



Art Appreciation Lecture Series 2015
Meet the Masters: Highlights from the Scottish National Gallery

Claude Monet: *Poplars on the Epte*, 1891
Anthea Callen
4/5 November 2015

Lecture summary:

This lecture considers Monet's *Poplars on the Epte* (1891) in the context of *plein air* oil sketching and the rise of landscape painting in nineteenth-century France. 'High' Impressionism is considered already on the wane by 1880, the year Monet exhibited at the Paris Salon for the first time in over a decade – rather than with his fellow Impressionists. By this date the group was more obviously divided in aims and loyalties, and for Monet the harsh criticism of Emile Zola left him feeling the need to produce more sustained and 'finished' works than had characterised the previous decade. During the 1880s he experimented with a wide range of motifs and effects, culminating in 1890 with the first of his 'Series' – the Grainstacks – exhibited in 1891. Looking first at the history of *plein air* painting, the lecture examines the materials and methods of Impressionism, and the apparently new path Monet took with his Series, including his choice of motifs.

Slide list:

1. Cover slide
2. Monet *Poplars on the Epte*, 1891. Oil on canvas, 81.80 x 81.30 cm. Edinburgh, NG Scotland
3. Info slide
4. Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, *Rome, Maisons domines par Dome*. c.1784? o/paper. Louvre
5. Parasols, Fontainebleau Forest, *L'illustration* 1849.
6. Daumier, *Les Paysagistes au travail* 1862
7. Corot, *Petit Chemin pres Ville d'Avray*, 1823-5. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
8. **LEFT:** Jules Coignet, *Painters on the Motif, Forest of Fontainebleau*, 1825; **RIGHT:** Daumier, "Can you see a civilised place where we can get a 12-egg omelette?," 'Les Artistes', 1849.
9. Camille Pissarro, *The Marne at Chennevières*, c1864-65, o/canvas. 91.5 x 145.5 cm
NG Scotland 2098. Salon exhibition scale 'studio' painting.
10. Info slide
11. Charles Daubigny, 'Le Réalisme', 1861, etching, British Museum, London
12. Monet *Poplars on the Epte*, 1891, Edinburgh, NG Scotland
13. Edouard Manet, *Monet working on his Floating Studio at Argenteuil*, 1874
14. Monet, *Bridge at Argenteuil, Grey Day*, c.1876, NGA Washington
15. Info slide
16. Top **LEFT:** Portable paint box, c.1820, T. Brown, High Holborn; Bottom **LEFT:** Lefranc colour chart, 1890; **RIGHT:** Lefranc tube specimens, c.1889.
17. Pissarro, *Palette with Landscape*, c.1878, Clark Institute.
18. Monet, *Gare St-Lazare, Paris*, 1877 o/c 54 x 74 cm. NG London
19. **Microphotographs of paint samples x200.** **LEFT:** 200x deep purple of station canopy: red lake + cobalt blue, cerulean blue, French ultramarine, viridian, emerald green and trace vermilion. **RIGHT:** 200x deep greenish blue shadow of station canopy: cobalt blue & cerulean blue + French ultramarine, viridian, emerald green, red lake, vermilion and white lead.
20. Commercially-prepared canvas, Bourgeois Aine 1906.
21. Techniques cover slide
22. Canvas priming, Lefranc-Bourgeois, 1978 (photo A Callen); Lefranc & Cie, Ready-prepared standard canvases, 1889.

23. Monet, *Snow at Amsterdam*, 1874
24. Ditto, detail
25. **LEFT:** Caricature: CHAM – *La Nouvelle Ecole*, 1878; **RIGHT:** Hogs hair brushes, c.1890
26. John Singer Sargent, *Monet Painting at the Edge of a Wood*, 1885? Tate
27. Photo: Monet working in his custom-built studio at Giverny, on the Water-lilies cycle c.1920
28. Monet, *Grainstack at Sunset, Frost*, 1891. 65 x 92 cm.
29. Ditto Detail
30. **LEFT:** Maurice Leloir, *Varnishing Day*, 1879; **TOP RIGHT:** Pissarro label warning against varnishing. **LOWER RIGHT:** Sisley, *Route de Louveciennes*, 1876, Courtauld Institute of Art - **half-cleaned/discoloured varnish**
31. Info slide
32. **Left:** Map of Giverny & environs. **Right:** The Poplar as the Tree of Liberty, c.1790s
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
33. Monet *Poplars on the Epte*, 1891, Oil on canvas, 81.80 x 81.30 cm. Edinburgh, NG Scotland
34. Georges Seurat, *La Luzerne* [Alfalfa], *Saint-Denis*, 1884–85. oil on canvas 65.3 x 81.3 cm
NG Scotland 2324
35. Monet, *Small boat on the Small Branch of the Seine at Argenteuil*, c.1872 o/c Private
Collection.
36. Monet *Poplars on the Epte*, 1891, Oil on canvas, 81.80 x 81.30 cm. Edinburgh, NG Scotland
37. Ditto Detail
38. Ditto Detail
39. Ditto Detail
40. Monet, *Poplars on the Epte*, 1891. o/c 93 x 74 cm. Tate, London. Grey ground
41. Monet, *Poplars (Wind Effect)*, 1891. 100 x 74 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris
42. Monet, *Poplars*, o/c, 89 x 92 cm. Fitzwilliam
43. Ditto Detail
44. Monet, *Poplars*, 1891, 93 x 74 cm. Philadelphia MoA
45. Monet, *The Four trees*, 1891. 81.9 x 81.6 cm Metrop Mus. NY

Reference:

John House, *Monet: Nature into Art*, Yale University Press, 1988

Paul Hayes Tucker, *Monet: The Series Paintings*, Yale University Press, 1990

Anthea Callen, *The Work of Art: plein air painting and artistic identity in nineteenth-century France*, Reaktion Books, 2015

Anthea Callen, 'Technique and Gender: Landscape, Ideology and the Art of Monet's Series Paintings', in Anna Gruetzner Robins and Steven Adams (eds.), *Gendering Landscape Art*, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp.26-44.

Impressionism: Art in the Making (National Gallery London Publications) [David Bomford, John Leighton, Jo Kirby, Ashok Roy], 1990.

For access to all past lecture notes visit:

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/members/current-members/member-events/meet-the-masters/>