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Forever young: Frédéric Bazille

by Karen Wilkin

On “Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism” at the Brooklyn Museum.

The entry in the Nouveau Petit Larousse Illustré says only “Bazille (Frédéric), peintre impressionniste français, né à Montpellier (1841-70).” Nothing more to be said about a man that Camille Pissarro, a mature painter ten years Bazille’s senior, described as “one of the most gifted among us.” By contrast, the entry on Bazille’s friend and contemporary Claude Monet reads “peintre français, né à Paris (1841-1926). Poète de la lumière, chef et représentant typique de l’impressionnisme; auteur des Nymphéas (Orangerie), Les Peupliers, Vues de Vetheuil.” There’s even a photo of the man himself, one of Nadar’s portraits with the cropped hair and bushy beard. The point? Obviously, that Monet outlived his colleague by more than half a century, ample time in which to establish himself as...

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