

MONET

Christoph Heinrich



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MONET (I) #BASICART

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Cartonato

cm 21,0 x 26,0, 96 pp.

italiano

9783836504027

10,00€

Disponibilità Immediata

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Il principe degli impressionisti

Catturare il volto mutevole della realtà

Chiamato il "principe degli impressionisti", **Claude Monet (1840–1926)** rivoluzionò le aspettative circa il fine della pittura su tela. Rompendo con la tradizione artistica dei secoli precedenti, cercava di **rendere non solo la realtà ma l'atto di percepirla**.

Lavorando *en plein air* con pennellate rapide e impetuose, studiava il gioco della luce sui colori, i motivi decorativi e i contorni delle cose e il modo in cui tali impressioni visive colpiscono l'occhio.

L'interesse di Monet per questo spazio tra il soggetto e l'artista abbracciava anche la **natura effimera** di ogni immagine che vediamo. Nella sua amata **serie di ninfee**, come nei **dipinti dei pioppi**, dei **covoni** e della **cattedrale di Rouen**, l'artista tornava a raffigurare lo stesso soggetto in diverse stagioni, condizioni atmosferiche e ore del giorno, per esplorare la costante mutevolezza visiva del nostro ambiente.

Questo libro offre un'introduzione essenziale a un artista la cui opera rifletteva al tempo stesso sul fine della pittura e sul trascorrere del tempo, riuscendo in tal modo a trasformare irrevocabilmente il corso della storia dell'arte.

La collana:

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

Christoph Heinrich ha studiato storia dell'arte, teatro e letteratura tedesca a Vienna e a Monaco. Dal 1994 al 2007 ha lavorato presso la Hamburger Kunsthalle, dove è stato nominato curatore della Galerie der Gegenwart nel 1997. Dal 2007 è curatore di arte moderna e contemporanea al Denver Art Museum. È inoltre autore di numerosi scritti sull'arte del Novecento e sull'arte contemporanea.

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The changes admittedly had startling social consequences, making a handful of property speculators rich and banishing much of the poorer, traditional population of Paris to the suburbs; but they also prompted a prosperity and splendour that the young artists evidently found attractive. Thus Monet too painted the new metropolis with its carriages and its promenading citizens.

He himself, it is true, had little share in the prosperity of the time. Repeatedly rebuffed by the Salon, without any dependable patron, he struggled to get by on occasional commissions and the support of friends. His family refused him an allowance, disapproving of the fact that he was living with Camille, a woman of humble origins. Bazille, who was better off financially, frequently took Monet under his wing, sharing his own studio with him and even buying *Women in the Garden*. He paid 2,500 francs for it – a high price for a work by an unknown – and doled the money out in monthly instalments of 50 francs. This well-meant patronage was still not sufficient for Monet's rent, food and painting materials, though – so he pretended to his family that he and Camille had separated. They promptly reinstated him, and he spent the summer of 1867 at his aunt's country house at Sainte-Adresse, writing to Bazille of his concern and asking him to look after Camille, who had stayed in Paris. Camille was pregnant, and on 8 August



Flowering Garden, c. 1868
oil on canvas, 64.3 x 53.3 cm
17 1/2 x 21 in.
donated by
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gave birth to their first son, Jean. Monet remained in Normandy, playing the family part expected of him in the hope of assuring the support of his relatives. "For two weeks," he wrote to Bazille on 26 June, "I have been in the bosom of my family, and am as happy as is possible. They are all nice to me, and go into raptures at every brushstroke. I have a good deal to do, about twenty seascapes, figures and gardens."

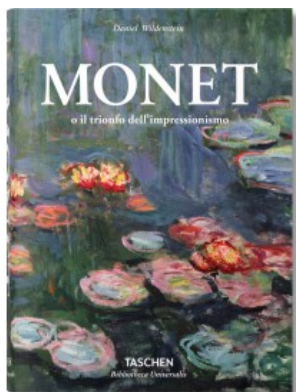
Gardens were to engage Monet his whole life long. He had hit upon this theme the year before at Sainte-Adresse, and was gripped by the colourfulness and opulence of flower gardens. The gleam and luxuriance of gardens allowed him a pretext to pursue the power and effects of light and colour to the full. The sunlight in *Flowering Garden* (ill. p. 20) awakens colour from the earthen sleep it had been kept in by realist art, with luminous red brightened by white and especially by the lush, rich complementary green. In *Garden at Sainte-Adresse* (ill. p. 21) the flowers and light have been combined with Monet's first subject, water. This picture was probably painted in the same year after *Flowering Garden*, and the figure in the foreground, as Monet later reported, is his father. The brushwork is not as relaxed as in the Paris paintings, and the figures, as well as the terrace and the sea, are oddly stiff and schematic; but still, in its use of sunlight the painting goes beyond *Women in the Garden*. For the first time,

Garden at Sainte-Adresse, 1867
Oil on canvas, 68.1 x 52.9 cm (26 7/8 x 21 in.)
Waldenstein 95
New York: (NY), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, special contribution and fund given or bequeathed by friends of the Museum 1967 (67.241)

Monet binds the sunlight, sea, figures and flowers into a composition that must have seemed daring at the time. His use of colour and his brushwork, though, were still closer to his earlier work than that to Impressionism.

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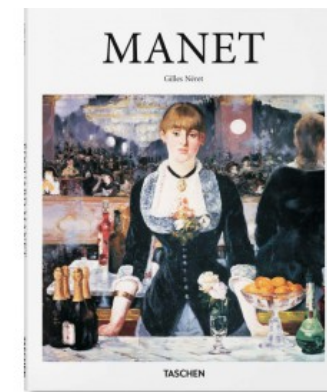
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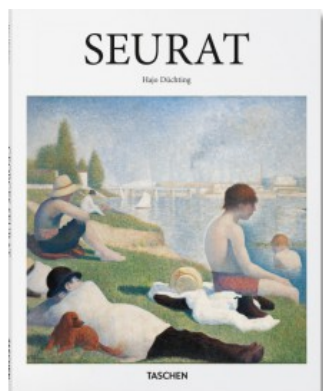
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