



Musée d'Orsay, Paris, França

**Papoulas vermelhas em Argenteuil (Red Poppies at Argenteuil)**  
Óleo sobre tela, 1873. Claude Monet

## Monet: father of Impressionism

Instead of continuing the family's business (a grocery store) as his father wanted, Claude Monet became the forerunner of an innovative art movement, whose name, Impressionism, began to be used after a negative review to his painting *Impression, Sunrise* (*Impression, Soleil Levant*), exhibited in the year 1872 together with works from some of his friends, as Renoir, Degas and Cezanne.

Oscar-Claude Monet was born in Paris in 1840, but grew up in the port city of Le Havre, where he had his first contact with the painting when he met Eugene Boudin, who encouraged him to work outdoors, a practice that would be crucial in developing his technique and style.

Monet returned to live in Paris at age of 19, with the sole purpose of studying painting. Despite the family's desire of seeing him in the traditional School of Fine Arts, he chose to join the Atelier Suisse, whose more liberal educational model better matched with his personality. Although Monet enjoyed drawing, he did not agree with the academic practice of traditional schools. It was in this environment that he would meet Pissarro, through whom he met Manet, Courbet and other avant-garde artists.

In 1861, Monet joined the army to defend France in the war and travels to Algeria. With the help of his aunt, he returns to Paris a year later, continuing his outdoor projects. He used to meet with his friends, artists as him, in the studio of some of them and go out to nearby fields and woods, where they spent their days painting

landscapes and making the most of the changes in brightness offered by the course of the day.

Monet met the young Camille Doncieux, who worked for him as a model and eventually became his wife. Together they had two children, but only married after three years together. The early days of the young couple were in serious financial trouble. As Monet was reluctant to change their painting style, he faced great difficulty in selling his paintings. It was only after the outbreak of Franco-Prussian War (1870), when he fled to London, that the painter's life began to improve.

In England, he met the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, who came to support the Impressionist and to acquire works from the group. Back to France in 1871, Monet lived in Argenteuil, and then settled in Vétheuil, beginning the most fertile period of his life. He became a close friend of the millionaire couple Alice and Ernest Hoschede that turned big fans of his work. By twist of fate, Monet and Alice eventually married after both became widows.

In 1883, Monet moved to Giverny once for all with his new wife and seven children (two of him and five of her). Gradually Monet turned his property into his little paradise, where he built a pond that would receive his famous nenuphars, nymphs and the Japanese bridge. He would paint there multiple series of marvelous pictures. The death of his second wife and of his son Jean, the First World War and the fight against blindness seriously afflicted the painter in old age. Yet, Monet lived and painted until 86 years old and he is buried in the garden of his property in Giverny.