An impressionist painting depicting two men in a studio. On the left, a man with a beard and a straw hat with a red band looks towards the right. On the right, another man wearing a dark turban and a white coat stands before an easel, looking at a canvas. The background features draped fabrics in shades of blue and white, with a window showing a view of a building. The overall style is characterized by visible brushstrokes and a focus on light and color.

Vol. 9, No. 2, Nov. 1978

art & man[®]

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The
Art of
Impressionist
Painting

Special feature on
Claude Monet

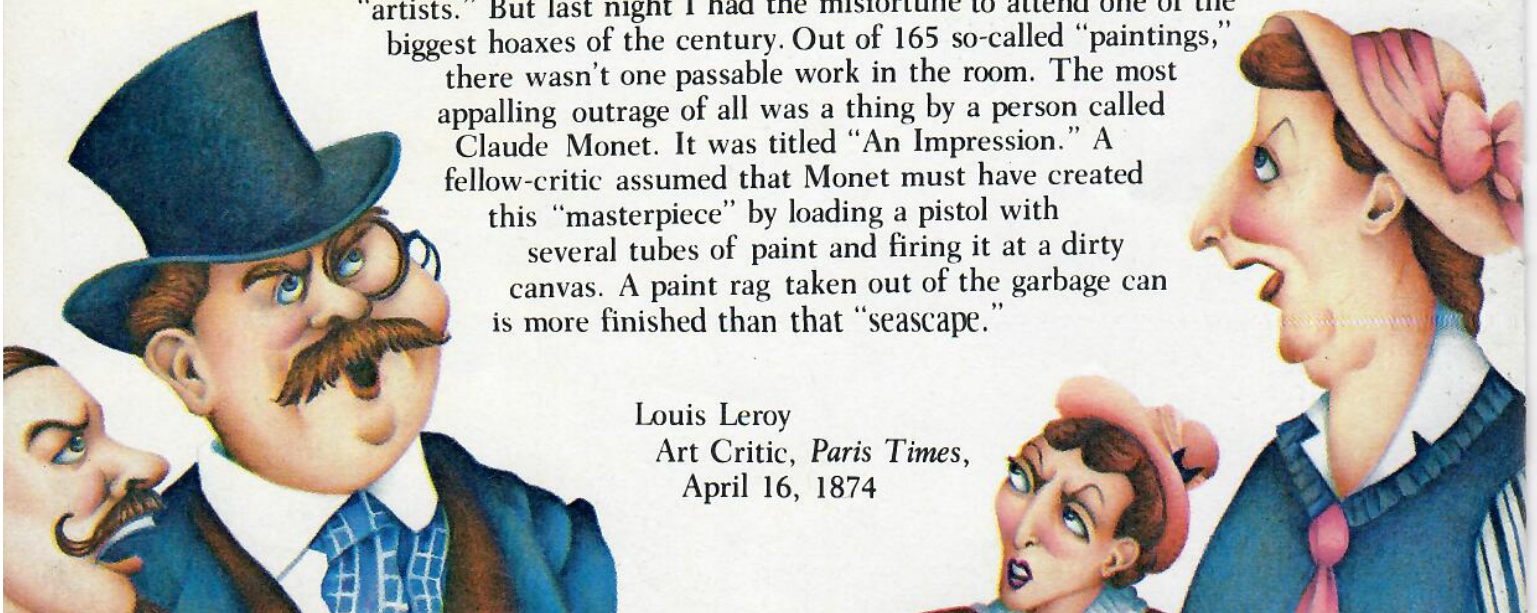
Cover: Edouard Manet (1832-1883). *Monet in His Studio-Boat*, 1874. Neue Pinakothek, Munich. Scala/EPA.



Claude Monet (1840-1926) *An Impression*, 1872. Marmottan Museum, Paris. Scala/EPA.

As an art critic, I am required to view many disturbing objects whose creators insist on being named "artists." But last night I had the misfortune to attend one of the biggest hoaxes of the century. Out of 165 so-called "paintings," there wasn't one passable work in the room. The most appalling outrage of all was a thing by a person called Claude Monet. It was titled "An Impression." A fellow-critic assumed that Monet must have created this "masterpiece" by loading a pistol with several tubes of paint and firing it at a dirty canvas. A paint rag taken out of the garbage can is more finished than that "seascape."

Louis Leroy
Art Critic, *Paris Times*,
April 16, 1874



CLAUDE MONET AND THE SHOW THAT SHOCKED THE WORLD

Does the painting on the left shock you? It, and its artist, caused a scandal in 1874. Find out why the art world would never be the same after Claude Monet painted this picture.

Crowds of people read this review (below, left) and came to laugh and make fun of the latest show held by the French painters called "Impressionists." But the painting they all hated the most was this scene of a harbor at sunset by Claude Monet (left). As you look at it, does it seem very revolutionary to you? You've probably seen reproductions of brightly colored "Impressionist" paintings like these in many places. Why would anyone react the way this critic did in 1874?

At the time that Monet painted this picture, no one had ever seen anything like it before. Sunsets in harbors usually looked like the one you see below, right. This work is very typical of the kind of painting that was being done 100 years ago. Compare it with Monet's painting of the same subject. What differences can you spot right away?

For many years, French painting had been dominated by an organization called the *Salon*. This powerful group, which held large shows each year, set up very strict rules for painting. A picture chosen had to be based on dramatic, historical, or biblical subjects. It was done on a very large canvas, and was carefully planned. Each detail had to be perfect. The whole thing took months and was done in the artist's studio.

The Impressionists changed all that. They hated all the old-fashioned rules and conventions they thought were killing art. They took their paints and canvases *outside* and painted nature *directly*. They wanted to paint the essence of nature. They tried to capture the *first*

impression of whatever they saw. They painted quickly on small canvases, using bright colors.

Claude Monet was the leader of the Impressionist group. He organized the show you just read about. But Monet hadn't always been a controversial figure involved in radical art movements. Monet was a grocer's son and he grew up in a small town on the coast of France. He drew all through his teens and became especially good at doing cartoons of people. By 18, he had earned enough from selling his cartoons to go to Paris to study art. Monet tried the official art school for a while, but couldn't stand all the rules. Finally, he and some of his friends left and began painting on their own. They painted in fields, on top of cliffs, in rain and snow. Monet made a special "studio-boat" (see cover) so he could spend days painting out on the water.

Year after year, this group of friends submitted paintings to the *Salon*, and year after year, their work

was rejected. Since their paintings were never seen, the artists never sold any. Finally Monet suggested they set up their own show in opposition to the *Salon*. You just read a typical reaction to that event.

A few people actually loved the "new" paintings, and Monet began to sell a few. Finally he was able to earn enough to buy a house outside Paris. He hired dozens of gardeners and had a pond dug. This pond has become one of the most famous places in the art world. During the last years of his life, Monet painted this pond over and over. One series of paintings, the *Water Lilies*, is among the greatest works of modern art ever created.

In this issue you'll be seeing more famous Impressionist paintings by Monet. You'll visit a high school student who does award-winning oil paintings from nature. And finally, you'll get a chance to use what you've learned about Impressionism when you create an "Impressionist" painting in oils.



School of Claude Lorraine. *Harbor at Sunset*, late 17th Century. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.





THE FIRST “MODERN” ARTIST

Does this look like a modern abstract painting? Stand back from it and look again. Now can you tell what it is?

Look at the opposite page. It's a detail of one of the paintings Monet did of his pond (the whole painting is above), but can you recognize exactly what it is? What is it about these paintings that makes them so important to modern artists working today? The most outstanding element in an Impressionist painting is color. Monet and the Impressionists never used solid colors, but put small brushstrokes of pure color together on the canvas. In the detail, you can see how Monet piled the thick strokes on top of each other.

Like modern painters, Monet used paint as paint, rather than as a way to represent a photographic likeness of a scene.

Monet chose to paint just a small area of the surface of his pond. But he put it on a huge canvas (the painting shown is the size of a whole wall). So, as you get close to this painting, it becomes an “abstract” design. As you step back, the pond and reflected sky and lilies all reappear again.

Monet did dozens of these enormous water lily paintings. He was in

his 80's and he could hardly walk or see to do them. But at the same time he “saw” far ahead, to the kind of abstract painting we know today. In his last works the color, the paint and the shapes have become more important than *what* Monet painted. This is the whole idea behind abstract painting and why Monet is sometimes called “the father of modern painting.”

Above: Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1919-1926. The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Right: *Water Lilies*, detail.

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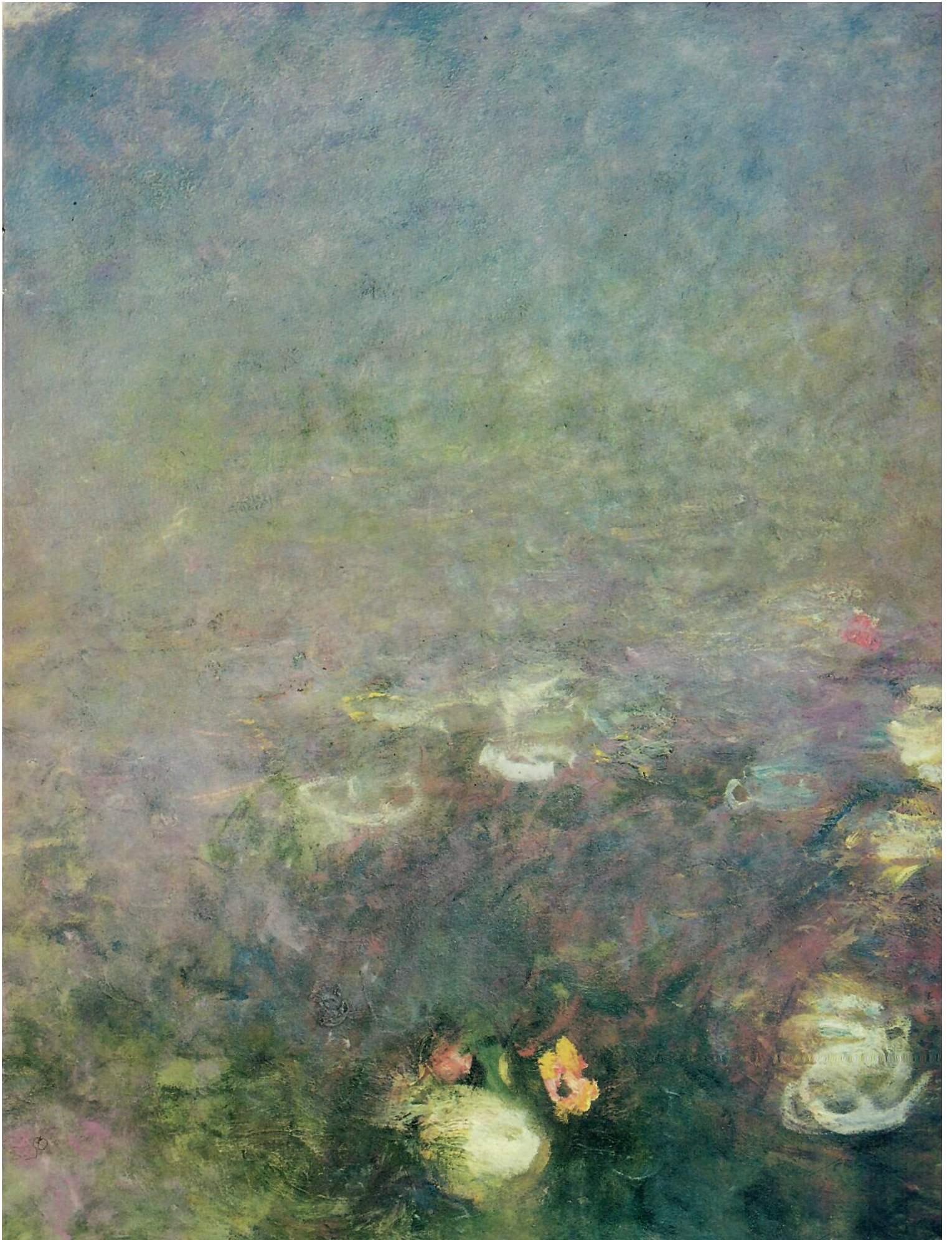
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Artist of the Month

MICHAEL SISCO: PAINTER

Who is this, painting his impression of a garden near his home? Today, Michael Sisco creates his own unique vision of nature, just as Monet did a century ago.

Two years ago, Michael Sisco spent most of his time fooling around. A high school teacher suggested he put his energy into painting. He did, and soon it became his main interest. Now he's in his first year at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. One of his most productive periods was the summer before last. He didn't have a job and spent practically every day outside — painting and sketching, and looking. We visited Michael at his home in Norwich, Connecticut, and talked to him about his art.

Photos by Janet Soderberg.



When did you first start drawing and painting?

I used to draw when I was in grammar school — cars, monsters, and stuff. And when I was in junior high, I went to art classes on Saturday morning. The teacher was always making us draw these stuffed ducks. I hated it. I had the same teacher for painting this past year in high school. Now I can appreciate what he was trying to teach us.

When did you get really interested in art?

My third year in high school. I just goofed off my first two years. Then one of my teachers talked to me and told me that I could be good in art if I wanted to. I started really working hard.

You mean at school?

All the time. I worked like a maniac, especially the summer before last and my last year in high school. When school was out, everybody else would go home. Not me — I'd grab something to eat and go back until about six. Or a lot of times I'd start painting late in the evening. It was quiet then. My brothers and sisters weren't around to bother me. There was nobody telling me what to do. I'd put my radio on and I'd paint until four in the morning. Then I'd sleep a few hours and go to school.

What made you want to paint so much?

I don't know. It's just something you want to do. I wished that I had started earlier. But all of a sudden I got better. I could see better and get things down the way I wanted.

It's funny — two years ago I didn't care about anything, you know. Except sports — playing football,



running, and stuff like that. I still play, but art means a lot more now.

How about last summer? Did you paint all day?

Sometimes. I'd go to the woods. Or when I went to the beach, I'd bring my sketchbook along. I did a lot of watercolors. Not so many oils because they're harder to carry. I learned a lot, but I threw most of the stuff away.

Why did you do most of your work outside?

I knew I had to. I'd never done it before. It's a different way of working. It's a lot harder to paint outdoors. The wind and the sun keep changing things. The sun goes behind a cloud and everything's a different color. Or bugs fly around your head. The water jar falls over. The paints go all over the place. It's an experience.

I used to think painting outside

was no big deal. But you really have to think when you're out there. What to put in. What not to put in. When to stop. I come in so tired. It's like I just went out and ran 15 miles.

How do you go about doing a painting outside?

Well, the first thing you do is sit down and look for a while — really look at everything. So if it changes you can remember it. Then you want to work really fast. Don't be afraid to put down *something*. Fill the whole canvas and then you can go back over it. But not when it's wet. Or else you'll make a big muddy mess.

What do you learn in doing landscapes?

Composition — where to put things. I hardly ever do the scene exactly the way it is. If there's a tree and I don't like where it is, I'll move it or take it out.

And you learn about color. In the summertime when you're out in the woods surrounded by trees, you see green everywhere you look, all different shades. So you study a lot of green.

Oil is considered a difficult medium. Would you agree? How was it in the beginning?

It's hard controlling the paint when you start out. I remember my first painting — it was all caked up. I kept adding on and I used too much paint. Our teacher told us, "You want to do grass. You don't have to do every blade. One square stroke will do the same thing."

This past year I learned to stop just

throwing the paint on. Now I think about it more. I stand back and look at it. Is that enough or does it need a little more?

How do you work? Is there anything you do to get in the mood to paint?

I read a lot of art books. Or at school I look at other kids' work. You can learn a lot from it. Some days you don't feel like doing anything. But I've found that it's good to paint when you don't want to. Or else you might not paint for a week. I paint even when I hate it. It's good discipline.

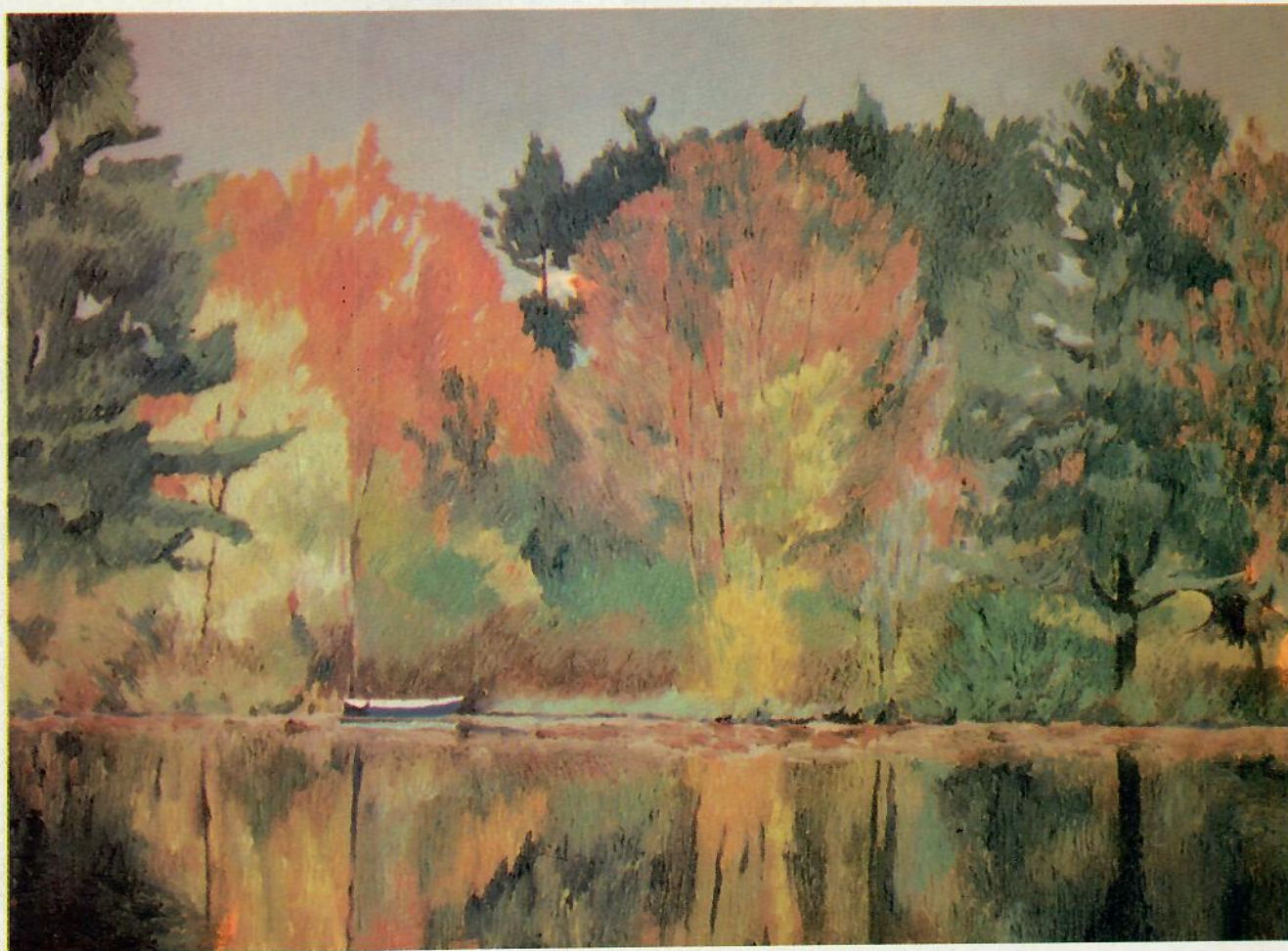
What do you think you'll do after art school?

Get a job part time — anything I can get — to pay the rent and eat. And, hopefully, sell some paintings. If I'd been smart, I'd have gone to a commercial art school. I would have been able to get a good job when I got out. But that's not what I like.

Why do you want to continue in art?

I don't know. It's something good to do. It's a way to express yourself. You look at your work. *You* did it. That's satisfying.

But it's frustrating. It's like constant competition with yourself. And you never win. "If I had only done this, it would have been perfect," you say. So you just keep trying.



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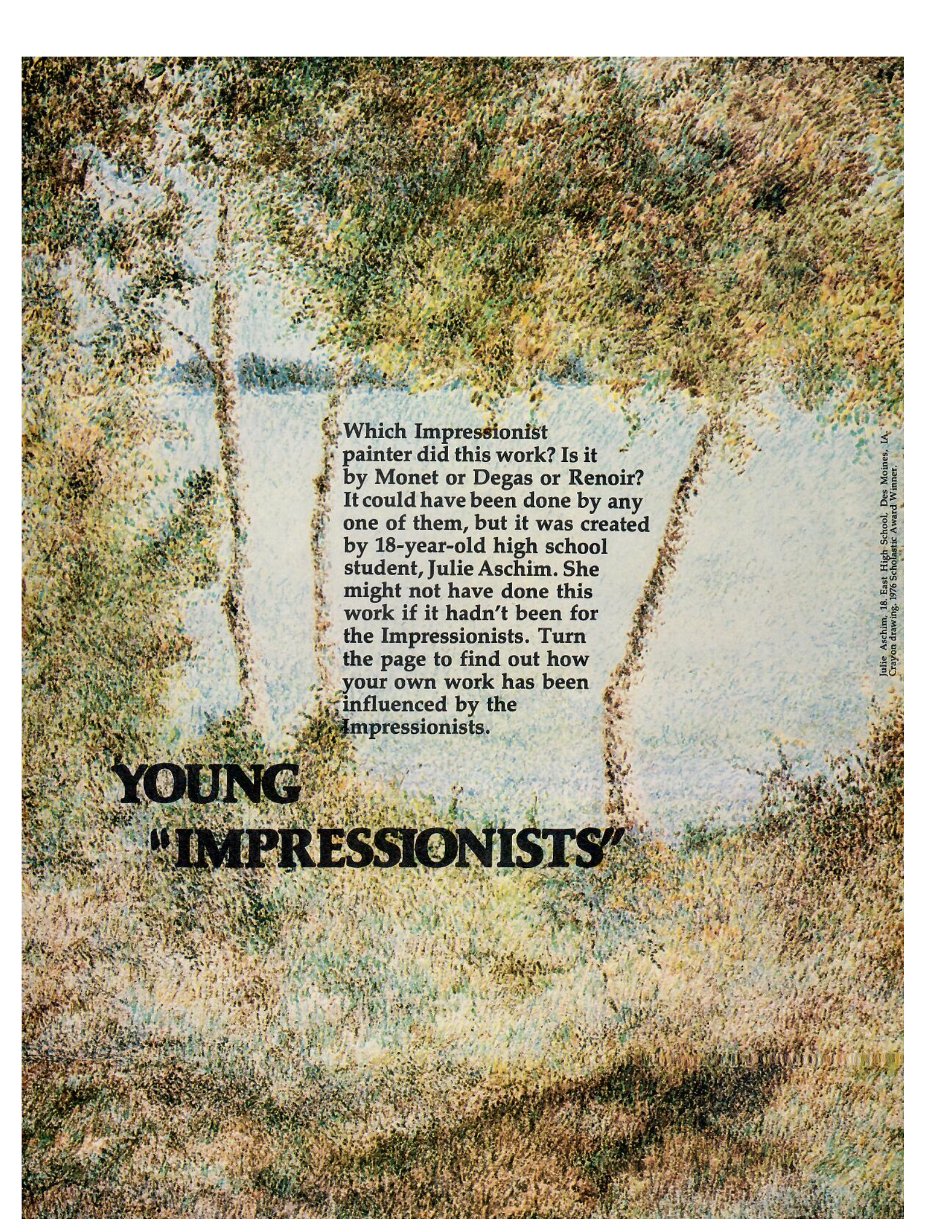
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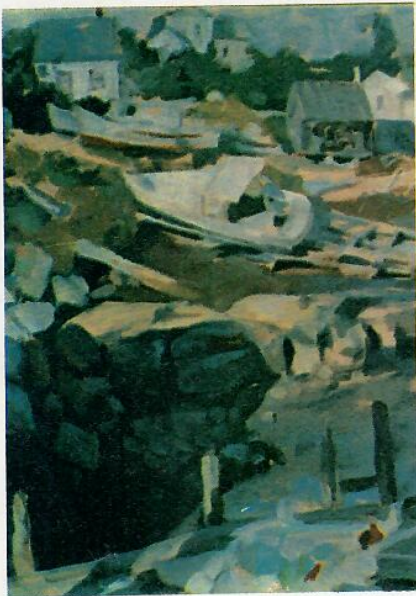
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Which Impressionist painter did this work? Is it by Monet or Degas or Renoir? It could have been done by any one of them, but it was created by 18-year-old high school student, Julie Aschim. She might not have done this work if it hadn't been for the Impressionists. Turn the page to find out how your own work has been influenced by the Impressionists.

YOUNG "IMPRESSIONISTS"

In this issue you read a lot about Monet and the Impressionists, but did it ever occur to you that *you* yourself might be painting very differently if the Impressionists hadn't changed our way of seeing? You might only be able to paint certain accepted subjects within very strictly set down rules. Many of the techniques and ideas about art that we take for granted today wouldn't exist if it hadn't been for Impressionism. See if you recognize some of the ways Impressionism has influenced the work of these young painters from all over the country.



(ABOVE)

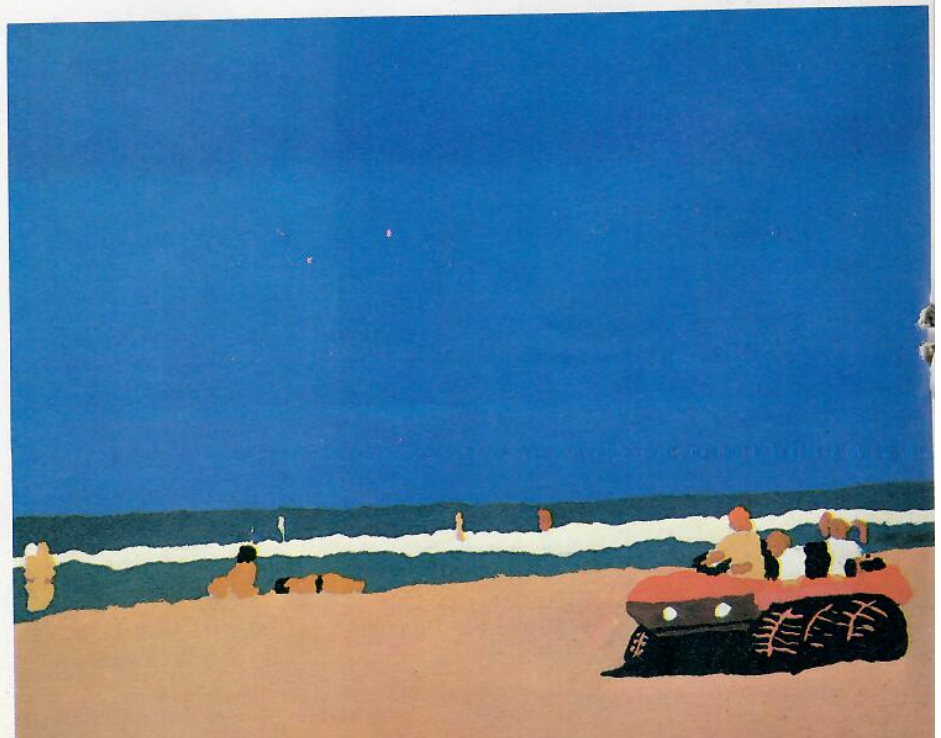
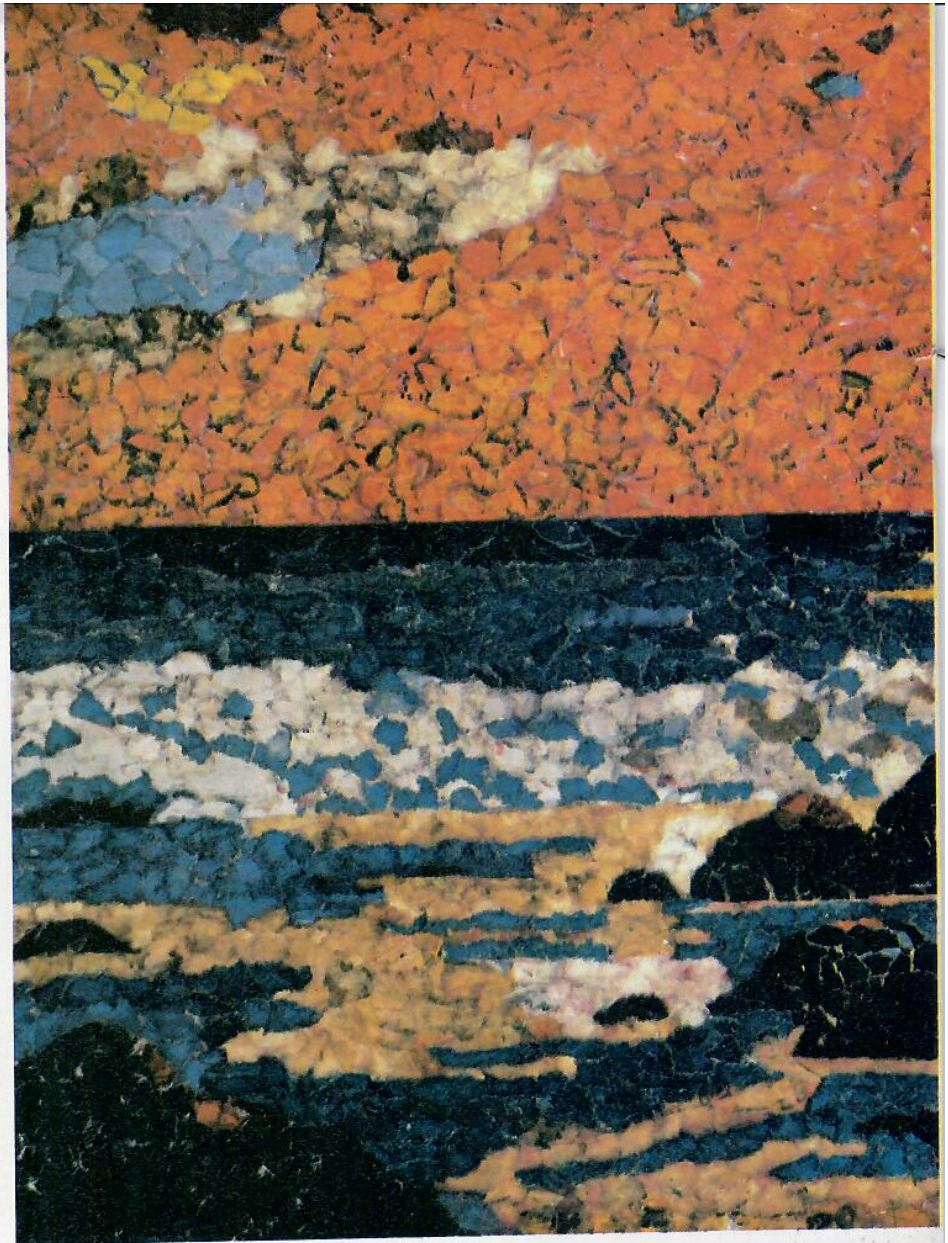
This work is like an Impressionist painting, but only in *some* ways. How and where do you think the artist painted it? Do you think it took very long? Does she seem to spend time on tiny details? What about her brushwork? Can you see nearly every stroke? Do these brushstrokes look "Impressionistic"? In what ways *isn't* this work like an Impressionist painting? What about the colors the artist used? Are they like those Monet used? Do they seem to "shimmer" or "vibrate"?

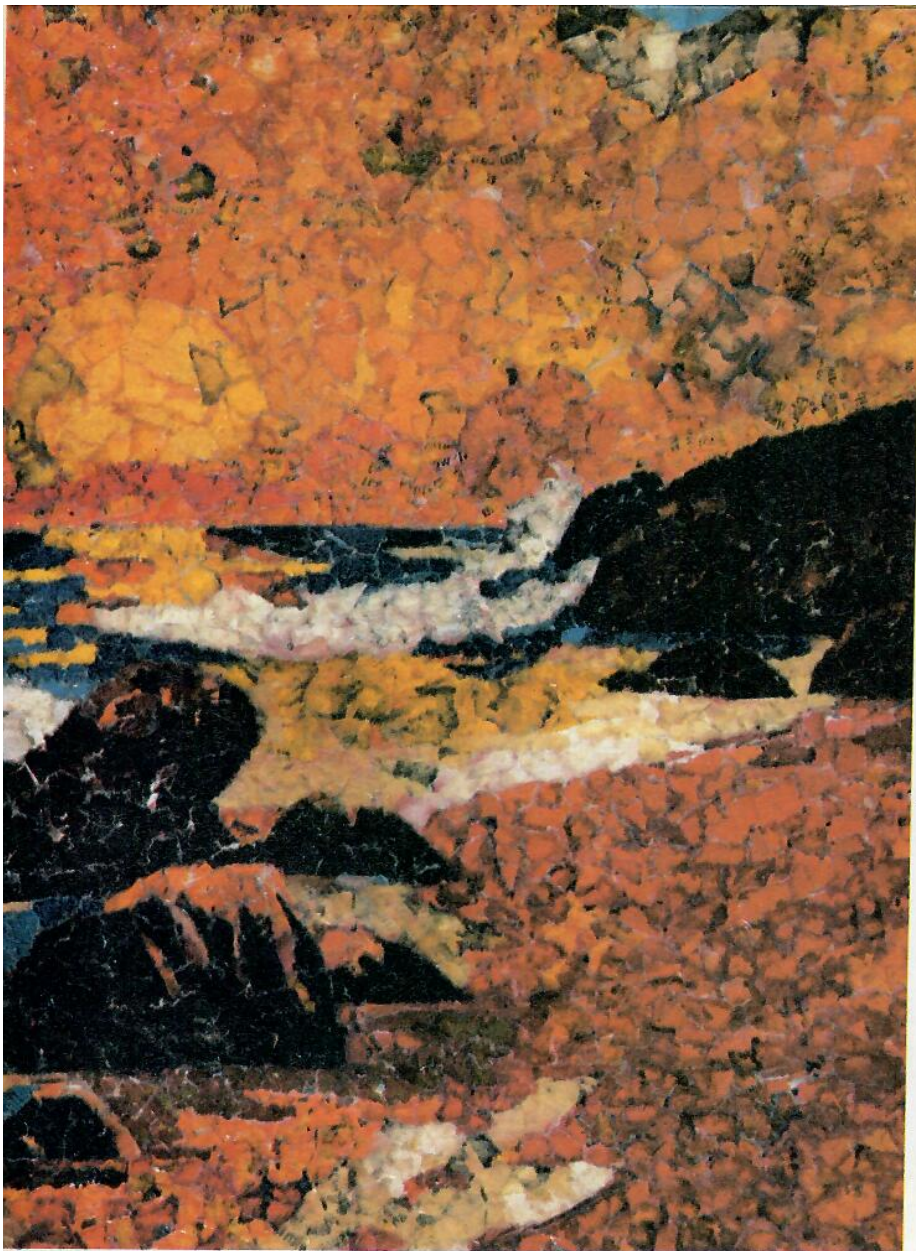
Boats in Dry Dock, oil. Nancy Edwards, 17. Norwich Free Academy, CT. 1977 Scholastic Award Winner.

(RIGHT)

The Impressionists' main purpose was to capture a fleeting impression of a scene by showing the effects of sunlight on it. Sometimes, in addition to bright colors, they used very dramatic compositions and simple shapes. Does this look like an "impression" of a beach scene on a bright, sunny day? But how does this work differ from most Impressionist paintings? Can you find the brushstrokes, or the complementary colors?

The Beach, acrylic, Calvin Stone, 14. Forest View High School, Arlington Heights, IL. 1978 Scholastic Award Winner.





(LEFT)

You've learned that the Impressionists used color in a very distinctive way. They put small brushstrokes of bright color next to each other, which gave their paintings the "shimmering" effect of sunlight. Can you find the two student works on these pages in which the artists have used color in this way? Look at the work on page 17. How many colors can you find in the grass and the trees? The Impressionists used small dabs of "complementary" colors next to each other. Look at the collage, left, and also at the work on page 17. Orange and blue, and red and green are complementary colors. Can you find these combinations in these two student works?

Seascape, mixed media. Stephanie Schmidt, 14. Lake Howell High School, Maitland, FL. 1978 Scholastic Award Winner.



(LEFT)

The Impressionists were also the first to paint very simple, informal subjects, cropped in unusual ways. Like this student, they too would have painted an empty chair sitting in the snow. Someone described an Impressionist painting as "a random framing of a piece of everyday life." Would you describe this painting in this way? What do you think about the purple shadow of the chair on the reddish-brown wall?

Watercolor, Thomas Wilson, 17. Wilmington High School, OH. 1978 Scholastic Award Winner.

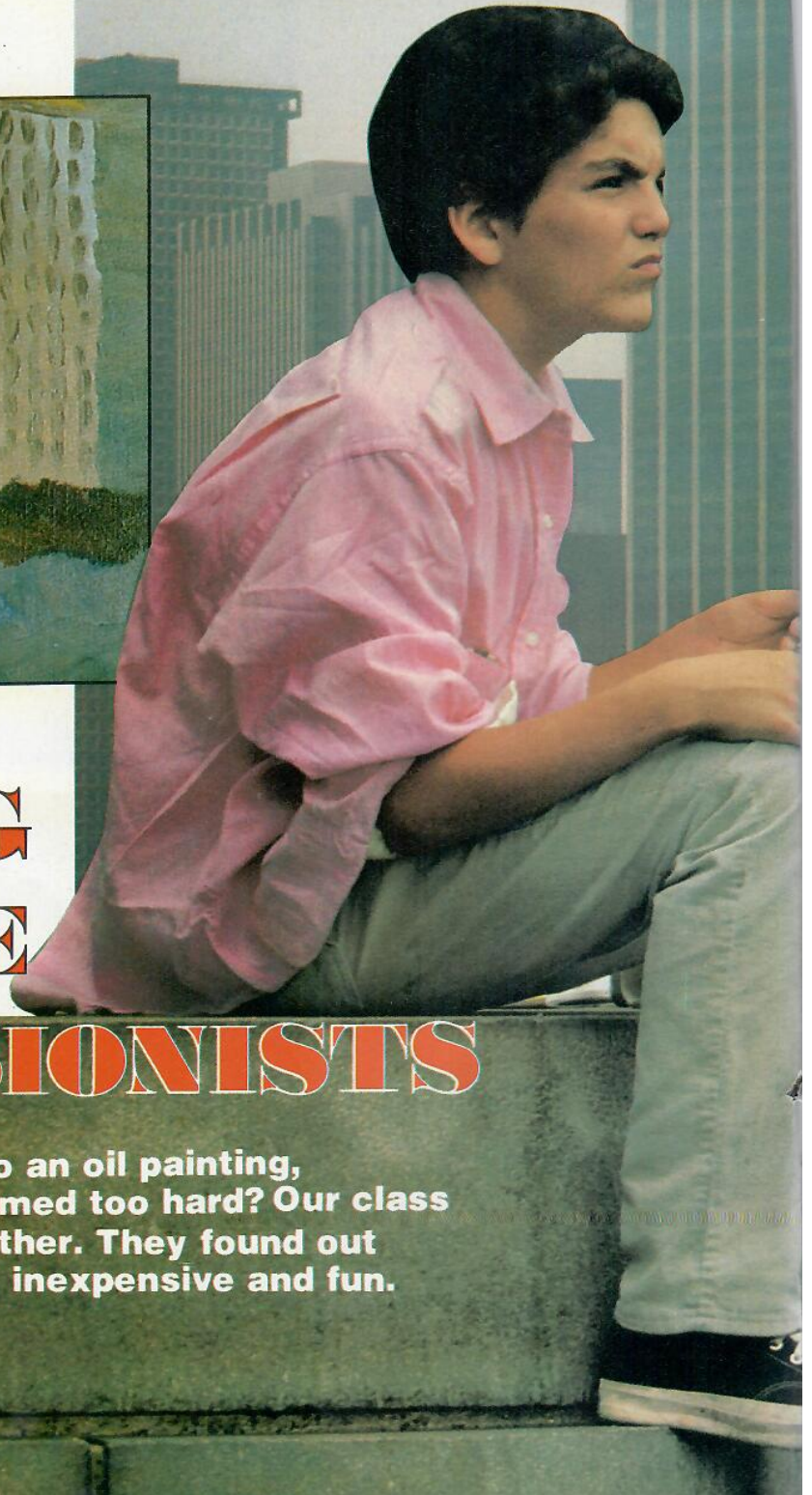
Art & Man Workshop

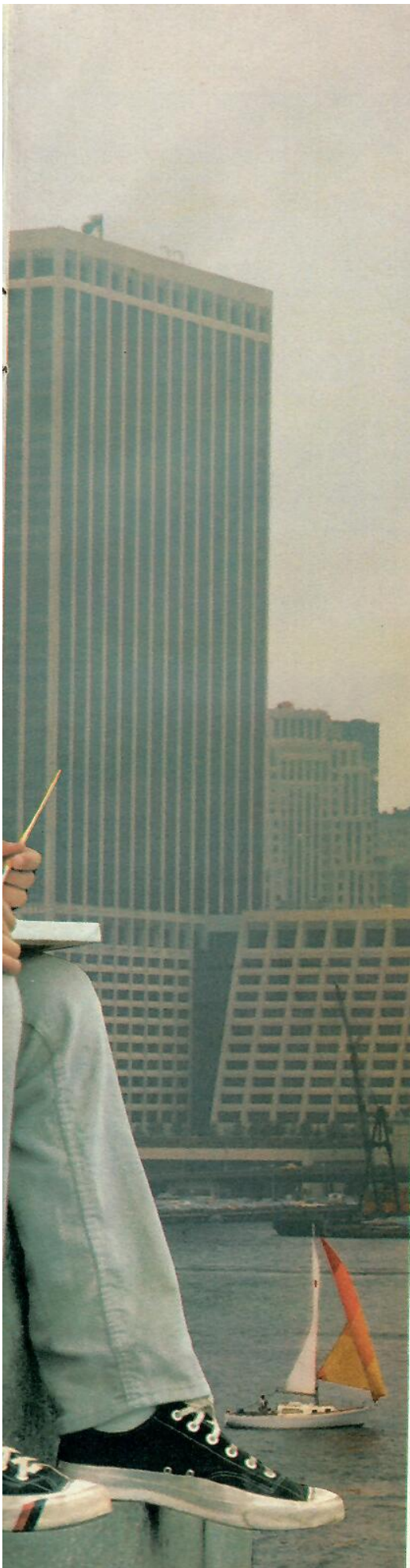


Wayne Lydon

PAINTING LIKE THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Have you ever wanted to do an oil painting, but avoided it because it seemed too hard? Our class had never used oils before either. They found out oil painting outdoors is easy, inexpensive and fun.





By capturing their "impression" of a certain time and place, the Impressionists achieved a new directness in their paintings. They did this by using a number of new painting methods. First, they worked outside directly from nature, which made it much easier to capture their impressions on the spot. The other important new techniques developed by the Impressionists were their use of bright color and the way they applied paint to the canvas.

The Impressionists used paint as brightly as possible, eliminating black and umber entirely. They used white to lighten the "value" of their colors. They also discovered that their paintings would seem to "shimmer" if they placed a particular color that had been used in one area of the painting in its other areas as well. Look closely at an Impressionist painting and you will see that a yellow used in a field might also appear in the sky, and that the blue of the sky may again appear as shadows or texture in the field. This "shimmering" quality was increased if the colors happened to be "opposites," which are known as *complementary* colors. By placing these complementary colors (red and green, orange and blue, or purple and yellow) next to each other, the Impressionists were able to achieve a *color vibration* that gave the paintings an even greater sense of life. Look and see how often reds and oranges (or tints of them) are put next to blues and greens in an Impressionist painting.

By "weaving" the surface of their paintings together with short, quick brushstrokes, and by placing so many complementary colors over the entire canvas, the Impressionists achieved an effect that is fairly close to the way we actually see. As you look at something, especially in bright sunlight, all the different colors seem to mix together to create the image you see. Look at a landscape, or just around you. The slight shimmering you may notice is what the Impressionists seemed to capture in their paintings. Our workshop this month focuses on these methods in order for you to create your own Impressionist painting.

Materials: Oil on canvas, but acrylic paints can be used instead.

Oil Paints: Only four colors are needed: The three primary colors, Red (bright cadmium), Blue (ultramarine and thalocynide blue provide two very different hues), Yellow (cadmium); and White.



Photos by Richard Hutchings.

Brushes: We used just one brush, a size 5 flat for oil paint.

Turpentine in a closable jar.

Painting medium or linseed oil in a small jar.

A Palette (paper tear-off type works well).

Rags.

Stretched Canvas, or canvas board, or gessoed masonite.

STARTING OUT



Get used to working with your materials for a few minutes in the studio before taking them outside.

Put out your three *primaries* and white in each corner of the palette. You won't need very much. You may want to mix some *secondary* (orange, green, violet) too. Mix a "gray," using equal parts of all three primaries, and lighten it with white. The "gray" will be used to change the tint of your primary and secondary colors to get a range of intermediate colors. Look again at the colors Monet used. Notice how often he used the secondary and "grayed-in" colors. Now,

PAINTING OUTSIDE

Select your site so that you will feel involved with your subject. You and you alone can tell which site will make the best painting. Think about composition, where the edges of your canvas will be in the scene, how much of the scene to include or exclude. The Impressionists did not do exact renderings of scenes, but painted their "impressions." Work quickly and do not get too involved with details. Remember to *weave* the surface together with your brushstrokes. Add some color from the sky to the land and from the land to the sky. Use your complementaries when needed.

Paint with *light* enough values of each color. (A lighter *value* is created by adding white to the color.) Don't be afraid to wipe out or paint over—oil paint is a wonderful medium for change. Allow your painting to grow and evolve as necessary.

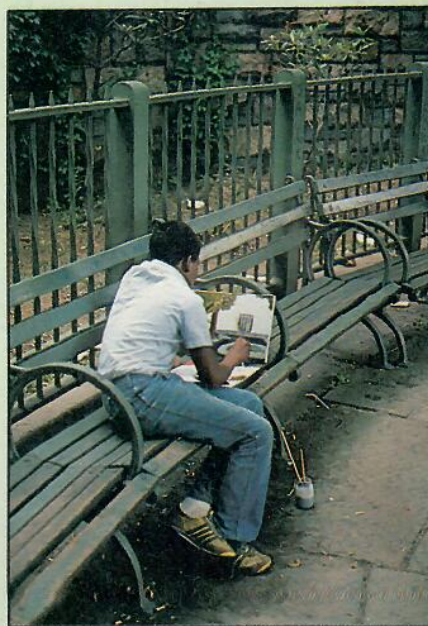
Once you are finished, be careful that the painting is stored in a safe place for the week or so that the oils will take to really dry. Your first painting will be difficult. But after you have made one, begin another, thinking about your use of color and brushstroke to get the impression of what you see.



Begin, as you did before, by setting out and mixing your colors.



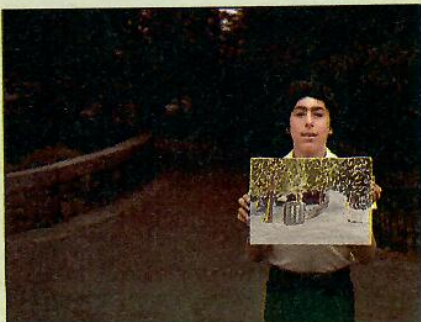
Remember to work on the *whole* canvas at once, not just one little area.



experiment on a canvas board by placing brushstrokes of different colors over the entire painting. Try adding complementary colors and see the effects you get. Use white with your colors as much as possible. Weave the surface of the painting with small brushstrokes. Try adding a small amount of painting medium, but do not thin the paint too much. Use the turpentine to clean the brush between strokes. Experiment, but try to keep your paint as "stiff" as possible. When you feel comfortable using oil paint, then take your materials outdoors.



The Impressionists did their paintings very quickly. Before you begin painting it's very important to select what you want to paint, and what you want to *leave out*. You won't have much time, so pick something you know you'll be able to do. It would be impossible to do everything in this cityscape, so each of these students chose a different aspect.



David Barry



Notice the very simple color range, loose brushstrokes and thin paint in this cityscape.

Wayne Lydon



This student limited his composition to one simple building. Why do the thick "Impressionist" brushstrokes seem to "shimmer"? What kinds of colors are used?

Nerida Maldonado



What subject did this student choose? Find the small brushstrokes of blue and yellow that appear in both water and sky.

Phoebie Stringer



How does this treatment of the same subject differ from the painting above? Could they both be called "Impressionist"?

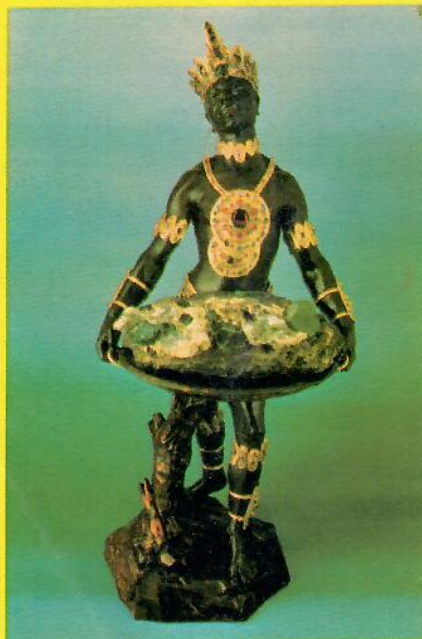
Ruben Pagon



This student selected to emphasize the warehouses in front rather than the city buildings. How many colors has he used in the water?

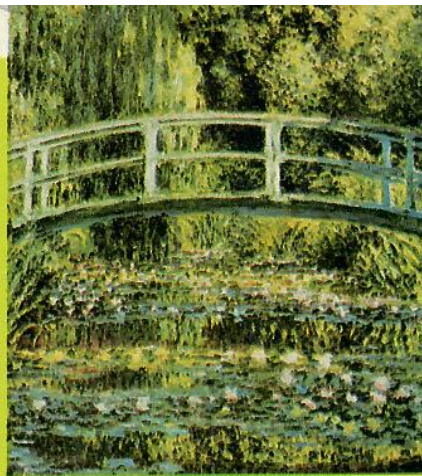
ARTS ALIVE

Black Moor With Emerald Base, 1724.
Permoser/Dinglinger. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen.
Dresden, German Democratic Republic.



THE SPLENDOR OF DRESDEN

Fantastic suits of armor, jeweled guns and swords, carved ivories, ornate statuettes, and many more incredible objects and artworks from East Germany are now on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The exhibit is "The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting." The rulers of Dresden, Germany, were lovers of art, and gradually they built up one of the finest collections in the world. This jewel-encrusted statuette (*above*) will give you an idea of how rich their collections were. The figure carries a tray of uncut emeralds and stands on a solid emerald base. In February, the exhibit moves on to San Francisco for a four-month stay at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor.



Claude Monet, *Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge*, 1899.
The Art Museum, Princeton University.

MONET'S WORLD

Monet's gardens were the inspiration for many of his most famous paintings. After he died, they gradually became a jungle of weeds, and now his paintings are the inspiration for their restoration.

What makes these gardens so special? Maybe you can guess if you study the painting above. This lily pond

and Japanese footbridge were part of Monet's water garden. Both were very carefully planned, yet they still had a feeling of nature. Creating this garden and reflecting on its beauty became as important to Monet as his painting.

Restoration was begun in 1976. The sludge-filled pond was cleaned. The bridge was reinforced and repainted, and gradually its "drapery" of wisteria began to creep back, as you can see in the photo (*below*) taken from the same spot as Monet painted.

The gardens are now open to visitors, although it will be two more years before the restoration is complete. Then visitors can see the "world" of Monet firsthand.



Photo by Stephen Shore.

BE A WINNER

Would you like to have your artwork exhibited in New York City? Would you like to see it in the pages of *Art & Man*? Perhaps you'll be recognized in your own community and everyone will be able to see your work displayed in a shopping mall or gallery near your home. All these things happened to 18-year-old Terry Moeller of Silskie, Texas, when he won a Scholastic Art Award for his oil painting (*right*). It can happen to you too, and now is the time to enter the program. For a rulebook, write to Scholastic Art Awards, Scholastic Magazines, Inc., 50 W. 44 Street, New York, NY 10036.

