**Edgar Degas.**

Edgar Degas (1834 – 1917) was born in Hilaire-Germain. He was a French artist famous for his works in painting, sculpture, printmaking and drawing. He apparently rejected the term ‘Impressionism’, but was regarded as one of the founders of it.

The majority of his art works has made him identifiable by the subjects within it (dancers). This (and also other subjects of race horses and female nudes) shows his understanding of ‘movement’.

He mastered not only the traditional mediums of oil on canvas but also pastel in the late 1870s. He applied pastels in complex layers and textures that enabled him to colour expressively. He stated that “pastels were more suitable for his delicate studies”, but they also have several other advantages (for him) such as being much quicker to work with then paint which allowed him to work quickly through his experimental work.

Other then traditional pastels, he also used powdered pastels, which he then mixed with water and applied with a brush.

He would always paint indoors and often in his studio. He would usually draw from photographs, models or his memory. He was fascinated by ballet dancers and did many studies tallying upto approximately 1500 works in that category.

He also became passionate about photography. He took photos of many friends and subjects under the lamplight and other forms of artificial lighting. It helped him attain the sense of movement from within the subject. This photography also contributed to many of his later works with different and unusual cropping and angles. Though, as he aged, his eyesight weakened and he increasingly used models and photographs of nudes and dancers.

Edgar Degas often used dark-brown cardboard or cards as his stock canvas. Then he used light charcoal to sketch and add small soft touches for final stages. He then made use of steam to seal and darken areas. He would usually use hard pastels initially before moving to softer pastels.

Resources

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Degas>

<http://pastelnews.com/2010/05/03/old-pastel-master-edgar-degas/>