



NORTON
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Claude Monet (French, 1840-1926)
Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera, 1884
Oil on canvas
28 3/4 x 36 5/8 in. (73 x 93 cm)
Bequest of R. H. Norton, 53.134

TAKE A LOOK



NORTON
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A CLOSER LOOK
EUROPEAN COLLECTION

Claude Monet
Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera, 1884

ABOUT



The Artwork

Claude Monet's *Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera*, 1884, captures the artist's sensations of light and atmosphere in the Mediterranean setting, as well as his fascination with the beautiful landscape of the Italian Riviera. A cascade of palms dominates the right third of the painting; Monet's vigorous painted brushstrokes define individual fronds in brilliant sunlight and in shade. The darker fronds echo the patterns of shadows that dapple the path in the central foreground. This trail appears small, as if it might be engulfed by the lush trees and bushes; however, the path leads the viewer from the foreground shadows into the sunlit center of the landscape. Here, a stand of trees reflects the pink light that Monet considered characteristic of the region. The skyline of Bordighera, featuring the tower of a church, appears beyond the trees. The buildings are essential to Monet's composition. Their paler tones, as well as their scale, offer a sense of perspective to the scene. Their geometry provides a dramatic contrast to the colors, shapes and patterns defining the natural world on the Mediterranean coast that Monet found irresistible to paint.

The Artist

Claude Monet (1840-1926) is one of the most famous painters of the Impressionist style. While some Impressionists were most interested in representing the modern urban world, painters like Monet focused on translating into paint the way our eyes see the light and color of nature at different times of day and in different types of weather. These artists sought to record the natural world as directly as possible. Unlike earlier landscape painters who sketched outdoors and painted inside, Monet lived at a time when new, commercially available artists' materials, such as paint in tubes, made it possible to work easily outdoors. New transportation innovations, such as train travel, allowed artists to gain inspiration from faraway places. He and his Impressionist colleagues were also aware of new theories concerning optics and how the use of complementary colors, placed side by side on the canvas, could enhance the brightness of the paint, making it seem like natural light. In *Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera*, an example of Monet's use of complementary colors can be seen in the relationship between the deep purple-red shadows next to the bright green palm fronds, or the orange clouds in the blue sky.

Monet became a very successful artist who was celebrated in his homeland of France and around the world. He was also a great influence on artists who came after him.

SEE



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Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera, 1884
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 Bequest of R. H. Norton, 53.134

THINK



Camille Pissarro (French, 1830-1903)
The Presbytery Garden, Knokke, 1894
 Oil on canvas
 25 5/8 x 31 7/8 in. (65.1 x 81 cm)
 Bequest of R. H. Norton, 53.125

Observe & Describe

Have students take a quiet moment to look carefully at the *Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera*.

As they take a closer look, first ask students: What do you see? Have students notice as many details as possible before moving to the next question. Ask them to describe lines, color, shapes and texture. Encourage even closer looking by asking the following questions:

- What else do you see?
- Is your eye drawn to a particular area? What makes you say that?
- How would you describe the brushstrokes?

Start a Conversation

Ask students to look even closer at the painting and describe what they see. Provide time for students to answer the following questions:

- Why do you think Monet decided to paint the brushstrokes this way?
- How do you think Monet creates perspective in this painting? Refer to the *Elements of Art* resource on norton.org/educators to find art vocabulary terms.
- Imagine you're inside the painting. What type of vegetation do you see? Where do you think he painted this painting?
- Is this a place you would want to visit? Why or why not?
- Why might Monet have chosen to paint outside instead of in an art studio?
- Railroads were new inventions in the 1800s. Why might train travel be important to Monet as an artist?

Let's Compare

The Presbytery Garden, Knokke

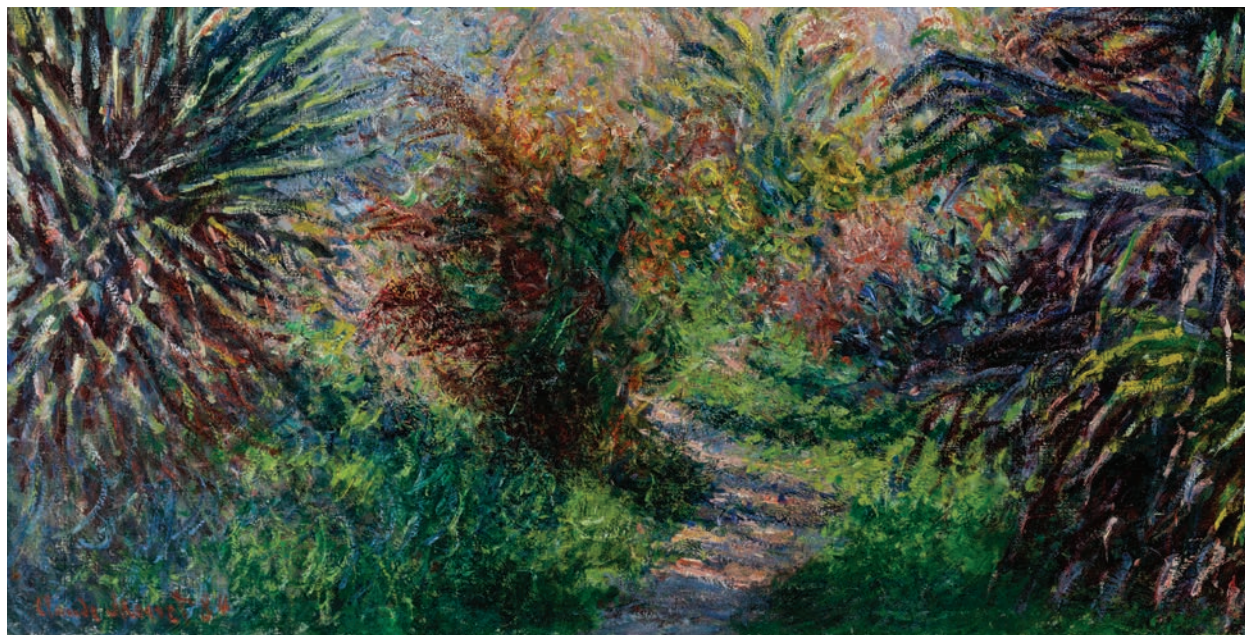
Camille Pissarro is one of the most famous painters of his time. In the 1860s, Pissarro studied at the Academie Suisse in Paris where he met Monet, Renoir, Sisley, and Cezanne. These artists came to be known as Impressionists, a label coined by a critic who called their works "mere impressions" of reality.

The Presbytery Garden, Knokke was one of at least 14 canvases that Pissarro painted while residing for three months in the seaside resort town of Knokke, Belgium in the summer of 1894. This work was painted in the gardens of the Marguerite Church and is a prime example of the Impressionist style: short brush strokes of bright color that capture flickering, outdoor light in the atmosphere.

Ask students the Observe and Describe questions for Camille Pissarro's artwork. Have students discuss the following:

- How are these artworks similar?
- How are these artworks different?
- Do you think they are painted in the same style? Why or why not?
- Where is the focal point in each painting? Refer to the *Elements of Art* resource on norton.org/educators to find art vocabulary terms.
- Which place painted by the artists would you rather visit? Why or why not?
- If the artists described the places in their paintings to one another, what would they say?

WONDER



For Older Students

- What have you discovered from looking at this work of art?
- Write a paragraph about *Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera* from the view of the artist. Why did you choose to paint here? What inventions helped you create this painting and how did they change the way you worked?
- Are there any inventions today that have changed the way you see our world?
- If you could create a new invention that helped you discover the world around you, what would it be? Why?

Classroom Discussion

Help students understand what it means to be an Impressionist painter! Introduce the Venn Diagram to your students and draw the diagram on the board. Have students look closely at the artworks by Monet and Pissarro and ask them to call out descriptive words about each work of art. As the discussion progresses ask: “Based on the words written in the middle of the diagram, what do you think are some characteristics of Impressionism?”

For Younger Students

Have your students work in pairs to answer the following questions.

- If you wanted to travel somewhere to paint outdoors, where would you go? Why?
- How would you get there?
- If you could create a new invention that helped you discover the world around you, what would it be? Why?

Ask them to share something they learned from their partner.

Make Personal Connections

Ask your students if there is anything they wonder about *Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera*. Allow time to invite multiple questions and thoughts into the discussion.

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Gardens of the Villa Morena, Bordighera, 1884 (detail)
Oil on canvas
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