

## The French Masters Series

The Parkville Frame Gallery is pleased to offer **The French Masters Series**. This series features a collection of reproductions of paintings created by some of the most well-known French artists. Images from this series can be purchased either already pre-framed in our gallery, or we can order these, and many other images in a variety of sizes, and frame them to your specifications.



***Oath of the Horatii*** (1785)

Jacques-Louis David  
Louvre, Paris

**Date painted:** 1785

**How originally painted:** Oil on canvas

**Size:** 129.8 x 167.2 inches

**Where on display:** Louvre, Paris

**The Artist:** **Jacques-Louis David** (1748--1825) was a 19th-century painter who is considered to be the principal proponent of the Neoclassical style. His most famous works include "The Death of Marat" and "Napoleon Crossing the Alps." Although paintings such as *The Oath of the Horatii*, and *Death of Socrates* would come to be associated with the Revolution of 1789, David's earliest successes were iconic images of valor and noble deeds, commissioned by royal and aristocratic patrons, who adopted the classical style as the latest trend.

**The Art:** ***Oath of the Horatii*:** The story of *Oath of the Horatii* came from a Roman legend first recounted by the Roman historian Livy involving a conflict between the Romans and a rival group from nearby Alba. Rather than continue a full-scale war, they elect representative combatants to settle their dispute. The Romans select the Horatii and the Albans choose another trio of brothers, the Curatii. In the painting we witness the Horatii taking an oath to defend Rome.



***The Gleaners*** (1857)  
Jean-Francois Millet  
Musee d'Orsay, Paris

**Date painted:** 1857

**How originally painted:** Oil on canvas

**Size:** 33 x 44 inches

**Where on display:** Musee d'Orsay, Paris

**The Artist: Jean-François Millet** (French, 1814--1875) was a French painter renowned for his peasant subjects. Millet spent his youth working on the land, but by the age of 19 he was studying art in Cherbourg, France. In 1837 he arrived in Paris and eventually enrolled in the studio of Paul Delaroche, where he seems to have remained until 1839.

The peasant subjects, which from the early 1850s were to be Millet's principal concern, made their first important appearance at the Salon of 1848 with *The Winnower*, later destroyed by fire. In 1849, after a period of great hardship, Millet left Paris to settle in Barbizon, a small hamlet in the forest of Fontainebleau. He continued to exhibit paintings of peasants, and, as a result, periodically faced the charge of being a socialist. Letters of the period defending Millet's position underline the fundamentally classical nature of his approach to painting.

**The Art: *The Gleaners*** (1857) This painting immediately drew negative criticism from the French middle and upper classes, who viewed the topic with suspicion. To them it was a reminder that French society was built upon the labor of the working masses. Landowners linked this working class with the growing movement of socialism. The depiction of the working class in *The Gleaners* made the upper classes feel uneasy about their status. The masses of workers greatly outnumbered the members of the upper class. This disparity in numbers suggested that if the lower class were to revolt, the upper class could be overturned. With the French Revolution still fresh in the minds of the upper classes, this painting was not well received by them.



***Women with a Parasol*** (1875)

Claude Monet

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

**Date painted:** 1875

**How originally painted:** Oil

**Size:** 3' 3" x 2' 8"

**Where on display:** National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

**The Artist: Oscar-Claude Monet** (French, 1840--1926) was a founder of French Impressionist painting and the most consistent and prolific practitioner of the movement's philosophy of expressing one's perceptions before nature, especially as applied to plein air landscape painting.

**The Art: *Women with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son*** In this painting we see just that – a woman with a parasol, or an umbrella, and a child. Argenteuil was a popular place for families to go for walks, and that is what Monet painted. In the middle of the painting is the figure of a woman, his wife Camille. She stands on the top of a hill with a blue sky as a backdrop. His wife is wearing a white dress and jacket, which blows in the wind and twirls as she turns towards the viewer. Monet was a painter who experimented with light and color, and that can be seen in the color of the woman's clothes. She is wearing white, but because the sun is behind her, she is seen in shadow, and her white attire appears blue. In her hands, she holds a green umbrella, and she looks at the viewer. Farther down the hill, opposite the viewer, a young boy stands also looking to the viewer.



***The Young Shepherdess*** (1885)  
William-Adolphe Bouguereau  
San Diego Museum of Art

**Date painted:** 1885

**How originally painted:** Oil on canvas

**Size:** 62 inches x 28.5 inches

**Where on display:** San Diego Museum of Art

**The Artist:** **William-Adolphe Bouguereau** (French, 1825-1905) was an academic painter. In his realistic genre paintings he used mythological themes, making modern interpretations of classical subjects, with an emphasis on the female human body. During his life he enjoyed significant popularity in France and the United States, was given numerous official honors, and received top prices for his work.

**The Art:** ***The Young Shepherdess*** (French: *La jeune bergère*) was painted with subdued colors that convey a gentle peacefulness in the scene; the scene takes us back to the ideal view of a farmhand as she does her part to help with the livestock. She stands only with her sheep as they feed on a sea of grass near gentle rolling hills under an open sky. *The Young Shepherdess* helps to evoke a nostalgic feeling in the viewer. It calls to mind a simpler life from much simpler times than today, free from the worries of modern urban life.