



Monet and His Muse: Camille Monet in the Artist's Life

By Mary Mathews Gedo

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“The mourning never stops, it just changes.” (Edward Albee)

For Claude Monet (1840–1926), the founder of French Impressionist painting, these words are a fitting testament to his lifelong relationship with the female muse, most notably—and most hauntingly—with his first wife, the model Camille Doncieux.

For the esteemed clinical psychologist and art historian Mary Mathews Gedo, *Monet and His Muse* represents a project twenty years in the making. Artfully interweaving biographical insight with psychoanalytic criticism, Gedo takes us on an exploration of Claude Monet’s conflicted relationships with women, complete with exquisitely researched material never before understood about one of our most popular—and inimitable—artists. Beginning with Monet’s childhood, Gedo delves into his relationships with a distant, unreliable father and his beloved, doting mother—whose death when Monet was just sixteen, the author establishes, inspired a lifetime preoccupation with the sea, its lushly imagined flora, and the figurative landscapes Monet painted to such acclaim.

And then—Camille. Entering Monet’s life when he was still a young man, becoming first his model and then mistress and then—finally—his wife, Camille Doncieux always fulfilled the function of muse, even after her life had ended, as Monet not only painted her one last time on her deathbed, but preserved her memory through the gardens he planted at his home in Giverny. Demonstrating how Monet’s connections with women were exceedingly complex, fraught with abusive impulses and infantile longing, Gedo sensitively uses Monet and Camille as exemplars in order to explore links between artists and muses in our modern age.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Monet and His Muse is a highly original work of impeccable scholarship, not only because it provides the first thorough and penetrating psychobiographical portrait of the artist, but also because of its unusual focus on the profound role that the painter's first wife played in his life and art.... This book simply represents the crowning achievement of our country's best psychobiographer of figures in the visual arts." - Bradley I. Collins, Parsons, the New School for Design"

About the Author

Mary Mathews Gedo is the author of *Picasso: Art as Autobiography* and *Looking at Art from the Inside Out*, as well as editor of *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Art*.

Users Review

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