

Renoir and the Impressionist Process



Impressionist Innovation

Primary Source 10

Illustration of painting en plein air, 1826.
E.H. Hareux, *La peinture à l'huile* (oil painting).



Primary Source 11

Illustration of paint bladder, 1844. Pierre-Louis Bouvier, *Manuel des jeunes artistes et amateurs en peinture* (manual for young artists and amateur painters).



Primary Source 12

Paint tubes from James McNeill Whistler's paintbox, c. 1900. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Primary Source 10

Unlike many of their predecessors, the impressionists painted en plein air, or outdoors. With portable equipment like the folding easel and paintbox shown here, impressionist artists could directly interpret nature's changing light and color.

Primary Source 11

Prior to the invention of metal paint tubes, artists stored their oil paints in animal bladders, much like this one. Made from a pig bladder, the container was about the size of a walnut. Bladders were considered inadequate for paint storage because they were difficult to maneuver and once they were opened, the paints often dried very quickly.

Primary Source 12

By the mid-nineteenth century, collapsible paint tubes replaced paint bladders, giving artists a convenient and effective way to store their oil paints. Since paint tubes were more durable than bladders, artists could easily pack them in their paintboxes for a day of work en plein air.

Teaching Tips and Tools

Visual Arts/Science: Technological advancements and inventions (like the metal paint tube) made it possible for the impressionists to paint in a new style. Make a chart analyzing the relationship between recent technological advancements and today's artistic styles.

VA 1, 4, 6 SC 6, 7

Visual Arts/Science: Make an outdoor painting kit. Fill a knapsack with portable art materials like a clipboard, blank paper, colored pencils, watercolor paints, a paintbrush, and a small plastic container for water. Using the kit, make an outdoor artwork on a sunny day in the schoolyard or in a nearby park. On a cloudy day, go back to the same spot and make another painting. Compare the two and notice how the changes in the weather and light have affected the artwork.

VA 1, 2, 3 SC 3

Renoir's Paintbox



Primary Source 14

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's paintbox and palette, c. 1900. ©Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

RENOIR'S PAINTBOX

Renoir's paintbox held all of the materials that he needed in order to leave his studio behind and paint outdoors. As you can see, his box contains metal paint tubes (an innovative technology at that time), a palette, a painter's rag, brushes, and a palette knife.

Teaching Tips and Tools

Visual Arts: Analyze Renoir's artist materials. What did he need to create a painting? Describe each component and its use.

VA 1, 2, 4, 5

Visual Arts: Renoir was using oil painting materials. List different media that artists use today.

VA 1