

**Masterpiece:** "The Japanese Bridge"

**Artist:** Claude Monet

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**Concept:** Impressionist Garden

**Lesson:** A Flowery Garden

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**Objectives:**

- To create an impressionist garden in the style of Monet
- Experiment with a new technique of dabbling in paint
- To mix colors "optically" on the paper.

**Vocabulary:** Impressionism, color, "optical mixing", texture, landscape, impasto, brushstroke.

**Materials: (one per student unless otherwise noted)**

- 8" x 11" white paper
- small/med paintbrushes
- tempera in red, yellow, blue and white (other colors: orange, green, and purple optional)
- plastic cups or containers for water
- paper towels for blotting brushes
- scrap paper for practicing.

**\*\* Please Note \*\***

Stress the importance of trying the technique of dabbling and "smooshing". Show them how to paint without "scrubbing" the paper - some kids like to use their paintbrush as a marker or crayon; gently remind them to be kind to the brushes. Show them how messy Monet's paintings look up close but from afar they look beautiful. Have them periodically get up and view their picture from afar, it usually looks better.

**\*\* Troubleshooting Thoughts \*\***

Cover desks and kids first. Give them nickel or quarter-sized amounts of paint on their Styrofoam plate "palettes", add more as needed. It does not take a lot of paint. When a student is finished with paint to spare, pass his/her plate to someone else who needs more of a color.

**Process:**

1. Look at paintings of Monet's gardens. Notice his short dabbing brushstrokes, and pay attention to how he uses bright colors beside each other without blending to create effects.
2. Show the students pictures of gardens and ponds to inspire them to draw their own garden. Point out that water is not always blue, but can be green, white, brown, black, or gold depending on what it reflects.
3. Have students lightly sketch a garden, with trees, pond, bridge, bushes, etc. They don't need to put in every detail of exactly how they look. Try to create an "impression" of how it would feel to be there.
4. If desired the students can add a footbridge to their landscape.
5. Encourage the students to practice dabbing and smooshing their paint on a scrap piece of paper if they like.
6. Have the artists mix as many different shades of green as they can. Use them to paint a leafy garden. Brush in different directions to make the garden look alive.
7. Paint the garden landscape using a dabbing and short stroke technique placing different bright colors next to each other without blending them.
8. If painting water in a pond, use wavy lines in shades of green and blue, and highlight with short dabs of white and yellow to show reflections.
9. Dot red, pink, yellow, orange, blue and purple flowers all over the garden.
10. Don't forget to color the sky!
11. Step back often to look at the painting. It will look messy up close, but will look better when viewed from afar.
12. Sign Your Work!
13. After drying, the art may be mounted on 9" x 12" colored construction paper.

# 5th GRADE--PROJECT #2

Artist: Claude Monet

Masterpiece: The Japanese Bridge

Lesson: Impressionist Garden

Project Samples:



Art Masterpiece  
Claude Monet (1840 - 1926)  
"Japanese Bridge"

Today we studied French Impressionist painter Claude Monet. Monet felt it was important to paint the things he saw around him instead of staged portraits and historical panorama. He met other young artists that felt the same way. They painted outdoors, not in a studio, and used strong colors and bold brush strokes. One of Monet's well-known paintings is of a seascape with boats at sunrise, showing his impression of sunlight reflected on the water, called "Impression: Sunrise". Art critics were not impressed and gave him the uncomplimentary title of "Impressionist". It was this that started the art movement known as Impressionism. He eventually became wealthy enough to purchase a large farmhouse with two acres of gardens. He constructed a water garden spanned by a Japanese arched bridge. Paintings of his own gardens and ponds were the subject of hundreds of his paintings and occupied him for the rest of his life. Your young artist created an Impressionist masterpiece using tempera. Please ask him/her about his/her art.



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# CLAUDE MONET

## (1840-1926)

Oscar-Claude Monet was born in Paris, France on November 14, 1840. When he was young he did not like school and spent a great deal of time wandering around the beaches making caricatures of tourists. He was able to sell many of them.

In 1859 Monet started to spend most of his time painting outside. He painted simple landscapes and scenes of the contemporary middle-class society. He was known as an Impressionist painter and his friends were Manet, Renoir, Pissarro, and Sisley, who were also Impressionists. Their paintings were not accepted in the beginning but in 1874 they had the first official show of Impressionist Art in Paris. The artists called themselves independents but the press soon labeled them as Impressionists because their work seemed sketchy and unfinished. One of Monet's first paintings was titled, "Impression: Sunrise" and so the name took hold. By the mid-1880's Monet was regarded as a leader in Impressionism and achieved significant recognition and financial security. Despite his boldness of color and the extreme simplicity of his compositions, he was recognized as a master of meticulous observation.

In 1883 Monet moved to Giverny which was not far from Paris. He bought a large farmhouse with two acres of gardens. It is here that he constructed a water garden with a lily pond that is arched with a Japanese bridge and overhung with willows and clumps of bamboo. Monet loved the way colors reflect in water and the special way that water makes the clouds and sky look. Paintings of his own gardens and ponds were the subject of hundreds of paintings and occupied him for the rest of his life. At the age of 60 his eyesight began to fail him. But, he continued to paint until he died in 1926 at the age of 86. Because of his failing eyesight his final paintings became very large (some as big as 40 feet wide) and were almost abstract.

If you look very close at some of Monet's paintings you can hardly tell what he painted. It just looks like a bunch of colorful brush strokes. But when you step back a little, it all starts to make sense.

## *CLAUDE MONET - ART PROJECT IDEAS*

### *1. A CHANGING PLACE*

Claude Monet enjoyed painting the same subject - a landscape or cityscape - at different times of day or in different seasons. Why do you think he wanted to try this? What changes happen in a scene as the morning becomes afternoon? Or evening? Or summer becomes fall? Or winter becomes spring? Is there a favorite place you go (your house, a playground or park, farm or country place, etc.) at different times and seasons? What is it you like about that place? Have students fold a paper in half or fourths and draw a favorite outdoor place in two or four different ways, either changing the time of day or the season. Allow some time for sharing when the pictures are finished.

### *2. GETTING SKETCHY*

The Impressionists were criticized for painting in an unfinished or sketchy way. But they wanted to capture a moment in time. Which pictures do you remember from the video that seemed sketchy? Have you ever made a sketch or drawn really quickly? Collect photos of places (landscapes and cityscapes) so that there is a classroom set. (Old calendars are a great source for these.) Have crayons or chalks and many sheets of paper at hand for each student. Then ask each student to make a one or two minute sketch capturing as much of the scene as they can - with quick strokes. Remind them that they won't have time to add too many details. Demonstrate if you can. Then ring a bell after two minutes and ask students to exchange photos and try it again. Do this as many times as interest holds, then save some time to share and discuss. Did anyone find sketching difficult? Did it get easier? Does it look more real or less real than when a picture has lots of details?

### *3. WATER AND FLOWERS*

Monet created his beautiful water garden at Giverny and used it as his subject over and over again. Water is constantly changing because it reflects the world around it, and moves.

Hang some prints with water as a subject in the room and/or photographs of large bodies of water. Also, bring in fresh or artificial flowers. Have students use watercolor paints directly, without a pencil sketch, to paint water and flowers together in a composition. They may want to try the technique of wetting the paper first, so that the paint flows freely on the paper. If you have access to music, play some Impressionist music by composers Claude Debussy or Maurice Ravel as the students work.



#### 4. *CARICATURES*

As a boy and young man, Monet loved to draw funny pictures or caricatures of people. What makes a caricature different from a realistic drawing of a person? (exaggeration) What features can an artist exaggerate? Have you ever seen an artist draw a caricature? Where was this?

Give the students mirrors and ask them to try drawing a caricature of themselves, using exaggeration. They may want to try Monet's technique of making the head much larger than the body. (You may want to remind the students that their cartoons should be funny, not cruel or inappropriate.)