In 1877, the Salon refused her work and Degas proposed to join the impressionist movement (who exercised no censorship upon creations).

From this moment on, she took an active part in her new friends' activities: Manet, Renoir, Monet, Pissaro.

The press will devote some articles to her paintings that she will have exhibited in the frame of this movement. Thanks to her fortune, she will participate in making impressionists known in the United States and in the world, multiplying her trips for the sake of this painting's influence.

Although Mary Cassatt studied the most varied themes, she is particularly considered as the « mother and child » painter. Contrary to academic paintings of the time with their set attitude that give to mothers the appearance of antique heroins and to children, airs of little pages full of their importance, she gives to her characters natural gestures, smiles that illuminate a familiar scenery and expressions of mutual tenderness.

In 1900, her eyesight began to decline and she was obliged to renounce painting in 1914.