. 80, no. 4, Dec. 1998, pp. 718–36. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3051320.
[8]. Lloyd, C. "Camille Pissarro: A Case Study in Impressionist Drawing." (journal and pages not specified), 1997. JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24555156.
[9]. Ashmolean Museum. "Pissarro Gallery." Ashmolean, n.d. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.ashmolean.org/pissarro-gallery. Ashmolean Museum
[10]. Auricchio, Laura. "Claude Monet (1840–1926)." Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 Oct. 2004. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/claude-monet-1840-1926. The Metropolitan Museum of Art
[11]. Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Camille Pissarro." Britannica, updated 6 July 2025. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Camille-Pissarro. Encyclopedia Britannica
[12]. Maison et jardins de Claude Monet. "Quotes." claudemonetgiverny.fr, n.d. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. [Secondary compilation; original letter not cited—Not sure] https://claudemonetgiverny.fr/en/decouvrir/quotes/. claudemonetgiverny.fr
[13]. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. "Manet in Black." MFA Boston, 2012. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/manet-black. Museum of Fine Arts Boston
[14]. Musée d'Orsay. "Paris 1874: Inventing Impressionism." Musée d'Orsay, 2024. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/whats-on/exhibitions/paris-1874-inventing-impressionism. musee-orsay.fr

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25aug1334

[15]. National Gallery (London). “Inventing Impressionism.” National Gallery, 2015. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/exhibitions/past/inventing-impressionism. nationalgallery.org.uk
[16]. National Gallery of Art. “1874: The Birth of Impressionism.” NGA Stories, 4 Sept. 2024. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.nga.gov/stories/articles/1874-birth-impressionism. nga.gov
[17]. Rabinow, Rebecca. “Édouard Manet (1832–1883).” Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 Oct. 2004. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/edouard-manet-1832-1883. The Metropolitan Museum of Art
[18]. Rosenfeld, Jason. “The Salon and the Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century.” Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 Oct. 2004. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/the-salon-and-the-royal-academy-in-the-nineteenth-century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art
[19]. Société anonyme des artistes peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs, etc. Première exposition, 1874—Catalogue. Paris: Impr. Alcan-Lévy, 1874. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. Gallica: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k994614t.texteImage. Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/frick-31072001226689. gallica.bnf.frArchive.org
[20]. Tate. “The EY Exhibition: Impressionists in London, French Artists in Exile (1870–1904).” Tate Press Release, 30 Oct. 2017. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.tate.org.uk/press/press-releases/ey-exhibition-impressionists-london-french-artists-exile-1870-1904. tate.org.uk
[21]. The Economist (1843 Magazine). “Monet’s Eye for Architecture.” 1843 Magazine, 17 Apr. 2018. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. [Secondary quotation—Not sure] https://www.economist.com/1843/2018/04/17/monets-eye-for-architecture. The Economist
[22]. Ministère de la Culture. “Les huit expositions impressionnistes (1874–1886).” culture.gouv.fr, 3 June 2014. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.culture.gouv.fr/thematiques/musees/Les-musees-en-France/les-collections-des-musees-de-france/decouvrir-les-collections/les-huit-expositions-impressionnistes-1874-1886. 문화부
[23]. “1876—Deuxième exposition.” culture.gouv.fr, 3 June 2014. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.culture.gouv.fr/thematiques/musees/Les-musees-en-France/les-collections-des-musees-de-france/decouvrir-les-collections/les-huit-expositions-impressionnistes-1874-1886/1876-deuxieme-exposition. 문화부
[24]. “1877—Troisième exposition.” culture.gouv.fr, 3 June 2014. Accessed 19 Aug. 2025. https://www.culture.gouv.fr/thematiques/musees/Les-musees-en-France/les-collections-des-musees-de-france/decouvrir-les-collections/les-huit-expositions-impressionnistes-1874-1886/1877-troisieme-exposition. 문화부