FS Colour Series: Light Blue Inspired by Claude Monetâ??s Poplar Skies

Description

Claude Monet, Poplars, 1891

The airy, breezy shade of LIGHT BLUE fabric made its way into many of Claude Monetâ??s most celebrated paintings, describing the soaring, luminescent skies of spring and summer in his native France. In particular, the colour came to play a key role in Monetâ??s famed â??Poplarsâ?? series, made from spring to autumn 1891. In total Monet made 23 studies of the same poplar trees lined up along the River Epte, conveying their fleeting, fragile qualities before they were later removed, thus reinforcing Monetâ??s deep understanding for natureâ??s impermanence. He said, â??For me a landscape hardly exists at all a landscape, because its appearance is constantly changing; but it lives by virtue of its surroundings, the air and the light which vary continually.â?•

FS Light Blue Signature Finish Midweight 100% Linen

The 1890s were a prolific decade for Claude Monet, during which time he made numerous series of paintings, capturing the same subject in varying times of day and year in order to convey how the shifting patterns of nature can entirely alter our perceptions of the real world. In 1891, a group of poplars planted in even intervals along the banks of the River Epte near Monetâ??s home in Giverny caught the artistâ??s eye, particularly when he heard that they were to be auctioned off and felled. During the sale, Monet persuaded the buyer to let him paint the trees over a period of several months before they were destroyed.

Each painting Monet made in this series was produced *en plein air,* allowing him to respond intuitively to shifting hues and tones in the trees and the sky while working up multiple canvases in a single day â?? he was so precise with his rendering of the given moment, that at times he had mere minutes to work on a canvas before the sunlight shifted. Monet even made many of the paintings in a makeshift floating studio on a barge, which meant he move closer to the trees, but it also allowed him to see, and paint, the sensation of endless sky reflected in the surface of the water, and the slim, shimmering trees and coarse grasses as a point of contrast between them.

Claude Monet, Poplars Four Trees, 1891

In *Poplars,* 1891, the sky blends from pale, pastel blue across the water and horizon line to a darker, night-time blue, suggesting the gradual encroachment of evening. Meanwhile the tall, slim trees seem to waver gently as if caught in the breeze, their pale green and sandy hued trunks acting as an appealingly subtle point of contrast, while also lending them a fleeting frailty.

In *Poplars Four Trees,* 1891, Monet paints four of the poplar trees as stark, purple silhouettes against the breezy blue sky, making them appear more monumental and permanent. The criss-crossed marks of angry, grassy reeds in purple and dark green are noisy against the crystalline sky, and speak of an early autumn evening as a chill begins to tinge the air.

Claude Monet, Poplars on the Bank of the Epte River, 1891

Poplars on the Bank of the Epte River, 1891, meanwhile, is freer and more expressive, with bristling, flickering brushstrokes that conjure up the sensation of wind rustling throughout the entire scene. Here Monet contrasts the ambient, light-infused blue sky with an array of golden hues, as if the trees have been lit up momentarily by a glowing sunset just out of view. Much like the sky, whose blue hue is being slowly engulfed by darkness, so too will the trees eventually make their way into the shade, and Monet shows us, once, again, how rare and fleeting such moments of awe and wonder in the great outdoors can be.

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Date Created
March 21, 2025
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