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Katherine Rothkopf, Richard R. Brettell, Charles S. Moffett : Impressionists on the Seine: A Celebration of Renoir's Luncheon of the Boating Party before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Impressionists on the Seine: A Celebration of Renoir's Luncheon of the Boating Party:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Best Book I Have Read about "The Luncheon of the Boating Party"By JamesI am a long time art lover and my favorite artist is Renoir and My favorite painting is "Luncheon of the Boating Party". This book provides a tremendous amount of information on the artist along with the other French Impressionist artists he knew and worked with. The book is the best I have read about Renoir's famous painting as it tells about the models and how the painting came into being. Also covered is how the impressionists gravitated to the river Seine and the subjects they painted. This is the book to have if you are lover of impressionist art. The bonus is the large amount of pictures of artwork by all the artists involved.3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Celebrating Lunch With Renoir and His FriendsBy Kenneth HughesThis is the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition of the same name at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., from September 1996 until February 1997. Impressionism is arguably the most celebrated artistic style in the world, and Renoir's canvas is probably the most celebrated painting in that style. When Duncan Phillips acquired it in 1923 from the Durand-Ruel Gallery, which had bought it from Renoir in 1881 immediately after its completion, he wrote to his new museum's treasurer that it was

"finer than any Rubens--as fine as any Titian or Giorgione" (233). Invidious distinctions and pride of ownership aside, he was unquestionably correct when he continued that "people will travel thousands of miles to our house to see it" (233 f.). People have indeed done that, and as the most famous work in the Phillips's collection, it was the best candidate for a "celebration" in commemoration of the Collection's seventy-fifth anniversary. The resulting catalogue is a visually splendid record of the exhibition; the cover text tells us that there are 177 illustrations and eighty-four in full color. There are sixty featured works, gathered from all over the world and arranged in roughly chronological order from Monet's "On the Bank of the Seine, Bennecourt" (1868) to his "Fishermen on the Seine at Poissy" (1882). These all have full-page reproductions with generally good color, although occasionally some of the blues seem to me a bit washed-out (and between sky and water, there is a lot of blue in these images--only three figure paintings of Renoir do not depict the river). The painters represented are Caillebotte, Manet, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Renoir, and Sisley. We have always known that they liked to paint the river, but to see so many fine pictures of the Seine gathered together (and to realize how many of them were made just in 1874 and 1875), is to perceive how almost obsessive the theme was among these artists. In the similar, but more recent, collection "Impressionists on the Water" (see the review on this website), Christopher Lloyd made the point that the reason the Impressionists paid so much attention to the Seine and the ocean was not just because of the opportunity they presented to study the effects of reflected light, but that they were simply following their program of representing life as it was currently being lived around them, and that water and water-sports were the new and affordable source of recreation and entertainment for the growing masses of the Parisian middle-class. In the most substantial of the four scholarly essays in the Phillips volume, Richard R. Brettell broadens that perception and demonstrates how deeply symbolic the Seine became for all of Parisian--and, thus, all of French--society in the nineteenth century. Not only the major painting, but also the major literature of the time, as represented by the works of Flaubert, Maupassant, and Zola, were suffused with images of the river, the "central aquatic boulevard" and pride of the most extensive system of inland waterways in all of Europe (87). In another essay, Charles S. Moffett discusses Renoir's painting as "An Icon of Modern Art and Life," virtually an embodiment of the values of "la France bourgeoise" and the society's newly developed self-consciousness after the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the establishment of more democratic institutions. In the two other introductory essays, Eliza Rathbone illuminates Renoir's canvas in the context of the evolution of French painting in the nineteenth century and its position in the artist's own life, and Katherine Rothkopf discusses the painters' use of the river for leisure and artistic purposes. These essays are all extensively supported by excellently chosen companion illustrations. There is also a report of the results of the first technical examination of the painting, undertaken in preparation for the exhibition and particularly revealing in the absence of any preparatory studies: Renoir extensively reworked almost every part of the canvas, primarily with a view, it seems, to making the party more intimate and its figures more closely involved with one another. The volume concludes with a short history of Duncan Phillips's acquisition of the painting and a list of its exhibitions, brief biographical sketches of the artists, an exhibition checklist, and a comprehensive index. Despite my reservations about the color in some of the reproductions, I think this is overall a very fine, informative, and useful catalogue, and I recommend it highly. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is a beautiful book with magnificent illustrations of Impressionist Art at the ...By readNreviewThis is a beautiful book with magnificent illustrations of Impressionist Art at the Phillips Gallery in DC, with special emphasis on "Luncheon of the Boating Party" by Renoir. I read the book "Luncheon of the Boating Party" by Susan Vreeland, and this was a wonderful accompaniment to the novel, which chronicles the summer that Renoir painted the picture and gives portraits of the friends and acquaintances he used as models. At the time, 1850, the Impressionists were not well regarded by the artistic community, and this large and beautifully rendered work was an answer to a review by Emile Zola denigrating the Impressionists. I have personally seen the painting in DC, and these books added to my experience. Great book!

Book by Rothkopf, Katherine, Brettell, Richard R., Moffett, Charles S.

From Publishers WeeklyThis exceptionally beautiful catalogue of an exhibition at the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., brings together the river scenes made along the banks of the Seine by French impressionists?Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Alfred Sisley, Gustave Caillebotte?between 1868 and 1882. It was along the Seine that these painters made breakthroughs with rapid, broken brushstrokes, a bright palette, explorations of light and color. They also delineated a broad socioeconomic mix of contemporary Parisians, while recording the incursions of industry, tourism and organized leisure activities on halcyon rural and suburban areas. Special attention is given to the techniques employed by Renoir in his monumental figure painting Luncheon of the Boating Party (1881). Essays by Rathbone, chief curator at the Phillips Collection, as well as other curators and scholars not only document the Seine's centrality to impressionism but also investigate its role as theme and symbol in Corot, Seurat and etcher Charles-Francois Daubigny, in French photography and in the writings of Flaubert, Zola and Guy de Maupassant. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.