



1874

Oil on canvas

21 3/8 x 28 7/8 inches (54.3 x 73.3 inches)

CLAUDE MONET

French, 1840–1926

LET'S LOOK

What time of day do you think it is? What do you see that makes you think so?

Describe the weather.
What might it feel like if you were there?

What colors are the shadows?
What about the reflections in the water?

LET'S LOOK AGAIN

Compare the two modes of transportation depicted.
How are they different?

If you could enter this picture, where would you go and what would you do?

RAILROAD BRIDGE, ARGENTEUIL

A small sailboat drifts along the water in this tranquil scene. Warm, golden light brightens the bridge's white pillars and the boat's sail. Their reflections in the water add pink, yellow, and orange **hues** to the blue of the river. Along the top of the bridge, a train chugs along, letting out puffs of smoke that drift across the sky. A gentle wind pushes the boat across the calm river below.

Claude Monet (clahd MOE-nay), the French artist who created this work of art, enjoyed painting the outdoors directly from observation. He appreciated the variety of colors in the sky, water, plants, and trees, especially those seen at sunrise and sunset. Notice the deep greens, blues, and purples in the grassy riverbank, and the blues and yellows in the train's smoke. Monet had to work quickly to capture the color and light as he saw it, since both frequently change as time passes. Look closely and you'll see the many short, quick **brushstrokes** that make up the grass, trees, water, and clouds. This style of painting is known as **Impressionism**.

This painting shows the Seine River in the town of Argenteuil (ar-jen-TOY), located just outside Paris. Monet lived there when he painted this picture, so he didn't have to travel far to observe this scenic spot. At that time, the railroad service was expanding, and it became easier for city dwellers to take weekend trips to the nearby countryside. Perhaps the tiny figures in the boat are enjoying time away from the faster pace of urban life.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, cat. 1050