

Endless Summer

By Kathleen McShane

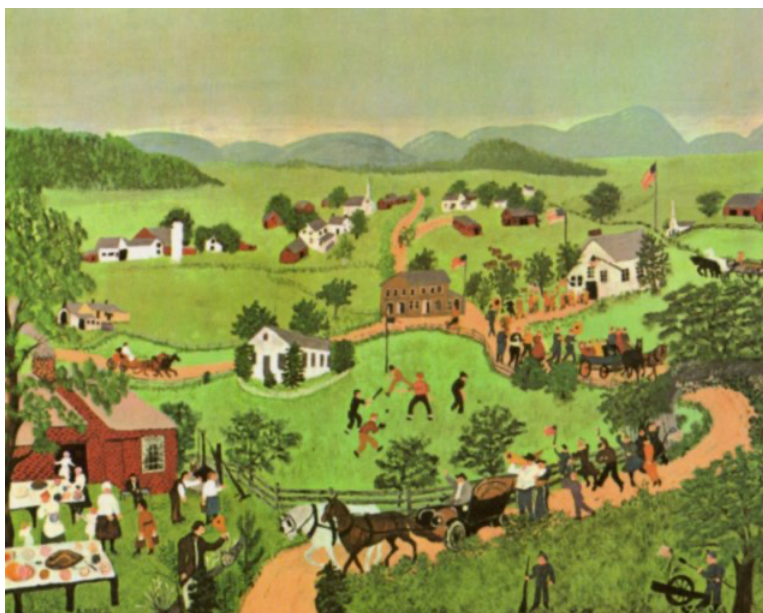
To complement VAC's summer exhibit, Endless Summer, here's a look at summer through the eyes of some other talented artists.

Today is the 4th of July, so what better way to celebrate than with a couple of 4th of July paintings.

The painting below is by **Childe Hassam** (1859-1935), a pioneer of American Impressionism and one of its most prolific and successful artists. The painting is part of Hassam's Flag Series, which includes about 30 paintings completed between 1916 and 1919. The full title of this work is *The Fourth of July, 1916 (The Greatest Display of the American Flag Ever Seen in New York, Climax of the Preparedness Parade in May)*. It shows Fifth Avenue in New York City decorated with numerous American flags to celebrate Independence Day in 1916.



Grandma (Anne Marie Robertson) Moses (1860-1961) is a symbol of American folk art, often depicting scenes of everyday American life. She didn't start serious painting until she was 78; she lived to be 101. The 1951 painting below, titled *July Fourth*, shows people celebrating Independence Day: a parade, a baseball game, a picnic, and a Revolutionary War reenactment. *July Fourth* was a gift to President Harry Truman for the White House and served as the basis for a commemorative stamp issued in 1969.



What's summer without a trip to the beach?

While we often associate **Edgar Degas** (1834-1917) with paintings and sculptures of ballet dancers (more than half of his works include dancers), the French Impressionist artist also created a short series of beach scenes during his travels to northern France. The beach in *Beach Scene* (1869-1870) is Trouville, in Normandy, a popular setting for works by Degas and his contemporaries.



Claude Monet (1840-1926) painted nine scenes of the beach in Trouville during the summer of 1870. The painting below, *The Beach at Trouville*, shows his first wife, Camille, along with a female companion. Camille appears in about 50 of Monet's paintings, including one on her deathbed at age 32.



American artist **Mary Cassatt** (1844-1926) spent most of her adult life in France, where Edgar Degas invited her to join the group of independent artists later known as the Impressionists. Cassatt exhibited the painting below, titled *Children Playing on the Beach* (1884), at the eighth and final Impressionist exhibition in Paris.

An art critic commented on Cassatt's skill at painting children: 'Oh, my God! Those babies! How those portraits have made my flesh crawl, time and again! –A whole passel of English and French smearers has painted them in such stupid, pretentious poses! For the first time, thanks to Mlle. Cassatt, I have seen effigies of enchanting tots, calm and bourgeois scenes, painted with an utterly charming sort of delicate tenderness.'



The painting below, entitled “*At the Seaside*” (1898), is by the American artist **William Merritt Chase** (1849-1916), the first American artist to create Impressionist paintings in the United States. The painting is set on Long Island, where Chase spent his summers.



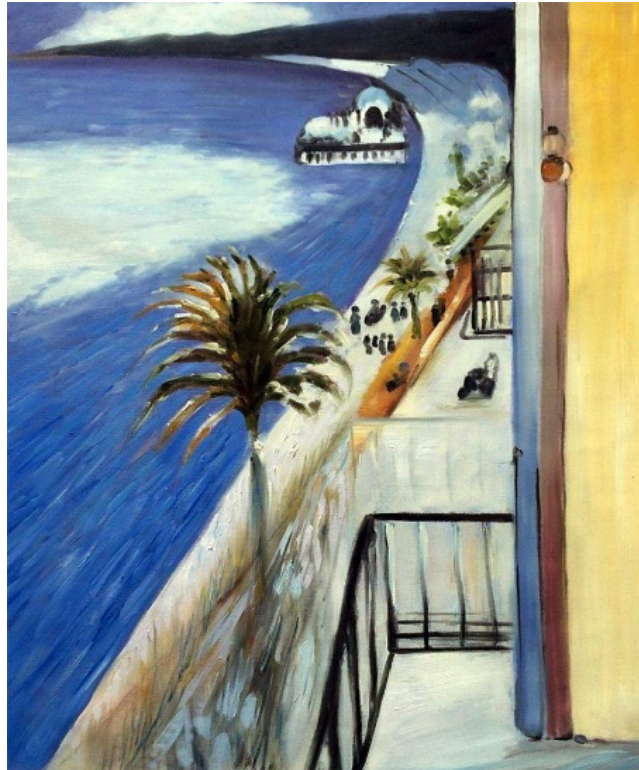
Joaquin Sorolla (1863-1923) was Spain's premier Impressionist artist. Although not widely known outside Spain, he is considered a national hero in his native country. His two great loves were his wife, who was his muse and the subject of many of his paintings, and his home city of Valencia. Called a *Master of Light*, he painted endless beach scenes, deftly capturing the effects of Mediterranean sunlight. The artist often painted in plein air, as evidenced by the grains of sand that are frequently found in his canvases. The painting shown below, *Women Walking on the Beach* (1909) features both his wife, Clothilde (with their daughter, Maria), and the beach.



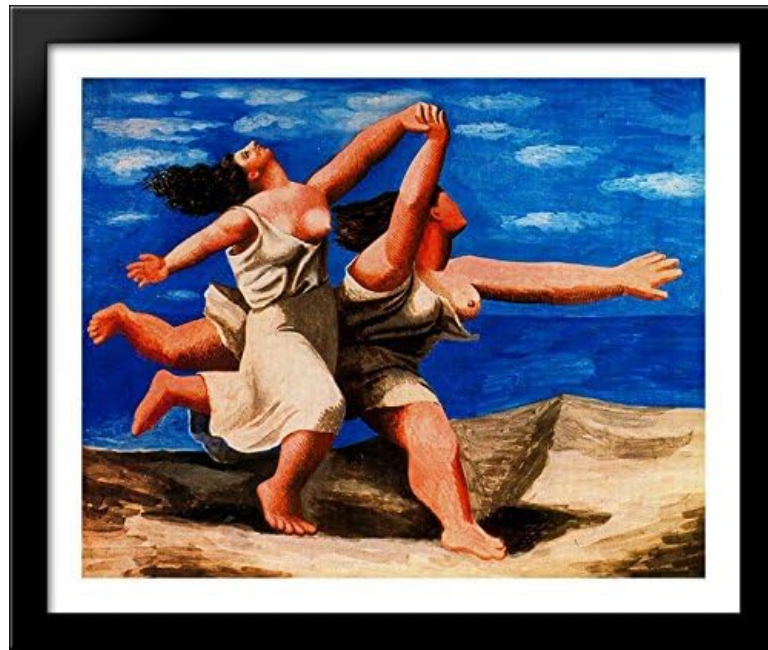
On the Beach (Girl in Blue) is by **Frederick Carl Frieseke** (1874-1939), an American artist and influential member of the Giverny art colony, who spent most of his life as an expatriate in France. His style has been dubbed “Decorative Impressionism”. The beach depicted is likely in Corsica, to which Frieseke had traveled in 1913. He is said to have found the experience challenging due to high winds.



Henri Matisse (1869-1954) was a French painter and mixed-media artist associated early in his career with the Fauvist movement; wild and dissonant colors often characterized his paintings. Matisse lived in Nice for more than 40 years; many of his paintings reflect the city's and its coastline's vibrant beauty. Matisse was first taken with Nice when he went there from Paris in 1916 to recuperate from bronchitis. He ended up relocating permanently to the south of France. His 1918 painting, *The Bay of Nice*, is from the vantage point of a hotel window.



Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) painted the work below during his so-called “neoclassic period.” The 1922 painting, titled *Women Running on the Beach (The Race)*, was created in the resort town of Dinard in Brittany, where Picasso was living with his wife, Olga, and son, Paulo. The author Gertrude Stein described Picasso’s neoclassic period as a period “of large women.” The two figures in the painting are said to resemble “maenads,” passionate female followers of Dionysius, the Greek god of wine. The original painting is a miniature, roughly 13 by 16 inches. A larger version was used as a backdrop for the ballet, *Le Train Bleu*, set in the fashionable Normandy resort town of Deauville.



Edward Hopper (1882-1967) has been called the most important American realist painter of the 20th century. The painting below, entitled *Jo Sketching at Good Harbor Beach* (1923-24), features his wife, Josephine Nivison Hopper. Apparently, Josephine Nivison Hopper was Edward Hopper's only model. When Josephine started dating Edward Hopper in 1923, she was a relatively well-known artist, having exhibited alongside notable figures such as O'Keeffe and Picasso. Hopper hadn't sold a painting in years. Nivison wanted to help him out; she convinced the curators of her then-current show to feature his work alongside hers. That was the turning point in their artistic careers. His star rose; hers fell. When Nivison bequeathed a trove of their paintings to the Whitney upon her death in 1968, the museum kept most of his work and discarded much of hers. The couple had an eccentric lifestyle and a difficult marriage. The actress, Helen Hayes, said of Edward Hopper, "I had never met a more misanthropic, grumpy, grouchy individual in my life..."



The Fauvist School's bright colors and lyrical style are reflected in **Raoul Dufy's** *Nice-The Bay of Angels* (1927). It has been said that Dufy never painted a sad picture. Dufy's early works were in the Impressionist style, but he was drawn to Fauvism after seeing a work by Matisse. The Bay of Angels is a recurring subject in Dufy's works. The French painter (1877-1953) was also a textile designer; his designs were used by the most famous haute couture houses of his time.



The last beach painting is by the Australian artist **Ken Done** (1940-present), whose work has been described as reminiscent of Raoul Dufy. Done's brightly colored images of Australian landmarks (e.g., the Sydney Opera House, the Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Harbour, and the Sydney Harbour Bridge) have been widely applied to lines of clothing and housewares. Done's works have been short-listed for the Sir John Sulman prize on multiple occasions. The prize, which dates from 1936, is awarded annually to the best subject/genre painting and/or murals/mural project by an Australian. The painting below, *Beach*, was short-listed for the 1984 prize.



Not a fan of the ocean? How about summer along the river?

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), a close friend of Monet, was essential to the development of Impressionism, though he later adopted a more traditional approach to painting, especially in his works featuring women. His entire body of work reflects his celebration of beauty and feminine sensuality. The largest collection of Renoir's work is at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, with 181 of the several thousand paintings he created. One of his most famous works is *Luncheon of the Boating Party* (1881), which shows a group of Renoir's friends relaxing at the Maison Fournaise along the Seine.



Another painting that features leisure activities along the Seine is what is perhaps **Georges Seurat's** (1859-1891) most famous work, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1884-1886). The Ile de la Grande Jatte is located in the Seine River and was a popular recreational spot for Parisians. Created in pointillist style, the work is considered one of the most important paintings of the neo-impressionist movement. It is Seurat's largest work, measuring approximately 7 by 12 feet.



Perhaps you prefer the pool.

Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures) (1972) is by the British artist, **David Hockney** (1937-present). Hockney is considered one of the most influential British artists of the 20th and 21st centuries and was an important contributor to the Pop Art movement of the 1960s. The painting is large-scale, approximately seven by ten feet. The painting has been called a sad song about a broken heart (Hockney's).

