

# Pierre Auguste Renoir

(aw-GOOST ren-WAHR)  
French painter

1841 – 1919

78



**Renoir** was born into a working-class family. As a boy he worked in a porcelain factory where his drawing talents led to being chosen to paint designs on fine china, hangings, and fans. Later, he enrolled in art school. He often visited the Louvre to study the French master painters.

In 1862 (21), he began studying art in Paris and met Alfred **Sisley**, Frédéric **Bazille**, and Claude **Monet**. At times, he did not have enough money to buy paint.

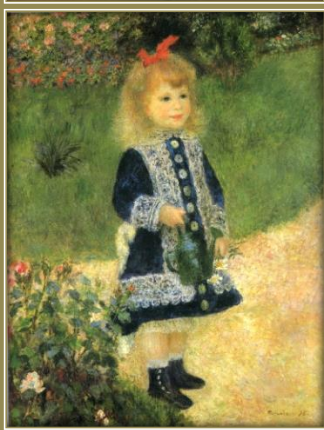
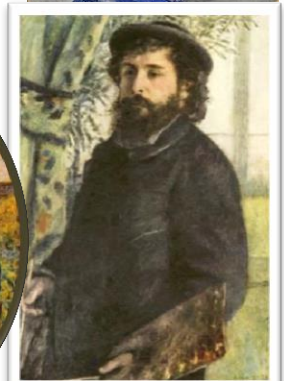
Renoir started exhibiting at the Paris Salon in 1864, but recognition did not come for over ten years, due, in part, to the turmoil of the Franco-Prussian War.

During the 1871 (30) Paris Commune, Renoir was painting at the Seine River. A group of *Communards* came upon him and, thinking that he was a spy, were about to throw him into the river when a *Commune* leader recognized Renoir as the man who had protected him on an earlier occasion.

Initial acclaim came when six of Renoir's paintings were hung in the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 (33).

In 1881 (40), he traveled, viewing the works of: **Delacroix** (Algeria), Diego **Velázquez** (Madrid), **Titian** and **Raphael** (Italy). Renoir met the composer Richard **Wagner** at home in Sicily. He painted Wagner's portrait in 35 minutes. He contracted pneumonia, which permanently damaged his respiratory system, and he had to convalesce for six weeks in Algeria.

In 1883 (42), Renoir spent the summer in Guernsey. In about a month he created 15 paintings, which were the subject of a set of commemorative postage stamps issued in 1983.

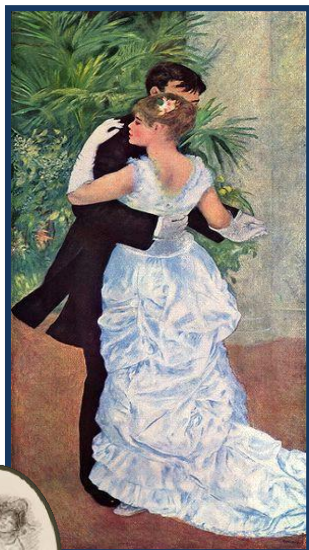
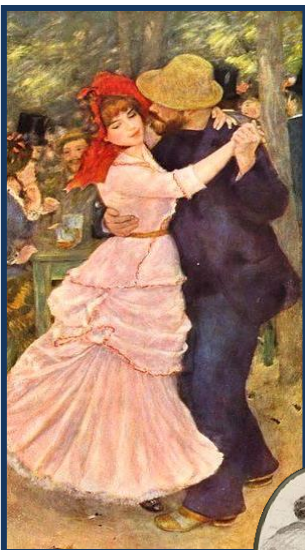


*Self-portrait, 1876 (35). Lise Sewing, 1866 (25). Portrait of Alfred Sisley, 1868 (27). Portrait of Claude Monet, 1875 (34). Claude Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil, 1873 (32). Jeanne Durand-Ruel, 1876 (35). The Theatre Box, 1874 (33). Richard Wagner, 1881 (40). A Girl with a Watering Can, 1876 (35). Children at the Beach at Guernsey, 1883 (44).*





In 1890 (49), he married Aline Charigot, who had modeled for *Luncheon of the Boating Party*, 1881 (40), and with whom he had a child, Pierre, in 1885 (44). After his marriage, Renoir painted many scenes of his wife, children and daily family life. The Renoirs had three sons. Pierre became a stage and film actor and Jean became a filmmaker.



Around 1892 (52), Renoir developed rheumatoid arthritis. In 1907 (66), he moved to the warmer climate of a farm close to the Mediterranean coast.

Renoir kept painting, even when arthritis severely limited his movement and he was wheelchair-bound. Progressive deformities in his hands and ankylosis of his right shoulder required changing techniques. The reports that in the advanced stages of arthritis Renoir painted by having a brush strapped to his hand is erroneous; he could grasp a brush, although an assistant needed to place it in his hand. The bandaging of his hands was used to prevent skin irritation.

*Luncheon of the Boating Party*, 1881 (40). *The Artist's Family*, 1896 (55). *Dance at Bougival*, 1882-1883 (41-42). *Dance in the City*, 1882-1883. Pencil study for *Dance in the Country*, 1883.

*Dance in the Country* (Aline Charigot and Paul Lhote), 1883 (42). *The Swing*, 1876 (35). Close up of model Aline, from *Dance in the Country*. Main source of document: Wikipedia. \*N





During this period, he created sculptures by cooperating with a young artist who worked the clay. He used a moving canvas, or picture roll, to facilitate painting large works with his limited joint mobility.

In 1919 (78), Renoir visited the Louvre to see his paintings hung there.

Renoir's paintings are notable for their vibrant light and saturated color, most often focusing on

people in intimate and candid compositions. The characters blend softly with their surroundings in the Impressionist style.

Renoir admired Gustave Courbet's and Édouard Manet's realism and his early work resembles theirs in his use of black. Renoir admired Edgar Degas' sense of movement. While painting *en plein air* (outdoors), he and Claude Monet found that the color of shadows is not brown or black, but the reflected color of the objects surrounding them, an effect known today as diffuse reflection. Several paintings exist in which Renoir and Monet, working side-by-side, depicted the same scenes.



One of the best known Impressionist works is Renoir's 1876 (35) *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette*. It depicts a popular dance garden on the *Butte Montmartre*, close to where he lived. It sold for \$78.1 million in 1990.

A prolific artist, he

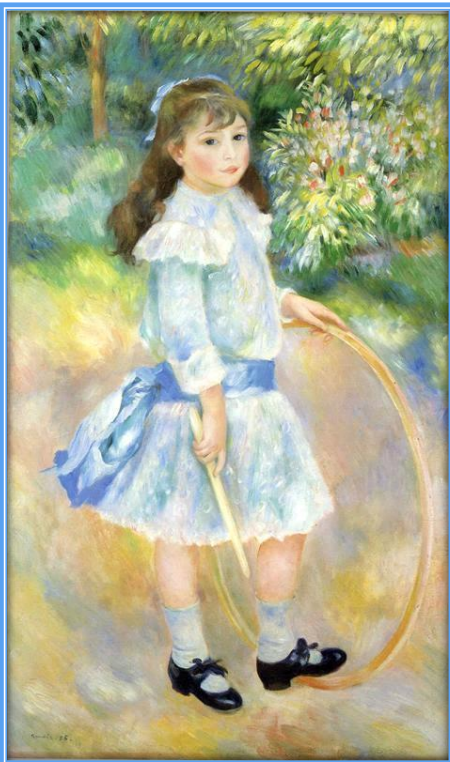
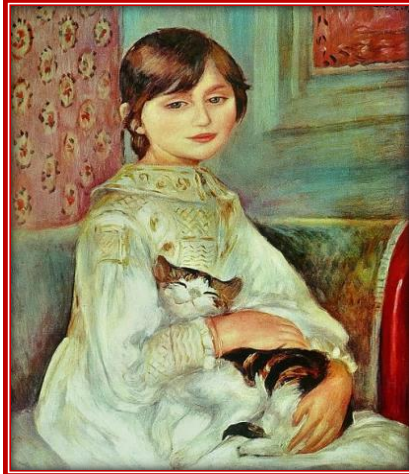


made thousands of paintings. The largest collection of 181 is at the Barnes Foundation, near Philadelphia, PA.

*Young Girl Holding at Bouquet of Tulips*, 1878 (37). *On the Terrace*, 1881 (40). *In the Garden*, 1885 (44). *Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette*, 1876 (35). Paul Cézanne, 1880 (39). *Pears and Apples*, 1890 (49).



In 2010, Renoir's 1879 *On the Shore of the Seine* was bought at a flea market for \$7 US. It was scheduled to be resold in 2012, but the auction was cancelled due to claims that the painting was stolen from the Baltimore museum in 1951.



*On the Shore of the Seine*, 1879 (38).  
*Girls at the Piano*, 1892 (51). *Julie Manet with cat*, 1887 (46). *By the Water*, 1880 (39).  
*Mme. Charpentier and her children*, 1878 (37). *Portrait of Berthe Morisot and daughter Julie Manet*, 1894 (53).  
*Boating Couple* (Aline Charigot and Renoir) 1880-1881 (39 - 40).  
*Girl With a Hoop*, 1885 (44). *Gabrielle Renard and infant son Jean Renoir*, 1895 (54). *"Jeune garçon sur la plage d'Yport"*, 1883 (42). *Self-portrait*, 1910 (69).

