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Claude Monet's Water Lilies, From Paintings to Dance

THESIS

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for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

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# **DEDICATION**

To

My Parents

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Claude Monet's Water Lilies, From Paintings to Dance

By

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Professor Mary Corey, Chair

This thesis investigates the process of transformation of Claude Monet's *Water Lilies* (*Nymphéas*) from paintings to dance. It is a thesis in two parts, consisting of a written analysis of the *Water Lilies*, which supports the creation of a one-act ballet that took place on May 12 and 13, 2016, at the University of California, Irvine's Experimental Media Performance Lab (xMPL).

The written document of this thesis examines three groups of *Water Lilies* (*Les Nymphéas*, *series de paysages d'eau*, the *Studies*, and the *Grand Decorations* of the Musée de l'Orangerie). It investigates these paintings and their supporting literature, focusing on how Monet employed abstraction in each group of paintings and how it served to create a complex viewing experience. The written document also includes an account of the creative process in translating this research into movement.

The creative emphasis of this thesis is a one-act ballet that consists of three parts (*Impression I: The Real and The Reflected*, *Impression II: An Artist's Process*, and *Impression III: Les Nymphéas*). Taking inspiration from the research on the *Water Lilies*, the dance attempts to pay homage to the artist and his painting series, as well as express the creative voice of the dance artist.



# INTRODUCTION

## The Road to Inspiration

This thesis project seeks to translate Claude Monet's *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)* from paintings to dance, exploring ways to transform the ideas behind the immobile, two-dimensional, landscape paintings into a three-dimensional, temporal expression of the human body. Focusing on three groups of *Water Lilies* painted between 1903 and 1926 (*Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d'eau* (1903-1909), the *Studies* (1914-1919), and the *Grand Decorations* of the Musée de l'Orangerie (1915-1926)), I examine the paintings' elements of abstraction and how they create a multifaceted viewing experience. I explore how Monet skillfully paints an imagined reality, allowing the viewer to engage with the paintings in multiple ways, resulting in the creation of a variety of perspectives that contribute to an ongoing conversation about the series.

The literature on Monet's *Water Lilies* provides several arguments about abstraction in the paintings and how it affects the viewer's perceptions and experiences of the works. Virginia Spate's monograph, *The Colour of Time, Claude Monet*, includes a comprehensive study of the *Water Lilies* in chronological order. She argues that the *Water Lilies* reveal Monet's increasing mastery of abstraction within representational art, allowing the series to offer a myriad of angles and dimensions for the viewer to perceive the work from, creating complex viewing experiences. Spate collaborates with David Bromfield in "A New and Strange Beauty. Monet and Japanese Art" in *Monet & Japan*, which accounts for the influences of *Japonisme* on Monet's oeuvre, including the *Water Lilies*. They argue that the discarding of western linear perspective in Monet's paintings frees the individual to engage with the depicted world more fully, with Monet employing the lines of the paintings in a way that suggests further dimensions in space,

enveloping the viewer in the painted world. John House's *Monet, Nature into Art* supports Spate and Bromfield's argument of the strong influence of Japanese art on Monet's oeuvre. However, he reasons that Japanese art confirms rather than inspires Monet's artistic beliefs. Paul Hayes Tucker's *Claude Monet: Life and Art* accounts for the relationship between the *Water Lilies* and the water garden at Giverny over time, aligning his arguments with Spate's that the paintings go further into abstraction and away from representation as time progresses. Michel Butor's "Monet, or the World Turned Upside Down" in *Claude Monet, Late Work* argues for abstraction from the *Studies* (1914-1919) and *Grand Decorations* (1915-1926) onwards, and how Monet's increasing blindness necessitates the artist's profound reliance on memory and experience to paint the *Water Lilies*. In "Claude Monet, 1840-1926," Richard Brettel joins Butor in saying that Monet's *Studies* and *Grand Decorations* are works of abstraction. He adds that this challenges the viewer to give up rationality and enter the illogical world of the paintings; only then would the viewer arrive at understanding the paintings.

My fascination with Monet's *Water Lilies* stems from an exposure to the paintings in art museums around the world from a young age. While some were overwhelmingly magnificent upon first sight, others required a longer process of contemplation before I was able to comprehend their particular beauty. As I found each painting to be interesting in its own peculiar way, I often thought about the relationship between the paintings and their association with their source of inspiration – Monet's water garden at Giverny, part of his estate in Normandy in northern France. Piecing my visual, logical, and emotional impressions of the different paintings together, I created my own vision of the water garden. After visiting Monet's Giverny estate in person, I found the water garden both familiar and foreign to my idea of it. While the elements of reality depicted in the paintings were all present (water lilies, pond, willow trees, Japanese

bridge,) Monet's execution of their individual form, spatial proportion, and colors were far from being accurate representations of their reality. This revelation was both upsetting and enthralling as I battled a sense of betrayal by the artist himself, while admiring his superior interpretation of the real world, which led to the creation of my own heightened imagined reality.

This personal experience initiated my curiosity to understand Monet's *Water Lilies* on a more profound level, focusing on the paintings' distorted representations of reality, which results in the creation of a complex visual experience. As a dance artist, I am interested in exploring the possibilities of using such techniques to create a similar experience for the dance audience, paying homage to my source of inspiration by using the *Water Lilies* as the key of movement creation.

Chapter One examines the elements of abstraction in Monet's three groups of *Water Lilies* (*Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d'eau* (1903-1909), the *Studies* (1914-1919), and the *Grand Decorations* of the Musée de l'Orangerie (1915-1926)) and how they create a complex visual experience. Chapter Two accounts for the creative process in transforming this research into movement, expressing the *Water Lilies* in the language of dance.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*

Oscar Claude Monet (1840-1926) was a nineteenth century French painter whose painting, *Impression, Sunrise* (1872), gave the Impressionist movement its name (fig. 1). As fleeting impressions of light, color, and life, his early oeuvre celebrated the modern bourgeois way of living in the wide avenues of Paris and in the blooming gardens of France (fig. 2-5). Breaking away from the traditional practice of using dark colors and seamless brushstrokes in creating a three-dimensional verisimilitude in painting, Monet painted the world with a bright color palette and sketch-like brushstrokes that created an unfinished look, with a sense of two-dimensionality that suggested something more than a mere imitation of the physical world.<sup>1</sup> Monet expressed modern life in a new language that was full of life and movement, glowing with a myriad of light and color.<sup>2</sup>

While Monet's later work drew on the techniques of his earlier oeuvre, he broke away from its youth and vivacity. The mature Monet stopped painting the dynamic energy of modern Paris and the idle young ladies of the gardens. Instead, his 1890s *Haystacks* and *Rouen Cathedral* series expressed an atmosphere of isolation and contemplation, with the artist painting a repeated motif that varied only in its articulation of light (fig. 6-11).<sup>3</sup> It is hardly surprising that

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<sup>1</sup> See Jason Rosenfeld, "The Salon and the Royal Academy in the Nineteenth Century," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), accessed April 25, 2016 [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd\\_sara.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sara/hd_sara.htm), Margaret Samu, "Impressionism: Art and Modernity," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), accessed April 25, 2016, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd\\_imml.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/imml/hd_imml.htm), and Laura Auricchio, "Claude Monet (1840–1926)," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), accessed April 25, 2016, [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cmon/hd\\_cmon.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cmon/hd_cmon.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Auricchio, "Claude Monet (1840–1926)."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Monet eventually retreated to his secluded gardens at Giverny, spending the last three decades of his life contemplating their changing nature, documenting his ever-evolving impressions of them on the canvas.

The *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)* series, which Monet painted from 1892 until his death in 1926, comprises approximately 250 paintings that depict his water garden at Giverny.<sup>4</sup> This series includes the *Water Lilies* that portray the water-lily pond, the *Japanese Bridges*, the *Weeping Willows*, the *Wisterias*, and the *Irises*.<sup>5</sup> No longer paintings of mere impressions of the real world, this series reveals the process of the artist's introspection and reexamination of nature.<sup>6</sup> Containing Monet's most experimental works, they question the traditions of art once again, as the artist had before. With the *Water Lilies*, Monet advances towards twentieth century abstraction.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis focuses on three groups of *Water Lilies* that depict the water-lily pond and that were painted in the twentieth century: they are *Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d'eau* (1903-1909), the *Studies* (1914-1919), and the *Grand Decorations* of the Musée de l'Orangerie (1915-1926). As will be discussed, abstraction manifests uniquely in each group, creating a world that straddles the real and the otherworldly, allowing the viewer to engage with the paintings in multiple ways. This results in the creation of a variety of perspectives and experiences that contribute to an ongoing conversation about the series, and about Monet as a twentieth century artist.

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<sup>4</sup> Julie Rouart and Camille Sourisse, "Catalogue Raisonné," in *Monet, Water Lilies, The Complete Series*, edited by Jean-Dominique Rey and Denis Rouart, translated by David Radzinowicz (Paris: Flammarion S. A., 2008), 119.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Simona Bartolena, *Monet* (New York: Prestel Publishing, 2011) 116-134.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

*Les Nymphéas, series de paysages d'eau*

*Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d'eau* was the title of Monet's exhibition in Paul Durand-Ruel's gallery in Paris in 1909, which showcased forty-eight of the eighty paintings he completed between 1903 and 1908.<sup>8</sup> *Paysage*, the French word for countryside, is also used to refer to a landscape painting. In this group of paintings, Monet redefines *paysages* by adding the word *eau*, the French word for water, resulting in a series of water landscapes that portrays the scenery of the real world in the form of a reflection on the surface of the pond at Giverny. Revolutionary in his altered perspective of landscape painting, Monet invites the viewer to see and experience the real world through its inverted and distorted image on the mirror of water.<sup>9</sup> As the form, color, and texture of the sky, clouds, and trees merge into a solitary, intangible image on the mirror of water, Monet amalgamates elements of the real and the unreal, blurring the boundaries between two distinct worlds, and defines the space in between, an abstracted reality.<sup>10</sup> The artist uses the vertical and horizontal linear trajectories of the paintings' world to further create a space that is limitless and multi-dimensional.<sup>11</sup> Presenting the horizontal plane of the mirror of water on the vertical plane of the canvas on the wall, Monet forces the viewer to rationalize what he sees. The concrete, representational world, infiltrated with elements of the unreal and the abstract, disorients the viewer and forces him or her to engage with the depicted

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<sup>8</sup> Virginia Spate, *The Colour of Time (Claude Monet)*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1992), 254.

<sup>9</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 258.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Spate and David Bromfield, "A New and Strange Beauty. Monet and Japanese Art," in *Monet & Japan*, curated by Virginia Spate and Gary Hickey (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2001), 55.

world with a consciousness that threads in and out of the real and the unearthly, creating multiple perspectives that are exclusive to each individual.

Monet's efforts to create a world that exists between the real and unreal was a process that developed over the length of *Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d'eau*. An early painting of this group, *The Clouds* (1903), shows that Monet has yet to realize the space between the two worlds (fig. 12).<sup>12</sup> Virginia Spate explains:

*The Clouds* is descriptive in technique, with local colours and brushstrokes responding to different substances, so that the reflected clouds and trees partake more of their reality as trees and clouds than as reflections, as if Monet were not yet able to dissociate his knowledge of their source in nature from his perception of the dematerialized colours of the images in water.<sup>13</sup>

Here, Spate contends that Monet's illustration of the clouds and trees on the mirror of water appear as they do in their physical form. Their colors and textures remain unmediated by the filters of light and water, as if tangible clouds and trees exist on the pond. From the painting, it is possible to recognize the cotton-like texture of the clouds, which are created by dabs of paint on the canvas, and they are juxtaposed with the fluidity of the long, horizontal brushstrokes that represents the mirror of water.<sup>14</sup> It is as if the reflection of the clouds and the mirror of water exist as two separate entities. Monet has yet to distort the representational world with elements of the intangible.

A year after *The Clouds*, in *Waterlilies* (1904), Monet reveals a development in his understanding of representing a space between the real and the unreal (fig. 13). Spate describes this shift in Monet's approach:

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<sup>12</sup> See John House, *Monet, Nature into Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 159, and Spate, *Colour of Time*, 254.

<sup>13</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 254.

<sup>14</sup> House, *Nature into Art*, 102.

Monet emphasized the pictorial substance of each element, translating local colours into interacting scales of green, deep blue and violet, accented by rose-pink and yellow lilies. As a result the reflected trees are more successfully transposed into the fluidity of water, and the painting becomes a more self-contained construction; rather than referring directly to conventionally known forms, it demands a more active reading of the abstracted colour structure. This, instead of the reflected clouds and trees being immediately identifiable, as they are in *The Clouds*, the lighter greens only gradually reveal themselves as the reflections of unseen trees...<sup>15</sup>

Spate observes the change in Monet's execution of the reflected world on the surface of water. In *Waterlilies*, green, deep blue, and violet, closely related colors, interweave in brushstrokes of the same handling to represent both the reflected trees and the surface of the water, leaving behind what they are in reality for an abstracted compromise that blends the two elements together. Are the greens of the water the reflection of the trees above or the refraction of light in water that reveals the depths of the pond? Monet's abstraction of the forms, colors, and textures of the different elements creates an ambiguity that opens the painting up to a variety of interpretations, allowing the viewer to negotiate from several points of view.

To further explore the world that exists between representation and abstraction, Monet challenges the canon of landscape painting by eliminating all references to land from his canvases from 1905 onwards.<sup>16</sup> In the earlier *The Clouds* and *Waterlilies* (fig. 12-13), a narrow horizontal strip of land, vegetation, and the horizon is seen at the top of the canvas. Beginning in 1905 (fig. 14), Monet eradicates even the slightest trace of the material world. As the artist paints solely the surface of the water lily pond, the real world is seen and experienced exclusively from its reflection – its immaterial, distorted reality. Monet invests more deeply into this in-limbo world by subjecting the viewer to its all-encompassing presence on the canvas, leaving the

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<sup>15</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 254.

<sup>16</sup> See Paul Hayes Tucker, *Claude Monet: Life and Art*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 194, and Spate, *Colour of Time*, 258.



viewer to wonder what lies beyond the edges of the canvas. Through deliberate fragmentation of the space, Monet invites the viewer to leave reality behind for the sake of imagination.

In 1907 and 1908, Monet furthers his exploration of an in-between world by painting on canvases that are more vertical than horizontal (fig. 15-16). Unprecedented in previous *Water Lilies*, this allows the reflections to be characterized by a verticality. Portraying the vertical scene from a single vantage point, these paintings vary only in the time of day they depict, resulting in unique atmospheric effects by employing different color palettes. The images appear to belong to entirely separate worlds, with their vertical reflections, strongly depicted by different colors, possessing metaphorical qualities that suggest other dimensions. In Figure 15, the blue mirror of water insinuates that it is perhaps the reflection of a calm, blue sky. However, the verticality in length, brushwork, and position of the canvas on a wall, accentuates an energy that lies in the vertical plane of the world, hinting also at an image of a flowing waterfall.<sup>17</sup> In Figure 16, the fiery red and orange *mélange* of the sky's reflection on the mirror of water, suggests a spirited flame rising into the sky. The dichotomy between water and fire, and the painting's ability to suggest both elements at the same place and time, further contributes to the layered complexity of the composition and heightens the perplexity of the viewer in their interpretation of two opposing realities at the same time.

Monet further heightens the tension within these paintings (fig. 15-16) by contrasting horizontal and vertical linear trajectories of the worlds depicted.<sup>18</sup> George Shakelford and MaryAnne Stevens point out that the verticality of the reflection is confronted by the horizontal

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Hayes Tucker, "Monet: Public and Private," in *Claude Monet, Late Work*, curated by Paul Hayes Tucker (New York: Gagosian Gallery, 2010) 27.

<sup>18</sup> Spate and Bromfield, "New and Strange Beauty", 55.

composition of the water lily clusters.<sup>19</sup> Paul Hayes Tucker adds that “the vertical scene is sliced down the middle by a meandering trail of sky”, suggesting a fierce energy that counteracts the “lulling calm” of the passive, floating water lilies.<sup>20</sup> The contrast in dynamic energies creates an imbalance between the vertical and horizontal trajectories, disrupting the balanced and calming atmosphere that usually envelops the works of the *Water Lilies*. Additionally, Spate and Bromfield argue that, in the world of the painting, both the reflection and the water lily clusters lie on the surface of the pond, which exists on the horizontal plane. Nevertheless, the two-dimensional painting is hung on the vertical plane of the wall. The distinction between the reality of the painting’s world and the reality of the representation of the painting’s world, creates an additional layer of complexity to confront in the viewing experience of the painting. Spate and Bromfield argue that these complex layers of opposing dimensions result in the viewer losing a sense of space in the depicted world, leading to a loss of a “centered consciousness”, which “dissolve[s] into the other space of the painting.”<sup>21</sup> Monet has realized a boundless, multi-dimensional space that transcends the real world, challenging the individual to place himself within the unknown.

In 1907 and 1908, Monet employed the use of circular canvases to compose his impressions of the water lilies, isolating the fragmented reflection from its position in the water garden at Giverny and implying that it is a complete world in itself (fig. 17). Spate argues that this “[detaches] the motif from its immediate dependence on the prosaic dimensions of the pool,”

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<sup>19</sup> Shakelford, George T. M., and MaryAnne Stevens, “Catalogue,” in *Monet in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, curated by Paul Hayes Tucker, George T. M. Shackelford, and MaryAnne Stevens (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 148.

<sup>20</sup> Tucker, *Life and Art*, 194.

<sup>21</sup> Spate and Bromfield, “New and Strange Beauty”, 55.

forming “a perfect, self-contained world, a world which forever turns in on itself.”<sup>22</sup> At the end of this group of paintings, Monet arrives at expressing the ultimate form of his new world; a world that integrates elements of the real and the unreal, the tangible and the intangible, the representational and the abstract, resulting in a world of complex dimensions and layers. Its realization on a circular canvas presents it as a world that exists independently, separate from its foundations in the reality of the water garden at Giverny. Tucker adds that the circular nature “takes the edge off the image while leading the viewer to believe that the scene extends out on either side, like the ocean observed through a porthole.”<sup>23</sup> This suggests its vastness into the unknown as Monet encourages the viewer to explore a world beyond the boundaries of the canvas and the real world, and determine where he stands in all of it.

*Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d'eau*, illustrates Monet's process of painting the reflected image of the real world as it appears on the surface of the pond at Giverny. Learning to merge the distinct forms, colors, and textures of real world elements, Monet creates an entity that both identifies with its original forms and is suggestive of abstracted forms. Through fragmentation of the space, he progressively moves further away from verisimilitude and the representational world into an abstracted otherworld. Using the vertical and horizontal linear trajectories of the painted world, Monet creates complex layers of perspectives that shapes the world as a multi-dimensional space that exists beyond reality. He concludes the series by placing the world in a complete circle, suggesting the limitless perspectives that lie beyond the boundary of the canvas, radiating outwards in every possible direction. Monet sets the stage for the *Studies*, the next chapter of *Les Nymphéas*, which further tests the boundaries of the real and representational world against the unreal and abstract.

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<sup>22</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 262.

<sup>23</sup> Tucker, *Life and Art*, 195.

## The Studies

The *Studies*, Monet's sixty *Water Lilies* painted between 1914 and 1919, reveals the artist's radical shift in exploring abstraction as he invents a novel type of painting and drastically distances his oeuvre from the representational world.<sup>24</sup> On canvases two to four times larger than the earlier *Water Lilies*, these paintings are investigations of the physical elements of the water garden at Giverny – the water, flowers, leaves, trees, foliage, and reflections. Monet painted the *Studies* to prepare for the creation of his *Grand Decorations*, his final large-scale *Water Lilies*.<sup>25</sup> Experimental in size, line, and color, the painted world of the *Studies* is almost unrecognizable from its source.<sup>26</sup> The abstraction in these paintings is further accentuated by the absence of linear perspective, which heightens the sense of two-dimensionality in the paintings.<sup>27</sup> Monet presents a world with layers of abstraction and reality for the viewer to negotiate and experience.

As studies for the *Grand Decorations*, the paintings from this group of *Water Lilies* are characterized by a sense of unabashed innovation that Tucker calls “ambitious” and “unprecedented.”<sup>28</sup> On large canvases, Monet magnifies the scenes offered by the water garden at Giverny and examines new possibilities for representing its physical aspects.<sup>29</sup> The artist shapes these material elements loosely, with unconventionally well-defined brushstrokes (fig.

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<sup>24</sup> Shakelford and Stevens, “Catalogue,” 192.

<sup>25</sup> See Shakelford, “Catalogue,” 192, and Spate, *Colour of Time*, 269.

<sup>26</sup> Michel Butor, “Monet, or the World Turned Upside Down,” in *Claude Monet, Late Work*, curated by Paul Hayes Tucker (New York: Gagosian Gallery), 12.

<sup>27</sup> Spate and Bromfield, “New and Strange Beauty”, 56.

<sup>28</sup> Tucker, *Life and Art*, 203.

<sup>29</sup> Shakelford, “Catalogue”, 192.

18).<sup>30</sup> Their large, sweeping, calligraphic lines and curves fail to dissolve into the forms of the physical objects they represent; instead, they exist independently as what Spate defines as “large scribbles” and “rapid loops of paint” (fig. 19).<sup>31</sup> Additionally, they are joined by prominent brushstrokes that are what Richard Brettel describes as “packed, jabbed, splattered, cooked, or scrambled” (fig. 20).<sup>32</sup> The visual manifestation of the magnified brushstrokes, each with their own individual character, weakens the presence of the known elements they represent. Their intended forms as flowers and leaves fade into the distance as abstract shapes, forms, lines, and colors, take center stage (fig. 21). The paintings’ abstraction is further supported by a discarding of linear perspective, which enhances the two-dimensionality of the paintings.<sup>33</sup> The *Studies* read more as abstract paintings communicating shape, form, color, and line, than representational art depicting the reality of the water garden at Giverny.<sup>34</sup>

As much as the innovation of the *Studies* was intentional, there is a sense among some art historians that there was more to its sudden manifestation than simply Monet’s progressive exploration of the abstract elements he started in his earlier oeuvre.<sup>35</sup> Monet’s increasing blindness beginning in the early 1910s naturally acted as a filter that deformed Monet’s perception of reality.<sup>36</sup> His distorted observations thus translate onto the canvases as undefined,

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<sup>30</sup> See Shakelford, “Catalogue”, 192, and Tucker, *Life and Art*, 203.

<sup>31</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 271.

<sup>32</sup> Richard R. Brettel, “Claude Monet, 1840-1926,” *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 147, no. 1112 (Nov., 1995): 774, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/886894>.

<sup>33</sup> Spate and Bromfield, “New and Strange Beauty”, 56.

<sup>34</sup> Butor, “Monet,” 10.

<sup>35</sup> See Butor, “Monet,” 12, and Spate, *Colour of Time*, 269.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

misrepresented scenes.<sup>37</sup> Unable to rely on visual observation, this sense of abstraction is further complicated by Monet's use of his memory to paint the scenes at Giverny, which adds another dimension of imagined reality to the actuality of the canvases.<sup>38</sup> Michel Butor mentions that Monet relied not on his visual observation of the scene to inform the colors he applied to his canvases; instead, the artist depended on his knowledge of the numbered tubes of paint and what he remembered of their corresponding shade to invent his paintings.<sup>39</sup> Butor states that Monet also used his "past impressions and sensations," as well as "old emotions," to create the new reality of the *Studies*.<sup>40</sup> Here, Monet uses his blindness as an artistic point of departure, synthesizing his logical and emotional worlds with the real world to invent the reality of his paintings. Spate adds that Monet's expertise in the water garden's every feature was "so deeply internalized that the distinction between observation and memory had become almost meaningless," explaining that Monet's novel paintings have fluidly amalgamated the real and the imaginary, making it impossible to distinguish one from the other.<sup>41</sup> The viewer is thus confronted with a problematic world that is both real and unreal, disorienting him in the struggle of slipping between the logical world and radical consciousness.

Monet thus creates a vision that Butor defines as "superior," a world that is simultaneously familiar and foreign.<sup>42</sup> This vision disorients the viewer as he continuously slips from his own reality, to his memory, and to his imagination. Brettel expresses the problem in this

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<sup>37</sup> See Butor, "Monet," 12, and Spate, *Colour of Time*, 269.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Butor, "Monet," 10-12.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 272.

<sup>42</sup> Butor, "Monet," 10.

way, “Do we relish, tolerate, or reject their ‘difficulties’?”<sup>43</sup> By employing a logical consciousness to understand the depicted world, the viewer could “reject” the paintings as he would find no comfort in connecting the painted world’s weak resemblance to his own reality or memory of the known. He could also “tolerate” the paintings, accepting Monet’s inability in artistic verisimilitude. Alternatively, the viewer could “relish” the painting’s complexity by letting go of the reasonable and join Monet in his radical otherworld of abstract representation, where abstract shapes, forms, colors, and lines, coexist with those of the physical world, and where this abstracted reality is beautiful and worthy of contemplation.<sup>44</sup> Brettel exclaims, “Do we remain forever suspended over the surface of the water or are we asked by the aged artist to plunge in, risking all in the act of entrance?”<sup>45</sup> Monet’s curiosity in the unknown and the limitless encourages the viewer to leave reality behind and embrace an otherworldly experience beyond the surface of our world.

The *Studies* thus presents an alternate world, revealing Monet’s ability to see abstraction in reality. He invites the viewer to engage in a novel way of seeing, experience art by relating it to one’s own multiple worlds and consciousness, and prepares both the artist and the viewer for Monet’s next project, the *Grand Decorations*, which concludes the *Water Lilies* series. There, the complex visual experience transforms into an equally complex physical experience, where elements of the representational and the abstract transport the viewer into an alternate space and time.

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<sup>43</sup> Brettel, “Claude Monet,” 774.

<sup>44</sup> Paloma Alarcó, “Monet and Abstraction,” *Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Caja Madrid Fundacion*, accessed January 20, 2016, [http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2009/Monet-y-la-abstraccion/Documentos/Seleccion\\_textos\\_INGLES.pdf](http://www.museothyssen.org/microsites/prensa/2009/Monet-y-la-abstraccion/Documentos/Seleccion_textos_INGLES.pdf).

<sup>45</sup> Brettel, “Claude Monet,” 774.

## The Grand Decorations of the Musée de l'Orangerie

Presented by Monet to the French State on the day after the Armistice on November 11, 1918 as a token of peace, eight of the *Grand Decorations* were installed into the two oval galleries of the Musée de l'Orangerie in 1927, shortly after the artist's death (fig. 22-30).<sup>46</sup> These large scale, horizontal compositions are each two meters in height and six to seventeen meters in length; they cover the expanse of the continuously curving walls of the oval galleries, surrounding the viewer with Monet's impressions of his water garden at Giverny. Abandoning western linear perspective, Monet decentralizes the viewer's perspective and allows the viewer to control his own gaze over the different parts of the canvases.<sup>47</sup> As the eye brings an aspect of a painting into focus, it seemingly diminishes the elements surrounding it, creating what Spate and Bromfield call a "mobile" painting, where parts of the canvas seem to move in relation to others.<sup>48</sup> The panoramic effect of these large scale, horizontal paintings supports a moving gaze across the length of each canvas, fragmenting each singular scene into several, successive scenes that create a cinematic viewing experience. This expands into a physical viewing experience if the viewer walks the length of a painting.<sup>49</sup> Extending the idea of a physical experience, walking towards and away from a painting changes one's distance to the canvas, allowing the viewer to gain different perspectives of the painted world from a variety of positions. This subjective

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<sup>46</sup> "History of the Water Lilies cycle," *Musée de l'Orangerie*, accessed April 27, 2016, <http://www.musee-orangerie.fr/en/article/history-water-lilies-cycle>.

<sup>47</sup> See "History," *Orangerie*, and Spate and Bromfield, "New and Strange Beauty", 56.

<sup>48</sup> Spate and Bromfield, "New and Strange Beauty", 56.

<sup>49</sup> See Steven Levine, "Monet, Lumière, and Cinematic Time," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 36, no. 4 (Summer, 1978): 441-447, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/430484>, and Spate, "Colour of Time," 303.



physical experience extends throughout the two galleries, whose individual open space and multiple entrances and exits force the viewer to shape his own experience of the *Grand Decorations*.<sup>50</sup> As the viewer grows to understand the paintings over space and time, he is metaphorically placed in the water garden at Giverny, whose irregular structure reveals the different angles of its physical aspects at different points in space and time. The *Grand Decorations* enhances the elements of abstraction in *Les Nymphéas, series de paysages d'eau* and the *Studies*, supporting the expansion of the complex visual experience into an equally complex physical experience, transporting the viewer to an infinite amount of dimensions in space and time, limited only by his imagination.

Monet's gradual abandonment of western linear perspective in *Les Nymphéas, series de paysages d'eau* and the *Studies* is complete in the *Grand Decorations*.<sup>51</sup> An art historian at the Musée de l'Orangerie argues that these works represent "the birth of decentralized painting in the West where no one part of the painting dominates another," insinuating that each visual element of the painting is as important as the one next to it.<sup>52</sup> As the tradition of western linear perspective is what Spate and Bromfield defines as a phenomenon that "[centers] on and [controls] the individual consciousness of the spectator," abandoning it allows Monet to free the eye, allowing it to discover the significance of every aspect in each painting independently.<sup>53</sup> The magnitude and horizontality of the *Grand Decorations* transforms this process of the moving eye, allowing the elements of each painting to appear to come in and out of focus, and, in three

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<sup>50</sup> "History," *Orangerie*.

<sup>51</sup> See "History," *Orangerie*, and Spate and Bromfield, "New and Strange Beauty", 56-60.

<sup>52</sup> "History," *Orangerie*.

<sup>53</sup> See "History," *Orangerie*, and Spate, "Colour of Time," 303.

dimension, enlarge out from and diminish into the depth of each canvas.<sup>54</sup> This creates what Spate and Bromfield call a “mobile” painting, whose elements seem to move in relation to each other, ironically creating depth in a painting that intentionally appears to be two dimensional.<sup>55</sup>

Viewing the *Green Reflections*, Spate describes this process (fig. 25):

If one focuses on [the island of lilies in the center of the pool] – as Monet would have done while painting it – the other islands of leaves loom and expand at the edges of one’s gaze, but if one shifts that gaze across the water surface to focus on the other islands, the central one maintains its radiance.<sup>56</sup>

Spate explains that every aspect of the painting demands one’s visual attention. Concentrating on one aspect encourages the viewer to look at another. One’s active gaze is continuously fed and engaged by the painting’s abstract, two-dimensional quality. Abandoning the painting technique that creates three dimensional verisimilitude, Monet allows the viewer to unearth the multiple dimensions of the *Grand Decorations* independently. This approach heightens the viewer’s engagement with the paintings.

The *Grand Decorations*’ magnitude and horizontality creates a panoramic effect that supports a moving gaze across the length of each canvas.<sup>57</sup> As the viewer tracks each painting from left to right and vice versa, he fragments the single scene into several smaller scenes that succeed each other over a period of time, expanding the viewing experience into one that is also cinematic and temporal. As individuals parse each painting differently, they each create their own narrative of the scene and shape their own unique understanding of the painted world. This

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<sup>54</sup> Spate and Bromfield, “New and Strange Beauty”, 56-60.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>56</sup> Spate, “Colour of Time,” 303.

<sup>57</sup> See Levine, “Lumière,” and Spate, “Colour of Time,” 303.

expands into an equally unique physical experience if the viewer walks the length of the painting.<sup>58</sup> Spate describes her experience with *Morning* (fig. 26):

One may look down to the lilies on the water ‘below’ one, or ‘across’ the open water, where the sudden diminution of scale of the lily islands, and the modulation of blue-violet to more roseate tints, suggest an infinite, luminous watery space; one may pause on the bright reflections on the left, where grasses are caught by the slanting rays of the early sun and where, in the transparent shadows, tiny concentric lines suggest ‘the seed which falls’; one may move along the painting, pass the central area of luminous violet-blues which, sharply accented by brilliant blues, suggest clear water ruffled by ripples, to the darker section of the painting on the right, where the grasses are rendered smudgily, as if to suggest still-lingering mist in which one only slowly comes to see the reflection of a willow made transparent by the light beyond it.<sup>59</sup>

Spate fragments the scene by the amount of light and shadow that touches the physical elements of the pool depicted. She discerns a contrast in space that changes as the scene progresses. Her understanding of the painted world develops over time, discovering new elements that reveal themselves only with further contemplation. Feeling the mutable energy of the painting, Spate experiences its source of life, transporting herself into a temporal dimension of *Morning*.

Expanding the idea of a physical viewing experience, walking towards and away from the painting changes one’s distance to the canvas and therefore how perceivable each detail is to the eye. Unlike walking the length of the painting where one’s understanding of it develops segment after segment, walking towards and away from the painting reveals its overall duality as representational and abstract art. From a distance, *Morning with Willows* appears fairly representational of a fragment of the pond at Giverny, framed by two willow trees. Walking closer, one might notice the abstraction within the reflection on the water, where dematerialized clouds and sky merge with the identifiable clusters of water lilies resting on the surface (fig. 28). This duality evokes *Les Nymphéas, séries de paysages d’eau*, where Monet played with the

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Spate, “Colour of Time,” 303.

space between the real and the unreal on the mirror of water. Walking even closer, the water lilies reveal to be what Henry Francis describes as “largely formless, except for their circular character.”<sup>60</sup> This unfinished, ambiguous form created by sketch-like brushwork recalls the *Studies* and the overwhelming nature of the abstract shapes and lines created by Monet’s brushwork that disguises their representations of the physical aspects of the garden. Similarly, *Morning with Willows* reveals its abstract quality up close, hiding in plain sight from afar. Monet enhances the abstraction of *Les Nymphéas, series de paysages d’eau* and the *Studies* in the *Grand Decorations*, amalgamating their unique abstracted features onto larger canvases, creating more complex scenes whose multi-dimensional quality is further heightened. This expands the boundaries of an individual understanding of the paintings and the ability of creating a multifaceted experience that is visual, physical, cerebral – its limits defined only by one’s ability to explore and be lost in the otherworld of the paintings.

This multi-dimensional viewing experience extends to the physical space of the two galleries, whose open spaces and multiple entrances and exits guide the individual to shape his own experience of the *Grand Decorations*.<sup>61</sup> Understanding the paintings from a variety of positions and angles over time, the viewer is metaphorically transported to the water garden at Giverny, whose irregular structure reveals the different angles of its physical aspects from different points in space and time (fig. 31). Like the *Grand Decorations*, the water garden at Giverny requires the individual to comprehend it from a variety of points in space, no single still position will allow the viewer to see it all. A physical discovery opens up the garden’s space to

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<sup>60</sup> Henry Francis, “Claude Monet Water Lilies,” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 47, no. 8 (Oct., 1960): 192-198, accessed January 20, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25142411>.

<sup>61</sup> “History,” *Orangerie*.

the viewer, as a physical viewing experience of the *Grand Decorations* engages the individual's different consciousness, exploring the limitless worlds of the paintings.

Concluding Monet's *Water Lilies*, the *Grand Decorations* of the Orangerie transforms the novelty of the earlier *Water Lilies* onto larger canvases that create a physical environment that represents an alternate dimension of the water garden at Giverny. Encouraging a radical use of one's imagination and otherworldly consciousness, the viewer creates his unique self in a space and time that is indeterminate.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Creative Process

#### Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*, From Paintings to Dance

##### A One-Act Ballet in Three Parts

The research on Monet's three groups of *Water Lilies* (*Les Nymphéas*, *series de paysages d'eau*, the *Studies*, and the *Grand Decorations* of the Musée de l'Orangerie) acts as the source of inspiration for the three sections of choreography of the thesis concert, *Claude Monet's Water Lilies, From Paintings to Dance*. This chapter explains how each group of *Water Lilies* informs each section of the dance, as unifying elements of the painting series envelope the three choreographic parts, presenting them as a single, cohesive work. In addition, I assert my individual voice as a dance artist over the work, characterizing it as a personal creative expression in the language of dance. Approximately twenty minutes in length, this one-act ballet in three parts is performed by five female dancers, with new music by Norman Beede for the piano and cello, played live by Beede himself and Marc Wong, respectively.

##### Impression I: The Real and the Reflected

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Les Nymphéas*, *series de paysages d'eau* is a group of *Water Lilies* that focuses on Monet's impressions of the real world as seen through their reflective image on the surface of the water lily pond at Giverny.<sup>62</sup> Merging tangible elements

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<sup>62</sup> Virginia Spate, *The Colour of Time, Claude Monet* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1992), 254.

into a single, dematerialized image on the mirror of water, Monet blurs the boundaries between the real and the unreal, defining the world in-between.<sup>63</sup> Using the vertical and horizontal linear trajectories of the painted world to invent a space that is multi-dimensional, Monet allows the viewer to engage with the paintings with an individual consciousness that interlaces different dimensions.<sup>64</sup> This allows the viewer to define his own viewing experience.

With these ideas in mind, *Impression I: The Real and the Reflected* is a duet that explores the relationship between a water lily and its reflected image. The dancers embody these roles by evoking the water lily's feminine sentience through their movement. To express this natural elegance, I collaborated with the dancers to create movement based on the ideas of a blooming water-lily, a water-lily at rest on the surface of the pond, a water-lily skimming across the length of the pond, and a water-lily spinning in situ or around the pond. They each perform these movements simultaneously on different levels and planes, occasionally altering their own direction and timing to convey the interdependent identities of the water-lily and its reflection.

Separating the dancers and the environments of the roles they portray are four pieces of semitransparent fabric in varying shades of white and off-white, each one-meter wide and eight-meters long. Suspended from the ceiling grid to the ground in a staggered diagonal line in the middle of the space, the panels of fabric act as a physical boundary that defines the worlds of the real and the reflected (Image to be included when available). The solid but flexible see-through fabric panels are hung with gaps in-between, revealing the visual and physical fragility of the border between the two worlds. The external environment reflects the interdependent nature of the water-lily and its reflection.

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<sup>63</sup> Spate, *Colour of Time*, 255.

<sup>64</sup> Spate and Bromfield, "New and Strange Beauty," 55.

Inspired by Monet's idea of transcending the boundaries of the real and the unreal by amalgamating elements of reality into a single projected image on the water, the dance progresses with the performers physically displacing the fabric from center-stage to the periphery, reconstructing the environment into one in which they both exist. Reflecting this idea of a single environment in themselves, the dancers move as a one unit, evolving into a single being.

Beede's music develops from this idea where two elements evolve into one. With the distinct sounds of the piano and cello, Beede creates two separate melodies that co-exist in the same space. Occasionally, their individual roles as melodies morph into harmonies that support the other, exploring the relationships between conjunction and disjunction, and consonance and dissonance.

In line with Monet's efforts to allow the individual to shape his own viewing experience, it is left to the audience member to decide which dancer represents the real and which represents the reflected, if one is at all distinct from the other, and/or if their roles interchange as the work develops. To further encourage individual interpretations, the space is designed to allow the audience to walk around the performance space, or sit in seats that offer different angles of the performance space. This multiplicity allows the audience member to design his own visual and physical experience of the work, shaping his personal interpretation of the relationship between the two dancers and their environment/s.



## Impression II: An Artist's Process

Towards the end of *Impression I: The Real and the Reflected*, a new force enters the space to threaten and ultimately destroy the duet's physical connection. The new dancer claims center stage as the two dancers' increasing distance from each other suggests the gradual dissipation of a short-lived impression.

As examined in the last chapter, the *Studies* are Monet's innovative explorations of the water garden at Giverny in preparation for the *Grand Decorations*.<sup>65</sup> Magnifying the scenes with sweeping, calligraphic and short, abrupt sketch-like brushstrokes, Monet's abstracted paintings only hint slightly at their representations of the water garden at Giverny.<sup>66</sup> Experimental in technique, the paintings are further abstracted by Monet's increasing blindness, whose distorted vision allows for memory and imagination to command the depiction of reality.<sup>67</sup> These layers of abstraction and ambiguity present the eye with multiple ways of perceiving the work, some logical and some radical. This forces the viewer to use his logical and irrational consciousness to negotiate with what he sees, ultimately deciding what he wants to see.

*Impression II: An Artist's Process* begins with all five dancers spread evenly in the space, each in their own individual pool of light. The dancer introduced at the end of *Impression I: The Real and the Reflected* is positioned in the center, and stillness is broken by her isolated movements in the different parts of the body as she attempts to paint the air. A foundational phrase is repeated and layered by an increasing engagement of the whole body, decorating the air more fluidly and completely. As the dancer continues to gesture towards the other performers,

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<sup>65</sup> See Shakelford and Stevens, "Catalogue," 192, and Spate, *The Colour of Time*, 269.

<sup>66</sup> See Spate, *Colour of Time*, 271, and Brettel, "Claude Monet, 1840-1926," 774.

<sup>67</sup> Butor, "World Turned Upside Down," 10-12, and Spate, *Colour of Time*, 269-272.

her movement initiates and continues to inform theirs, expressing the growing manifestation of an artist's ideas. Each of the four other performers receive a gesture that instigates their own, with each of these gestures representing a fleeting impression of an idea that each dancer is tasked to explore and experiment with into maturity. In the choreographic process, each dancer was tasked to improvise with their gesture in mind, using what it evokes logically, emotionally, and spontaneously to create movement that I developed into a coherent sequence for each of them to perform in their own pool of light. In parallel with Monet's layers of consciousness (reality, observation, memory, and imagination) that informs the *Studies*, these phrases manifest from the sources of reason, sensation, and impetus.

Gradually, the four isolated dancers and their unique ideas coalesce and form a collective whole in the center, joining the central dancer in her spotlight. Together, they weave in and out of a number of collaborative impressions that gradually travel through the space and become more expansive. The section ends with the dancers in one of these layered impressions.

Beede's music reflects the development of the dance as it sets out by centering on a foundational phrase for the cello that is repeated and varied. As a solo, it creates an audible sparseness that juxtaposes the full-bodied duet that ends the previous section. This contrast amplifies the isolation of the cello and its repeated phrase, audibly expressing the dancers' remote worlds and movements. It is from these isolated notes that a flowing duet evolves from, supporting the dancers' collective impressions that close the section.

By *Impression II: An Artist's Process*, the audience is seated in a curved configuration on the periphery of one half of the stage. This offers a variety of angles from which to view the dance, allowing each spectator to perceive aspects of the dance that are unique to his point of view. The spectator's visual experience is further individualized by a presentation of the five

dancers in their own pool of light, shaping each of their worlds with a distinct gesture or quality that separates each dancer from the rest of the stage. This allows for a decentralization of the eye to one or multiple sections of the stage of the spectator's choice, which may be influenced by the proximity of a dancer to the eye, forming a unique impression of the dance through an active, individualized gaze. When the dancers progress to move as a collective whole through a number of "impressions" at various positions on stage, each audience member collects a unique set of perspectives that contributes to his subjective impression of the dance.

### Impression III: Les Nymphéas

The *Grand Decorations* of the Musée de l'Orangerie are Monet's final *Water Lilies*, the culmination of the artist's technical, cerebral, and emotional experience gained over the decades spent painting his water garden at Giverny.<sup>68</sup> Like the *Studies*, and to an extent *Les Nymphéas*, *séries de paysages d'eau*, Monet discards the western painting tradition of linear perspective on the large horizontal canvases of the *Grand Decorations*, accentuating the two-dimensionality of the canvases, creating an unreality in the scenes that represent his water garden at Giverny.<sup>69</sup> The lack of a single perspective allows the viewer to negotiate with everything he sees on the canvas, discovering details and narratives that another might not. As the eye fragments the scene, focusing on one part after another sequentially, the viewer experiences the panoramic and cinematic effects of the paintings.<sup>70</sup> This complex viewing experience becomes an equally

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<sup>68</sup> Spate, "Colour of Time," 303.

<sup>69</sup> See "History," *Orangerie*, and Spate and Bromfield, "New and Strange Beauty", 56.

<sup>70</sup> See Levine, "Lumière," and Spate, "Colour of Time," 303.

complex physical experience as the viewer roams unguided around the two galleries whose walls hold the paintings.<sup>71</sup> He is subconsciously transported to the water garden at Giverny as he explores the gallery space as physically and as visually as he would the garden. Over space and time, the viewer discovers new perspectives of the paintings, ultimately forming a unique understanding of the eight paintings. This is similar to an experience in the garden, which is understood over space and time, with the viewer piecing his experiences in the different sections to create a unique whole.

*Impression III: Les Nymphéas* is a section for an ensemble both because it is the last crescendo of the ballet and because it reflects the culminating effect of Monet's final *Water Lilies*. The dancers and I accumulated the ideas explored in *Impression I: The Real and The Reflected* and *Impression II: An Artist's Process*, developing them on a more expansive scale. We reexamined earlier movement ideas, most notably those that convey the interdependent relationship between a water lily and its reflection, and the fleeting impressions created by amalgamating an artist's many ideas. We took these movement concepts further in space and time, reminding the audience of what they have seen earlier while offering them more to perceive. This brings the dancework full circle, allowing the audience to sense its development.

*Impression III: Les Nymphéas* also conveys the *Grand Decorations*' magnitude, doing so through movement that expands to the far-reach space of the individual kinesphere as well as to the edges of the shared performance space. It draws on the ideas explored in the previous sections (a water lily skimming across the surface of the pond, running into another and deflecting both their directions, getting caught up with another and travelling with it for awhile, and resting in the corner of the pond) to express the magnitude of each individual and the shared

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<sup>71</sup> "History," *Orangerie*.

environment. With events happening in different corners of the performance space, the eye is decentralized and encouraged to focus on a detail of its choice. This engages the audience's active gaze, allowing each individual to design his own viewing experience, as Monet did with his paintings.

The active gaze is employed further as the choreography attempts to refer to the two-dimensional horizontality of the paintings. Positioned in a horizontal line across the performance space, the dancers explore movement and stillness within the shared line, suggesting the movement behind the still scenes of the *Grand Decorations* that a viewer could allow himself to imagine. With the dancers in a horizontal line, the eye of the audience is free to wander across the line, focusing on a certain dancer and her movements at a particular point in time. As the individual chooses from a variety of elements to concentrate on, his overall perspective and experience of the dance would be distinct from that of another.

Beede's music reflects the conclusive nature of this section by building up to a climax that draws upon the music of the previous sections, developing earlier ideas into a fluidly complex and final crescendo. It interweaves the sparse, repetitive phrase of *Impression II: An Artist's Process* to remind the audience of earlier impressions as the dance advances into conclusion.

In this section, the audience continues to be seated as the dancers moving fluidly in the space, making use of its full capacity. This allows me to present the section with the horizontal line facing them, ensuring that the artistic intention is clearly expressed.

### Concluding Thoughts

As a three-dimensional temporal art form, dance further complicates the *Water Lilies*' concept of the individual viewing experience. In contrast with an immobile two-dimensional painting, the medium of dance's three-dimensionality presents the audience member with more angles to view the work from, if permitted to walk around it. The ephemeral nature of dance also heightens the individual viewing experience as the audience member is presented with a limited amount of time to discover and remember what the dance has to offer. If the dance decentralizes and offers several vignettes in one space at the same time, the audience member must assess what he sees quickly, directing his eye towards a focus of his choice, following a line of narrative that further individualizes his experience. I delve further into Monet's ideas of abstraction and a complex viewing experience, made possible only by presenting them in a different light, in the medium and language of dance.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Claude Monet, *Impression, soleil levant*, 1872. Oil on canvas, 48 x 63 cm. Musée Marmottan Paris.

Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (Accessed March 13, 2016).



Figure 2. Claude Monet, *St. Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 79 x 98 cm. Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (Accessed April 25, 2016).



Figure 3. Claude Monet, *Paris, rue St. Denis, Celebration of June 30, 1878*, 1878. Oil on canvas, 81 x 50 cm. Musée des beaux arts, Rouen, France.

Reproduced from ArtStor, <http://www.artstor.org> (Accessed April 25, 2016).



Figure 4. Claude Monet, *Garden at Sainte-Adresse*, 1867. Oil on canvas, 98 x 130 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

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Figure 5. Claude Monet, *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1865. Oil on canvas, 248 x 217 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

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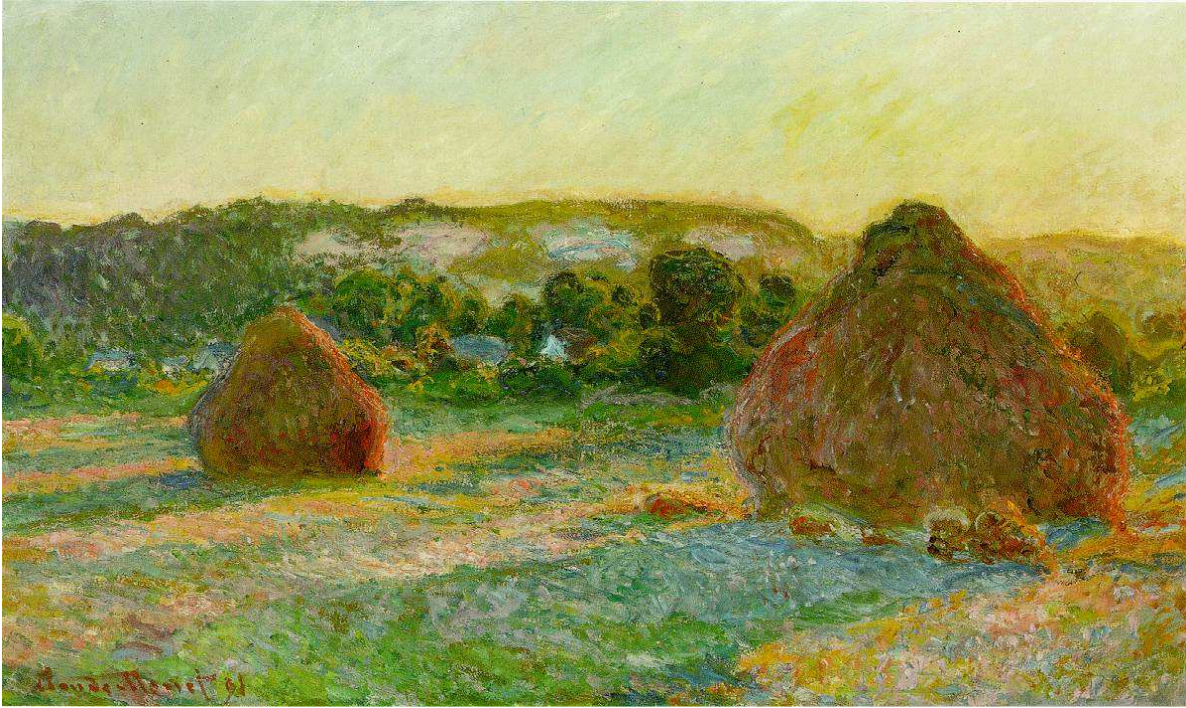


Figure 6. Claude Monet, *Wheatstacks (End of Summer)*, 1890-91. Oil on canvas, 60 x 100 cm. Art Institute of Chicago.

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Figure 7. Claude Monet, *The Haystacks, End of Summer*, 1891. Oil on canvas, 60 x 100 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

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Figure 8. Claude Monet, *Wheatstacks, Snow Effect, Morning*, 1891. Oil on canvas, 65 x 100 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, Los Angeles.

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Figure 9. Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Morning Effect*, 1894. Oil on canvas, 107 x 73.5 cm, Folkwang Museum, Essen, Germany.

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Figure 10. Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Sunlight*, 1894. Oil on canvas, 107 x 73.5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

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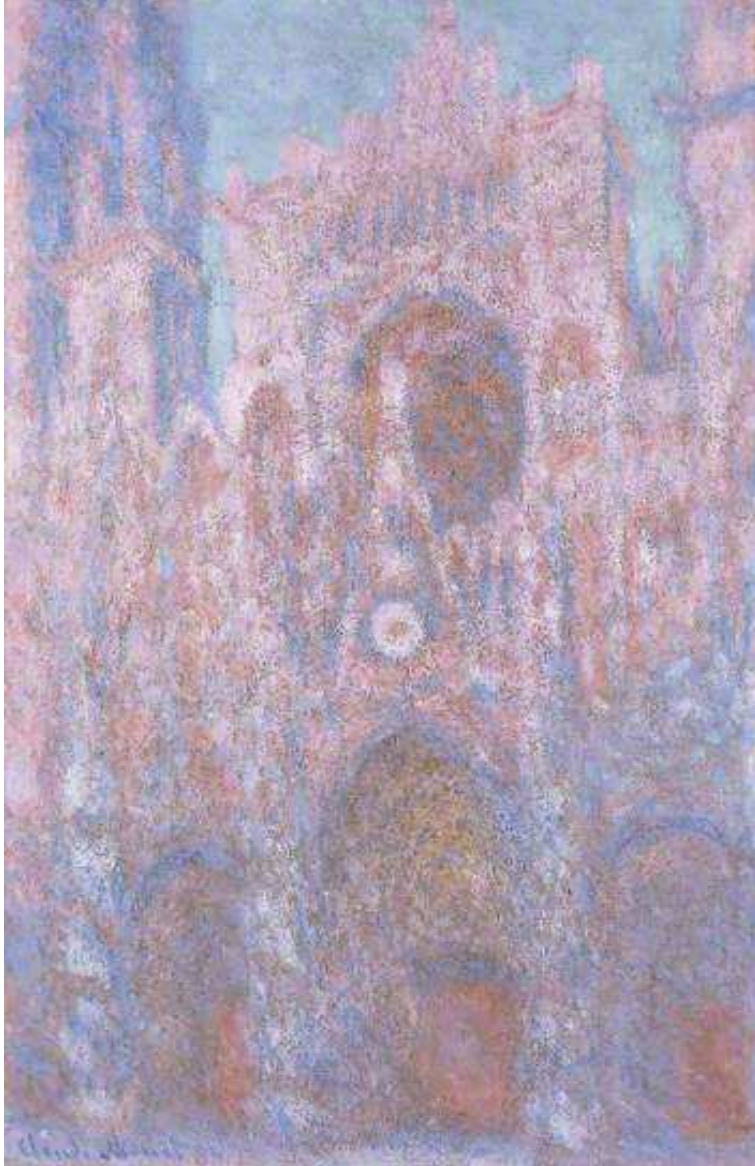


Figure 11. Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, West Façade, Setting Sun*, 1894. Oil on canvas, 107 x 73.5 cm, National Museum, Cardiff, UK.

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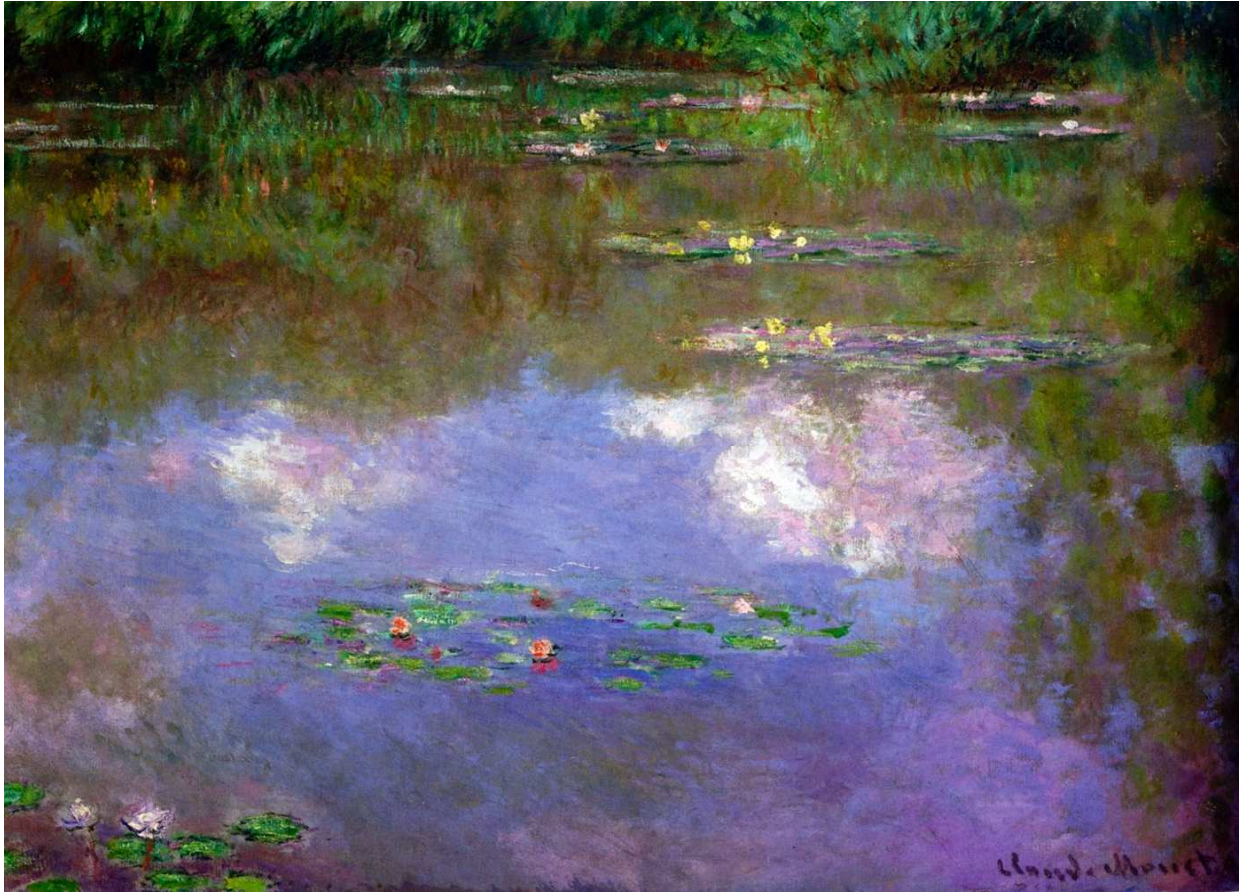


Figure 12. Claude Monet, *The Clouds*, 1903. Oil on canvas, 62 x 106 cm. Private collection.

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Figure 13. Claude Monet, *Waterlilies*, 1904. Oil on canvas, 89 x 92 cm, Musée d'art moderne André Malraux, Le Havre.

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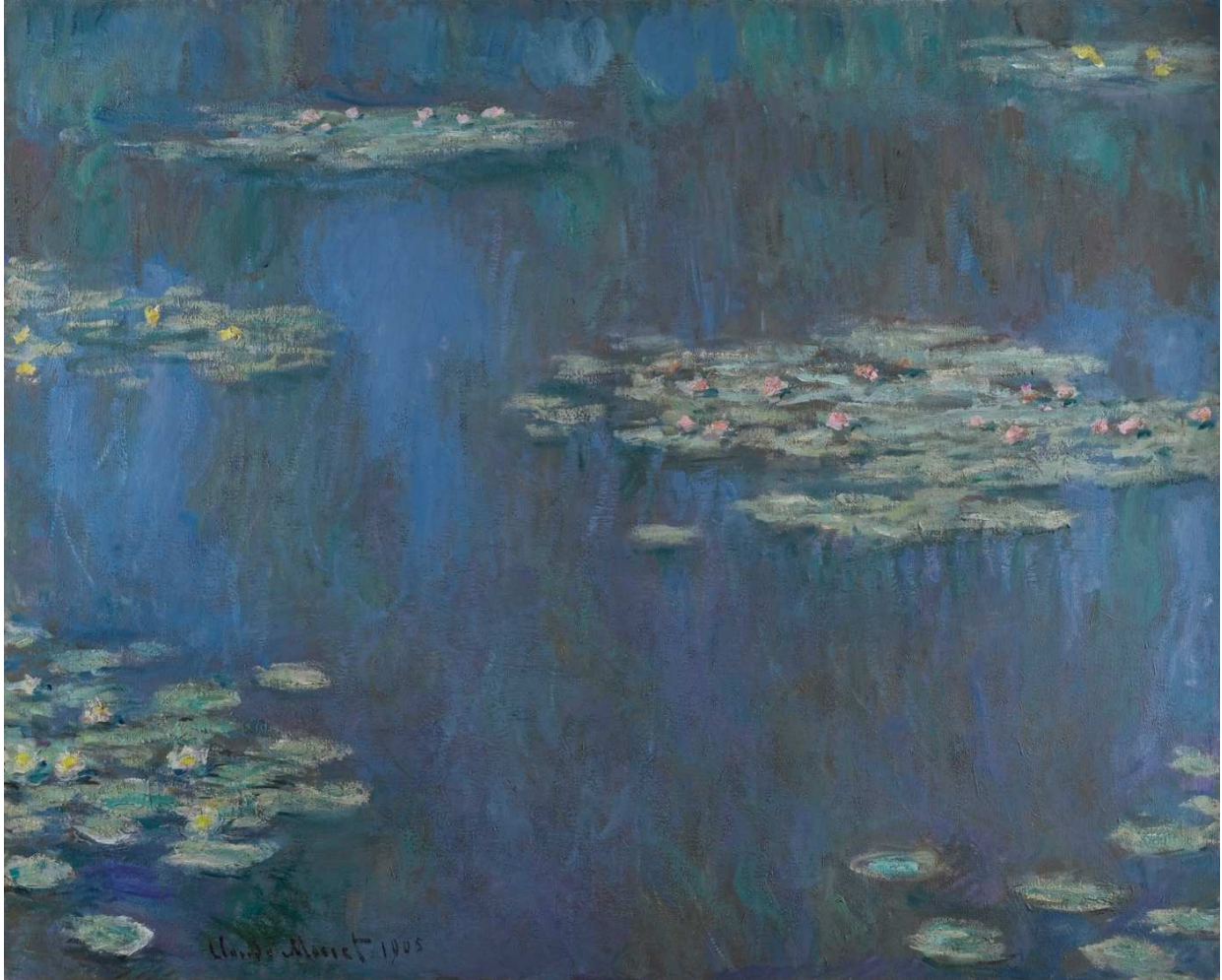


Figure 14. Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1905. Oil on canvas, 89.5 x 100.3 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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Figure 15. Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 91 x 81 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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Figure 16. Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1907. Oil on canvas, 100 x 73 cm. Musée Marmottan.

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Figure 17. Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1908. Oil on canvas, diameter 80 cm. Dallas Museum of Art.

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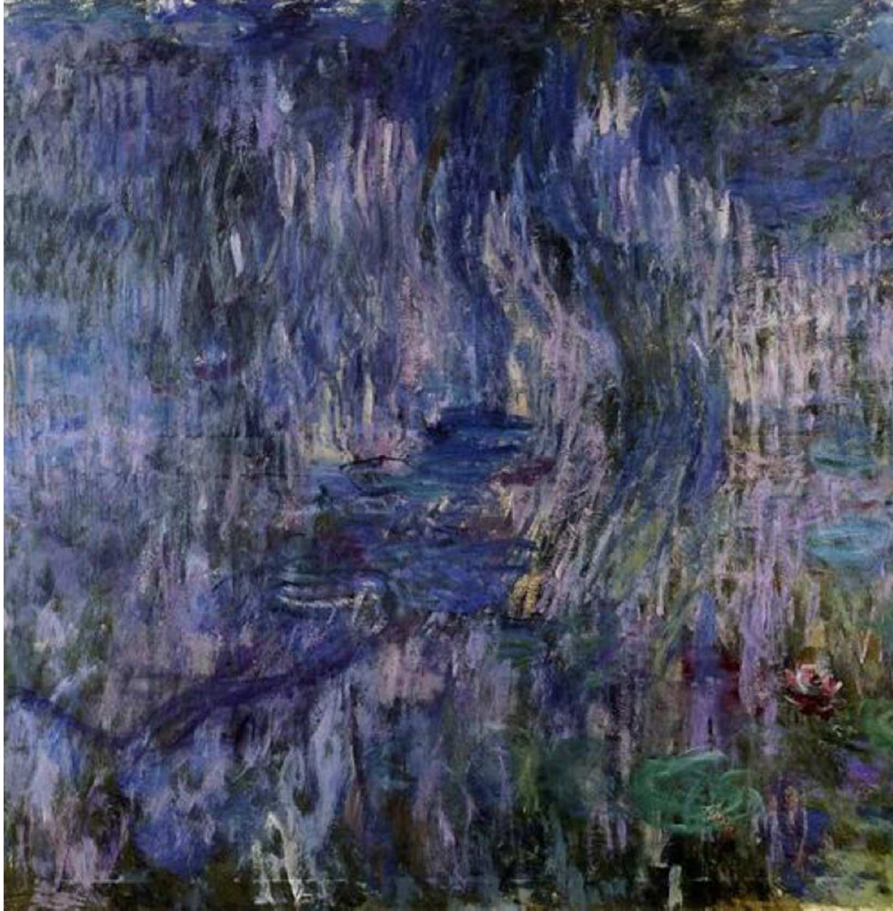


Figure 18. Claude Monet, *Water Lilies, Reflections of Willow*, 1916-1919. Oil on canvas, 200 x 200 cm, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris.

Reproduced from WikiArt, <http://www.wikiart.org> (Accessed April 4, 2016).



Figure 19. Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1914-1917. Oil on canvas, 169 x 123 cm, Private collection.

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Figure 20. Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, 1914-1917. Oil on canvas, 130 x 90 cm, Private collection.

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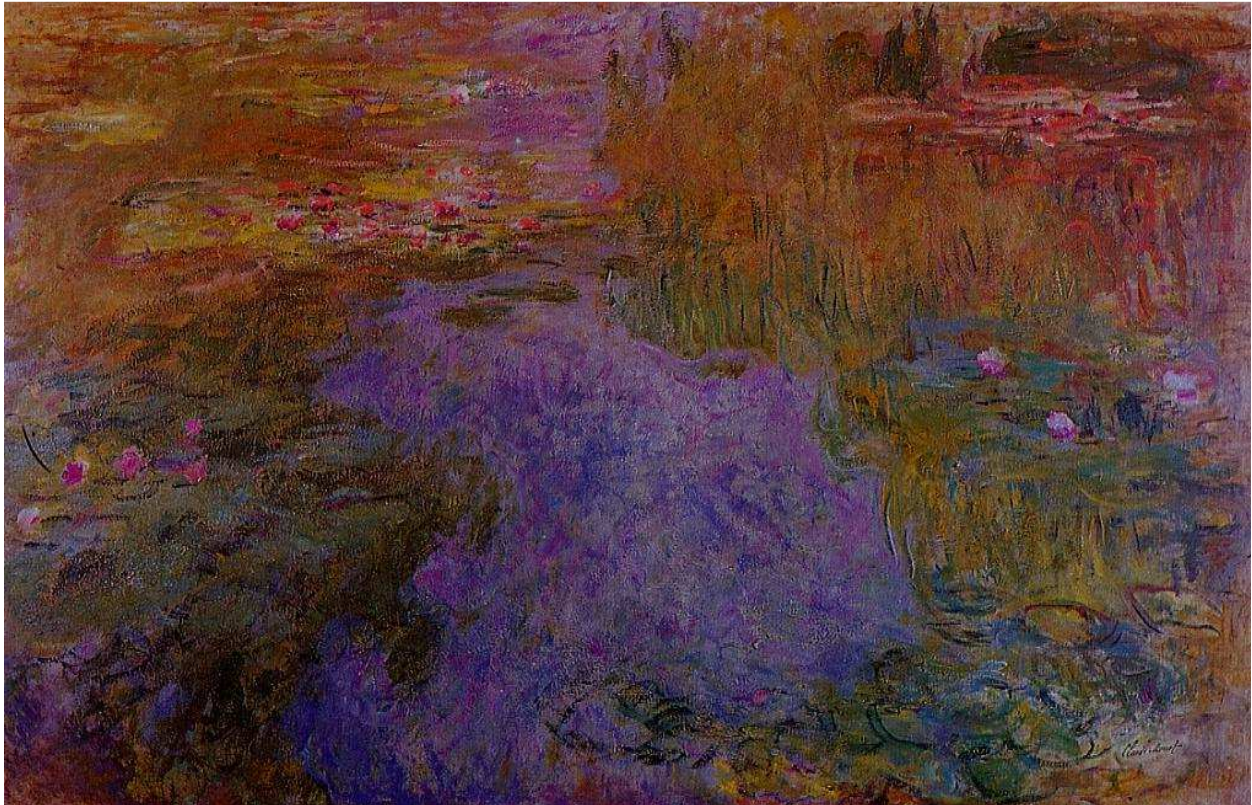


Figure 21. Claude Monet, *The Water-Lily Pond*, 1917-1919. Oil on canvas, 130 x 200 cm, Private collection.

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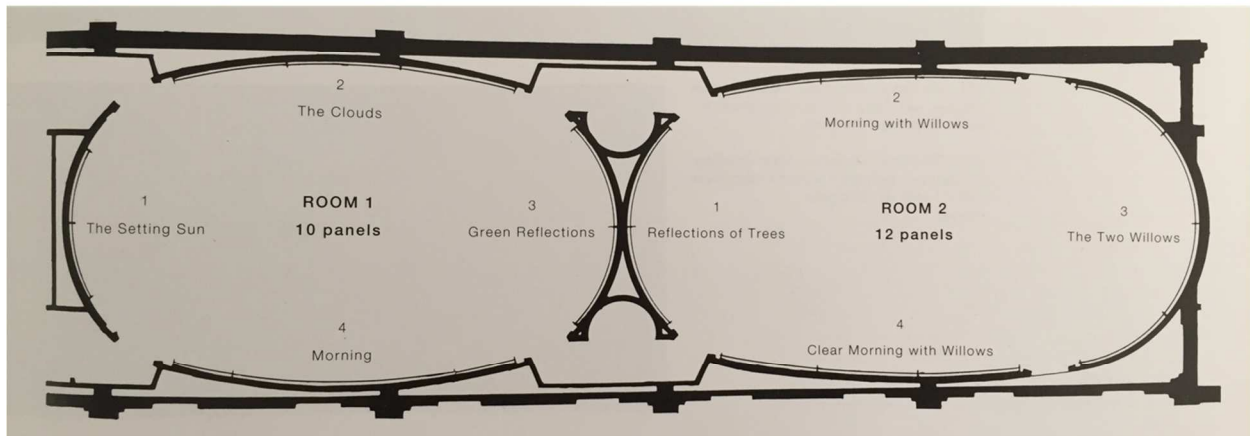


Figure 22. Layout of the *Grand Decorations* in the Orangerie

Reproduced from Virginia Spate, *The Colour of Time, Claude Monet* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1992), 281.



Figure 23. Claude Monet, *Setting Sun*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 600 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

Reproduced from Musée de l'Orangerie, <http://www.musee-orangerie.fr> (Accessed April 27, 2016).



Figure 24. Claude Monet, *The Clouds*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 1275 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

Reproduced from Musée de l'Orangerie, <http://www.musee-orangerie.fr> (Accessed April 27, 2016).



Figure 25. Claude Monet, *Green Reflections*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 850 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

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Figure 26. Claude Monet, *Morning*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 1275 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

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Figure 27. Claude Monet, *Reflections of Trees*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 850 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

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Figure 28. Claude Monet, *Morning with Willows*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 1275 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

Reproduced from Musée de l'Orangerie, <http://www.musee-orangerie.fr> (Accessed April 27, 2016).



Figure 29. Claude Monet, *The Two Willows*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 1700 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

Reproduced from Musée de l'Orangerie, <http://www.musee-orangerie.fr> (Accessed April 27, 2016).



Figure 30. Claude Monet, *Clear Morning with Willows*, 1915-1926. Oil on canvas, 200 x 1275 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

Reproduced from Musée de l'Orangerie, <http://www.musee-orangerie.fr> (Accessed April 27, 2016).



Figure 31. Layout of Claude Monet's Giverny Estate. (Bottom: Water Garden)

Reproduced from Giverny-Vernon, <http://www.giverny.org> (Accessed April 27, 2016).

## APPENDIX A

*Claude Monet's Water Lilies, From Paintings To Dance*

Video documentation URL: [https://youtu.be/Cx5obTQe\\_S8](https://youtu.be/Cx5obTQe_S8) or <https://vimeo.com/167674013>