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Writing Assignment 3
Pointillism

Pointillism is a time consuming and labor intensive method for painting, applying texture or shading (in illustration). It is most commonly seen in painting, which is its most elaborate form. Tiny dots of primary colors are used to create an image. The style was originally created by Georges-Pierre Seurat [2].

At the time of Seurat's original pointillism works, the technique was thought to be strange and was not well received [1]. The accepted approach to painting of the time was large brush strokes. Brush movements were used to create texture, as well as apply color [2]. The technique is very methodical, almost mathematic in its application. Pointillism requires fewer colors of paint, but a greater understanding of color theory to master [1].

There are a variety of ways to approach Pointillism. The most common is to use dots of color to achieve a photo-realistic image [4]. Another common method is to make the dots stick out, either by spacing them, or creating a border around them (such as a visible grid) [3]. Pointillism allows a great understanding of the viewing perspective of two-dimensional works, by forcing the viewer to stand away from a painting to be able to fully understand its content [1]. The technique takes advantage of numerous properties of physics that allow light reflected off of pigments to be combined by the receiving device (in Seurat's case, the human eye) and understood as the intended composite color rather than the individual components [3].

The modern relevance of pointillism is hidden in almost everything we do and see. Pointillism is the key foundation of modern computer monitors and printers. Newspaper presses have for a long time utilized the four stage printing process that involves the

combining and overlapping of dots to produce color images. In mathematics there exists a law concerning circles. All circles witnessed are created by a discreet number of points or lines, indicating there is no perfect circle in existence. Pointillism shows that concept very strongly. The modern uses of pointillism are more effective and less "fuzzy" than pointillism paintings only because the size of the dots has been greatly reduced, further fooling the eye into believing that it is witnessing perfect, smooth shapes and millions of distinct colors (up to about 165 million) [3]. In reality the eye is combining millions of square pixels and three colors (red, green, blue) into the complex shapes in a variety of colors.

The primary artists usually attributed with working in pointillism are Georges-Pierre Seurat, Chuck Close and Vincent van Gogh [4]. Seurat was aware of the science behind pointillism and concentrated heavily on it in his paintings. Paul Signac (another painter of pointillism) once commented on the irony of pointillism; when two colors mix on the canvas they produce dirty tones, but when two colors mix in the eye, they create pleasing tones [1].

I feel that pointillism reveals the amount of thought that goes into an artistic work. Layering color, or mixing paints produce a desired result, but produce it without the knowledge of the viewer. The use of individual dots of color to create new colors is absolutely fascinating to see. There is a difference in how the technique was perceived in the past and how it is perceived now due to the invention of computer monitors and other devices that more clearly show us these dots, or pixels.

Bibliography

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