**Pointillism**

Pointillism is a technique developed by Neo-Impressionist painter Georges Seurat whereby paint is meticulously applied in small daubs or dots. Interested in colour and optical theories, the Neo-Impressionists (Seurat, Paul Signac, Camille Pissaro and other artists) applied Pointillist daubs (rather than more sweeping Impressionist brushstrokes) in conjunction with a closely related process known as Divisionism. Using these techniques, unmixed (or divided) points of pigment were applied with the idea that the colours would blend in the eyes and minds of the viewer. Although this optical blending does not fully occur, these techniques produce a sense of vibrancy as the viewer’s eyes attempt to synthesise the multi-coloured points. With the goal of creating well-crafted harmonies of contrasts, the points of paint were applied, in analogous and complementary clusters, over gradated fields of local colours (such as green for grass) to form mutually enhancing fields of complementary hues. Although Pointillist and Divisionist techniques were intended to produce undulating colour and light effects, the Neo-Impressionists’ concern for scientific principles, ordered composition and artistic craftsmanship tended to result in more rigidly structured paintings than those of the Impressionists.

**References and further reading:**

*Art in Theory, 1815-1900: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, edited by Charles Harrison et al (Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

*Neo-Impressionist Painters: A Sourcebook …*, Russell T Clement and Annick Houzé (Greenwood Press, 1999).

*The Neo Impressionists*. Jean Sutter and Robert L. Herbert (New York Graphic Society, 1970).

*Seurat and the Science of Painting*, William Innes Homer (M.I.T. Press, 1964).

**Key work:**

Georges Seurat: *A Sunday on* *La Grande Jatte* (1884-1886), first shown at the eighth, and final, Impressionist Exhibition, now in the collection of the Art Institute, Chicago.

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/27992>