

# Amélie Bertrand Hyper Nuit



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"My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece."<sup>1</sup>  
Claude Monet

"Ideal landscapes inspired by nature are of  
no interest to me."<sup>2</sup>  
Amélie Bertrand

Counterpoints abound when considering the work of Claude Monet (1840–1926) and Amélie Bertrand (b. 1985). Whereas Monet famously painted *en plein air*, Bertrand composes in Photoshop before ever putting brush to canvas. To document variable weather and light conditions, Monet visited various land-, city-, and water-scapes—from London’s Houses of Parliament and Venice’s Grand Canal to his own pond in Giverny. Bertrand prefers to confront her source material virtually—combing the internet for images of chain-link fences, daisies, stone walls, art deco columns and palm fronds (a few of the motifs that reappear across her oeuvre). She then treats these landscape elements with Photoshop filters that mimic different light sources. Whereas Monet represented natural atmospheric effects like sunlight, shadow, rain and haze using daubs of thick paint, Bertrand’s depictions of artificially lit volumes and spaces bear no visible brushwork. If the former’s impasto accents underscore his paintings’ materiality and often add a chromatic shock, the latter’s paintings are characterized by smooth, screen-like surfaces and seamless color gradients. But despite such obvious stylistic and technical differences, profound affinities exist between these two modern landscape painters focused on how landscapes feel, not just how they look.

Monet’s and Bertrand’s paintings result from long, labor-intensive creative processes involving conceptual and physical work that goes well-beyond the act of painting. Before starting to paint, both artists perfect their subject by other means—Bertrand on the computer ("The computer is my studio"<sup>3</sup>) and Monet in his Giverny garden (his "open-air studio"<sup>4</sup>). Notably, Monet’s most famous water-scape subject wasn’t one he found in nature, but rather one he constructed based on labor-intensive landscaping that included the cultivation of non-native plant species. There was no naturally-occurring body of water on the Giverny property when the artist first settled there in 1883. In 1893 he oversaw an initial excavation to create a small pond, fed by the nearby Ru stream. And between 1901 and 1906, he expanded the pond and installed sluice gates to protect his prized water lilies, which included exotic and hybrid varieties. In addition to composing flora according to his preferences for color and form, Monet made sure the pond was also maintained to meet his aesthetic ideal: crystal clear surface with circular clusters of lily pads. With similar authorial intent and different means, Bertrand likewise exerts

- 1 Jean-Pierre Hoschedé, *Claude Monet, ce mal connu, intimité familiale d’un demi-siècle à Giverny de 1883 à 1926*, P. Cailler, Geneva, 1960, p. 70.
- 2 An interview with Violaine Boutet de Montvel, *Pleased To Meet You Amélie Bertrand*, n°2, Semiose, Paris, November 2016, p. 8.
- 3 Brice Matthieussent, "I’ll Put Red Roses On Your Grave" in *Amélie Bertrand*, Semiose, Paris, 2023, p. 12.
- 4 Georges Clemenceau, *Claude Monet : Les Nymphéas*, Librairie Plon, Paris, 1928, p. 49–50.

