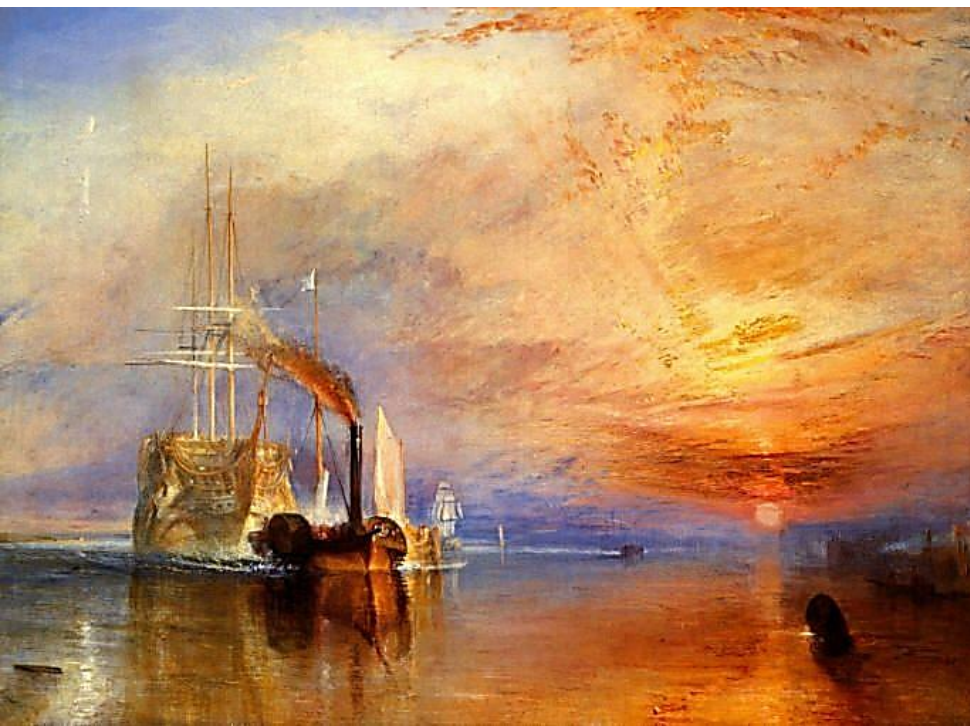




# ARTY STORIES

BOOK 4

NORTHERN EUROPE  
REVOLUTION & EVOLUTION



**Art and life  
across the centuries**

Ian Matsuda, FCA, BA (Hons)

for  
Noko

Copyright © Ian Matsuda, FCA, BA (Hons), 2017

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system, transmitted or utilised in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher or licence holder

<https://www.artystories.org> email: [info@artystories.org](mailto:info@artystories.org)

*Liberty leading the battle, 1830 Eugene Delacroix, Louvre, Paris*  
*The Fighting Temeraire, tugged to last berth, Turner, 1839, National gallery, London*

# 'ARTY STORIES'

*Art & Life across the centuries*

This series of six books tells the stories of events and lives and the influence of art that reflects these societies.

Designed specifically for younger students to create an interest for complementary studies in both art and history they provide an easy and accessible introduction to the myriad lives and wonderful art over the centuries.

Together they provide a sweeping framework in which to follow and understand the struggles and triumphs of people in the evolving changes through peace and war from 3,000Bc until today.

By taking this holistic approach this book contributes to the UK Educational targets of Key Stage 3, ages 11-14 *'know how art and design both reflect and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation'*.

This also contributes to the educational debates in the USA on the benefits of art to the health of society.

Supported by the Arts Council, England as: *'creative and engaging for young people'* - *'the opportunities to stimulate young people's interest and imagination are evident'*.

Centuries of great art are a gift to us all

## Books in this Series

Book 1	Egypt - Greece - Rome	Empires & Games
2	The Renaissance in Italy	The Patron & The Artist
3	The Four Princes	War, Terror & Religion
4	Northern Europe	Revolution & Evolution
5	The American Dream	Depression to Optimism
6	The Modern World	The '...isms' of Art

*All free e-book downloads*

<https://www.artystories.org>

## Book 4

# NORTHERN EUROPE

## Revolution & Evolution

### CONTENTS

- Northern Europe – the Netherlands
- Children's games and town festivals
- The French revolutions
- Romance in England
- The Battle of the Artists
  
- Summary
- Sources of information

## Northern Europe – The Netherlands

Outside of Italy and prior to the Renaissance, art was taking very different paths in very different worlds. It was the Dutch who had first taken paintings to a new level with oils on canvas. Trade brought rich customers who wanted bright paintings to hang on their walls and to send home.

At the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch artist Jan van Eyck had developed painting with linseed oils, building up translucent layers for a 'glazed' finish to enhance the colours. Through their trade routes from the Dutch East Indies, they could import bright pigments from as far away as Baghdad and exotic Persia. Colours were natural, not manufactured and the deep blue of lapis came from Afghanistan. Millions of years ago lapis was thrown up from 35-40 km underground where the extreme heat and pressure had transformed yellow sulphur into a deep ultramarine blue – worth more than gold! Using oils also meant that the Dutch could paint on a ship's canvas rather than oak board and the canvas could then be rolled up and sent by sea or overland in smaller and faster carts. Paintings became more available and much more exciting. (1)

The Dutch already had established routes for their art as the Netherlands became a centre of trade between the north from England, Russia and Scandinavia and the south with France, Italy and Constantinople (now Istanbul). Bankers provided letters of credit for payment and these wealthy bankers had come from Italy and wanted to send some of this wonderful new art back home. At that time Italian artists were still using an egg-based paint and could not produce the same impression of depth and colour achieved with oils. The bankers spent much of their wealth on portraits, 70 years before the Italian painters such as Michelangelo and Leonardo.

Jan van Eyck was the first to produce realistic portraits that reflected the sitter's character. He worked for the fabulously wealthy Duke of Burgundy, acting as ambassador and spy with his travels termed 'secret commissions'. His artistic notoriety and the patronage of the Duke, opened many doors otherwise held closed.

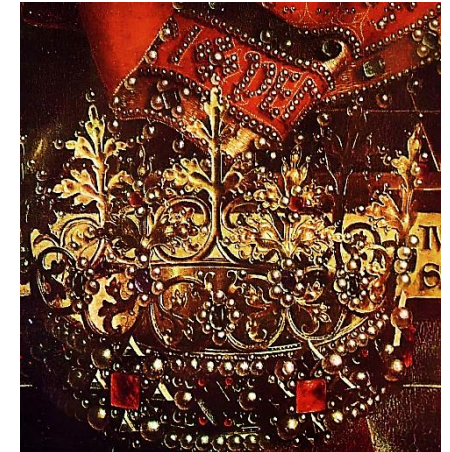




This self-portrait by the artist Jan van Eyck shows him looking challengingly at the viewer with an inscription reading 'as I Eyck can'. With the exaggerated folds of the bright red 'turban' he was showing prospective customers the colour, detail and accuracy of his own work. These true to life portraits were a new skill appreciated by the aristocracy to favourably display themselves and when looking for a wife from another country could see not just her looks, but gave an insight into her character.

Van Eyck displayed an incredible level of detail, as in these excerpts from his Ghent altarpiece. The detail and richness of colour that he achieved stands out and also shows how he was a master of portraying the brilliance of jewellery.

*Self-portrait, Jan van Eyck, 1433 National Gallery, London*



The altarpiece was opened on feast days to show rich religious symbols

*Ghent Altarpiece, Jan & Hubert van Eyck, 1432, St. Bavo's, Cathedral, Ghent. (Excerpts are from the top 2<sup>nd</sup> and centre panels)*

## *Children's games and town festivals*

But as all these bankers, Kings and Dukes lived these privileged lives, what of everybody else, the poor – what were their lives like in Northern Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

Well at first with all this trade work was plentiful and the people in the towns lived well. So, they began to have larger families, but with more mouths to feed, the price of their food escalated. Then as the children grew up, there were more people to work and so wages fell, pushing them back into poverty. A life of swings and roundabouts. Their diet was black bread and peas, washed down with lashings of beer, an average of one litre a day each. The water could be too bad to drink, so it had to be beer. But they lived in close communities and celebrations and festivals were their escape from the grind of life, both for children and for adults.

One Dutch artist 130 years after van Eyck, was Pieter Bruegel the Elder. Rather than paint for the rich, he chose to record village life, providing a unique window into a now vanished folk culture and rural society. Bruegel started out in life as a designer of prints, but he moved to Brussels and switched to painting and unusually at that time, depicted peasant life. Bruegel produced many scenes of rural and town life during the 16<sup>th</sup> century and as his sons and even grandsons were to continue this work, he came to be called Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

His paintings became sought after by wealthy Flemish collectors, who were drawn to the distinct style of dozens of small figures engaged in individual pursuits, seen from a high viewpoint. This was very different to the studied and structured paintings of the day where all was carefully staged in a rigid pose.

Without these paintings we would not have such a vibrant picture of life outside of the cities.





*'Children's Games' Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1560, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*

Amazingly in this painting, from almost 500 years ago, are 80 children's games.

Playing with dolls, a water gun, an inflated pig's bladder (like a football), masks, swing, climbing, handstand, somersault, tiddlywinks, marbles, pretend wedding, blind man's bluff, soap bubbles, riding a broom, 'hide and seek', a toy animal, walking on stilts, pole vaulting, leapfrog, rolling a hoop and that's just 20! These are games still played today.

A town full of children.

There was a poem of the time that ridiculed adults as playing foolish games in their lives like children, when perhaps they should know better, as in the next painting.



This painting has an interesting contrast with an inn (pub) on the left-hand side, with boisterous partygoers dancing to a band to celebrate carnival. While on the other side is a church with nuns in black observing prayer and Lent, tending the poor and the sick. One celebrating the church religious festival and the other the carnival party. Each year there was a 'battle' between the two sides with competing floats. The fat man on the beer barrel with a pie on his head pushed by a 'clown', contrasted by 'Lady Lent' on the other, drawn by a nun and a monk.

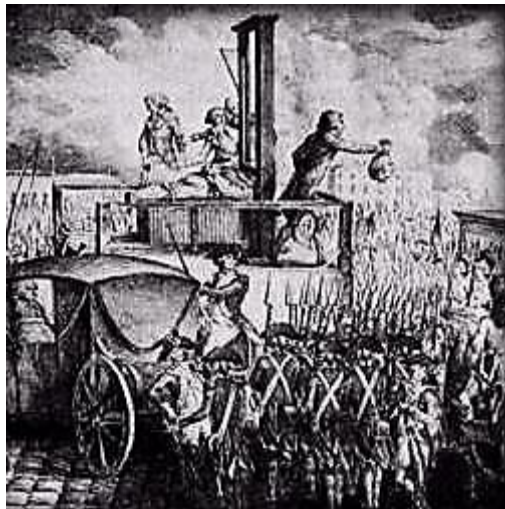


*Town Festival, 'The Fight Between Carnival and Lent', Pieter Bruegel the Elder 1559, Vienna*

In the middle of the square is the well that serves everyone with water, while at the back of the square are people preparing food and wine. On the left is a scene of joy that food is plentiful and then on the right the religious reminder of the tougher times to come before spring. Both the harvest and the church are important.

## The French revolutions

As the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries drew to a close, while the Dutch had entered a 'Golden Age' (Book 3), in France the poor began to increasingly suffer with grinding poverty and oppression, only worsening through the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In France the King and the Queen, together with the aristocrats, had trodden the people down into near starvation when the Queen told them to 'eat cake' if they were hungry! The people rose up and they together with the aristocrats, were thrown into jail where they promptly came before the people's judge to be found guilty. They would then immediately be taken to have their heads cut off by the infamous 'Madame Guillotine'. A dreadful and swift retribution.



Dragged on a cart through the crowded narrow, cobbled streets, overflowing with sewage, they faced crowds of 'citizens' crying out for their blood. Terrified and huddled together they would reach the dreaded guillotine and wait to watch those before them being beheaded, before it was their turn to walk up the steps. Between 1793 and 1794, 17,000 would make this terrible journey, to the cheers of the crowd each time the guillotine fell. (2)



Following this revolution, Napoleon took France on a doomed adventure to conquer all of Europe. This was stopped at the battle of Waterloo in 1815, throwing France into disarray and heralding the return of a monarchy. But this new monarchy was itself to become deeply unpopular as they sought to overrule the government and were removed by a second revolution in 1830. France struggled to keep its titular monarchy, but it would finally be removed in 1848 when a Republic was declared with an elected President, in place to this day.



*Liberty leading the battle, 1830 Eugène Delacroix, Louvre, Paris*

Men and women were equal in this struggle for democracy and women were portrayed as leading men into battle against the aristocrats' soldiers. Seen here in the second revolution, leading a charge over the bodies of the fallen soldiers. Baring her chest to the enemy she leads and turning with the French flag in one hand and a musket in the other, urges the men on, to raise their tempers for the battle

The painting is a celebration of the victory of the people's republic to go forward into the future, with a cry of '*Liberté, égalité and fraternité*' ('Liberty, equality and fellowship') A cry that is still heard in the French national anthem today.

In England they chose another way without terror and blood, but one that still empowered the people.

## Romance in England

When Henry VIII broke away from the church in Rome in 1532, he destroyed all the powerful and rich abbeys and discouraged religious art in the churches. (Book 3) England was now outside of the Italian Renaissance and art tended to be commissioned by the King and the landed gentry in staged portraits, particularly miniatures. Sculpture was limited to tombs.

It was not until a further 200 years later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that the industrial revolution was to bizarrely develop an art for the ordinary people and then in romantic paintings. A contradiction, but also a progress.

In the Victorian age; 1837-1901; living conditions in the new industrialised towns were terrible, with dreadful housing in slums and dangerous working conditions. These brought poverty, poor health, hunger, high child mortality and minimal education. In these living conditions people will despair and foster a dangerous resentment. Later photos came to record the people and their conditions.



Whitechapel, London, 1880's



Glass factory 1908



They portrayed the ignorant poor children who had their lives taken away from them, with no hope for the future. This suffering has been immortalised in the hymn 'Jerusalem', as 'those dark satanic mills'.



Coal mining 1911



Mill workers 1910

This was a recipe ripe for revolution as happened in France and one that the British government sought to avoid. They introduced a succession of reforms giving people the right to vote (although women had to wait another 50 years), with worker's trade unions. Public health improved with clean water through sewage removal and education was compulsory for all children. Children as young as 5 or 6 had worked 10-15 hours a day, often barefoot with no shoes, in dreadful factories and mines. This first reform only changed to a minimum age of 9 years old and working 12 hours a day. (3)

As the reforms were enacted, public bodies sought to engender a pride and ownership in their towns, with grand public buildings, as in ancient Athens. (Book 1) A national pride grew as the British Empire strode the world and 'Great Britain' under Queen Victoria, stamped its place in the world and in people's lives.



*Victorian Leeds Town Hall, 1853-1858*

People's lives became far better and with the introduction of holidays, far more enjoyable. Factory owners saw the benefits of people being healthier and happier and started out to develop a pride in their town. Public buildings for local councils and libraries were built and art galleries opened, mostly in the Greek style with pillars. For the first time the ordinary man had a civic pride and could see art in his local town and it was free for all, giving a sense of ownership.

A new urban society grew, with greater prospects, leading to a rapidly expanding middle class.

The most popular paintings were in romantic settings that gave people a dream out of their day-to-day lives of smoky and dirty towns, to a beautiful, sunny countryside. Artists looked to portray an abundance of detail with the intense colours of nature and not the elegant poses that the rich had commissioned. This art became the art of the people, not religious art or views of the upper class, but of the dreams in their lives. People now had something to imagine, away from their hard lives.

One artist who led this rebellion against the upper class and their establishment, was Holman Hunt.





*The Hireling Shepherd, 1851*      *William Holman Hunt*  
*Manchester Art Gallery*

Romantic and doomed love was a melodrama loved by the Victorians. But not all paintings were sad and some told of happiness and love, with scenes of an ideal England among the country fields, far from the smoke of industrialised towns.

The shepherd neglects his sheep who are wandering into a corn field, to be with the girl, showing her a butterfly that he had caught for her. The rosy complexions and rich landscape of sheep and corn, show a land of goodness and plenty, with time for love.

The painting is still in the Manchester Art Gallery

In strict and conservative Victorian England when women had little rights, love was a distraction from the greyness of everyday life. It was their 'cinema' and their escape to other worlds, with an art for the people.

Poetry and books began to be popular as education helped people to learn to read. Romantic dreams in the Victorian age flourished with novels by Jane Austen and Charles Dickens and poems by Wordsworth and Tennyson. One popular romantic poem was *The Lady of Shalott*, written by Tennyson in 1832. A sad tale of all consuming and tragic love. True Victorian melodrama.



*A lady lost to a doomed love*

*The Lady of Shalott, 1888, John Waterhouse,  
Tate Britain, London  
From the poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson*

The story in the poem is of the Lady of Shalott who lived 'by the island in the river, flowing down to Camelot' – fabled castle of the medieval knights. There was 'a curse on her if she stay to look down to Camelot', so she only looked out through a reflection in 'a mirror clear'. But she was lonely and one day a knight, 'bold Sir Lancelot' rode down by the river 'and as he rode his armour rang', she turned to look and 'the mirror cracked' and she cried 'the curse is come upon me'. But, she had fallen in love with 'his coal black curls' and 'down she came and found a boat' and 'she floated down to Camelot'. Then 'singing in her song, she died' as her curse had predicted, Lancelot looked down on her and said 'she has a lovely face, God in his mercy lend her grace, The Lady of Shalott'.



## The Battle of the Artists

While life improved in England, there had been smaller revolts right across Europe in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, Milan, Rome and Venice. All against the upper classes as a call from the poor for greater freedoms. Revolution would become evolution.

In 1870 war broke out between France and Germany and a penniless young artist, Claude Monet fled to London. As a young man Monet had been impressed by the work of Joseph Turner, a prolific English painter. Turner had suffered criticism of his 'impressionist' paintings, described as 'soapsuds and whitewash' with critics saying that 'calling it a picture would be an abuse of language' (4) Paintings that we admire today.



Painted by Turner, 'The Fighting Temeraire' had boasted 98 guns and had fought at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Here Turner shows us as she is being towed to her last berth in 1839 to be broken up for scrap. Silently sailing into her last sunset, with the light falling on the ship to conjure a white ghostly yet colourful image to haunting effect. We can see how he has framed the sky, with the rich colours reflected in the sea.

*'The Fighting Temeraire, tugged to last berth',  
Turner, 1839, National gallery, London*

It was Turner who first had caught the impression of movement and colour some 30 years before Monet, instigating a major evolution in art.



Monet was to hold this inspiration and develop his new ideas on his return to Paris.

In France, there had been a public outburst of freedom of expression, with the people looking to a new future, challenging the old ways. This spirit of rebellion saw artists rejecting the traditional paintings of the 'high art' picturesque and staged scenes. Their entirely new approaches brought the 'Battle of the Artists' to the streets of Paris. They wanted to catch life in the moment, just as it is happening, as an impression of that moment with the changing light. But, rejected by the official art salons, they had to fight to even get their paintings shown.

Gone was the carefully lit studio and studied pose. Artists set up their easels outside and painted with no preparation, in rapid short brushstrokes or scraped on with a palette knife, applying layers of thick oils on wet oil paint for a texture and softer mix of colour.



The introduction of synthetic oil paint in tubes in vivid colours, meant that artists were free to paint in the open air, without having to mix colours. One even set up his studio on a little boat so that he could catch the light as it was reflected in the water and how it changed as the sun moved between clouds. Using a strong contrast between light and dark made the colours more vivid and more absorbing to the viewer. This was an art of the streets.

Be it Revolution or Evolution, Impressionism had arrived.

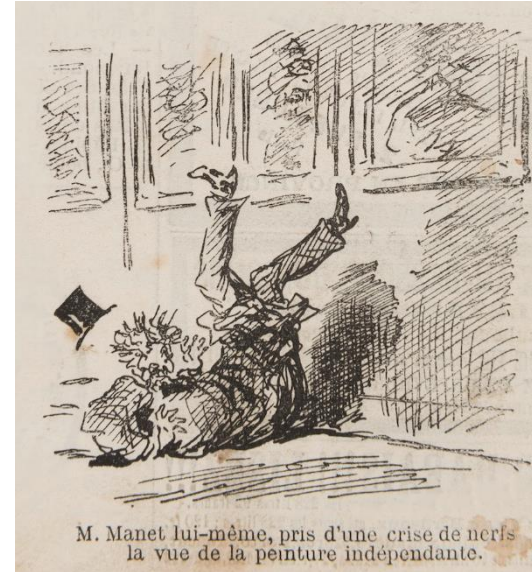
*Monet on the river, by Edouard Manet, 1874, Munich*



The painter in the boat was Monet, a penniless young artist who would go on to become one of the most famous painters in the world, but he had to fight to have his paintings shown and his art recognised.

The newspapers laughed at these new works, portraying people as collapsing from shock in front of the paintings.

*Claude Monet  
1860-61, aged 21*



*Nervous collapse on seeing the new 'independent' art*

With their work rejected by the established galleries, in 1874 the artists formed an association and held their own exhibition which the critics attacked as a 'disaster', exclaiming 'my horrified eyes behold something terrible'. Crowds from the upper-class establishment, packed to get in, but only to 'rock with laughter' at the 'cruel spectacle that met their terrified gaze'. Much the same criticism as aimed at Turner, 35 years earlier.



Women were warned to stay away - even though for the first time women artists were included. (Book 5) The outcry from the critics knew no bounds.

Everyone laughed.

But these critics were themselves made to look fools as the public – the people – took the new style to their hearts as a symbol of their new world, in a society of today and of the future, not of the past.

*No entrance for pregnant women to the exhibition of the 'Impressionists'!*

The impressionists set out to portray how the eye sees life in a glance, spontaneously as an impression, not as a focused image. People could now take photos themselves for an accurate image and so painting came to serve a new, aesthetic purpose. The technique of quick brushstrokes to capture movement and light, enabled their paintings to catch real life in streets, cafes, cabarets, across rivers, people at work or at play, not in idealised studio situations. This was a new form of art that people saw as a rebellion against the conservative 'establishments' of the upper classes, with an art that portrayed their own lives and was their own. (5)

Everyday views were transformed as the artists introduced new contrasts of dazzling colours. Society found an art that matched their new world, an art that reflected society and so helped establish that new French society.



On returning to Paris from London Monet burst into his own style, painting real life in the outdoors.



*Gare Saint-Lazare, Paris, Monet, 1877  
National Gallery, London*

Just three years after his first exhibition, Monet's style had evolved to this evocative painting.

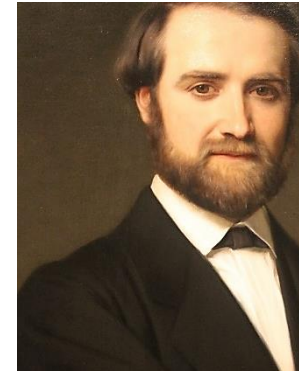
Monet caught the light streaming down through the glass skylight, through the clouds of steam as the train emerges from this confusion of the bustle of a station. Throwing steam over the city, under the clear cold blue sky of a winter's day, the scene is framed by the dark blue of the roof.

The impression is of a movement as a spectator experiences all of the sensation of actually being on the spot. So inspired was Monet, that he made four versions of the same scene.

The steam is portrayed in blue, pinks, violets, tans, greys, whites, blacks and yellows, showing how colour was used to create an impression rather than a factual picture. Standing in front of an impressionist canvas is to be absorbed into a pool of colour and drawn into the picture, making the prints so popular with people today.

But it was an art dealer Paul Durand-Ruel who had met Monet in London, who had kept the artists going, buying up their works in groups of 30-50 paintings. This at a time, when no-one else would go near them and so he kept the artists from bankruptcy. The artists would even exchange their works just for oils so they could continue working.

These artists painted what they wanted, not what any patron wanted. It is Paul that we have to thank for the impressionist paintings today.



*Paul Durand-Ruel, 1866*

Paul saw this as a 'battle' to have these wonderful paintings accepted. He became such a collector that he also nearly went bankrupt, collecting hundreds of paintings that he couldn't sell. Then in 1885 he was invited to take 350 paintings to an exhibition in the USA, where they were snapped up as a new art for a new country. Which is why today there are so many impressionist paintings in American art galleries. *(Book 5)*

Without this art dealer, the impressionists may not have been able to continue and we may never have heard of the great artists such as Monet, Renoir, Pissarro or Manet, all of whom he kept afloat at his own cost. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, every artist has needed patronage, be it a collector or a gallery. The difference this time is that it is the artist who determines the subject, the content and the form of representation, not the patron.



Monet was to return to London 33 years later and here he found the damp, misty light to be so different from Paris. He portrayed impressions of buildings peering through the gloom, where he caught the evening sun setting through the soft fog that blew from the factory chimneys. He created a frame of the sky at the top and the river at the bottom, reflecting the sunset of the sky. Surrounded, the Houses of Parliament sits solidly in the centre in the cold blue of a winter's day.



*The Houses of Parliament, London, Monet, 1903  
National gallery, London - one of 19 similar views!*

But not all impressionists used this style. Degas also looked to catch images in the moment, but not in the avalanche of colours used by Monet. He was particularly interested in portraying ballet dancers rehearsing and self-occupied in their own thoughts, rather than posed on a stage.

Degas had rejected a career as a lawyer to become an artist and then rejected the conservative paintings of the establishment and joined the impressionists. But Degas again took his own route, not painting outdoors and instead turned indoors to the dance studios.

He liked to catch the dancers from unexpected angles, in a casual position, where their characters can be seen resting, unaware of the artist. We see the dancer bent forward, holding her ankle in a moment of relaxation.



*Awaiting the cue, Degas, 1879*

*Private collection*

At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ballet shoes had heels with no support for toes and the dancers could be heard clunking across the floor. Dancers were only set free with the introduction first of flat ballet shoes, then later with a platform to support the toes. So, ballet dancers could then leap and by the end of the century, could stand poised on their toes, 'a pointe'. Unlike the early leather soles, the sole was made of satin and the dancer was almost silent. The dancers representing swans in Swan Lake, could now glide to the music and Romeo could run to Juliette without a crashing of feet to disturb the romantic illusion.

So, ballet assumed an artistic style and a genre in its own right, becoming part of society and its culture.

This new evolution in ballet was happening at the time that Degas was visiting the dance studios, so he could portray the new grace of the dancers. (6) But as he grew older, his eyesight began to fail him and Degas turned to sculpture, producing this beautiful study of a young ballerina.



The ballerina shows the stress in her face of aiming for perfection. Only a girl of 14, she is lifting her head and arching her back, with studied pride. Degas dressed her in a ballet dress that emphasises her youth and poise.

Degas made this in a reddish wax and it was only after his death that his relatives had a bronze cast made.

So, with his realism Degas sits between impressionism and tradition.

*Little Dancer, aged 14, Degas, 1881  
Metropolitan Museum, New York*



## Summary

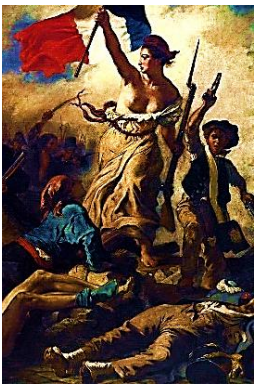


The Dutch had introduced new oil paintings on canvas, allowing vivid paintings that were also easy to transport.

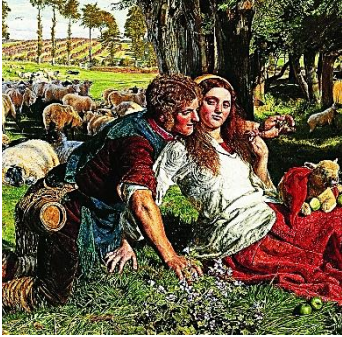
Rich, detailed and lifelike works that brought medieval art out of the 'dark ages'.



In Northern Europe we saw how people lived and how children played. As people travelled far less than we do today, each village and town had a strong community that came together for harvest or religious festivals. They were poor, but they knew how to enjoy themselves!



But across Europe there came revolution as the people rose up from their poverty and hunger, to strike down their rulers and the upper classes who grew rich on their work. In France, the dreadful Madame Guillotine cut off the aristocratic heads as the people shouted, 'Liberté, égalité and fraternité'.



In England, the government had moved to give people better conditions and better lives and rather than total revolution, people found a pride and went to new art galleries in their towns to see romantic paintings. Pictures of a world that they could only dream of, away from the work and grime of their everyday lives, to enjoy a new urban society.

But a new more prosperous world was just around the corner.



A new art of impression evolved that challenged the old traditional art and society. An art of a different beauty that the establishments tried to throw out, only for the people to shout its praises in their new world of freedom.

A new art for a new, modern society, with new cultural values and aspirations.



Then a realistic impressionism with a life-like model portraying a juvenile arrogance. The dancer's expression juts out to the world as if to say 'this is me and I am good!'

Now art has its own expression, free of any demanding and manipulating patrons.

*'From revolution to evolution'*

## Sources of information

- (1) <https://www.webexhibits.org/pigments/intro/renaissance.html>
- (2) [https://www.softschools.com/facts/world\\_history/french\\_revolution\\_facts/2206/](https://www.softschools.com/facts/world_history/french_revolution_facts/2206/)
- (3) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zvmv4wx/revision/4>
- (4) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/11110438/JMW-Turner-art-master-and-polemicist.html>
- (5) [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd\\_imml.htm/](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd_imml.htm/)
- (6) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_ballet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_ballet)



A BBC series 'Civilisation', provides a history of art and society from the middle ages to the present day, over 13 episodes

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p050q44y>





*Little Dancer, aged 14, Degas, 1881  
Metropolitan Museum, New York*

The history of life and art across centuries,  
of changing societies and changing cultures.

'I think the concept for your work is both  
creative and engaging for young people.  
The links between art, history, society  
are clear in the outline you provide and  
the opportunities to stimulate young people's  
interest and imagination are evident'.

Sir Nicholas Serota,  
Chairman, Arts Council, England

Society makes art and art defines society's culture