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FLEETING AND ETERNAL: CLAUDE MONET'S IMPRESSIONS

lecture by Dr. Katie Hanson

It is a miracle. It is almost a paradox that one can, with impasto on canvas, create impalpable matter, trap the sun. And yet, it is not a miracle, it is not a paradox: it is the logical outcome of the art of M. Claude Monet.

--- novelist and art critic Octave Mirbeau in 1904

The indeterminate and the vague are modes of expression that have a reason for existing and have their own characteristics, through them sensations become lasting.

--- Claude Monet

The artworks created by French artist Claude Monet (1840-1926) contain many seeming paradoxes of immediacy and infinity, *plein air* observation and studio revision, the appearance of ease and the practice of struggle. We come closer to the man himself, to his thoughts and his painterly practice, through these poles of experience and through his words.

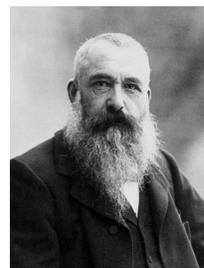
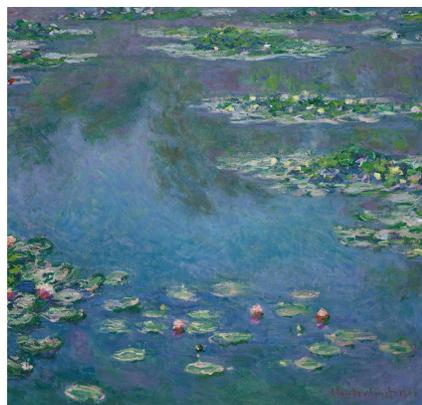


photo by Nadar, 1899



Monet's thoughts on painting continue to resonate strongly still in his letters and in interviews, nearly one hundred years after his death. He carefully read reviews of his work, sometimes penning a note of thanks to an article's author, and his poetic and literary friends likewise wrote about him. Seeing Monet's paintings in the context of his observations and opinions, and those of his valued peers, affords us insights into his painterly practice and allows us to see his acclaimed works of art anew.

Dr. Katie Hanson is Curator of European Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Her recent projects at the MFA include exhibitions dedicated to Claude Monet, Paul Cézanne, Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, as well as the medium of pastel in the age of Impressionism. Hanson was the lead curator for the 2021 Melbourne Winter Masterpiece exhibition *French Impressionism from the Museum of Fine Arts Boston* at the National Gallery of Victoria. Her publications include contributions to anthologies, exhibition catalogues, and journals addressing artists from Jean-Honoré Fragonard to Henri Matisse and, in 2020, her newest book *Monet: Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*.



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