

ART HISTORY II: RENAISSANCE TO THE PRESENT

THE AGE OF POSITIVISM: REALISM
AND PHOTOGRAPHY, 1848-1885

Europe and the U.S. in the Mid to Late 19th Century

Positivism is the view that the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge. The doctrine was developed in the mid-19th century by the French sociologist and philosopher [Auguste Comte](#) (1798 - 1857) - **all knowledge must come from proven ideas based on science or scientific theory.**

Technological, economic, and social transformations that took place with the Industrial Revolution intensified during this time period.

Coal and iron increased in demand and therefore necessitated improvements in mining, metallurgy, and transportation. **Development of the locomotive and steamship** not only facilitated the movement of raw materials but of human passengers as well.

Scientific discoveries led to the invention of the telegraph, telephone, and radio. By the end of the 19th century, **electricity powered lighting, motors, trams, and railroads in most European and American cities.** Developments in chemistry created many new products, **such as aspirin, disinfectants, photographic chemicals, and more effective explosives.** In medicine and public health, **Louis Pasteur's purification of beverages through heat (pasteurization) and the development of vaccines, sterilization, and antiseptics** led to the dramatic decline in mortality rates all over the Western world.

Geologists at this time concluded that the Earth was far older than the estimated 6,000 years sometimes claimed by biblical literalists. In **1859, Charles Darwin proposed that life evolved gradually through natural selection.**

Rural poor moved to cities to find work in factories, mines, and mechanical manufacturing. Industrialists and entrepreneurs enjoyed new levels of wealth and prosperity, while conditions for workers, many of them women and children, were often abysmal.

In 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published the Communist Manifesto. According to the Manifesto all history can be explained in terms of class struggles. At the same time, Americans **Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Caddy Stanton organized the country's first women's rights convention** in Seneca Falls, New York. They **called for equality of women and men before the law, property rights for married women, the acceptance of women into institutions of higher education, the admission of women to all trades and professions, equal pay for equal work, and women's suffrage (right to vote).**

Industrialists, merchants, professionals, the middle classes, some governments, and national academies of art became new sources of patronage in the arts. **Large annual exhibitions in European and American cultural centers took on increasing importance as a means for artists to show their work, win prizes, attract buyers, and gain commissions. Inexpensive illustrated newspapers and magazines published art criticism that influenced public opinion on art, and commercial art dealers emerged as important brokers of taste.**



PATRONAGE AND ARTISTIC LIFE: 1848-1900

- Artists joined groups and worked for galleries
- Commercial galleries became important
- Museums opened and displayed art
- Art sold to an ever widening market
- Artists worked for private and public institutions to a sometimes critical public
- Artists used new media like photography and lithography
- Architects used new technology in construction

FRANÇOIS JOSEPH HEIM
CHARLES X BESTOWING HONORS ON THE
ARTISTS OF THE SALON OF 1824
1827
68 X 100" OIL ON CANVAS

Realism opposed the Romantic respect for truth as experienced through emotion. Romantics tried to arouse the viewer's emotions by depicting nature in all its glory and fury. **Realists** on the other hand, **focused on the external world, social conditions, and everyday life.**



GUSTAVE EIFFEL
EIFFEL TOWER, PARIS
1887-89
984' HIGH, IRON

31 Mars 1889

22

THE ALBUMEN PRINT
[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/CQ1RVAHEPSK](https://youtu.be/CQ1RVAHEPSK)



GUSTAVE COURBET
A BURIAL AT ORNANS, 1849-50.
OIL ON CANVAS, 10' 3-1/2" x 21' 9"
MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS



THÉODORE GÉRICAUT
THE RAFT OF THE "MEDUSA"
1818-19, OIL ON CANVAS, 16'1" x 23'6"
MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, PARIS

19th century **Realism** can be described as the **subject matter of everyday, contemporary life as seen or seeable by the artists**, whether recorded photographically or by other modes of visual report. During the middle of the 19th century the differences between Romanticism and Realism became obvious in subject matter. Realists disapproved of traditional and fictional subjects since they were not real and visible, and not of the present world.



KEY TERM:
AVANT-GARDE: STRIKINGLY NEW OR RADICAL FOR THE TIME

GUSTAVE COURBET
A BURIAL AT ORNANS
1849-50 (FRENCH REALISM)
OIL ON CANVAS, 10' 3-1/2" x 21' 9"
MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS



ÉDOUARD MANET
DÉJEUNER SUR L'HERBE (LUNCHEON ON THE GRASS), 1863.
OIL ON CANVAS, 6' 9-1/8" x 8' 10-1/4"
MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS.

KEY TERM: SALON DES RÉFUSES



TITIAN AND/OR GIORGIONE
PASTORAL CONCERT (CONCERT CHAMPÊTRE)
CA. 1509-10
OIL ON CANVAS. 43 1/4" X 54 3/8"
MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, PARIS



After photography, the most pervasive influence on 19th century art in the West came from Asian art, especially color woodcut prints.

Along with the forcible opening of Japanese ports by the American naval officer Matthew Perry in 1853, "new trade agreements beginning in the 1850s resulted in an unprecedented flow of travelers and goods between Japan and the West.

Western appreciation for Japanese graphic art and objects quickly intensified and Japanese-influenced style irrevocably entered the lexicon of Western artistic expression.

This craze with all things Japanese came to be termed **japonisme**.



KITAGAWA UTAMARO
*MIDNIGHT: THE HOURS OF THE RAT; MOTHER
AND SLEEPY CHILD*
CA. 1790
POLYCHROME WOODBLOCK PRINT
H. 14 3/8 IN., W. 9 5/8 IN
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



ANDŌ HIROSHIGE
*PLUM ESTATE, KAMEIDO, FROM THE SERIES ONE
HUNDRED FAMOUS VIEWS OF EDO*
1857
WOOD-BLOCK PRINT, 13-3/8 × 9"
BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK.



EDGAR DEGAS
THE ORCHESTRA OF THE PARIS OPÉRA
1868-69
FRENCH REALISM
OIL ON CANVAS, 22-1/4 × 18-3/16"
MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS

IMPRESSIONISM, C.1870-1888

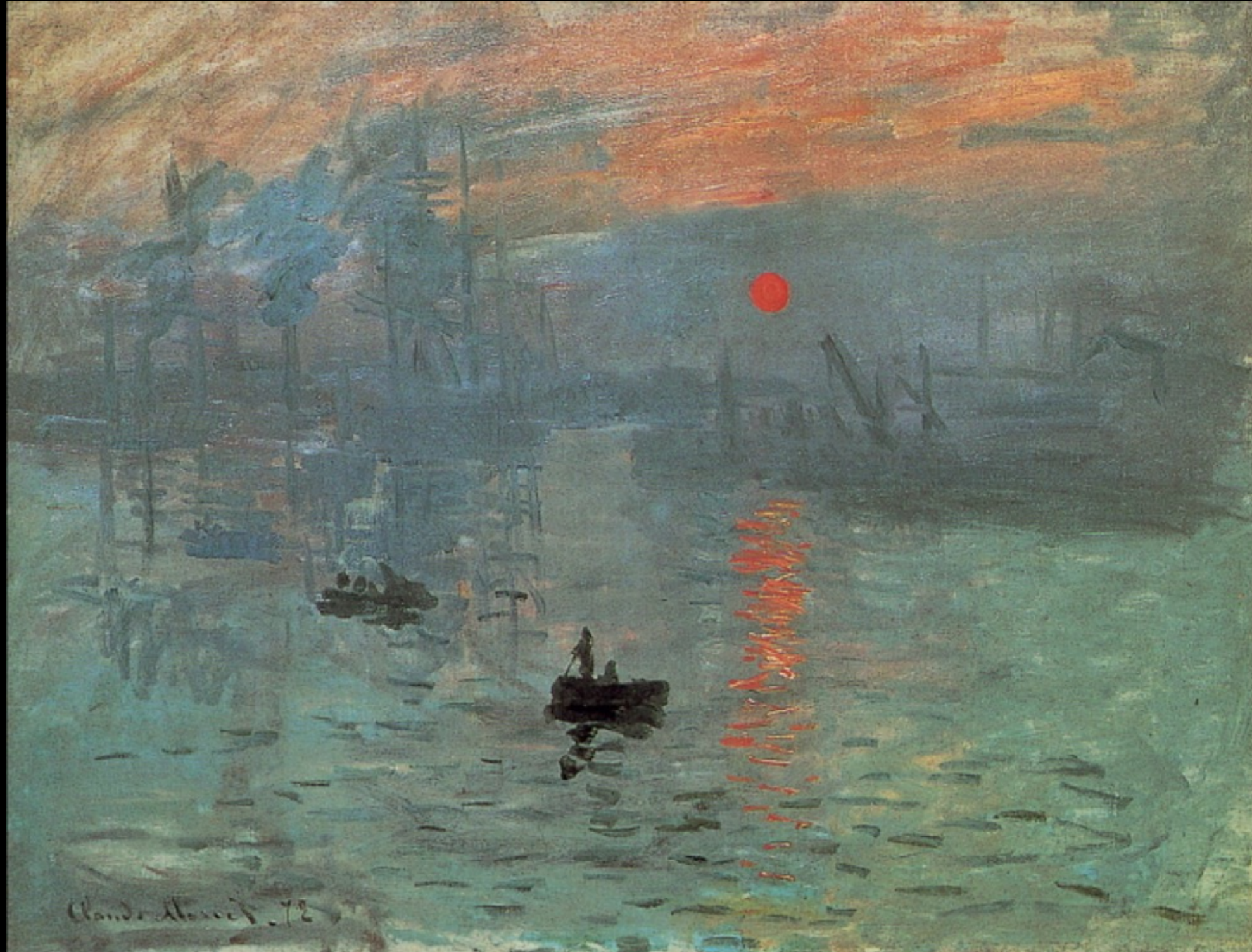
The label "Impressionism" was coined by a hostile conservative critic, Louis Leroy, in 1874 when reviewing the first exhibition of an artists' collaborative called the *Société anonyme des artistes* (Artists, Inc.), an organization that sought to provide an alternative to the Salon. We now refer to that show as the first Impressionist exhibition (there would be eight altogether between 1874 and 1886).

Impressionism disregarded traditional subjects. They were interested in recording the transformations occurring in French society, especially the leisure pursuits of the *nouveaux riches*, while also painting city scenes and genre.

The Impressionists focused more on landscape and cityscape, and instead of constructing their compositions in the studio using models they worked *en plein air*, or outdoors, recording fleeting moments and sensory perceptions (using the senses or the mind).

Monet, Renoir, Degas, and Pissarro were among the masters that produced Impressionistic works of art.

The purpose of Impressionism was to record nature impersonally and without interpretation. These artists were opposed to the Romantic idea of art conveying emotion but rather that art needed to capture the visual impressions and not the permanent aspects of scenes or objects. These artists were strongly against the stifling training of the art schools and the French Academy.



CLAUDE MONET
IMPRESSION: SUNRISE
1872
FRENCH IMPRESSIONISM
OIL ON CANVAS, 17-3/4 x 21-3/4"
MUSÉE MARMOTTAN, PARIS



CLAUDE MONET
ON THE BANK OF THE SEINE,
BENNECOURT
1868
OIL ON CANVAS, 32-1/8 x 39-
5/8"
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO



PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR. LUNCHEON OF THE BOATING PARTY. 1880-81.
OIL ON CANVAS, 4'3" x 5'9"
THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.



MARY STEVENSON CASSATT
THE CHILD'S BATH
1893
AMERICAN IMPRESSIONIST
OIL ON CANVAS, 39-1/2 x 26"
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO



WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT. *THE AWAKENING CONSCIENCE*
1853–54, OIL ON CANVAS, 29½ X 22"
TATE BRITAIN, LONDON



JAMES ABBOTT MCNEILL WHISTLER
SYMPHONY IN WHITE NO. II: THE LITTLE WHITE GIRL
1864. OIL ON CANVAS, 30⅞ X 20⅞
TATE BRITAIN, LONDON

BRITISH REALISM



WINSLOW HOMER
SNAP THE WHIP
1872

AMERICAN REALISM

OIL ON CANVAS, 22-1/4 x 36-1/2"

THE BUTLER INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN ART, YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO