



Often called the father of impressionism, Camille Pissarro was the only artist to show his paintings in all eight impressionist exhibitions held in Paris from 1874 to 1886. Pissarro was an adviser and friend of many of the younger impressionists, including Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and postimpressionists such as Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh. For most of his artistic life, Pissarro depicted peaceful rural scenes in which he sought to unify color to create an overall harmony or accord. Pissarro did not dissolve his subjects into semiabstract patterns of brushstrokes, as did Monet and others; instead he retained a certain formal solidity.

In the last decade of his life, Pissarro turned to the rapidly expanding urban centers of France for subject matter. From July to October 1898, he stayed in Rouen on the Seine River and painted nineteen canvases. *View of Rouen* is from this series. The painting was most likely executed from a window in the Hôtel de l'Angleterre (Pissarro's decision to paint indoors was partly because of a recurrent eye infection he had suffered since 1889). Two years before painting *View of Rouen*, Pissarro had stayed in the same hotel, where he painted *The Great Bridge, Rouen* (1896, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh), the same bridge (Pont Boieldieu) as that in *View of*

CAMILLE PISSARRO

French, b. West Indies, 1830–1903

View of Rouen, 1898

Oil on canvas: 25 × 31 1/4 in. (63.5 × 79.4 cm.)

Gift of Mrs. Charles M. Cooke, 1934 (4110)

Rouen. Although in the Academy painting the view is slightly farther upstream, the towering chimney of the main gasworks and the windblown puffs of smoke are prominent in both paintings; the slanted glass roof of the Gare d'Orléans in front of the gasworks can be distinguished in each.

In *View of Rouen*, Pissarro captures a moment in the spectacle of urban life. The salmon-colored quay in the foreground is populated with observers and passersby. Aboard the ship, the people crowding the deck are painted in strokes similar to those used for the figures on land. Large cargo ships are moored on the far side of the glistening Seine; impressive buildings line the street that parallels the wharf. The entire work is created with thickly applied strokes of paint that capture the light, causing the surface of the painting itself to shimmer.

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CAMILLE PISSARRO

France, 1830–1903

Rouen, Saint-Sever, Morning, 1898

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mrs. Charles M. Cooke, 1934 (4110)

Often called the father of Impressionism, Camille Pissarro was the only artist to show his paintings in all eight impressionist exhibitions held in Paris from 1874–1886. For most of his career, Pissarro depicted peaceful rural scenes. In the last decade of his life, however, Pissarro turned to the rapidly expanding urban centers of France for subject matter. In *Rouen, Saint-Sever, Morning*, Pissarro captured a moment in that city's life along the Seine River. The foreground is populated with observers and passersby; more people crowd the deck of a ship. Large cargo ships are concentrated on the right, while impressive buildings line the wharf. The entire work is created with thickly applied strokes of paint that capture light, causing the surface to shimmer with the brilliance of a hazy summer morning.

CAMILLE PISSARRO

France, 1830–1903

Rouen, Saint-Sever, Morning, 1898

Oil on canvas

Gift of Anna Rice Cooke, 1934 (4110)

Camille Pissarro was the only artist to show his paintings in all eight Impressionist exhibitions, held in Paris from 1874 to 1886. For most of his career, he depicted peaceful rural scenes. In the last decade of his life, however, his focus turned to the rapidly expanding urban centers of France. *Rouen, Saint-Sever, Morning* captures a moment in that city's life along the Seine River. The entire work is created with thickly applied strokes of paint that capture the play of light and shadow and cause surfaces to shimmer with the luster of a hazy summer morning.

View of the Port of Rouen (4110)
gift of Mrs. C. M. Cooke, 1934
oil on canvas

GALL
PISSARRO, C.J. France
1898

ARTIST: Camille J. Pissarro (b. St. Thomas, West Indies, 1830/31? d. Paris 1903). One of the founders of Impressionism, Pissarro studied in Paris as a youth, and then returned there in 1855 to begin his career as a painter. During the next ten years, he pursued a solid academic training and also formed close friendships with Monet, Renoir, Cezanne, and others, and was much influenced by Corot and Courbet. In England during the Franco-Prussian War, he and Monet admired the landscapes of Constable and Turner. In 1874, back in Paris, he showed in the first exhibition of the "Impressionists" and in the next seven of these exhibitions (1876-82). Pissarro experimented briefly with Seurat's pointillist method from 1886-90, but eventually returned to his own style of impressionism. Known primarily for his peaceful landscapes, Pissarro showed a new interest in city scenes during the last ten years of his life. It was also in these last years that he and his family enjoyed an affluence unknown in earlier, more difficult years.

SUBJECT: View of the newly industrialized city of Rouen, on the Seine. Along the river is a series of quays at which boats are moored; a bridge spans the river at left. Pissarro painted in Rouen from August-October of 1898; two years earlier he had painted a similar view of the city, from a point farther to the left, with a greater view of the bridge. (This painting "Le Grand Pont, Rouen" is in the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.)

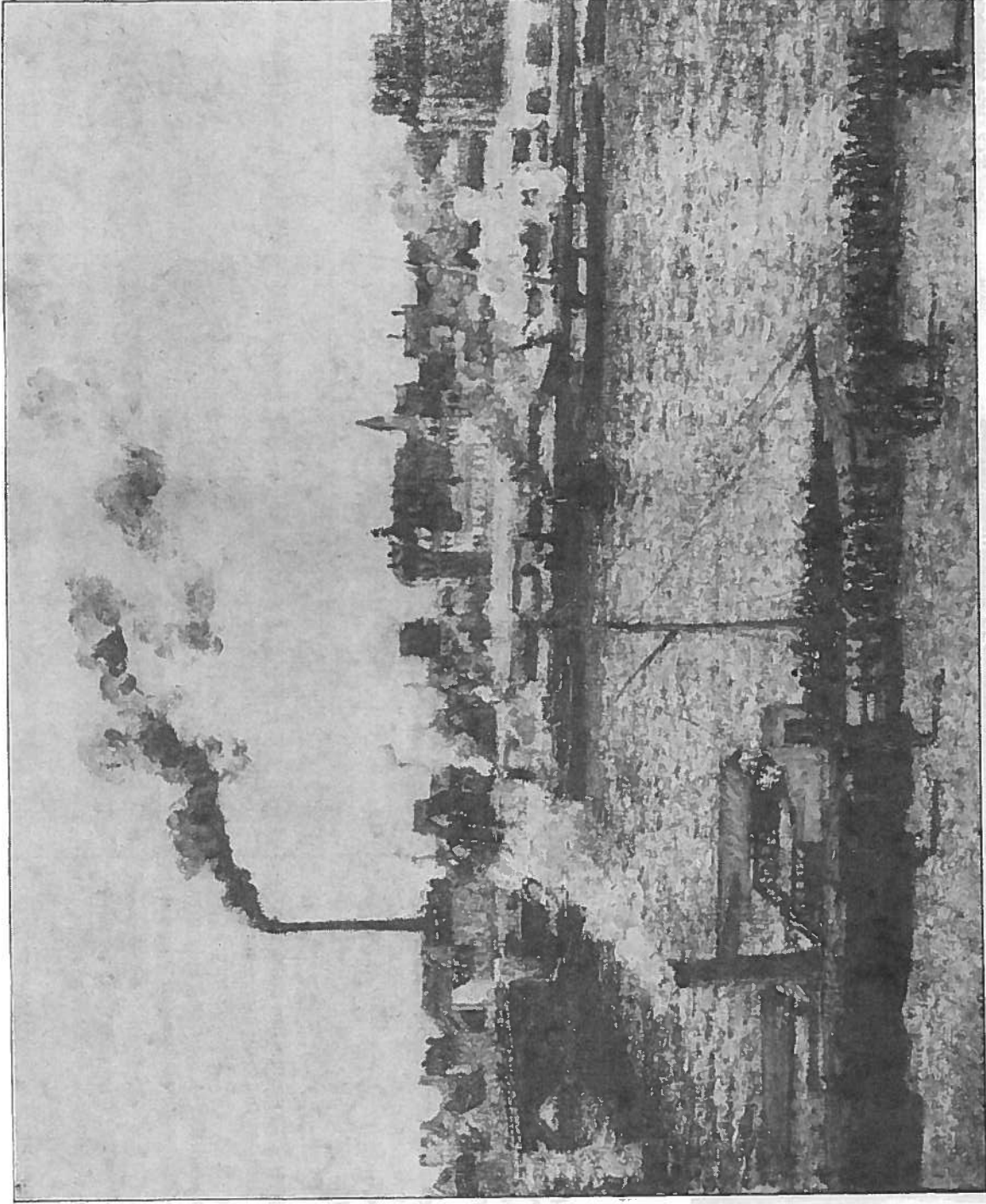
MEDIUM: oil on canvas

STYLE: Pissarro's view of the city is one of pulsating energy and urban bustle caught and held still for a single moment. The stationary figures on the shore, greeting or seeing off the boat at its dock, will soon disperse; the wide expanse of river will soon be broken by a ship seeking its way up or down stream; the wind-blown paths of smoke will soon disappear altogether. The composition, a series of calm horizontal bands structured by the occasional verticals of ship masts and smokestacks contributes to the temporary stillness of the scene; only rarely is this broken by diagonals, usually those of the airy puffs of smoke. The scene is flooded with a clean, fresh light which dazzles one's vision and enlivens even the solid, gray buildings in the background. The river catches the multiple reflections of sky, ships and buildings; the thickly textured strokes of paint catch the natural light of the room itself and add to the shimmering, sunstruck effect of the surface.

Pissarro's color choices are predominantly subdued neutrals, with a high use of white to affect the glow of light. The dark forms of the buildings and ships retain their sense of structure and solidity; this attention to form is a characteristic of Pissarro which differentiated him from the increasingly abstract Monet.

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS: How might this scene change in 5 minutes? Ask for examples of children's experiences looking at or being in water: e.g., if you've been to the Chinese or Spanish courts, what did you observe there? Or ask what water looks like when you're swimming in it on a sunny day. How does this artist paint water? How does this compare with the way you usually think of water?

Camille Pissarro



Camille Pissarro, 1831-1903, *View of Rouen*, 1898, gallery 1 Oct. '93

13 October: "Paris and the Impressionists" by Roger Dell, curator of gallery education, Honolulu Academy of Arts. In the mid-19th century Emperor Napoleon III ordered the rebuilding of the city of Paris, and for the next 20 years