



George Seurat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDW4wSTm-V4>

We learn how to combine colors to make pictures using just dots. Have your child use their creative side to make a picture by just using dots. Listen to your favorite music as inspiration for your picture.

Art History and Artists Georges Seurat

- **Occupation:** Artist, Painter
- **Born:** December 2, 1859 in Paris, France
- **Died:** March 29, 1891 (age 31) in Paris, France
- **Famous works:** *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, *Bathers at Asnières*, *The Circus*
- **Style/Period:** [Pointillism](#), Neoimpressionist

Biography:

Where did Georges Seurat grow up?

Georges Seurat grew up in Paris, France. His parents were wealthy allowing him to focus on his art. He was a quiet and intelligent child who kept to himself. Georges attended the School of Fine Arts in Paris starting in 1878. He also had to serve a year in the military. Upon his return to Paris he continued to refine his art skills. He spent the next two years drawing in black and white.

Bathers at Asnieres

With the help of his parents, Georges set up his own art studio not far from their house. Because his parents supported him, George was able to paint and explore any areas of art he chose. Most of the poor artists at the time had to sell their paintings to survive. Georges first major painting was *Bathers at Asnieres*. It was a large painting of people relaxing near the water at Asnieres. He was proud of the painting and submitted it to the official French art exhibition, the Salon. The Salon, however, rejected his work. He



joined the Society of Independent Artists and presented his art at their exhibition.



Bathers at Asnieres
(Click image to see larger version)

Pointillism

Seurat began to explore the science of optics and color. He found that, rather than mixing the colors of paint on a palette, he could place tiny dots of different colors next to each other on the canvas and the eye would mix the colors. He called this way of painting Divisionism. Today we call it Pointillism. Seurat felt that this new way of painting would make the colors appear more brilliant to the viewer.

Paul Signac was a good friend of Seurat's. He began to paint using the same method of Pointillism. Together they pioneered a new way of painting and a new style of art.

Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte

In 1884 Seurat began to work on his masterpiece. He would use pointillism to paint a huge painting called *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*. It would be 6 feet 10 inches tall by 10 feet 1 inches wide, but would be painted entirely with small dots of pure color. The painting was so complex that it took him nearly two years of non-stop work to finish. Each morning he would go to the scene and make sketches. Then in the afternoon he would return to his studio to paint until late at night. He kept the painting a secret, not wanting anyone to know what he was doing.



Sunday on the Island of La Grande Jatte
(Click image to see larger version)

When Seurat finally exhibited the painting in 1886, people were amazed. Some thought this new way of painting was the wave of the future in art. Others criticized it. Either way, Seurat was now considered one of the leading artists in Paris.



Continued Work

Seurat continued to paint using the pointillism style. He also experimented with lines. He felt that different types of lines could express different types of emotions. He also grew to be friends with other [Post-impressionist](#) artists of the time including [Vincent van Gogh](#) and [Edgar Degas](#).

Early Death

When Georges was just 31 years old he became very sick and died. He likely died from meningitis.

Seurat gave the world of art new ideas and concepts in color and how the eye works together with color.

Interesting Facts about Georges Seurat

- He had a wife and child that he kept secret from his mother. His son died at the same time he did of the same [disease](#).
- He must have had a great amount of patience to paint such large complex paintings using only small dots of color.
- His paintings worked a lot like computer monitors work today. His dots were like the pixels on a computer screen.
- A lot of what we know about Seurat today comes from the diary of Paul Signac who liked to write.
- His final painting was *The Circus*.

More examples of Georges Seurat's Art:



Circus

(Click to see larger version)



Eiffel Tower

(Click to see larger version)



Gray Weather

(Click to see larger version)