

Everything You  
Need To Know About  
**Oil Painting  
Reproductions**



Paul Williams



# How To Understand About The Quality of Your Reproduction Before You Buy

This report is designed for one reason - to give you a crash course education into the world of oil painting reproductions and help you understand the differences in quality so you don't end up wasting money on rubbish.

My name is Paul Williams and I run several online oil painting websites and have experience in oil paintings for over twenty years. But don't worry, this is not a sales letter to try and convince you how wonderful we are and all the reasons you should buy from us. This is a quick report to give you some facts so you'll be able to make an educated decision whoever you decide to buy your painting from.

Buying an Impressionist oil painting reproduction over the internet can be daunting. With an online gallery you can't see the painting, so how can you be sure of the quality? The simple answer is... you **can't**, which is why any gallery or studio should always offer you a money back guarantee.

Artists differ so much in quality. The materials they use, the techniques they employ in producing a reproduction causes such a wide gap in the finished painting that a copy of Monet's "**Woman With a Parasol**" can be found in a gallery for up to \$10,000 or on eBay for just \$100 or less.

The results can be frightening!

A Museum quality Impressionist reproduction can be indistinguishable from the real Monet. A cheap copy can look terrible and resemble nothing more than a half-hearted attempt with different colors and features from the original. The old adage "you get what you pay for" certainly is true for reproductions.

This easy guide to Impressionist reproductions will help you understand the difference between the quality you can expect and save you from disappointment. After all, if you love a painting enough to want a reproduction, you will want the very best. But that doesn't mean you have to pay the very highest prices.

Here's what you need to know. . .

## **The Different Grades**

There are different grades that galleries and studios use to describe the quality. However, just like everything, these terms are used loosely by sellers and what one person describes as top quality is more like average to the rest of us.

### **Museum/Gallery Quality**

As a general rule, any painting described as Museum or gallery quality means the materials used are top quality and more expensive than average. This includes the canvas and oils. This also means the artist will have spent more time and dedication on getting the painting as close to the original as possible.

As with all hand painted reproductions, there are bound to be slight differences in details and colors to the original. However, the painting will still look amazing and to the average person looking at both the original and reproduction, the difference will be hard to spot.

Here is the original "Luncheon Of The Boating Party" by Renoir



And here is a reproduction by us that we describe as museum quality



Here is the same painting offered elsewhere. . .



As you can see there is a difference, not only in colors but also details. And it is these details that give you the feeling when you look at a painting. You can't always tell "why" it is not right, but it just "feels" not right. However, when you compare with the original the differences become clear.

At first glance they do look fairly good. But when we have a quick comparison we notice some pretty obvious differences.

The table holds different bottles and glasses that are in different colors. The little dog doesn't look quite as fluffy. Poor reproductions just look "flat".

The shades and tones are different which results in a different feel.

## **Retail/Commercial Quality**

***Oh so what?! Does it really matter??!!***

I know I'm being a bit picky here, but I can sometimes get obsessed with perfection!

The truth is, only **you** can decide if it matters. If you don't mind a few differences as long as the painting is roughly the same, then that's fine. You obviously save money when purchasing a retail quality reproduction.

But if you truly *love* Impressionism and Renoir is your favorite artist, would you be truly happy with a retail reproduction?

Retail reproductions are fine if you want to just *look* at the painting, but if you want to **experience** the painting - it's Museum quality for you!

Art is big business. Where there is demand there is supply. Unfortunately this also means where there is supply there are ways of getting it done cheaper.

Prices for copies in this level can range from \$50-\$100 for medium sized copies to \$200-\$400 for larger sizes.

The Far East first introduced the concept of commercial painting. The painters of China, Hong Kong and Asia have a natural blend of being half-artist and half-business person. We'll talk more about China in a moment, but here are some examples of what is described as commercial quality.

Usually cheaper canvas these are paintings that are 'knocked up' quickly and don't always look anything like the original. They are designed to be sold in bulk, sold cheap and sold fast! More of an impulse buy, these are now the most common reproductions you would expect to find on ebay.

Whilst there is nothing wrong with these paintings, you would expect to pay a LOT less as the quality is so much less. If you really love a particular painting I would recommend NOT buying one of these. If you really can't afford a good reproduction (which only cost a fraction more) then I would suggest buying a print because it will give you more satisfaction than a poor reproduction.

Here are some different examples where you can clearly see the difference from the original. . .

Original "San Giorgio Maggoire" at Dusk by Monet



Retail reproductions



Monet was brilliant at conveying light but he was also especially awesome at painting water. A painting such as this where it is based on water takes a skilled painter to re-create the same effect.

Original Clifftop Walk by Monet



Retail/commercial versions



Below is a reproduction we painted for our very first customer many years ago!



Here is the original of Monet's Woman With a Parasol next to a commercial quality example (with what I see is a scary face!)



Here is a Woman Reading by Monet. . .



And here is a reproduction. . .



Notice the difference in colors, the outlines and the brushstrokes.

Now, I must point out that these are NOT bad paintings. Nor is the artist a bad painter. This level of reproduction is painted for a different market and is priced accordingly.

I provide them here as an example to demonstrate the difference between Museum quality and Retail quality.

This level of quality is common with copies sold at art shows, department stores and online auctions.

The elements, colors, shades and detail of the original picture are copied in a general way.

Retail quality lacks the precise care to the details of the painting. Colors and shades will appear similar but distinctly different even to the untrained eye.

The more complex and detailed paintings can show even more differences.



Above is the original of The Poet's Corner by Van Gogh.

Both the reproduction paintings below were painted here at the Impressionist-Art-Gallery.com and are considered Museum Quality.



They are identical in size but there are slight differences in each one as you would expect with a hand-painted picture.

Museum quality is considered the best investment for an Impressionist reproduction and it is this level of quality the **Impressionist Art Gallery** provides. The matching elements such as paint tone and brush stroke features is outstanding.

Only high quality linen canvases are used and each painting takes several weeks to complete.

The prices for Museum/Gallery quality reproductions can range from \$300-\$500 for the smaller reproductions and \$800-\$5,000 for larger sizes.

The biggest difficulty in re-creating Impressionist works is for the artist to take care and copy the original while at the same time paint in what appears to be quick and spontaneous brushstrokes.

This is the reason why we only work with studios who specialize in Impressionism and whose artists understand Impressionist techniques.

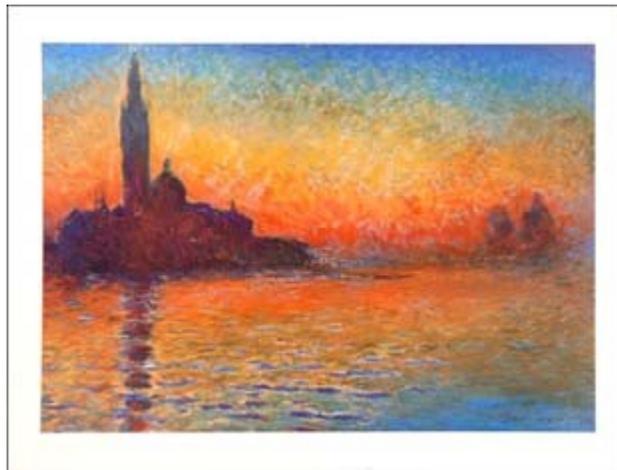
The finished painting has to achieve 2 main aims:

1. First, it has to look like the original. It must have the right colors, tones, dimensions and the brush strokes have to be in the right places.
2. Second, it has to convey the passion. It has to become a masterpiece in its own right. When you look at a museum quality reproduction, it must create the same sensation you would feel as though you were staring at the original in a museum gallery.

It takes a very skilled artist to achieve both of these aims. A hand-painted reproduction will **NEVER** be exact to the original if you compare them side by side. You **will** notice slight differences. These aren't painted by machines, they are painted by real living human artists.

But the differences will only be slight and hardly noticeable. These are the best reproductions you can buy. They are the closest to the real thing. These paintings look like the originals. They have the colors. They have the dimensions. They have the brushstrokes. They have the passion.

## Machine Reproductions



Another method for creating copies is by using computer imaging technology. One such method is known as "giclee" (pronounced "zee-clay") printing. This is French for "fine spray".

These techniques print an image onto canvas in a similar way to an ink-jet computer printer. The picture is normally identical to the original as like a print, but is of course just as flat.

The finished picture lacks the vibrant oils, texture and occasion of a hand-painted oil on canvas reproduction. Although "giclee" prints look good from a distance, if you are expecting the same texture and elements of the original, you will be disappointed.

They should be considered better than paper prints and even commercial quality but watch for distributors who try to sell them as Museum or Gallery quality oil paintings. They are NOT hand-painted and are NOT oil paintings. They are prints on canvas. Prices will vary depending on quality and size, from \$40 to \$200.

# Behind the Scenes Secrets

## How are Impressionist reproductions created?

Oil painting reproductions are hand-painted by a professional and talented artist.

There used to only be one way of creating a reproduction but thanks to technology and the business savvy Far East, there is now two.

To paint a reproduction, the artist would prepare the canvas and begin by sketching the outline in pencil. The time would vary depending on the complexity of the painting but on average would take several days.

Once the outline was complete the artist would begin by adding the first few layers of paint.

Thanks to technology there is another way of beginning. Very much like a giclee print, the original is scanned into a computer and the image is printed onto the canvas. Sometimes in color, sometimes just black and white.

The artist then carries on as before and paints over the print.

This saves time by eliminating the sketching stage and one could argue that it saves money if the artist is not having to work as long.

The result is a near likeness every time as the proportions are identical to the original. This method is used mainly for portraits and I believe is the main reason why there has been an explosion in portrait services at such low prices.

Portrait painting is one of the hardest skills, and the artists who can paint portraits demand much higher fees.

I used to be dead against printed canvases as to me it was not a real painting. However, there is a wide difference between a faint black and white print to assist the artist, and a color print where the 'artist' merely touches up to make it look like a painting.

The other concern is the durability of the painting. Every canvas has to be treated before painting to help the oils stick and make the painting last. The problem with printing onto canvas and then painting over the print is how does this affect the stickability of the oils?

Will the paint start to crack and lose its grit after a few years to leave a mess?

Time will tell as this is a new technology and even most gallery owners are not aware of its existence.

At first glance they are impossible to tell. And I have to admit, I was caught out with this trick a few years back.

I found a new studio who were producing some promising work so decided to put them through their paces and see how good the paintings really were.

I had them reproduce some of my standard paintings which I use on every new artist to help me judge them better.

The results were fantastic! One of the paintings was so close in proportions, and colors, and likeness that I was amazed at how quickly it was finished.

Normally my paintings take anywhere from 45 to 60 days. This one was ready for shipping within less than 20 days.

In all honesty, I would never have know a machine was used to start the process. After all, once the paint is on, how can you tell what went on under it?

On this occasion, fate stepped in.

The weather in my part of the world was terrible. Thick heavy rain for days caused chaos and delivery companies were having a tough time getting through it.

The studio made a fatal mistake and did not wrap the painting properly. When they were finally delivered, the paper that wrapped the tubes were wet and soggy and water had entered the tube.

Normally this would not matter. Canvas will dry out and oils are not affected by water. But these paintings were affected. I could not understand why the colors had run and the back of the canvas was awash with mixed paint.

On the front, the painting looked normal except for colors running off into the white margins. On the back however, was a strange mess of colors I had never seen before.

It took a while to work out, but what had happened was simple. The color picture that was printed onto the canvas before painting was made with inkjet print that you find in a common printer. It was this image that had run as oils are not affected by water but ink most certainly is.

And there it was. The reason the painting was completed so fast was simply because a color print had been printed onto the canvas first enabling the artist to finish his work faster.

So even "professionals" like me get caught out from time to time!

There are methods for securing against this and one way is to add something to the original image that you ask the artist not to paint in. If you then hold the finished painting up to light, such as a big window, if the artist has used a print this hidden item will show up like a water mark.

Another method would be to take a wet sponge to the edges of the painting (which would normally be hidden behind the frame) and apply the sponge to soak a small area. The oils should remain as normal, but if there is a print under the paint, it will run.

## **The Far East**

We spoke a few moments ago about the Far East so let's take a closer look at this.

Several years ago Hong Kong was a favorite for good, cheap oil paintings of all kind. They were being exported by the truck load and galleries around the world were snapping them up. China was behind in quality and service, but that has all changed and China now has some very talented and hard working artists to offer.

There is a 'snob' factor involved in art and paintings. A painting produced in France, England, Italy or America normally has a higher value than one painted in China.

This is nonsense in my mind. China has some excellent art schools and very hardworking artists. In some cases the Chinese artists are more talented than most but this is a matter of opinion.

The reason why products and art is cheaper in the Far East is simply because their cost of living is cheaper than compared to the west. Which is why everything from car parts, to ipods to hospital equipment is made in China.

With the Internet there has also been an explosion of studios appearing online and now for the first time, the consumer can go direct.

However, all is not what it seems. Artists do not work direct in China but go through studios. The studios pay the artists their wage and deal with all enquiries. And it is this studio who is responsible for the quality control.

Oil painting reproductions can be bought in China for as little as \$10 and as much as \$900. . . for the same painting!

There are artists and studios who dedicate themselves to learning and becoming masters. They take their craft seriously and have a keen eye for details. They often win International awards for their works. The result is a great quality painting offering a big saving compared with other artist prices in the world. The studios charge more for this work because it is top quality work and the artist is paid more.

At the other end are the artists who paint several van Gogh copies a day and hang them on a washing line to dry. These cheap reproductions are bought by resellers in the West for low prices in their hundreds and are sold at markets and on ebay.

Let me be clear that there is nothing wrong with the artists or studios of the Far East, even if the painting you bought from your local gallery was painted in China.

The problem occurs when the studio doesn't care enough.

You place your order and the painting is made. But nobody checks the quality. Nobody checks the reproduction against the original. Maybe they haven't even seen the original in real life so don't really know what the brush strokes look like. Nobody stops to think and ask "is this the best that we can do?"

Orders are received and paintings are sent out fast. The Chinese are hard workers for sure, but they are not given the time they need to paint a true masterpiece. Their low prices mean they have lots of commissions to get through and are often painting 20+ paintings all at once along what appears to be a factory style conveyor belt stuck on a wall.

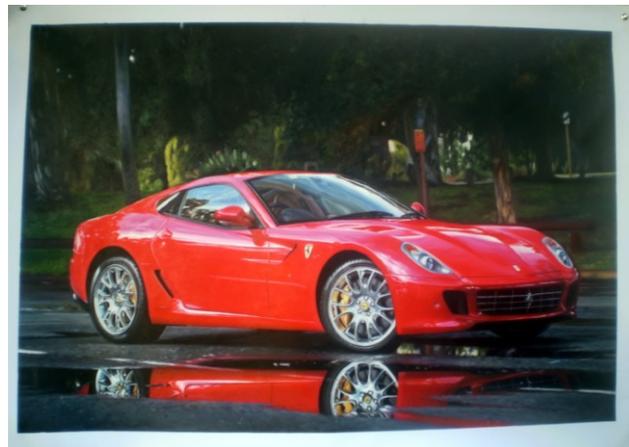
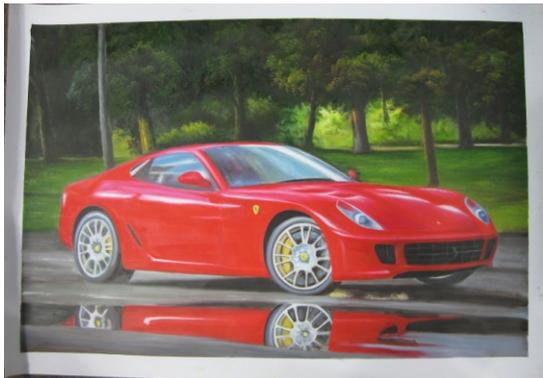
Nobody has time to check the painting against the original, email the customer the image for their opinion and then add to the painting to make it as close as possible. The paintings are just a product and it's all business.

And that's the problem in my humble opinion. It's just business. The passion seems to be lacking and nobody really cares if you like or love the painting. As long as it is okay, that's good enough.

Now you can understand why our paintings take a little longer. I like to visit museums and see the originals. I have hundreds of books and hundreds of images of the paintings because I love the paintings and love reading and learning about the artists. It's one of my passions like cars. I have hundreds of books on cars and know Ferrari inside out.

Talking of which, let me show you another example to illustrate this point.

Below is a photo image of a Ferrari 599.

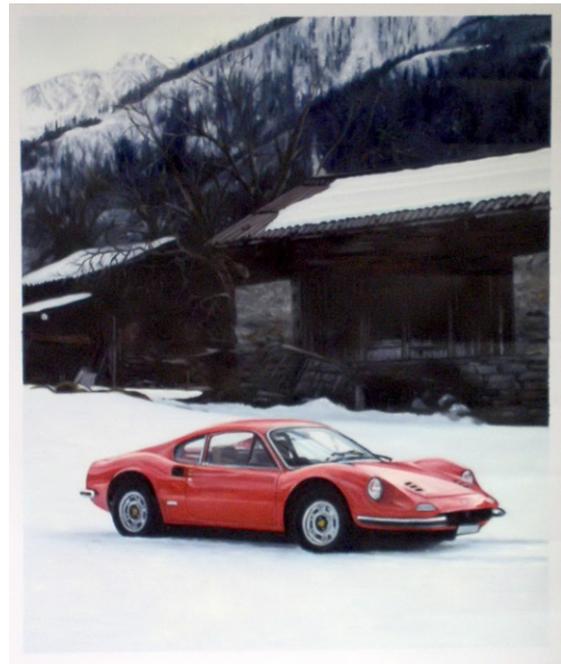
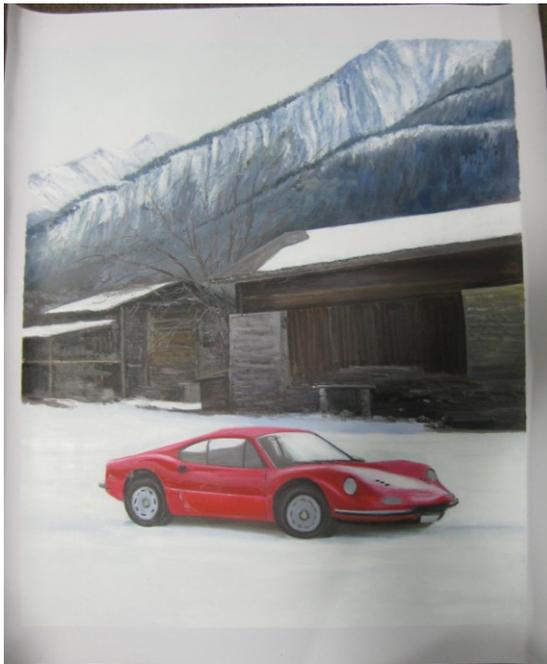


The first painting on the left was from a studio who thought good enough was good enough. The painting on the right is what you call attention to detail. See the difference?

Or how about this little Ferrari Dino 246 GT?



This is the original photo above. The painting on the bottom left is NOT early stages, it is a finished painting! The painting on the right is by a different artist who cares enough to get it right.



## Artists Vs Machines

There is of course more to reproductions than just painting-by-numbers. For me, a machine can be used to assist a real, genuine artist, but I object when a machine does most of the work.

At the Impressionist Art Gallery each artist is a real, professional artist in their own right. Painting a reproduction involves a lot more than merely copying a picture. The artist must understand all the elements of composition, color mixing, light etc.

We use a team of artists who specialize in Impressionist art and have perfected their expertise through years of study and practice. Each picture is painstakingly painted using only the highest quality oils to attain the closest match of colors and elements of the original.

Because each painting is hand-painted by a real artist using real oils, you can enjoy the rich texture of oils and see, touch, feel and even smell the brush strokes!

Each artist is an expert in the technique and history of the picture they are reproducing.

Whether it is a Monet, Renoir or Degas they are reproducing a painting from a photograph of a portrait, a dog or a Ferrari, they know the techniques, types of brushes, mixing of colors, shades used allowing them to reproduce each painting with the same exact detail to the original image or original artist's unique style of painting.

## **How close are reproductions to the original paintings?**

This is the danger zone!

Take care when buying oil reproductions because the quality can vary so much, as you have seen.

If you are paying low prices and the painting is "in stock", be prepared for disappointment. Now, not every painting brought from "stock" will be bad or even cheap, but the best paintings will almost always be commissioned at the time of ordering.

Some reproductions are extremely close to the original. Near identical. Almost too good! They have been re-created by an artist who is not only very talented and experienced but also loves painting Impressionism.

This to me is important because Impressionism is so different to other painting styles that the artist must be dedicated if he/she is to achieve the desired result.

I love Impressionist paintings. One of the reasons that I personally check EVERY reproduction that is commissioned before it is sent out, is because I simply love looking at the paintings!

I'm very lucky to be able to do this as a "job" because these are the most beautiful products in the world!

The other reason I check the paintings myself is because I want them identical to the original.

I make a point to personally visit museums where the original artworks are displayed. Seeing the originals in the “flesh” ensures all Impressionist oil reproductions are reproduced to an exact likeness.

Every painting is painstakingly reproduced by hand in a style identical to the original down to the smallest detail by an artist who is as passionate about Impressionist art as we are. Every painting is then inspected and approved by me personally before it is sent to you. And of course, you can inspect it before you decide to keep it.

So, when choosing an Impressionist reproduction for yourself, use the price and delivery time as a guideline and if in doubt, look for a money back guarantee.

## **The Guarantee Small Print**

Guarantees though can also differ just like artists.

Make sure the guarantee has a good time limit like 30 days or more. Watch out for guarantees that only last 7 days. Also watch out for guarantees that will refund your money **less** a handling fee. These fees can be called handling fees, re-stocking fees or administration fees. They may even deduct shipping fees.

THIS IS NOT FAIR TO YOU! As far as I’m concerned, if I’m promised a money back guarantee, I expect **ALL** of my money back!

Which is why at the Impressionist Art Gallery all of our paintings come with a massive year long guarantee. I love what we do so much that I stand behind the quality and give you total peace of mind for a full year.

Every Impressionist reproduction and portrait comes with a full 12 month, 365 day money back guarantee. You can return the painting for ANY reason. Of course your painting is fully guaranteed against any material defects but it is also guaranteed against any reason you can think of.

Any reason.

If for example, your painting does not meet your high expectations or you decide that having a Monet or Renoir on your wall brings you no joy, simply send it back.

We won't ask you any questions and there will be **no** forms to fill in.

There are **no hidden charges** like re-stocking fees and other nonsense. If you're not delighted with your Impressionist art for any reason, simply send it back for a **full 100%** prompt and courteous refund.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this mini-report. If you have any further questions about reproductions, please do contact me at paul@impressionist-art-gallery.com because I'd love to help in any way that I can.

Sincerely



**Paul Williams**

**Impressionist Art Gallery**  
Oil Painting Reproductions of Impressionist Masterpieces