



## A Peasant Woman

### Date

1871

### Primary Maker

Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas

### Medium

Oil on canvas

### Dimensions

40 x 32 cm

### Description

A modern classicist Degas lived and worked in Paris. Part of the revolutionary movements in painting championed by the Impressionists, he, like them drew on contemporary life for his paintings. He exhibited in all the Impressionists exhibitions except that of 1882 but unlike

their work in with Degas we find no dissolution of form. A superb draughtsman his intensity of observation is apparent in all his work. While most famous for ballet scenes and horse racing, all his subject matter, is imbued with a startling realism. A Peasant Woman is part of small series of works where he tackles the problems of painting white material against light with its opposing qualities of transparency and opacity. The Breton girl's white headdress is illuminated by the bright sunlight which pours in through a transparent white curtain. This painting also reveals Degas pre-occupation with *contre-jour*, modelling mass against light. The fluency of line assists his exploration of form and together with his innovative use of light and colour, he has created some of the most acute observations of contemporary existence. (BD)