
Guillaumin, (Jean-Baptiste-)Armand

(b Paris, Feb 16, 1841; d Paris, June 26, 1927).

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T035584>

Published online: 2003

French painter and lithographer. He grew up in Moulins, but at 16 he returned to Paris to find work. Despite the opposition of his working-class family, he prepared for an artistic career while he supported himself in municipal jobs. He started drawing classes and then enrolled in the Académie Suisse, where he met Cézanne and Camille Pissarro. Guillaumin began his career as an avant-garde artist by exhibiting with them at the Salon des Refusés in 1863. He was also active in the Manet circle at the Café Guerbois, from which Impressionism developed.

Guillaumin developed his landscape style painting outdoors in the environs of Paris while employed on the Paris-Orléans railway. He frequently painted labourers and barges along the quays of the Seine, for example *Quai de la Rapée* (1879; Paris, priv. col.). Like Pissarro he empathized with the working-classes, and he influenced Seurat, Signac and their Neo-Impressionist followers towards depicting industrial settings. Guillaumin's painting style of the 1860s, like Cézanne's, was inspired by the naturalism and materiality of Courbet's paintings. Dense paint applied in thick strokes, sombre colours and heavy outlines are seen in his *Sunset at Ivry* (1869; Paris, Mus. d'Orsay). The works of the following decade, mostly landscapes, show a lightened palette and small touches of the brush. In the early 1870s Guillaumin worked with Pissarro at Pontoise and also with Cézanne and Dr Gachet at Auvers, where Daubigny also lived and worked. Guillaumin's mature Impressionist style, combining pictorial structure and shimmering light, evolved from his contacts with these artists and their shared aesthetic premises. His extensive work in pastel also contributed to the development of the spontaneous brushstroke which builds form as it captures light. The *Reclining Nude* (1876; Paris, Mus. d'Orsay) and the *Seine at Paris* (1871; Houston, TX, Mus. F.A.) exemplify Guillaumin's use of the constructive brushstroke. The artist's expressive use of colour, which transcends nature in its vibrant harmonies, is also characteristic of his style in the 1870s. He contributed to all but two of the Impressionist exhibitions, showing in 1874, 1877, 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1886.

In the 1880s, like his Impressionist colleagues, Guillaumin experimented with new pictorial techniques to convey a more personal expression of mood and feeling. He used heightened colour, favouring the effects of early morning light or the drama of sunset skies, composing harmonies from complementaries of orange-red and blue-green, purple and green or mauve and yellow. The *Road in the Valley* (1885; Paris, Mus. A. Mod. Ville Paris) and *Twilight at Damiette* (1885; Geneva, Petit Pal.) are typical paintings of this period which inspired critics such as J.-K. Huysmans to call Guillaumin a 'furious colourist', and Félix Fénéon to remark on his 'super-heated skies'.

Guillaumin's passionate response to nature impressed Vincent van Gogh who became his friend in Paris in 1886-7, while Theo van Gogh assisted Guillaumin with sales of his works. Guillaumin's personal fortunes improved with his marriage to a professor in a prestigious school for young women. He expanded his travels from the Ile de France to the central regions and Provence. In 1891 he won a state lottery of 100,000 francs, which allowed him to retire from government service and to devote himself wholly to painting. His extensive travels are reflected in landscapes of France and the Netherlands. Such paintings as *Rocks at Agay* (1893; Paris, priv. col., see Serret and Fabiani, pl. 233)

are emblematic of rugged aspects of nature in their bold simplification and strong colour contrasts. They share the primitive spirit of Gauguin and his Pont Aven followers and directly prefigure the intensity of Fauvism. Guillaumin's work continued to show strength and individual character, developing the innovations of Impressionism in a modernist spirit. In 1896 Ambroise Vollard published a suite of his lithographs.

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See also

Competition, §III, 1: Painting: Personal rivalry

External resources

Guillaumin, Armand: The Bridge of Louis-Philippe, 1875, National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC) [_<http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pinfo?Object=46347+0+none>](http://www.nga.gov/cgi-bin/pinfo?Object=46347+0+none)

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