Different Dots, Different Purposes

What is the difference between one dot of paint and another? The difference between them is what they are meant to portray. Dots aren’t the same and they shouldn’t have to be presented the same. One set of dots can be meticulously placed and the other can by dripped and splashed on, but why do they both have to be hung on a blank white wall? Many people know Jackson Pollock by his drips of paint all over a white canvas, hung in a museum on display. It is the same sinario with Georges Seurat, he also uses dots in painting and hung for show, but these different dots portray different ideas and techniques. Different dots and techniques should not equal different display.

Georges Seurat came after the great impressionism movement. He wanted a new style and started pointillism. Pointillism was influenced by impressionism and has many characteristics of it but the one real difference between the two, it uses dots of color instead of short brush strokes of color. Seurat simplified his subject matter then used optical illusions of color to make the groups dots come together as a picture. His paintings and colors were very well planned out. His paintings are of people and places. They are easy to look at and meant to go up on a wall. He was more like an art scientist. He was very interested in scientific theories about color perception and chromatics. Most of his paintings were supposed to play tricks on the eye from different distances. He only produced seven major paintings to gaze upon before his death. Those seven made way for more studies on color theory
In his painting A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte, the dots of pure color look every planned out. The shadows are perfectly placed with lower valued dots of pigment. I almost had to look through all of the dots to finally see the picture. It is a blurred image of people doing basically nothing at a park by a lake. His pictures are not of action or excitement, they are dots representing the lines of proper figures, water, and plants. It is very precise right down to the last dot. These are things that people are interested in, the play of color and a new style, in that day, of doing it.

Seurat’s paintings belong on a museum wall to for people to study and observe. His theories on color led the way for other artists to study color perceptions and how the colors play with audiences eyes. I don’t think that his landscape scenes or people were very interesting to look at, but the way that he used his colors made me want to stare at them. To think that all of the dots of true pigment made all the colors that flowed through his pictures is remarkable. His paintings were a great accomplishment for the art world. The seven major paintings that he made deserve to be hung for people to see because of his color theories.

There is only one thing that I would change about the presentation of his work at the museums. Seurat deserves recognition for his theories on color perception. They should also include notes or diagrams to explain how he worked with is colors. Pointillism didn’t stay around very long but it did teach other artists about how to use color. People should know this about his paintings. They should know the reason behind the millions of dots that made his pictures.

Jackson Pollock was an abstract expressionist. He painted in a very new technique that produced mixed emotions among many critics. He inspired the likes of
Ann Hess and other in this period of art. He brought creative aspects to the art world that hadn’t been seen before. He created a path of abstraction for the world’s best artists to come. Although his art was very influential, it shouldn’t be the only thing of his put on museum walls.

Jackson Pollock has another way of making dots. He makes dots of rage, and enthusiasm. “It was great drama, the flame of explosion when the paint hit the canvas; the dance-like movement; the eyes tormented before knowing where to strike next; the tension, the explosion again…”, said Namuth (Pollock book) This is a quote from a photographer as he watched and filmed Pollock. When I first saw Pollock’s splatters of paint, I didn’t think much of it. It was just layers and layers of dots of color. Then I looked a little more, I eventually saw lines leading me across and through the entire painting. The painting was dots that undefined lines crossing, hitting, and mixing with each other. Instead of using a traditional easel like others, Pollock would affix his canvas to the floor of his studio and manipulate sticks, trowels, and knives to make different effects of dots on his canvass’.

When you look at the photographs of the action, you begin to see more that the paint splattering. You start to see the man behind it. His art isn’t landscape or a person it is him and his thoughts. His paintings are the end of the story. The art is the process of painting his pictures, not the end result.

In the photographs of Autumn Rhythm, you can see one picture of him just standing in front of the blank rolled out canvas, thinking. Then is arm reaches out and slams a long line of dots across the right side. Throughout the photographs there are pictures of him stepping on the canvas with his big black books, paint flying everywhere,
arms flinging, paint splattering. This is the art! This is what everyone should see. They shouldn’t see the end result on a wall, they should replace the blank white space around the framed work of Pollock’s with televisions and photographs of him making his work. This technique is called Action painting, so why hang up a picture dried on canvas and call it Action? The modern art museums should be playing the videos that taped him in his studio working on his masterpieces. They should show the man with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth splashing paint everywhere. That is the action!

His ways of painting are almost like a dance routine around a large white rectangle. He sways back and fourth on the white canvas swinging his hands around slamming and smearing paint in every direction. His dancing is like the recital and his paintings are the red curtains coming down at the end and the lights go off. His choreographed performances around his splattered center piece is like performance art taped to view. These performances should be presented to view along side of his work. The sweat and time that does in these pieces of art should be shown too.

In the film of Pollock drawing Number 27, I can see how Pollock draws figure. He doesn’t paint it like I thought he would, he does the same thing as he does then he makes paintings like Autumn Rhythm. He drips dots of paint down to form lines. This video shows his process making pictures of abstract people that would resemble stick figures. It shows that he does have a reason for some of his art and how he has complete control over the paint. The knows what effects that he wants and how to do it.

Without this knowledge or prior introduction to him, many people could stumble upon Pollock’s art that aren’t in awe by it, and are appalled that it is considered art. Normally when someone sees something that they don’t like, they don’t do research to
figure out why they don’t like it. Where as if they do see something that interest them or are drawn to it, they want to know more. With the dwindling art programs in public schools, uneducated people are going to the museums who could easily overlook an artist like Pollock because of misinterpretation of how he makes these dribbled paintings and why they are so important.

Many museum websites that spotlight certain artists include a brief biography with them. Some that spotlight Pollock do include some photographs along with the biography but not many. Although with these few, there is no evidence that these photographs are included with the display. One museum included a full biography, photographs of him painting, and some of his works, which was Jetty Museum. Normally I wouldn’t think that it was important to demonstrate how an artist paints but his dots and splashes of paint are so misunderstood! Many people think that he just painted splashes of color all over a white canvas and got famous and recognition for it. They don’t know that he painted detailed work before, nor do they know how much he puts into it. They only see the layers upon layers of dots that are placed speratically all over. With photographs and films, they can see why he is an action painter. They should see how and why he does what he does.

Although Seurat and Pollock had many difference between the ways they used dots of color in their works, there were some similarities. They obviously used dots of color in their works of art. They both made undefined lines with their sploches of color. They also both play with a lot of variations of color. They are both remarkable artists that left their stamps on the art world with unique techniques that were misunderstood a lot of the time.
Millions of dots make up everything that we all see. These two remarkable artists dotted their way into the spotlight with the same small circles but in different ways. They changed the way we think and admire art but are all too often pushed aside by the uneducated public. Their art not only effected the techniques but also the color. They pushed their way into the history books by not only crossing their t’s but dotting their i’s. They are very different but very much the same, united by dots.