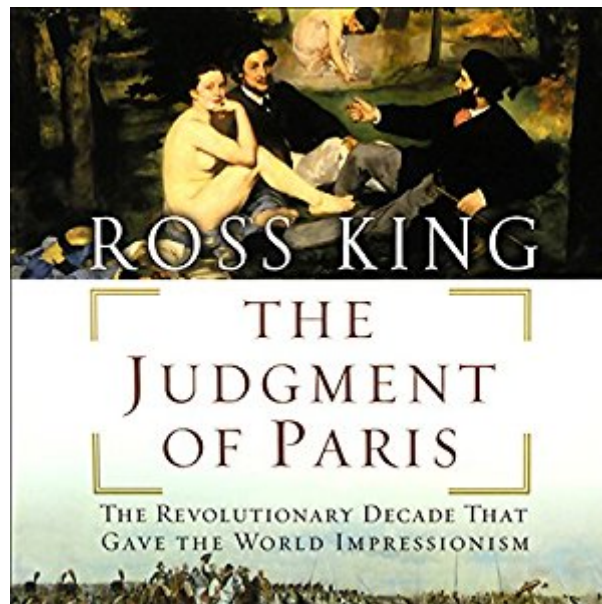


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# The Judgment Of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave The World Impressionism



## Synopsis

While the Civil War raged in America, another revolution took shape across the Atlantic, in the studios of Paris: The artists who would make Impressionism the most popular art form in history were showing their first paintings amidst scorn and derision from the French artistic establishment. Indeed, no artistic movement has ever been quite so controversial. The drama of its birth, played out on canvas and against the backdrop of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, would at times resemble a battlefield; and as Ross King reveals, it would reorder both history and culture, and resonate around the world. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ross King has written a fine book, rich in detail, which covers the emergence of the Impressionists against an engaging background of the political, military, scientific, and cultural trends of mid-19th century France. Perhaps unintentionally, he has also made a case for rehabilitating Ernest Meissonier, the painter whose reputation went into eclipse as the world went nuts over Manet, Monet, and their ilk. We are told that Meissonier possessed colossal self-regard and hauteur, but the details adduced in THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS show him to be: generous (he supported a bankrupted blacksmith and a poor woman in Antibes), forgiving (when his son damaged his most important canvas), an ally to other artists (he signed his name to a petition over restrictive judging rules), a meticulous craftsman (he made countless models and sketches and even grew a wheat field to be trampled so he could paint it), and, most especially, wise about the vagaries of posthumous reputations ("Life. How little it really comes to."). It is fine to argue now, as a fatuous NY

Times review did, that Meissonier's major work, *Friedland: 1807*, is "fussy," but attention must also be paid to the quote in King's book that sheds important light on the Impressionists: On page 196, Claude Monet says: "It really is appallingly difficult to do something which is complete in every respect, and I think most people are content with mere approximations." Meissonier emerges, like his paintings, in three dimensions; Manet, like his, in two. Manet is portrayed as petulant, mean, and petty, refusing at first even to meet Monet because of a belief that the younger man was stealing his name.

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