

MONET PAINTING IN HIS GARDEN AT ARGENTEUIL

Michael Cole-Fontayn, Chairman of Europe, Middle East & Africa
Ann Dumas, Curator, Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse
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Michael: Ann, perhaps you can tell us a little more about the relationship between Renoir and Monet, and how that developed.

Ann: Well, they were young artists at this time. Now, they're such big names and fetch such enormous prices in the sale room, so it's perhaps easy to forget that they were young, penniless artists who formed this group, which at the time was an avant-garde group because it was breaking with all the respected canons of painting, so they were very close friends.

Michael: And what does this painting tell us about the relationship between these artists and gardens?

Ann: Well, I think the impressionists love gardens because what was radical and new about what they were doing was that they were painting completely out of doors. They painted very spontaneously and quickly and wanted to capture sort of fleeting effects of light outdoors, so gardens were perfect for them because in effect it was an outdoor studio.

Michael: We understand that Monet created gardens wherever he lived, even in rented homes and houses. What does this tell us about Monet the horticulturalist?

Ann: It tells us a great deal, and one thing we've really tried to bring out in this exhibition is the extent to which Monet was a really knowledgeable horticulturalist. He belonged to a very learned society that just specialised/talked about irises and different ways of growing irises.

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