

x2

## 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.

By using only black and white paint and painting the same subject matter in different ways I believe Warhol wanted the viewer to focus on the subject and experience the emotion of the different paintings. Looking at the black and white painting as a whole, it resembles a film strip that's telling a story, a film strip that is warped, eerie, and eventually fades away. If the viewer is aware of the subject and her death, the painting can represent tragedy, timelessness, iconic beauty, sadness, and death.

It's interesting that you say Warhol is trying to focus attention on the subject because my response posits that Monet was doing the opposite. The subject was incidental to the work. Taken together the two ideas illustrate the depth of the art world and how much is going on in a work that isn't readily apparent.

Jess, I like that you thought of Monroe after her death and the legacy that she left behind. It is interesting to think of Warhol's interpretation not only depicting her beauty, but also how the colors he used represented how the world saw her when she was gone. The idea of life and death in relation to color is an interesting exploration!

Jess and Megan, that's exactly what I thought, Warhol and Monet's pieces are somehow the opposite of each other. Warhol is paying homage to his subject while Monet is merely using the subject as an excuse to focus on execution. Very well put!

Andy Warhol is an iconic artist for his pop art. Using Marilyn Monroe was just one of the many ways he revolutionized art. He created a new fun way to

express himself through the portraits of Marilyn Monroe. The series describes and fluent but ever changing piece of art that can be seen many different ways. Having the black and white color keeps it simplistic but also has a eye catching tone to it. Each photo being different pulls the eye in each direction so you focus on each point and where the colors are highlighting. Warhol gets the attention of the viewer to look at each aspects of the portrait to find what I think which one they like best.

Your point about pulling the viewer's eye around the image to focus on certain aspects is really good. When I see a portrait I'm usually drawn right to its eyes. In these paintings, my eyes go wherever there is the most contrast. By using so many hues and so many different kinds of contrast, Warhol prevents us from approaching his paintings in the normal way we approach portraits and human faces.

Warhol achieved, what Smith described in one of our readings as "an intrinsic relationship" with color and he "inspired the world to think differently about the role and value of color in our lives" by depicting Marilyn Monroe in more than 50 different ways. Marilyn Monroe is an icon and known for her beauty. By using contrasting colors in his palette, we are faced with distorted depictions of Monroe. In some iterations, we Monroe's blonde yellow hair is enhanced and pink eye eyeshadow make the image pop - whereas in other versions, she is eerily printed with dark green hair and a dark green face. It questions the viewers attachment to societies idea of Monroe's beauty by using different colors.

I have to be honest, I don't particularly like Warhol - his works is not aesthetically pleasing to me.

Your statement about using the color combinations to question concepts of beauty helps me appreciate his work and what he achieved, even if I don't like looking at it.

I agree with you Rilka. Maybe the more abstract use of color is a reflection of Monroe. She was one of the most free-willed women of her time in my opinion, kind of living her life how she wanted, wearing what she wanted, dating who she wanted, etc. Some of the color compositions could reflect how starkly different she tended to be from the other women in the spotlight- making more controversial choices as a woman for her time.

By painting the same mundane subject matter repeatedly, Monet explores how color works in different combinations and in different lights. The paintings range from bright, saturated colors depicting a sunny day, cool, monochrome grays and whites of winter, to red and oranges of sunrise and sunset. (in #6 below he also combines warm and cool by painting a winter sunset.)

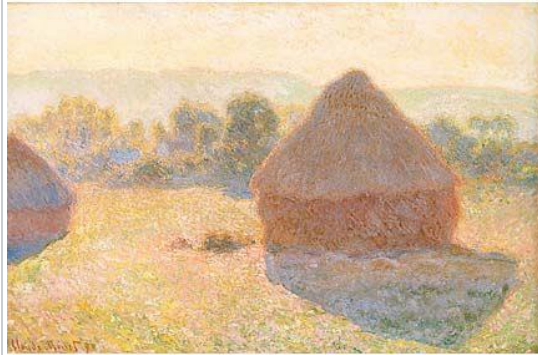
By using the same subject matter, Monet essentially removes considerations of form and composition to focus exclusively on light and color, allowing views to explore these elements in depth. From this series of 30 paintings, one can surmise that Monet placed a higher importance on color and light than he did on form, which is characteristic of the Impressionist school.



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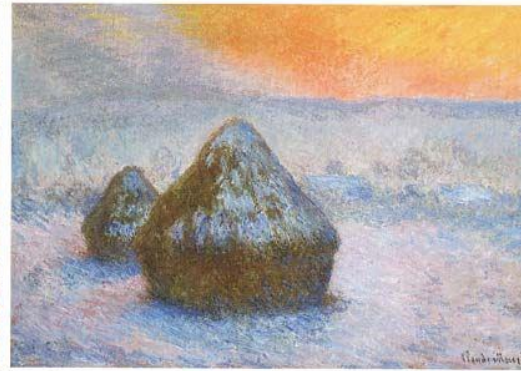
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I think your point about Monet's removal of consideration of form and composition to focus on light is an interesting one to consider. I do think Monet considered his compositions to some extent as his haystack series still demonstrate perspective, balance and proportion. To me almost it seems like his focused treatment of light makes the light itself an element of the composition like an apple might appear in a still life.

By painting the same subject in different seasons and times of day, Monet is showing us how much color and light can affect our perception of an image.

He uses a mundane object as the main theme so that it can adapt to each different surrounding.

To me, it seems that some paintings are more dramatic, some are melancholic, some are relaxing, even ethereal, and others are uplifting. Each one evokes a certain feeling and it's incredible how this effect is achieved "only" by playing with light and color.



It's interesting you say color and light can affect perception, when I had been referring to it in the opposite way, stating Monet's perception was what was affecting the colors he used. It almost begs a similar question to which comes first; does perception affect the color, or does color affect the perception. I think, in this instance, it works both ways.

Monet's haystack series showcases the transient, fleeting nature of light. Through repetition, he illustrates the nuances in his perception of the scene as it relates to a particular time of day or year. The fact that the subject of the paintings remains the same across the series causes the difference in color pallets to stand out. This allows the viewer to really focus on the changes in

mood from canvas to canvas. Monet leverages these different color pallets to document changes in the light both reflected and absorbed into the haystacks and their surroundings. The overwhelming sense of atmosphere causes one to feel as if they are present in the field at those very moments.

It's often stated that "there are two sides to every story", but I think Monet's series takes that statement to a new level, illustrating that there are unlimited ways to perceive or experience the same situation. With his haystack series, Monet proves that individuals are capable of viewing the same subject in different lighting, making a broad statement about perception. If this statement can be made about such simple and mundane subject matter, it naturally causes one to look at more complex situations in the same way. I think people in society would get along a lot better if everyone realized that perception is unique to an individual and life isn't black and white.

Hi Whitney, thank you for your thoughts of Monet's haystack series. Reading your response gave me new insight on the saying "there are two sides to every story." I think you're so right that there are unlimited ways to perceive and experience the same situation. So many things can influence a person's point of view and experience of a situation. Depending on who a person is, what their personal beliefs may be, what frame of mind they are in at a given time, along with so many other variables can and will affect how a person views a certain situation or sees a certain subject. I love your point you make at the end of your response about how people in society would be able to get along better if everyone realized that perception is unique to each individual and that life isn't just black and white....well stated!

Monet's series of Haystacks shows the power that different color schemes can have. I believe in this case, the difference between paintings is mostly in the mood they convey. Some have soft colors, and some have bright, saturated colors. Some have minimal variation in value, and some have deep shadows. They're all paintings of haystacks but some feel fresh and exciting, some feel calming, and others feel despondent. I wonder if they were meant to all be viewed together. If so, they would show the variation but lose the emotional impact. If they were each meant to be a separate piece, they could each successfully serve a separate purpose, but they would lose the impact of the group.

Warhol was a pioneer in pop art for a variety of ways. He actually made these prints after Monroe's death. I think for him this was a mix of having fun creating a new process and pushing the boundaries. These were largely an experiment on silkscreen with glue and the process of printing on top. The idea of printing usually makes us think of the same images being repeated using the same colors, but what is unusual about his Monroe prints are each one is different depending on how the ink grips to the glue and silkscreen. This draws the viewer in and forces them to appreciate every one because they are all different. I think in a way this was his version of a study of colors as there are various color themes. I think it is pretty widely recognized that possibly the black and white version represents her death and the color versions are her life, or various stages of life.

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I think you nailed Warhol's depiction of Marilyn Monroe perfectly. Through his distinctive style of work, Warhol referred to a society in which individuals were seen as mere products rather than human beings. Warhol evokes Monroe's ubiquitous presence in the media. The contrast of vivid black and white color and the effect of fading are symbolic of the star's mortality, whereas the color variations are symbolic of her immortality.

Hi Georgia,

Thank you for the interesting info behind Warhol's creation of the iconic Monroe paintings, especially you mentioned the experiment on silkscreen with glue and the process of printing on top, which is completely new to me. I'm not familiar with his styles, but just happen to see his works all the time such as the Monroe and Campbell's tomato soup. It's interesting to learn that the various color versions mean different stages of Monroe's life, and the black and white version represents her death. I think an artist / designer can really rely on colors to convey the core messages of a design he/ she wants to deliver to the audience.

Cheers,

Stacy

Monet's painting series *Haystacks* exhibits the grandeur of the countryside where meaning can be found in the simplest of things. The poignant series allows one to reflect on the beauty found in nature and the complexities of what hides below the surface.

As an impressionist artist, Monet does an incredible job of taking something as common as haystacks and highlights the importance hay plays in agriculture and sustaining life. As days turn into night, and summer fades into fall, the bales of hay withstand the harsh winter weather until it is time to harvest them in the spring.

Just as Monet captures the delicate shades throughout the day, it's a kind reminder that life is fleeting with each sunrise and sunset.

For *Haystacks Claude Monet Series*, I think the different paintings of the same subject matter showcase Monet's ability to convey different atmospheres clearly with distinct details to the audience. Even by using the same haystacks, he is able to show the different weathers and situations clearly by using different techniques of classic color theory including contrast of light and colors.

For the below painting, he used the contrast of complementary hue orange and blue to make both the orange sunset sky and icy blue environment more vibrant. Also, the contrast of color temperature and color intensity (bright orange sky vs muted, less saturated icy blue snow setting) makes the sky warmer and the snowy ground appear colder to the audience.





*Claude Monet, Grainstacks At Sunset, Snow Effect, 1890-1891*

For the below painting, he used the contrast of hue and saturation to show the clear, nice weather. The highly saturated bright colors (in orange, yellow-green, green, blue and blue-violet) of different subject matters in sharp details contrast with the pale, muted blue sky, which conveys the idea of clear weather.



*Claude Monet, Haystacks At Giverny, 1884*

For the below painting, he used the monochromatic, desaturated and darker warm colors vs small proportion of blue to convey the soft misty weather and the warm sunset. All the details are in blur which is distinctively different from previous sharp painting above, and successfully rendered the misty environment.



Claude Monet, *Haystacks, Sun in The Mist*, 1891

From Monet's paintings, I understand that the contrast of light and colors plays a significant role in delivering the core message of a design.

*Haystacks at Giverny* is one of my favorites, and an interesting choice for your post. That earlier example shows that the series isn't as much about the particular couple of haystacks as it was about the mood and the weather. I think of the series as a diary. Working at an antique shop, I recently came across a handwritten diary from 1901. There was an entry for every single day of the year, and they always started with a comment on the weather, and sometimes nothing else. Before we had the ability to predict weather like we do now, it wasn't considered mundane conversation. I think it's fascinating the way art was used to document and express atmospheric changes, the same as words were.

I have always interpreted Monet's *Haystacks* series as a diary of sorts, using images instead of words to convey whatever he was feeling or experiencing at the time. His *Water Lilies* series is very similar, though less extensive, and more varied in the particular scenes depicted. As others have said, the subject

matter of Monet's work was often less important than the colors used. The subject, in this case the haystack, was simply part of the canvas, a shape used for the sole purpose of showing light and shadows. The colors chosen reflect both the weather/season and the emotional lens he was looking through.

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?

The Impressionist movement was focused on conveying moments in time on canvas and they did so by using light and color. The repainting of the subject matter at different times of the day and in different seasons allowed the artists capture many different moments. Monet was particularly interested in how light defined a moment and how the atmospheric properties surrounding a subject could transform it.

Andy Warhol was a central figure of the American Pop art movement. Known for his bright paintings of subjects ranging from celebrities to everyday images found around the house such as his paintings of the Campbell's soup can, for example. Warhol noted that repeated exposure to an image make those around it begin to become de-sensitized to the image. His work titled *Marilyn Diptych*, based on a repeated image of Marilyn Monroe, followed these two themes of celebrity and repeated exposure that Warhol has become so well known for. *Marilyn Diptych* measures more than 6'W x 9'H; a grand scale that calls attention unto itself and to its subject – Marilyn Monroe. The work is made from two silver canvases on which Warhol silkscreened a single photograph of Monroe. One side is in vibrant color, the other side is in black and white.

By repeating the same image of Monroe over and over throughout the colossal scale of the work, Warhol evokes Marilyn Monroe's universal presence in the media. The black and white images on the right side of the canvas exemplify the stark reality that, despite their status in society, celebrities are still regular people, too. The smear in the second column of the black and white area could possibly symbolize the tarnishing of the Monroe's

reputation that took place in the media after her death was ruled a probable suicide.

The contrast presented by the vivid color on one side with the black and white on the other, along with the gradually fading black and white in the right panel, symbolize the actress's mortality. Her indecipherable and unknowable expression makes her face appear eerie and like a lifeless mask. When coupled with the repetition of the image, Monroe's mask-like face not only seems to drain *her* life away, but also seems to drain *our* connection and reaction to her life by deadening our emotional response to her death.