



## Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters

*By Barbara Ehrlich White*

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### **Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters** By Barbara Ehrlich White

During the seventy-eight years of his life, Pierre-Auguste Renoir painted thousands of paintings and made uncounted drawings, watercolors, and sketches. Behind this prodigious output, rivaling even Picasso's, is a lifetime of struggle and anguish seldom hinted at in the work of this "happy painter." His efforts to find a new art to match his vision of the world created by light and warmth are vividly and intimately chronicled here through his letters and those of his friends and patrons.

Barbara Ehrlich White, a renowned Renoir scholar, devoted more than twenty years to searching out unpublished letters and documents that reveal his life as an artist and as a man. First published in 1984, her book was praised for its comprehensive yet intimate history of Renoir's life and work. Now back in print, White's classic book brilliantly contrasts the story of Renoir's personal battle against crippling arthritis—as well as his loss of favor with old patrons dissatisfied when he developed a new style—with the joyous gratification of the senses that flows from his canvases. She captures both the underlying traditionalism of his training and his audacious breakthrough in style, subject, and technique.

This uniquely documented tribute to Renoir, with its lavish illustrations, including three gatefolds, is the essential Renoir.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, Books of the Times, November 28, 1984, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt: "One of the two most impressive art books of the year . . . Barbara White's documentary life of Renoir serves to integrate the joyful oeuvre with the not always so happy times of the artist."

TIME MAGAZINE: "A thorough and commendably lucid biography of the great French painter."

BOSTON GLOBE, Art critic Robert Taylor: "RENOIR. . . is a remarkable task of scholarship accomplished by a Tufts scholar who has sifted through hundreds of letters and basic source materials concerning the artist. But it is also a highly readable account, which ought to change the way we look at Renoir."

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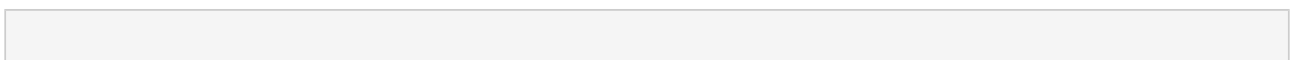
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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

This stunning book is a lavish celebration of Renoir's life, exploring his early formative years and his rapid progression into one of the world's most highly respected Impressionist painters. More than 250 of the artist's better known works are reproduced with amazing clarity, and are a testament to Renoir's diverse talent and imagination. From his subtle, tender images of children in paintings such as *Girls at the Piano* and *The Letter*, to his full-textured and opulent paintings such as *Sleeping Odalisque* and *Ode to Flowers*, Renoir really was the Workman of Painting. --*Naomi Gesinger*

### Review

"White's biography lets us look at Renoir's life work in an entirely new light. Hundreds of letters by the painter, his friends, critics, and patrons -- many previously unpublished, most in English for the first time -- offer a first-hand glimpse of his frustrations and triumphs." --PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (*added by author*)

Art critic Robert Taylor: "RENOIR. . . is a remarkable task of scholarship accomplished by a Tufts scholar who has sifted through hundreds of letters and basic source materials concerning the artist. But it is also a highly readable account, which ought to change the way we look at Renoir." --Boston Globe (*added by author*)

Lisa Lane: "Barbara White, a renowned Renoir scholar, masterfully contrasts his difficulties as an individual with the gentle, colorful works he produced .... The text [is] a delight to read." --Christian Science Monitor (*added by author*)

Art critic Edward J. Sozanski: "White's . . . biography of the most popular of the impressionists, a project that took 23 years to complete, is not only timely but practically required reading. The most comprehensive examination of Renoir's life yet, it relies heavily on original sources, particularly letters. White has uncovered nearly 1,000 of the latter, including 213 previously unpublished ones .... RENOIR is a testament to White's industriousness." --Philadelphia Inquirer (*added by author*)

Malcolm Forbes: "Stunning reproductions and extraordinary scholarship that correlates beautifully the life and letters of Impressionism's most widely appreciated master." --Forbes Magazine (*added by author*)

Lee Grove: "Barbara Ehrlich White, a Tufts professor who has already won an Emmy for a television script on the life of Renoir, goes for gold once again with the handsome result of 20 years of research: this sturdy biography and appreciation of the impressionist master." --Boston Magazine (*added by author*)

Books of the Times, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt: "Barbara White's documentary life of Renoir serves to integrate the joyful oeuvre with the not always so happy times of the artist." --The New York Times (*added by author*)

Wendy Smith: "Tracking these sources down and organizing them into a coherent whole was a task of monumental proportions." --Author Interview in Publishers Weekly (*added by author*)

"A thorough and commendably lucid biography of the great French painter." --Time Magazine (*added by author*)

Review by Art Historian Gabriel P. Weisberg, "The book remains a compassionate, articulate and moving survey of a very complex figure. After reading the text, one's perceptions of Renoir's place in art history and his significance as a human being are significantly altered and enlarged... .The book goes far towards clarifying his place and contribution without sacrificing the mechanics of scholarship. This volume shows Renoir demystified and humanized by considering how he actually created and what he was thinking at pertinent phases of his life." --The Burlington Magazine (*added by author*)

#### About the Author

Barbara Ehrlich White was a member of the Tufts University faculty from 1965–2002, where she lectured on art history. In addition to *Renoir: His Life, Art, and Letters*, first published in 1984, White is the author of Abrams's *Impressionists Side By Side* and numerous journal articles. In the course of her career, she won numerous grants and awards, and wrote several television scripts on Renoir, one of which won an Emmy.

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**William Matthews:**

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