



Large
Print

**Painting the
Modern Garden
Monet to Matisse**

Impressionist
Gardens

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Multimedia tour



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



Claude Monet, Spring Flowers, 1864



Claude Monet, The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil (A Corner of the Garden with Dahlias), 1873 AND Renoir, Claude Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil, 1873



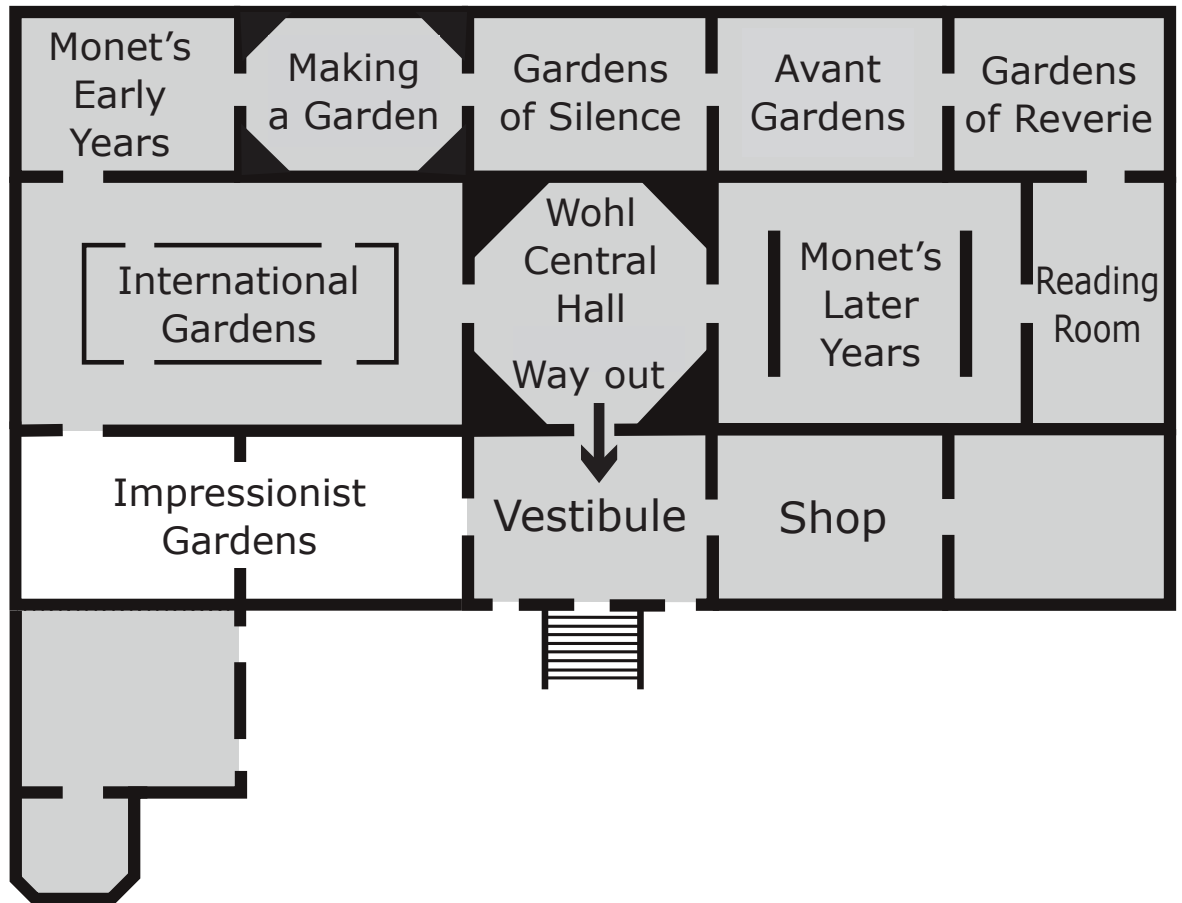
Camille Pissarro, Kitchen Gardens at L'Hermitage, Pontoise, 1874



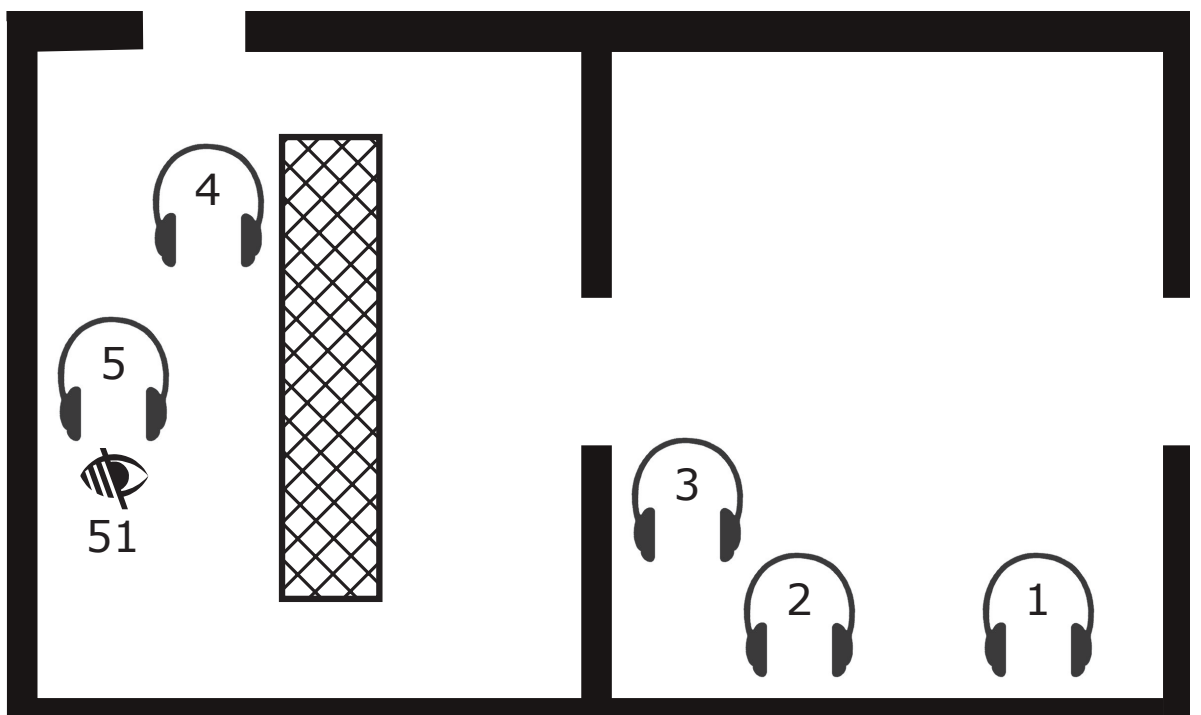
Gustave Caillebotte: Dahlias: The Garden at Petit-Gennevilliers, 1873



51 Claude Monet, The Artist's Garden at Vétheuil, 1881



You are in
Impressionist Gardens



Showcase

Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Main Galleries:

30 January – 20 April 2016

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Introduction to the exhibition

Monet cultivated gardens throughout his life, from his early days at Argenteuil in the 1870s until his death at Giverny in 1926.

The magnificent garden he created at Giverny, about 50 miles to the northwest of Paris, was his greatest horticultural creation and continues to attract thousands of visitors today. Monet found in these gardens an infinite source of creative inspiration for his painting.

A surprisingly large number of Monet's contemporaries shared his fascination with the subject.

Many were inspired by the great horticultural movement of the nineteenth century, when gardening as the modern pursuit that we enjoy today began to take shape. Greater affluence and leisure time provided the growing middle class with new opportunities to garden for aesthetic pleasure.

Floral displays became major attractions at international fairs, while horticultural societies, plant nurseries and popular gardening magazines became ever more popular. New plant species imported from Asia and the Americas, combined with advances in botanical science, led to the production of larger, more intensely coloured hybrids with more varied shapes and sizes.

This newly emergent floriculture inspired artists to explore innovative ways of depicting the natural world. Gardens ignited their imaginations, sharpened their response to colour and provided a fertile space in which to explore a broad range of painterly and thematic ideas.

Although Monet, the artist-gardener par excellence, is the touchstone, this exhibition also looks broadly and deeply at the theme of the garden in the work of many other artists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

From Impressionist visions of light and atmosphere, to Symbolist evocations of imagined realities, to sites for avant-garde experimentation with form and colour, and ultimately to sanctuaries of healing during the First World War.

By framing these paintings of gardens in the context of broad artistic movements, as well as social and horticultural developments, the exhibition seeks to provide the visitor with a deeper understanding of how gardens served as a universal, multifaceted source of inspiration for artists of the modern era.

Impressionist Gardens

The modern garden in the late nineteenth century provided ideal subject-matter for the Impressionists.

Offering a vital means of reconnecting with nature in an age of rapid industrialisation, gardens had also acquired a new status as a space of leisure, which was an essential part of the radical motif of “modern life” that lay at the heart of Impressionism.

Artists began to treat their gardens as outdoor studios and even as works of art in their own right. Keenly aware of developments in horticultural science, they participated in the explosion of interest in gardening for pleasure and embraced the many ways in which a garden could be enjoyed and cultivated.

Like Monet, Gustave Caillebotte was an avid gardener, and the two artists exchanged letters about gardening, constructed their own greenhouses and grew new hybrids.

Whereas Camille Pissarro's traditional kitchen or vegetable gardens maintained a connection with the past, Pierre-Auguste Renoir preferred wild, untamed gardens, which fed a new concern with sensory experiences of colour, scent and texture.

Contemporary theorists praised gardens as essential to a healthy family life and interpreted the rising popularity of personal gardening as a sign of France's recovery after the disastrous Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune of 1870–1871.

The anarchist writer Octave Mirbeau (1848–1917), who exchanged visits with Monet, Caillebotte and Pissarro, considered his garden in the valley of the River Seine an unspoiled utopia, commenting in a letter to Monet: "I love compost like one loves a woman."

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919)

Flowers in a Greenhouse 1864

Oil on canvas

Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg

This work shows a modern garden in the making: flowers grown under glass await bedding-out. Traditional favourites including daisies, crocuses, a Keizerskroon tulip, a tiny white hyacinth and an arum lily complement cineraria and lilacs, flowers much developed in Renoir's day.

While the influence of traditional still-life flower painting is clear, emphasis is given to naturalistic effects of light and shade, while the wooden crate and mud-smeared pots suggest a gardener at work.

This and the adjacent flower study by Monet were painted when the two young artists met, became friends and painted together in the years before Impressionism.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)



Spring Flowers

1864

Oil on fabric

The Cleveland Museum of Art. Gift of the Hanna Fund

Monet said he learnt gardening in his youth, “when I was unhappy”, but these magnificent flowers freshly cut from a garden – perhaps that of his aunt at Sainte Adresse – surely speak of his delight in making things grow.

Horticulturalists have identified over ten specific floral species. They include red pelargoniums, opulent peonies and velvety wallflowers, with Persian lilac and the pink tubular petals of Weigela amabilis – both newly introduced to Europe – framing the basket of guelder roses.

“I perhaps owe it to flowers that I became a painter”

Claude Monet



Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919)

Claude Monet Painting in His Garden at Argenteuil 1873

Oil on canvas

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT.

Bequest of Anne Parrish Titzell

Claude Monet appears in the lower right of this canvas holding a palette and brush, captured in the act of painting the garden at his first house in Argenteuil. The blossoming dahlias, planted informally without edging or borders, suggest the freedom of an English cottage garden.

Perhaps no other image so succinctly encapsulates Monet's lifelong devotion to gardening and painting.

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)



The Artist's Garden in Argenteuil (A Corner of the Garden with Dahlias) 1873

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gift of Janice H. Levin, in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art

This may be the very canvas Monet was working on when Renoir depicted him painting in his garden at Argenteuil. The viewpoint shifts to focus more intensely on the yellow, red and white dahlias, perhaps including the giant new *imperialis* and red *juarezii* varieties.

Camille Pissarro

(1830–1903)



Kitchen Gardens at L'Hermitage,
Pontoise
1874

Oil on canvas

National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh

Like Monet, Pissarro was a gardener himself, but preferred traditional kitchen or market gardens dedicated to growing fruits and vegetables. In this tranquil autumnal scene, red tiled roofs and a modern green picket fence frame a traditional scene of ploughing and harvesting, creating a subtle balance of old and new.

Contemporary writers mocked Pissarro's "deplorable fondness for market gardens" and referred to him as an "Impressionist market-gardener specialising in cabbages".

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Lady in the Garden

1867

Oil on canvas

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

This work is thought to depict Monet's cousin, Jeanne-Marguerite Lecadre, on the rich green lawns of his aunt's garden at Sainte-Adresse near Le Havre in Normandy.

Sainte-Adresse was renowned for its private horticulture. The splendid standard roses and the "carpet" bed of red geraniums is typical of formal French garden design at this time, and is in marked contrast to the looser planting Monet was to develop a few years later.

Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

In the Garden
1875

Oil on canvas

Private collection, Switzerland

Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

Plum Trees in Blossom at Vétheuil
1879

Oil on canvas

Szépművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Fine Arts),
Budapest

Camille Pissarro

(1830–1903)

Spring, Plum Trees in Blossom
1877

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Bequest of Gustave Caillebotte,
1894

Frédéric Bazille

(1841–1870)

Les Lauriers Roses (The Terrace
at Méric)
1867

Oil on canvas

Cincinnati Art Museum, Gift of Mark P. Herschede

This painting depicts a terraced garden at the Domaine de Méric, the summer home of Bazille's family. Located near Montpellier in southern France, the extensive estate included an English garden, orchards and fields of perfumed Mediterranean flowers.

Although unfinished, the boldly painted composition – featuring pink and white oleanders drenched in sunlight – attests to Bazille's contributions to the early development of Impressionism. His close relationship with Monet and Renoir was cut short by his death in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919)

The Garden in the Rue Cortot, Montmartre 1876

Oil on canvas

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Acquired through the generosity of Mrs Alan M. Scaife

This painting depicts the secluded garden behind Renoir's studio on the Rue Cortot in Montmartre. Although famous for its bohemian cabarets, Montmartre was also dotted with small gardens.

As this painting indicates, Renoir preferred wild, natural gardens and treated them as laboratories for exploring new techniques of quickly applying paint with broken brushstrokes that dissolve forms into patterns of flickering, coloured light.

Armand Guillaumin

(1841–1927)

The Nasturtium Path

1880

Oil on canvas

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. On long-term deposit from the National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen, since 1922.

Guillaumin, a pioneer member of the Impressionist group, was admired for his use of vivid colour. Nasturtiums were greatly favoured by nineteenth-century horticulturalists, and some contemporary scientists thought that they emitted light when in shadow.

This garden, blooming with orange nasturtiums, provided a perfect subject for Guillaumin's love of exuberant colour.

Paul Cézanne

(1839–1906)

The Pond at the Jas de Bouffan
c. 1874

Oil on canvas

Museums Sheffield

Camille Pissarro

(1830–1903)

Jeanne Pissarro (called Minette)
Sitting in the Garden, Pontoise
c. 1872

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Gustave Caillebotte

(1848–1894)

The Wall of the Vegetable Garden,
Yerres

1877

Pastel on paper

Private collection

Camille Pissarro

(1830–1903)

The Artist's Garden at Eragny
1898

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington. Ailsa Mellon Bruce
Collection

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Small Country Farm at Bordighera 1884

Oil on canvas

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Museum purchase, Joslyn
Endowment Fund

Claude Monet (1840–1926)



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The Artist's Garden at Vétheuil 1881

Oil on canvas

Private collection, California

Monet moved to Vétheuil, a village on the Seine to the northwest of Paris, in 1878. In this painting, the third of four variants, Monet's sons Michel and Jean stand on the steps of the garden, flanked by a profusion of blossoming sunflowers.

The cloudless blue sky and the shimmering midday light suggest a brilliant summer's day. In the foreground is a set of blue-and-white Delft pots, probably acquired by Monet in Holland in 1871, which reappear often in his early garden paintings.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Moreno's Garden at Bordighera 1884

Oil on canvas

Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach.

Bequest of R. H. Norton

In the winter of 1883–1884, Monet visited Francesco Moreno's famous palm garden at Bordighera, an Italian seaside village near the French border. Monet delighted in the garden's exuberant palm trees and densely packed overgrowth, which to him suggested a primitive life force lacking in the more controlled gardens in northern France.

He painted this garden with a heavy impasto and high-keyed colours evocative of the intense heat and humidity of the region, and later tried to re-create the lush colours of Mediterranean plants in his gardens at Giverny.

Camille Pissarro

(1830–1903)

The Terrace at Les Damps,
Octave Mirbeau's Garden
1892

Oil on canvas

Beatrice Cummings Mayer, Chicago

Pissarro diverged from his more customary practice of painting kitchen gardens during a two-week holiday in Normandy, where he painted several views of the flower garden of the writer Octave Mirbeau. Pissarro and Monet exchanged several visits with Mirbeau, sharing ideas about art and gardening.

This view of the writer's garden features exuberant flowers carefully organised around a gravel path.

Edouard Manet

(1832–1883)

Young Woman Among Flowers
1879

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Young Girls in the Dahlias
1875

Oil on canvas

Národní Galerie, Prague

Dahlias underwent extensive hybridisation in the nineteenth century, and in this garden – thought to be Monet's own at Argenteuil – these quintessentially modern flowers almost engulf the women picking them. The association of gardens with femininity was a popular theme in Impressionist painting.

Berthe Morisot (1841–1895)

**Woman and Child in a Meadow at
Bougival
1882**

Oil on canvas

Ar fenhyg gan / Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National
Museum Wales, Cardiff. 1963 Margaret Davies Bequest

Gustave Caillebotte

(1848–1894)

Nasturtiums

1892

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Gustave Caillebotte

(1848–1894)



Dahlias: The Garden at Petit-Gennevilliers

1893

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Caillebotte's garden at his home in Petit-Gennevilliers included a separate studio, flower and vegetable gardens, and a greenhouse. He was consulted by his close friend Monet about the construction of a greenhouse, a relatively new feature in private gardens.

The two artists exchanged letters about gardening, grew their own floral varieties, traded plants and visited horticultural exhibitions together. The curving double petals of the dahlias that dominate the foreground of this work identify them as the showy new 'cactus' variety, which is illustrated in 'L'Illustration horticole' (below).

Image: Martial Caillebotte, 'The House, Studio, Garden and Greenhouse of Gustave Caillebotte at Petit-Gennevilliers', c. 1891.

Digital print. Private collection

© Comité Caillebotte



Dahlias

Single dahlias, illustrated here in a copy of a lavish horticultural encyclopedia that Monet owned at Giverny, came to Europe from Mexico in 1789.

The double “cactus” dahlia was in turn developed from the bright red ‘Dahlia juarezii’ introduced in 1864, and ‘L’Illustration horticole’, to which both Monet and Caillebotte subscribed, asserts that there is “nothing more decorative in a park or garden”. With their “beautiful and gracious form” and “beauty and richness of...colours”, cactus dahlias “surpass all the earlier types” and “merit being universally grown”.

Caillebotte’s ‘Dahlias: The Garden at Petit-Gennevilliers’ (displayed above) almost certainly shows cactus varieties. The ‘Dahlia imperialis’, illustrated here in ‘La Revue horticole’, was a giant variety only newly cultivated in northern France, which can be seen in Monet’s painting of his garden at Argenteuil in the first room.

Showcase

Edouard Manet

Letter to Félix Bracquemond

October 1880

Triton Collection Foundation

Illustration of Dahlia variabilis: variétés simples hybrides

In 'Dictionnaire pratique
d'horticulture et de jardinage',
George Nicholson, vol. 2
1893–1894

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Illustration of Dahlia à fleurs de cactus

In 'L'illustration horticole: Revue mensuelle des plantes les plus remarquables des introductions nouvelles', J. Linden (ed.)
1889, vol. 36

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Illustration of Dahlia imperialis'

In 'Revue horticole: journal d'horticulture pratique,
E.-A. Carrière (ed.)
1872

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

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Molly Bretton, Access Manager



InTouch  **at the RA**

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Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



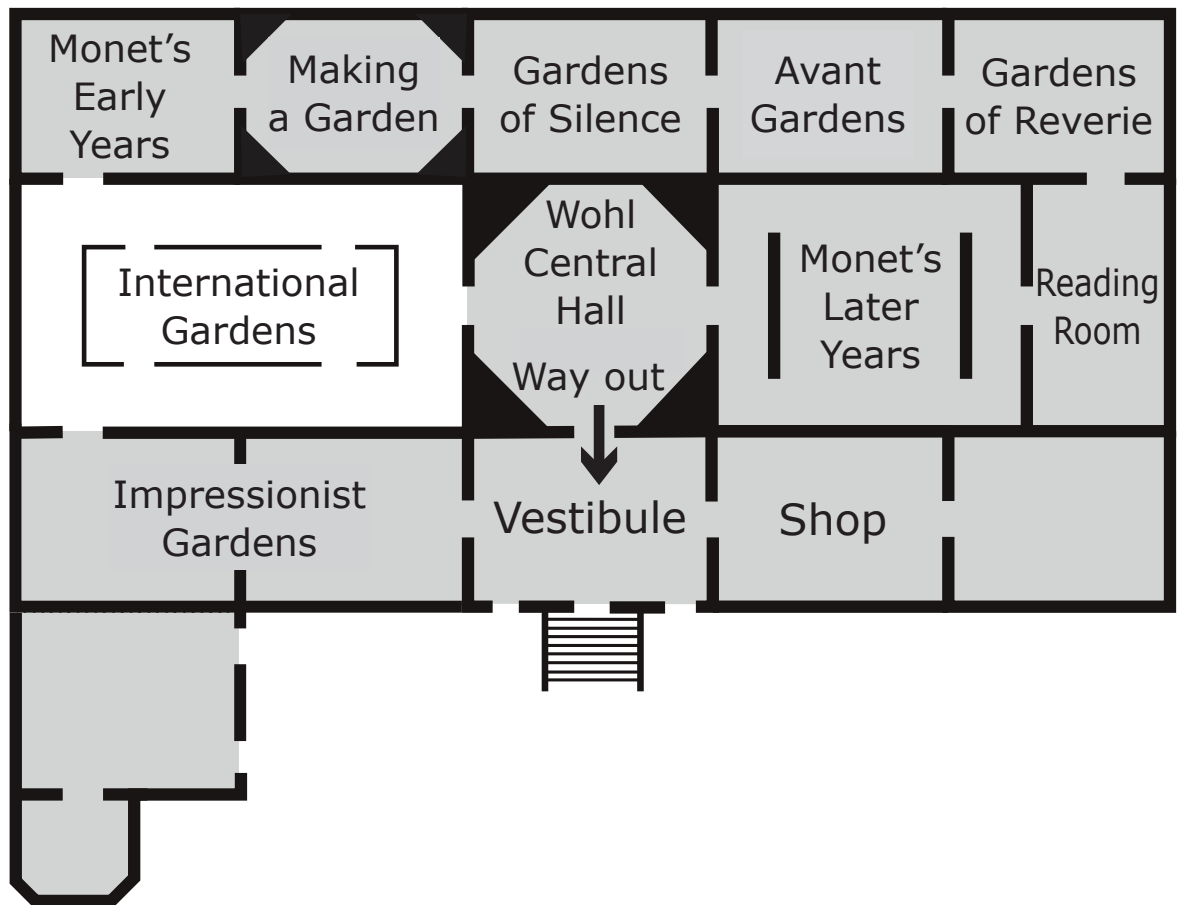
52 Joaquín Sorolla, Garden of the Sorolla House, 1918-1919



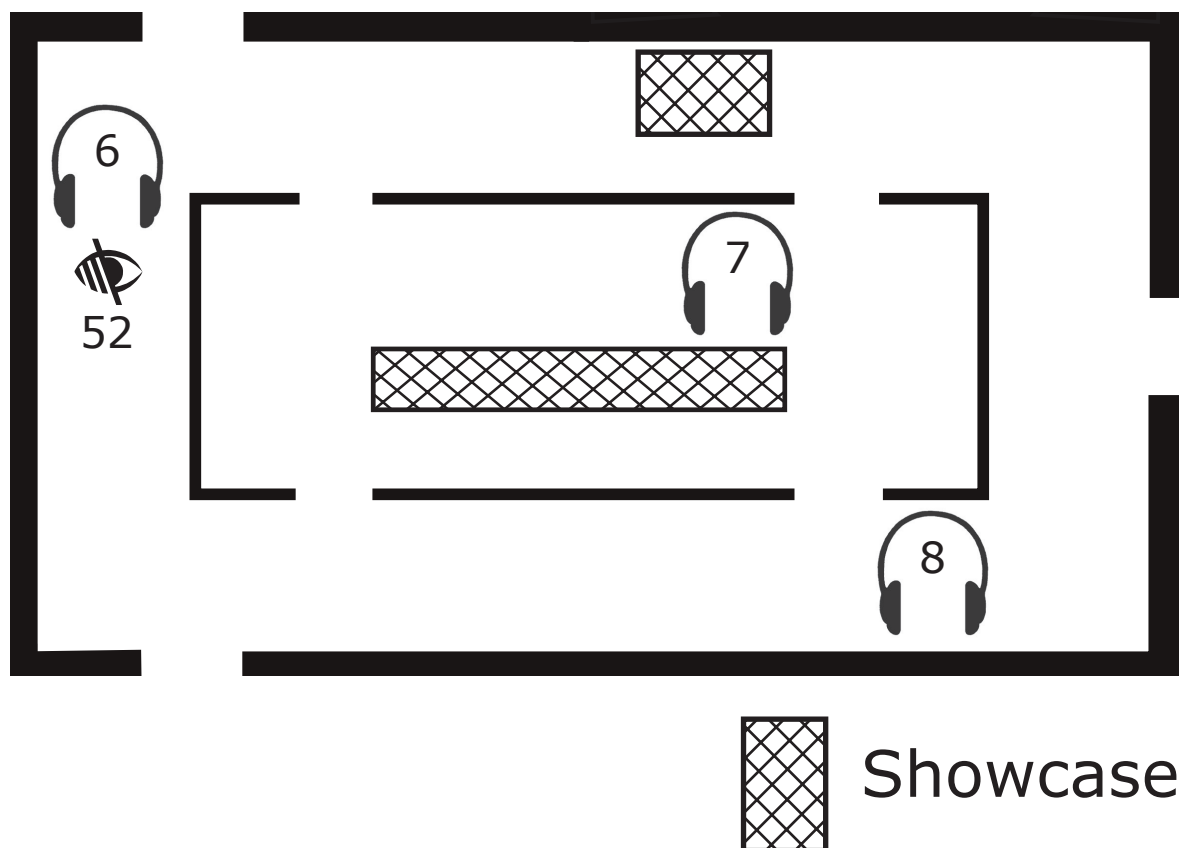
Claude Monet, Chrysanthemums, 1897



Max Liebermann, Flower Terrace in the Garden, Wannsee, 1915



You are in
International Gardens



Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Main Galleries:

30 January – 20 April 2016

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International Gardens

By the turn of the century, the desire for a verdant retreat from the ills of urban life had become an international phenomenon.

Mounting enthusiasm for personal pleasure-gardening and the rise of the artist-gardener saw painters in Britain, continental Europe and the United States seek out or create their own havens, leading to a splendid array of garden paintings that documented the intertwining of artistic and horticultural movements as they varied from country to country.

The vogue for outdoor painting and the growth of artists' colonies made gardens ideal sites for communal painting. John Singer Sargent spent several summers painting at Broadway in the Cotswolds, while the village of Skagen in northern Denmark provided a retreat for Scandinavian artists, including Laurits Tuxen and Peder Krøyer.

A number of Scandinavian artists, including the Swedish painter Karl Nordström, also travelled to France, to the artists' colony at Grez-sur-Loing, where the light was so much brighter than at home.

The German Impressionist Max Liebermann developed an extensive garden at his home on the shores of Lake Wannsee, outside Berlin, which followed the principles of the garden-reform movement that was gathering pace in Germany at the time.

Joaquín Sorolla planned the garden at his home in Madrid as gardener and painter in equal parts, forming a Moorish-inspired oasis that provided an endless source of visual motifs.

The American painter Childe Hassam, although not himself a gardener, created a series of dazzling paintings of his friend Celia Thaxter's garden in Maine, and also painted gardens in France.

The "great horticultural movement" of the nineteenth century had spread far and wide.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

John Singer Sargent (1856–1925)

**At Torre Galli: Ladies in a Garden
1910**

Oil on canvas

Royal Academy of Arts, London

Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923)

Sorolla acquired a plot of land at Paseo del Obelisco (now known as Paseo del General Martínez Campos) in Madrid in 1909, and soon set about realising his vision of developing a harmoniously interconnected house and garden.

Keenly aware of the neglect of his country's historic gardens and of their artistic value, Sorolla had travelled throughout Spain to visit Moorish gardens at Valencia, Seville, Barcelona and the Alhambra, and incorporated their features into his own garden.

The result was a verdant retreat from the city, in which intimate spaces adorned with Valencian tiles, terracotta patios and fountains were seamlessly linked by colonnades, pathways and various levels of terracing.

Every room of the house opened onto the Moorish-inspired garden, yet in his paintings of the garden on display here the house is concealed by a tapestry of geraniums, lilies, roses, oleanders and orange and lemon trees.

Sorolla planned his garden with the mind of a painter, selecting colours, contrasts and vistas with painstaking care, and creating for himself an endless source of pictorial motifs that inspired some 50 canvases.

Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923)

Garden of the Sorolla House
1918

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923)

Garden of the Sorolla House
1920

Oil on canvas

Museo Sorolla, Madrid

Joaquín Sorolla **(1863–1923)**



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Garden of the Sorolla House
1918–1919

Oil on canvas

Museo Sorolla, Madrid

Joaquín Sorolla **(1863–1923)**

Geraniums
1918–1919

Oil on canvas

Museo Sorolla, Madrid

Alfred Parsons

(1847–1920)

Orange Lilies, Broadway,
Worcestershire

c. 1911

Oil on canvas

Royal Academy of Arts, London

The English painter Alfred Parsons belonged to the same artists' colony as Sargent, at Broadway in the Cotswolds. This painting probably depicts the artists' personal garden at his home there. The carefully observed scene features a prominent bed of intermixed blooms of various kinds, a common feature of the simple English cottage gardens championed by the artist's close friend, William Robinson.

One of the most influential horticultural journalists of his time, Robinson disseminated his revolutionary gardening ideas through widely circulated books and journals.

Childe Hassam

(1859–1935)

Poppies on the Isles of Shoals

1890

Oil on canvas

Brooklyn Museum. Gift of Mary Pratt Barringer and Richardson Pratt Jr. in memory of Richardson and Laura Pratt

In 1890 Childe Hassam painted several views of the poet Celia Thaxter's famous garden on Appledore, the largest of the Isles of Shoals off the coast of Maine.

Thaxter's home and gardens served as a gathering place for eminent American artists and writers. In 1894 she published her most celebrated book, 'An Island Garden', illustrated with Hassam's colour lithographs (displayed below).

Showcase

Celia Thaxter

An Island Garden

1894 (1989 facsimile)

Private collection

Childe Hassam **(1859–1935)**

Gathering Flowers in a French
Garden

1888

Oil on canvas

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA. Theodore T. and
Mary G. Ellis Collection

Max Liebermann

(1847–1935)

Flowering Bushes by the Garden
Shed
1928

Oil on canvas

Estate of Gretchen Whitman in memory of her husband,
Gerd Whitman, banker, Berlin, New York, London

Max Liebermann

(1847–1935)

Park Landscape (Hedged Garden
at Wannsee Looking East)
1925

Oil on canvas

Galerie Neue Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen,
Dresden

Max Liebermann

(1847–1935)

In 1909 Max Liebermann purchased a plot of land on the shore of Lake Wannsee, to the south of Berlin. He commissioned a grand villa, and around it developed a garden that was to occupy him for the rest of his life and provide the subject-matter for nearly 200 of his paintings.

Designed in collaboration with his friend Alfred Lichtwark, a well-known garden designer and Director of the Hamburg Art Gallery, Liebermann's garden embodied the ideals of the garden-reform movement that Lichtwark led, which endorsed functional cottage gardens on one hand and a geometric, Baroque-style layout on the other.

Arranged in carefully thought-out sections, Liebermann's garden comprised a flower terrace, three "hedge gardens", an avenue of birch trees and a kitchen garden planted with flowers and vegetables.

(continued over)

These five paintings of Liebermann's garden at Wannsee invite you to take a walk around the different "rooms" of his garden.

The architectural layout of the garden contrasts with Liebermann's free, impressionistic brushwork; purple coneflowers, phlox, goldenrod and lupins have been identified in contemporary photographs of the herbaceous border, but the thick application of paint in 'Flowering Bushes by the Garden Shed', displayed nearby, makes identification of the plants depicted there difficult.

Max Liebermann (1847–1935)

**The Birch Avenue in the Garden at
Wannsee Looking West
1918**

Oil on canvas

Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hanover



Max Liebermann

(1847–1935)

Flower Terrace in the Garden,
Wannsee

1915

Oil on canvas

Die Lübecker Museen. Museum Benhaus Drägerhaus

Max Liebermann

(1847–1935)

Garden Beds with Path and
Flowers

1922

Oil on canvas

Private collection, Switzerland

Johan Fredrik Krouthén (1858–1932)

View of a Garden, Linköping
1887–1888

Oil on canvas

Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

John Singer Sargent (1856–1925)

The Millet House and Garden
1886

Oil on canvas

Karen and Kevin Kennedy Collection

Sargent began visiting the Cotswold village of Broadway in the mid-1880s, where he stayed with the family of fellow American artist Francis Millet. The previous summer he had sent the Millet family 50 Aurelian lily bulbs, which Lucia Millet planted in pots, seen here dotting the sunlit path in their garden.

Inner Room

Gaines Ruger Donoho (1857–1916)

The Artist's Garden
1910

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Laurits Tuxen (1853–1927)

Rhododendron in Tuxen's Garden
1917

Oil on canvas

Skagens Museum, Skagen

John Singer Sargent

(1856–1925)

Poppies (A study for 'Carnation,
Lily, Lily, Rose')

1886

Oil on canvas

Private collection

This extreme close-up view may have been inspired by Monet's depictions of poppies, which Sargent may have seen while visiting Monet at Giverny in 1885.

Rather than emphasising botanical precision, Sargent captured the energetic movement of the paper-thin poppy blossoms, as if mimicking the view of a butterfly or a bee swooping gracefully over the flowers swaying in the sun and wind.

James Tissot **(1836–1902)**

Chrysanthemums **c. 1874–1876**

Oil on canvas

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Acquired in honour of David S. Brooke (Institute Director, 1977–1994)

At a time when other artists were constructing private greenhouses for growing flowers, James Tissot treated the conservatory attached to his London studio as an interior garden.

This spacious environment provided endless possibilities for botanical studies, along with settings for complex human interactions and commentaries on the social ironies of Victorian England.

This painting depicts a woman immersed in a blaze of chrysanthemums inside the artist's conservatory garden. Dressed in yellow and white, she is at once enveloped and entrapped by the chromatically related blossoms.

Dennis Miller Bunker (1861–1890)

Chrysanthemums 1888

Oil on canvas

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

After returning from England, where he worked alongside Sargent, Bunker painted this magnificent view of chrysanthemums in the greenhouse of his patron Isabella Stewart Gardner at her home in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Although Bunker died prematurely of meningitis at the age of 29, he was greatly admired by his contemporaries and his paintings played an important role in the transmission of Impressionism to America.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)



Chrysanthemums 1897

Oil on canvas

Private collection, Los Angeles

Monet was fascinated by chrysanthemums, which were originally introduced from China in 1789 before being extensively cross-bred to produce hardy varieties and the subtle colours that horticulturalists termed “modern”. This is one of four paintings of his specimens at Giverny that Monet exhibited in 1898.

Chrysanthemums were also the Imperial flower of Japan; in this work the decorative, close-up focus, without any horizon, recalls Japanese prints of these popular flowers such as Hokusai's 'Chrysanthemum and Bee', displayed in a case nearby.

Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923)

Madonna Lilies

1916

Oil on canvas

Museo Sorolla, Madrid

Joaquín Sorolla

(1863–1923)

Louis Comfort Tiffany
1911

Oil on canvas

On loan from The Hispanic Society of America,
New York, NY

This work depicts American designer Louis Comfort Tiffany painting in the garden of his lavish home on Long Island, New York. Surrounded by rhododendrons and blooms of various colours, Tiffany looks directly and confidently at the viewer.

The audacious panorama of colour alluded to the luminosity of the stained glass that Tiffany was famous for, and foreshadowed Sorolla's paintings of his own garden that were to follow over the next two decades.

Karl Nordström

(1855–1923)

Garden at Grez

1884

Oil on canvas

Gothenburg Museum of Art. Bequest of Pontus and Göthilda Fürstenberg, 1902

Born and trained in Sweden, Nordström travelled to France in 1881 and joined the Scandinavian artists' colony at Grez-sur-Loing, located 43 miles south of Paris. This painting depicts a walled garden at Grez neatly organised around long gravel paths.

Nordström's friend, the Swedish artist Richard Bergh, spoke admiringly of the "white garden walls in grilling sunlight, radiantly coloured flowers, succulent green lawns and cabbage patches, sandy paths red as the sun".

P. S. Krøyer (1851–1909)

Roses (Marie Krøyer Seated in a
Deckchair in the Garden by
Mrs Bendsen's House)

1893

Oil on canvas

Skagens Museum, Skagen

Image: 'P. S. Krøyer and Marie Krøyer Sitting in
the Deckchairs Beside the Rosebush', 1893. Private
collection. Photo: Copenhagen, Hirschsprung Collection

John Singer Sargent **(1856–1925)**

Garden Study of the Vickers
Children
1884

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan.
Gift of the Viola E. Bray Charitable Trust via Mr and Mrs
William L. Richards

Henri Le Sidaner **(1862–1939)**

The Rose Pavilion, Gerberoy
c. 1936–1938

Oil on canvas

Wallraf-Richartz-Museum and Fondation Corboud,
Cologne

Henri Le Sidaner was directly influenced by the principles of English garden design, and the inspiration for the rose pavilion in his garden at Gerberoy can be seen in the nearby copy of Charles Holme's 'The Gardens of England in the Southern and Western Counties', of which Le Sidaner owned French editions.

Holme's own garden was designed by renowned English gardener Gertrude Jekyll, who promoted the synthesis of the "natural" and the "formal", exemplified here by the wild profusion of roses that almost engulfs the architectural structure of the pavilion.

Showcase

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**The Rose Garden at
Corsham Court,
Wiltshire**

In 'The Gardens of England in the
Southern and Western Counties',
Charles Holme (ed.)

1908

The British Library

Chrysanthemums

1889 marked the centenary not only of the French Revolution, but also of the introduction to Europe of dahlias and chrysanthemums. New hardy chrysanthemums, such as those portrayed in 1889 in 'L'Illustration horticole', were highly prized and acquired international repute.

The chrysanthemum's eastern origins were particularly celebrated; its popularity in Europe was in keeping with the fervent Japonisme that profoundly influenced fin-de-siècle aesthetics.

Monet's bold image of his specimens at Giverny, displayed nearby, echoes the decorative effect of Hokusai's prints, while Pierre Loti called his 1887 novel about Japan 'Madame Chrysanthème'. A version of Loti's story in turn inspired the 1904 opera 'Madame Butterfly' by Puccini, who also composed a quartet entitled 'Crisantemi' (Chrysanthemums) in 1890.

Pierre Loti

Madame Chrysanthème

1888

Royal Academy of Arts, London

**Illustration of
Chrysanthèmes
d'automne (variétés
nouvelles)**

In 'L'illustration horticole: journal
special des serres et des jardins',
J. Linden (ed.)

1889, vol. 36

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Types de chrysanthèmes d'après Hakusai [sic]

In 'Le chrysanthème: histoire,
physiologie et culture en France
et à l'étranger', Henri L. de
Vilmorin, 1896

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Katsushika Hokusai

Kachoga. Flowers,
Chrysanthemum and Horse-fly
c. 1833-1836

Woodblock print

The British Museum, 1927,0518,0.6

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Molly Bretton, Access Manager



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Large
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Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Monet's
Early Years

Do not remove from gallery

Multimedia tour



Main commentary



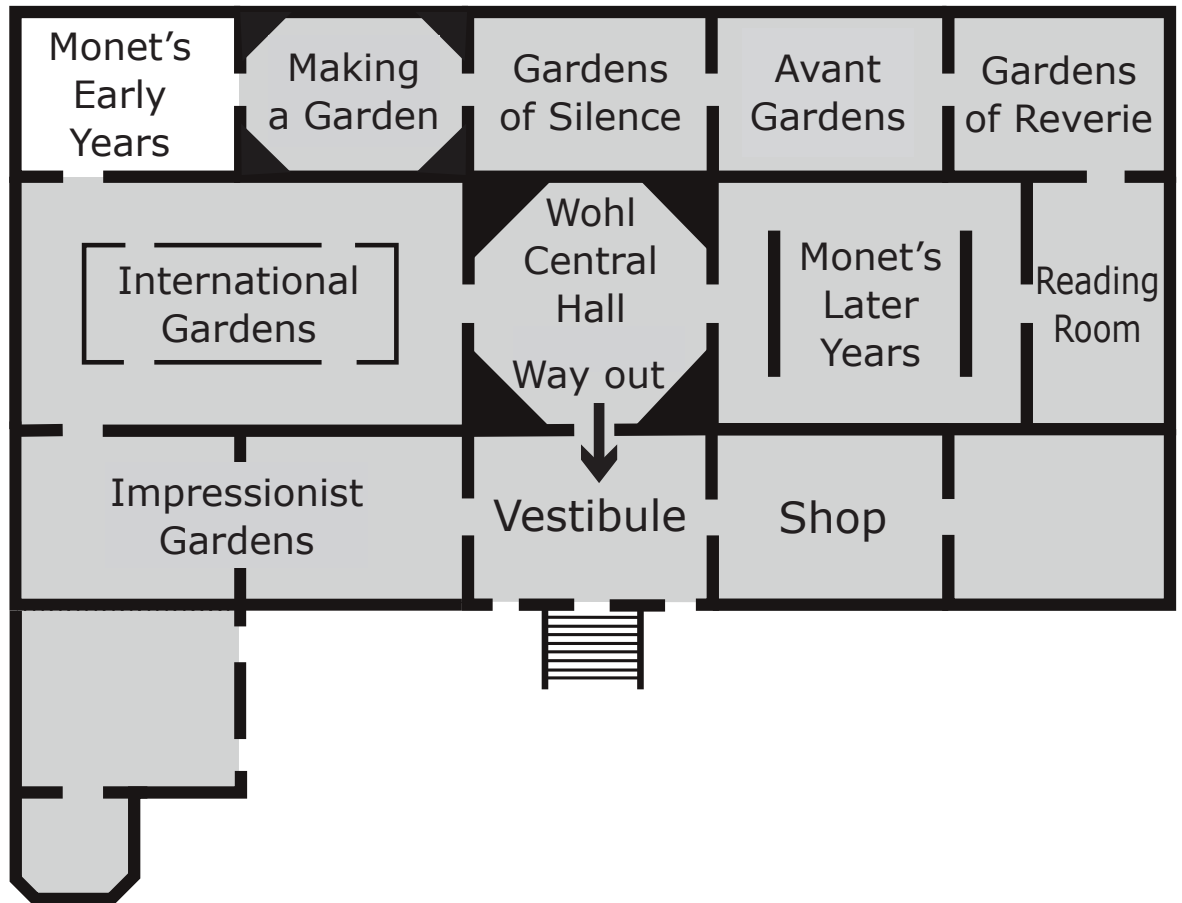
Descriptive commentary



53 Claude Monet, Water Lilies, 1905



Claude Monet, The Artist's Garden at Giverny, 1900



You are in
Monet's Early Years



Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

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Monet's Early Years at Giverny

In 1883 Monet moved with his family to a large, rented house at Giverny, a village to the northwest of Paris. The extensive grounds included a traditional Clos Normand (an enclosed Norman garden) for growing fruit and vegetables.

After purchasing the property in 1890, Monet began to redesign the gardens, laying out gravel paths and planting flowers that would bloom in a succession of ever-changing colour harmonies.

To realise his horticultural ambitions, he constructed a heated greenhouse, and eventually directed a staff of at least six gardeners who cultivated over 70 species of trees and flowers.

Inspired by a water-lily garden that he had seen at the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1889, Monet purchased an adjacent property in Giverny in 1893 and diverted water from a nearby stream to create a pond.

This was soon filled with new hybrid species of pink and red water lilies and spanned by an arched bridge inspired by those that Monet admired in Japanese woodblock prints.

In 1899 he painted a series of twelve paintings of the bridge and the carpet of water lilies below. In 1902 his newly enlarged water garden inspired an extended series of paintings in which he focused entirely on the surface of the water, the reflections of the sky, and the water lilies.

The challenge of registering the subtlest shifts of light and atmosphere in a group of interrelated paintings caused him tremendous difficulty and at one point drove him to destroy a number of canvases.

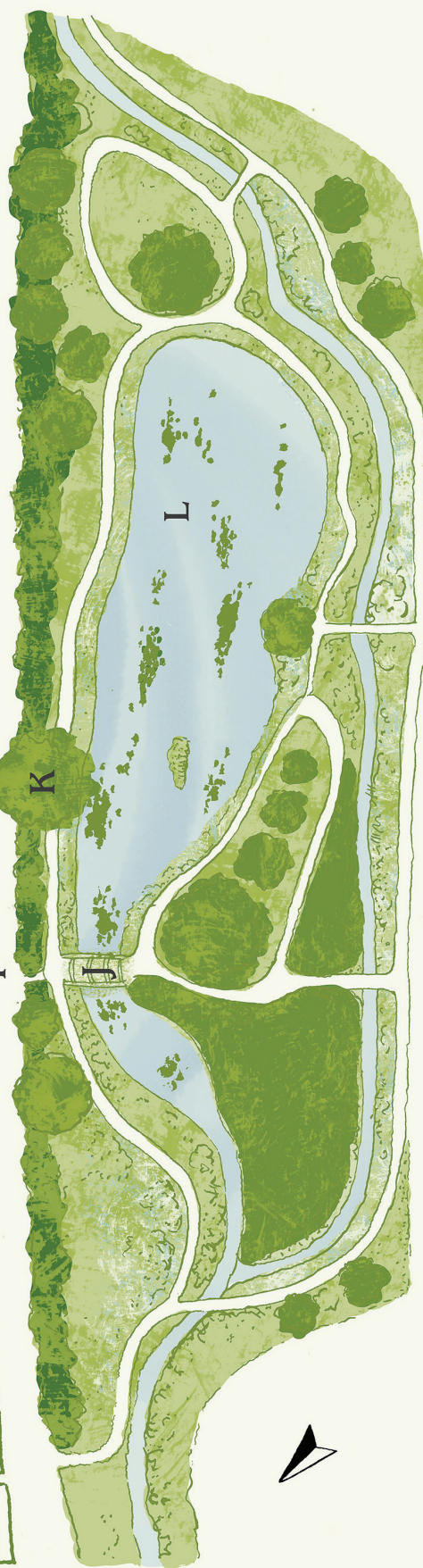
In 1909, when 48 of the paintings were eventually exhibited at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris under the title 'Water Lilies: Series of Water Landscapes (Nymphéas: Série de paysages d'eau)', critics praised the modernity of the works and the way they seemed to transcend time and space.

One observed: "No more earth, no more sky, no limits now."

Plan of the Garden at Giverny



- A** Garage
- B** Second studio
- C** Greenhouse and cold frames
- D** Monet's house, and first studio
- E** Paint-box beds
- F** Grande allée
- G** Large 'water-lily' studio
- H** Gardener's cottage
- I** Road, formerly a railway line
- J** Japanese bridge
- K** Weeping willow
- L** Water-lily pond



Kathrin Jacobsen, with assistance from the Fondation Claude Monet at Giverny

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

**Japanese Footbridge, Giverny
1895**

Oil on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of F. Otto Haas, and
partial gift of the reserved life interest of Carole Haas
Gravagno, 1993

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

White Water Lilies

1899

Oil on canvas

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Monet's earliest series of paintings at Giverny comprised twelve views – of which two are shown here – in which the Japanese bridge, now painted green, entirely spans the pond that is covered with a carpet of water lilies.

Monet acquired the prize-winning pink and red hardy water lilies, developed through hybridisation by the horticulturalist Joseph Bory Latour-Marliac, after admiring them at the 1889 Paris Universal Exhibition. Here, they throw into relief the shimmering green foliage, inspiring critics to liken the effect to the sparkle of jewels or the flickering of fire.

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

The Pond with Water Lilies,
Harmony in Green
1899

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Bequest of Count Isaac de Camondo, 1911

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies
1903

Oil on canvas

The Dayton Art Institute, Gift of Mr. Joseph Rubin

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Water Lilies

1904

Oil on canvas

Musée d'art moderne André Malraux, Le Havre

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Water Lilies

1905

Oil on canvas

Private collection



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Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies

1905

Oil on canvas

Private collection, California

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies (Nymphéas)

1907

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Gift of Mrs Harry C. Hanszen



Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

The Artist's Garden at Giverny
1900

Oil on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

The Artist's Garden at Giverny
1900

Oil on canvas

Yale University Art Gallery, Collection of Mr and Mrs Paul Mellon, B.A. 1929, L.H.D.H. 1967

Monet's pink house with green shutters glints in the sunshine beyond his allée of red spruce trees.

In pride of place, however, are his beds of irises, whose “strange curling petals” and “elaborate depths” so fascinated the writer Octave Mirbeau (1848–1917).

Hundreds of new iris varieties were developed in the 1900s, including the purple-violet ‘Madame Monet’. Monet adored irises and planted them almost everywhere, often in combination with other flowers to create a succession of ever-changing colour harmonies.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Peonies

1887

Oil on canvas

Musée d’art et d’histoire, Geneva. Dépôt de la Fondation Jean-Louis Prevost, Geneva

Monet carefully selected his flowering plants to provide a near unlimited variety of colour harmonies and textural effects for his paintings. Here, the red peonies growing under a protective straw awning provide a robust contrast to the green foliage.

This close-up view compresses space by eliminating any suggestion of foreground, thereby drawing attention to the painterly surface of pure colour quickly applied with rhythmic brushstrokes.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Monet's Garden at Giverny 1895

Oil on canvas

Stiftung Sammlung E. G. Bührle, Zurich

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Large
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Painting the Modern Garden Monet to Matisse

Making a Garden

Do not remove from gallery

Multimedia tour



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



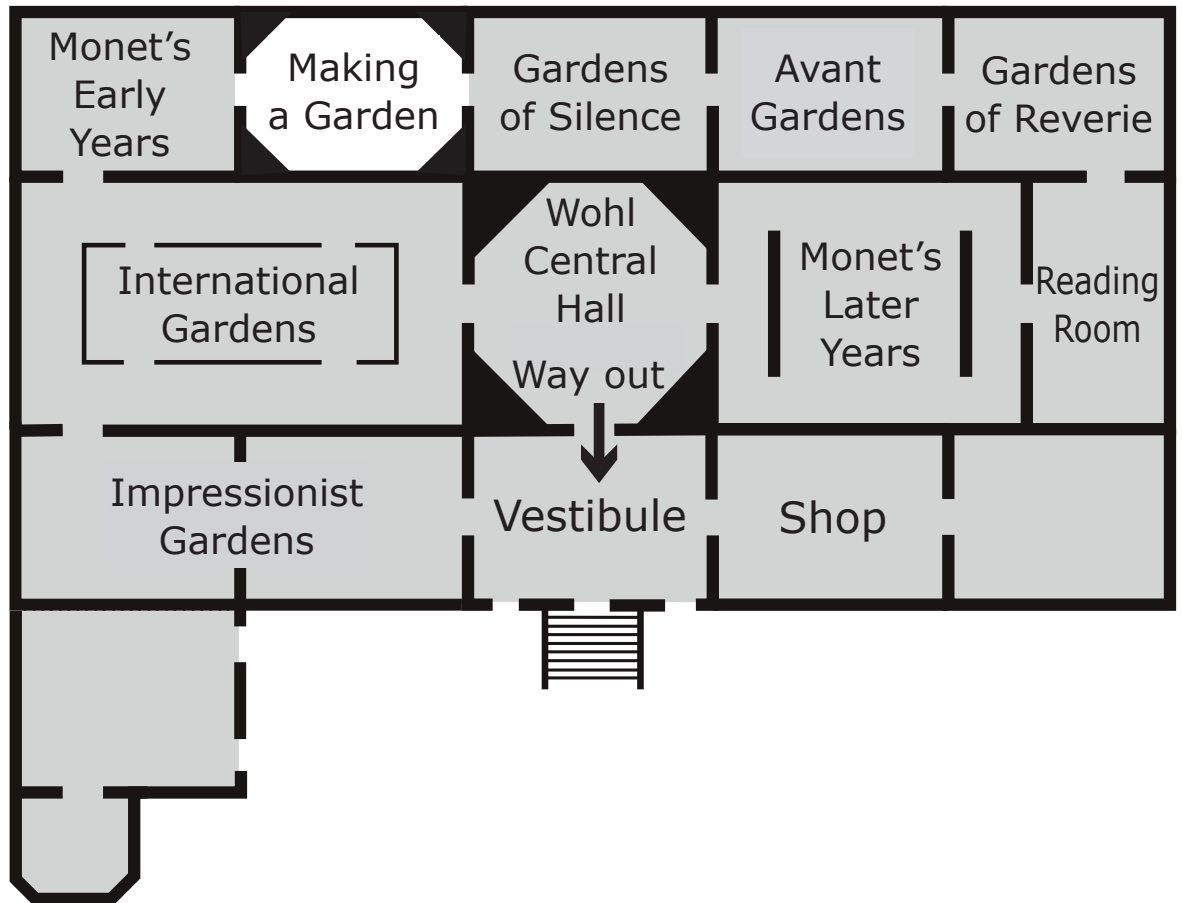
Katsushika Hokusai, Kachoga. Flowers, irises and grasshopper, 1830s



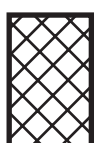
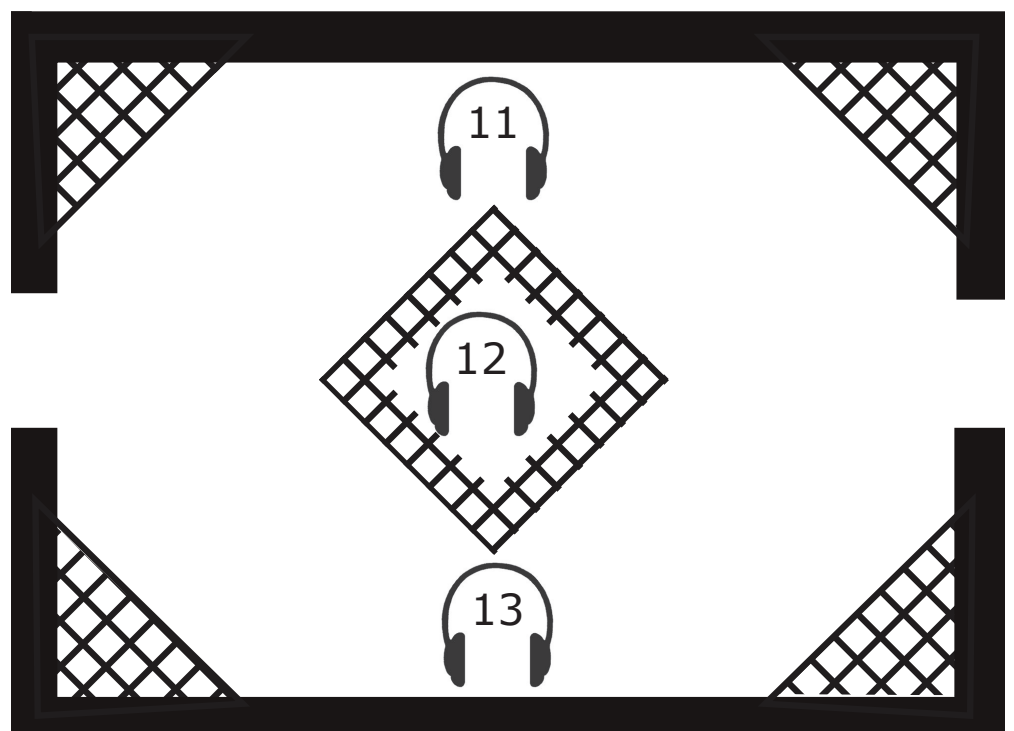
'Etablissement Horticole du Temple-sur-Lot: Spécialités de Nymphéas etc.', 1910 (book)



Nicholson, Miss Jekyll's Gardening Boots, 1920



You are in
Making a Garden



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Making a Garden

This gallery presents a selection of books, journals, photographs, documents and letters that demonstrate the influence of contemporaneous horticultural movements on the artists included in this exhibition.

Photographs document Monet's garden at Giverny, while original letters and plans tell the story of his application for planning permission to create the water garden, which was originally rejected by local farmers and villagers.

Monet's garden at Giverny is world-famous, but less well known is the remarkable depth of his botanical knowledge, which extended far beyond that of an amateur gardener. Editions of horticultural books from Monet's extensive library, as well as gardening periodicals to which he subscribed, are displayed here.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Room 2 - Horticulture

Menu for the wedding of Monet's step-daughter Germaine Hoschedé and Albert Salerou

With a photograph of the
Japanese Bridge
12 November 1902

Digital print

Collection Philippe Piguet, Paris

Le jardin de Claude Monet

By Georges Truffaut

In Jardinage, no. 87, November 1924

Etablissements horticoles Georges Truffaut

Theodore Robinson

Portrait of Claude Monet

c. 1888–1890

Digital print

Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago. Gift of Mr Ira Spanierman

Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago / Art Resource, NY

Illustration of the Paris Pavilion at the Floral Exhibition

Organised by the Société
nationale d'horticulture de France
23 May 1882

In 'L'Horticulture française: ses
progrès et ses conquêtes depuis
1789'

Charles Baltet, 1889

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Sacha Guitry

Octave Mirbeau
1905

Digital print

Roger Viollet Archives, Paris

Roger Viollet / Rex Shutterstock

Monet Inspired by Japanese Prints

Monet collected Japanese prints and displayed them in his dining room at Giverny.

Such prints became available to European artists after Japan opened itself to trade with the West in the 1850s. Monet was attracted to both their bold formal simplifications and their insights into botanical knowledge.

The water garden and Japanese footbridge Monet constructed at Giverny were partly inspired by the prints of Hiroshige and other nineteenth-century Japanese artists. He owned several prints from Hokusai's rare 'Large Flowers' series, impressions of which are displayed here.

"Thank you for having thought of me for the Hokusai flowers," he wrote to a dealer friend in 1896. "You don't mention the poppies, and that is the important one, for I already have the iris, the chrysanthemum, the peonies and the convolvulus."

Utagawa Hiroshige **(1797–1858)**

Wisteria at Kameido Tenjin Shrine
1856

Woodblock print

The British Museum, 1906, 1220, 0.665

Katsushika Hokusai **(1760–1849)**



Kachoga. Flowers, Irises and
Grasshopper
c. 1833-1836

Woodblock print

The British Museum, 1927,0518,0.7

Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849)

Kachoga. Flowers, Peonies and
Butterfly

c. 1833-1836

Woodblock print

The British Museum, 1926,0112,0.2

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858)

Monkey Bridge, Kai Province
1853

Woodblock print

The British Museum, 1902, 0212, 0.397.56

“He reads more catalogues and horticultural price lists than articles on aesthetics”

Journalist Maurice Guillemot after interviewing Monet in 1897

Claude Monet Painting at the Edge of His Lily Pond

Summer 1904

Digital print

Collection Philippe Piguet, Paris

Jacques-Ernest Bulloz

Claude Monet beside the Water Lily Pond
Summer 1905

Digital print

Agence Bulloz. Musée municipal A.-G. Poulain, Vernon

© RMN-Grand Palais / Agence Bulloz

Herbier with handwritten label

Reading 'Rosa obtusifolia desv.
Giverny by Hoschedé and Monet'
1893

Société Nationale des Sciences Naturelles et
Mathématiques de Cherbourg

This original page from a herbarium
(a collection of dried plants) was assembled
by Monet and his stepson Jean-Pierre
Hoschedé, who was also an enthusiastic
botanist.

Claude Monet's Lily Garden

By Stephen Gwynn

In 'Country Life' magazine

Saturday 7 October, 1933

Royal Academy of Arts, London

"At Giverny, Mr Claude Monet in his garden near clumps of larkspur", extract from Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier, 'Le jardin de M. Claude Monet, Fermes et Chateaux' no. 39, 1 September 1908

Musée des impressionnismes Giverny/

Photo: Patrice Schmidt

**“Sowing: Around 300 pots Poppies
– 60 Sweet pea – around 60 pots
white Agremony – 30 yellow
Agremony – Blue sage – Blue
water lilies in beds – Dahlias – Iris
Kaempferi”**

Instructions in a letter from Claude Monet to
his gardener, September 1900

Letter from Max Liebermann to Alfred Lichtwark with a Sketch of the Garden at Wannsee

27 October 1909

bpk/Hamburger Kunsthalle

Photo: Christoph Irrgang

German Gardens

Horticulture was a German passion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and grand international garden exhibitions were mounted in Hamburg and Berlin. By the 1890s, however, German garden designers were beginning to look to the freedom of the German heathland, and the intimacy of the traditional native Bauerngarten (farm garden).

The ensuing garden reform movement, conceived as an antidote to city life and influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement, was led by Alfred Lichtwark (Director of the Hamburg Art Gallery), and designers such as Joseph Maria Olbrich. Lichtwark added a chapter on William Robinson's "wild garden" to his book 'Blumenkultus', and from 1909 helped the German Impressionist Max Liebermann create his garden at Wannsee near Berlin.

This included a “wild” grove of birch trees, “garden rooms”, and a lawn leading down to the lake – all depicted in Liebermann’s letter to Lichtwark, with the comment “I would very much like your advice on the garden.”

Alfred Lichtwark

Blumenkultus: Wilde Blumen
1897

Royal Academy of Arts, London

Siegfried Braun

Gartenflora: Zeitschrift für Garten
und Blumenkunde
1909

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Joseph Maria Olbrich

Neue Gärten von Olbrich
1905

National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

The Oval Hedge Garden in Max Liebermann's Garden at Wannsee 1927

© Max-Liebermann-Society Berlin, photo: S. Frank

A Garden at Broadway, England

Engraved for 'The Garden' from
an oil painting by Alfred Parsons'
in 'The Garden: An Illustrated
Weekly Journal of Horticulture in
All Its Branches'

15 April 1893, vol. 43

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

English Gardens

The British horticulturalist William Robinson (1838–1935) promoted the concept of the “wild garden”.

In his book on the topic, as well as his later ‘English Flower Garden’, and his journal ‘The Garden’, he fought against the fashion for tender exotics displayed in geometric “carpet-beds”, advocating freely-growing “colonies” and “cascades” of native and hardy flowers instead. These, he argued, created “pictures”, and he employed artists including Alfred Parsons to make his point.

Robinson’s ideas in turn inspired Gertrude Jekyll, who, in partnership with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, combined the formal with the “wild” in gardens such as her own at Munstead Wood in Surrey. Nicholson’s evocative image of Jekyll’s well-worn garden boots, displayed nearby, was painted at Munstead while the artist was working on a portrait of her.

William Robinson

The English Flower Garden
1893 (third edition)

Private collection: Craig Brough

William Robinson

The Wild Garden
1870 (first edition)

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

William Nicholson (1872–1949)



**Miss Jekyll's Gardening Boots
1920**

Oil on wood

Tate, London. Presented by Lady Emily Lutyens 1944

**Pogany, 'Félix Breuil, the Head
Gardener, at work, Giverny'
c. 1913**

Illustration of Variétés nouvelles d'Iris xiphioides

In 'Revue horticole: journal
d'horticulture pratique', E.-A.
Carrière (ed.)
1891

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Les Iris cultivés: Actes et Comptes-Rendus de la 1ère Conférence Internationale des Iris tenue à Paris en 1922

1923

Royal Academy of Arts, London

Irises

By the late nineteenth century, numerous varieties of iris had become available through imports and hybridisation.

The Japanese 'Iris kaempferi', grown by Monet at Giverny, was particularly prized; the 1880 volume 'Flore des serres et des jardins de l'Europe', which he owned, describes its "admirable combinations of form with lavish striations, reticulations, variegations, spottings, splashings, and lappings".

By 1910, a new purple-violet iris had been named 'Madame Monet' after Monet's wife, and in 1913 Monet's irises were the subject of an article by his head gardener, Félix Breuil, in the gardening journal 'Jardinage'.

In 1922 Monet himself was a delegate at the first international Iris Congress in Paris, whose topics included classifying irises by colour. The Congress Proceedings quote the British horticulturalist William Robinson's recommendation of "extensive plantations of irises" in "cooler light", where their colours have "greater charm – the blues more tender, the deeper colours richer".

Illustration of Iris Kaempferi

In 'Flore des serres et des jardins de l'Europe, annales générales d'horticulture', Louis van Houtte (ed.) vol. 23, 1880

The British Library

**“Les Iris pour bords
de rivières, étangs
et terrain humides”
 (“Irises for riverbanks,
ponds and wetlands”)**

By Félix Breuil, ‘Jardinage’

No. 21, October 1913

Etablissements horticoles Georges Truffaut

Georges Truffaut

View of the Water Lily Pond,
Giverny

c. 1913

Digital print

Etablissements horticoles Georges Truffaut

Central Showcases

Illustration of Nouveaux nénuphars hybrides

In 'Revue horticole: journal
d'horticulture pratique'

E.-A. Carrière (ed.)

1895

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Dedication to Joseph Bory Latour-Marliac

In 'The Garden: An Illustrated
Weekly Journal of Horticulture in
All Its Branches'

6 January 1894, vol. 44

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Catalogue of aquatic plants

From the horticulturalist
Lagrange at Oullins, Rhône
1902

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Illustration of Nymphæa

In 'Dictionnaire pratique
d'horticulture et de jardinage',
George Nicholson, vol. 3, 1895–
1896

Library, Art and Archives

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Monet's Water Garden

In 1893, Monet developed an ambitious scheme to create a water garden in which he would grow aquatic plants.

The plan involved the purchase of a plot of land alongside a branch of the River Epte and separated from the existing garden by a railway track. His application was initially resisted by the farmers and villagers of Giverny, who were suspicious of Monet and his plans and feared that his strange water plants would poison their water.

Permission was eventually granted and the pond was created.

In addition to the traditional white and yellow varieties of water lily, Monet planted his water garden with the acclaimed new hybrid water lilies that the specialist horticulturalist Joseph Bory Latour-Marliac had created by crossing hardy exotic varieties, and he also purchased "rare and ornamental" water lilies from the horticulturalist Antoine Lagrange.

Letter from Claude Monet to the Prefect of the Eure

Requesting permission to divert
water from the River Epte and to
build two small footbridges

17 March 1893

Archives Départementales de l'Eure, Evreux

"[...] I am the owner of a piece of land situated between the Pacy-Gisors railroad and the left bank of a branch of the Epte, and tenant of the land forming the opposite bank [...].

"In order to renew the water of the ponds that I am going to dig on the land I own, for the purpose of growing aquatic plants, I should like to install a water feeder in the Epte by means of a small trench [...].

“In addition [...] I plan to install over the stream of the Epte two small, light, wooden footbridges.”

Further letter from Claude Monet to the Prefect of the Eure

appealing against opposition to
his plans to divert water from
the River Epte to feed his water
garden

17 July 1893

Archives Départementales de l'Eure, Evreux

“I have the honour of submitting to you a few observations regarding the opposition raised by the municipal council and several inhabitants of Giverny concerning the two inquiries made relative to the request which I have had the honour of addressing to you.

(continued over)

“I would like to point out to you that [...] the aforementioned opponents have in fact no other goal than to hamper my projects out of pure meanness [...].

“I would also like you to know that the aforementioned cultivation of aquatic plants will not have the importance that this term implies and that it will be only a pastime, for the pleasure of the eye, and for motifs to paint [...] and that there is absolutely no danger of poisoning the water.”

Plan of the first water garden project

By the engineer of the ‘Ponts et chaussées’ (bridges and roads) of the Department of the Eure
22 June 1893

Archives Départementales de l'Eure, Evreux

Letter from Octave Mirbeau to the Prefect of the Eure

Endorsing Monet's application to
divert water from the River Epte
17 July 1893

Archives Départementales de l'Eure, Evreux

"My friend, the great painter, Claude Monet [...] is waiting on your decision to obtain permission to divert water from the Epte [...]. He has had a pool [...] dug, where he grows wonderful water lilies and dreamlike Japanese irises.

"This pond poses a threat to no one, and in no way adversely affects the river. But local farmers have protested [...] against this diversion being made. I am therefore taking it upon myself, Sir, to request earnestly that you grant this permit for my friend Claude Monet.

“You will afford me much pleasure, in so granting it on his behalf, first of all, with his passion for those flowers, and then for myself, because when I go to Giverny, it is a joy to see this enchanting spot.”

Receipt of authorisation to build two footbridges, signed by Claude Monet

24 July 1893

Archives Départementales de l'Eure, Evreux

The Gardener Félix Breuil in the Norvégienne on the Water Lily Pond

Digital print

Collection Philippe Piguet, Paris

Plan of the water garden with diversion project from the arm of the Epte known as the “communal arm”

Report of the subdivisional foreman

8 October 1901

Archives Départementales de l'Eure, Evreux



Catalogue for ordering water lilies and aquatic plants

From the Latour-Marliac nursery,
Le Temple-sur-Lot, France
1910

Robert C. Sheldon, SARL Latour-Marliac

Delivery slip from the Latour-Marliac Nursery to Claude Monet, 15 May 1894

Robert C. Sheldon, SARL Latour-Marliac

Growing instructions :

“The ‘Nelembium’ can be very easily grown outdoors in the Department of the Eure, as noted in the catalogue. The rhizomes should be laid horizontally and covered with mud in the ponds or receptacles ear-marked to hold them. They should not be put at a depth of more than 50 centimetres”

Claude Monet

Self-portrait on the Surface of the
Lily Pond, Giverny
c. 1905

Digital print

Collection Philippe Piguet, Paris

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Large
Print

Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Gardens
of Silence

Do not remove from gallery

Multimedia tour



Main commentary



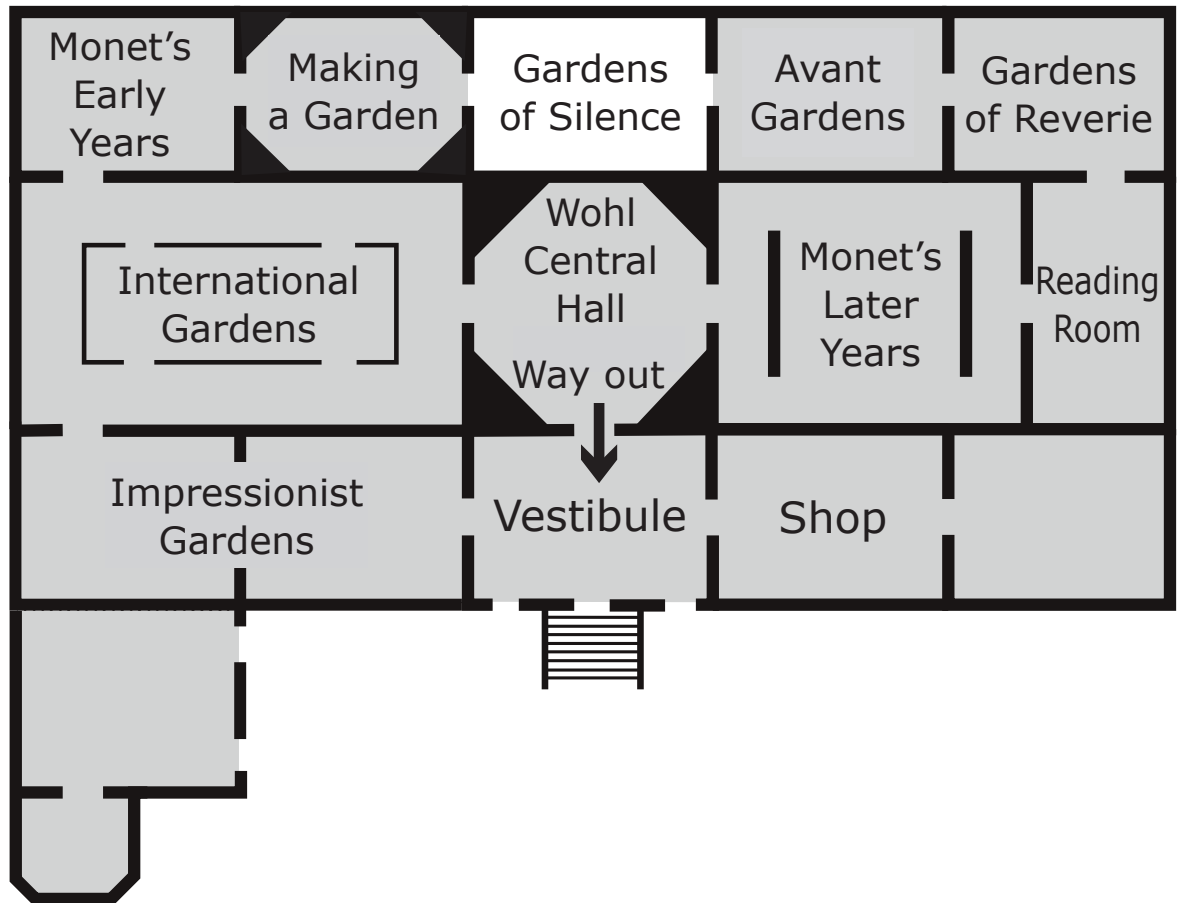
Descriptive commentary



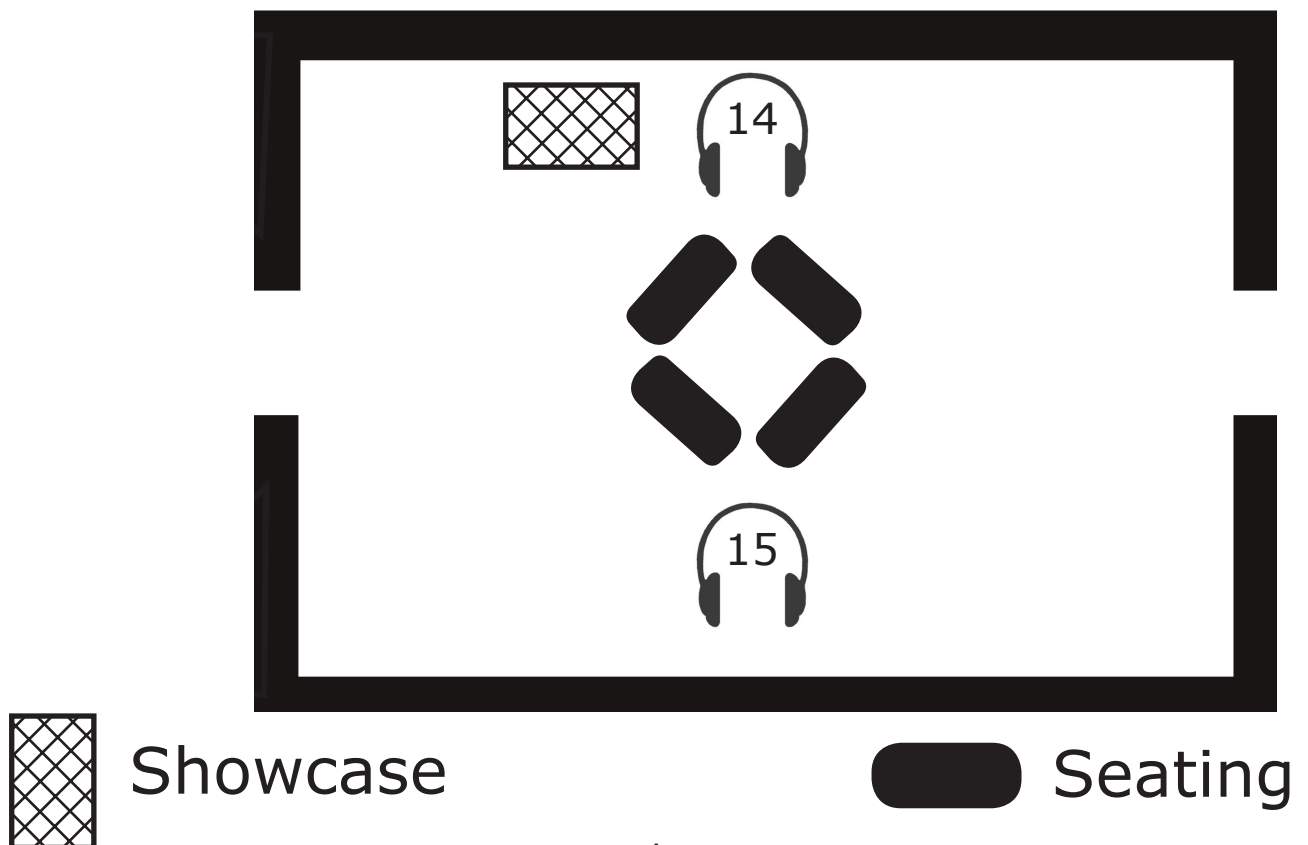
54 Santiago Rusiñol, Glorieta VII,
Aranjuez, 1919



Henri Le Sidaner, The Pavilion, Gerberoy,
1909



You are in
Gardens of Silence



Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

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List of works

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Gardens of Silence

The gardens depicted in this gallery are devoid of human presence.

All the artists represented relished the stillness and silence they found in gardens and imbued their paintings with a dream-like ambience removed from the here and now.

Santiago Rusiñol was a melancholic personality, and for him the empty garden was perhaps a metaphor for the artist's inner world. His paintings of the crumbling, abandoned properties of Spain's ancien régime at Granada, Aranjuez and Majorca may also have been an expression of his sadness at Spain's decline following the country's defeat in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

A contemporary described Joaquín Mir y Trinxet, the Catalan modernist painter and a friend of Rusiñol, as “the poet who speaks with colour”. His garden was the subject of dozens of his canvases, which despite their realistic details – a parrot on its perch or a fountain glimpsed through the arches – are enveloped in an atmosphere of mystery.

In the village of Gerberoy in Picardy in northern France, Henri Le Sidaner designed a romantic garden that included a “white garden” and a small pavilion that served as a summer studio, over which cascaded an “orgy of roses”.

Perhaps influenced by Monet’s paintings of Giverny, which he visited in 1918, Le Sidaner delighted in painting his own garden in different seasons and at different times of day, and was particularly drawn to the poetic atmosphere of twilight.

Further south, Le Sidaner's friend Henri Martin created his own garden on the River Lot at Marquayrol. Combining a pointillist technique of small dots of colour with a Symbolist mood of reverie, he created quiet, poetic visions of his private paradise.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

**Joaquin Mir y Trinxet
(1873–1940)**

Garden of Mogoda

1915–1919

Oil on canvas

Private collection

**Joaquin Mir y Trinxet
(1873–1940)**

The Artist's Garden

c. 1922

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Colour and light were central to the work of Catalan painter Joaquín Mir y Trinxet. In this view of the garden of his home at Vilanova i la Geltrú, to the south of Barcelona, the light of the setting sun fills the painting with an aura of mystery. Potted geraniums line neatly clipped hedges in the shade, while the reflection of the house, which glows in the last sun of the day, shimmers in the pool like a golden mirage.

Santiago Rusiñol **(1861–1931)**

Gardens of Monforte
1917

Oil on canvas

Colección BBVA

Showcase

Santiago Rusiñol

Jardins d'Espanya

1904

The British Library

Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931)

Glorieta VII, Aranjuez

1919

Oil on canvas

Fundación María José Jove, La Coruña 2007

Rusiñol painted numerous views of the Garden of the Principe in Aranjuez, a royal palace near Madrid. This painting is one of the largest and most sumptuous in the series.



54



14

The symmetrical composition, featuring a circle of rose bushes surrounding colourful chestnut trees and a green cypress arbour, evokes a powerful feeling of stillness and grandeur alluding to the eternal cycle of life and death.

Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931)

Green Wall, Sa Coma V
1904

Oil on canvas

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931)

Hydrangeas on a Garden Path
1929

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Henri Martin

(1860–1943)

Pond at the Western Gate
of the Park of the Manoir de
Marquayrol, with the Artist's
Studio

c. 1920

Oil on canvas

Richard Green, London

Henri Le Sidaner

(1862–1939)

Faïence Pots, Gerberoy
1928

Oil on canvas

Richard Green, London

Henri Le Sidaner (1862–1939)

The Steps, Gerberoy 1902

Pastel on canvas

Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France

Deeply admired by the writer Marcel Proust, Le Sidaner has been described as a Symbolist, an Impressionist and an “intimist” painter. Rather than merely rendering nature as it appears, he constructed carefully organised compositions and orchestrated his colour harmonies to evoke a particular mood or emotion.

Le Sidaner’s gardens at Gerberoy provided a major source of inspiration for his paintings, which were often distinguished by their contemplative silence and stillness.

Henri Le Sidaner (1862–1939)



The Pavilion, Gerberoy 1909

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Le Sidaner designed a rose garden on the uppermost terrace of his garden at Gerberoy, which was situated upon the ruins of the town's feudal ramparts. Painted three years after the pavilion was built, the pink and red roses, which seem to be plucked straight from the evening sky, have yet to envelop the trellises, fences, arches and fountains, as they would do with time.

Henri Le Sidaner

(1862–1939)

The Table in the White Garden at
Gerberoy
1900

Oil on canvas

Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, Belgium

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community

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Large
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**Painting the
Modern Garden
Monet to Matisse**

Avant Gardens

Do not remove from gallery

Multimedia tour



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



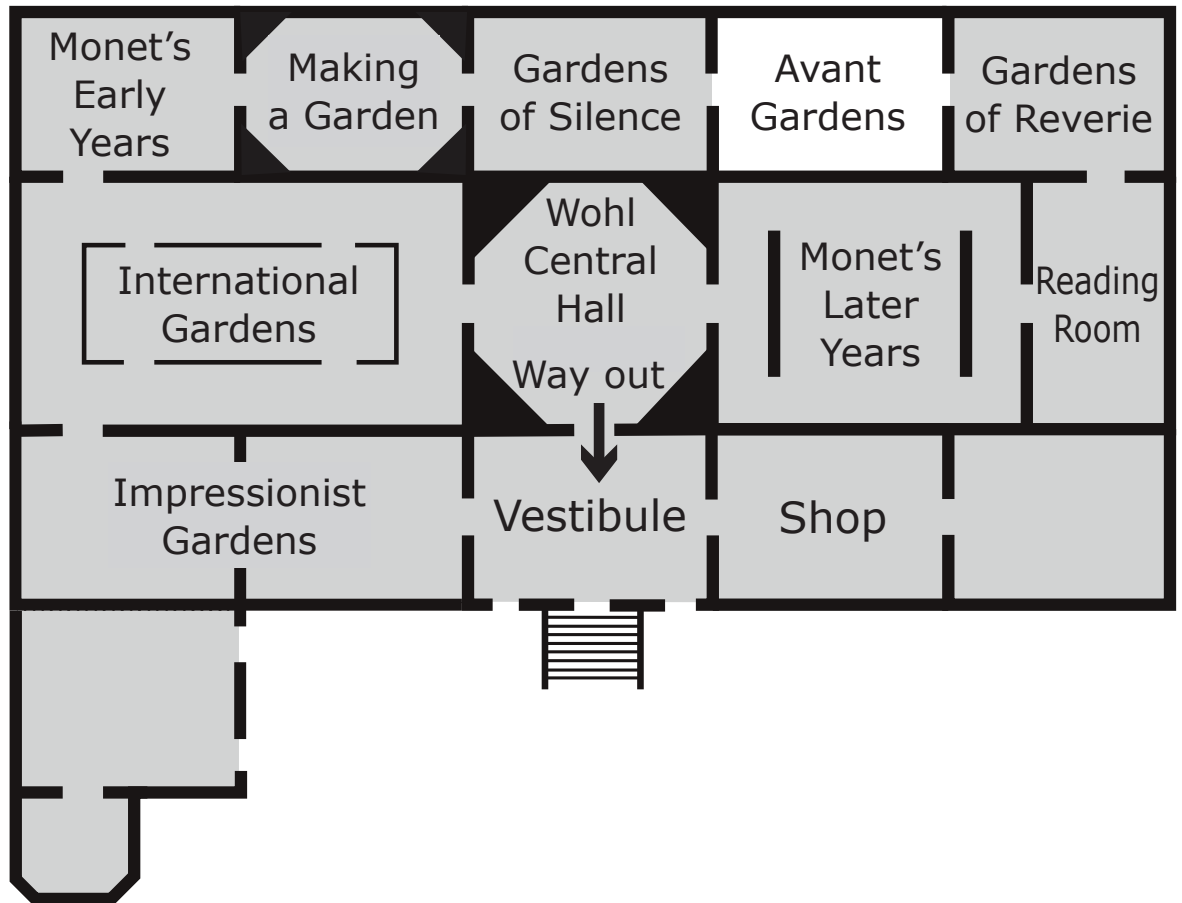
55 Emil Nolde, Flower Garden (M),
1922



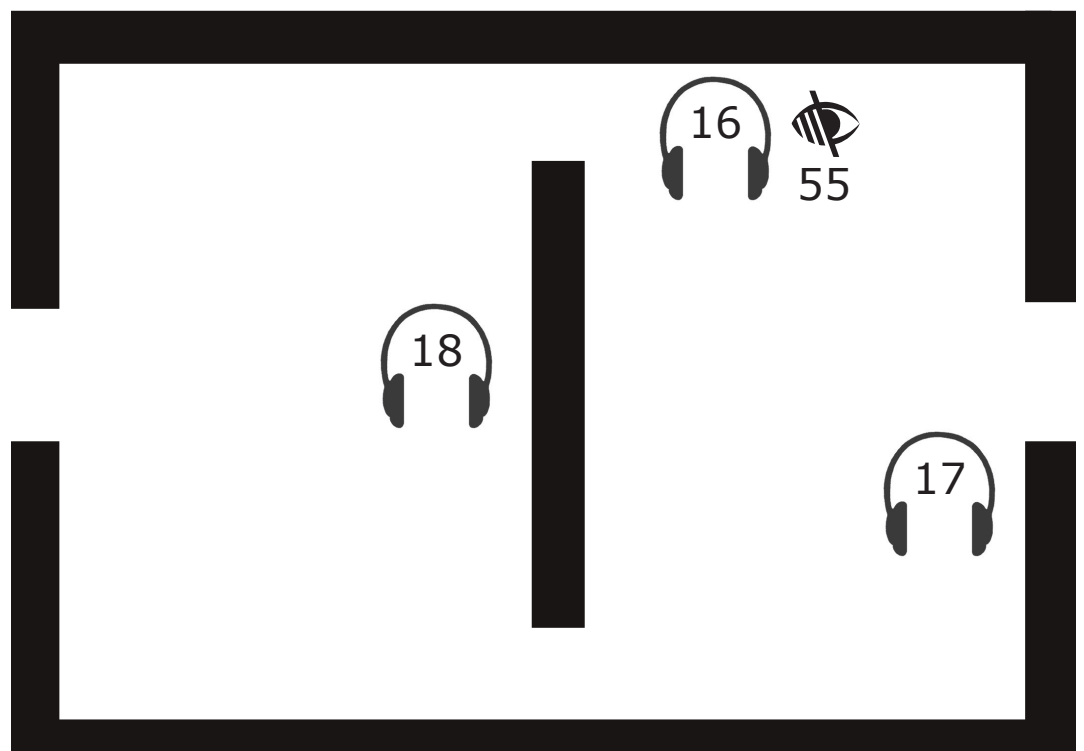
Gustav Klimt, Cottage Garden,
1905-1907



Henri Matisse, Palm Leaf, Tangier, 1912



You are in
Avant Gardens



Painting the Modern Garden Monet to Matisse

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Avant Gardens

Vincent van Gogh found solace in painting gardens and claimed that he discovered the laws of colour contrasts while studying flowers.

His use of strong colours to convey the intense emotions that nature aroused in him powerfully influenced the next generation of avant-garde artists as they were developing new, expressive pictorial languages in the early twentieth century.

Like Van Gogh, they came to view gardens not merely as things to be seen, but as spaces in which deeply felt internal realities could be experienced.

Gardens offered the French Fauves Henri Matisse and Raoul Dufy ideal settings for experimenting with vivid colour. The German Expressionist Emil Nolde's close focus and vibrant hues encapsulate the rapture he felt when contemplating the flowers he grew in his Danish and German gardens.

In Gustav Klimt's paintings of a garden on Lake Attersee, flower borders are transformed into bejewelled mosaics, while in Kandinsky's vision of his peaceful garden in the Bavarian village of Murnau, the radiant blooms are caught up in a maelstrom of colour that hovers on the edge of abstraction.

Paul Klee was fascinated by the structure of plants and turned to them throughout his life as a means of better understanding pictorial composition.

Not surprisingly, these experimental artists' interpretations of gardens were multifaceted, yet they were all born of a common desire to understand and draw sustenance from the regenerative power of nature.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Henri Matisse (1869–1954)



Palm Leaf, Tangier 1912

Oil on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Chester Dale Fund

In 1912 Matisse received permission to paint on the grounds of a private garden in Tangier, Morocco. He found the experience of working from nature deeply stimulating and described this painting as “a burst of spontaneous creation, like a flame”.

Feeling “spiritually exalted” by the exotic palm trees and acanthus, he worked in a flash of heated inspiration, even leaving areas of pencil underdrawing visible. He heightened the emotional excitement even further by spontaneously scratching into the thin paint surface.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944)

Murnau Garden II
1910

Oil on cardboard

Merzbacher Kunststiftung

Emil Nolde

(1867–1956)

Large Poppies

1908

Oil on canvas

Leopold-Hoesch-Museum & Papiermuseum, Düren

Nolde was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardener. In his diaries he revealed that the experience of painting gardens during his early years led to a breakthrough in his understanding of colour. “The colour of the flowers drew me magnetically to them,” he recalled, “and suddenly I was painting...”.

Through his expressive brushstrokes and vivid use of colour, Nolde expresses great emotional intensity in this early work, painted while living on the Baltic island of Als.

Emil Nolde

(1867–1956)

Flower Garden (O)
1922

Oil on canvas

Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

Emil Nolde

(1867–1956)

Flower Garden (M)
1922

Oil on canvas

Nolde Stiftung Seebüll



After moving in 1915 to Utenwarf in rural Denmark, Nolde developed a new garden that inspired a spectacular series of paintings featuring densely packed, luxuriant flora and allusions to a primeval, tropical paradise, often rendered through extreme close-ups and pure, heavily encrusted colours applied over coarse burlap.

“Whenever we returned from the big city and arrived at Utenwarf,” Nolde wrote, “I was soon overcome by an irresistible desire for artistic creation. The flowers in the garden would greet me jubilantly with their pure and beautiful colours.”

Emil Nolde

(1867–1956)

Peonies and Irises

1936

Oil on canvas

Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

In 1928 Nolde acquired a property, named Seebüll, in northern Germany near the Danish border, and constructed a brick house with a magnificent garden on the grounds. Paths in the flower beds were laid out to incorporate the letters E and A, forever linking the initials of the artist's first name to those of his wife, Ada.

The garden at Seebüll provided Nolde with a constant source of artistic inspiration for the rest of his life.

“The colour of the flowers drew me magnetically to them, and suddenly I was painting”

Emil Nolde

August Macke (1887–1914)

Garden Path

1912

Oil on canvas

LWL – Museum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster



Gustav Klimt

(1862–1918)

Cottage Garden
1905–1907

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Curt Herrmann

(1854–1929)

In the Garden of Schloss
Pretzfeld
1905

Oil on canvas

Courtesy Kunsthaus Bühler, Stuttgart

Vincent van Gogh

(1853–1890)

Daubigny's Garden in Auvers

1890

Oil on canvas

Famille Vernes-Karaoglan-Classé monument historique
décret 28 juillet 1989

Van Gogh painted this view of a garden in Auvers during the last months of his life. It may depict the garden of Charles-François Daubigny, a Barbizon School painter greatly admired by Van Gogh, Monet and the Impressionists.

The experience of visiting the late Daubigny's home in the spring of 1890 and meeting the artist's widow inspired Van Gogh to paint several views of his garden.

Van Gogh's radical simplifications of form and willingness to distort colour to increase emotional intensity had a powerful influence on Edvard Munch and the next generation of modernists.

Henri Matisse (1869–1954)

**The Rose Marble Table
Spring–summer 1917**

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mrs Simon Guggenheim Fund, 1956

This unusually sombre view of Matisse's garden at Issy-les-Moulineaux was painted in the wake of the epic battles at Verdun and the Somme. The stark composition may reflect his feelings during the dark years of the First World War, when colleagues were serving at the front and his family suffered from severe shortages of food and heating fuel.

Raoul Dufy **(1877–1953)**

The Little Palm Tree **1905**

Oil on canvas

Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, on loan to the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid

After encountering the paintings of Henri Matisse and the French Fauves ('Wild Beasts') at the Salon des Indépendants of 1905, Dufy abandoned Impressionism and began exploring intense, arbitrary colour and radical simplifications of form in his own compositions.

This turning point in his artistic development is evident in 'The Little Palm Tree' of the same year.

Inspired by a visit to southern France, Dufy interprets a Mediterranean garden as a series of boldly reductive planes of pure colour, their intensity increased by the tightly compressed space that forces forms to remain close to the picture surface.

Paul Klee

(1879–1940)

White Blossom in the Garden

1920

Oil on paper, mounted on paper

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Estate of
Karl Nierendorf, By purchase

Paul Klee

(1879–1940)

Picture of a Garden in Dark Colours

1923

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Private collection

Paul Klee

(1879–1940)

Flower Bed

1913

Oil on cardboard

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Estate of Karl Nierendorf, By purchase

Plants and gardens deeply fascinated Klee from an early age. Scholars estimate that he devoted around a tenth of his œuvre, about 10,000 works in all, to plant imagery. Klee expressed his affinity for gardens in a letter to his fiancée, Lily:

“My mind is clearest and freshest, and I often experience the most captivating moods, even moments of great joy, when I am tending plants in my garden, making cuttings, potting, binding, pruning, transplanting, separating, etc., and when I feel like a plant myself.”

Edvard Munch

(1863–1944)

Apple Tree in the Garden

1932–1942

Oil on canvas

Munch Museum, Oslo

Munch often painted his gardens at Åsgårdstrand and Ekely, and wrote about them in his literary sketches.

Imaginary and inventive gardens, including references to the Garden of Eden, are a recurring theme in Post-Impressionist and Symbolist painting.

Munch painted numerous images of the apple tree in his garden, often implying symbolic allusions to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

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Large
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Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Gardens
of Reverie

Do not remove from gallery

Multimedia tour



Main commentary



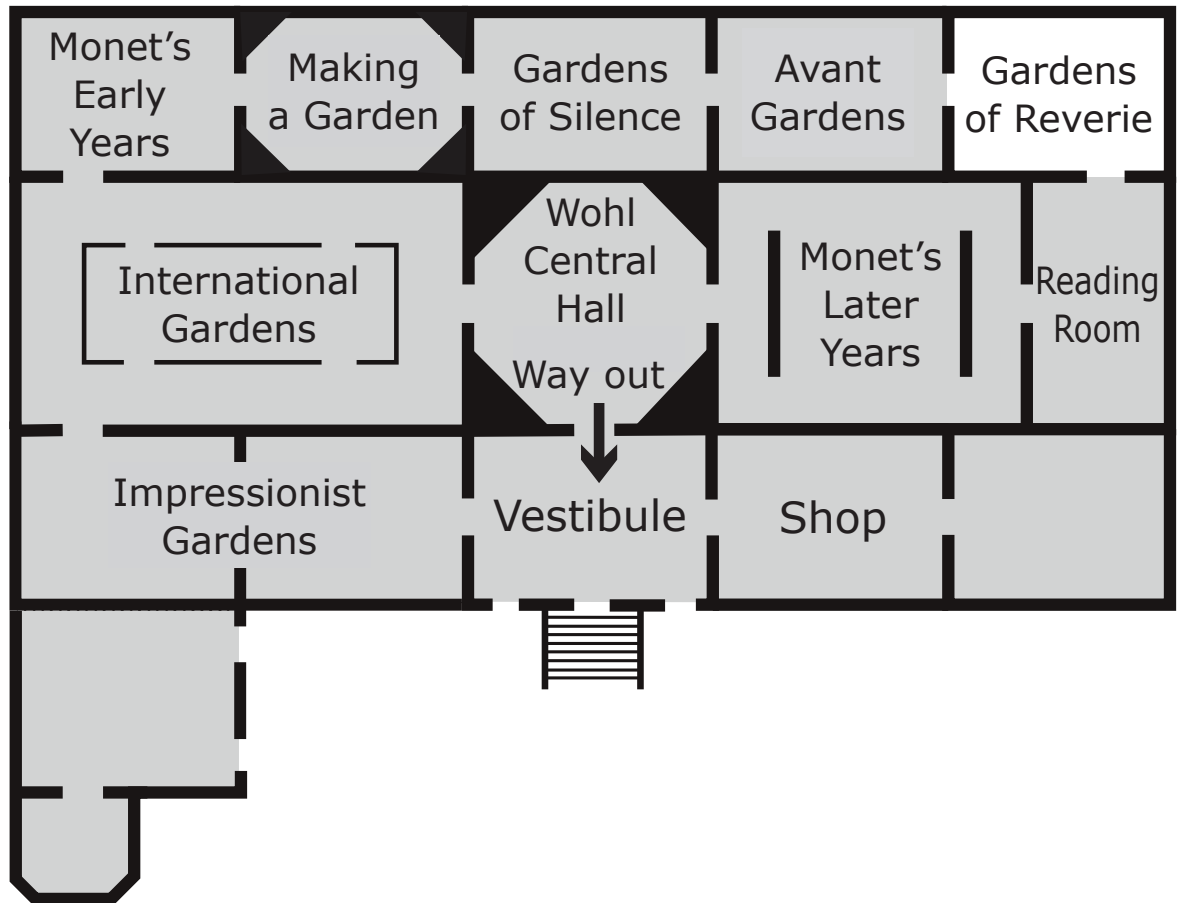
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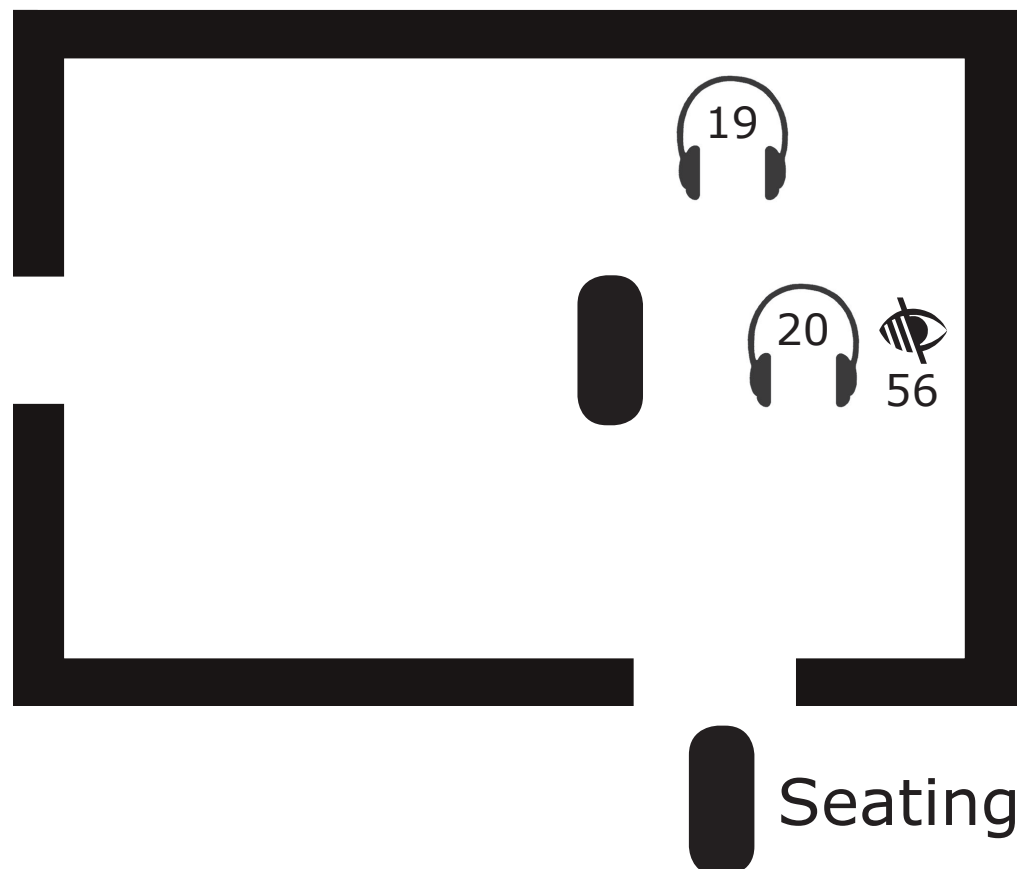
Pierre Bonnard, Resting in the Garden,
1914



56 Edouard Vuillard, Woman Reading
on a Bench, 1898 and Woman
Seated in an Armchair, 1898



You are in
Gardens of Reverie



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Gardens of Reverie

In the late nineteenth century, the threat of ever-expanding cities and industry gave rise to a utopian yearning for a better world. The notion of the garden as a private sanctuary, a “Paradise on Earth”, found expression in both literature and painting.

Maurice Denis’s enigmatic scenes of women in gardens are imbued with literary and Catholic associations.

Like Denis, Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard were members of the Nabis (“Prophets”), a group of avant-garde artists that emerged in France in the 1890s. They painted in a flat, decorative style to evoke an introspective mood, partly influenced by their work with contemporary Symbolist theatre.

The somewhat claustrophobic gardens that sprang from their fertile dreams and imaginations gave way, after 1900, to an airier vision of the natural world, as they adopted a late Impressionist style to create scenes flooded with sunlight, yet steeped in reverie.

Both Vuillard and Bonnard admired Monet's garden paintings and visited him at Giverny. Bonnard's house at Vernonnet, which he named "Ma Roulotte" ("My Caravan"), was only three miles away, and he and Monet frequently exchanged visits to talk about gardening and painting.

In contrast to Monet's carefully thought-out planting, Bonnard preferred to let nature run riot in his "jardin sauvage" ("wild garden"). In his two large decorative panels depicting the garden of his friends Thadée and Misia Natanson at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, Vuillard achieves an evocative fusion of observation and dreamlike imagination.

Bonnard's luminous views of his garden and the landscape beyond envelop the viewer in a lyrical vision of nature that seems inspired by a nostalgic longing for an idyllic world.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Maurice Denis

(1870–1943)

Virginal Spring

1894

Oil on canvas

Kunsthaus Zürich. Gift of the Hulda and Gustav
Zumsteg Foundation

One of the founding members of the Nabis ("Prophets"), a group of French PostImpressionists, Denis believed that form, line, and colour should echo the cadence and pulse of the natural world.

Painted the year his infant son died, 'Virginal Spring' depicts a group of nuns dressed in white robes moving diagonally through a garden filled with flowering trees. Shrouded in mystery, the figures move slowly and meditatively, as if united with the landscape.

Maurice Denis

(1870–1943)

Orchard of the Wise Virgins

1893

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Denis, who was a devout Catholic, depicts his future wife Marthe in the guise of one of the wise virgins from 'the Parable of the Ten Virgins', a metaphor for the faithful awaiting Christ at the end of time.

Marthe sits in the foreground of an Edenic orchardgarden patiently waiting for her fiancé. The fence in the background alludes to the hortus conclusus (enclosed garden) that often served as a setting for depictions of the Virgin Mary in medieval art.

Pierre Bonnard

(1867–1947)

Sunlit Terrace at 'Ma Roulotte',
Vernonnet
1916

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Pierre Bonnard

(1867–1947)

Blue Balcony
1910

Oil on canvas

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery,
London

In 1910 Bonnard began renting a house at Vernonnet, a small town on the Seine near Giverny. Over the next few years he frequently exchanged visits with Monet and developed his own garden, which sloped down to the river, often depicting it seen through windows or from his balcony or terrace.

While he shared Monet's love of gardens, Bonnard preferred his more natural "jardin sauvage" ("wild garden") – seen here blossoming in springtime – to his friend's more meticulously arranged environments.



Pierre Bonnard **(1867–1947)**

Resting in the Garden **1914**

Oil on canvas

The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design,
Oslo

Rather than focusing on specific plants or horticultural motifs, Bonnard typically portrayed gardens as part of a larger world, often connected to a distant landscape and filled with elements that infuse the scene with an evocative mood.

He often incorporated “natural” or “wild” gardens into his paintings as signifiers of a timeless world of boundless pleasure and sensual delight.



56



20

Edouard Vuillard (1868–1940)

The Garden of Le Relais at
Villeneuve-sur-Yonne
1898

Glue-based distemper on canvas

Private collection

Woman Reading on a Bench (left)

Woman Seated in an Armchair
(right)

Thadée Natanson, editor of the avant-garde 'La Revue Blanche', spent the summers with his wife Misia at Le Relais, their country residence in Villeneuve-sur-Yonne in Burgundy. Here they welcomed many artists, writers and musicians, including Edouard Vuillard.

(continued over)

These two panels portray the extensive gardens at Le Relais.

In the left panel Misia's friend Marthe Mellot reads an illustrated newspaper in the company of Pierre Bonnard, who plays with a cat, while in the right panel Misia herself dozes in a cane chair. Intended as decoration for the writer Jean Schopfer's flat in Paris, the panels would have brought the scudding clouds and fresh breezes of summer into a stuffy urban interior.

At the same time, their intricate pattern of flowers in the grass evokes the stylised millefleurs (flower-studded) ground of medieval tapestries such as the famous 'Lady and the Unicorn' series, which Vuillard much admired in the Musée de Cluny (now the Musée national du Moyen Age) in Paris.

In this sense, the panels conjure a visionary, ideal realm of sensory delight.

Pierre Bonnard

(1867–1947)

Summer in Normandy
1912

Oil on cardboard

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Pierre Bonnard

(1867–1947)

The Family in the Garden
c. 1901

Oil on canvas

Kunsthaus Zürich

Edouard Vuillard

(1868–1940)

Women in the Garden or Song
of Songs

1891–1892

Oil on canvas

Triton Collection Foundation

Edouard Vuillard

(1868–1940)

Beneath the Trees

1897–1899

Oil on board, mounted on canvas

Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, on loan to the
Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid

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Large
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Modern Garden
Monet to Matisse**

Reading Room

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Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

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Film Clips

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List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Ramon Calvet

**Santiago Rusiñol Painting in
the Gardens of the Granja Vella
d'Horta**

26 May 1930

Collection Arxiu Mas, Institut Amatller d'Art Hispànic,
Barcelona

© Fundació Institut Amatller d'Art Hispànic. Arxiu Mas

Portrait of Max Liebermann Pruning Roses in His Garden

c. 1927

Ullstein Bild Archiv, Berlin

Sorolla Painting in the Garden of His House in Madrid

c. 1920

Museo Sorolla, Madrid

Laurits Tuxen Painting in the Garden at Villa Dagminne

c. 1910

Art Museums of Skagen

Karl Thaxter (attrib.)

Childe Hassam on Celia Thaxter's Porch

1880-1910

Courtesy of the Star Island Photograph Collection at the Portsmouth Athenaeum

Henri Matisse and His Wife Amélie in Their Garden at Issy-les- Moulineaux

1927

Archives H. Matisse © Succession H. Matisse / DACS
2015

Gabriele Münter

Wassily Kandinsky Gardening at
Murnau

1910–1911

Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung,
Munich, inv. 2247

© Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung,
Munich / © DACS 2015

Mathilde Klee

Paul Klee and His Son in the Family Garden 1914

Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern, Schenkung Familie Klee

© Klee-Nachlassverwaltung, Bern

Gabriele Münter

August Macke Watering the Plant of Modern Art 1912

Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung,
Munich, inv. 2247

© Gabriele Münter- und Johannes Eichner-Stiftung,
Munich / © DACS 2015

Moritz Nähr

Gustav Klimt in the Garden in
front of His Studio at Josefstädter
Strasse 21, Vienna
April/May 1912

Austrian Archives Collection

© 2015 SCALA, Florence / Austrian Archives

Emil and Ada Nolde at the Fisherman's House on the Island of Als 1913

Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

© Nolde Stiftung Seebüll

Camille Pissarro Pushing His Easel on Wheels in the Garden at Eragny

c. 1895

Courtesy of Pissarro Family Archives

Claude Monet in the Largest of His Three Studios

1915–1917

Collection Philippe Piguet, Paris

Henri Le Sidaner Painting 'Les baraques' at the White Garden

Yann Farinaux-Le Sidaner

Martial Caillebotte

Gustave Caillebotte in His
Greenhouse at Petit-Gennevilliers
1892

Private collection © Comité Caillebotte

**Berthe Morisot, Eugène
Manet and Their
Daughter Julie in the
Garden at Bougival**
1880

Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris

Bridgeman Images / The Illustrated London News

Picture Library, London

Reine Natanson

Pierre Bonnard with Claude
Monet in Giverny

c. 1926

Private Collection/Patrice Schmidt

Vuillard and Alfred Natanson in front of Le Relais, in Villeneuve-sur- Yonne

c. 1897–1899

Private collection

John Singer Sargent Painting in the Countryside, at Fladbury, Worcestershire

1889

Bridgeman Images / The Illustrated London News
Picture Library, London

Film Clips

Film clip of Claude Monet by the lily pond at Giverny, from 'Ceux de chez nous' ('Those of Our Land') by Sacha Guitry, 1915

© Messieurs Christian et Patrick Aubart,
ayants droit de Sacha Guitry

Film clip by Louis Le Sidaner showing Henri Le Sidaner's garden at Gerberoy in 1938, from 'La Renaissance de Gerberoy' ('The Rebirth of Gerberoy') by Yann Farinaux-Le Sidaner, 2011

© Yann Farinaux-Le Sidaner

Film clip showing Max Liebermann's garden at Wannsee in 1922, from 'Max Liebermann – Klassiker von heute, Revolutionär von gestern' ('Max Liebermann – From Revolutionary to Master of the Establishment') by Irmgard von zur Mühlen, 1979

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Large
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Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Monet's
Later Years

Do not remove from gallery

Multimedia tour



Main commentary



Descriptive commentary



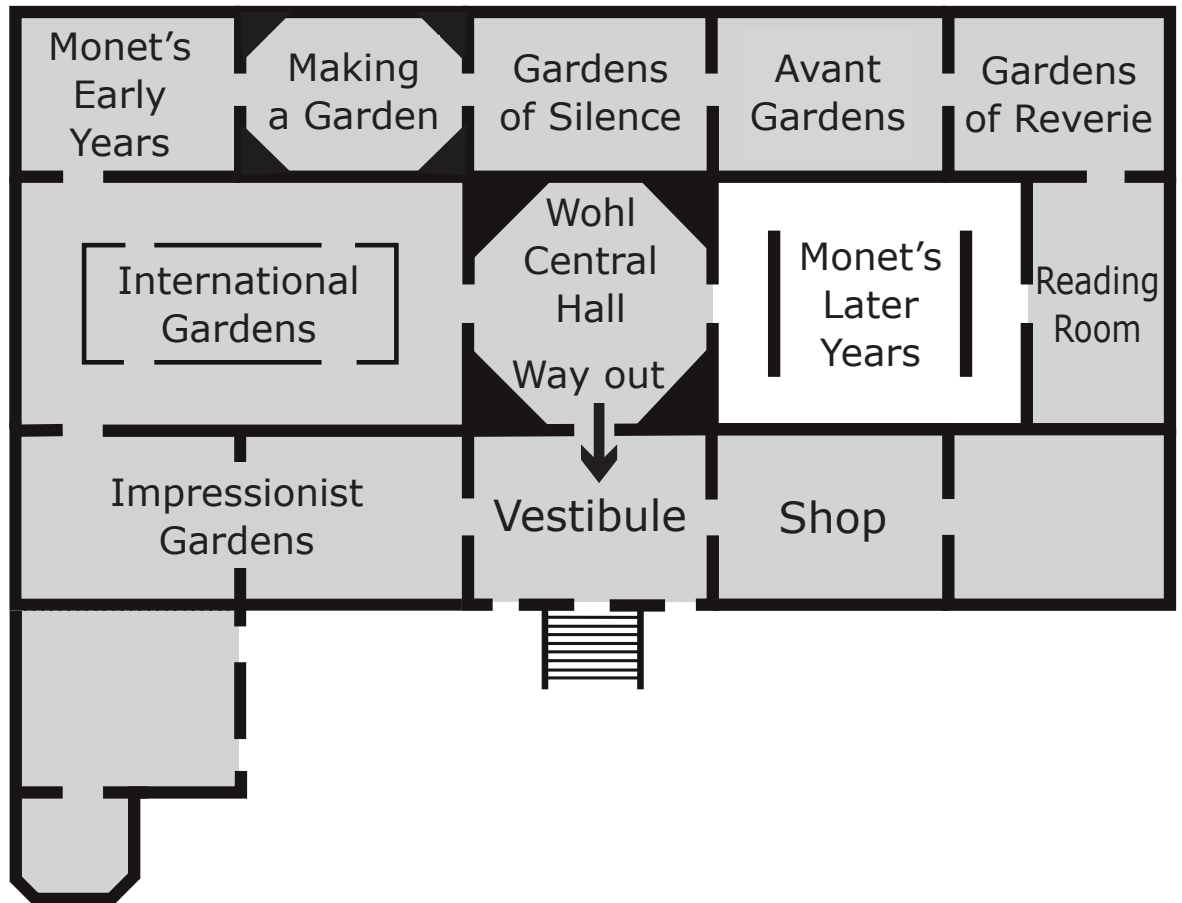
Claude Monet, The Japanese Bridge,
1923-1925



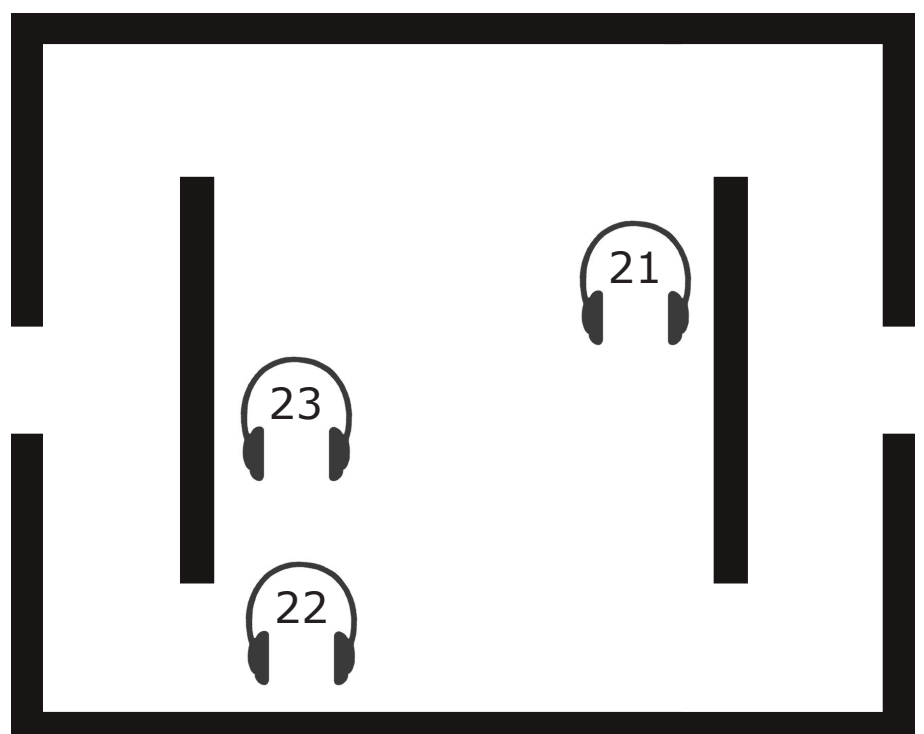
Claude Monet, Nymphéas (Water Lilies),
1914-1915



Claude Monet, Weeping Willow,
1918-1919



You are in
Monet's Later Years



Painting the Modern Garden

Monet to Matisse

Main Galleries:

30 January – 20 April 2016

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Monet's Later Years at Giverny

Devastated by the death of his second wife Alice in 1911, Monet virtually stopped painting for three years. He was also suffering from failing eyesight and was diagnosed with a cataract in one eye.

After his vision improved in 1914, he began to work on numerous canvases of his water garden, which was to become his exclusive subject until his death in 1926. He continued to paint the water lilies but also turned to the irises and other plants at the water's edge, and revisited the subject of the Japanese bridge for the first time in two decades.

During the early months of the First World War, civilians fled from Giverny en masse, including members of Monet's own family. Yet Monet stubbornly stayed behind, feeling it was his patriotic duty to continue painting.

The sombre deep-blue and violet tones in some of his water-lily paintings, and particularly the motif of the weeping willow in a group of works begun in the spring of 1918, seem to express his distress at the tragedy of the war.

In Monet's final decade he began to paint the water lilies on very large canvases, for which he constructed a special studio. His technique and compositions became more daringly abstract, anticipating later developments in twentieth-century art. "The subject is secondary," he said. "What I want to reproduce is that which is between the subject and me."

Although he never completely stopped working from nature, Monet increasingly painted in the studio from memory, guided by the internal dialogue of his canvases as he established visual relationships between them.

List of works (clockwise in order of hang)

Claude Monet (1840–1926)



The Japanese Bridge c. 1923–1925

Oil on canvas

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Bequest of
Putnam Dana McMillan

Monet summoned all the powers he had developed over nearly 60 years as a working artist when he painted the final versions of his Japanese bridge theme. Here, the arching bridge nearly disappears under overlapping skeins of thickly encrusted paint and tightly interwoven streams of free, gestural colour flowing across the surface.

This painting may look back to Monet's early admiration for J. M. W. Turner (1775– 1851) and seems to partake of the same sense of immense creative freedom Turner expressed during his late years.

Thérèse Bonney, 'Claude Monet on the Japanese Bridge in His Giverny Garden', c. 1922. Digital print. Musée Clemenceau, Paris

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

**Nymphéas, Japanese Bridge
1918–1926**

Oil on canvas

Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Albert M. Greenfield and Elizabeth M. Greenfield Collection, 1974

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies

c.1914

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies with Weeping Willows

1916–1919

Oil on canvas

Lycée Claude Monet, Paris

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies

1914–1915

Oil on canvas

Portland Art Museum, Oregon. Helen Thurston Ayer Fund

This depiction of the artist's water garden belongs to the series of large paintings Monet began in 1914 and which preoccupied him throughout the war years. Without a horizon or stabilising banks around the pond, time and space seem exquisitely suspended.

Many but not all of Monet's paintings from the war years are pervaded by unusually dark tonalities, perhaps reflecting the artist's shifting mood during this difficult period.



Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

Weeping Willow **1918**

Oil on canvas

Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio. Gift of Howard D. and Babette L. Sirak, the Donors to the Campaign for Enduring Excellence, and the Derby Fund

Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

Weeping Willow **1918–1919**

Oil on canvas

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas

Monet's most direct response to the First World War appears in a series of paintings depicting the weeping willows in his water garden. As early as 1916 he painted several canvases in which willow branches are seen hanging mournfully over the dimly lit pond.

In the spring of 1918, the last year of the war, he began a new series in which weeping willows assume a more prominent role as the principal focus of the composition. Branches and leaves now writhe with agitated emotion, frenetic brushstrokes ignite the thickly encrusted surfaces, and colour burns with new intensity.

“As for me, I’m staying here all the same, and if those savages must kill me, it will be in the middle of my canvases, in front of all of my life’s work”

Claude Monet, 1 September 1914

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Corner of the Water Lily Pond
1918

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Irises

c. 1914–1917

Oil on canvas

The National Gallery, London. Bought 1967

Monet planted a profusion of irises in his water garden for practical and aesthetic reasons: they thrive in shallow water and provided a colourful transition between the water and the banks of the pond. Their translucent petals also filter light, producing a shimmering effect that Monet repeatedly painted.

Distinctions between materiality and reflection in this painting dissolve into a dazzling display of gestural brushwork and kaleidoscopic colour.

Claude Monet (1840–1926)

Day Lilies
1914–1917

Oil on canvas

Private collection

Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

Irises by the Pond
1914–1917

Oil on canvas

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Adolph D. and
Wilkins C. Williams Fund

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Large
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**Painting the
Modern Garden
Monet to Matisse**

Wohl Central Hall

Do not remove from gallery

Claude Monet

(1840–1926)

Water Lilies (Agapanthus)
c.1915–1926

Oil on canvas

In 1914 Monet began painting a series of monumental canvases intended for display as a continuous panorama, which he called his “Grandes Décorations”. The paintings became intimately bound up with Monet’s feelings about the First World War.

On the day after the war ended Monet donated two of the canvases to the French state as a patriotic gesture. He soon expanded the number and proposed installing twelve paintings –including this triptych – in a circular pavilion constructed on the grounds of the Hôtel Biron, now the Musée Rodin, in Paris.

After the project collapsed for financial reasons, Monet developed another proposal to install more than twenty Grandes Décorations in two oval rooms at the Musée de l'Orangerie. He continued working on this project until his death in 1926, without ever releasing the paintings from his studio at Giverny.

Photographs taken in Monet's studio in 1917 reveal that this triptych originally included agapanthus growing along the shore in the left panel, but at some point Monet significantly reworked the compositions and painted over the plants that gave the triptych its original title.

Eliminating the agapanthus and any hint of foreground or sky made the compositions more abstract. The paintings remained in Monet's studio under the care of his family until the 1950s, when they were acquired separately by three American museums in St Louis, Kansas City and Cleveland.

Not only are these great canvases an extraordinary summation of Monet's paintings of his garden at Giverny, but they confirm the artist's deeply felt need, following the trauma of the war, to restore the world to harmony and balance, to find beauty to counter ugliness, joy to overcome sorrow, life to overcome death.

Thanks to these three exceptional loans from the museums listed below, this is the first time this triptych has been reunited in Europe.

Left Panel

The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund and an anonymous gift

Centre Panel

Saint Louis Art Museum, The Steinberg Charitable Fund

Right Panel

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust

Claude Monet **(1840–1926)**

Water Lilies

After 1918

Oil on canvas

The National Gallery, London

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