

Georges Seurat (1859-1891)

Soon after the camera was invented, artists began to explore new ways of painting. They didn't want their pictures to look like photographs. One young artist who thought of a new method of painting was Georges Seurat. He filled his canvases with points of color. His advanced dot painting is called Pointillism.

Seurat was born in 1859 and grew up in Paris, France - the heart of the art world. He liked art and loved to draw. He used to draw pencil copies of his favorite masterpieces. When he was in art college he tried new ways of painting. Soon he discovered a method that no one had ever tried before-Pointillism.

"Art is harmony", Seurat said. Just like the orchestra playing a symphony, a painting is a coming together of many parts to create a whole. To prove his point, Seurat painted every single part as a tiny dot. The dots colored and shaped the images in his pictures. Different colored dots were layered on top of each other and they all came together in harmony.

Seurat's most famous painting is *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* (1884). The painting is approximately 7' high by 10' wide. Seurat worked for 2 years on this painting.. It's one of the most famous pieces of art in the world. Notice the light and the shadows.. How did Seurat make these so dramatic? If you look closely at the painting, you can see that he added dots of lighter paint where bright highlights appear and darker color dots where shadows appear.

Another example of Seurat's use of bright light can be seen in *Seine at the Grande Jatte*. Note the white highlights on the water. Darker colors are used in *The Maria at Honfleur*.. Look closely at all of the different colors he used to get the dark tones.

Seurat also liked to use complementary colors.. Complementary colors are colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. Look at the examples of *The Circus* and *The Side Show*. Can you name the complementary colors used in each painting? Blue and Orange (The Circus), yellow and purple (The Side Show) and red and green.

POINTILLISM

Purpose

- ❑ To familiarize students with artist Georges Seurat's development of techniques and accomplishments.
- ❑ To explore Seurat's techniques of painting with dots and using complementary colors.
- ❑ Creating secondary colors from primary colors.
- ❑ To show the use of white paint to create bright highlights.

Teacher Provides

- ❑ Pencils

Docent Provides

- ❑ Prints of Seurat paintings
- ❑ paper Towels
- ❑ Red, blue, yellow and white Tempera paints.
- ❑ Color chart
- ❑ Plastic fruit (one per student)
- ❑ Q-tips (6 per student)
- ❑ Paper plates for palettes
- ❑ White drawing paper - 2 sheets 6" x 9" per student
- ❑ Colored pictures

Set Up

- **Pass out following**
 - Two pieces of white 6" x 9" paper
 - One fruit per student
 - 6 Q-tips
 - two paper towels
 - paper plate palette with three colors

First Painting

- **FRUIT - SHOW EXAMPLES OF FINISHED PROJECT.**

This exercise gives you a chance to work with a simple shape on a small scale. Filling in colors may seem slow and tedious with the Q-tip, but it gives you a chance to really control your colors, highlights and shadows.

 - Place your piece of fruit on your extra sheet of white paper. Draw the shape of your fruit lightly with a pencil. Notice how the overhead light creates a shadow? Outline that shadow area in pencil.
 - Fill in the color of the fruit using Seurat's technique of layered colors. For example, if you are painting an orange do not use orange paint. Instead, on your palette, mix shades of yellow and red. The darker red-oranges should be used on the shadow edge of the fruit and the lighter yellow oranges should be used on the edges that the light is shining on. **Start with the light colors and work up to the darker colors.** (quickly demonstrate to students)
 - To do the shadow, use the color of the fruit that is reflected onto the white paper and layer shades of the complementary colors, in this case blue, on top of the fruit color. Notice that the shadow will be darkest right under the edge of the fruit and it will get lighter as the shadow gets further away from the fruit.
 - Don't forget to put some of your shadow color along the shadow edge of the fruit. This will help give it the appearance that it is round.
 - Use white for the highlights (you may want to mix a bit of the fruit color into the white to soften it). Paint these where you see your strongest source of light reflecting off the fruit.

Second Painting

□ LANDSCAPE - SHOW EXAMPLES OF FINISHED PROJECT

- Have students select a landscape photo (one table at a time can go up to choose one)
- Lightly pencil in the different areas of colors on your second sheet of paper. Do not go off the edges of your paper. Leave a white border around your pencil drawing (show them on yours)
- Fill in the color using the same techniques you used when you painted the fruit.
- Take your time layering the colors. See how many variations of a color you can make.
- Notice the shadow and light in your photo.
- Feel free to ask for advice or guidance. Have Fun!