



# Art Through the Year

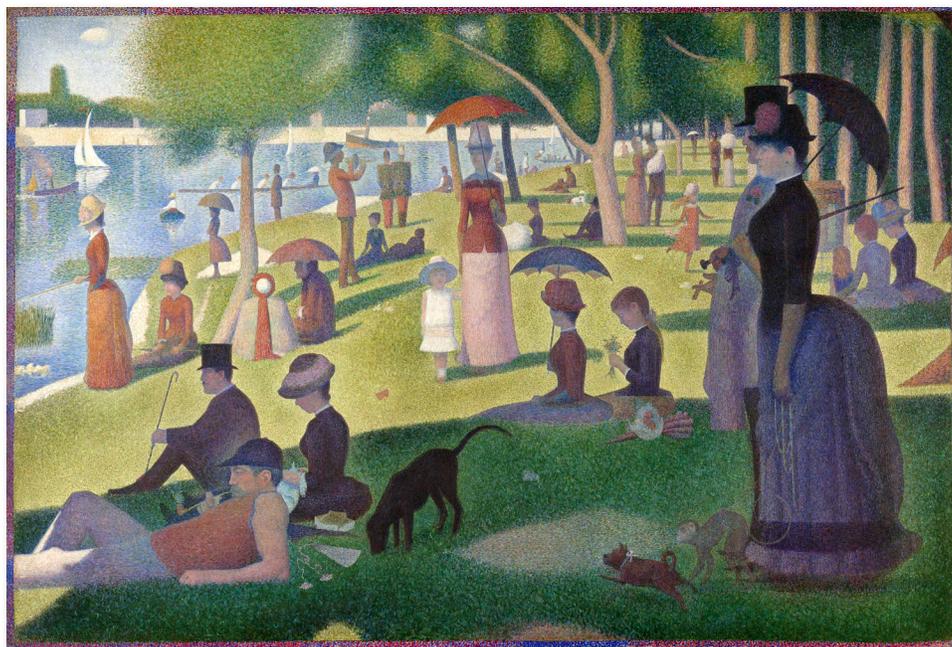
with Sharon Jeffus

## Lesson 1: Post-Impressionism and Lines

Post-Impressionism is a beautiful development in art that began in the late 1880's. It is wedged between Impressionism and Expressionism in the movements of art. Post-Impressionists are characterized by often using vivid colors, thick application of paint, and real-life subject matter. They were known for emphasizing geometric forms, distorting form for expressive effect, and using color in striking ways. Leaders in the movement are George Seurat, Paul Cezanne, Paul Gaughin and Vincent van Gogh. I love this quote about their work summing it up very well:

**“They have managed to produce intense coloring with the help of observation as precise as it is simple... They’ve avoided any muddiness in their painting by using tiny brush-strokes, little dotted points, or the juxtaposition of colors: the mixture occurs in the eye, not on the palette. They paint by attenuating, by modifying the local color of an object through reflections of the strongest adjacent color.”**

—Critic Jean Ajalbert, “Le Salon des impressionnistes,” *Revue Moderne*, June 20, 1886



A Sunday on La Grande Jatte, Georges Seurat, 1884

Seurat invented the technique called pointillism. The tiny juxtaposed dots of multi-colored paint allow the viewer’s eye to blend colors optically, rather than having the colors physically blended on the canvas. It took Seurat two years to complete this 10-foot wide painting. You can see his use of atmospheric perspective in the sky and water. Notice that the sky is darker blue at the top. Notice the water is darker around the shore. Notice the shading on the trees. All of the painting is done in the technique of using small dots of paint.

**“Some say they see poetry in my paintings; I see only science.”**

—Georges Seurat



Mont Sainte-Victoire, Paul Cézanne, 1887

Cézanne was interested in showing naturally occurring forms as their geometric essentials: he wanted to “treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone” (a tree trunk may be conceived of as a cylinder; an apple or orange a sphere, for example). He used planes of color and small brushstrokes that built up to form complex fields. In the picture above we see a lovely cool color masterpiece. Notice the basic shapes in the painting and how Cézanne shaded them to show volume.

**“When I judge art, I take my painting and put it next to a God made object like a tree or flower. If it clashes, it is not art.”**

—Paul Cézanne



Tahitian Women on the Beach, Paul Gauguin, 1891

Gauguin was inspired and motivated by the raw power and simplicity of the so-called “Primitive” art of foreign cultures. His bold, colorful and design-oriented paintings significantly influenced Modern art.

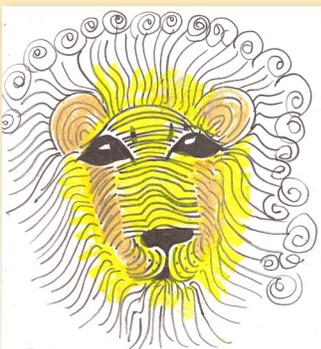
**“In art, all who have done something other than their predecessors have merited the epithet of revolutionary; and it is they alone who are masters.”**

—Paul Cezanne



A *Starry Night*, Vincent van Gogh, 1889

Perhaps the greatest of the Post-Impressionists was the master artist Vincent van Gogh. Considered by many to be the true genius of the movement, he distinguishes his work with heavy brushstrokes. One of the best things about studying Van Gogh is to understand and appreciate his use of line; the first element of art. You can create a very interesting representation of an animal or object just using the first element of art, line.



### Further Exploration:

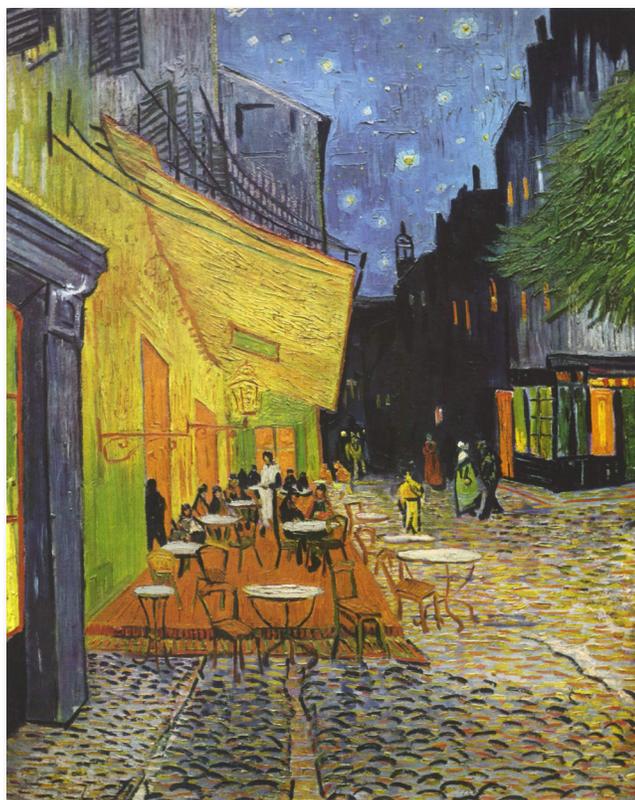
In the Art Lesson 1 Project Handout, you will first practice doing some designs just using line in Project 1: Lines & Lions, then copy the above master work of art by Vincent van Gogh in Project 2: Your Own *Starry Night*. Remember that with everything in art you can be creative and original. You can add your own interpretation to the project with your own choice of color or design. All of the elements of art have certain power to using them and we will explore all of these truths to help you become a better artist.

Lions are very powerful symbols of strength and it very easy to create a lion that is expressive by just using the element of art called "line."



**Samples of Student Artwork:**

The master artist Van Gogh uses line in his technique of painting. In the Art Lesson I Project Handout, you can copy his master work *Starry Night* (in Project 2: Your Own *Starry Night*) and create your own lines, colors and shapes as these students have done.



The picture to the left is also by Van Gogh. If you look very closely, you will see heavy brushstroke lines. My student looked at the picture and did the mural below, working with Van Gogh's technique. Choose a picture by Van Gogh and make it your very own with use of color and shape—which is what the Post-Impressionists did. **See you next time and enjoy art!**



Cafe Terrace at Night, Vincent van Gogh, 1888