

## CLAUDE MONET

### 1. **A CHANGING PLACE**

Claude Monet enjoyed painting the same subject – a landscape or cityscape – at different times of day or in different seasons. Why do you think he wanted to try this? What changes happen in a scene as the morning becomes afternoon? Or evening? Or summer becomes fall? Or winter becomes spring? Is there a favorite place you go (your house, a playground or park, farm or country place, etc.) at different times and seasons? What is it you like about that place? Have students fold a paper in half or fourths and draw a favorite outdoor place in two or four different ways, either changing the time of day or the season. Allow some time for sharing when the pictures are finished.

### 2. **GETTING SKETCHY**

The Impressionists were criticized for painting in an unfinished or sketchy way. But they wanted to capture a moment in time. Which pictures do you remember from the video that seemed sketchy? Have you ever made a sketch or drawn really quickly? Collect photos of places (landscapes and cityscapes) so that there is a classroom set. (Old calendars are a great source for these.) Have crayons or chalks and many sheets of paper at hand for each student. Then ask each student to make a one or two minute sketch capturing as much of the scene as they can – with quick strokes. Remind them that they won't have time to add too many details. Demonstrate if you can. Then ring a bell after two minutes and ask students to exchange photos and try it again. Do this as many times as interest holds, then save some time to share and discuss. Did anyone find sketching difficult? Did it get easier? Does it look more real or less real than when a picture has lots of details?

### 3. **WATER AND FLOWERS**

Monet created his beautiful water garden at Giverny and used it as his subject over and over again. Water is constantly changing because it reflects the world around it, and moves. Hang some prints with water as a subject in the room and/or photographs of large bodies of water. Also, bring in fresh or artificial flowers. Have students use watercolor paints directly, without a pencil sketch, to paint water and flowers together in a composition. They may want to try the technique of wetting the paper first, so that the paint flows freely on the paper. If you have access to music, play some Impressionist music by composers Claude Debussy or Maurice Ravel as the students work.

### 4. **CARICATURES**

As a boy and young man, Monet loved to draw funny pictures or caricatures of people. What makes a caricature different from a realistic drawing of a person? (exaggeration) What features can an artist exaggerate? Have you ever seen an artist draw a caricature? Where was this? Give the students mirrors and ask them to try drawing a caricature of themselves, using exaggeration. They may want to try Monet's technique of making the head much larger than the body. (You may want to remind the students that their cartoons should be funny, not cruel or inappropriate.)

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### 5. *CREATE YOUR OWN SALONS*

The Impressionists like Monet were painting in a new way that wasn't immediately accepted. What was the older way of painting? (The older way of painting was dark, it usually told a story from the Bible, mythology or history.) How were the Impressionists different? (The Impressionists painted the world around them – modern subjects like a train station or people enjoying a picnic in a park. They painted with light, bright colors, often working outdoors instead of in a studio.)

As shown in the video, at the Salons, paintings were hung in rows way up to the top of a high wall. Being close to eyelevel was the most desirable place to have your painting hung. Today, the style of art museum display is very different. Have any students been to an art museum lately? Can you describe how the paintings were hung, and the sculpture displayed?

In teams, using a variety of art materials, students create miniature versions of Monet's great paintings, complete with fancy frames. They can include works by other Impressionists (Renoir, Sisley, Boudin, Pissarro, Bazille, Manet, Morisot, Cassatt, Degas) and artists of the time (1870 – 1890) who were painting in the more traditional way also. If computers are available they may also want to copy and print small reproductions of Impressionist work from the Internet.

They can then use tag board or cardboard to construct a gallery space – a floor and two or three walls and then “hang” their exhibition. Will every painting produced by the team be included? How can the work best be displayed for viewing? Students may want to construct miniature gallery visitors, benches, architectural details, etc. Older students may want to research the Salons of Paris and the Impressionists exhibitions as part of the project.