Pierre-Auguste Renoir

1841-1919

Renoir was born in France. His father was a tailor (a person who makes clothes) and the family often didn’t have much money. They moved to Paris in the hope of making a better living. The family’s new home in Paris was near the Louvre, one of the world’s largest art galleries. As a young person, Renoir showed a talent for drawing and singing. However, when he was thirteen years old, Renoir had to leave school and get a job, as his family still had little money.

Eventually, Renoir studied art under an artist called Charles Gleyre. It was around this time that he met Claude Monet, an Impressionist painter (an artist who uses thick layers of paint and fast brush strokes to give the impression of movement). Renoir and Monet sometimes sat side by side, painting the same scene, although their paintings looked quite different. At times, Renoir was so poor he couldn’t even afford paint; however, gradually his paintings became more popular and Renoir became well known.
Renoir’s painting style went through several changes. After a trip to Italy, he was inspired to paint with a heavier outline and harsh colours. Later, he changed his style again, outlines became softer and colours less harsh.

Renoir married and had three sons. His wife, Aline, and their children were often the subject of his paintings. One of their sons, Jean, became a well-known filmmaker.

Towards the end of his life, he developed a condition called arthritis which made it difficult for Renoir to move his hands and fingers. However, this didn’t prevent him from painting, despite often needing help to pick up the brush. He died in 1919.

Luncheon of the Boating Party, 1881