

= Skaters in the Bois de Boulogne =

Skaters in the Bois de Boulogne (French : Les patineurs à Longchamp) is an oil @-@ on @-@ canvas landscape painting by the French artist Pierre @-@ Auguste Renoir , created during the winter of 1868 . The painting depicts a snowscape with a large number of Parisians , young and old , spending leisure time on a frozen park lake . Due to Renoir 's strong dislike of cold temperatures and snow , the piece is one of his few winter landscapes .

= Background =

Pierre @-@ Auguste Renoir (1841 ? 1919) first met landscape painters Alfred Sisley (1839 ? 1899) , Claude Monet (1840 ? 1926) , and figure painter Frédéric Bazille (1841 ? 1870) at the art studio of Swiss artist Charles Gleyre in 1861 . In addition to their friendship , all would prove influential in Renoir 's work . For the next several years , Renoir attended the École des Beaux @-@ Arts . He first exhibited a large painting at the Salon in 1863 , but destroyed his work . That same year , Renoir was living in a studio with Bazille who introduced him to Paul Cézanne (1839 ? 1906) and Camille Pissarro (1830 ? 1903) .

An early painting , The Cabaret of Mère Anthony (1866) , represents for Renoir " some of the most agreeable memories " of his life with friends at a village inn during this time . He soon moved to the village of Chailly near Marlotte and the forest of Fontainebleau , and began working with model Lise Tréhot who posed for him between 1866 and 1872 . Renoir began painting at La Grenouillère , a popular middle class day resort with a floating dance hall , in late 1868 . Like Monet and several other Impressionists , Renoir worked en plein air , painting outdoors , but unlike Monet , who was known for painting in the cold and snow , Renoir was not fond of cold temperatures . Years later , he told art dealer Ambroise Vollard that he could not stand the cold : " But then , even if you can stand the cold , why paint snow ? It is a blight on the face of Nature . " Although it is unknown when his symptoms began , Renoir was known to suffer from rheumatoid arthritis from at least 1892 onward , an affliction which would severely restrict his artistic production in late life .

= Description =

Renoir , who was then 26 years old , painted Skaters in the Bois de Boulogne in the public park of Bois de Boulogne in Paris en plein air during the cold winter month of January 1868 . Newspaper accounts of the time recorded freezing temperatures allowing people to walk across the Seine and ice skate on rivers and streams . Due to Renoir 's dislike of cold temperatures , it is one of the few winter landscapes he completed aside from a few minor studies . At the time of the painting , the park itself was relatively new , with construction beginning in 1852 under a public works program led by Georges @-@ Eugène Haussmann under the direction of Napoleon III . Under Haussmann 's renovation of Paris , the Bois de Boulogne was completed in 1858 .

The scene is thought to have been painted near the Lac pour le patinage (Skating Lake) , an artificial lake . Renoir chose the park because he preferred painting crowds . The painting has an unfinished , sketch @-@ like quality to it , in the style of a pochade , but the brushwork is bold and the composition fully realized . The scene represents the western part of the park , using an elevated perspective . The theme evokes older Dutch ice skating landscapes made popular by painters like Hendrick Avercamp (1585 ? 1634) . Several dogs can be seen in the work , reflecting Renoir 's thematic interest in the lives of the Parisian bourgeoisie . The motif of social leisure depicted in the piece would come to define Renoir 's subsequent work .

= Other work =

There are at least four known snowscapes by Renoir : Skaters in the Bois de Boulogne (1868) ; Winter Landscape (1868) ; Snowy Landscape (1870 ? 75) ; and another work also titled Snowy Landscape (1875) . Along with Skaters in the Bois de Boulogne , Renoir would return to the

imagery of the Bois de Boulogne years later with a large painting called The Morning Ride (1873) , alternatively titled Madame Henriette Darras , which was rejected by the Salon in that year .

= = Provenance = =

The piece is currently held in the private art collection of William I. Koch , who lent the work for exhibition by the Museum of Fine Arts , Boston in 2005 . Previous owners include :

Ambroise Vollard

The Marquess of Northampton

Richard L. Feigen & Co .