

The Boy Who Loved Colors



By Sérgio Valle Duarte (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0]

Jacob Abraham Camille Pissarro was born in 1830 on St. Thomas, an island in the Virgin Islands. The Virgin Islands are located in the Caribbean Sea.

Jacob was different from his siblings. He didn't want to go to school. He didn't want to work in his family's store. All he wanted to do was draw and paint. And the island was full of colorful things to paint.

There were bright red and green parrots, startling yellow birds, and vivid green iguanas. The island was covered with tropical trees. The Flamboyant tree was the most spectacular. In summer, the tree was covered in stunning orange blooms.

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Jacob loved to draw nature. He painted the flowering trees. He painted the sea. He filled his canvases with so many colors that people thought there was something wrong with his eyes. He didn't see the sea as blue. He saw aquamarine, turquoise, powder blue, deep greens, light greens, even yellows. To Jacob, even the rain fell in different colors—minty green, cobalt blue, teal.

Jacob's family sent him to live with their relatives in Paris, France. Paris was the center of the art world and it had the best art schools. Many of the best artists flocked to Paris for that reason. When Jacob became an art student he started to go by his third name, Camille, which is a French name.

In France, Jacob—now Camille—found that the rain only came down in one color—grey. But he found many other colors in the French countryside. He began a new way of painting called impressionism. He painted his impressions of what he saw. His paintings didn't look like photographs. Instead, they were filled with hundreds of different colors in many different shades. He saw each leaf and each blade of grass as made up many different splotches of colors. And this is how he painted.

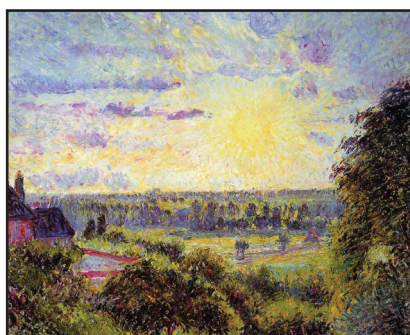
Camille Pissarro returned to St. Thomas for a few years to help with his family's business. But his heart was in his art and he left a few years later to travel around Central and South America. He painted what he saw and lived off money he made from doing sketches for people on the street.



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Eventually Pissarro moved back to France for good. He became known as the father of impressionism. Many other famous artists hung out with him and they shared their ideas and styles with each other.

During his lifetime, Pissarro did not sell many paintings. He was poor but happy to be a painter. Today, Pissarro's paintings sell for millions of dollars. They hang in museums all over the world.



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