

When one thinks “Impressionist”, one’s attention immediately focuses on Monet, Renoir or Degas. Rarely do the names Giovanni Fattori, Telemico Signorini or Silvestro Lega come up. Despite being overshadowed by the French, these and other Macchiaioli pioneered both freer paint application and the importance of the sketch or “impression” of an image on the eye and intellect. Their artistic movement was intimately connected to the political movements of the day, especially the struggle for independence from foreign rule and the unification of Italy. They were crucial in creating a national identity and preserving the country’s heritage.

Class #1. The Risorgimento and the Earliest Images of It

Class #2. Creating a National Identity in Paint

Class #3. The Lasting Influence and Legacy of the Macchiaioli

It would be helpful if you printed a copy of this document to bring to class so that you have the spelling of these unfamiliar names.

Here are most of the names of the Macchiaioli and some useful terms:

Cristiano Banti (1824-1904)
Vito D’Ancona (1825-1884)
Serafino De Tivoli (1826-18920)
Guiseppe Abbati (1836-1868)
Adriano Cecioni (1836-1886)
Telemaco Signorini (1835-1901)

Giovanni Fattori (1825-1908)
Silvestro Lega (1826-1895)
Vincenzo Cabianca (1827-1902)
Odoardo Borrani (1833-1905)
Raffaello Sernesi (1838-1866)
Pellizza Volpedo (student of Fattori)

Risorgimento (the movement name given to the liberation and unification of Italy)

Caffe Michelangiolo (cafe where the Macchiaioli met in Florence)

Castiglioncello (seaside town where the Macchiaioli painted)

Volturno, Magenta, Palestro, Solferino, Villafranca (famous battles in the liberation/unification)

Maremma (swampy area in southern Tuscany, a beloved subject of the painters)

Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Baron Ricasoli (prime movers in the unification of Italy)

House of Savoy: Vittorio Emanuele II. King of Italy

Alessandro Manzoni author of *The Betrothed* famous novel of the Risorgimento

Bibliography if you are interested: Most literature on the Macchiaioli is written in Italian but there are two useful books in English:

Albert Boime *The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento*. (Very good and complete)

Norm Broude *The Macchiaioli: Academicism and Modernism in 19th Century Italian Painting* (she feels that the Macchiaioli were “failed” impressionists)