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The impact of the Impressionist art movement on Printmaking

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Abstract

The study is practice-based research, and analysis of colors and lines philosophy in impressionist artworks is considered an enrichment for art students or experts and the development of their artistic sense. This is achieved through growing their visual culture, dealing with color and lines in these famous paintings, and controlling the visual sense of color, line, and texture through practical experience by synthesizing monotype and block printing. This research uses a descriptive, experimental method relating to the idea of the connection of impressionism as a different style of artists. Impressionism is considered a radical change from traditions. Looking back, we can see that impressionism was more than just a change in art history: it changed how people think of art today. We have this excellent art movement today thanks to impressionists, who struggled to move forward with their beliefs. The researcher began this study by analyzing color used by impressionists' color method and its relation to the light within the painting. It also analyzed how this color experience is transferred in printed work by supporting the lines of block printing and spaces in monotype printing. The researcher believes this experience significantly affects students in art education as a major at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait. The experience relies on monotype printing and block printing using a linocut surface. The student chose the painting of any impressionist for analysis and study of the lines and colors philosophy in that painting. Then, they change them to a clear line for printing on paper using printing ink. They rely on soft pastel colors to avoid the flatness of colors as a surface in printing and to maintain the harmony of color as in the original painting. The research aims to increase the cognitive level of art students and have them go through the experience of studying and analyzing color philosophy in the impressionism movement, which has significantly influenced modern art history. This also aims at acquiring a printing experience through which they can print their works with a different vision.

Keywords:

Impressionism, Printmaking, Linoleum Block, Monotype.

Introduction:

Impressionism is considered the introductory revolution of modern art. Impressionists are always distinguished by their paintings' strength of color and direct expression. Through a previous study by the researcher, which revolves around the dynamics of line movement in Van Gogh in printing, the researcher recommended studying and analyzing the works of impressionist artists in print and presenting this research as an exercise Experimental for students of the Department of Art Education in the College of Basic Education, to raise the level of artistic awareness among students in printing through the works of Impressionists in the history of art.

Research problem:

The problem can be formulated in the following question:

How can the spontaneity of color and line be achieved for the works of impressionist artists in print by applying two monotypes and Linoleum block printing techniques?

Research importance:

- 1- Adding a different field of application to Impressionist art, not limited to photography, but instead based on direct coloring besides manual printing.
- 2- Revealing new applications and uses that depend on the student's comprehension of

impressionistic art to invent new treatments for the printing surface.

- 3- The use of direct drawing, in addition to printing the monotype and the typographical template together, increases the practical and artistic value of the students.

Research hypotheses:

Adding an application as an experimental aspect of the research, as one of the works is innovative by one of the students and the work does not belong to the results of impressionist artists, to be an area for comparison between the work and the creator and the rest of the works to give the study a new analytical value.

Research aims:

- 1- Studying the style of impressionist art as history and identifying its artistic value and aesthetic dimensions.
- 2- Using more than one color in a direct drawing style enriches the paths of color and its different directions by synthesizing monotype and block printing. This enriches the field of manual printing in the educational field.
- 3- Developing the expressive ability of the students by combining my style with printmaking, which raises the level of their understanding of the experience of printmaking in technical education.

Research limits:

- 1- The research is limited to the use of some impressionist artists only.
- 2- Search results only by printing the monotype on the surface of the plastic and the (Lino) template only.
- 3- Implementation by female students of the College of Basic Education (girls) during one semester.
- 4- The printing works shall be carried out using soft pastel colors and black ink for printing on white A3 paper.

Research method:

Analytical descriptive approach as practice-based research applied by undergraduate art education students (experimental process) at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait.

First: Theoretical phase: Understanding and assimilation of students:

- 1- Students' presentation and study of impressionist art, its style, and its importance as an introduction to modern art.
- 2- Studying the concept of color and its artistic significance for the Impressionists.
- 3- Classifying the paths and movement of color in impressionist works.
- 4- Recognizing the expressive values of form and line among the Impressionists.

Second: Practical phase: Drawing - Engraving - Printing:

- 1- Each student chooses one of the Impressionist artists' paintings after absorbing Impressionism in kinetic paths of color and line.
- 2- start by copying the outline of the original painting directly while preserving the identity of the original image.
- 3- Color it in soft pastel colors.
- 4- Transfer the same painting drawn on the linoleum block's surface or the plastic (monotype printing).
- 5- Print the work using black printing ink.

Previous studies:

Impressionism emerged in France in the late 19th century as a response to traditional academic painting styles. Impressionist artists, including Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, and Edgar Degas, sought to capture the fleeting effects of light and color in their paintings, using loose brushwork and bold colors to create a sense of movement and atmosphere. Printmaking played a significant role in the development of Impressionism, providing an accessible and efficient means of reproducing images and disseminating them to a wider audience.¹

¹ Billeter, E. (2018). Art of the 20th Century. Hatje Cantz Publishers.

One of the most significant printmaking techniques used by Impressionist artists was lithography. Lithography allowed artists to create high-quality prints of their work, preserving the spontaneity and immediacy of their brushwork while facilitating mass production. Artists including Toulouse-Lautrec and Bonnard were known for their work in lithography, using the medium to create posters and other commercial art.¹

Another printmaking technique used by Impressionist artists was etching. Etching involved using a sharp tool to draw an image into a metal plate, which was then inked and pressed onto paper. Etching allowed for greater precision and detail in printmaking, making it a popular technique for artists including Edgar Degas.²

In more recent years, scholars have continued to explore the interplay between printmaking and Impressionism. For example, a study by art historian Rachel Sloan examines the role of etching in the work of Edgar Degas, exploring how the technique enabled Degas to create greater depth and tonality in his prints (Sloan, 2017). Another study by art historian Jean-Philippe Garric analyzes the

role of printmaking in the dissemination of Impressionism, tracing the development of print innovations and their impact on the movement's reception.³

Overall, while Impressionism is often associated with painting, the movement's impact on printmaking has been significant, allowing artists to reproduce their work on a mass scale and disseminate it more widely. The continued exploration of this relationship promises to yield new insights into the role of printmaking in developing one of the most significant movements in art history.

The development of Impressionism was closely tied to the rise of color printmaking and the use of chromolithography to mass-produce colored images. Artists such as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec experimented with color lithography, using it to produce posters and other commercial works that were highly influential in their time.⁴

Moreover, many Impressionist artists were deeply interested in Japanese prints, which were being imported to Europe in increasing numbers. Japanese printmakers made use of techniques such as multiple blocks, which allowed for overlapping colors and intricate

¹ Harris, N. (2018). *Impressionism and Printmaking: The Art Institute of Chicago*. Art Institute of Chicago.

² Lloyd, G. (2014). *Impressionism and the Art of Etching*. Yale University Press.

³ Garric, J.-P. (2017). *Printmaking, Photography, and the Dissemination of Impressionism*. In *Science,*

Industry and the State: Office de Recherche sur l'Histoire de l'Environnement (pp. 302-315). Springer.

⁴ Applegate, E. (2014). *A Cloak of Many Colors: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and the Art of the French Poster*. Yale University Press.

details, as well as a flattened, two-dimensional style that favored design over naturalism. Artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Mary Cassatt, and Edgar Degas were all deeply influenced by Japanese prints in their work, and their paintings and prints show evidence of this influence in their use of strong color contrasts, bold outlines, and flattened perspectives.¹

One of the most innovative printmakers of the Impressionist era was Camille Pissarro, who experimented with several printmaking techniques, including etching, drypoint, and aquatint. Pissarro developed a unique style of etching that emphasized tonal gradations and soft, velvety textures. His printmaking, including his famous series of rural landscapes, often exhibited greater abstraction than his paintings, giving his works a unique and intimate quality.²

In recent years, scholars have continued to explore the relationship between Impressionism and printmaking, as well as the ongoing influence of Impressionism on contemporary printmaking. For example, a 2015 book by art historian Elizabeth Wyckoff examines the ongoing impact of

Japanese prints on Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, arguing that Japanese aesthetics still shape how we think about color, design, and style in art.³

Overall, the relationship between Impressionism and printmaking was a complex and multifaceted one, with artists using printmaking techniques to experiment with form, color, texture, and style. The continued study of this relationship promises to yield new insights into the ways that printmaking has influenced the development of one of the most important and influential movements in art history.

Relief printing:

Relief printing is the process of highlighting part of the printing surface by removing part of it, usually by engraving; Through the passage of printing ink on the surface, we have an area free of ink (low) and areas covered with ink (high). Therefore, printing the image is a relatively simple matter by contacting the printing surface with the paper with pressure. A printing press may not be required; the back of a sheet of paper can be pressed by hand with a simple flatbed tool.⁴

¹ Mathews, N. (2019). Edgar Degas: A Strange New Beauty. The Museum of Modern Art.

² Fleming, W. (2013). Camille Pissarro: Impressions of City and Country. National Gallery of Canada.

³ Wyckoff, E. (2015). Color, Line, Light: French Drawings, Watercolors, and Pastels from Delacroix to Signac. The Art Institute of Chicago.

⁴ Schmidt, C. (2010). Print Workshop. New York, USA: Porter Craft

Chinese civilization is credited with the use of relief printing and the discovery of multiple surfaces for printing. Also, Islamic culture has the most significant credit for spreading relief printing and transferring it to other Western civilizations. Most of those publications were for manuscripts in Arabic calligraphy and Islamic decorations. The first relief printing was discovered in Europe in the fourteenth century AD In Italy and Germany. There was no relief printing before that in Europe, most of which were related to designs for inscriptions and drawings associated with the Christian religion.¹

Why the Impressionists:

Impressionism is an art movement established in France between 1860 and 1890. The term has been widely adopted worldwide to describe artistic productions that follow the principles and methodologies of the “Impressionists” in opposition to realism. This technique values the subtle rendering of a scene to “copy nature.” The Impressionists sought to observe nature and capture its transitional states of light and feeling. The Impressionists produced paintings of landscapes as well as scenes of

modern life to express the essence of modernity.

They took advantage of technological innovations such as collapsible paint tubes and synthetic colors, which allowed them to work fast outdoors. Modernism also brought new products to Paris. The opening trade routes between Japan and Europe exposed French artists to various installation techniques through Japanese woodblock prints

Claude Monet claimed that Japanese artists "taught us, Impressionists, to combine printmaking and painting differently. The Impressionists suffered criticism for technical incompetence that did not reflect the standards prevailing in the art academy. However, Impressionist paintings continued to be successful and are among the most widespread and famous works of modern art.² Degas, Pissarro, Cassatt, Renoir, Morisot, Bracquemond, Manet, and Whistler - these or other Impressionist artists often experimented with different printmaking techniques, producing prints in black and white as well as in color that show the same easy, crisp appeal as their oil paintings. This is what the researcher relies on upon in the

¹ Griffiths, A. (1996). *Prints and Printmaking*. Los Angeles, USA: University of California Press.

² Frascina, F., Garb, T., Blake, N., Fer, B. and Harrison, C. (1993) *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting*

in the Nineteenth Century, New Haven, Ct: Yale University Press.

practical study. In this research, the focus is on direct drawing and the spontaneity of color for each student.

The impact of impressionism on students:

Impressionism is a radical departure from tradition. Looking back, we can see that Impressionism was more than just a change. It changed the nature of the way people think about art today. And it is thanks to all the Impressionists fighting to get ahead of what they believe we will never have that excellent art style that we call Impressionism today.¹ This change is reflected in students' thinking during the learning stage. They are free to draw without restrictions. The process is structured to work with different techniques in drawing and printing through monotypes and experience works that enable them to pursue their ideas and artistic talent. This independence may be reflected not only in the education side but also in the art market as soon as the student gets acquainted with the freedom of expression in color and line of the Impressionists.

Theoretical phase: Understanding and discussing with students:

At the beginning and before the production stage, the researcher was keen to allocate two

lectures of 8 to 10 hours in the class "Printmaking D3" by presenting the names of Impressionist artists and presenting some famous works by Claude Monet, Renoir, John Sargent, Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas and other well-known artists in Impressionism. As an example, the researcher described, as in Figure (1), a painting by Pierre-Auguste Renoir entitled "Les Parapluies (The Umbrellas) (1880-86)". The researcher describes the artwork to the students and the color harmony in the Impressionist style and explains how the blue color enters most of the spaces within the painting to form color harmony as the hues of blue overlap with other colors and change according to the angles of light in the image.²

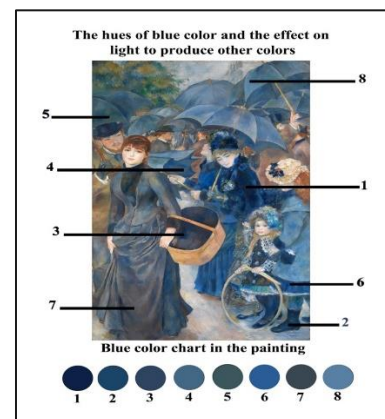


Figure 1 a model made by the researcher, showing the balance of blue in light-dependent tones in Impressionist painting by Pierre-Auguste Renoir

¹ Lewis, M. (2007) *Critical Readings in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism: An Anthology*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

² Roy, A., Billinge, R., Riopelle, C. 'Renoir's "Umbrellas" Unfurled Again'. *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* Vol 33, pp 73–81. 2012.

Practical aspect: steps and analysis of results:

The researcher will display the steps of one of the works that have been completed, and then the other results will be shown, as all students followed the same steps. Inside work). There is an individual experience that is different for everyone, as the student applied the experiment in the past to the Impressionists' work. Still, this study will be an innovative subject based on the Impressionist method.

- Steps to implement printing by a student using A Sunday on La Grande Jatte by Georges Seurat experiment with template printing on the surface of the lino as in Figure (2):

Steps to implement printing by a student using Dance Examination by Edgar Degas to experiment with monotype printing on a plastic surface, as shown in Figure (3):

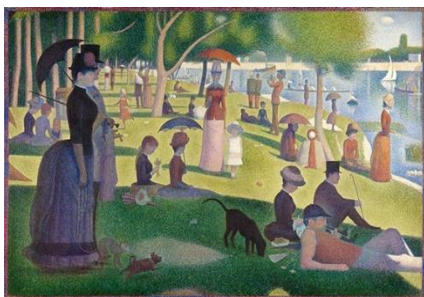


Figure 2 The painting that was chosen for monotype, block printing



Figure 3 The Painting was chosen for Linoleum printing.

1-Sketching the outlines and beginning to color them using soft pastels to preserve color quality and build color layers because the researcher focused on color spaces in the printing as a process to avoid flatness on the surface and not to lose the sense of light, as shown in Figure (4), and then the spray the surface with the fixative after each layer of color is built on the surface. The result is shown in Figure (5).

2-The outlines are drawn by students using the monotype technique using an A3 plastic plate to start erasing the areas of black ink from the surface, as in Figure (6). Print with Linoleum block, as in Figure (7), so that the areas of the lines are identical to the drawing executed on the printing paper.



Figure 4 Coloring the surface for monotype printing



Figure 5 Coloring the surface for Linoleum printing



Figure 6 erasing the ink in some areas on monotype plate



Figure 7 Graving the surface of the Linoleum block

The last step is printing, as in Figure (8), where ink is used on the surface that has been colored in soft pastel colors, matching both surfaces of the paper and the printing surface in the monotype process or the Linoleum block as in Figure (9).



Figure 8 The process of Linoleum block printing

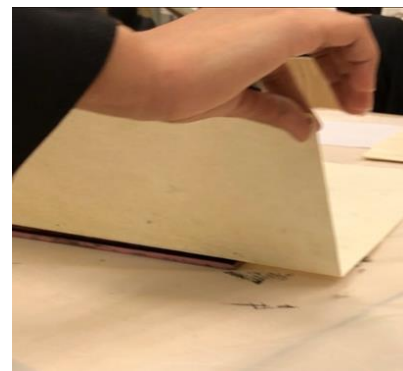


Figure 9 The process of Linoleum block printing

Analysis of search results:

This study achieved many results, as the true success of the works based on printing with Linoleum block is better due to the accuracy of engraving the lines inside the work. The results of monotype printing were different due to the students' difficulty erasing the ink of some areas on the plate surface with the cotton buds on the surface. But as a result, after coloring and printing, the researcher sees that there is a remarkable convergence in the lines, but that depends on the capabilities and accuracy of the student abilities by erasing the ink areas in the monotype as in Figure (10), and the engraving in the Linoleum block printing as if Figure (11).



Figure 10 The result of the monotype print

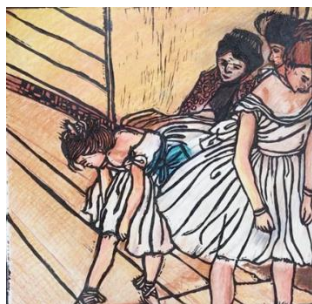


Figure 11 The result of the Linoleum block print

In these works, the movement of the lines represents the movement of the light, which gives the subject of the work sharpness and clarity compared to the artist's original work. The selection of the Impressionists' paintings in this study is considered successful compared to the sense and philosophy of color in the original work. In other results of this study, the researcher sees the difference in dealing with the original theme of the painting and preserving the work's identity and even adding each student his/her sense of color based on his/her understanding of the colors of the Impressionist artists.

Conclusion:

In this study, the researcher reached the experience of printing flexibly and straightforwardly. He relied on the philosophy of color for impressionism artists and the construction of lines resulting from erasing spaces in monotype and engraving Linoleum block printing in the paintings of artists whose names were associated with the power of color and light as a subject matter of landscapes, portraits and the daily life of European peoples in that era. And they passed it on to other generations in a more beautiful way. The researcher answered the research question by applying the experience of printing to the students, who benefited greatly from this experience. Hence, they

gained more information about the Impressionism movement when they understood the philosophy and style of the Impressionists; they analyzed the color and lines in those paintings, this is in addition to gaining experience in printing monotypes and Linoleum block and the power of the impact of printing on highlighting the elements of the artwork and how the diversity of color and line in printing raises the artistic value in their works.

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ملخص عربي:

الدراسة عبارة عن بحث قائم على التجربة العملية، ويعتبر ذو منهج تحليلي وصفي لفلسفة الألوان والخطوط في الأعمال الفنية الانطباعية إثرًا لطلاب الفن أو الخبراء وتنمية حسهم الفني. يتم تحقيق ذلك من خلال تنمية ثقافتهم البصرية، والتعامل مع الألوان والخطوط من خلال اللوحات الانطباعية الشهيرة، والتحكم في الإحساس المرئي للون، والخط، والملمس من خلال الخبرة العملية في توليف أحادي النمط والطباعة بالقالب، يستخدم هذا البحث طريقة وصفية وتجريبية تتعلق بفكرة ارتباط الحركة الفنية الانطباعية بأسلوب مختلف للفنانين، تعتبر الانطباعية تغييرًا جذريًا عن التقاليد الفنية المتبعة سابقاً، إذا نظرنا إلى الوراء، يمكننا أن نرى أن الانطباعية كانت أكثر من مجرد تغيير في تاريخ الفن، لقد غيرت طريقة تفكير الناس في الفن اليوم. لدينا اليوم هذا التطور الفني المعاصر بفضل الانطباعيين، الذين كافحوا للمضي قدمًا بمعتقداتهم، بدأ الباحث هذه الدراسة بتحليل الألوان التي يستخدمها الانطباعيين في أعمالهم، وعلاقة تلك الألوان بالضوء داخل العمل الفني، كما حلل الباحث أيضًا كيفية نقل تجربة الألوان هذه في العمل المطبوع من خلال دعم الخطوط في الطباعة ما بين العناصر والمساحات في الطباعة بالقالب ما بين المونوتايب و اللايو، يعتقد الباحث أن هذه التجربة تؤثر بشكل كبير على طلاب التربية الفنية كمتخصص في كلية التربية الأساسية في الكويت، حيث تعتمد التجربة على الطباعة أحادية النمط المونوتايب والطباعة بالقوالب عن طريق حفر قطعة اللايو، يختار الطالب أي عمل من الأعمال الانطباعية المشهورة لتحليلها ودراسة فلسفة الخطوط والألوان في ذلك العمل، ثم يغيرها إلى خط واضحة الحدة للطباعة على الورق باستخدام حبر الطباعة، الأصلية، يهدف البحث إلى زيادة المستوى المعرفي للطلاب.