

Pointillism: The Art of *Deception*

MYRIAH MAXWELL

The eye is a marvelous thing. Even after years of searching, scientists have still to uncover all the hidden facets of one our most important features. The eye is also what most artists have been seeking to appease for millennia.

One way artists have found to please the eye is by tricking it. A popular way of doing this is through a technique called pointillism.

Pointillism is the practice of using only dots of pure colors to create the illusion of many different colors. Despite the fact that very few colors are used in the creation of a pointillism painting, due to the way the light is reflected off the closely placed dots, the human eye sees a variety of colors and hues. Through this technique it is hoped that brighter colors will be achieved due to using an additive method of mixing versus the traditional subtractive method of mixing pigments that sometimes muddies the colors.



Above is an example of pointillism created by Paul Signac. It is entitled, "*La Calanque*" or "The Bay". You can find this image at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Signac_-_La_Calanque.jpg



I myself attempted this technique, as displayed to the left. I used closely placed dots of **Red** and **Blue**, primary colors of light, to create the illusion of **Magenta**, a secondary color. The further you stand from the piece the stronger the illusion. But as you move closer to the screen the dots of different colors become quite apparent.

I found this project quite fascinating and very rewarding. Though the actual execution of the pointillism took a lot of time and patience, the end result was better than I expected.

Watching dots of red and blue change to a purple literally blew my mind. The eye is truly amazing, and I will never again take for granted the impact of light on artwork.