



Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Young Girl with a Hat*, ca. 1890,
oil on canvas, 41.5 x 32.5 cm, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) began to paint several portraits of girls in hats. On some occasions, he even had hats specially made for his models. This work features a young woman in a pink dress with an extravagant hat embellished with large red ribbons. Her body is facing left but her face is turned toward the viewer to reveal her contemplative gaze. Her left hand is carrying a bouquet of white and pink flowers, while her right hand is raised to her chest as though she is thinking of a loved one. The figure's rosy cheeks

and long, flowing locks emphasize her youthful beauty. Many of Renoir's paintings, including his girls in hats, appealed to a wide audience. Unlike his contemporaries, he held strong oppositions toward the notion of narrative painting, and had no desire to depict the social realities of his time. Through his art, he wanted to portray his own idyllic views of the world around him as if they were reality. This period in Renoir's career is also characterized by a turning point in his influences: leaving behind Impressionism, his work began to reflect the sensual beauty and pastel colours of the eighteenth-century French artist Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806).

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