

# A History of Plein Air Art

## IMPRESSIONISM IN CALIFORNIA

by Jean Stern, Executive Director, THE IRVINE MUSEUM



Franz A. Bischoff, *San Juan Capistrano Mission Yard*, oil on canvas, Irvine Museum

Starting with the late 1880s and continuing into the early part of the twentieth century, artists in California painted in an artistic style which exalted the picturesque landscape and unique light of this Golden State. This style, which is often called California Impressionism or California Plein-Air painting, after the French term for "in the open air", combined several distinctive aspects of American and European art.

Landscape painting is a time honored tradition that is inseparable from the spirit of American art. From Colonial times, American art had been governed by special circumstances unique to this land. Unlike Europe, American art was nurtured in the absence of empowered patronage. Institutions such as the monarchy or the church had been powerful determinants in the progress of European art. In turn, America's democratic tendencies were powerful factors that led to the popularization of landscape painting as the ideal vehicle for expressing the American spirit, as it afforded an avenue to express God and Nature as one, an understanding of spirituality that disavowed religious patronage, and it created a metaphor of the American landscape as the fountainhead from which sprang the bounty and opportunity of rustic American life.

The Hudson River School, a group of early nineteenth century artists led by Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and Asher B. Durand (1796-1886) ventured into what was then the "wilderness" of upstate New York. They were in awe of the beauty and grandeur of nature and developed a popular and long-lived style that centered on landscape as a primary subject. In a very real sense, they were the environmental activists of their day. At the same time, America produced a vigorous school of genre painters, most notably Winslow Homer (1836-1910), who specialized in scenes of everyday life in a country that, at the time, was embodied by farms and small towns.

In keeping with this truthful and honest approach to art, the artist resolved to carefully and accurately observe the subject. Thus, Realism and its associated variants was the style of choice. The desire for realistic portrayal of forms has always been a forceful characteristic of American art.



Anna Althea Hills, *Summer in the Canyon*, oil on canvas, 18 x 26 inches, Irvine Museum

As a philosophical, literary, and artistic movement, the goal of Realism was to give a truthful, objective and impartial representation of the real world, based on meticulous observation of nature and contemporary life. In painting, it is best illustrated by the French artists Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) and Jean Francois Millet (1814-1875). Their work was concerned with nature and dealt with life in the rustic settings of France.

Coming in the mid 1800s, at the height of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, with its attendant mass urbanization, environmental pollution and social transformations, Realism harkened to the idyllic life of the immediate past, to a time, real or imagined, when people were in harmony with nature and its bounty. It was a movement to democratize art, in step with other mid-century demands for social and political democracy. Declaring that art must have relevance to contemporary society, the Realists refused to paint moralistic or heroic models from the past and instead directed their thoughts to themes that acclaimed people and events in more commonplace circumstances and in their own time.

One noteworthy group of Romantic-Realist painters focused on the French landscape. They imbued their works with an active brush stroke and a dramatic sense of light, most often energizing their compositions with vivid end-of-the-day sky effects. These artists, notably Theodore Rousseau (1812-1867), and Narcisse Diaz de la Pena (1807-1876), lived and painted in the village of Barbizon, thus giving name to this aspect of Realism, a romantic model of nature and people, coupled with dramatic technique and lighting. The Barbizon Style found a quick and willing group of followers in late nineteenth century Europe and America.

The art of painting underwent a revolution starting in the 1860s. The cumulative result of a systematic study of light and color, coupled to a rising interest in scientific observation and the preference by artists for on-site plein-air painting, modified the age-old effort of trying to capture or duplicate the true, natural representation of light to that of representing the effect of light in terms of an optical stimulus/response sensation.

This revolution in art was spurred by numerous scientific color theories that were circulated in the latter part of the 19th century. This trend was manifested by newly published scientific investigations of physiological optics and, most importantly, in the active involvement of the artists in these fields. The artistic inheritors of this revolution were the Impressionists, in the early 1870s, and more so, the Neo-Impressionists in the 1880s.

Among the many color theories that influenced art in the late nineteenth century, the most popular were those of Eugene Chevreul, originally published in French in 1839, with an English translation appearing in 1872. Chevreul was a consulting chemist who was



Benjamin Brown, *The Mission*, Irvine Museum

asked to improve the quality of dyes used in a tapestry factory. He conducted many experiments, looking for ways to produce colors that were more vivid. He deduced that the role of the chemist was not as important as the role of the artist, and that more potent dye formulations would not significantly improve results as effectively as proper color placement. Thus evolved Chevreul's Law of Simultaneous Contrast of Colors. It states, in part, "The apparent intensity of color does not depend as much on the inherent pigmentation...as it does on the hue of the neighboring color." Furthermore, Chevreul adds, "When two colored objects are scrutinized together, the color of each will be influenced by the complementary color of its neighbor." Moreover, "In the case where the eye sees at the same time two contiguous colors, they will appear as dissimilar as possible, both in their optical composition and in the height of their tone." The distinction of Chevreul's work is that it took into consideration the physiological processes by which the human eye receives color and the way that information is interpreted by the brain.

Chevreul's work was truly revolutionary because of its basis in recent advancements in the scientific study of physiological optics. His law explored the role of color as a stimulus on the human eye, not necessarily on its role in nature. He advised the artist to realize that, "There are colors inherent to the model which the painter cannot change without being unfaithful to nature (and) there are others at his disposal which must be chosen so as to harmonize with the first." In addition, he cautioned, "The greater the difference between the colors, the more they mutually beautify each other; and inversely, the less the difference there is, the more they will tend to injure one another."

Chevreul's color theories, as well as an assortment of other scientific approaches, were scrutinized and systematized by the Impressionists in the early 1870s and to a greater degree by the Neo-Impressionists, followers of Georges Seurat (1859-1891), in the 1880s. The immediate outcome of this scientific infusion in art was the appearance of intensely bright paintings, particularly in the representation of sunlit outdoor scenes. The utilization of the previously discussed laws of color contrast and color harmony enabled the artist to present the effect of intense sunlight and at the same time, the effect of cool, lively shade, without arbitrarily darkening the shadow. Overall, the Impressionist painting was designed to create movement on the optical plane by the juxtaposition of selected color patches, a movement which closely approximated the natural fluidity of light.

The concerns of artistic methodology and preference of subject matter caused the Impressionists to part company with the Realists. Technically speaking, the Realism of Courbet and the Romantic-Realism of Theodore Rousseau and Charles-Francois Daubigny (1817-1878) were more or less academic approaches, differing only in subject matter and objective content. Impressionism, by contrast, repudiated most of the tenets of the Academy. The time consuming, over-worked method of painting which required days or weeks to produce a painting was spurned by the Impressionists. They lamented the artificiality of light and color which often characterized an



William Wendt, *A Clear Day*, Irvine Museum

academic canvas, a consequence of painting in the studio. Impressionists preferred instead to paint directly on primed canvas and to set the easel out-of-doors.

Philosophically, Impressionists sought even more relevance in subject matter, turning to everyday life for artistic motivation. They aspired for art that reflected the people as they were, and that necessitated acceptance of the urban setting and rejection of the Realists' ideal of peasant life as simply another artistic convention not reflective of contemporary life. Reluctant to pose a composition,

Impressionists explored the "fleeting moment" or the "temporal fragment" in ordinary life. Where the Realists yearned for a contemporary view of history, the Impressionists sought an instantaneous view.

Impressionism made its debut in Paris in 1874. The new style of painting was greeted with much criticism and derision. In all, the small group of painters, including Claude Monet (1840-1926), Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), Edgar Degas (1832-1917), Alfred Sisley (1839-1899), Georges Seurat and Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), among others, exhibited together only eight times. Strong disagreements over theory and practice led to the eventual break-up.

Mary Cassatt (1844-1926), an American painter living in France, was accepted as a member of the group in 1879, and participated in later exhibitions. Another American, Theodore Robinson (1852-1896), lived a great part of his short life in France and was a friend of Claude Monet. Although he did not exhibit with the Impressionists, he nevertheless was one of the first American artists to return to the United States espousing Impressionism.

The first exhibition of French Impressionist paintings in America was held in Boston in 1883. The display consisted of works by several artists, including Monet, Pissarro and Sisley. In 1893, the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago had a significant art section devoted to American Impressionist painters, and in 1898, the Ten American Painters was formed in New York. "The Ten" was a group of professional Impressionist artists who organized for the purpose of exhibition and sale of their paintings. They were Frank W. Benson (1862-1951), Joseph De Camp (1858-1923), Thomas W. Dewing (1851-1938), Childe Hassam (1859-1935), Willard L. Metcalf (1853-1925), Robert Reid (1862-1929), E. E. Simmons (1852-1931), Edmund C. Tarbell (1862-1938), John H. Twachtman (1853-1902), J. Alden Weir (1852-1919) and William Merritt Chase (1849-1916), who was invited to join after the death of Twachtman.

Just as the original group of French Impressionists consisted of diverse personalities with disparate aims and philosophical approaches, American Impressionists likewise were practicing different forms of the style, and on occasion straining the limits of what can be



Granville Richard Seymour Redmond, *Flowers Under the Oaks*, Irvine Museum

loosely defined as Impressionism. Moreover, Impressionism came to America at least a decade after its riotous debut in France. As such, American painters benefited from the soothing effects of time on a critical art public. Also, they had the luxury of picking and choosing between a number of techniques and approaches, many of which were developed by artists who had progressed beyond Impressionism. These methods, principally Post-Impressionism, concerned themselves with specific uses of subject, color and line, and related to painting techniques followed by artists such as Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890).

By 1900, Impressionism, or what may be more properly termed "Impressionistic Realism", was the style of choice among American painters. The significant contributions of French Impressionism to American art were in the use of color and the specialized brushwork. Americans, in general, did not dissolve forms, a common practice with Claude Monet and his followers. The penchant for realistic observation of scenes, long a staple of American painting, survived the Impressionist onslaught. The scientific theories of color, as revealed by Chevreul, were indeed well received by Americans, even by those who did not consider themselves Impressionists, and the outcome showed in paintings with brilliant and convincing effect of natural light. The loose, choppy brush stroke that characterizes an Impressionist work was both the consequence of the quick manner of paint application and the desire to produce a brilliant surface covered with a multitude of small daubs of bright color.

As a regional variant of American Impressionism, the California Plein-Air style is a composite of traditional American landscape painting and influences from French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. It is part of the continuum of American art's passion with landscape, a lineage that began long before the early years of the American Republic.

In mid-nineteenth century California, San Francisco was the center of American social and intellectual presence. The port of San Francisco was the debarkation point for miners, merchants, bankers, and immigrants, all seeking to benefit from the gold fields, and it was the embarkation point for the tremendous quantity of gold that was generated from the mines.

In the 1860s and 1870s, at the time that Impressionism flowered in France, California was yet a distant, isolated region, hazardous and time-consuming to reach. The initial transcontinental railroad, the Union Pacific, was completed in 1869 with its western terminus at

San Francisco. Prior to the completion of the Union Pacific, the only approaches to California were overland by horse and wagon, a perilous and often hostile journey, or by ship from Panama or around South America. The pre-canal Panama route necessitated docking on the Atlantic side, crossing the isthmus to the Pacific side and boarding a ship to continue to California.



Alson Skinner Clark, *Mission San Juan Capistrano*, Irvine Museum

San Francisco grew from the ensuing trades and businesses that accompanied the effects of the Gold Rush and soon developed an artistic community. The direction and quality of artistic and cultural matters tend to be determined by the patrons who support those activities. Art patronage in mid-nineteenth century San Francisco demanded works that mirrored European canons, especially current French modes. The dominant style in France, and indeed in upper class America, was a derivative of the French Beaux Arts or “Salon” style. Paintings of this type were frequently large, pretentious historical and figural compositions, well suited for the grandiose homes of the San Francisco elite.

With the growth of population of the early 1880s, Los Angeles began to attract professional artists. By the late 1880s, several artists were already permanent residents. Among the most prominent were John Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941) and his wife Elizabeth Putnam Borglum (1848-1922), Elmer Wachtel (1864-1929) and John Bond Francisco (1863-1931).

John Gutzon Borglum trained in Los Angeles and San Francisco and painted large narrative works in the Barbizon style depicting California in the accepted Western conventions of the day. One such series of his paintings dealt with stage coaches. Borglum would later turn to sculpture and be best known for the monumental presidential portraits carved on Mount Rushmore.

His wife, Elizabeth Borglum, first came to Los Angeles in 1881. She was known as Elizabeth Jaynes Putnam, or Mrs. J. W. Putnam before she married Borglum in 1889. She likewise worked in the Tonalist-Barbizon esthetic. She had studied art in San Francisco, with William Keith in 1885, and J. Foxcraft Cole (1837-1892) in 1887, both of whom were well entrenched in the Tonalist-Barbizon style. She and Gutzon sketched throughout southern California, painting landscape and pastoral scenes.

Elmer Wachtel was at first very much a Tonalist, showing moody and poetic landscapes in dark tones. As he progressed he accepted much of the Impressionist esthetic and significantly brightened his palette. Many of his mature works show a more decorative and lyrical style, very reminiscent of Arthur Mathews (1860-1945), the San Francisco landscape and figure painter who influenced a generation of northern California painters, although Wachtel did not include figures in his compositions.

J. Bond Francisco arrived in Los Angeles in 1887. Munich trained, he produced landscapes and Western genre subjects in a Barbizon palette that likewise brightened with time with elements from Impressionism..

The 1890s saw the first encroachment of Impressionism in California. In keeping with the techniques of Impressionism, California's plein-air painters preferred to sketch and paint directly out of doors. Shunning the artificial light of the studio, the new arrivals determined that the best way to paint a landscape was to be in the landscape. Moreover, the intent of capturing the delicate and

fleeting effect of California's light necessitated swiftness. As such, the technique of direct and quick application of paint became indispensable and thus a characteristic of this style.

English-born William Lees Judson (1842-1928) came to Los Angeles in 1893 in search of a healthful climate. Judson lived in the Arroyo Seco, a wooded valley that runs between Los Angeles and Pasadena that was home to the area's artists and intellectuals. He taught at the Los Angeles School of Art and Design and began to paint landscapes in the Impressionist style. In 1896, he joined the faculty of the University of Southern California and in 1901, founded and was the first dean of its School of Fine Arts. An originator of the Craftsman movement in Southern California, he also worked in stained glass and other arts and crafts.

Benjamin C. Brown (1865-1942) came to Los Angeles to visit and sketch as early as 1886, and settled as a permanent resident in 1896. After finding few patrons for his portraits, Brown turned to painting landscapes in a daring, vigorously Impressionistic style. An outspoken proponent of his art, Brown pursued a long and active career as one of California's boldest Impressionists.

With the turn of the century, when Impressionism had only recently become an accepted American style, Southern California experienced an influx of young artists, most of whom had been trained in that style and had never known any other. The period from 1900 to 1915 marks the flowering of California Impressionism.

Much has been offered about the desirability of the southern California climate, with its generous number of sunny days, as motivation for the advent of Impressionism in the southern part of the state. Likewise, the southward migration caused by the San Francisco earthquake of April, 1906, was significant. Both factors exerted considerable influence, however, the chief motivation was surely economic opportunity. Los Angeles, at the time not having an ingrained artistic establishment, became the alternative metropolitan center that absorbed the infusion of young artists in California in the late nineteenth century.

Among the important artists who came to southern California in the first ten years of the twentieth century, one can count the luminaries of the Plein-Air style: Granville Redmond (1871-1935), Hanson D. Puthuff (1875-1972), Marion Kavanagh Wachtel (1876-1954), Franz A. Bischoff (1864-1929), William Wendt (1865-1946), Jack Wilkinson Smith (1873-1949), George Gardner Symons (1862-1930), Jean Mannheim (1863-1945) and Maurice Braun (1877-1941). In addition, Edgar Payne (1883-1947) and Elsie Palmer Payne (1884-1971) were making frequent visits to Los Angeles and Laguna Beach and, by 1914, with the return of Guy Rose and the arrival of Donna Schuster (1883-1953), the stage was set for one of the most remarkable and distinctive schools of regional American art.

Austrian born Franz A. Bischoff was trained in Europe and moved to the United States in 1885. He quickly established himself as a painter on porcelain, a renown for which he is still held in the highest regard. In 1900, he visited California and in 1906, he and his family moved to South Pasadena. Once in California, he was seduced by the glorious landscape and light and turned to easel painting. He traveled throughout California, producing remarkable views of the natural beauty of his adopted state.

William Wendt came from Germany to the United States in 1880, settling in Chicago where he worked in a commercial art firm. Essentially self-taught, he attended evening classes at the Art Institute of Chicago for a brief period. He preferred painting the landscape and became an active exhibitor in Chicago, winning the Second Yerkes Prize at the Chicago Society of Artists exhibition in 1893.

Wendt and his friend Gardner Symons made a number of trips together to California between 1896 and 1904. In 1906, Wendt settled in Los Angeles with his wife, sculptor Julia Bracken. Already a successful painter, he quickly became a leading member in the art community and was a founding member of the California Art Club in 1909. He was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1912, the same year that he moved his home and studio to the art colony at Laguna Beach. Somewhat shy and reclusive, he was that art colony's most important resident artist-teacher.

Deeply spiritual and with the same perspective as the Hudson River School artists, Wendt perceived nature as a manifestation of God and viewed himself as nature's faithful interpreter, rarely including figures or animals in his landscapes. He worked out of doors, sometimes sketching and sometimes painting large, finished works. His early works reflect the feathery brush strokes and hazy atmosphere of Impressionism. In his later works, after about 1912, he employed a distinctive block or hatch-like brushwork giving solidity to natural forms. A prolific painter, he was called the "dean" of Southern California's landscape painters.

Like Wendt, Edgar Payne was also essentially a self-taught artist. As a young man, he traveled for a number of years throughout the South, the Midwest, and in Mexico, taking various jobs as a house painter, sign painter, scenic painter, and portrait and mural artist. He settled in Chicago in 1907 where he enrolled briefly in a portraiture class at the Art Institute of Chicago, leaving after only two weeks. Establishing himself in Chicago, he began landscape painting in the form of murals and small easel works.

Payne visited California in 1909 and spent some time painting in Laguna Beach. While in San Francisco, he met his future wife, artist Elsie Palmer (1884-1971). He returned to California in 1911 and married Elsie in November, 1912. Together, they became well established in Chicago art circles and made annual trips to California.

In the summer of 1917 they moved to Glendale, California; then, in November, they moved to Laguna Beach. An active force in the budding Laguna Beach art colony, Edgar was a founding member and first president of the Laguna Beach Art Association in 1918.

Payne painted throughout California, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as in Canada. No locale was too remote. He was one of the first artists to routinely paint in the High Sierra, living for weeks at his elaborate campsites. In the summer of 1922, the Paynes went to Europe, painting over a two-year period in France, Switzerland, and Italy. Always the painter of high mountains, his painting of Mont Blanc entitled *The Great White Peak* received an honorable mention at the Paris Salon in the spring of 1923. Upon their return to the United States in the fall of 1924, the Paynes settled in Los Angeles with frequent visits to Laguna Beach.

Guy Rose, who is generally regarded as the most important figure of this style, was born in San Gabriel, just east of Los Angeles, in 1867. He left in 1885 to study art in San Francisco and continued to France in 1888. For years, he lived in New York and Paris, with occasional visits home to Los Angeles, until 1904, when he and his wife, Ethel, bought a house in Giverny, the small French village that was Monet's home. They left Giverny in 1912, returned to New York until sometime in October, 1914, when the couple came home to Los Angeles. After six years of living and painting in California, Guy Rose suffered a debilitating stroke on February 2, 1921. Thereafter, he never painted again. Rose died, on November 17, 1925.

Rose's prominence as an artist had preceded him to Los Angeles. Indeed, his status as an internationally known Impressionist, with a long list of exhibitions and awards in prestigious exhibition both in Europe and in the United States, made him a figure of near reverence to the members of the Los Angeles art community. Had it been any other important artist who chose to live in Los Angeles, the attention would have been considerable, but this was a "Native Son," who had returned in triumph to the outstretched arms of a devoted following.

Of the numerous articles and reviews of Rose's work, one of the most interesting essays praising him was written in jest and published in the *Los Angeles Times*, on January 14, 1923, under the pseudonym "Benjamin Blue." Benjamin Blue was in fact Luvena B. Vysekal (1873-1954), a fellow artist who authored a series of humorous essays she termed "Counterfeit Presentments." Please keep in mind that the Rose Parade has absolutely nothing to do with Guy Rose.

*Over Pasadena way, there lives a painter, a Native Son, who is honored by his fellow citizens each New Year's Day in a most appropriate manner.*

*So few communities really know how to pay tribute to their artists that Pasadena deserves credit for the pretty little innovation. Each New Year's Day, they gather billions of posies and strew them along the path this Native Son will tread the coming year.*

*This stupendous, spectacular, gigantic, elaborate and artistic tournament each New Year's Day in his name should serve as an incentive to other communities, (Friends of American Art please take notice) on how to treat their favorite artist.*

*It's a wonderful thing to be a Native Son of California! It's a wonderful thing to be an artist! The combination of the two is an achievement worthy of all the traffic blocking it on occasions. Next time I am cast in the role of an artist, I'm going to see to it that I am born in California.*

*As the recipient of this overwhelming adulation, his modesty is amazing. But after all, if your fellow citizens do your boasting for you, and your neighboring city calls you on advisory committees, and your club bids you serve on art juries, and the newspapers quote you*

*and reproduce your paintings every other Sunday, and the art dealers run after you, and the exhibitors invite you, and patrons buy you, it's a trifling matter to be becomingly modest.*

*Only recently, I bought and read a book about this fellow-painter and his works. It was gratifying to think that anyone had shown the good judgment to publish a book about one of us while he yet lived among you.*

*This fortunate son of California is no wayward child. His delineations of his native hills and plains, the sea and sky that embrace them, are as full of love and tenderness as a most exacting parent could hope, and every mother's son who loves her feels such a thrill of pride, that even we adopted children, who stand to one side and join in the chorus of "We love you, California," do so with no spark of envy, we put real feeling into our part of the song. We realize Californians can't help boosting their own crop.*

*And he? Well, all the honors that Paris heaped upon him couldn't keep him long away from his own. No doubt about its being a perfect affinity.*

*Vive le Californian!*

The eventful year 1915 saw the opening of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. It was both the last great Impressionist show in America and the first major Impressionist exhibition in California. The exposition brought to California the major figures of American Impressionism. William Merritt Chase (1849-1916), Childe Hassam (1859-1935), Edmund Tarbell (1862-1938), and Edward Redfield (1869-1965), among others, were given individual galleries to hang their works. The Grand Prize of the exposition went to Frederick Frieseke (1874-1939), Rose's friend and neighbor in Giverny, and the Medal of Honor to Willard Metcalf (1858-1925), a consummate Impressionist.

Nineteen-fifteen also marks the beginning of San Diego's professional artist community. In competition with San Francisco, San Diego likewise marked the opening of the Panama Canal with an exposition, the Panama-California Exposition, held in the newly constructed Balboa Park. Only one exposition per year could use the designation "International" and San Francisco's bid for the title was successful. Both expositions were extended for the following year, creating a rich source of confusion for scholars and trivia aficionados. In 1916, the "International" designation was in turn awarded to San Diego and the appellations were "Panama-Pacific Exposition" for San Francisco, and "Panama-California International Exposition" for San Diego.

While the shows in San Francisco and San Diego came too late to influence the established generation of Plein-Air painters, the impact of the expositions on younger California painters was tremendous and immediate. Because of the public awareness of Impressionism at these fairs, the style stayed popular for another decade in California. A group of young painters known as The Society of Six, who lived and painted in the San Francisco Bay area, were awed by the Impressionist displays and were stimulated to produce vivid and fresh plein-air scenes of their environs.

The Plein Air style continued to be popular in California until the end of the 1920s. By that time, many of the key figures that had made the style the vibrant and dynamic phenomenon of earlier years had died or ceased to paint. Moreover, the new generation of California artists, who had admired, sought out and trained under the Impressionists, had been lured into "new" styles, based on tenets and concepts of European Modernism. The 1930s heralded change. The Great Depression was an equal-opportunity affliction to all artists in California. Modernists as well as Plein Air artists joined in the Works Progress Administration programs, such as the Federal Arts Project, which allotted mural commissions in public buildings. With economic recovery, time and the caprices of taste made inroads. By the outbreak of World War II, most of the prominent names of California Impressionism had died or had withdrawn from the public eye, and the style itself became a nostalgic souvenir of a bygone era.

**Jean Stern is the Director of The Irvine Museum, the only museum in California dedicated to the preservation and display of California Impressionism or Plein-Air paintings, an art style that flourished in California from 1890 to 1930.**

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