

ALFRED SISLEY



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ALFRED SISLEY (1839-1899)

Printemps a Veneux

1880

Signed lower left, "Sisley"

oil on canvas

28 ¾ x 35 ¾ in. (73 x 90.8 cm)



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PROVENANCE

Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., Paris (acquired from the artist, by August 1891)
Paul Durand-Ruel, Paris (acquired from the above, 1901)
Private collection, Paris (by descent from the above, by 1959)
Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., Paris (acquired from the above, 16 January 1962)
Sam Salz, Inc., New York (acquired from the above, 23 January 1962)
Stephen Richard and Audrey Currier (by 1967)
Estate sale, Christie's, New York, 16 May 1984, lot 18
Howard B. Keck, Los Angeles (acquired at the above sale)
Sotheby's, New York, 6 November 1991, lot 4
Sale, Christies's New York, 8 May 2013
Richard Green Gallery, London
Private Collection, acquired from the above
Private Collection, Wyoming
Private Collection, Florida

EXHIBITION

Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Exposition de tableaux de Monet, Pissarro, Renoir & Sisley*, April 1899, no. 134 (titled *Le Printemps* and dated 1878).
Paris, Chambre Syndicale de la Curiosite des Beaux-Arts, *L'art francais au service de la Science francaise: exposition d'oeuvres d'art des XVIIIe, XIXe et XXe siecles*, April-May 1923, no. 224 (titled *Printemps* and dated 1878).
Paris, Musee des arts decoratifs, *Cinquante ans de peinture francaise, 1875-1925*, May-July 1925, no. 75 (titled *Les pommiers en fleurs* and dated 1882).
Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Tableaux de Sisley*, February-March 1930, no. 7 (titled *Paysage* and dated 1872).
Paris, Galerie Durand-Ruel et Cie., *Exposition de tableaux par Alfred Sisley*, January-February 1937, no. 29 (dated 1882).

LITERATURE

G. Geffroy, *Sisley*, Paris, 1923 (illustrated, pl. 8; titled *Le Printemps*)
G. Geffroy, *Sisley*, Paris, 1927 (illustrated, pl. 24)
J. Jedlicka, *Sisley*, Bern, 1949, p. 30, no. 22 (illustrated, pl. 22; titled *Fruhling*)
V. Gildaroni, *L'Impressionismo*, Milan, 1951, p. 152, no. 43 (illustrated, pl. 43; titled *Primavera* and dated 1878)
F. Daulte, *Alfred Sisley: Catalogue raisonne de l'oeuvre peint*, Lausanne, 1959, no. 356 (illustrated; with incorrect provenance)

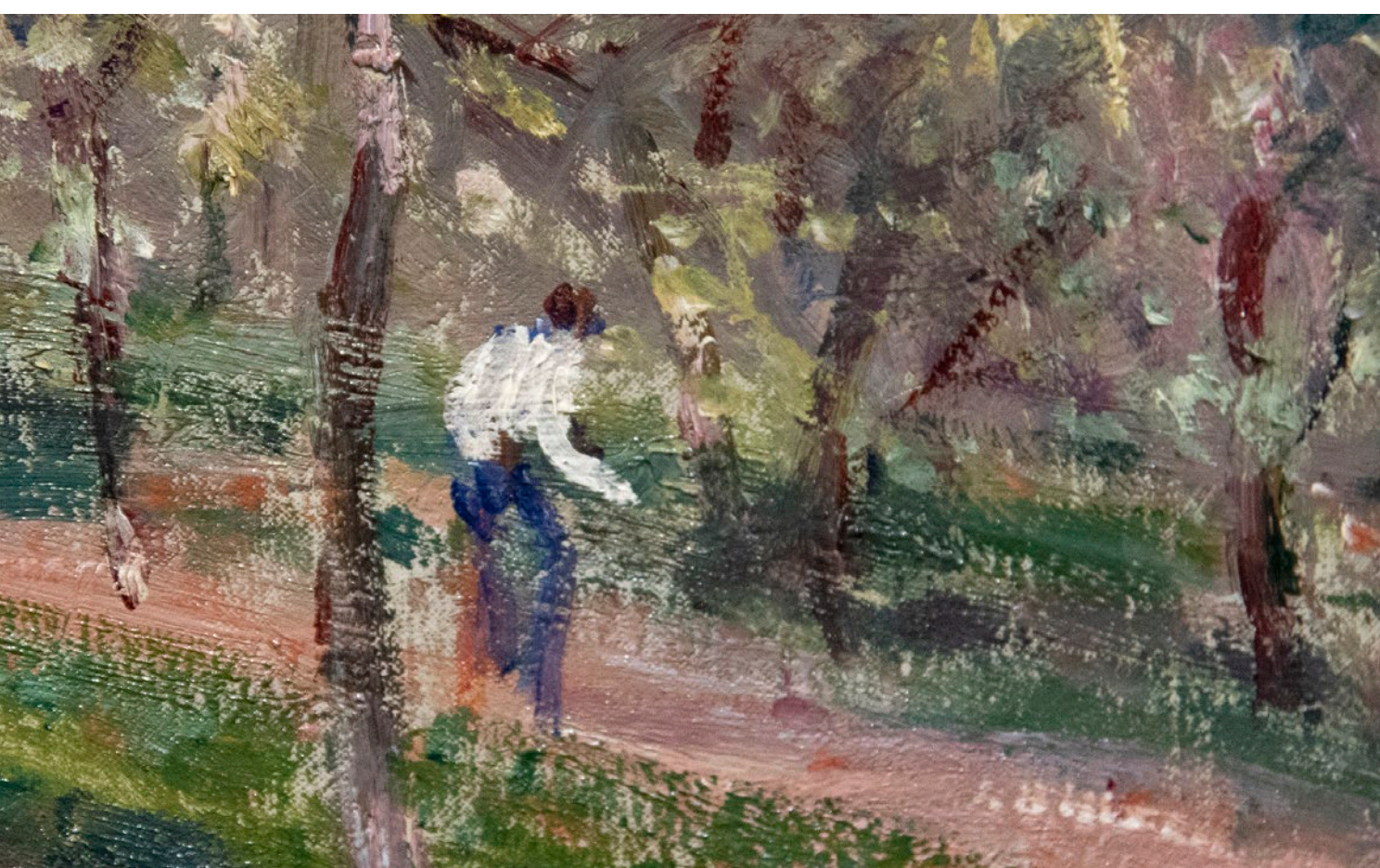
IMPORTANT FACTS

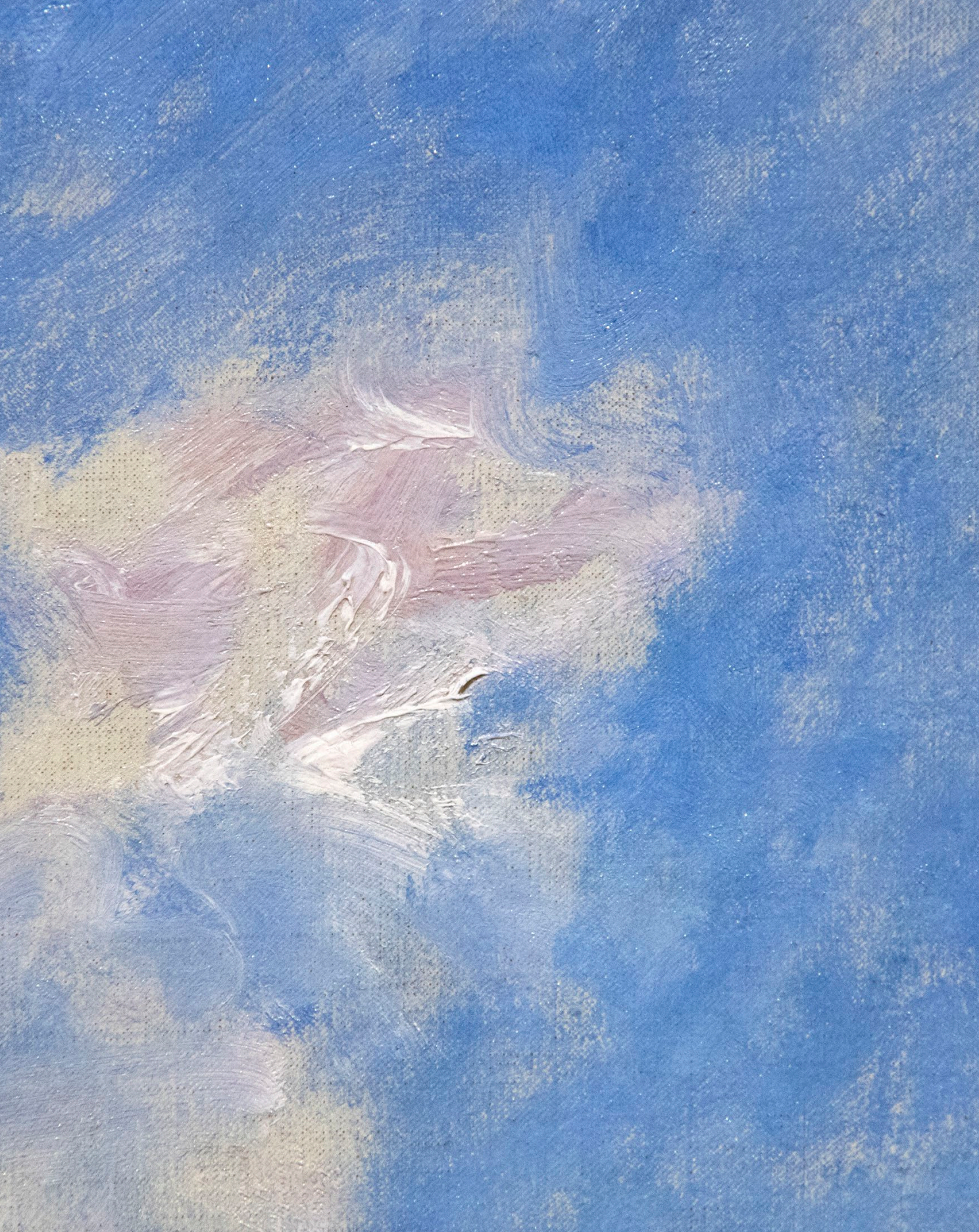
- Alongside Monet and Renoir, Sisley was a founding member of Impressionism and remained true to the principles of pure color, rendering fleeting moments and capturing the essence of atmosphere throughout his career. Unlike many of his contemporaries who traversed varied subjects of industrial urbanism, rural locals and figures, Sisley was enamored with the French countryside and focused almost entirely on this subject.
- Painting en plein air, directly onto a primed canvas outdoors, Sisley rarely reworked his paintings back in his studio. This mode of painting brings an immediacy to his work, particularly in *Printemps a Veneux*. He painted this piece in April of 1880 in Veneux-Nadon, a small village along the west bank of the Seine river.
- Cerulean skies with plush white clouds prevail in many of Sisley's paintings. The crisp Spring air rustling the leaves of the orchard in which Sisley placed his easel shifts the light across the grove, creating delightful patterns of shadow. The atmosphere of *Printemps a Veneux* is palpable. The large scale of the canvas is rare in Sisley oeuvre and enhances the immersive feeling.
- Two years after Sisley painted this work, Impressionist champion and patron Paul Durand-Ruel acquired the painting from the artist and was so delighted with it that he kept it in his private collection for decades. Three years after Sisley's death, Durand-Ruel finally exhibited *Printemps a Veneux* in an important 1899 Impressionist exhibition in his Parisian gallery.

DETAIL IMAGES









TOP PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



Effet de Neige à Louveciennes
1874

oil on canvas
21 ¼ x 25 ½ in. (53.9 × 64.7 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's London:
March 2017 for \$9,065,000**

Le Loing à Moret, en été
1891
oil on canvas
29 x 36 ½ in. (73.6 x 92.7 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's London:
February 2007 for \$5,746,000**



TOP PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



Moret au Coucher du Soleil, Octobre
1888

oil on canvas
29 x 36 ½ in. (73.6 x 92.7 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's London:
November 2015 for \$4,954,000**

Le Loing à Moret
1883
oil on canvas
20 x 26 in. (50.8 x 66 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's London:
November 2014 for \$4,869,000**



COMPARABLE PAINTINGS SOLD AT AUCTION



Le Loing à Moret
1886
oil on canvas
21 x 28 in. (54.4 x 73.5 cm)

**Sold at Christie's London:
June 2007 for \$4,257,575**

Bords du Loing Près de Moret
1892
oil on canvas
28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (73 x 92 cm)

**Sold at Sotheby's London:
June 2013 for \$4,512,367**



SISLEY PAINTINGS IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS



**Musée d'Orsay
Paris**

Lisière de Forêt au Printemps
1885
oil on canvas
28 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 29 in. (60.5 x 73.5 cm)

Philadelphia Museum of Art

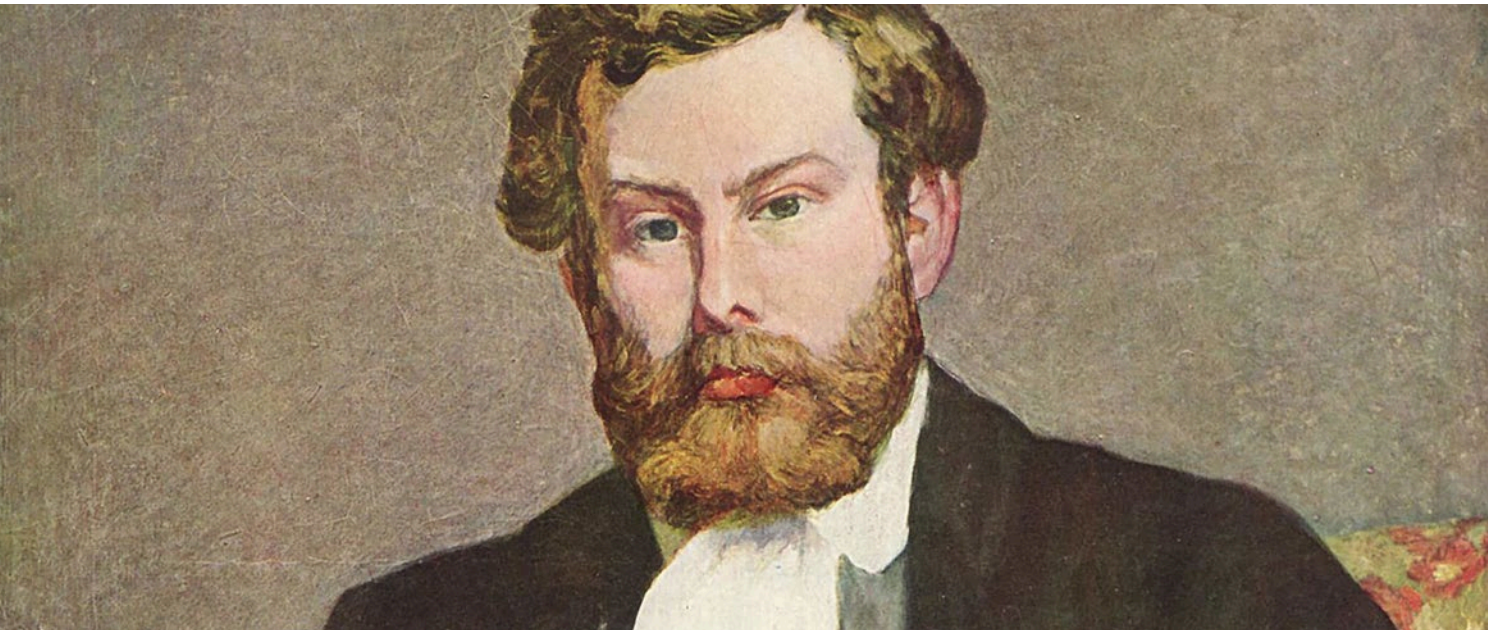
Banks of the Loing River
1885
oil on canvas
21 $\frac{11}{16}$ x 28 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (55.1 x 73.3 cm)



"I always start a painting with the sky."

Alfred Sisley

HISTORY



The Painter Alfred Sisley (detail) - Pierre-Auguste Renoir

Alfred Sisley played an important role in the Impressionist movement and developed his own visual language, receiving renewed interest and appreciation in recent years. His works speak across time because of his unique artistic vision.

In 1863, Sisley painted with Monet and Auguste Renoir en plein air (painting outdoors), and the experience changed the trajectory of his process. Landscapes make up the vast majority of Sisley's oeuvre, yet despite landscapes and painting en plein air being synonymous with Impressionism, most scholarly attention has been on his fellow artists' paintings of middle-class life. Their examinations of urban life, industrialization, and an expanding middle class has captured the attention and imagination of academics. It is this emphasis on landscape within

Sisley's body of work that separates him from the other impressionists. Paradoxically, it has both limited the study into Sisley and marked him, along with Monet, as chief representative of Impressionism.

In this 1880 painting, Sisley captures the spring air as nature emerges. Sisley painted this work in Veneux near Moret-sur-Loing. He had recently moved to the area from the Paris suburb of Sèvres due to financial hardship, but instead of rough times, the town helped instill new vitality in his paintings. The town was a source of inspiration for Sisley and his fellow Impressionists including Claude Monet.

Sisley traipsed throughout Veneux and Moret-sur-Loing, exploring every inch of its landscape and translating his sights onto the canvas. Unlike his close friend Monet who dashed to the coast for dramatic seascapes or utilized bold colors of his garden, Sisley preferred the gentle scenic atmosphere surrounding Paris; for the last decades of Sisley's life, Moret-sur-Loing and its environs would be almost exclusively the subject of his paintings. The resurgence in creativity for Sisley has been collected by museums throughout



Alfred Sisley (1839-1899)
Rue Eugène Moussoir at Moret: Winter
1891, oil on canvas, 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Alfred Sisley (1839-1899)
The Road from Moret to Saint-Mammès
1883-85, oil on canvas, 19 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



the world from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Musée d'Orsay in Paris to the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.

This painting contains many of quintessential hallmarks of Sisley – the dominance of an open sky, the light palette, the use of paths for composition. The sky was incredibly important to the artist and two thirds of the canvas is sky, providing an openness. But, by interrupting the visual plane with trees, the sky doesn't overwhelm. This is an idea Sisley would return to as seen in *The Small Meadows in Spring* in the National Gallery, London, and painted the same year as *Printemps à Veneux*.

Less an exact representation of spring in Veneux, Sisley creates in this work an atmospheric painting through the play of light, color, and brushstroke. The painting helps illustrate how through the 1880s Sisley's brushstrokes opened up, became freer and the colors more experimental. With just a few daubs of paint, he paints the figures within the scene not for realism but to give a sense of depth and perception.

One need only look at similar works like *The Road from Moret to Saint-Mammès* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see how Sisley returned to these ideas – the large skies, trees breaking up the canvas, a light color palette, and figures layering an additional atmospheric touch. In his endless exploration of the surrounding area, Sisley creates infinite iterations that are at once familiar and unique.

Perhaps it was his outsider status among the Impressionists as a French-born Brit that has caused some scholars overlook Sisley. In the renewed reconsideration of his place among his fellow artists, we are able to get a fuller image of what Impressionism could do and what its adherents could achieve. Not merely decorative, Sisley's landscapes are careful studies of light and atmosphere moving the traditional painting away from realism into new territory.

Alfred Sisley (1839-1899)
Les Petits Prés au printemps
1884, oil on canvas, 21 1/4 x 28 3/4 in.
Tate, London





Alfred Sisley, circa 1882



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