

IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING ON STAMPS

By George Speers



The impressionistic movement was a reaction to traditional art represented by Gainsborough who painted *The Blue Boy*. Other traditional painters include William Hogarth, Jan Reubens and Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The impressionists chose scenes from everyday life, especially outdoor scenes and people from ordinary life. They eliminated minor details, avoided black and brown and used short brushstrokes of primary colors, especially red, yellow and blue and complementary colors, especially green, purple and orange. Their aim was to present the naturalness and immediacy of a subject.

Among painters who were classified as impressionists were Frederic Bazille, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Berthe Morisot, Edouard Manet, Gustave Cailleboite, Pierre-

Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley and Camille Pissaro. Claude Monet was likely the most famous of them all.

Impressionists painted both human beings and natural scenes in various locations. There were scenes in cafes, in various arts settings, especially ballet and opera scenes, in parks, beside or in the water, including many boating scenes, in shops, in travel scenes and in the countryside.

Countries and issues

The country that features impressionist painting the most is obviously France, the birthplace of Monet. However, several other countries issued impressionist stamps including Australia, Poland, Guinea, Monaco, Sharjah, the U.S.A. and Great Britain.

France has several issues devoted to impressionism, including the set of ten stamps in the issue Normandy, Cradle of Impressionism (2010), which included three Monet paintings, including View of the Raven and the Water Lilies.

Australia issued a set of four stamps featuring Australian impressionist painters in 1989, Poland, a set of four stamps featuring Polish impressionists in 2005, Guinea, a set of six stamps featuring impressionist painters in 2010, Sharjah, an issue of a stamp featuring Winslow Homer's painting Stormy Waters in 1968 and Monaco, the Monet painting, Impression: Sunrise, in 1974.

The USA has issued some stamps featuring impressionist paintings. Mary Cassatt, Winslow Homer and J. A. M. Whistler were considered impressionists, but few stamps feature their paintings. There's a stamp featuring James A McNeill Whistler in the set of artists in the Famous Americans issue of 1940 and a sketch of Mary Cassatt in the 1986 issue on Great Americans. However, there are only six obvious impressionist paintings on American stamps. These include a painting of Winslow Homer entitled Breezing up in the Christmas issue of 1962, a painting entitled The Boating Party by Mary Cassatt, in the 1967 issue and four family paintings by Mary Cassatt in the 2003 issue.

In Canada, the Group of Seven painters were influenced by European impressionism, as were Suzor-Cote, Emily Carr and David Milne. Stamps featuring their paintings were issued by Canada.