

# Pierre-Auguste Renoir

1841-1919

Impressionist

Born in Limoges, France. The third son of a tailor and seamstress. He was a very happy child, he was talkative and made friends easily. He had an uncomplicated attitude toward life, he did not stress or worry about things. This attitude toward life was later reflected in the warmth and happiness of his paintings.

He was interested in drawing, shapes and figures, from a very young age. But, he was identified as a promising singer. He was sent to music school and pretty much stopped formal training in visual art.

His family was considered working or middle class in France; they all had to work hard to provide food, shelter and clothing for themselves. This meant that Renoir's music lessons had to stop when he became of working age; the age of 13. At this time his family also moved to Paris. He found work that relied on his ability to paint and draw. He began working in a porcelain factory painting decorative designs on serving plates.

He was happy at this time of his life mostly because of his family's proximity to the Louvre where he could go during his free time and study artists and artistic styles.

Unfortunately, within a couple of years, technology advanced to the point where machines began painting onto

porcelain, which eliminated his job. At this time he decided to pursue his art in Paris.

While in Paris he met several other young artists, namely Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley and Frederic Bazille. The four young men, working together to improve their art, created a new artistic style called Impressionism.

? What are some characteristics of Impressionism? Broken brushstrokes, bold combinations of pure complementary colors used to capture light and movement

At first this new style was not well received, the artists were not able to sell any of their work and as a result were not able to buy materials for new paintings. They took on odd jobs.

It was not until 1881, when Renoir was 40 years old that he was able to support himself as an artist. This means that for 40 years, he was surviving hand to mouth... what does this mean? He only made enough money to survive. This is remarkable to me since any one piece of his artwork today would be invaluable, perhaps selling for tens or maybe hundreds of millions of dollars.

He was handicapped later in life due to arthritis and a stroke, but he did not stop creating. For several years, his assistant would strap a paint brush on his wrist so that he could paint. Then, just prior to his death he began directing students to act as his hands in creating sculpture.

He died a wealthy man at the age of 78. However, he was poor most of his life, and is well known for his remark that lack of money should not be a personal barrier to success or happiness in life.

And there are enough unpleasant things in the world, therefore he paints things of beauty.

Many people simply refer to Renoir and talk about how wonderful he was able to use color.