

# La moulin galette



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Le Moulin De La Galette The year was 1876 when Pierre Augustus Renoir painted his Le Moulin De La Galette this piece of art was in the style of impressionism. This was a fairly new art style during these years thus making it very popular at the time. Renoir's works has endured the test of time with the popularity of his art and is still one of history's more prominent artists.

The painting itself was an open-air oil portrait on canvas that measured 4ft. 3in. X5ft. 8in. the composition of the painting was of a large outdoor gathering of music and dancing which included many of Renoir's friends, including one of his closest friends Georges Rivie`re. The following year while at the third impressionist exhibit of 1877 Rivie`re described the painting as follows: " It is a page of history, a precious monument to Parisian life, Done with rigorous exactitude.

No one before Renoir had thought of portraying an event in ordinary life on a canvas of such big dimensions" (Rivie`re quote, Sayer 493) The type of line generally employed throughout the painting is primarily expressive and flowing, this is generally type of line impressionist used in their paintings. When Renoir painted this portrait his use of line seemed to soften the overall look of the painting. While there are areas in the painting where the artist's line are more structured and deliberate the overall feel of the painting is that the line is free flowing and expressive.

Renoir's use of space is very precisely controlled by the overlapping of figures in the painting to create the feel of a large outdoor courtyard. While the overlapping of the figures create the feel of an open courtyard, it also

portrays at the same time how completely cramped and crowded the dance area seems to be, this also helps define the space and also creates a feel of movement in the painting. Renoir's scale that he placed on the table and the people around it, compared to the dancers in the rest of the painting helped the viewer take in the entire painting and gave it a sense of balance.

The colors in the paintings palette were mostly analogous cool colors of different shades of blues and greens. There are other colors used in the painting and these are used in the complementary manner in order to intensify each color, there were fewer areas of complementary colors in the painting this was probably done in this manner to keep your eyes going to different focal points in the painting. Impressionism is a style of painting that uses a command of light and shadows and colors by discontinuous brush strokes to represent the effects of light.

It shows that light can be reflected to show color in shadows and not just the brown or black darkness of a shadow that is typically described as a shadow. To many this mastery and skill of using light is one of the most important skills in painting. Renoir completely showed his skill of adding light to his portraits by creating a feel of the sun cascading through the canopy of trees in the courtyard. All through the painting the viewer will see small streams of light gently falling onto the people and furnishings in the courtyard.

There does seem to be a repeating pattern in the painting especially in the way the same colors are used throughout the painting and how there seems to be certain figures looking directly towards you. By the way Renoir used this type of line orientation also helps in defining the relationship of space by

having different figures looking directly at you from different levels in the painting thus creating a feel of spatial depth.

The focal point and emphasis of the painting seems to have been placed on the area where the woman is leaning down with her hand placed upon the young girl in the striped dress, the lady is in conversation with one of the young men at the table. The young girl has her gaze focused beyond the scope of the painting possibly watching the band as they play the music that the group is enjoying and dancing too or maybe another activity that has caught her attention.

One of the identifiable figures in the painting was of the male who is seated at the table to the far right who seems to be either writing or possibly sketching the lady, who used as the focal point, by the way he is so closely looking at her trying either to take in all she is saying or to study her for his sketch. That male figure in fact is of Georges Rivie`re the friend of Renoir who was mentioned earlier. The painting has used asymmetrical balance; this type of approach differs from symmetrical balance, which is when there are components on each side of the portrait that mirror each other (Sayer 145).

Another way Renoir created and shown asymmetrical balance in this portrait was from the larger area of the table and the guests around it and how it compared to the other areas of where the dancers have gathered. Also the darker and more prominent areas of the painting are balanced by the open area where the sunlight seems to show an area of the ground. By doing this the artist has added the balance of the lightened area to the shaded darker

area, and also the area of less activity to area of the dance floor, by doing this you are again drawn back to the focal point of the painting.

This analysis has focused on certain parts of Renoir's La Moulin De La Galette, but a viewer must try to be able see how each of the parts simply compliment each other to completely appreciate this wonderful art work. People have often stated many times in the past that " I don't know art, but I know what I like" with this attitude a viewer will be able to enjoy this painting immensely, but when you realize and see the way Renoir used so many artistic tools and techniques to achieve this work of art, then the viewer will be able actually to appreciate this art work.

The skill and thought that have been used on this painting is obviously evident. Most of Renoir's paintings have a more somber feel and approach, but this painting depicts a fun and lighthearted day that was overly filled with dancing, music and wine that was enjoyed by all in attendance. {Total word count 1103}

Work cited Sayer, Henry M. The World of Art. Ed. Leah Jewell published by PearsonEducationInc. as Prentice Hall Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.  
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