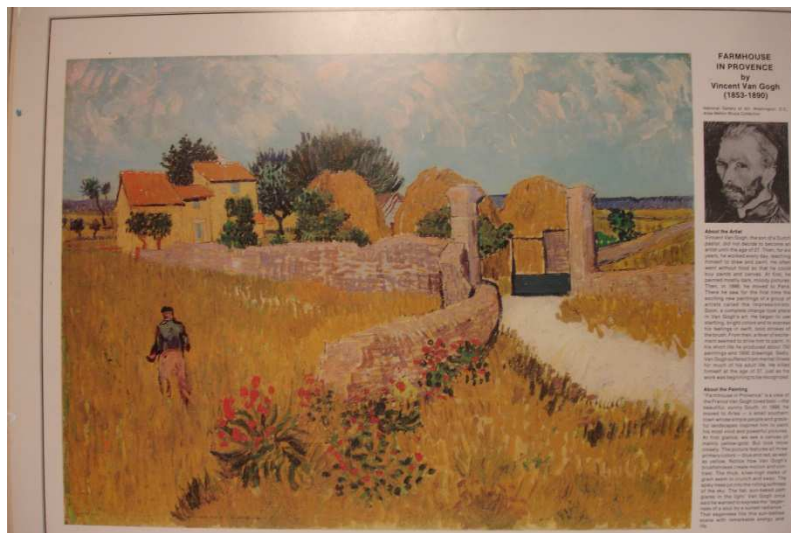


Vincent Van Gogh "Farmhouse at Provence"



Claude Monet "Banks of the Seine, Vetheuil"



Artwork Overview:

Vincent Van Gogh painted "Farmhouse at Provence" to show his impression of the countryside in France called Provence. The colors are very warm in the front (foreground) and cooler in the background. The brush strokes are very heavy and deliberate. Van Gogh used a lot of paint when he applied color to his canvas. The sky is bright with fresh blue and white providing a relief from the hot golden yellow of the fields.

Claude Monet also painted an impression of a place in France. Monet has painted "Banks of the Seine, Vetheuil" in much cooler colors than Van Gogh has chosen. The paint is applied in short, dabbing motions. There is also water in this painting which reflects the colors in the sky. Monet was interested in capturing light in his painting. Many times he painted outdoors in order to capture natural light in his paintings.

Topics for Discussion:

1. Both Claude Monet and Vincent Van Gogh painted *en plein air*. Can you discover the meaning of *en plein air*, by looking at these paintings?
2. Can you find things that are alike in these paintings?
3. Can you find things that are different in these paintings?
4. Have the artists used warm colors (red, yellow, orange) or cool colors (blue, green, violet)? Why do you think the artists chose these colors?
5. Can you find light in these scenes? How does the artist depict light?
6. How do you feel when you are looking at these paintings?
7. Monet once said "Paint what you see, not what you think you ought to see." What do you think Monet was trying to say?

Hands on Art Activity      Watercolor painting with light effects

Materials:    11 x 15 Halifax Watercolor paper  
                  Water color paints  
                  Water color brushes  
                  Blue Sponges  
                  Water tubs  
                  Newspaper  
                  Paper towels  
                  Smocks  
                  Cool/warm watercolor chart  
                  Pencil (kids supply)

Directions:

1. Discuss the way the water reflects the color and shapes of the trees, people, clouds and structures from above. Does this produce a mirror image or does the water distort the light and color with ripples and sparkles?
2. Apply water to the sky and water in the paintings (if the student decides to paint water) this will provide the soft wash that makes the watercolors flow on the paper. A clean wet sponge works well for this step and an adult or older helper can assist.
3. Carefully paint the colors and watch them flow together and blend. Use warm colors and cool colors in separate areas to avoid brown colored sky and water.
4. The dry areas of the paper can be grass and flowers. The dry area of paper provide more control of the paint.
5. Sign the front of the painting when complete.

About the Artists:

Refer to copy of **Vincent Van Gogh**.

### **Claude Monet (1840-1926)**

Claude Monet was a French painter and leader of the Impressionist movement. He greatly influenced the history of art by painting his response to the visual. Monet was interested in light and how it influenced the colors of the natural world. His paintings were fresh and bright in color with paint applied in thick deliberate brush strokes. He was one of the first artists to paint "en plein air" (out of doors). Monet experimented throughout his art career looking for ways to capture light in the visual world.

Monet was born in Paris, then moved with his family to Le Havre on the Normandy coast. The coast with the water and bright sunlight influenced Monet's lifelong interest in light and color.

In 1859, he visited Paris, frequented cafes, and studied at the Academie Suisse, an art school that provided models but no instruction. In 1861, he was drafted into the army and served in the African cavalry in Algeria for over a year. He was sent back to Normandy on sick leave in the late summer of 1862. By autumn he returned to Paris where he enrolled in the studio of Charles Gleyre (1808-1874), an instructor at the Academy's Ecole des Beaux Arts. There he met artists who were to become his friends and fellow rebels: Renoir, Frederic Bazille, Alfred Sisley and other students. During the next several years Monet and his friends painted on weekends and holidays in the forests of Fontainebleau and along the coast of Honfleur. Here the group developed their theories of color and light in their paintings. This was the beginning of Impressionism.

By spring 1868, Monet moved to Bennecourt on the bank of the Seine River. Here he brought along his model, soon to be wife Camille Doncieux and their infant son Jean. Monet painted many scenes on location along the banks of the Seine. Camille and his friends occupy the shimmering, landscapes that Monet painted during his brief stay.

Monet later became friends with Camille Pissarro, Paul Cezanne and Edgar Degas. Through these artists Monet began exhibiting his work at the Salon in Paris. Monet's first submission of two seascapes were accepted in 1865. The following year he displayed two more paintings. But other than a painting of the port of Le Havre in 1868, the Salon rejected Monet's work for the rest of the decade.

From the friendship between Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Renoir and Manet, a new direction of art for the first Impressionist Exhibit of 1874. These artists were scorned by the conventional art world, thus a critique responded to the first exhibition of their work as an "impression". The name was adopted by the group and thus began the new direction for art. The aim of this movement was to produce paintings entirely faithful to reality- to make an exact analysis of tone and color and capture the reflections of surfaces on objects.

Monet settled in Giverny, north-eastern France in 1883. In Giverny he created gardens filled with elaborate arrangements of plants and flowers. Here in the 1890's he began painting subjects in multiple series recording the varying light conditions at different times of the day. This is where he painted his most famous series "Waterlilies", the shimmering pools and shadowy atmosphere envelopes the viewer. Suffused in light and color the one is amazed that Monet was going blind when he painted these massive works.