



Edgar Degas
Dance like
a Butterfly

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Prestel

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Edgar Degas never got bored watching ballet! But it wasn't as if he had ever wanted to become a dancer himself. His great love was painting.

Degas wanted to bring movement into his pictures and to paint the surprising and exciting moments of life in Paris as it was when he lived there 130 years ago. The stage lighting, the rooms behind the wings which the audience never saw, the figures and steps the ballerinas danced, and the materials from which the costumes were made all fascinated the artist.

But it was not just the public performances that Degas found interesting. In fact he could best watch the dancers when they were practicing. He studied every detail very closely and made quick sketches in his little pad of paper. He used these drawings later in his studio as the basis for his paintings.

Degas also painted other subjects, but it was his pictures of ballet dancers that really made him famous. Nobody else had ever painted them so brilliantly before. Thousands of drawings and pictures of ballet scenes piled up in his studio—and he even owned a silk ballet shoe that was a great help when he was painting.



The ballet shoe that Degas once owned