

The Courtauld

View from a Window



↑ Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Place Lafayette, Rouen, 1883, Oil on Canvas, 46.3 x 55.7cm, (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld

This painting is by Camille Pissarro (1830 -1903) who wanted his paintings to capture the reality of everyday life. The painting captures the view from a hotel room where Pissarro was staying, looking down on the street below from his window. Pissarro is often associated with a group of artists working at the same time, who were known as the Impressionists. These artists choose to break from the traditional style of painting taught in France at the time and wanted to focus on giving an impression of a scene.

A Closer Look:

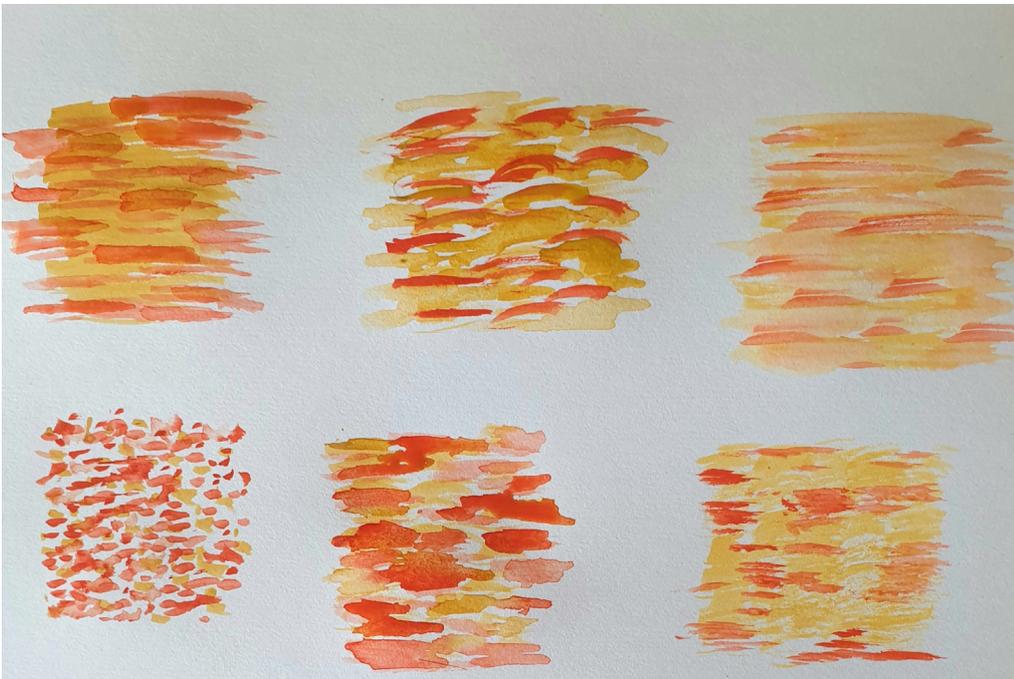
With someone in your household, use the questions below to take a deeper look into what you can see in the painting and have a discussion about it. These questions are to help you look more closely at the painting and there are no right or wrong answers.

- What is your first impression of this painting? Use one word to describe the painting.
- What colours can you see?
- Can you see the brush marks?
- What type of buildings can you see in the background? Does the smoke give you any clues?
- What animals can you see in the artwork? What do you think the animals are doing?
- The Impressionists liked to capture the seasons and how these affected the atmosphere of a painting. What season do you think we might be in?
- What time of day do you think it is?
- Would you like to visit this place? If yes, why? Or if no, why not?
- If you visited this place what would you be able to smell and hear? What might you be able to see that isn't in the painting?
- How is looking at this painting different to looking at a photograph of the scene

Activity:

Materials:

- Paper
- Paints or colouring pencils, crayons, or chalk
- Paintbrush

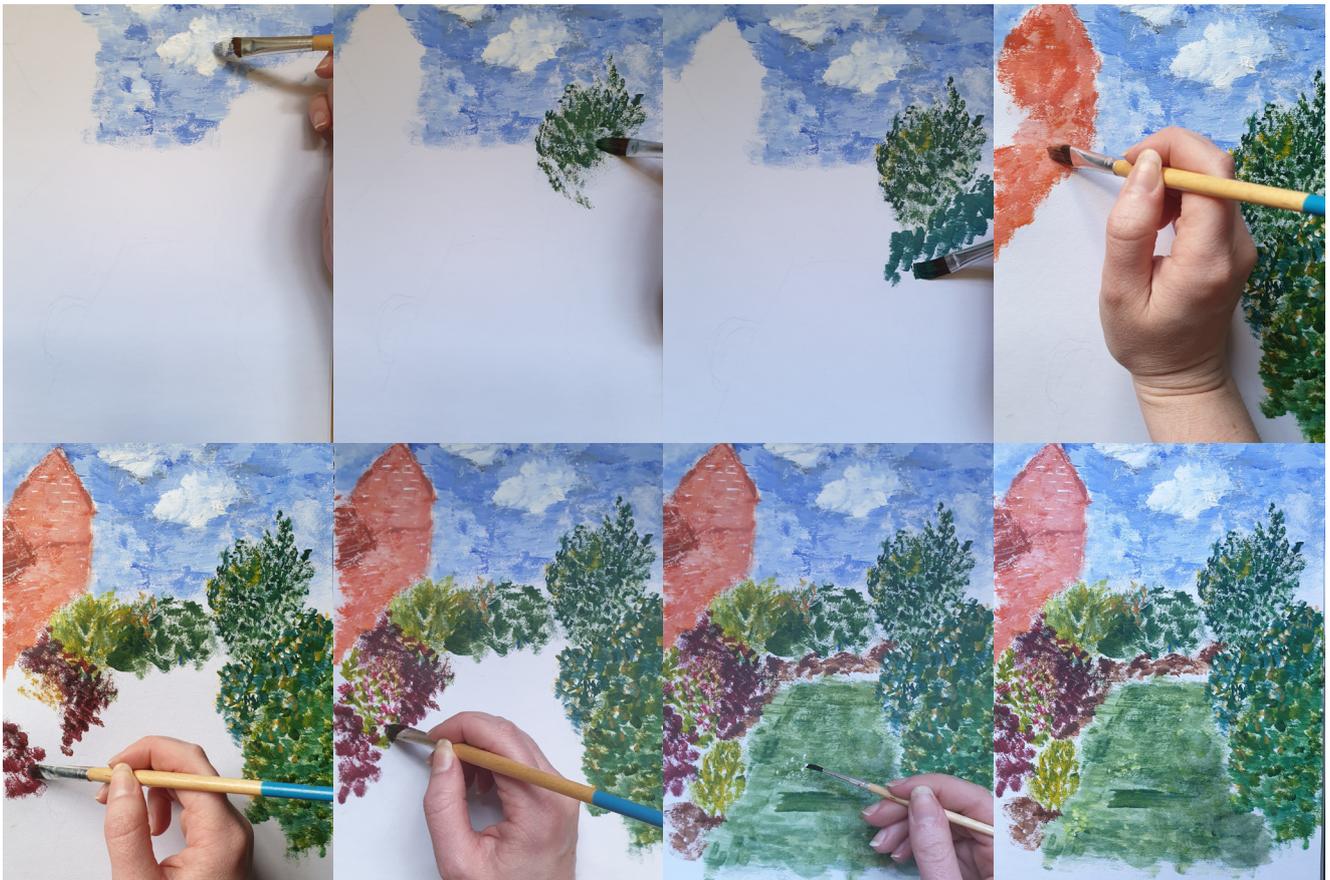


Step 1: Colour Mixing

Pissarro wanted to capture the fleeting quality of light and movement with his brushstrokes. Experiment with using short quick strokes, dabs and dashes of colour. Try painting or drawing two colours, such as red and yellow, side by side. When you step back and look, the colours start to merge together to create a new colour. This technique is known as Optical Mixing.

Step 2: Capture your View

It's time to use your new techniques and create your own landscape painting of the view from your window. Landscapes can include anything that you can see including buildings and vehicles. Think about the size and scale of your artwork. You could use the window frame as a guide for what to include and experiment with sitting closer or further away to see how this changes your view.



Look out of the windows in your home

- What can you see?
- Can you see grass and trees?
- Can you see the sky?
- Can you see a road or buildings?
- What kinds of buildings? Houses, flat, shops?
- Can you see people?
- In Pissarro's painting you can see a horse used to transport bays of hay. Can you see any modes of transport from your view?
- Can you see any similarities between the view from your window and Pissarro's painting?

Top Tips:

- Try to create an overall impression, don't worry too much about the details.
- Capture the moment by capturing the light, if the light changes keep going and incorporate the new colours and shadows.
- Work quickly, using short brushstrokes, don't try to be neat.
- Experiment with painting colours next to each other, instead of mixing them together.
- Don't be afraid of painting one colour on top of another