

FAMILY GUIDE

French Paintings at the National Gallery of Art

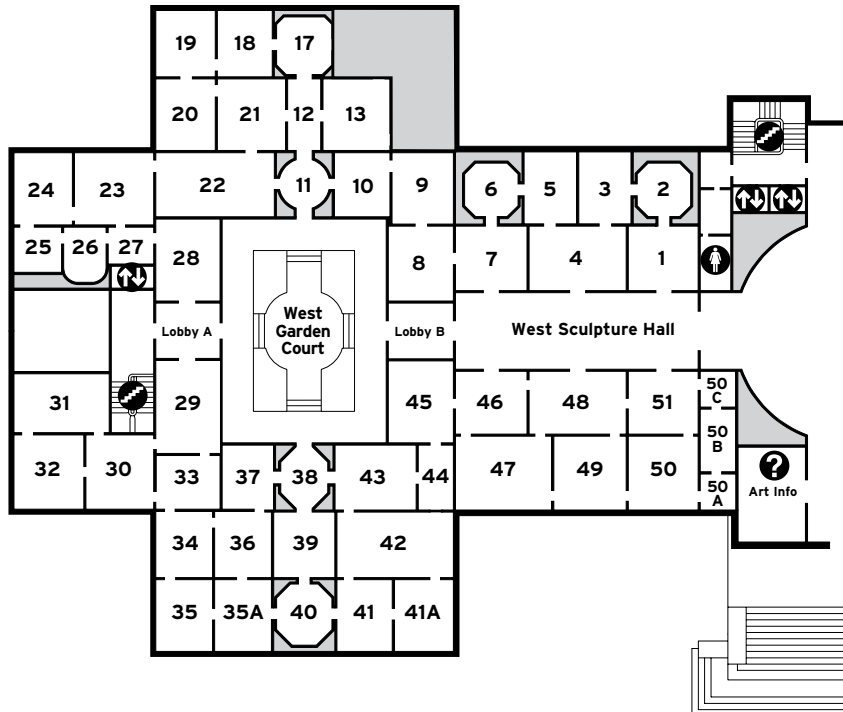


**ages
6 and up**



Welcome to the Gallery's Collection of French Art

West Building, Main Floor



**Mall
Entrance**

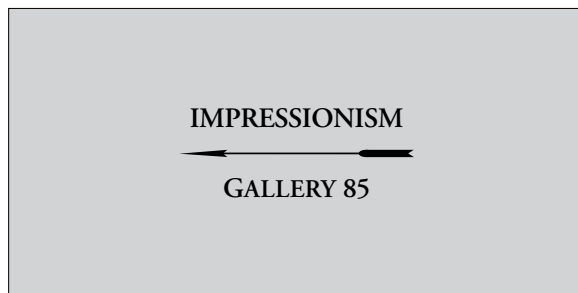
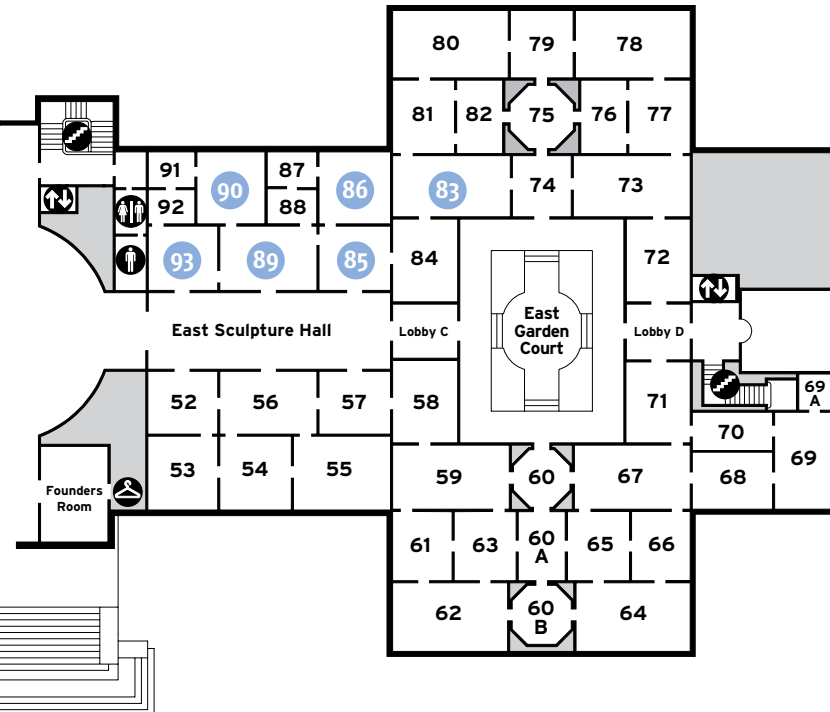


Remember to explore paintings with your eyes only; do not touch. If you stand about three feet away from the art, you will have a perfect view.

Feel free to **write** and **draw** in this book and use it to start discussions about the art you find.

Ages 6 to 8 may need help from an adult.

Ages 9 and up may enjoy working independently.



Gallery numbers are located on wall plaques between rooms.

"I Hear the Voices of the Trees." – Théodore Rousseau



A nineteenth-century advertisement for artists' outdoor equipment

Artists like those who painted the wooded scenes in Gallery 93 went to the countryside to make art *en plein air* (“in the open air”). They brought portable equipment— easels, umbrellas, tubes of paint—to outdoor locations like the beach and the woods.

Many artists worked in the large forests surrounding Paris. Some of the trees there were hundreds of years old and so loved that people named them. At Fontainebleau, “Snow White” (*La Reine Blanche*) was a favorite among painters and photographers who stored their paints and equipment in her generous hollow trunk.

Find paintings in Gallery 93 with huge old trees.
Choose the one you like best.



“Snow White”

Title of painting: _____

Artist: _____

Describe your tree and **imagine** its personality.
 What does your tree’s trunk, bark, and leaves look like?

Can you see its roots? _____

Is it healthy or sick? Alive or dead? Look and explain.

Describe the land around your tree:

Color of the earth _____

Water _____

Rocks or boulders _____

Ground cover _____

Where is it?

___ Inside a forest

___ Beside a stream or lake

___ On a hill

___ In a field

___ Somewhere else: _____

What is the weather like? _____

Based on the information you have, **describe** your tree's personality:

Strong and silent

Dreary

Friendly

Big

Broken

Other: _____

Now, **name** your tree! _____



GALLERY

89



Modern Paris: Life in Motion

The artists in this room saw Paris change from a medieval town with narrow cobblestone streets into a modern city of wide, walkable boulevards, bridges, and parks. Many of them strolled outside, sketching and painting right in the middle of the fast-paced city life around them.

Find and **check** the characteristics of “modern Paris” you see in paintings in this room:

- ___ Wide, straight, and tree-lined streets
- ___ Tall buildings
- ___ Paved bridges
- ___ Public monuments and gardens
- ___ People walking around the city
- ___ Cafés
- ___ Nightlife
- ___ All kinds of people, from rags to riches

Choose a favorite painting in this room.

Title of painting: _____

Look and **listen**.

Describe the sounds you hear in your painted scene:

Look for the ways young artists in Paris captured the jumble of city life. **Circle** when you find:

Formal outings **Daily activities** **Grand views**

Crowded streets **Loneliness**



Study a scene that attracts you.

Sketch a detail from it. Add color now or later.

A large empty rectangular box for sketching a detail from the chosen painting.

Title of painting: _____

GALLERY

85

Impressionism: The Colors of Light and Shadow



The artists in this room, called impressionists, captured the way light and shadow change minute to minute in nature. Up close, their paintings look like mosaics of squiggles, drags, and dabs of color. Stand back, and the scenes take shape!

The famous impressionist Claude Monet tells us colors and forms do not always match our expectations:

When you go out to paint, try to forget what objects you have before you, a tree, a house . . . whatever. Merely think here is a little square of blue, here an oblong of pink . . . and paint it just as it looks to you.



Test Monet's advice.

Stand back and **look** at the paintings around you.

Choose a favorite painting in Gallery 85. **Describe** what is happening in the painting:



Take a closer look.

Circle the colors you see in your painting:

Red Orange Yellow Pink Black Brown

Green Blue Purple White Gray



Squiggle



Drag



Dabs

Check the types of light you see:

Sparkles Glares Shadows

Sunshine Ripples Glints

Other: _____

Now, take an even closer look!

Find an object in your painting made up of squiggles, drags, or dabs of color.

You can look at other paintings in the room if you don't see it on yours.

Describe the colors and paint strokes you see.

Are there any unexpected colors? Yes No

Explain: _____

Draw as You Dream

Artist Paul Gauguin wrote:

Don't copy nature too literally . . . draw art as you dream in nature's presence, and think more about the act of creation than about the final result.



Walk around Gallery 83 and **look** at works of art by Paul Gauguin, Edgar Degas, and Vincent van Gogh (read their biographies on page 12).

Look for the ways they combine dreamlike elements in otherwise realistic scenes. **Find** paintings or sculptures that have these qualities:



Curvy outlines

title: _____

Flattened spaces

title: _____

Electric colors

title: _____



Exaggerated textures

title: _____

Repeated patterns

title: _____

Make your own drawing here using the design elements you see in Gallery 83.



Edgar Degas

The sophisticated Degas grew up in France's capital, Paris, studying art at the city's museums and art schools. He made its people (especially ballet dancers) and modern life his main subjects.



Vincent van Gogh

Dutch-born, he never felt truly home regardless of where he lived. He read deeply, loved art, and tried to root himself in the south of France. His emotions can be seen in his brushstrokes.



Paul Gauguin

Born in Peru, raised in Paris, he was forever drawn to out-of-the-way places like Brittany, Martinique, and the islands of French Polynesia. In his art, he transformed ancient customs and gentle landscapes into vivid fantasies.

Mary Cassatt

At age 22, she moved to Paris, where women had better chances of becoming professional artists. Today you probably saw many paintings of women, but not many *by* women. Cassatt was one of only four women to exhibit with the impressionist painters and the only American.



Camille Pissarro

Born on the Caribbean island paradise of Saint Thomas, Pissarro went to boarding school in France. Afterward he settled in the Parisian countryside with his love Julie Vellay. They had seven children. He became well known for paintings of village life and nature.



Write your autobiography. Tell us about yourself: Where do you come from? What do you love to do? Did you find a favorite artist today?

GALLERIES

85

86

89

90

Working Title

Many works of art here once had more interesting names. For example, Claude Monet's *Woman with a Parasol—Madame Monet and Her Son* (Gallery 85) was poetically called *La Promenade (The Walk)*.

As you can see, a good title is often short and suggestive rather than long and descriptive.

Suggest some new names for these paintings:

Edgar Degas, current title: *Woman Viewed from Behind* (Gallery 89)

Your **new** title: _____

Berthe Morisot, current title: *The Mother and Sister of the Artist* (Gallery 86)

Your **new** title: _____

Édouard Manet, current title: *The Dead Toreador* (Gallery 90)

Your **new** title: _____



Captions

All images in this booklet are details from paintings in the National Gallery of Art collection, unless otherwise noted:

Cover

Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, Chester Dale Collection

Auguste Renoir, *Oarsmen at Chatou*, 1879, Gift of Sam A. Lewisohn

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Advertisement for E. Mary et Fils, Paris, in *Salon de 1888*, Catalogue illustré (Paris, 1881), 351, National Gallery of Art Library

Gustave Le Gray, *Tree, Fontainebleau*, 1856, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Museum purchase with funds provided by the Brown Foundation Accessions Endowment Fund, The Manfred Heiting Collection

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Horace Vernet, *Departure for the Hunt in the Pontine Marshes*, 1833, Chester Dale Fund

Constant Troyon, *The Approaching Storm*, 1849, Chester Dale Fund

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *Forest of Fontainebleau*, 1834, Chester Dale Collection

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Auguste Renoir, *Pont Neuf, Paris*, 1872, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection

Camille Pissarro, *Boulevard des Italiens, Morning, Sunlight*, 1897, Chester Dale Collection

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Edgar Degas, *Woman Ironing*, begun c. 1876, completed c. 1887, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Édouard Manet, *Plum Brandy*, c. 1877, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Édouard Manet, *Masked Ball at the Opera*, 1873, Gift of Mrs. Horace Havemeyer in memory of her mother-in-law, Louisine W. Havemeyer

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Claude Monet, *Woman with a Parasol—Madame Monet and Her Son*, 1875, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Camille Pissarro, *The Artist's Garden at Eragny*, 1898, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection

Auguste Renoir, *Oarsmen at Chatou*, 1879, Gift of Sam A. Lewisohn

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Edgar Degas, *Four Dancers*, c. 1899, Chester Dale Collection

Paul Gauguin, *Fatata te Miti (By the Sea)*, 1892, Chester Dale Collection

Vincent van Gogh, *La Mousmé*, 1888, Chester Dale Collection

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Watercolor-and-ink illustration by Susanna Fields-Kuehl

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Edgar Degas, *Self-Portrait with White Collar*, c. 1857, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney

Paul Gauguin, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, Chester Dale Collection

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Mary Cassatt, *Portrait of the Artist*, 1878, gouache on wove paper laid down to buff-colored wood-pulp paper, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Edith H. Proskauer, 1975 (1975.319.1). Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image source: Art Resource, NY

Camille Pissarro, *Self-Portrait (Camille Pissarro, par lui-même)*, c. 1890, Rosenwald Collection

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Edgar Degas, *Woman Viewed from Behind*, unknown date, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Berthe Morisot, *The Mother and Sister of the Artist*, 1869–1870, Chester Dale Collection

Édouard Manet, *The Dead Toreador*, probably 1864, Widener Collection

Back Cover

Photograph of Amedeo Modigliani, Courtesy Lebrecht Music and Art Photographs, London

Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Waistcoat*, 1888–1890, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

Written by Heidi Nasstrom Evans and Barbara Moore with drawings and support from Susanna Fields-Kuehl, department of education publications, and Mary Morton, department of French paintings, National Gallery of Art, Washington

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Amedeo
Modigliani

Pocket Pal

Many artists you looked at today influenced one another. Amedeo Modigliani, whose paintings hang in Gallery 80, kept a picture of Paul Cézanne's *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* (in Gallery 84) in his pocket for inspiration. We include it here for you to take home, cut out, and keep close to your heart. We hope it inspires you to do great things!



Paul Cézanne, *Boy in a Red Waistcoat*

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