

BACKGROUND READING FOR PRESENTERS

Georges Seurat *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*

Grade 3

Georges Seurat (ZHORZH suh RAH) (1859-1891)

Source: Teaching Guide for My Weekly Art Gallery, No. I

George Seurat was born in Paris, France, and died there at the age of thirty-two. He studied at an art school in Paris and then continued his education by visiting art galleries, reading and studying the problems of light and color. He led a very secluded life and devoted his short life completely to his work.

The painting method that he developed is called Pointillism. The artist paints small dots or strokes of pure color on the canvas. Seen from a distance, these "points" blend and give the effect of a different color and high luminosity. For Seurat, he used one of six colors: blue, yellow, red, green, violet, or orange. His compositions were carefully planned with intelligence and discipline. Although his paintings are few in number, they are valued among the greatest and most beautiful works of art.

In 1886, Seurat finished his painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. This is the painting that we are going to look at today. It became the most outstanding example of pointillism. The original is very large--6 1/2 by 10 feet. It took two years for Seurat to paint this painting.

During an exhibition of his art he contracted a chill which turned into infectious angina. He died soon after. Sadly, his one year old son also became ill from the disease and died a few weeks after his father.

ART PRESENTER PROGRAM

GEORGES SEURAT
*A Sunday Afternoon on the Island
of La Grande Jatte*

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
GRADE THREE

1. What do you see in the painting? (get many answers)
2. What is happening?
3. What can we learn from looking at the activities, clothes, gestures, and expressions of the figures?
4. The painting contains over 40 characters of different ages, gender, social classes, and occupations. How many can we identify? (ask someone to keep count)
5. What kind of day is it?
6. What do the shadows tell us?
7. Why are most of the people gathered at the edge of the river?
8. Are they enjoying themselves?
9. Find the few accents in the painting that show a sense of motion: a girl running, a small dog in the foreground, and a butterfly.
- 10 Can you see the many dots/tiny brush strokes from a distance?
Have a student close to the painting see if he/she can see them up close. This is the Pointillism style.

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMPANY:

Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte
Georges Seurat

Grade 3

1. Pointillism Picture

Materials: construction or drawing paper, crayons, or chalk

Discuss Pointillism again. Notice how Seurat made one color by dotting two or more colors side by side. You can experiment using dots of blue and yellow to obtain green, red and yellow, etc. Make a picture or part of a picture using dots of colors. Notice how much time it takes to make this kind of picture.

There are numerous pictures to make copies of from the two folders in the red bag. Some are large, which will take students a LONG time to complete with this style. A butterfly has been reduced to a small size, which you may find works well, so students are able to complete the project.

2. Color Wheel/circles and squares

Materials: copies of the hand-out that has 3 circles and 3 squares, crayons/colored pencils

You may want to discuss the warm and cool colors, along with the color wheel. On the back of that warm/cool color sheet are three colored circles. Show the students how the overlapping makes a different color.

Then, have them fill in the circles and squares experimenting with colors, lighter and darker dots.

3. There is a lesson plan--art 334 with specific directions for a pointillism project. You may want to use that detailed plan.