

Comparative Study



“Self Portrait”, 1890



By Curtis A. Hicks

“Woman with a Parasol -
Madame Monet and Her Son”

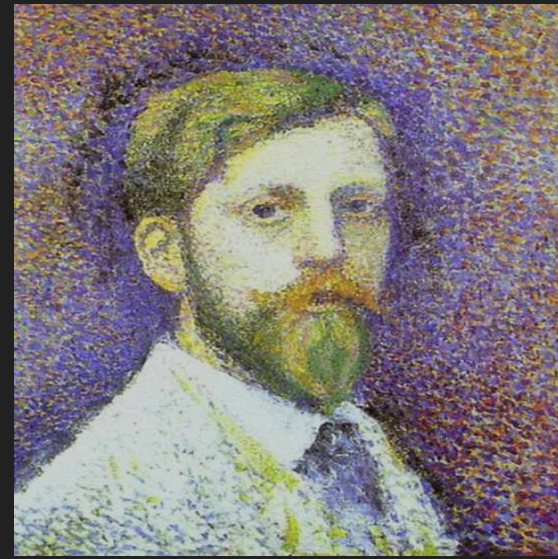


“Springtime”

In this comparative study, I will discuss the connections between the following works and how they can be connected visually as well as thematically. The art being analyzed is “Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son” and “Springtime” by French painter Claude Monet, and “Self Portrait, 1890” by Belgian painter Georges Lemmen. I will not only discuss the similarities and differences in their styles with paint but I will also cover how emotions can play a part in how you interpret their themes. Then, if possible, I will compare the common thematic interpretations of these works, and how the viewers come to these conclusions.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance - Georges Lemmen

Georges Lemmen was a German neo-impressionist painter born in Belgium. In his early years, he enrolled into a drawing school named St. Josse-ten-noode. His art was initially influenced by Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, who, among other things, worked with impressionism art. As he developed, he eventually joined a group named Les XX in 1888. A few years after joining, he would later become influenced by Theo van Rysselberghe, and practice with neo-impressionism. Along with neo-impressionism, he also practiced with pointillism, which would become one of his primary categories for his work. The target of his work varied from portraits to objects to entire landscapes. Other than his paintings, Georges Lemmen also worked on a variety of posters, ceramics, and drawings. He died in July of 1916, being well known for his unique take on pointillism.



“Self Portrait” (1890) - Georges Lemmen



“Aline Marechal” - Georges Lemmen

As for his work itself, most were created in the Modern Art era, towards the end of the impressionist / neo-impressionist eras. Impressionism had the greatest influence on his work, often revolving around developing a piece through points and blocks of color. The style was initially unpopular, but later grew praised by the public. Lemmen’s work was inspired by these styles to a grand extent, developing his own method of using looser strands of color. In his “Self Portrait” this can be seen strengthening his point of interests, as his appearance stands out within the piece, while still presenting the colors and pieces of the background together.

Analysis of Function and Purpose



“Self Portrait” (1890) - Georges Lemmen

Georges Lemmen’s “Self Portrait” was a representation of the combination of a person’s “background” that likely reflects the development of his character. The way Lemmen used movement to bring the background towards him represents this. It’s goal was to bring awareness to how the past forms into someone’s present self.

It was also meant to invoke a feeling of neutrality or tranquility. The point of emphasis, the man, wears an expression of no real emotion, as though there isn’t necessarily anything to be concerned with at the moment. It focuses on the being itself, rather than additional emotion.

In a way, this piece serves as an answer to the question of “what” a person actually is. They could consider themselves the result of their actions, their history, which formed into a longer lasting nature that describes you and what you will do. This work presents “pieces” coming together to represent something different all together.

Analysis Of Formal Qualities

The piece is composed entirely from pointillism. The points are composed of several different **hues** used to separate the background and bring emphasis to the subject of Lemmen himself. The **colors** selected for the background surrounding Lemmen serves as a metaphor for the emotions and events leading up to the development of his character.

Here, there is a combination of similar **hues** in order to form a **line**. The technique gives the appearance of Lemmen a smoother **texture** as though it was a (mostly) singular object. This unexpectedly smooth texture created by points strengthens the metaphor that these emotions and past events build his character



“Self Portrait” (1890) - Georges Lemmen

There is a strong difference between the **value** in between the **point of emphasis** and the background. In the edge of the portrait, the outer portion of the background shares a similar value with the man’s skin. The immediate background surrounding the man uses considerably darker **tones of color**. This, in conjunction with the smooth texture produced by the fusion of points within the area works together with the darker area of the background to develop the metaphor. The dark background outlines Lemmen’s character, as though his past shapes his present self.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance - Claude Monet

Claude Monet was one of the founders of French Impressionist painting, born in Rue Laffitte, Paris. When he was 10, he enrolled into the Le Havre secondary school of the arts. He initially grew popular for his work in charcoal caricatures. It wasn't until around 1857 until he met his mentor Eugene Boudin, who would teach him about oil paintings. He would later travel and befriend numerous artists, as well as find new mentors such as Charles Gleyre. It was in Paris that he continued to experiment with spots with rapid brush strokes, which would be known as the foundation of Impressionism. In 1866, his first famous painting, *Camille (The Woman in the Green Dress)*, would be released, marking the beginning of his major achievements and influences.



“Camille (The Woman in the Green Dress)” - Claude Monet

Apart from his charcoal caricatures in his early days, Monet's work was primarily developed in the Impressionist movement. Being one of the founders, his work served as the foundation and base for the movement in its entirety. His own interests as well as the lessons taught by his mentors left a lasting impression on Monet, leaving most of his works to be created in a similar manner. Most of his works, while looking relatively clear, still shared the overall composition of Impressionism. The works were made with quick strokes and numerous spots and points in order to develop into a point of interest. In a way, his style reflects how he learned; taking lessons from several other artists, as well as working with other artists which developed into his own unique version of Impressionism.



“Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son” - Claude Monet

Analysis of Function and Purpose

Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son, was a piece that represented tranquility and neutrality, similar to George Lemmen's self portrait. The colors eventually come into focus and bring attention to the point of interest. The movement of the piece causes the reader's focus to shift between the colors and the composition of the artwork itself. The work was created this way primarily so the viewers would take notice of the details.

Thematically, the artwork can be broken down into numerous themes. For instance, this could resemble how a background reflects onto someone and represent who they have become. This style of impressionism was visible in Lemmon's work as well, where the movement, value and color all came together towards the point of interest, as though to represent something. It could also resemble how people are pushed forward, similar to how the woman seemingly looks towards the direction of the winds.



“Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son - Claude Monet”

Analysis Of Formal Qualities

The use of **color** here in order to produce **value** works in conjunction with the **movement** of the piece. As the viewer's eyes move toward the point of emphasis, they will begin to take in the detail of the value presented here; the woman is facing away from the sun, which can reference a variety of themes.

Throughout the work there is a consistent presentation of both **color** and **value** at work. Here it is shown reflecting the colors from both the ground and the sky onto the woman and eventually having parts of these colors coming together, which can represent the development of a person.



“Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son
Claude Monet”

The use of **line** here is considerably different than how it is represented in Lemmen's work. The point of interest seems to mend considerably more in the background, while still remaining a bit of its **colors and hues** that shows that the background and the woman are in fact separate. It's use of **movement** also strengthens the difference between the woman and the background.

There is a strong emphasis on **Movement** throughout the background. The brushstrokes created here all lead toward the upper left, where it will eventually move to the right portion of the work. This presents the idea of the background blending more with the composition of the woman.

Analysis Of Formal Qualities

Monet has extensive application of **movement** here. He uses small strokes to not only form the **line** and shape of the branches, but to progressively move them upwards and then towards the right. The viewer's eyes will be inclined to follow along this branch pattern.



There is a large display of **line** being used here. Monet was able to accurately separate his subject from his background in an essentially perfect manner. The woman looks as though she is a part of the scenery without blending into it entirely.

Monet shows a strong control over his use of **color** here. He has blended a color together that accurately captures the shining of light, without the color of green standing out too much as though it were a different color entirely.

Monet once again displays a strong control of his **colors** to implement **light** into his artwork. He was capable of giving the impression of light shining onto the woman despite her white clothes. Being able to distinguish between two different shades of light while also fitting the tone of the other colors with light would be a very difficult task to do consistently.

"Springtime" - Claude Monet

Analysis of Function and Purpose



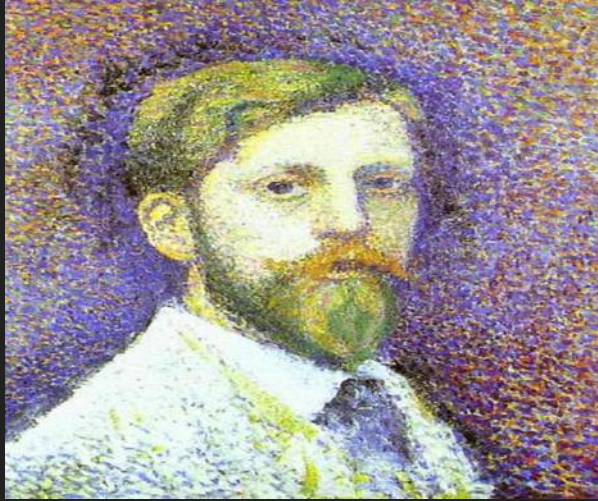
"Springtime" - Claude Monet

Monet's "Springtime" was another artwork focused around tranquility and its complimentary emotions. Monet featured a very strong use of movement in this artwork that blended across the entire top of the painting. He had also demonstrated incredible control over his color in order to implement light across his artwork, regardless of the color he would be using in addition to the light. This combination of movement and light makes the artwork look lively and relatively realistic for an impressionist artwork.

For the themes of Monet's "Springtime", it likely represents the connection between people and the earth through the calm and warm settings of spring. The way the woman stands out yet looking as though she belongs in the portrait is a way to emphasize the connection between the people and the planet. The way some parts of the painting seem to smear and blend together further points towards a theme relating to connections. The tendency to rain in spring can relate to this form of smearing and movement across his work.

Comparison of Lemmen's and Monet's work.

“Self Portrait”,
1890 - George
Lemmen



“Woman with a
Parasol - Madame
Monet and Her
Son” - Claude
Monet

Culture

- Both artists had been influenced by a respective art school of their choice in a young age. Both being around the time they were in middle and high school.
- Both had significant influences outside of their art schools. They had found mentors that allowed them to take inspiration from and develop their own unique styles.

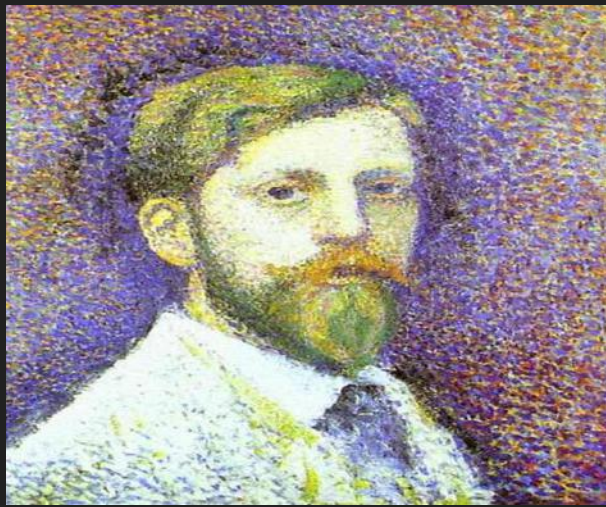
Function and Purpose

- Both artworks actively strive to appear as something clear, commonly seen in many impressionism works. This connects to the theme of blending and its implications.
- Both artworks seem to provide feelings of neutrality or tranquility. There's no negative emotions being expressed, and the pictures seem to provide a calm state because of this.

Formal Qualities

- Both artworks seem to have a distinguishable quality about them. For both artworks, there seems to be an outline or layer surrounding the subject of the art. They use **colors** and **movement** to create an outline that separates the subject from the background.

Comparison of Lemmen and Monet's Work.



“Self Portrait,” 1890 - George Lemmen

Function and Purpose

- Monet used strong amounts of movement and great control of his color to focus on the subjects in the photos, making them stand out relatively strongly from the background. Lemmen does this as well with his pointillism. His subject also strongly stands out in comparison to his background, both by shape and especially color.



“Springtime” - Claude Monet

Culture

- Both are originally branched from impressionist artwork. They were both major figures in these styles, and initially started with less intricate styles that would progressively develop.
- Both artists were heavily influenced by their mentors prior to branching out and developing their own styles. This led to some of their initial works being relatively similar.

Formal Qualities

- Both artworks partially resemble a standard human figure, but have distinct qualities that make them a little more abstract. Their use of **colors** and **movement** create blends that make parts of the art seem to fuse together, or spread out depending on the artist's choice. Monet work seems to take this method to a much higher degree, seemingly more abstract than the pointillism used by Lemmen.

Comparison of Monet's work.

Culture

- Monet was one of the largest figureheads of the impressionist movement. He was renowned for his unique applications of blending to form the "impression" of his references and subjects. His style was often seen replicated in several manners by other artists.

Formal Qualities

- The most obvious comparisons of Monet's artworks are his powerful usage of **color** to implement **lighting** in his artwork, as well as his **blending** techniques to include **movement** in his piece. These techniques often make them look relatively natural or separate from the subjects, as well as incline the viewers to transition across the artwork to follow its movement "pathways".

"Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son" - Claude Monet

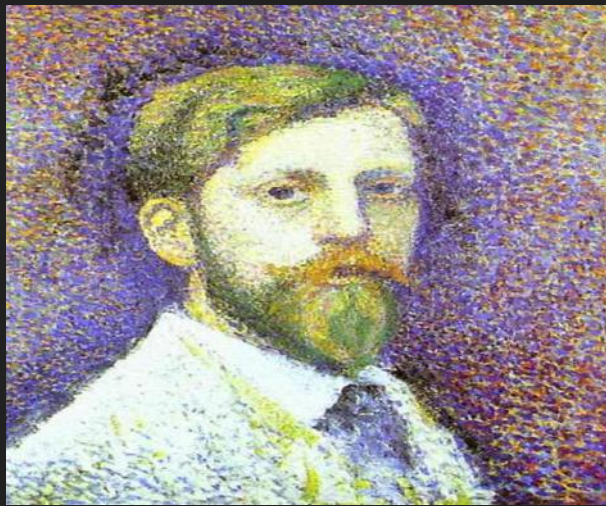
Function and Purpose

- Monet's artwork seem to consistently feature melancholy or tranquil scenery that doesn't necessarily express strong emotions. The use of movement and color mostly bring a great sense of calm in opposition to evoking emotions in his viewers. This is best achieved by his artworks featuring a person within his unique landscapes.



"Springtime" - Claude Monet

Contrast of Lemmen and Monet's work.



“Self Portrait”, 1890 - George Lemmen

Function and Purpose

- Lemmen's work was practically more focused on melancholy emotions than Monet's. Lemmen's work focused on bringing dull or potentially even depressing emotions.
- Monet's work was considerably more vibrant and clear. His use of lighting and the way everything flows with movement often brings out calming feelings rather than strict emotions.



“Springtime” - Claude Monet

Culture

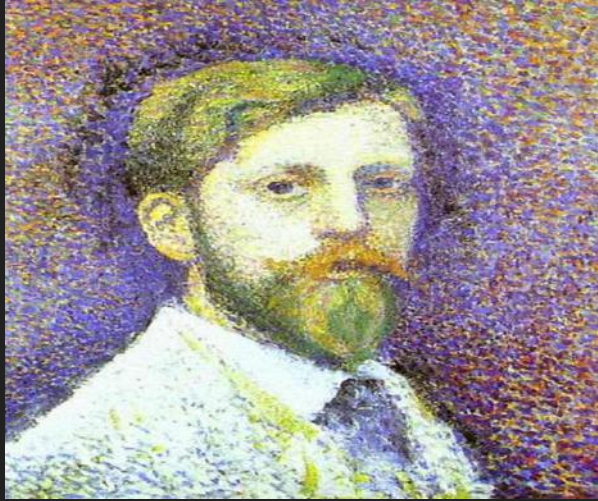
- Monet's work eventually developed into impressionism that was much more realistic than the standard impressionist movements by focusing on small precise strokes.
- Lemmen's work was primarily more focused on pointillism following the developments of his impressionist works. This was most likely due to the influence of his mentors

Formal Qualities

- The biggest contrasts between the two artists likely lie in their styles. Lemmen had eventually developed into a style that focused on pointillism, making him one of the earliest representations of the style.
- Monet's artwork had varying levels of realistic applications to it, making it look like a real scene. In “Springtime”, this was most shown by the color and how it presented light into the artwork.

Contrasts of Lemmen's and Monet's work.

“Self Portrait”,
1890 - George
Lemmen



“Woman with a
Parasol - Madame
Monet and Her
Son” - Claude
Monet

Culture

- Both artists seemed to have taken their own method of impressionism artwork. Lemmen's is focused more on pointillism while Monet is focused more on standard impressionism
- Monet seemed to have a more consistent group of artists that impacted their style further compared to Lemmen, who only had a notable mentor for a few years.

Function and Purpose

- Both artworks have stark contrasts in their use of movement and color in the piece. In a way, Lemmen's work seems more static while Monet's seems more fluid
- Both accomplish similar feelings through different styles. Lemmen's work focuses more on a direct, still appearance rather than a calming moving scenario.

Formal Qualities

- As stated earlier, Lemmen's work focuses more on **pointillism** rather than standard impressionism. His use of points also seem to lack as much **movement** as Monet's work, which uses significant strokes to make a moving scenery rather than a still portrait.

Contrasts of Monet's Work.

“Springtime” - Claude Monet



Formal Qualities

- Monet's work had varying levels of consistency with them. These were for the most part stylistic choices. Woman with a Parasol is less focused on pure detail than "Springtime", but it also features a much stronger use of movement in comparison to that artwork.
- Woman with a Parasol also has significantly more focus on color. There is many more varying colors that also had to be adjusted to fit with the shadows of the artwork.

Function and Purpose

- These artworks can also bring out varying responses to the viewers. "Springtime" brings out a strong sense of calm to the viewer through its use of movement and light.
- Since Woman with a Parasol features much more movement and considerably more intense shadow, it can bring out feelings of moving forward, as well as reflecting on strong contrasts personally based on the contrast with the shadow.

Culture

- Monet's artwork varied across different styles of impression throughout his career. This was both due to his development of the style as well as his stylistic choice. His artwork frequently changed in style, though he has shown that he is capable of returning to some of his previous styles as well.



“Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son” - Claude Monet

Comparison of My Work and Monet's



"Froth in a Sea of Leaves" - My Work



"Weeping Willow" - Claude Monet

- Our works were heavily influenced by the impressionist movement, making our techniques similar in nature. This resulted in our works often being consisted of speared textures rather than an actual photograph. These paintings are composed of multiple streaks
- These works also connect to nature in order to convey its emotions. These artworks do not seem to have any moral theme, but rather were created to bring up emotion within the viewers. These feelings can vary from melancholy to sadness, given the downward stroke motions across the work.
- These artworks are also heavily reliant on their use of color. This project was initially developed for me to focus on my use of color and blending, which I achieved to some extent with the tree. Monet also heavily focuses on these, being able to perform them to an extreme extent.

Contrasts of My Work and Monet's

- Monet's work has a much stronger emphasis on movement. He consistently uses strokes, most of which being downwards in direction. This strengthens the connection between the art and the viewer's emotions. The downward movement brings out the negative or neutral expressions of a person.
- Monet's work is also heavily focused on his color and blending. He reflects the lighting of his work in conjunction with the environment, giving most of his work this light yellow tone across the artwork.
- My work twists onto standard impressionism by adding additional details to the artwork, specifically the "froth" present in the impression of a tree. These frequent, nearly blank spots brings out thought in the viewer about what they may represent. In some cases, it could cause feelings of frustration.



"Froth in a Sea of Leaves" - My Work



"Woman with a Parasol - Madame Monet and Her Son" -
Claude Monet

Comparison of My Work and Lemmens'



“View of the Thames” - Georges Lemmen



“Strand Split” - My Work

- Our work shares strong similarities in our use of color, especially since they refer to the color of the sky or background. We applied significant blending details in order to represent the change in the horizon, whether that be due to artistic choice or the change of time.
- In this project I had attempted to replicate his pointillism to some extent. The results were somewhat successful, though were not nearly as experienced as Lemmen himself.
- Intentionally or not, our artworks seem to have a significant amount of resemblances in terms to the time present in the painting. We often developed artworks that varied from day to night, or sometimes with varying weather.

Contrast of My Work and Lemmens'



“Strand Split” - My Work



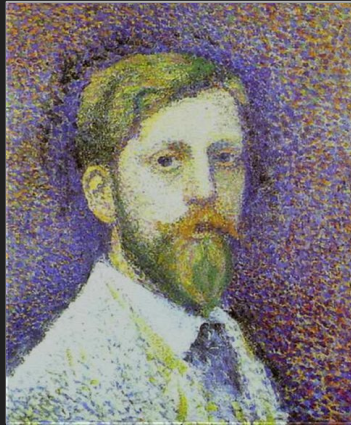
“Self Portrait” (1890) - George Lemmen

- Our artworks heavily differ in experience. Lemmen’s use of pointillism is way more apparent in his artworks, composing most if not all of his subjects in the paintings themselves. His use of blending is also significantly different, being able to change between strong colors and lighter colors.
- Lemmen’s work is also more focused on important landscapes or subjects in his artworks. The background color or setting of these works seem to vary sometimes, which can present additional themes to his artworks.
- Lemmen’s work can be considered to be a culmination of what he learned from several mentors, as well as his work in his art school. Theo van Rysselberghe in particular was one of his most influential mentors in the impressionist movement.

Comparing and Contrasting: My Work, Monet's Work, and Lemmen's Work



"Strand Split" - My Work



"Self Portrait" (1890) -
George Lemmen



"Froth in a Sea of Leaves" -
My Work



"Woman with a Parasol -
Madame Monet and Her
Son" - Claude Monet

- There is a visible difference in experience between these artists and my works, as they have performed what I have attempted to a significantly greater degree. Lemmen has shown his significant mastery of pointillism artworks, and his usage of blending. Monet has shown his mastery of color, and well as his application of movement into his artworks.
- I have shown some improvement over the course of studying these artists. My illustration in particular shows my significant development in my ability to blend, as the artwork is much less static compared to my painting.
- These two artists also show to have significant skill in each other's strengths, even though they are not the main focus. Lemmen still shows his strong ability to generate movement in his artworks, even through the use of pointillism. Monet still shows his strong ability to generate texture, as well as ability to blend in colors, which some can argue are much more apparent than Lemmen's.