

Robert Duncan v. Claude Monet

By Marilyn Reeves

I'm not an artist in the true sense of the word. The few originals that I come up from time to time usually go back on the shelf to be used as future paint-overs. But through the years I have developed a reasonable degree of skill as a 'copyist.'

Thanks to the miracle of the Internet, I have virtually unlimited access to all kinds of pictures. I simply go to Google Images, type in the name of the artist or the subject matter I'm searching for, and, *voilà!* – thousands of images at my fingertips. I also receive daily samplings from Pinterest. If I click on one I'm interested in, I have access to thousands more. Obviously, I don't have time to look at them all, but will scan through several on-line pages of pictures from time to time, and save the ones I like to my file. I can pull one up and print it out whenever I'm ready to paint it.

I went through a phase in which I was doing a lot of Robert Duncan paintings. He's a modern painter known for his Western-themed pictures, but the ones I like best are those he has done of his wife and children on their farm in Utah. My all-time favorite is the one called 'Anniken and the Cows.' It shows this tiny little girl, who can't be more than three years old, passing by a group of cows standing behind a wire fence. You can almost feel the energy of that cute little girl and the curiosity of those cows as they watch her trekking by.

I've also gone through phases in which I attempted to paint some of the works by the classical European masters. I've done a few by Johannes Vermeer, and have observed that virtually all of his paintings were done in the same room with the same window on the left-hand side of the picture. Except for his renowned 'Girl with the Pearl Earring,' which simply shows her portrait against a black background.

I've copied a few paintings by Renoir, and yes, I even did one of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Mona Lisa.' Dare I say I really don't see what all the fuss is about? I like his depiction of the Last Supper a whole lot better. I attempted to replicate that one, too.

More often than not, when I am perusing the paintings I find on line, I am drawn to those done by Claude Monet. Not just his countless depictions of waterlilies at his Garden at Giverny, but his landscapes, seascapes, and villas. Perhaps it's the soft pastels I'm attracted to, or his unique approach to form and balance. But I find I've done more paintings by Monet than by anyone else.

So, who is my favorite artist – Robert Duncan or Claude Monet? It all depends on my mood.