



# The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity

*Ms. Anthea Callen*

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## **The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity** Ms. Anthea Callen

This magnificent book is the first full-scale exploration of Impressionist technique. Focusing on the easel-painted work of Monet, Pissarro, Renoir, Cézanne, Cassatt, Morisot, Caillebotte, Sisley, and Degas in the period before 1900, it places their methods and materials in a historical perspective and evaluates their origins, novelty, and meanings within the visual formation of urban modernity.

Drawing on scientific studies of pigments and materials, artists' treatises, colormens' archives, and contemporary and modern accounts, Anthea Callen demonstrates how raw materials and paintings are profoundly interdependent. She analyzes the material constituents of oil painting and the complex processes of "making" entailed in all aspects of artistic production, discussing in particular oil painting methods for landscapists and the impact of *plein air* light on figure painting, studio practice, and display. Insisting that the meanings of paintings are constituted by and within the cultural matrices that produced them, Callen argues that the real "modernity" of the Impressionist enterprise lies in the painters' material practices. Bold brushwork, unpolished, sketchy surfaces, and bright, "primitive" colors were combined with their subject matter—the effects of light, the individual sensation made visible—to establish the modern as visual.

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