CLAUDE MONET & LIGHT AND SHADOW

The Magpie, Claude Monet (Public Domain)

Claude Monet is well known for his paintings of waterlilies, but he painted many different scenes and seasons, including the winter scene above called The Magpie. Monet was an Impressionist painter, impressionists liked painting everyday things outdoors, focusing on the use of light and color to create their paintings. Most paintings at the time were painted in studios, people liked portraits of kings or heroes, battle scenes or scenes from the bible. Impressionists wanted to paint the world around them, trying to capture the play of light quickly with thick color pigments and quick short brush strokes.

Monet was born in Paris, France on November 14, 1840. His family moved to a seaside town in France called Le Havre. When Monet begin to draw, he drew caricatures (a cartoon like drawing of a person with larger overdone features) of people he saw coming into the harbor on ships. When he went out painting one day with a painter named Eugène Boudine, he found that he loved painting so much, he wanted to become a painter himself. He went to art school in Paris and met other painters who shared his style of painting. After many struggles, he and his friends showed their work together in Paris in 1870. One of Monet's paintings Impression: Sunrise, gained the most attention. A critic that did not like the painting style that Monet and the other artists used, wrote an article he titled, Impressionists. He didn't mean it in a kind way, but Monet and his friends started to call themselves impressionists anyway.

After struggles and heartaches for many years, Monet finally found success. It wasn't until he was in his forties, after a one-man exhibition in 1880, that he became a well known artist, selling his paintings
at high prices. He moved his family to Giverny, France, where he painted many of his famous works, such as the waterlilies series and the haystacks series. He loved his home in Giverny and lived there with his family until he died on December 5, 1926.

Monet was a master of color and he was a master of light! He created paintings that showed how the light fell and moved at different times of day, as in his haystack series:

“Haystacks at sunset, frosty weather”
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“Haystack in the evening sun”
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“Grainstack in sunshine”
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Magpie is also a great example of how he used light and shadow. Do some practicing yourself. Watch this video, How to Art – Drawing Shadows (And Light!) by Mary Doodles (YouTube):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12mYmU3Dl40

Try the drawing exercise that she talks about. Take an egg or ball and shine a lamp or flash light at the object from one side. Draw what you see. Try to draw where the light falls on the object and where the shadows form.

On a nice day, try the same exercise with the natural light of the sun. You can put an object in the snow or on the sidewalk and see where the light and shadows fall, or draw something that is already outside, a tree, a stone, a bush, paying attention to the light. Just like Monet, you can try the same scene at different times of day, to see how the light and shadows change!
To learn more about Claude Monet, watch this video:

Intro to Claude Monet for Kids  
[https://youtu.be/_fsH2wf1y54](https://youtu.be/_fsH2wf1y54)

And check out these books from the library:

- Portrait of an Artist  
  Claude Monet  
  by Lucy Brownridge

- Claude Monet  
  The Magician of Color  
  by Stephan Koja

- Claude Monet  
  A Blue Butterfly, A Story About Claude Monet  
  by Bijou Le Tord

- Who Was Claude Monet  
  by Ann Waldron  
  Monet Paints a Day  
  by Julie Danneberg