

# Impressionism and earth art assignment

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Impressionism and Earth Art When one hears the term Impressionism or Earth Art, one can already presume and expect what sort of depiction each movement would present without having any prior knowledge of them. Impressionism, which began in the 1870s, often depicted scenes and the artists' impression of nature and, modest yet vivacious quarters of Paris. Now almost exactly one hundred years later, a completely new form of art takes the place of the prior paintings of those subject matters, actually inside -called Earth Art. In France, 1875, a new genre of painting began to emerge. These paintings demonstrated a fleeting outcome of colors. Impressionists aimed to capture that immediate moment of their subjects which provided a sense of spontaneity. These sudden bursts of color and light had taken the public by surprise -who had adapted to observing rather conservative, academic paintings with somber shades of colors. It was the first most dramatic change in style, expression and revolutionized painting throughout Europe and eventually the world. For Earth artists, they all had similar objectives as well.

It was now taking their imaginations to the outdoors as well as raise awareness towards the environment. This form of art is almost like three-dimensional version of Impressionism landscape pieces, but with a more defined arrangement and form. Earth artists made use of the materials the landscapes offered such as dirt and rocks. The leaders of their respective movements, Claude Monet and Robert Smithson both began completely new eras of art. Claude Monet started off as a realist and Robert Smithson started as a conceptual artist.

Monet wanted to create an impression of what he saw and defied the norms of realistic, bibliographic paintings. The thickness and low consistency of his oil paints allowed him to dramatically express his impression of his subject matter. His paintings mainly consist of landscapes, water lilies in particular. Smithson also took the initiative to start something completely new.

Smithson pieces were meant to gradually perish through time and nature. It was a theme throughout all his works, whether it was his art or his writing - the theme of time.

Smithson aimed and successfully displayed the delicateness of nature in such a commercial environment. In 1873, Monet's pieces entitled *Impression; Sunrise* initiated the spark which would soon become Impressionism. Louis Leroy, the critic, declared this painting incomplete, that it was solely a sketch of Monet's impression and this resulted in the whole movement being coined by this piece. Monet conveys vague forms through his short, natural brushstrokes of his oil paints. The constant altering of light and color are effectively represented through the shadows and contrasting of the pure colors.

This piece, *Spiral Jetty* (1970), is already exceptional in a sense that there is no exact set way to observe it. From afar, from above, up close, each different view gives off a different sensation. Smithson implements the use of black basalt, limestone rocks, dirt and the earth itself to create this seemingly effortless spiral. It is a staggering length of 1,600 feet, smoothly extending into Salt Lake City, Utah. Both pieces use a body of water as the foreground, but different focal points. Monet's piece has a dark boat figure

and bright sun which contrasts the more composed shades of green, blues and yellows.

Spiral Jetty doesn't necessarily contrast greatly color-wise but in form. The elongated, linear movement of the spiral with a jagged texture is distinct from the uniformity of the ocean. Initially looking at the two pieces, Haystacks, Morning Snow Effect and Spiral Hill, there is already a similarity in form of the central objects. The haystack and the hill ACH have a trilateral shape and upward motion. Smithson evidently creates circular motion up the hill. Often through the use of circular motion and shapes, he demonstrates his theme of time, the chronological cycle.

Through Motet's piece, he also embraces the notion of time but more so of a moment in time. Although the brushstrokes of the oil paints are rather rough, the softness of the colors and contrasts emit the serenity of a winter morning. The appropriate choices of colors, the soft yellows, blues and grey, capture the essence of the bitter cold winter morning but also the warmth of a morning sun. The murky cast shadow of the haystack illustrates the progression and movement of the sunrise. This atmosphere in Motet's painting clearly depicted and established whereas Smithson piece is transposable.

Depending on the time and day at Men, Holland, the weather can alter the impression it imprints. Wet, gloomy weather versus a warm summer day, each produce a different foreground. Rain or snow, along with the black soil and white sand that Smithson utilized for this piece, can affect the color and shade of the materials as well as the texture. Though Claude Monet and

Robert Smithson ideas are a century apart, they both had significant effect on society and the history of art. Their contributions and efforts lead art history to keep moving to what it is today.