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Degas

Biography

- **Born:** July 19, 1834
Monet parallel
- By **age 19**, he turned his room into an art room, and had his **bachelors** degree.



- At age 21, he was accepted into Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

★ Bold Monet statement



- In **1856** Degas traveled to **Italy**, where he copied paintings done by **Michelangelo**, Raphael, Titian, and other artists of the Renaissance.
- Art used to be formal, exact, and **mandated**; an artist would copy other artists.



Biography: Continued

- For the next **15 years**, Degas made a living as an academic history painter.
- In **1970** he enlisted in the Franco-Prussian War.
- Shortly after his father passed away, and he had to sell his estate.

Here is where Degas' life gets difficult . . .

- Degas needed money, so he joined forces with **impressionist** artists.
- Impressionists cause a **scandal**; the art world and the public hated them.



- **Degas** even admitted that he did not like impressionist artists - he even **mocked** them!

Why would he join Impressionist artists, subject himself to the public's criticism even though he admitted to not liking them?

Discussion Question:

Is it okay morally or ethically to join a group just to be popular, or to use them just to make money?

- Degas denied being Impressionist; he claimed to be a student of realism.



Impressionist

- Off center Composition
- Use of bright colors (particularly white)
- Parisian life
- Association with Impressionist artists (Manet)

Realism

- Detailed figures
- Presence of dark colors and earth tones
- Did not paint “en plein air”
- Slow, blended brushstrokes



Degas: half impressionist, half academic.

- As Degas got older, he switched from paint to pastels.
- His **vision** became much worse, to the point that he started sculpting.

Why did he switch to sculpture, when he was trained his entire life to draw and paint?

- Ultimately, he never married and lived the rest of his life by himself.
- He died in 1917 in Paris of natural causes, wandering the streets seemingly lost and lonely.



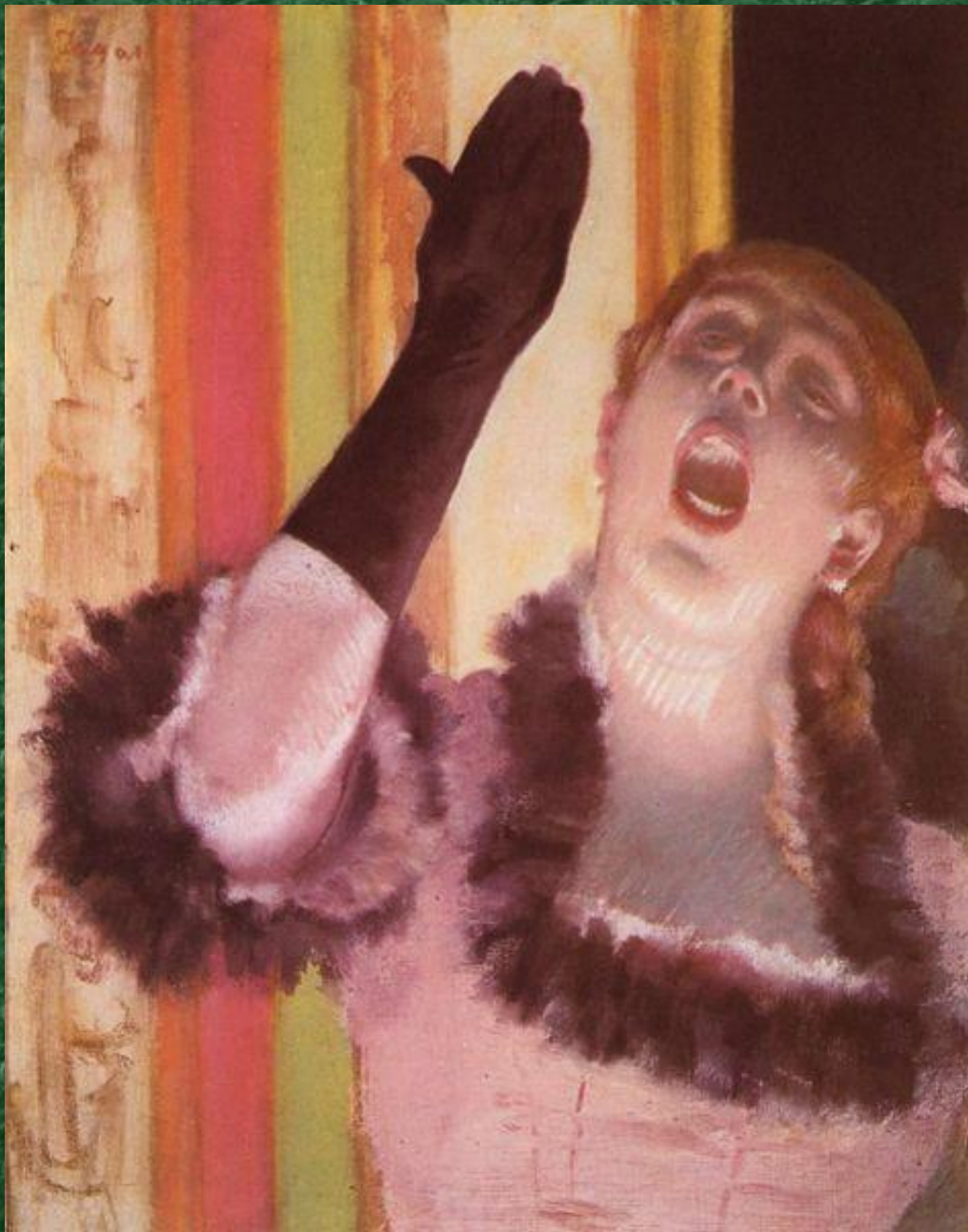
1860



1873



1876



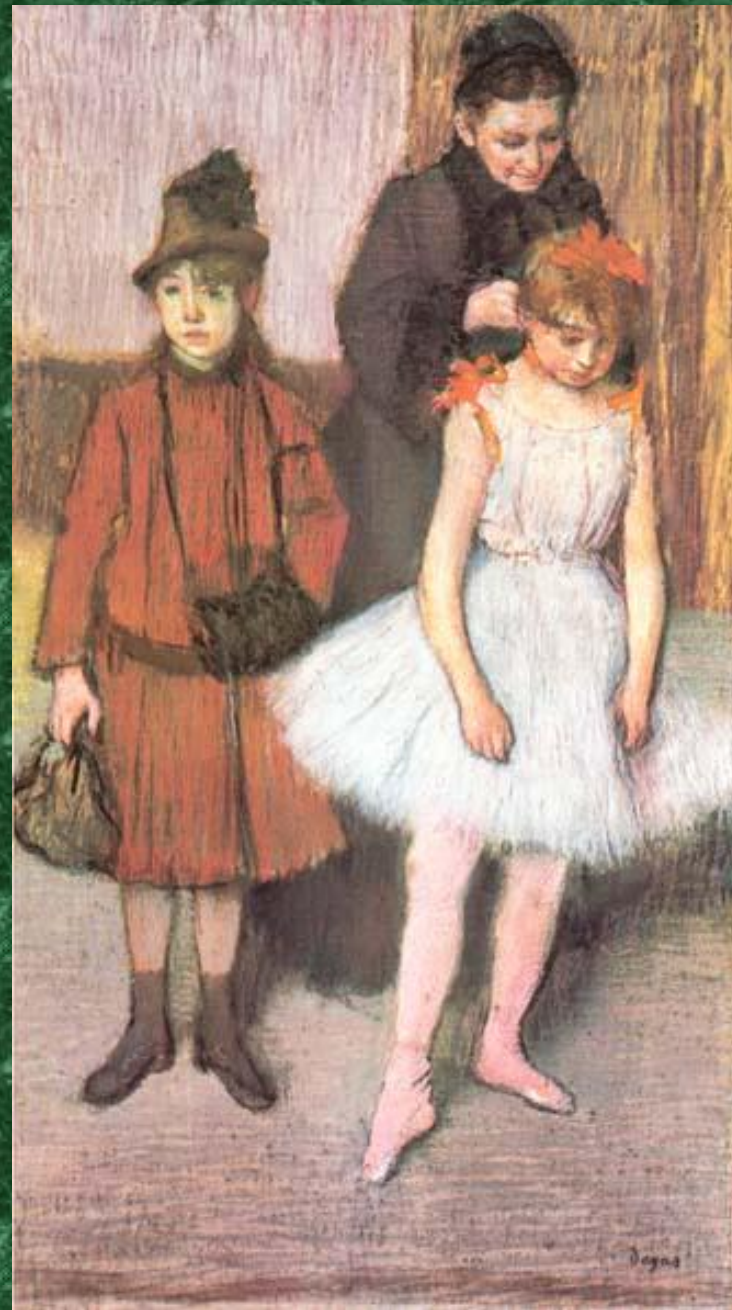
1878



1880



1860



1884

Degas Quotes

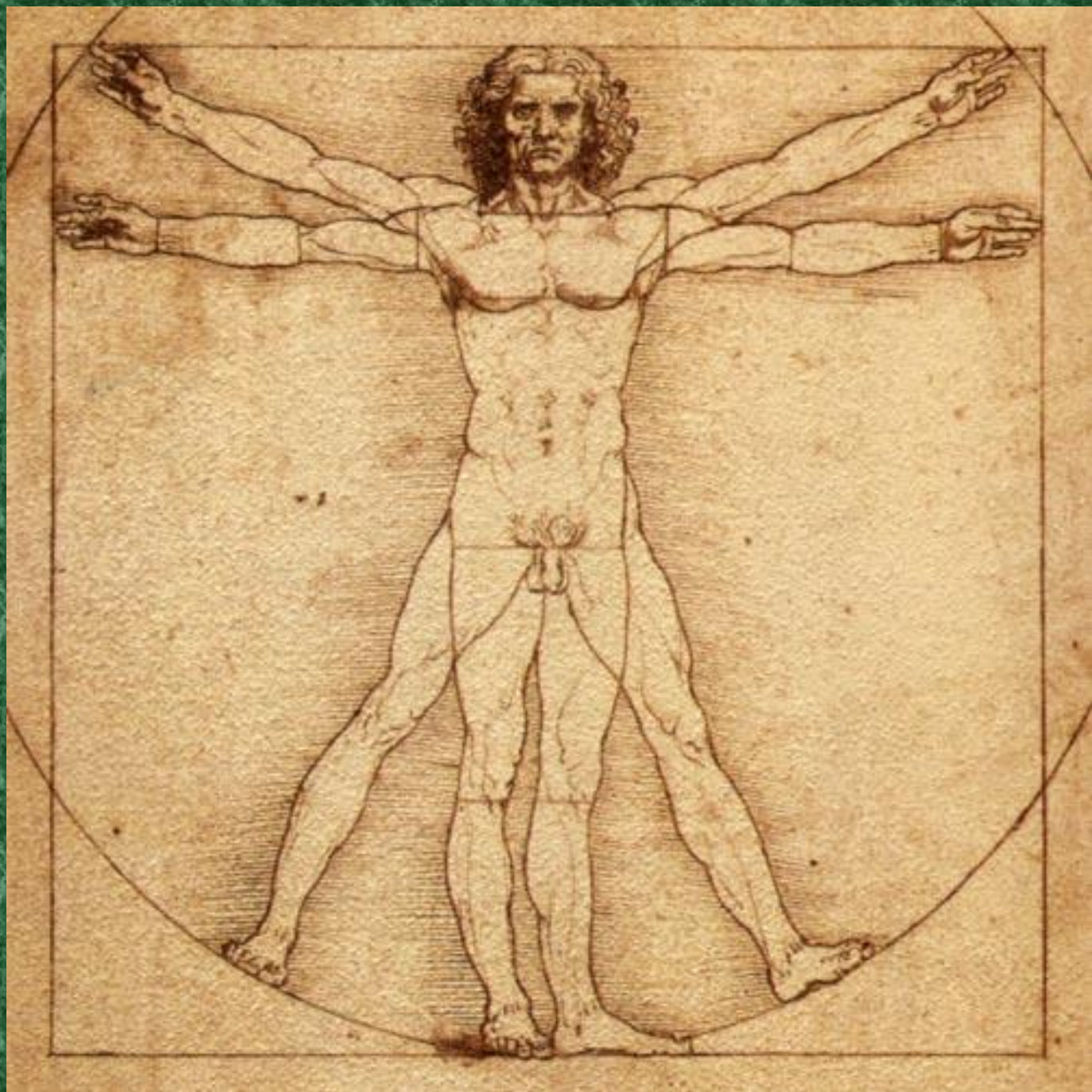
- “Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.”

“Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do.”

What does this mean?

Degas ultimately ended up sculpting figures, and that is what we will do as a class.





The average human is about 8 head heights tall, Most people are between 6 and 10.

One Head Height

The shoulders are about 2 head heights wide.

The waist is about 1 head height wide.

The legs are half of the body (In this case 4 head heights.)

