

QCT On-the-Road Study Guide

Impressions of Yesterday by Wade Bradford

In *Impressions of Yesterday*, you got to meet and learn more about Impressionist artists like Mary Cassatt, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, and Edgar Degas. In this study guide, you'll find more information about the Impressionists and their art.

What is Impressionism?

Impressionism is a 19th Century art movement (1870s and 1880s) originating with an independent group of French artists who broke from traditional ideals and aesthetics of the 19th Century French academic painters.

What makes Impressionism different or unique?

The Impressionists were considered radical artists because they didn't adhere to the Academic hierarchy of what was considered "high art". (Religious and historical painting was at the top of the hierarchy, then portraits. Still life and landscapes were considered lower forms of art. A smooth layering of oil paint was used to create effects, with little to no brush strokes visible.)

What qualities/style choices might be in an Impressionist painting?

The Impressionists often employed an "impasto", or use of a heavier/thicker brushstroke. Along with layering, they often used bright colored strokes next to one another to



Figure 1. *The Cafe Concert* by Edouard Manet

create more vibrant and intense interactions of color. They rarely used pure black and mixed their colors on the canvas.

They portrayed modern daily life and subjects that might not be considered "high art". Their use of composition employed strong visual movement and unusual angles.

How did the Impressionists get that name?

The term Impressionism was coined from a painting by Claude Monet titled "Impression Soleil Levant (Impression at



Figure 2. *Impression Soleil Levant* by Claude Monet

Sunrise)”. The name was originally used as an insult, but since the Impressionists explore the way the eye sees images in a moment in time, the artists adopted the name.

Who were some famous Impressionists?

Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Mary Cassatt, Cezanne, Renoir, Sisley, and Pissarro were some of the most famous of the Impressionists. Edouard Manet was a great influence on the Impressionists, and they embraced him as part of their group.

Vincent Van Gogh is considered a Post-Impressionist.

How can I learn to be an artist like the characters in *Impressions of Yesterday*?



Figure 3. Maternal Caress 1896 by Mary Cassatt

Take art classes! Study the Impressionists by reading about them. Learn how to make Impressionist art through classes or even videos. As they say in our play, “Keep your eyes and your mind open, and capture whatever makes an impression.”

To learn more, visit:

NEA Exploring Impressionism: <http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/exploring-impersonism-6-8.html>

For activities, video, and background information on Impressionism.

The Art Story: <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-impersonism.htm>

For an online gallery of Impressionist works.

Quincy Art Center: <http://quincyartcenter.org/>

For classes or updates on local art exhibitions.

Quincy Community Theatre: <http://www.1act.org/>

For information on more plays like *Impressions of Yesterday*.