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The Honest Eye: Camille Pissarro's Impressionism
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with:
- Ortrud Westheider, Director, Museum Barberini
- Christoph Heinrich, Director, Denver Art Museum
- Nerina Santorius, Curator and Collection Director, Museum Barberini
- Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts, Curator

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Following the press conference, curator Nerina Santorius will lead a tour of the exhibition.

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The Honest Eye: Camille Pissarro's Impressionism

Camille Pissarro is considered one of the founders of the Impressionist movement in France. His artistic beginnings, however, lay in the Caribbean and South America. These roots were combined with a painterly interest in scenes of everyday rural life and a sympathy for anarchism.
Pissarro's motifs are often simple and restrained in tone. Only at second glance do we discover the charm of their attentively observed details and carefully orchestrated harmonies, qualities that arise from the artist's respectful gaze, idealism, open-mindedness, and love of experimentation. Thematically, his images range from landscapes and gardens to family portraits, scenes of peasant life, and urban motifs such as the ports of Normandy and the bustling streets of Paris.

With the seven paintings by Pissarro in the Hasso Plattner Collection as the point of departure, augmented by over 100 works from fifty international collections, the exhibition *The Honest Eye: Camille Pissarro's Impressionism* offers a well-grounded overview of Pissarro's entire oeuvre while also revealing the social-utopian ideas that informed his art. The show is presented in cooperation with the Denver Art Museum, with loans from numerous renowned collections in the United States such as the Art Institute of Chicago, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the National Gallery in Washington, DC, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Other international lenders include the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen, the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, the Courtauld and the National Gallery, London, and the Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

With Camille Pissarro, an outsider became a key figure in Impressionism. After making his earliest studies *en plein air* in the Caribbean and Venezuela, he introduced a new perspective, free from academic norms, to the circle of Parisian artists. He also played a decisive role as a networker: he worked alongside Claude Monet in the region around Paris, introduced Paul Cézanne to the group, and advocated for the work of Mary Cassatt. He was also open to the concerns of the Neo-Impressionists, and unlike Monet and Renoir also exhibited with these younger artists.

Beginnings in the Caribbean and Studies in France

Born in 1830 in Charlotte Amalie in what was then the Danish Antilles, Pissarro spent his childhood in a multicultural environment. As the son of a prosperous Jewish merchant family with French-Portuguese roots, he belonged to the European minority of colonial officials and plantation owners. He maintained his Danish citizenship throughout his entire

life. After completing his schooling in France, Pissarro spent two years traveling through Venezuela in the company of the Danish painter Fritz Melbye. A preference for scenes of nature and the simple life of the rural folk is already apparent in the early works created during this journey.

In 1855, Camille Pissarro moved to France. In search of a new, contemporary aesthetic, he enrolled at the private Académie Suisse in Paris, where he encountered like-minded artists such as Claude Monet and Paul Cézanne. Pissarro's paintings from his early Paris years are marked by a new interest in the direct experience of the everyday environment. Camille Corot proved to be an important mentor for the young artist, and in the 1860s Pissarro followed in the footsteps of the Barbizon School, painting *en plein air* in the forest of Fontainebleau.

Cofounder of Impressionism

With the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Pissarro – a devoted father of eight children, five of whom reached adulthood – fled Paris with his family. In London, he met his later art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel and studied the works of John Constable and William Turner, a crucial stage in his search for a landscape painting marked by both realism and atmosphere.

When the family returned to France, Pissarro found that most of his works had been destroyed by soldiers. Despite the loss of over 1,000 pieces and only sporadic acceptance into the Paris Salon, Pissarro continued to pursue his art. He joined forces with fellow painters like Monet, Renoir, and Sisley, and together they organized the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874. Seven more exhibitions would follow until 1884; Pissarro was the only member of the group who participated in all eight shows. He also played an important role as an active networker, keeping the loosely affiliated group together, cultivating contacts, and suggesting new participants.

The characteristic Impressionist project of capturing sense experience on canvas was only a part of Pissarro's artistic approach. Rather, he frequently altered and interpreted his landscape motifs in accord with his social agenda. Everyday scenes from the industrial suburbs and provincial France bear witness to the painter's sensitivity to the upheavals of modernity. Pissarro developed a new image of the landscape, striving for compositional balance and harmony in every painting.

Pissarro as a Painter of Social Utopias

Politically, as well, Pissarro aspired to a society with equal rights for all. He read the writings of the anarchists Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin and discussed them with his sons. For them, the free self-organization of people in society offered the chance for a better life for all. Self-sufficient farmers played an important role in this regard: Pissarro, who himself lived in the country rather than the metropolis of Paris, depicted them again and again, presenting them with dignity and respect. He shows peasant men and women making hay, harvesting, planting, and sowing, integrated into the rhythm and cycle of the seasons. These images also embodied a social utopia – the dream of a self-determined life and communal work in harmony with nature.

And, in fact, for many years the vegetable garden cultivated by his wife Julie in Éragny-sur-Epte was essential to the Pissarro family's survival until they were able to live from the sale of the artist's works.

In 1885, Camille Pissarro's artistic development took a new turn when he encountered the younger painters Paul Signac and Georges Seurat. At first, he enthusiastically embraced their new, scientific technique of Divisionism. After four years, however, he abandoned this rigid, time-consuming system of color dissection and returned to a freer style of painting. Only late in his oeuvre did Pissarro turn his attention to the theme of the cityscape. In multiple series of paintings, he captured the hustle and bustle of the port cities of Rouen, Dieppe, and Le Havre in Normandy as well as the metropolis of Paris. The streets, squares, and bridges in his 125 views of the capital become a stage for the evocation of atmospheres: populated, shaped, and enlivened by countless individuals, they represent the active force Pissarro sought to document throughout his entire life with his quiet, reserved humanism.

The Uniqueness of Pissarro's Oeuvre

Camille Pissarro has long received considerably less attention than other artists associated with Impressionism. Ortrud Westheider, director of the Museum Barberini, notes: "Camille Pissarro was a father figure to many of the Impressionist artists, yet only in more recent times has his own oeuvre been more studied and appreciated in greater depth. In recent years, exhibitions like those in Williamstown and San Francisco, Ordrupgaard near Copenhagen, Basel, and Oxford have focused more strongly on Pissarro. The retrospective in Potsdam and Denver builds on these important stations in the research on Pissarro. With the seven works by Pissarro in the Hasso Plattner Collection as a point of departure and the outstanding collaboration of the Denver Art Museum, we show how Pissarro's Impressionism is closely tied to the group, but at the same time is also unique."

"It is Pissarro's conception of the landscape, above all, that stands out among the Impressionists," says Nerina Santorius, curator of the exhibition and collection director at the Museum Barberini. "While painters like Monet or Renoir usually showed the city and country as the setting for bourgeois leisure activities, Pissarro points our gaze to the way in which ordinary people shape and influence a variety of everyday landscapes – through the life and work of the individual in harmony with nature as well as through the movement of crowds in the metropolis. He depicts his wife Julie cultivating the garden, shows an experienced peasant woman starting a fire even with damp wood, and paints carriages stuck in rush hour traffic on a boulevard in Paris. One of Pissarro's central artistic concerns was to show the beauty in the small things of everyday life."

This exhibition is the second cooperation between the Museum Barberini and the Denver Art Museum, where the show will be presented from October 26, 2025, to February 8, 2026. In 2020, the two institutions mounted the major retrospective *Monet: Places*, bringing together numerous key works from all phases of Claude Monet's oeuvre and for the first time examining the artist's career from the perspective of his choice of location and awareness of place. Now, *The Honest Eye: Camille Pissarro's Impressionism* emphasizes the deep humanity with which Pissarro encountered the present in all its unassuming aspects and invites viewers to discover his work with the same faculties of close observation that Pissarro himself used to capture his direct experience of everyday life on the canvas.

Structure of the Exhibition

The Honest Eye: Camille Pissarro's Impressionism

Under Palm Trees and at the Port. Artistic Beginnings in the Caribbean
Sun-drenched shore landscapes with palms, simple huts in a tropical setting and women engaged in conversation – such motifs shape the earliest works of Camille Pissarro. His artistic origins were not in France but on the island of Saint Thomas in the Caribbean, where he was born, and in Venezuela, where he lived from 1852 to 1854. Pissarro's interest in plein-air painting and atmospheric landscapes as well as the life of ordinary people is already evident in his first paintings and drawings. The son of a Jewish merchant family, he grew up in a culturally diverse environment and experienced the abolition of slavery as a young man. In France, Pissarro introduced an international perspective to the Impressionist group.

The Path to Impressionism. Modern Landscapes

Camille Pissarro moved to France in 1855, having already spent part of his school years there. The realistic style of his early landscape paintings was influenced by artists of the Barbizon School such as Camille Corot and Gustave Courbet. Pissarro often painted the vegetable gardens, fields, and roads in the towns of Pontoise and Louveciennes, where he lived. Many viewers criticized these motifs as banal, while others celebrated them as genuine and honest. In addition to his interest in rural life, Pissarro was one of the first Impressionists to embrace the industrialized suburbs of Paris as a worthy subject for modern landscape painting. He began to explore the transformation of motifs at different times of day and year. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, he fled to London, where he met art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel.

Family Pictures. Portraits and Still Lifes

Camille Pissarro's large family played an important role in his life. Against his parents' will, he married Julie Vellay, a French Catholic wine-grower's daughter who had been employed as a maid in his family home. The couple had eight children, three of whom died: one son as a young adult and two daughters during childhood. Compared to the many landscapes he painted, Pissarro created only a few portraits of his family members. These works tend to be private in character. He used powerful, impasto brushstrokes to express his wife's strength and life experience and evoked the frail constitution of his young daughter Jeanne-Rachel with muted tones and a more transparent application of paint. Pissarro also encouraged his children to acquire artistic training, and five of them followed in his professional footsteps.

Painting Outdoors. Pissarro's Impressionism

From the early 1870s on, Camille Pissarro increasingly adopted a lighter color palette and a broken brushstroke – both central characteristics of Impressionism. His unconventional, sketch-like plein-air painting was repeatedly rejected by the jury of the Paris Salon. To gain independence from these state-sponsored exhibitions, he helped found the Société Anonyme des Artistes Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs, etc. in 1873 with fellow painters, including Claude Monet and Edgar Degas. Pissarro was the only artist to participate in all eight of the exhibitions organized by the group between 1874 and 1886. In the early years, he concentrated on landscapes painted at different times of day and year, often populated with small figures. In doing so, Pissarro emphasized the reciprocal relationship between humans and nature.

Rural Community. Harvest and Market Scenes

From 1880 on, Camille Pissarro turned his attention to rural figure scenes, with which he expressed his ideal of country life in a wide variety of media. He shows women harvesting hay or picking grapes, performing their work easily and rhythmically, as if it were choreographed. At times, they pause for a moment, suggesting the peaceful, fulfilling nature of their activity. Pissarro's stylization of the figures lends them a timeless quality and imbues his carefully developed compositions with universal meaning. The themes evoked by the harvest pictures are continued in lively market scenes in which women offer their agricultural produce for sale. Like the ideal of rural life, the balanced relationship between production and consumption corresponds to Pissarro's anarchist convictions.

Garden Views. The Studio in Éragny-sur-Epte

In 1884, Camille Pissarro and his family moved into a house in Éragny-sur-Epte, where he painted not only the surrounding landscape and the neighboring villages but also numerous views of his garden. For years, the vegetable garden cultivated by his wife, Julie Pissarro, was essential to the family's support until they could live from the sale of Pissarro's paintings. After converting the barn into a studio in 1893, the artist frequently painted the garden from the window, often depicting Julie at work. Pissarro's portrayal of the active shaping of nature distinguishes his scenes from the motifs of other Impressionists, who showed the landscape primarily as the site of bourgeois leisure activities and as an object of aesthetic enjoyment. Pissarro's studio work marked an important stage in his artistic process, during which he reduced motifs captured en plein air to their essentials and developed them into decorative compositions.

A Harmony of Opposites. Neo-Impressionist Paintings

After the encounter with his younger fellow painters Georges Seurat and Paul Signac in 1885, Camille Pissarro adopted their technique, which was based on the newest developments in color theory. The paint was applied to the canvas in small dots, allowing the colors to mix not on the palette but in the eye of the beholder, thereby evoking a greater sense of luminosity. In his paintings, Pissarro sought to unite opposites such as warmth and cold or light and shadow into a harmonious whole in accord with the Neo-Impressionist quest for "a modern synthesis." The technique was very laborious, limiting the number of pictures that could be produced and making it unsuitable for quickly capturing fleeting impressions. Pissarro therefore abandoned its strict use around 1890. However, the transition was gradual – short brushstrokes continued to appear in his later works.

City People. Paris Series

In Camille Pissarro's images of Paris, all is in flux: crowds of people of different social classes, moving along on foot and in carriages, are a central element of his cityscapes. In line with his anarchist convictions, Pissarro depicted both the crowd and the individual within the fabric of the modern metropolis. The series the artist created in the capital city between 1893 and 1903 show panoramas viewed from an anonymous distance. Pissarro understood himself as an observer of the metropolis, not as an inhabitant. In varying atmospheres of light, he depicted motifs such as the Boulevard Montmartre, the Pont Neuf, and the Place du Théâtre Français – which some considered ugly, but which for Pissarro was the epitome of modernity – as well as the Seine and the Louvre. His dealer Paul Durand-Ruel encouraged him to paint such scenes, which became popular among progressive collectors.

Motors of Progress. Normandy Port Series

In the final years of his life, Pissarro painted multiple series showing ports in Normandy. In Rouen, Dieppe, and Le Havre, he rented rooms in portside hotels in order to paint the bustle of travelers and sightseers from the window, as well as the workers loading and unloading the ships. Under changing weather conditions, Pissarro captured the lively atmosphere and distinctly poetic qualities of the modern industrial landscape. In doing so, he sought to capture the connection between sky, ground and water in a harmonious form. The theme of international trade resonates in these images, bringing us full circle to Pissarro's artistic beginnings on Saint Thomas, where his double perspective as a merchant's son and aspiring painter formed his unique awareness of the harbor as a place.

In Pissarro's Studio. A Window into Impressionist Experimentation
Clarisse Fava-Piz

In 1893, at the age of sixty-three, Camille Pissarro transformed the barn on his property in Éragny-sur-Epte into an atelier, and the studio windows framed the artist's view of the surroundings that he would then repeatedly paint. However, Pissarro worried about the implications of this workspace on his artistic practice. In a letter to his sons Lucien, Georges, and Félix, Pissarro shared his apprehension regarding the new arrangement:

> It's a first-rate atelier, but I keep saying to myself, what's the point of having a studio? In the old days, I did my painting anywhere; in every season, in sweltering heat, under rain, in horrid cold spells, I found it in me to work enthusiastically [. . .]. Am I going to be able to work in this new environment??? My painting's bound to be affected; my painting will put on gloves, gosh almighty, I'll be official!!!

Pissarro's anxiety reflects his association of a studio with official art. He feared that by confining himself to working indoors, the nature of his paintings would change and turn into much-loathed academic art. Plein-air painting is still considered a major principle of Impressionism, in opposition to the stuffy aesthetic rules of the nineteenth-century academy. But the image of the Impressionist artist standing in front of the easel outdoors, directly transcribing immediate sensations onto the canvas, is a reductive understanding of Pissarro's complex practice.

Not content to just paint outdoors, Pissarro, a prolific draftsman, exercised his eye and hand on a near-daily basis and used his drawings to build a wide repertoire of figures and motifs that he incorporated into his paintings. Moreover, the artist often annotated in pencil the colors that he intended for his painted compositions. Pissarro also carefully prepared his paintings before working at the easel. He did not necessarily design the drawing in such a way that it could be transferred directly to the canvas, but rather he gathered enough visual data to develop and refine his final composition. Pissarro's rigorous artistic process destabilizes the common understanding of Impressionist painting as the direct and immediate transcription of atmospheric effects directly experienced by the artist.

Plein-air practice dominated Pissarro's early Impressionist years, but even before the creation of a dedicated studio space at Éragny-sur-Epte, Pissarro sometimes worked indoors. Weather conditions could affect the artist's progress on his paintings initiated outdoors, forcing him to pursue his work inside. Moreover, Pissarro's dacryocystitis, which he had been suffering from for some time, worsened around 1889. The chronic eye infection made it difficult for him to paint outside. Even at the time, critics noted that

Pissarro's work was constructed and rigorous, and while initiated *sur le motif,* his paintings were completed in the studio. In 1892 art critic and novelist Georges Lecomte was one of the first to comment on Pissarro's artistic process:

> For a long time now, Mr. Pissarro had ceased to work exclusively in front of nature, to render its momentary and incidental details. After having fixed in watercolor or pastel the physiognomy of a site, the appearance of a farmer or an animal, he devotes himself, far from the motif, to a work of composition during which the relative and the superfluous are pruned: only the essential aspects contributing to the meaning and the decorative whole of the work remain.

Lecomte understood the studio as a necessary stage in Pissarro's artistic process, where the artist was able to distance himself from the motif in order to capture the essence of his subject and achieve the unity of his composition. Moreover, Lecomte portrays Pissarro as an artist who navigated fluidly between watercolor, pastel, and oil on canvas without any aesthetic hierarchy in the artist's mind. Other contemporary critics concurred, including Charles Kunstler, who noted:

> One thing generally unknown to the public is that Pissarro is not just a plein-air painter, a painter of impressions. He executed *in his studio* not only numerous pastels and gouaches, but also large paintings of tedders and harvests, looking for new layouts, but nevertheless using direct studies, after nature, some very advanced.

Although often compared to contemporary landscape painters Claude Monet and Alfred Sisley, Pissarro had more in common with Edgar Degas in his insatiable search for new technical and pictorial problems. This essay aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the artist's process and oeuvre beyond the wide-spread recognition of Pissarro as a well-known Impressionist plein-air painter. It will also examine how seriality is implicated in Pissarro's studio aesthetic and unveil the artist's studio practice through the study of the proliferation of motifs and experiments across disparate media. It posits a definition of the studio not only as the physical space where the artist pursued his creative endeavors but also as a laboratory of experimentation with forms, media, and motifs.

Seriality

Throughout his career, Pissarro used seriality and multiples to create his compositions and advance his artistic experimentations. This essay states that a serial production is the reworking of one image into another and is different from multiplicity, which consists of creating multiple views of the same scene, perhaps from different angles. Importantly, serialization is more inherently a studio practice, both in the physical sense of where the work was created and in the conceptual sense of how the work was conceived and assessed. In some cases, the whole composition is serialized; in others, just a motif. Sometimes, images and motifs are reworked across media – paintings, prints, and decorative arts. While seriality and multiplicity are two different processes, artists can use one or the other, or some combination of the two, and sometimes it is not completely clear if the repetition is a multiple or a series, especially in the case of the paintings inspired by what Pissarro saw from his studio window.

Looking at *The Pontoise Bridge,* painted in 1891, one might think that Pissarro had set up his easel alongside the river on the Quai Bucherelle in Pontoise, where the artist frequently painted, next to the group of horses grazing in the foreground. The bridge running across the composition leads to a group of customs houses on the Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône bank of the river. However, far from being done *sur le motif,* this painting is a reappropriation of an earlier composition painted in 1875, when Pissarro still lived in Pontoise. Locals would have noticed that by 1891 the stone bridge had been replaced by an iron bridge. In the new version of *The Pontoise Bridge* executed in his studio, Pissarro abandoned the figures, flattened the perspective, cropped the composition, and recentered it around the horses and the streetlight to the left. Less naturalistic than the older version, this painting gives more prominence to the vivid colors applied in small touches across the surface, an approach that is characteristic of the Impressionist technique.

This case is not an isolated example in Pissarro's oeuvre since that same year the artist created *Snow Effect with Cows in Montfoucault* (1891, private collection), the third of a series of paintings on the same motif dated 1874 and 1882, respectively. Here again, Pissarro used a more naturalistic composition from the early 1870s to experiment with a new style. In the 1882 version, he dramatically cropped the composition. A decade later, he used his first version of the painting as a point of reference to experiment with a more varied chromatic palette and vibrant touches of colors.

This practice of seriality and reworking not only included motifs close to home, such as Pontoise and Montfoucault, but also views reconstructed after trips across the English Channel. For instance, *Charing Cross Bridge, London* from 1891 constitutes a small-scale version of another painting of the same subject, itself painted in the artist's studio after Pissarro's trip to London in 1890. One recognizes Charing Cross Bridge viewed from Waterloo Bridge, the high towers of the Houses of Parliament with Westminster

Hall and Westminster Abbey in the center background, and Whitehall Court to the right. In his letters to his niece Esther Isaacson, based in London, Pissarro asked her about the exact topography of the site, which he was trying to recollect to execute his painting back home. The smaller 1891 version exemplifies the artist's attempt at using a new style. Instead of constantly looking for new motifs, Pissarro revisited earlier compositions in his studio over time to experiment with new techniques and styles, such as Neo-Impressionism.

As art historian Joachim Pissarro has demonstrated, many examples of "this vast program of 'repeats' of earlier themes" abound, and in the 1890s, another type of artistic revision appears in which Pissarro reworked many of his Neo-Impressionist paintings. While this practice of repetitions and variations in Pissarro's oeuvre has been little studied, it sheds new light on the serial paintings of his late career. Furthermore, it recasts Pissarro's studio at the center stage of his artistic production.

In Pissarro's Studio

In 1884, after many years marked by constant moves, Pissarro settled in the village of Éragny-sur-Epte, a commune located about fifty-six miles northwest of Paris, in the Département de l'Oise. Thanks to a loan from Monet and a contribution from Paul Durand-Ruel, Camille and Julie Pissarro bought the property they were renting in 1892. It was composed of a house, an orchard, and a barn – which the painter would shortly convert into his studio. Even before transforming the barn into a studio space, Pissarro painted indoors from the second-floor window of the house. The artist multiplied the views of his surroundings from this elevated viewpoint, capturing the atmospheric changes of the alluvial plain of the Epte River at different times of the day. The four views of nearby Bazincourt, ranging from 1884 to 1892, are part of one of the earliest and largest series of pictorial variations completed by the artist.

In 1893 Pissarro hired Parisian architect Alfred Besnard to plan and oversee the conversion of his barn into a studio. The correspondence between Pissarro and Besnard not only lists the contractors, masons, carpenters, and locksmiths who worked on the project but also highlights Pissarro's involvement in the various phases of the studio transformation. The artist provided feedback on the successive architectural plans that Besnard submitted, weighing in on every aspect of the new studio.

A side-by-side comparison of *View from My Window, Éragny* and *Plum Trees in Blossom, Éragny* (cat. 59) highlights the transformations of Pissarro's property. In 1893 the thick wall running alongside the artist's garden was torn down, creating an opening leading to the meadow. In *Plum Trees in Blossom, Éragny,* painted in 1894, a figure carrying a bucket stands at the juncture where the wall would have previously stood, signaling a newly opened path. The old barn depicted on the left side of *View from My Window*, begun in 1886, was transformed into the artist's studio as seen in *Plum Trees in Blossom, Éragny*: the henhouse was removed, and a set of stairs was added to the

building. Access to the studio was possible via a covered exterior staircase. Pissarro commented on the completion of his studio to his son Lucien in August 1893, accompanying his letter with a sketch of the stairs of the newly built studio:

> My studio is coming along, they're putting in the ceiling, it [the studio] measures seven by eight and a half yards and has a very high ceiling, there will be a sizable window to the west, which I would have liked to have square, but I thought of it too late, the door will be right by the entrance to the barn, [with] the stairway in the yard, there will be a roof of old tiles. [. . .] I forgot the main thing, an arched picture window three yards wide to the north, which will give a good light.

In October 1893, the studio space was greatly enhanced by a large north-facing window, and Pissarro was eager to start working. From this window, he completed a series of paintings including *The Steeple at Éragny Viewed from the Studio* (1894, private collection) and *The Deaf Woman's House and the Steeple at Éragny* (ca. 1894, private collection), which are variations of the same subject. The vertical formats highlight the church's steeple, with the so-called deaf woman's house to the left. In the foreground, the enclosed space corresponds to Pissarro's back garden. The second version constitutes a more intimate painting in which the space is compressed, and the vertical format is emphasized by the placement of a figure walking toward the viewer. The distinction between serial and multiple is blurred here because Pissarro was painting in his studio in both cases. Did he create the same scene with a slightly different perspective by looking out of the studio window again, or did he rework a previous composition?

Printmaking Experiments

The painting *L'Île Lacroix, Rouen (The Effect of Fog)* is not only a magnificent example of Pissarro's brief Neo-Impressionist period, but it also illustrates how Pissarro's printmaking experiments advanced his pictorial efforts. Indeed, this painting is part of a long series of works in various media, which started with a series of works on paper, including a watercolor completed on the motif five years prior in 1883 and a cycle of prints. The painting closed the cycle of Pissarro's experimentation with the motif of the Seine in Rouen, at a time when he was not traveling there anymore. According to Christophe Duvivier, former director of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Pissarro – Pontoise, Pissarro's Neo-Impressionist works originate from the artist's technical experiments with prints and works on paper. Duvivier's assessment of Pissarro's oeuvre complicates the common understanding of the emergence of Neo-Impressionism as the direct evolution of the Impressionist touch.

Furthermore, Pissarro's interest in series and multiples, best highlighted in his late cityscapes, can also be attributed to his printmaking experiments. While printmaking has traditionally been considered a reproductive medium, some Impressionists such as Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, and Pissarro appreciated it for its emphasis on the artistic process. They executed each step of the process themselves, from creating the image and producing a matrix to printing the image on paper, believing that it allowed them to develop singular techniques that served their artistic innovations. Pissarro first used Degas's press and his expertise to print his etchings. Later, in 1894, he installed a printing press in his newly renovated studio in Éragny-sur-Epte and shared his excitement with his son Lucien: "The press that I bought from Delatre is installed in the large studio, I am waiting for ink to print. We tried it with oil color, it will be amazing. This will give me a taste." Pissarro's fascination with printmaking is discernible here in his impatience to experiment with new materials in his studio.

Throughout his career, Pissarro completed about 230 prints, including 131 etchings, 67 lithographs, and approximately 30 monotypes. For a brief period following the close of the fourth Impressionist exhibition in 1879, Cassatt, Degas, and Pissarro worked together on the publication of the journal *Le Jour et la nuit* (Day and Night), which ultimately failed to materialize. However, this collective enterprise had an important influence on Pissarro's printmaking, which he integrated fully into his artistic practice. During the fifth Impressionist exhibition in 1880, he exhibited multiple states of the same printing plate in a single frame, considering each state of the print a finished work. The multiplicity of states made it possible to preserve variations of the same composition, a principle that Pissarro applied to his large urban and port series of Paris, Rouen, Dieppe, and Le Havre, in which he worked on multiple canvases simultaneously at different hours of the day, capturing the changing atmosphere. Like the states of an etching, the painter developed multiple interpretations of the same pictorial motif unfolding before his eyes. One can argue that Pissarro's experiments in etching instigated and sometimes advanced his research in other techniques. Throughout the 1890s, Pissarro used a variety of print media to treat his favorite subjects, such as fieldworkers and cityscapes. His affinity for these themes and motifs is manifest across media beyond painting.

Venturing into Decorative Arts

In 1876, while in Montfoucault at the invitation of his friend artist Ludovic Piette, Pissarro first toyed with the idea of painting on ceramics. According to his biographers, to save costs, he painted ceramics without using a professional workshop, as he hoped to make up for the financial shortfall of his lackluster painting sales by selling painted tiles. *Landscape* (1880, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire Pissarro – Pontoise) and *The Jetty* are two examples of these delicate objects, painted in green monochrome on white porcelain, which were probably fired in the local ceramic factory in Osny. Pissarro constructed

detailed landscapes in the small format tiles. He also used the rectangular format of a ceramic planter to create paintings on earthenware tiles, as in *Apple Picking* and *Saint-Martin Fair at Pontoise* (ca. 1883, private collection). Taking advantage of the light background of the earthenware to create a luminous effect, Pissarro skillfully transposed the principles of Impressionism to a utilitarian object.

In *Interior of the Studio,* Pissarro's son Lucien depicted such a ceramic planter, decorated with his father's recognizable apple-picking scene, standing on a side table to the left. Here, art pervades the Pissarro household through its everyday objects, and the apple-picking scene takes on a new meaning as it functions as the base for a floral ensemble that expands beyond its support. Pissarro had considered the functionality of the support in creating the tile's design: the cropping of the tree trunk and the legs of a figure climbing on the ladder suggest that the scene ought to be completed by the actual plant in the planter. Indeed, the figure on the ladder is absent from the paintings based on the same composition. There, the main protagonist, a standing young woman, is not holding a ladder but a long stick – a motif of which a drawing also exists (ca. 1885, Musée d'Orsay, Paris). While motifs circulate through several compositions across media, such as the standing figure in this apple-picking scene, the artist introduces variations. The stick held by the figure in the drawing and in the painted versions becomes the ladder in the ceramic in order to emphasize the functionality of the planter. *Apple Picking* exemplifies Pissarro's serialization and can be linked clearly to the experimental nature of his print-making practice, as discussed earlier.

Saint-Martin Fair, Pontoise constitutes another instance in which the artist circulated a motif from one medium to another, on a painting on canvas (1883, private collection) and on the earthenware tile mentioned above. In both instances, the scene is organized into horizontal bands with people mingling in the foreground and the rooftops of the village in the back. However, while a horse takes center stage in the work on canvas, a central road opens onto a vista on the tile. These variations demonstrate how Pissarro adapted his compositions to the constraints of various media. In his fan-shaped gouache of the same topic, exhibited at the sixth Impressionist exhibition in 1881, a post with a hanging lamp to the center left structures a unified and crowded composition where villagers socialize among small pavilions. Again, the artist explored the same topic in a series of etchings. By transferring his rich repertoire of rural motifs and themes such as apple-picking and market scenes into a variety of formats and media, Pissarro masterfully transformed it.

Pissarro's Fans

Pissarro exhibited fans for the first time in 1879 at the fourth Impressionist exhibition: twelve fans accompanied twenty-five other works. They were shown alongside fans by Jean-Louis Forain and Edgar Degas, the latter of whom had envisioned a room devoted

entirely to fans but was unable to fulfill the plan. Exhibiting his work in various media would not be an exception for Pissarro, both at the Impressionist exhibitions and at Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris. While fans were not an Impressionist invention, the artists considered them particularly conducive to formulating the transience of phenomena. This "epidemic of fans," as contemporary critics defined it, grew out of the exhibition of Japanese objects at the 1867 and 1878 Expositions Universelles in Paris, when a Japanese pavilion was built on the Rue des Nations on the Champs de Mars. The Impressionists seemed particularly attracted by the way Japanese artists applied the same principles of composition on various supports and in different techniques.

Fans offered an experimental ground for Pissarro, who multiplied the techniques of ink, gouache, oil, and watercolor on surfaces such as Japanese paper, cotton, vellum, and silk. In a letter to his son Lucien in 1890, Pissarro described his excitement regarding two new fans whose surfaces allowed for unexpected artistic effects:

> Since your departure, I have made, in addition to canvases, five fans with which I am happy. I have two *Fogs* [. . .]; there is one on Japanese paper, it's magical, and the other one on the back of a skin, onion skin paper, this one unexpected. It is a red setting sun, like an aurora borealis, with a strip of pearl-gray fog with cows blurred in the mist and a tall, young girl in the foreground. I bet Durand won't want it!

More often decorative than functional, Impressionist fans were framed and hung on picture rails and could seduce a new clientele at lower prices than oil paintings. Artists valued the research that the fan allowed on the specific form and material of the fan, rather than the purpose of the work. More than just a fertile ground for experimentation, Pissarro's fans can be analyzed as an additional medium through which the artist challenged artistic expectations in his search for compositional unity.

Pissarro mastered the arc-shaped format with its emphasis on its two ends and made the curvature of the fan a compositional element, in contrast to other artists, such as Paul Gauguin, who adapted the cutout of the fan window to the preexisting work. Indeed, the constrained format of the semicircle allowed the artist to play with decentering, ellipsis, and the scattering of patterns and planes. In most cases, Pissarro reused the compositions of earlier paintings or drawings. However, there are instances when it is difficult to know whether the fan was created first. This is the case with *The Pea Stakers,* where female figures labor in rhythm, and which was executed both as a fan (1890, The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford) and as a painting.

Pissarro's Window

With his back to the viewer, a painter is caught in action, holding a brush in his right hand. Several paintings and frames are stacked against the wall to the right in a confined space that is hard to identify. While one might expect to witness the banal scene of an artist in the act of painting on canvas, it is in fact a window shade that the artist paints. Pissarro is portrayed here by his friend, fellow artist Armand Guillaumin, with whom he produced shades in the 1860s. Far from the typical portrait of the Impressionist painter, who at the end of his life depicted himself gazing out toward the viewer, his palette at hand, in an interior framed with a window to the left, Guillaumin's depiction of his friend highlights a lesser-known aspect of Pissarro's artistic identity. The artist who would become primarily known as a plein-air painter and leader of the Impressionist group appears here as an everyday painter and a humble artisan on the one hand, and as a multifaceted artist resistant to fixed ideas and settled formulas on the other hand.

The motif of the window became characteristic of Pissarro's late artistic production; in addition, the window was always a site that allowed Pissarro to shift from outdoor to indoor, to go back and forth between plein-air painting and studio practice.[36] He did not choose just any window, but the ones that would allow him to paint specific motifs, painting from the studio but directing his gaze outward. Pissarro also experimented with various materials and supports, repurposing motifs in different compositions over time, working in and outside the studio. The serial reworking of an image through brushstroke and color, like his serial reworking of the etching plate, is less about capturing a fleeting sensory impression than it is about manipulating the pictorial elements of the medium on the canvas or on paper. Pissarro sought aesthetic sensation in the material and support of his work rather than in nature. Pissarro came back to the term *sensation* repeatedly in his letters. In 1890 he gave some words of advice to his son Georges, which encapsulate his artistic approach:

> The only thing to do is to let the young man follow his sensations as much as possible; if he has the stuff of a man of talent within him, like the bee, he will know how to find the nectar of the flowers that will sustain him. [. . .] Create your project according to your sensations, as long as it is new and harmonious.

Facts and Figures

Exhibition run:	June 14 – September 28, 2025
Adress:	Museum Barberini, Alter Markt, Humboldtstraße 5–6, 14467 Potsdam
Opening hours:	W–M 10 a.m.–7 p.m. Kindergartens and schools by appointment M–F (except Tu) from 9 a.m.
Admission and ticketing:	W–M € 16 / € 10, Sa/Su/holidays € 18 / € 10 Free admission for schoolchildren and visitors under 18 Free admission every Thursday from 2 p.m. for visitors under 25
Curators:	Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts, coauthor of Pissarro catalogue raisonné Clarisse Fava-Piz, Denver Art Museum Nerina Santorius, Museum Barberini
Exhibited works:	108 works
Lending collections:	53 lending institutions Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam Baltimore Museum of Art Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest The Art Institute of Chicago The Cleveland Museum of Art National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe Wallraf-Richartz Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen Musée d'art moderne André Malraux, Le Havre The Courtauld, London The National Gallery, London Tate, London J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon

	Kunsthalle Mannheim Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa Ashmolean Museum, Oxford Musée d'Orsay, Paris Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena Philadelphia Museum of Art Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh Hasso Plattner Collection, Museum Barberini, Potsdam Národní galerie v Praze, Prague Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Reims Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond Saint Louis Art Museum Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco Staatsgalerie Stuttgart Toledo Museum of Art Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA Kunst Museum Winterthur Collection of Isabelle and Scott Black Collection of Prof. Mark Kaufman, Monaco Drs. Tobia and Morton Mower Colección Pérez Simón Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Archive of the Pissarro Family Pissarro & Associates Fine Art as well as other collections and collectors who wish to remain anonymous.
Exhibition area:	ca. 1,250 square meters
Exhibition design:	Philipp Ricklefs, Berlin, and BrücknerAping, Bremen

Digital Resources, Events, Outreach

Social Media:

#PissarroBarberini at the #MuseumBarberini on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube

Digital resources:

The *Barberini App* is a personal guide before, during, and after the museum visit. It offers audio tours of the exhibitions in German and English for adults and children, as well as an adult-child tour, texts in simplified language, service and event information, and video interviews with experts. Available free of charge in the App Store and from Google Play.
museum-barberini.de/app

The *Barberini Prolog* offers an introduction to the current exhibition. As a compact multimedia website, the Prolog presents an overview of themes and works and can be used to prepare for the museum visit, read more about the works, or recommend the show to others.
prolog.museum-barberini.de

The newly redesigned *360° Tour* on the museum website offers the opportunity to digitally explore the current exhibition (starting mid-July 2025) and the Hasso Plattner Collection. In a 3-D model, viewers can enjoy a virtual tour of the entire museum. The large number of 360° photo location points makes it possible to examine each work in detail. The model also helps facilitate an even more realistic experience in digital tours of the exhibition.
museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek

In the video series *Close-ups*, the art and outreach team of the Museum Barberini introduce paintings from the Impressionism collection and offer insight into their creation, visual language, and reception.
museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek

Our *expert video* introduces the themes of the exhibition in conversation with Clarisse Fava-Piz of the Denver Art Museum, Colin Harrison of the Ashmolean Museum of Art (Oxford), Christoph Heinrich of the Denver Art Museum, Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts (Paris), Joachim

Pissarro, Lionel Pissarro, Ortrud Westheider of the Museum Barberini, and Daniel Zamani of the Museum Frieder Burda. *museum-barberini.de/de/mediathek*

Discover the *Impressionism collection online* with video discussions of paintings, filmed tours, interviews with experts, and artist biographies. *sammlung.museum-barberini.de/en/* and *museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek*

Program of events:

The exhibition is accompanied by a wide-ranging program of educational opportunities and events for all ages and interests. On June 18, 2025, actor Jörg Hartmann will read from Pissarro's letters, and on June 25, 2025, the *ZEIT* podcast *Augen zu* with Giovanni di Lorenzo and Florian Illies will be recorded in front of a live audience at the Museum Barberini. On June 20, the conversation concert *KlangFarben* will trace musical developments from Romanticism to the modern era, exploring them in the context of Pissarro's world and work. Other offerings include our popular yoga sessions as well a variety of tours, workshops, lectures, and barrier-free events.

For the complete program as well as news and updates, visit our website:
museum-barberini.de/en/kalender/formate

Barberini Studio:

The *Barberini Studio* has been enthusiastically received since its opening in February, and its modern facilities and state-of-the-art technology have enjoyed an overwhelmingly positive response from participants. Thanks to the studio, the Museum Barberini is able to expand its educational offerings with digital tools, enhancing the institution's media-pedagogical orientation. A total of 118 workshops for a variety of age groups and interests took place from February to May, with new formats including *Digital Drawing*, *Art and AI*, *Museum Sounds*, and workshops presented in cooperation with the Bauhaus-Archiv. The new lecture series *Kunst und Wissen* (Art and Knowledge) has also generated tremendous interest.

In conjunction with the exhibition on Camille Pissarro, numerous workshops will be offered over the summer holidays. *Barberini Mini*, a creative opportunity for young visitors ages three to five, takes place every Sunday, while tours in a variety of languages are available every Saturday. Workshop activities include creating fans, designing garden dioramas, and making paintings inspired by Pissarro's technique. Other sessions focus on photography, digital drawing, and stop-motion imaging.

For young international audiences, the monthly English-language workshop *Be Creative* offers a place for encounter and exchange, while the *Barberini Art Club* also organizes a workshop for art lovers ages 16 to 30 once a month.

The Honest Eye:
Camille Pissarro's Impressionism
Edited by Angelica Daneo, Clarisse Fava-Piz, Christoph Heinrich, Michael Philipp, Nerina Santorius, and Ortrud Westheider, with contributions by Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts, Clarisse Fava-Piz, Nerina Santorius, Emily Willkom, and Daniel Zamani

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Advance review copy on day of press conference (June 12, 2025): € 20

Essays

- *"Absolutely Free": Camille Pissarro's Dedication as an Artist* (Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts)
- *In Pissarro's Studio: A Window into Impressionist Experimentation* (Clarisse Fava-Piz)
- *Realism or Utopia? Pissarro's Depictions of Rural Labor* (Daniel Zamani)

Catalog of Exhibited Works

- *Under Palm Trees and at the Port: Artistic Beginnings in the Caribbean* (Clarisse Fava-Piz)
- *The Path to Impressionism: Modern Landscapes* (Clarisse Fava-Piz)
- *Family Pictures: Portraits and Still Lifes* (Clarisse Fava-Piz)
- *Painting Outdoors: Pissarro's Impressionism* (Clarisse Fava-Piz)
- *Rural Community: Harvest and Market Scenes* (Clarisse Fava-Piz)
- *Garden Views: The Studio in Éragny-sur-Epte* (Nerina Santorius)
- *Harmony of Opposites: Neo-Impressionist Paintings* (Nerina Santorius)
- *Motors of Progress: Normandy Ports* (Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts)
- *City People: Views of Paris* (Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts)

Appendix

- *Chronology* (Emily Willkom)
- *Excerpts from Camille Pissarro's Letters* (Claire Durand-Ruel Snollaerts)

Press Images

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Download work and exhibition views:
museum-barberini.de/en/presse

Landscape, Saint Thomas, 1856
Oil on canvas, 47.63 x 38.1 cm
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond,
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon
© Sydney Collins, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Jeanne Pissarro (Minette) holding a Fan, 1873
Oil on canvas, 55 x 46 cm
The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.
Bequeathed by Esther Pissarro, 1952

The Shepherdess, 1881
Oil on canvas, 81 x 64.8 cm
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, Bequest of Isaac de Camondo, 1911
© bpk | GrandPalaisRmn | Hervé Lewandowski

Hoar-Frost, Peasant Girl Making a Fire, 1888
Oil on canvas, 92.8 x 92.5 cm
Hasso Plattner Collection, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

Spring at Éragny, 1890
Oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.6 cm
Denver Art Museum, Frederic C. Hamilton Collection, bequeathed to the Denver Art Museum
© William O'Connor, Denver Art Museum

Garden and Henhouse at Octave Mirbeau's, Les Damps, 1892
Oil on canvas, 65.4 x 81.6 cm
Denver Art Museum, Frederic C. Hamilton Collection, bequeathed to the Denver Art Museum
© William O'Connor, Denver Art Museum

Camille Pissarro
Plum Trees in Blossom, Éragny, 1894
Oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm
Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen
© Heritage Images / Fine Art Images / akg-images

Camille Pissarro
Morning Sun in the Rue Saint-Honoré, Place du Théâtre Français, 1898
Oil on canvas, 65.6 x 54 cm
Ordrupgaard, Copenhagen

Camille Pissarro
Avenue de l'Opéra, 1898
Oil on canvas, 73.3 x 92.3 cm
Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Reims,
Bequest of Henry Vasnier, 11/1907
© Christian Devleeschauwer

Camille Pissarro
Boulevard Montmartre, Twilight, 1897
Oil on canvas, 54 x 65 cm
Hasso Plattner Collection, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

Unicorn: The Mythical Beast in Art
October 25, 2025 – February 1, 2026

The unicorn has inspired the imagination more than any other animal. Known for centuries in many cultures, its fascination persists to this day. The mythical beast is a multilayered signifier, charged with associative energy. The unicorn has left its mark on Christian and non-European art, on science, medicine, and a multifaceted world of symbolism. The iconography of the unicorn invites us to reflect on imagination, empirical knowledge, ambivalence, and projection.

The exhibition *Unicorn: The Mythical Beast in Art* presents over 100 works from international lenders such as the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, the Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, and numerous other collections, above all in Germany and France.

Presented in cooperation with the Musée de Cluny, Paris, where the show will be on view March 16 – June 28, 2026.

Avantgarde. Max Liebermann and Impressionism in Germany
February 28 – June 7, 2026

The point of departure for this major special exhibition on German Impressionist painting is a private collection whose holdings include not only nine paintings by Max Liebermann, but also important works by Max Slevogt and Lesser Ury. These foundational pieces are augmented by more than 100 loans from some fifty international museums and private collections. The exhibition spans a chronological arc from the 1870s to the 1930s, presenting a range of artistic positions that highlight the variety and diversity of German Impressionism. In addition to key works by artists long firmly anchored in the canon such as Lovis Corinth, Max Liebermann, Max Slevogt, and Fritz von Uhde, the show also features works by lesser-known artists, including Philipp Franck, Theodor Hagen, Friedrich Kallmorgen, Gotthardt Kuehl, Christian Landenberger, Heinrich Eduard Linde-Walther, Ernst Oppler, Franz Skarbina, Lesser Ury, Max Uth, and Heinrich von Zügel.

The exhibition also sheds light on the still-neglected contribution of woman artists such as Charlotte Berend-Corinth, Dora Hitz, Sabine Lepsius, and Maria Slavona to the development of German Impressionism. Lenders include the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin, the Galerie Neue Meister in Dresden, the Folkwang Museum in Essen, the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main, the Hamburger Kunsthalle, the Neue Pinakothek in Munich, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, and the Belvedere in Vienna.

Presented in cooperation with the Museum Frieder Burda, Baden-Baden, where the show will be on view October 3, 2025 – February 8, 2026