

Renoir a change of styles

Ryan McCullough

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Instructor Kenneth Frawley

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Pierre-Auguste Renoir was a French artist who along with Monet and their contemporaries laid the frameworks for a style of painting that would later become known as Impressionism, but Renoir was not always loyal to the style that he would help create. During his career Renoir would also produce works using classical style as well as others.

Renoir's early works often display the usual elements that can be classified as impressionist as the works display the typical use of color with feathery brush-strokes as well as the style that was popular among many of his peers to depiction light. In the late 1880s however Renoir would often use a more traditional style when painting portraits and figure paintings particularly when the subject were women.

The Swing (La Balançoire), painted by Renoir in 1876 would be a good example of his works that display the impressionist elements as it has the feathery brush-strokes. In this work as well as in many of Renoir's other works, Renoir is probably partially inspired to capture the curves of the woman's body. Renoir during his life had made reference to the fact that he possibly would not have become an artist without the curves of a woman's body as this was a major source of



his inspiration. The woman in this painting stands out much more than either of the two men or the child so it is more than likely that she was probably Renoir's main focus.

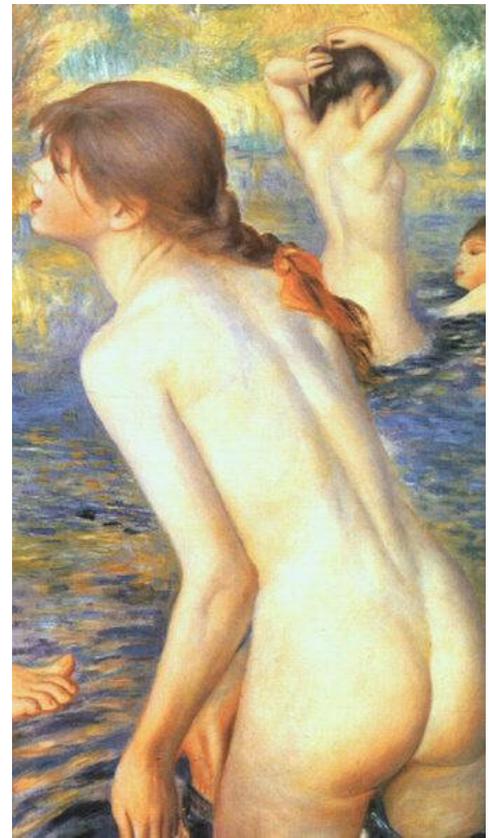
Whereas *The Swing (La Balançoire)* is an exceptional piece in general, and is a fine



display of the impressionist style, *Girls at the Piano*, painted by Renoir in 1892, is a fine an example of Renoir's shift to a more traditional style as this work is much more polished than what would be found in most impressionist works. The way light is used is also less vibrant than in Renoir's impressionist works and the color is less saturated as well.

Although I do like *Girls at the Piano* I find the painting less attention grabbing than *The Swing (La Balançoire)* possibly because the lady on the swing seems as if she is enjoying herself more than the women at the piano. *The Bathers* painted by Renoir in 1887 displays his attempt to return to a classical style as many of the works painted by Renoir around this time are polished and detailed. Between 1884-1887, Renoir would make a series of works that would drastically depart from the impressionist style he helped to create only to return to it some time later. This change in style started around 1881-82 after Renoir visited Italy and became inspired by many of the classical style works found there.

The subject matter of his works shifted from contemporary themes to more classical style items such as nudes. In *The Bathers* the style change is clearly visible, as the colors are duller than Renoir's impressionist works, but more polished as they don't display the feathery brush strokes of his



earlier works. Although *The Bathers* is not representative of Renoir's impressionist style I think they are excellent works and some of his best.

Renoir, although he shifted away from his impressionist style at points throughout his lifetime, the quality of his work never diminished. Renoir was more than impressionist and truly an excellent artist he was able to create great works in a variety of styles.

References

First reference

www.wikipedia.org, July 22, 2007

Second reference

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/renoir/>, July 22, 2007
