

Key Terms

1. Dot
2. Pixel
3. Raster
4. Accretion
5. Fractal
6. Gestalt
7. Abstraction

1. The Evolving Universe

Big Bang > Galaxies > Stars > Planets
Kandinsky <> Hubble

2. Mosaic

Raster figuration in the fiber arts
Tapestry – Weaving / Embroidery / Stitchery – Knotting – Lace – Knitting / Quilts

3. Pointillism / Impressionism (19th C.)

William Henry Fox Talbot – 1852 English Patent No. 565 – The Halftone
Claude Monet (1840-1926)

Courbet / Paik / Kandinsky / Malevich / Celmins / Kelly / Riley
Benjamin Day 1878 Benday Dot
Frederick Ives 1881 Halftone Screen
Georges Seurat (1859-91)
Vincent van Gogh (1853-90)
Discoveries of the 1890's
1895 – X-Ray 1896 – Radioactivity 1897 – The Electron (1st sub-atomic particle)

4. Geometric Abstraction (20th C.)

Edwin Hubble 1924 Galaxies
Mondrian / Vasarely / Mangold / Klein

5. Mosaic Today (grids)

Leon Harmon
Salvador Dali
Chuck Close
Rob Silvers

6. Pointillism Today (big dots)

Arthur Mole
Yayoi Kusama
Stan Herd
Tony Cragg
Steve Reeder
Maggie Toole
Scott Blake
Glenn Zucman

"I try to downplay subject matter because I'm afraid it limits how people think about pictures... ambiguity is as important as specificity. It becomes a beautiful dialog, a tightrope walk, between abstraction and representation."

—Wayne Thiebaud, 1998

"I also believe that painting is an essentially concrete art and can only consist of the representation of real and existing objects. It is a completely physical language that has as words all visible objects, and an abstract object, invisible and non-existent, is not part of painting's domain. Imagination in art consists in knowing how to find the most complete expression of an existing object, but never in imagining or in creating the object itself."

—Gustave Courbet, 1861

"We are moving in TV away from high fidelity pictures to low fidelity... From Giotto to Rembrandt the aim was fidelity to nature. Monet changed all that."

—Nam June Paik, 1970

First reaction to Monet's Haystacks:

"...the painter had no right to paint in such an imprecise fashion."

Later response:

"I had the impression that here painting itself comes to the foreground; I wondered if it would not be possible to go further in this direction."

—Wassily Kandinsky, 1895

"Color and texture in painting are ends in themselves. They are the essence of painting, but this essence has always been destroyed by the subject. And if the masters of the Renaissance had discovered the surface of painting, it would have been much more exalted and valuable than any Madonna or Gioconda. And any carved-out pentagon or hexagon would have been a greater work of sculpture than the Venus de Milo or David. ... The Futurists hold the dynamic of three-dimensional form to be of prime importance in painting. But in failing to destroy the world of objects, they achieve only the dynamics of things. Therefore Futurist paintings and all those of by-gone artists can be reduced from twenty colors to one, and not lose their impression. Repin's picture, Ivan the Terrible, could be devoid of color and still give us the same impressions of horror as in color. The subject will always kill color and we shall not notice it. ... Suprematism is the pure art of painting, whose independence cannot be reduced to a single color. The gallop of a horse can be depicted with a pencil of one color. But it is impossible to depict the movement of red, green or blue masses with a pencil."

—Kasimir Malevich, 1916

"the image is just a sort of armature on which I hang my marks"

— Vija Celmins, 1999

"The basis of my painting was to find something away from personal art. ... At the time, in 1952, I was living outside of Paris ... I realized that Monet died in 1926 although the latest Monet I knew of was from 1909. I wondered what the hell had happened in his last years. So I wrote to his stepson in Giverny, and was invited to visit the studio... The stepson ... took us out to the big studio where all the paintings of waterlilies were kept. ... there was one painting, a huge one, that was all white, very heavily painted."

There was some orange and some pink ...and some pale green. ... Monet was losing his sight and was fascinated by the movement of the leaves under water. ... The day after I visited Giverny, I painted a green picture, a monochrome. I had already done paintings with six color panels but now I wondered if I could do a painting with only one color. So that is my Monet influence - the idea that I could do a single color painting.

... *Painting for a White Wall* [1952] was only five panels joined together and, at the time, it was a revelation that five panels joined together could exist as a painting. People looked at it and said that it wasn't enough, that there were no marks on it, that it didn't say anything, and that there was no idea. They said it was just a presentation of colors. And I said, 'Well, that's what it is - the naming of colors.' These works are between painting and sculpture. Sculpture has always existed in its own space, whereas painting shares form and ground on the same surface. Therefore painting to me was always an illusion. And in order to get away from that illusion, I had to have each panel with its own color.

— Ellsworth Kelly , 1991

“At the end of his life, Monet painted his largest, grandest and in many ways greatest paintings about virtually nothing; about looking into a huge expanse of water set with a few lilies in which unexpected colors appear in the depths, or elusively in reflections. It is a most mysterious, extraordinary subject in which he invests all his experience and power. In the end there seems to be hardly any subject matter left - only content.”

— Bridget Riley, 1992

Chuck Close 1995 Conversation with Roy Lichtenstein:

Close: I love how the Benday dots really were content, and how in that wonderful painting of the magnifying glass the dots are simply bigger inside the frame of glass...

Lichtenstein: I can see it in your work, of course, because the mark that is supposed to symbolize a highlight or a shadow is itself a decorative thing; it could be a painting.

Close: Well, I think that's why your work was so important to me. In fact, when Diane Waldman said that you were conjoining a real image with an abstract style, that had real urgency for me: the idea that it was so clearly the marks on the surface at the same time as it was the image.

“What moves me about Seurat's art is the incremental, nuanced, part-to-whole way his paintings are built out of elegant little dots, though I feel even more of a kinship with Roman mosaics because the mosaics are made out of big, clunky chunks, and I especially like the idea that something can be made out of something else so different and unlikely. In Roman mosaics, an eyeball is made from the exact same chunk of stone as the background, and this brings up the concept of alloverness and Jackson Pollock. It's what I aim for in my own work, an alloverness that's different from what most portraitists do by putting all of their attention into the eyes, nose and mouth.”

—Chuck Close, 1998

“Upon close examination of anything – it becomes interesting.”

—Allan Kaprow, 1999