

X3

Week 6 Discussion: Warhol or Monet?

Warhol painted the same black-and-white photograph of *Marilyn Monroe in more than 50 different ways*. What did he achieve?

OR

Haystacks OR Rouen Cathedral Claude Monet Series. The impressionists played with light and color, as well as representation. Taking the same subject matter and repainting in different seasons, times of day, etc. What comment do you think this makes?

Please reply to one other student's post as well.

Andy Warhol's iconic Marilyn series is a color sensation. Warhol's color combinations evoke many different emotions ... some are vivid, cheery and bright while others are dark and morbid. This seems to suggest that he was interested in duality of her life and death (which was proximate to when he painted the images). The colors Warhol used seem to loosely fit in the different combinations we have studied . . . a few are based on monochromatic schemes, like this one with various greens:



and complementary colors like this which pairs red and green:



Clearly Warhol was obsessed with celebrity, especially famous women. However, by reproducing the same image of Marilyn in serial nature, he seems to dehumanize her a bit. And in some versions, only Marilyn's features stand out making her look almost clown-like and in my opinion they detract from her beauty. As in this one:



Perhaps he wanted us to see her more as a commodity "a star" than a person. I think that Warhol's Marilyn work achieves a striking example of pop art and proves that he was a master colorist and was clearly a groundbreaking artist.

Hi Marcie,

Thanks for all of the examples of his work, it was nice to see them along with reading your response. It seemed to me that his work was more focused on the interpreter (or society's interpretations) rather than the subject (Marylin in this case). With the mass production style of his works and the almost defiant coloration it seems he is making a visual comment on what stardom is. What it makes me think of to see each of the different Marylin's is the many versions of her that society, her fans, directors, etc. have created of her. I read that Andy's intention was to be a mirror to the world and not so much change, but reflect what he saw. I suppose that is why my mind went straight to seeing him as using different colors to create a version of each Marylin that he saw created by others while using the same image under all of the color for each one. Nice discussion points!

Monet's Haystack series conveys how much color exists in an ordinary thing. When I think of a haystack in a field, the colors yellow, brown, blue and maybe

some green come up. Looking at his works it is very obvious that there is an array of color that creates a more lifelike painting. When I have seen his work up close even the small ticks of white paint have many colors within them. It seems that he was able to perceive so many colors and was inspired by seeing what one object could become in different lighting and weather situations. Almost like he wanted to use every single color to tell one story.

Totally agree! When I quickly think of a haystack in my mind, the color is just an overall golden like the hay. However, it is really so many colors - the parts in the sun appear different than the shaded areas of the stack and so on. Money was a master at subtly conveying the different colors that actually make up the world around us,



Monet's Haystacks series to me is largely a study of light, perhaps most successfully highlighting that objects we observe not only have an 'intrinsic' color but also are very much affected by their surroundings. Impressionists' use of quick brush strokes and a multitude of colors to create shadow convey a mood diametrically opposed to Academy painting that was the norm at the time.



An even more effective example of this pursuit of capturing the complexity of light in everyday observations is the Rouen cathedral series, which to me is more striking – the scene and setup are nearly identical in all 30+ paintings, yet depending on time of day and weather conditions, the façade looks dramatically different. It is fascinating that the artist was able to depict all these moments without a camera, relying only on his eyes. Monet's perception of the transient nature of light and the different palettes he uses to translate it to the canvas dramatically changes the appearance of the subject.

I love how in these two series Monet used the same subject, but it doesn't feel repetitive at all. His understanding of color and how it is affected by light was genius, and I'm blown away by how different each painting is, both in terms of color and the atmosphere depicted. I also appreciated how the main subjects (the haystacks and the cathedral) end up not being what is celebrated here, but what is behind them. Monet said it himself- "To me the motif itself is an insignificant

factor, what I want to reproduce is what exists between the motif and me."



Warhol expressed ideas of celebrity and death through his work of the Marilyn Monroe photograph. By repeating the photography over and over, he captures the world's obsession with celebrity and the fact that Marilyn's presence was everywhere. His various color combinations capture different emotions - some bright and optimistic, some dark and morbid, some harmonious and some not. This work ultimately suggested the life and death of a celebrity.

Definitely see the somberness in the top right silkscreen with its desaturated colors. Perhaps a reaction to Marilyn's death around the time that he started producing the multiple versions in the series. I found it interesting that Warhol would try to dismiss deeper meaning in his work by saying there's no hidden symbolism or message to his art, but personal experience and reflection can trigger many different emotions when looking at the pieces.

I never thought about Warhol paintings in this way but it is very accurate! The images that are darker are much more sad and depressing, absolutely depicting the stresses of fame. While the brighter images show how she is almost a cartoon and not a real person...super interesting when you think about it in this way!

I think Monet showed an evolution though changing lights and color schemes. We definitely get a powerful sense of the life cycle while he was challenged to portray the different lights and tones throughout seasons and weather. It seems like a study of light and reflections and shadow, and even the air seems to have varying textures. Aside from the sheer beauty of showing change, I think the series is a celebration of the remarkable range of colors that can be found in nature, and represented in paint. And how nothing really ever remains the same - that perception is a fluid thing in an ever-changing landscape. The haystacks themselves seem to come alive with different moods with every shift.

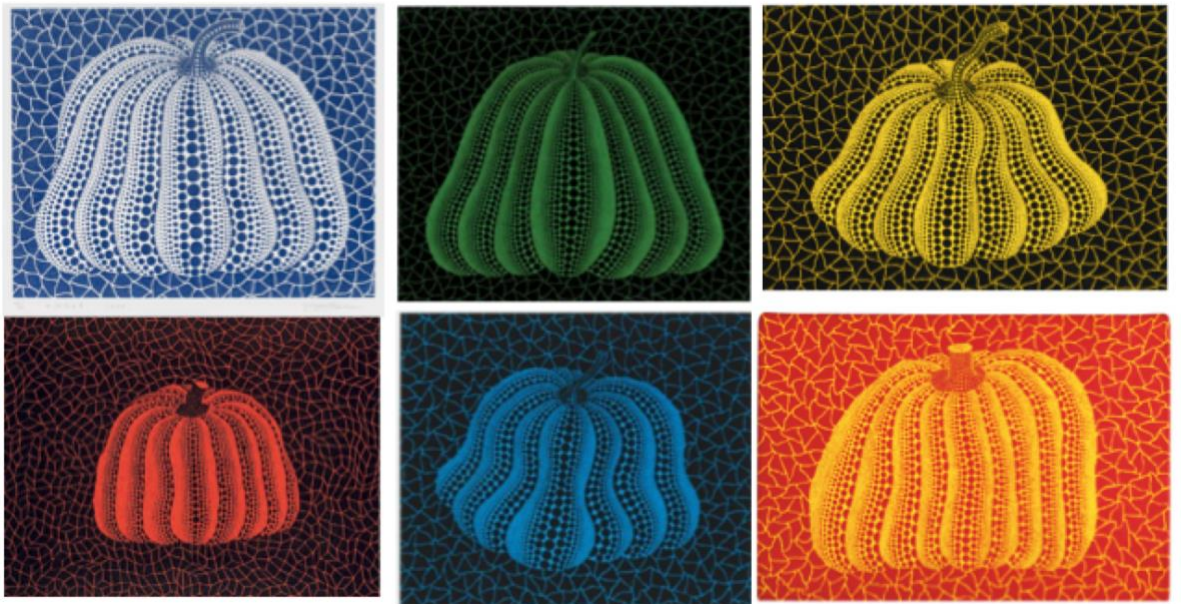
Hi Sharon, I personally love the change of the seasons (miss that very much only having summer in the tropics - Indonesia), when the colors start to change...., and I am amazed with how much we can fall in love with the same scenario in different ways. I admire Monet's series for portraying the differences of light according to the seasons and the weather. It's just amazing how the painter played with the same scenario by changing the colors, and truly transmitted the feeling of heat, cold, summer breeze, and so it goes...! But I also read that he was representing the wheat harvest. Something that should probably be crucial at the time.

Warhol's color usage is a means to challenge traditions, rules, boundaries, and evoke viewer's emotions.

Through repeating the same photograph and making the only variable its bold color combinations, Warhol is able to blur the line between fine art and commercial art. He challenges the realistic color usage in traditional fine art, as well as the idea of fine, one-of-a-kind craftsmanship by acting like a machine and mass producing the same image.

He acts as a bystander in his works. The unique color combinations of his works creates a sense of disconnect. Rather than projecting his personal emotions into his works, he lets his audience decide on what to react and feel based on their own experience.

An interesting contrast to Warhol is the works of Yayoi Kusama. She approaches her artwork in a similar manner, yet the intentions behind her work is the complete opposite to that of Warhol's. Kusama often uses the pumpkin as her subject and create different color combinations based on very similar compositions, (as seen in images below). While both artists use bold, catchy colors to create images based on simple subjects, Kusama creates works based on her emotions while Warhol tries to achieve desensitization of personal emotions. As stated in an interview, Kusama uses the pumpkin as her frequent subject because she finds the shape of it humorous and loves its human-like quality and form. I find it interesting that Warhol tries to create machine-like images using a living subject, while Kusama tries to connect and humanize her non-living subject.



Hi Iris,

I totally love your example and how you compare these two artists. At first glance, Warhol and Kusama's work resemble in terms of color usage (highly saturated, high contrast), but definitely, the meaning and intent behind are totally different.

Actually, I've seen a short video about this artist (Yaoyi Kusama) on FB a while ago and was impressed by her art and her story right away. The fact that she is currently living in a mental institution and still manages to create art every day is very amazing, but not surprising though - it IS scientifically proven that there is a very thin line between genius and insane.

Monet's Haystack paintings are mainly about his understanding of color and how it is directly impacted by the light or lack of it, the season changes and the atmosphere. The haystack is merely a subject used on all these paintings, what is more important is what we see in the background- how the light changes at different times of the day, across seasons and in almost all types of weather. The invariable haystack allowed him to explore light and mood across his series, and to demonstrate his genius understanding of color and lighting. What is most surprising is how different each painting is, despite the same subject being used in all of them.

Without having read anything, the first thing that came to my mind was that Warhol painted Marilyn Monroe in so many different ways to boost awareness of POP art, and himself. It's impossible not to remember his name before these paintings. But that would be too marketeer....

Later I researched and found out that he was obsessed with morbid concepts, and produced the images a few years the actress passed away:

"In August 62 I started doing silkscreens. I wanted something stronger that gave more of an assembly line effect. With silkscreening you pick a photograph, blow it up, transfer it in glue onto silk, and then roll ink across it so the ink goes through the silk but not through the glue. That way you get the same image, slightly different each time. It was all so simple quick and chancy. I was thrilled with it. When Marilyn Monroe happened to die that month, I got the idea to make screens of her beautiful face the first Marilyns." ([link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)).

Was it a simple exercise of the silkscreen technique he was applying? Was it his own art expression to immortalize her? Giving her life and different feelings to the audience by using different colors? Life and dead, as the article states, comparing it with religious work references? In a world where everyone buys massively, would that also be a manifesto of abundance, consumerism? It's hard to say for sure....

By valuing her beauty in different color schemes, he is emphasizing glamour, and her celebrity status. And then again, he achieved the consecration of pop art, and brought it to the masses.

Claude Monet's Haystacks Series and similar series, to me, are so beautiful and meaningful. In this series he uses light, seasons, and color to make the viewer feel differently about the same subject (similar to Warhol). In Monet's work, all paintings are beautiful but they make the viewer feel different, for me I notice the difference with his use of light. The paintings that are for winter months have less brightness and more cool tones whereas there are other works that use more vibrant tones. What I appreciate about Monet's work is that it is so natural and, for someone who appreciates nature and its beauty in different moments, it is so nice to see the same subject portrayed with different lighting. I would like to see someone photograph the same subject in the same way that Monet made his works, I think that would be a very interesting photo journal!

Hi!

Marilyn Monroe in More than 50 different ways

Warhol captured her life and death with the repetition of her paintings showing Marilyn Monroe's many social masks as an actress, sex symbol and the icon of marketing she was for Hollywood.

I think the different tones of color represent the glamorous and superficial life and her tragic death.

Hi,

Pop art movement, 1950s. Hollywood, magazines, television, and newspapers are all producing new images daily, enlarging the popular culture. All that surrounds us are images ready to be consumed. Andy Warhol summarized

the Pop movement and the role of media in this famous quote "In the future, everybody will be famous for fifteen minutes." It sounds so ironic and sarcastic and so typical for a pop art movement.

As many articles say that the Warhol's choice was almost accidental and there is nothing behind it, it is very hard to believe. I agree with many points my classmates have made above. Just wanted to add that personally, I think that by reproducing Marilyn's print and painting it in more than 50 different ways, Warhol not only reflects Marilyn's animated and extraordinary personality but also evokes different feelings and "pleases" (ironically) different target audiences. Everyone can "choose" their favorite Marilyn, according to one's personal preferences and moods.

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