# MARY CASSATT (1845-1926)

Mary Cassatt - Self Portrait

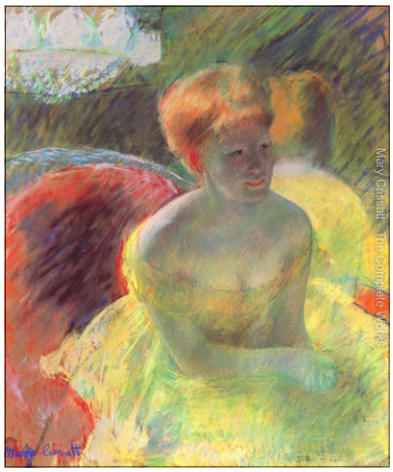
American painter, born in Allegheny City, near Pittsburgh. She grew up in a very cultivated environment and in 1861, she entered Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. During a stay in France in 1868, she decided to become a painter, notwithstanding her parents' disagreement and in 1872, she went to Europe, reaches Madrid where she got enthiusiastic with the Rubens paintings at the Prado museum. She settled down in Paris definitively in 1874.

She was very interested in modern art evolution at this time and got nearer to impresonnists. She regularly exhibited her paintings at the *Grand Salon de Paris* where her work was noticed by Degas.

In 1877, the Salon refused her work and Degas proposed her to join the impressionnist movement (who exercised no censorship upon creations).

From this moment on, she took an active part in her new friends activities : Manet, Renoir, Monet, Pissaro.

The press will devote some articles to her paintings that she will have exhibited in the frame of this movement. Thanks to her fortune, she will participate in making impressionnists known in the United States and in the world, multiplying her trips for the sake of this paiting's influence.

Although Mary Cassats studied the most varied themes, she is particularly considered as the « mother and child » painter. Contrary to academic paintings of the time with their set attitude that give to mothers the appearance of antique heroins and to children, airs of little pages full of their importance, she gives to her characters natural gestures, smiles that illuminate a familiar scenery and expressions of mutual tenderness.

In 1900, her eyesight began to decline and she was obliged to renounce painting in 1914.