

Camille Pissarro's Late Self-Portraits and The Mirror Stage of Old Age

Shira Gottlieb

This article analyzes the late self-portraits of French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) in light of Leni Marshall's argument on the positive potential of misrecognition—the psychological outcome of Kathleen Woodward's concept of the Mirror Stage of Old Age. Around the age of seventy, Pissarro, predominantly known as a landscape painter, was compelled to abandon working outdoors due to a chronic eye infection. Two of his three self-portraits from this period were executed with the aid of a mirror, depicting the artist in an interior setting with a window revealing an urban landscape. I suggest that Pissarro channels the physical limitations he faced due to age and health into new modes of production and expression, as conveyed in these portraits. Additionally, this article considers Pissarro's self-portraits within the framework of Old Age Style, proposing that his adaptation to new practices represents a metamorphosis of OAS—not in traditional formalistic terms, but rather in terms of creativity and practice.

Much has been written on self-identity as a cultural construction, and aging (Brandtstädter and Greve; Herzog and Markus; Kaufman; de Medeiros). Such ideas are also echoed in written narratives, in first person, by both men and women. In her book, *The Coming of Age*, sixty-two-year-old Simone de Beauvoir contends that she always felt younger than her biological age. She argues that the acknowledgment of one's advanced age comes from our surroundings and describes how startled she was to hear a young man referring to her as an old woman. For her, the older self is an “other” that exists within us (de Beauvoir 283-288). Other examples described similar situations. Sigmund Freud notes how, on one occasion, it took him a few moments to recognize that the old

man in his train wagon was in fact him, reflected in the mirror (Strachey 248). Likewise, in *Time Regained*, fifty-year-old Marcel Proust refers to himself as a “young man,” only to see others giggle (292). Age, as is evidenced, is a complex matrix that combines the perception of the self, together with the way others see and react to us, based on our physical appearance. For this reason, the self-portrait is a unique vehicle for artists, enabling them to simultaneously explore their internal and external identities (see, for example, Kampmann).

Older figures have always been present in Western visual art. Aristocrats and wealthy elderly were usually depicted in commissioned portraits, while anonymous older figures appear in genre paintings or as representations of allegories for vices and virtues. These included personifications of time, negative stereotypes, and/or social injustice. Since the early modern era, we also see older artists depicting themselves in self-portraits (see, for example, Laneyrie-Dagen; Banerjee et al.; Disport; Swinnen). This not only provides new modes of representations of elderly figures but also coincides with the shift in the artist's position from an anonymous craft maker to “an artist,” known by his or her name, and with the emergence of the notion of the self. Such self-portraits were the subject of multiple studies on the physical and facial, in particular, manifestations of old age (see Abastado et al.; Espinel; Marcus and Clarfield).

However, self-portraiture reveals more than just the physical features of the artist, especially when old age is in question. The word *self-portrait* or *autoportrait*, which implies a self-reflexive act of the artist, is relatively new and first appeared in French dictionaries only in 1928. Up until then, such paintings were simply known as “a portrait of the artist painted by himself” (Williams 4). Indeed, art historians today typically tend to read self-portraits as not merely a visual depiction of the artist's external features but more as a psychological introspective and as an expression of an artist's interiority, as he or she perceives

it (Williams; Silverman; Chapman). This article examines psychological aspects of self-portraiture in old age by considering the late self-portraits of French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro's (1830-1903) as case studies. While the self-inspection of one's specular image in old age may give rise to negative emotions and feelings of misrecognition, I argue that, in Pissarro's case, it leads to new modes of artistic productivity, particularly when viewed in light of his earlier works. This article ties together psychological theories and formalistic interpretation of works of art to allow a comprehensive reading that relates to art as an expressive and personal vehicle used by the artist.

The research on productivity and old age is often examined under the theoretical framework of "Old Age Style" which attempts to identify stylistic shifts and characteristics in the production of older artists (see Clark; Cohen-Shalev "*Both Worlds*"; Galenson; Lindauer; Said; McMullan and Smiles). The term, which was coined in 1925 and usually refers to painters, musicians, and authors, remains very vague and prone to various interpretations and disputes, such as to whom this term applies and what age is old age. Among the main criteria that are often mentioned in the study of Old Age Style in the plastic arts are formalistic characters, such as intensive expression, loose style, indifference to contemporary stylistic norms, and lack of finish (Cohen-Shalev, "In Praise of" 99). But if, indeed, such a stylistic trend can be identified, is it possible to similarly identify a "Young Age Style?" Seventeenth-century French painter Nicolas Poussin's (1549-1665) hands started shaking when he was in his fifties and, by the time he was in his sixties, the trembling became uncontrollable and distinctly noticeable in his drawings and letters. His last painting, *Apollo and Daphne* (1663-4, Fig. 1) was completed just before his death and clearly lacks the finish and detail level that characterize his earlier works. Titian (Tiziano Vecellio, c.1490-1576) lost acuity in eyesight towards the end of his life which is noticeable in the shapes, color palette, and detail in his later works. However,

as Philip Sohm argues, artistic style is more than merely a neurological condition or motor skills, even though trembling hands and deteriorating eyesight may produce similar outlines (63). The problem with Old Age Style, as far as I see it in reference to painting, is the somehow positivistic attempt to identify formalistic change and ascribe it to old age while neglecting other factors like a natural stylistic development throughout a painter's career or even economic motives. Older Titian, for example, returned to old paintings and reproduced them—a practice that was employed by many famous artists at that time. The quick and loose style he used could be explained as an Old Age Style but also—given his preoccupation with money during his old age—as a cheap and quick way to make money. Such an accusation, which was suggested by Pietro Aretino who was a friend of the artist, is not far-fetched, even though Titian was a wealthy man (Sohm 89-91). Circumstances that relate to old age may indeed affect the productivity of older artists but not necessarily in formalistic style, rather, as this article argues, in various practices which depart from a generic view of productivity in old age and incorporate one's individual and personal experiences of old age.

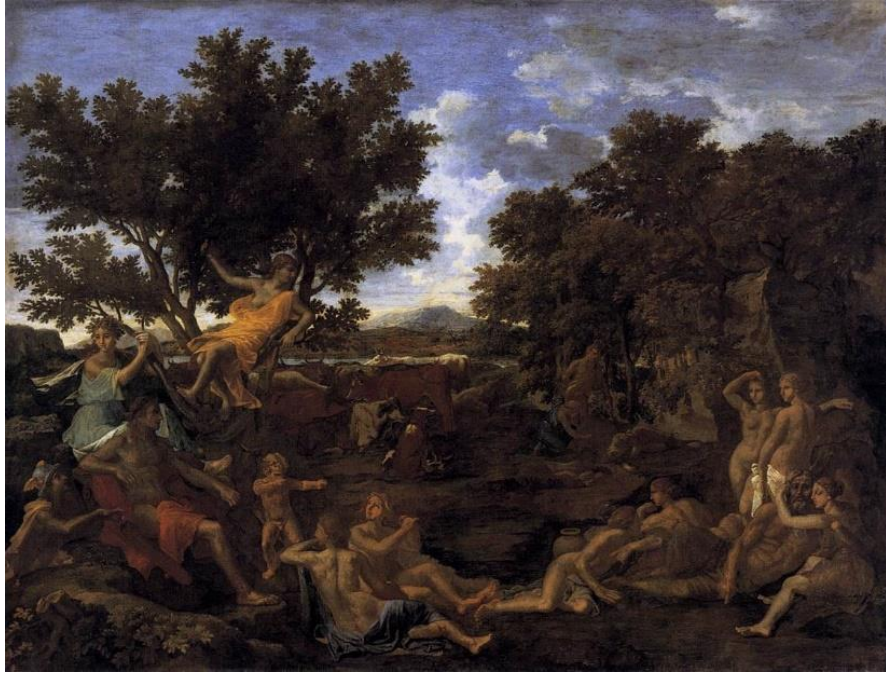


Figure 1: Nicolas Poussin, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1663-64.

Camille Pissarro, an Impressionist Landscape Painter

Camille Pissarro was born in 1830 in St. Thomas, then a Danish territory, to a Jewish family of French and Portuguese origins. His interest in painting developed at a young age and, in 1855, he settled in France to pursue his artistic career. Often nicknamed “the dean of Impressionist painters,” as he was older than his fellow Impressionists, Pissarro co-organized and participated in all of the group’s eight exhibitions (Rewald 9). The Impressionist exhibitions were an innovative initiation designed to undermined the monopoly of the official Salon exhibitions—organized by the Académie des Beaux-Arts—in dictating artistic tastes. The methods and subject matters that were promoted by the Académie were seen by the Impressionists as outdated and irrelevant to their time. Instead of heroic history paintings or mythological scenes that were seen as the most appropriate genres for art, they turned to private, individual, “here and now” scenes that show modern aspects of their daily lives, such as a busy Parisian street scene or a lodge at the opera. Correspondingly, they strove to find new

artistic practices that would be best suited to capture these scenes and developed a sketchy style, characterized with rapid and abbreviated brushstrokes, as clearly visible in the works of Pissarro. This technique was largely seen as blurry and lacking any finish, especially when compared to traditional Salon paintings. Moreover, color was highly important to the Impressionists; for them, it was the articulation of an attempt to capture the sensory experience of the eye, that is, the blotches of color reflected from an object and absorbed by the retina before the intervention of the brain and the process of deciphering the sights. As the jury of the Salon would reject such formalistic style from the official exhibitions, the Impressionists united in alternative, self-organized ones.

Although they sought to undermine institutional establishments, many of them were still economically dependent on the selling of their works by art dealers, most famously Paul Durand-Ruel. As reflected in Pissarro's letters, the pressure to meet the public demand and sell, deemed the Impressionists' paintings as a commodity per se. This aspect of Impressionism highlights their political goals that, on the one hand, came out against the official institution and tradition, venerated individualism, and the freedom to create and display art, but on the other hand, still adhered to satisfy public tastes.

Nature painting was among the prominent subject matters explored by the Impressionists: a genre that the Académie regarded as inferior to history painting, portraiture, and even genre painting. Yet, for the Impressionists, it was a locus through which they could explore the effects of light and a shimmering atmosphere. They painted outside, *en plein air*, in an attempt to capture the fleeting moment of a changing light effect and atmosphere at a specific time of the day and year. Although artists have painted nature from direct observations for centuries, the traditional practice involved preparing *in-situ* studies only as a basis for the final composition that was executed in the studio. In contrast, the

Impressionists painted the entire work outside, on site, without any preliminary studies.

Correspondingly, throughout his artistic career, Pissarro's main subject matter was undoubtedly landscape painting, both rural and urban, which he painted *en plein air*. However, towards the age of sixty, he developed a chronic eye infection which continued to bother him until his death, as he often mentions in his letters (see Rewald 34, 43; Brettell and Pissarro xxviii). This condition prevented him from staying outdoors for long periods of time and therefore, from painting in the open air. Pissarro adjusted to this new reality forced upon him by working indoors, depicting cityscapes seen from the windows of the lodgings in which he stayed. He produced over three-hundred paintings of urban views, such as the Boulevard Montmartre and Rue Saint-Honoré in Paris, rue de l'Épicerie in Rouen, and harbor views of Dieppe and Le Havre at different times of the day and year.

Nevertheless, the change Pissarro was going through due to his physical condition was more than just a technical matter; it was one that involved, or rather initiated by, personal and psychological aspects. I argue that while working indoors, in addition to his ongoing interest in landscapes, Pissarro also explored his own identity as an aging artist that consisted of his external image as an older man, and of his inner perception and self-identity as a landscape painter. Furthermore, I show that through this identity inspection, Pissarro channels the physical limitations he was facing due to old age and health issues—which clearly affected his artistic practices—to new modes of production and expression. In other words, I seek to demonstrate how Pissarro's old age and disability allowed him to explore innovative methods of artistic creation.

Pissarro's urban cityscapes, those painted indoors due to his physical condition as well as earlier landscapes painted outdoors, show no traces or evidence of the position and location of the artist. They neither disclose the

surface from which he was painting, like window frames or any other evidence of Pissarro's physical position. Furthermore, his compositions seem to be painted from multiple positions at the same time, sometimes from an aerial viewpoint to such an extent that, in the 1870s, his paintings were criticized for being disorienting, and that the viewer had to struggle to establish a seamless connection between his or her physical presence and the depicted scene (DeLue). Yet, in two of his late self-portraits, painted from lodgings where he was forced to stay due to his disability, the artist gives himself away and provides a clear view and perspective of the interior in which he was working. In the unfinished portrait which now hangs in the Dallas Museum of Art (Fig. 2), Pissarro is standing with a palette in his right hand, while his left one is lifted towards the assumed canvas in order to paint. Behind him is an interior of a room in the Grand Hôtel du Louvre in Paris with what seems to be decorative wallpaper and a window, overlooking the Place du Théâtre Français. 1897, the year that Pissarro painted the Dallas Portrait, was a difficult time in the artist's life that undoubtedly affected him emotionally. Earlier that year, his eldest son Lucien suffered a stroke and his son Félix had died of tuberculosis in November, one month before Pissarro began working on this portrait. In addition, the ongoing Dreyfus affair and rising antisemitic voices affected the Jewish Pissarro, as he frequently mentions in his letters (Pissarro). The second portrait, which now hangs at the Tate (Fig. 3), was painted five years later, just a few months before his death. This portrait captures the artist's bust, a segment of the bare wall behind him and, again, a window, this time overlooking the Pont Neuf.

Evidently, these two self-portraits were painted at significant moments in the artist's life. How do they differ from an earlier self-portrait painted some twenty years earlier? What role do the windows—and the view reflected through them—play in these self-portraits of an older artist so keen to paint outdoors but is

unable to do so? How can they be understood in reference to the reflective act of the self-portrait?

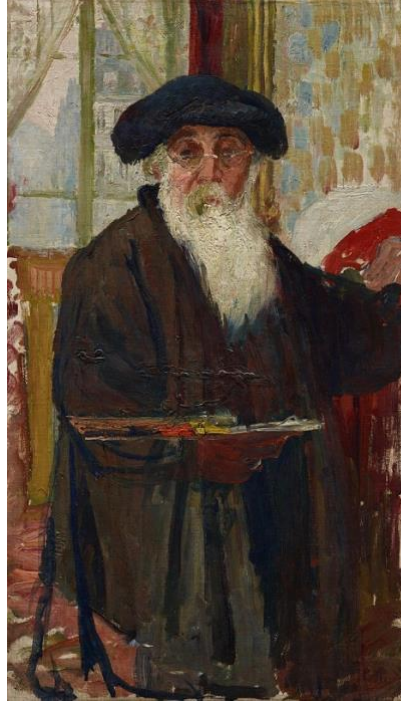


Figure 2: Camille Pissarro, *Self-portrait*, 1985.



Figure 3: Camille Pissarro, *Self-portrait*, 1903.

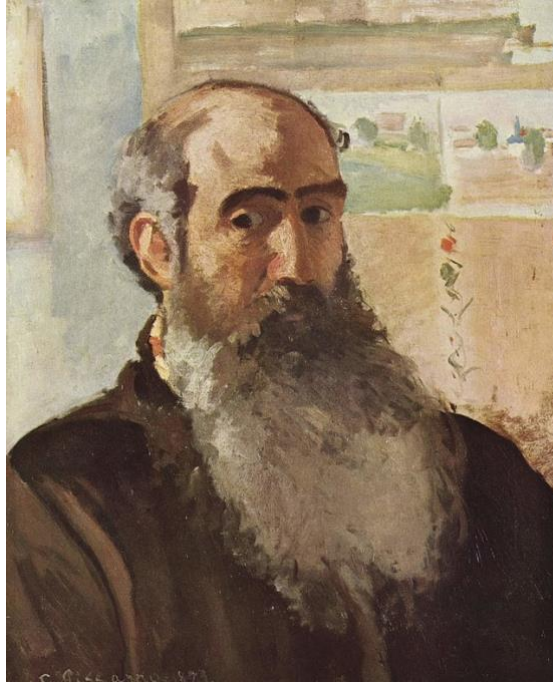


Figure 4: Camille Pissarro, *Self-portrait*, 1873.

Pissarro produced only four oil self-portraits during his life, three of which when he was older than sixty-five. The earliest, now at Musée d'Orsay (Fig. 4), was painted in 1873, when the artist was forty-three. It shows the gray-haired and bearded Pissarro in front of a wall covered with reproductions of landscape paintings he had painted. Depicting himself along with a reference to his art, assumingly in his studio, is a conscious self-fashioning act that serves as a certificate of his profession as a painter and his achievements, especially after selling five paintings for high prices at an auction in January of the same year (Rewald 23). And yet, in this early self-portrait, Pissarro does not include any views of an actual landscape seen from a window or even as a background to his figure. Rather, he shows only a representation of the landscape as captured in his earlier works. In this way, the portrait can be regarded as some sort of a “business card” that represents him as an accomplished artist along with his production. In contrast, the two late portraits which are the focus of this article, were produced at a different stage in his career when working outdoors was no

longer possible but the passion to paint was still burning. By 1896, Pissarro had already been suffering from his ocular condition for a few years, and in a letter to his son Lucien, he even wrote that: “What annoys me is being unable to work outdoors; I am making gouaches and bathers here and, for lack of a model, I am posing myself!” (Pissarro 292).

Self-portraits are usually painted using mirrors or photographs. The mirror, according to French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, enables artists to see and to be seen at the same time: “To see *things* and also to see how *things* see them” (168-9). It is reasonable to assume that Pissarro used mirrors, rather than photos of himself, when producing the Dallas and the Tate portraits. Photographs that show him at work indicate that he painted with his right hand while, in the portraits, it seems that the left hand is the one raised towards the canvas. Such a reverse is caused by a mirror and is present in many other self-portraits, such as those by Paul Cézanne (Silverman). In addition, it is likely that with the then-contemporary equipment, a photograph taken in front of a window with a brightly lit day outdoors would show the interior space too dark and the outside view too bright and with no details. So when Pissarro uses a mirror to paint himself in these portraits, not only does he paint what is seen in the mirror but also what *he* sees in it. In other words, he captures the object as well as the subject which, as I suggest, are not the same. But if Pissarro paints his image as an object seen in the mirror, then what is the subject that he sees there? Pissarro might have chosen to work next to a window in order to benefit from the natural daylight—a reminiscence from his Impressionist practice—but that does not account for the window’s relatively large area within the composition and the artist’s gaze towards it. It is almost as if he’s looking at the window while depicting himself.

My argument is that the window, or more precisely, the view seen from it, plays a significant role in Pissarro’s two portraits and symbolizes his subjective

and inner self. What Pissarro is actually portraying is twofold: on the one hand, these are self-portraits—paintings of himself, as reflected in the mirror, the image that others see from the outside: the image of an older person. But, at the same time, Pissarro depicts his *self*, as a subject who explores his own aging. This self is reflected in the form of the urban landscape seen from the windows. Here, Pissarro does not include a *representation* of the landscape, as he did in the Orsay portrait (see Fig. 3) but rather the *real* landscape. It is no longer a sort of a certificate of his achievements, a signifier of his profession as an artist but rather his identity, a part of who he is: a landscape painter. The mirror, which is the means that enables the production of these portraits, serves as the tool that splits Pissarro's perception of the self into his external identity and his inner one.

The Mirror Stage of Old Age

The conception of the mirror as forming the identity of the self was first suggested by French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan (1-6). The “Mirror Stage,” as he called it, happens when infants recognize themselves for the first time in the mirror. At this point, they experience a gap between what they realize as themselves and the specular image that is also a part of their identity. To overcome this feeling of separation, the infants identify with their image. This, according to Lacan, develops their sense of self-identity, which includes their sense of *the self* (as a subject) and that of their external image (as an object). Kathleen Woodward builds on Lacan's mirror stage and suggests a reverse process that may occur at an older age, when one feels that his or her [old] specular image no longer represents them or, at least, what they perceive as themselves (61-71). In other words, Woodward considers a situation in which older people look in the mirror and find it hard to “recognize” themselves in it as the mirror stage of old age, which she defines as a split in one's identity

between one's image and one's inner self. In this case, the image in the mirror becomes the Other. Woodward relates to the moment of looking in the mirror as an uncanny experience which is described by Freud as "related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror," and "feelings of repulsion and distress" (63). She then summarizes the outcome of the mirror stage of old age as *méconnaissance* (misrecognition). In Lacan's mirror stage, the infant likes the figure seen in the mirror and the identification with it is a pleasant and a positive experience, leading to bodily wholeness between the image and the self. However, in Woodward's mirror stage of old age, the older person experiences a disintegration of his or her specular image and, as a result, a sense of despair. In de Beauvoir's terms, this specular image is the Other within us.

Leni Marshall challenges Woodward's theory and contends that "accepting the misrecognition of the second mirror stage has the potential to positively transform the outcomes of the first mirror stage, offering people the opportunity to create those selves anew" (52). She contends that when overlooking the positive potential of misrecognition, the older body is socially objectified with negative connotations, such as deterioration, thus seen as Other. However, once the image reflected in the mirror is embraced, it affects one's self-image and the social location. As an example, Marshall shows how dancers and actors, whose body and appearance serve as the focus for their vocation, channel the feeling of *méconnaissance* to discover new ways of performing.

Similarly, I suggest considering Pissarro's late self-portraits as a practice initiated by old age and disability and channeled to new modes of productivity. As an artist painting himself with the use of a mirror, the mirror reflects Pissarro's two selves, distinguished from each other: one is his specular or social image seen in the mirror and the other is his own experience and perception of the self, represented in the form of the cityscape seen from the window painted

in the two self-portraits. When he captures his specular image, Pissarro depicts it as others see him from the outside, as a representation of age, marked by characteristics, such as a white beard, glasses, and aging body. It is the same body that prevents him from working outdoors. His specular image could therefore be read as an image of an older landscape painter forced to paint indoors. But Pissarro also captures what is visible for him and not for others: his inner self as he perceives it. This self, I argue, is represented by the landscape and the outside view which constitute the very essence of landscape painting, the main subject matter that has been identified with him ever since he was a young artist. This introspective self-representation, in turn, provides an example to a question that Woodward herself raises in reference to the negative effect of misrecognition: “Can we imagine mirrors which reflect other images of old age back at us?” (70) The mirror, in this case, reflects not only the external, social self but also an inner self, and provides Pissarro new subject matters with which to experiment and explore.

Formalistic Characteristics of Aging

The representation of the inner self and the outer image in the Dallas portrait are depicted with the same level of detail. Although it is unfinished, mainly in its margins, Pissarro’s face— or his outer self—was done with multiple layers of color applied in dense brush work. This applies also for the view seen from the window, or the inner self, which is thoroughly painted and does not leave any places of bare canvas. Comparing the view and its position in the painting to other parts, the upper right or the lower third of the painting seems very sketched and loose in texture. In contrast, the outside view is entirely realized. Clearly, Pissarro paid attention to these details. It must have had some significance for the essence of the portrait, as it was among the only parts that he completed before laying it aside. Therefore, we can see the outside view as

not merely a continuing element of the composition, painted simply because it was there but rather as a substantial essence of the self-portrait, similar to Pissarro's exterior image, as seen in the mirror.

The mirror doesn't only serve as an instrument that reflects what is in front of it or enables seeing things that are usually hidden to oneself. As mentioned, it also reverses the objects reflected in it, so that what is on the left is, in reality, on the right, and vice-versa. In Pissarro's portraits, the mirror double-reverses his image: in a left-right manner but also in an inside-out manner. What is perceived as an inner self is located outside the space he physically inhabits while his external image, which is his body, is located within this space. In this way, the two portraits enhance the duality and dichotomy between the two "selves" of the older artist, his inner and external identity. In a sense, they symbolize the feeling of possessing a body that may no longer serve or represent him. This is especially visible in the Tate portrait, where the window is bare and has no curtains or a decorative frame, alluding to a window of a prison cell. All that is happening outside is represented by numerous, abbreviated, quick, and colorful brush strokes typical of Pissarro's Impressionist style and appears in contrast to the monochromatic room in which the artist's face and beard blend and fade in, as if slowly uniting with it.

This contrast between interior and exterior spaces, along with the confinement to the domestic sphere, reflects the spatial experience of old age in general and highlights the social context of Pissarro's self-portraits in particular. Just a few months before completing the Tate portrait, Pissarro mentioned in a letter to his son that he regretted not being able to attend Émile Zola's funeral due to his age (350). Zola was a childhood friend of Pissarro's fellow painter Paul Cézanne and a major figure in the French literary world of the nineteenth century. He also played an active role in the Dreyfus affair and fought to expose Dreyfus' innocence. Zola famously published his article

“J'Accuse...!” in the newspaper *L'Aurore*, where he overtly accused the French government of antisemitism and pointed to the injustices done to Alfred Dreyfus, who was accused of espionage. The Dreyfus affair swept France, divided the nation and surfaced antisemitic manifestations, sometimes with violent incidents. As his letters indicate, Pissarro—despite declaring himself atheist and anarchist (Rachum 4, 9)—was deeply affected by the events and regularly reported them to his son Lucien who lived in London. In a letter from January 1898, he reassures his son that he should not worry, since “the antisemitic ruffians are much less noisy and aggressive since the beating they received at Tivoli Vauxhall, where they had organized an antisemitic demonstration.” (Pissarro 319) In another letter, however, Pissarro tells his son that he was horrified to hear hatred reactions about Dreyfus from his close circle of acquaintances, including painter Armand Guillaumin and the staff at the Durand-Ruel gallery (318). Indeed, the atmosphere in the streets during the days of the affair, which span from 1894-99, was very hostile and violent towards French Jews who overnight became the enemy of their own nation (Wilson). Old, unable to mobilize freely due to his ocular condition and alarmed by the rising antisemitic violence and its ensuing consequences, the interior space becomes a space of confinement and a crypt.

In social terms, the act of painting indoors out of necessity strongly alludes to the obstacles women artists faced in the nineteenth century. Adhering to bourgeois social norms meant that women did not have the same liberty as their male counterparts to explore museums on their own or travel in order to paint outdoors, without an escort or a chaperone (Nochlin). Although early manifestations of the first wave of feminism were already seen in France in 1870, women artists who often came from a bourgeois background were expected to follow these norms. Such limitations affected the spontaneity and freedom to mobilize, as painter Marie Bashkirtseff, who was born into a Russian

noble family and lived and worked in France, noted: “What I long for is the freedom of going about alone, of coming and going, of sitting in the seats of the Tuileries, and especially in the Luxembourg, of stopping and looking at the artistic shops, of entering churches and museums, of walking about the old streets at night; that’s what I long for; and that’s the freedom without which one cannot become a real artist.” (347). The consequences of such social constraints meant that women were often inclined to paint domestic scenes, as in the case of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot who mostly painted scenes of women and children within domestic spaces, simply because it was more practical. The outcome of Pissarro’s old age and disability had a similar limiting effect on his mobility, presence in and experience of the outside world, thus “feminizing” him in relation to contemporary social codes and artistic practices.

While many other artists have produced self-portraits in their later years, portraits that were often driven by self-exploration and marked by personal turmoil, I wish to emphasize the singularity of Pissarro’s case in reference to Marshall’s framework by briefly considering other cases. Dutch painter Rembrandt (1606-1669) famously produced a remarkably large number of self-portraits throughout his life. In one of his final portraits (Fig. 5), painted at the age of sixty-three, he is wearing dark clothes that blend in with the background behind him, highlighting the artist’s bright face and hair. Rembrandt captures himself standing in a three-quarters position, with clasped hands, looking directly at the viewers, as if scrutinizing them—or, more likely, his reflected image. X-ray analysis of this work reveals that this was not the original composition and that, initially, Rembrandt depicted his hands holding a paintbrush and maulstick (an instrument that painters use to support their painting hand). Although we do not know the reason that drove him to alter the composition, such a decision could be interpreted as if Rembrandt ultimately decided to disregard any depiction of activity (painting) that could

have distracted him when scrutinizing his image in the mirror, most likely positioned in front of him. In other words, the alteration of the composition enabled focusing and reflecting the artist's reflected image rather than his activity or profession. Rembrandt's final years were fraught with difficulties: his companion Hendrickje Stoffels passed away in 1663 and his son Titus died in 1668. Despite his artistic success, he nearly went bankrupt in the 1650s, sold his big house and rented a much more modest place. At the time of his death, the inventory of his estate included no more than daily necessities like chairs, tables, and dishes (Chapman 128). Unlike Pissarro, Rembrandt produced an unprecedented number of roughly 75 self-portraits in a period that spanned throughout his career, often depicting himself in different costumes and roles, such as a soldier or a beggar. Some historians suggest that his portraits may have served as a self-promotion tool (van de Wetering; Manthub) and, indeed, despite his poverty, at the time of his death, he was still known as "the most famous living painter" (Chapman 129). There is no doubt that his self-portraits served as a self-reflective tool in some way or another (see Chapman; Manthub) but, to be sure, it wasn't a new mode of productivity which he developed in old age out of an acknowledgment to his age and limitations.



Figure 5: Rembrandt, *Self-portrait at the Age of 63*, 1669.

Much like Rembrandt, Titian, too, produced many self-portraits throughout his life, utilizing them to enhance his reputation (Rosand). Titian, who constantly and deliberately provided misinformation regarding his true age, regularly complained about being old and lonely which, despite being a subjective emotion, was questioned by some historians, given the fact that he was a family man and even had nine grandchildren (Sohm 93). While most people try to hide their actual age and present themselves as younger than they really are, Titian was actually presenting himself as older. This, as art historians suggest, might have been another “self-fashioning” strategy to promote himself as an old and honorable artist (Sohm 83-84). In the only two self-portraits that survive, both show him as an old man: he makes no eye contact with the viewer—a composition that is more difficult to create since it requires the use of two (or more) mirrors. By depicting himself with a long beard and a cap, Titian alludes to representations of Aristotle and Saint Jerome that were

popular in Italy from the late fifteenth century (Jaffé 142). In both paintings, he is wearing the chain of the Order of the Golden Spur, given to him by Charles V, which is clearly meant to honor and praise himself. Similarly, his shifted gaze can also be interpreted as a conscious act of humility. In addition, as Titian was portrayed in profile so often, his long beard and pointed nose have become public features of his persona, which further stresses the marketing purpose of his portraits (Rosand). It therefore seems that these portraits were meant for others to see and remember him by: as a respectable intellectual painter. Such meticulously planned portraits, by both Titian and Rembrandt, highlight Pissarro's portraits as spontaneous, genuine, and personal but also as a new mode of practice that he turned to due to and in his old age.

Conclusion

As a non-narrative vehicle for self-articulation, self-portraits are, by definition, a reflexive means that enable the examination of both physical and psychological characteristics. Pissarro's late self-portraits, as I suggest, foreground the artist as a landscape painter no longer able to paint *en plein air*, and who manipulates his disability to create new forms of productivity. Considering Pissarro's late self-portraits in light of Old Age Style, it is hard to identify a departure from his earlier works in terms of subject matter—as he experiments with self-portraiture or cityscape earlier in his career—or in terms of his quick and unfinished style which also characterizes his earlier works. However, these portraits do represent a shift in his artistic practices as an outcome of his old age and disability. This shift, in turn, can be regarded as a manifestation of an extended interpretation of Old Age Style that, based on Marshall's analysis, suggests that embracing one's older image may enable new forms of creativity. This interpretation allows us to reconsider Old Age Style as unique, having individual characteristics that apply differently to artists, rather

than a generalized view that attempts to link between old age and creativity, based on fixed criteria.

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Shira Gottlieb is an art historian and lecturer at the Open University of Israel. Her research focuses on nineteenth-century art history and themes of old age and aging, and she is currently examining representations of older women in late nineteenth-century French visual culture. She has published articles on this and related topics in *Woman's Art Journal* and *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*.