

# Intro to art history final essay

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The two paintings capture a fleeting moment over a landscape, but one is realistic while the other contains a dreamy quality.

Turner's painting exhibits a group of boats in the center with buildings on both sides while Signal's painting displays groups of boats on the sides with the Notre Dame-De-la-Garden in the center background. Although these two paintings are distinctive with separate painting techniques, they have a similar subject matter and arrangement of composition. Joseph Mallard William Turner's *Venice, from the Porch of Madonna Della Salute* is based on a sketch during his first trip to Venice. This painting displays a combination of viewpoints of the Grand Canal. The buildings on the left are viewed from the corner of Santa Maria Della salute while buildings on the right are viewed from across the canal. The composition is symmetrical with the center ship dividing the two viewpoints of buildings. Working people are displayed in this evaded but they are very small; figures on the left look like angular stick figures. The people are individualized in that they have different colored clothes and are performing personal activities, but their faces do not have much detail.

The idea is assumed to be focusing on the landscape rather than the actual people. This art piece consists of a very earthy color palette by including browns, tans, grays, greens and whites, as opposed to Signal's vibrant composition. The palette and faint details cause the painting to appear very airy and light-toned. The vanishing point is on the back of the center boat in the background. The colors of the boats, buildings, and sky are similar to the water and reflections, making it difficult to tell where the boats and buildings end, and where the reflections begin. It is also confusing to tell where the

horizon divides between the sky and the body of water. The clouds are made up of visible, thick brushstrokes that come out of the surface. The entire composition is brushy and not precise.

It is difficult to identify where the clouds actually touch down because of a brushy and foggy sensation. The ships, buildings, and reflections within the water in the far back lack detail and are made up of white tones. However, fog should not be present because the composition appears to take place during a clear midday from the bright blue sky at the very top. Half of this composition incorporates a blue sky with white clouds. While the buildings and boats emerge over the small human figures, the natural sky seems to dominate over everything else.

This painting appears to be sketch-like because it consists of undefined outlines and visible loose brushstrokes; the people are not detailed and appear to be like stick figures; the colors bleed out of the outlines; and the size of the windows are not consistent within the buildings that they are in. Turner does acknowledge recession into space since the buildings get smaller as they withdraw back, but the buildings (especially on the left) have vague details with no depth, appearing to be very flat. It looks like Turner sketched the buildings on a separate piece of paper and then glued it on this composition. Turner acknowledges and conveys light by displaying reflections and shadows, especially on the right, which are not black but rather darker tones. The reflections exhibit the same colors and contours as the buildings and ships that are above the water; the reflections are almost mirror-like except elongated and larger. It is evident that the water is instant because the reflections are not as distorted as those in Notre-Dame- De-la-  
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Garden. The right portion of the painting seems to have been adjusted or incomplete because the marble tone does not resemble the rest of the building.

It is evident that there is a bright light source because of lighter tones and lack of shadows; however, the side facing the sunlight lacks a lot of detail compared to the rest of the marble structure. Notre-Dame-De-la-Garden, Marseilles displays Paul Signac's contribution in developing pointillism, a technique consisting of small, distinct dots of color applied in patterns. The Theory of Optical Mixing, the idea that pure colors painted next to each other would mix in the viewer's eye and that color would be brighter than if mixed on a palette, must have influenced Signac as a pointillist. Similar to Georges Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on the island of La Grande Jatte*, this painting consists of impasto that breaks out of the surface.

The revealing canvas, when looked up close, allows the separate brushstrokes to be recognized. These dots of different combinations of color are made up of visible, rectangular brushstrokes. High-keyed complementary colors splay where the focus of the painting is and where the foreground is, since they stand out more. The ships consist of darker and contrasting colors such as blues, purples, magenta's, reds, and greens. The background consists very soft colors such as baby blues, pinks, yellows, and whites. In general, objects lose focus, brightness, and detail as they go farther back. Turner applies high- keyed complementary colors onto the boats at the front to allow the viewer to believe that they have more detail and are closer to the viewer.

It is evident that the basilica is in the background, as opposed to the foreground, not only because of recession into space but because the brushstrokes consist of similar tones of colors; the lack of high-keyed complementary colors allow the viewer to recognize that there is less focus and detail since it is difficult to distinguish between similar tones. The lack of bright tones creates a soothing and peaceful landscape. Signal acknowledges and conveys light by displaying sunlight with yellow and amber tones in the sky, applying shadows on the boats, as well as displaying reflections of sunlight and boats in the water. The sun is assumed to be setting because of: the lack of an evident light source, the sky is made up of violet, lilac, and whites, and there are more yellow brushstrokes closer to the land than up in the sky. Instead of using black for shading Signal uses dark purples, blues, and greens. The colors of the boats are reflected onto the water in addition to green tones. The boats on the left have more vibrant colors than those on the right because they have sails that capture the sunlight. The viewer is able to recognize that the bows of the boats on the left are facing the viewer because each boat is divided into two sides with different color combinations.

The boats on the right are positioned perpendicularly to the viewer with no sails. These boats appear to be painted with dark tones of purple, blue, and green because the sun is unable to shine on this side. It can be assumed that the side of the boats facing the sun contains hues of red, purple, and magenta. It is difficult to differentiate between the boats and reflections because of the similar dark tones. Signal enables the water to appear in motion by placing each color of the brushstrokes in an undulant

arrangement. For example, if lines were drawn through each yellow dot in the water from left to right, the lines would not appear to be straight.

It is difficult to differentiate the objects in this painting at close-up because it is easier to distinguish the different colored brushstrokes; however, when looking at this piece as a whole, the objects are formed from the patterns of color through the viewer's eyes. Turner's painting displayed people throughout the composition; however, *Signal* displays only two or three people on a rowboat in the foreground. The figures can be identified because of the change of direction of the brushstrokes; most of the painting consists of horizontal and vertical brushstrokes, but diagonal brushstrokes outline the figures.

These compositions are distinct with separate painting techniques and settings, but they have a common arrangement of composition. Turner and *Signal* acknowledge and convey light through shadows, sunlight, and reflections. While *Venice* displays different light sources due to the multiple viewpoints, *Notre-Dame-De-la-Garden* infers a sunset behind the basilica. Reflections in the bodies of water in both paintings are displayed with similar colors and contours as the boats and buildings.

The reflections are keys to identifying whether or not the water is in motion or not.