

Frederic Bazille

Frederic Bazille was born in 1841 to a wealthy family of wine producers near Montpellier. He came to Paris in 1862 to study medicine, but also decided to take classes with Charles Gleyre. After failing his medical exams in the spring of 1864, he enrolled as a full-time student of Gleyre.

Gleyre emphasized the importance of originality, and Bazille once said "Thanks to Gleyre's teaching, I shall at least be able to boast that I have not copied anybody."

He was interested in plein air painting, but of figures rather than pure landscape, and his work is of interest for its exploration of the effects of light on flesh tones (e.g. Family on the Terrace, 1867, Paris, Musee d'Orsay). Much of his work retained a high finish and dark palette (e.g. Negro Woman and Peonies, 1870, Montpellier Musee Fabre). He was also a portraitist and recorder of the Impressionist scene (e.g. Studio in the Rue de la Condamine, 1870, Paris, Musee d'Orsay)."

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As a student in Gleyre's studio in Paris (1862) he befriended Monet, Renoir, and Sisley. Attracted by the modernist tendencies of avant-garde art, the four abandoned the studio in favor of direct observation of nature (they painted out of doors at Fontainebleau and in Normandy). Working in close harmony, they gradually invented impressionism. Through them he met Manet.

From 1865 to 1866, he shared a studio with Monet and then the following year, shared a studio with Renoir. Bazille usually took the main financial responsibility of paying the rent. He was a regular at the Cafe Guerbois and in 1868, he took a studio off the Boulevard de Clichy and it is that studio which is depicted in the Studio, rue de la Condamine.

In August of 1870, following France's declaration of war against Prussia, Bazille enlisted. On November 28th, Bazille was killed in a minor skirmish in Burgundy. He was 29 years old.

Bazille painted this piece as a way to amuse himself. It represents his studio with many of his friends. They include Monet, Zola, Renoir, Maitre, and Manet. Manet is in front of the canvas talking to Monet and Bazille. What makes this painting really interesting is that it was Manet who painted the figure of Bazille.

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