

From Nana's Back Porch: Famous Artist Georges Seurat

Hello, this is Nana from my back porch. Thank you for joining me today. You are all artists!

Hello, this is Nana. I'm speaking to you today from a back porch. You'll be able to hear birds and maybe even a motorcycle from down the street. So just bear with me. We're going to have a good time today. Because we're going to talk about Georges Pierre Seurat. He is a French impressionist painter.

Seurat was born on December the 2nd, 1859, and died on March the 29th, 1891. A very short life of 31 years, devoted to what he believed was the science of post-impressionist painting. Seurat painted during the time of the great giants of impressionism: Monet, Renoir, and Pizarro.

His scientific ideas about color led him to develop a different painting technique. He painted with tiny dots of color with a theory that viewers, their eye, would mix them together. This technique is called pointillism. He studied art near his home outside of Paris, a somewhat boring and conventional education. Sometimes drawing from casts, you know, like plaster casts, casts made from antique sculpture, and copying drawings by the masters.

Seurat then entered military service, and after a year he returned to Paris and rented a small apartment and worked tirelessly to master his drawing technique.

Seurat's painting of bathers enjoying a swim on the Seine river was his first major work. His year-long effort was met with a rejection from the jury of the Salon, which was France's most popular exhibition.

The Bathers was not widely appreciated during the artist's lifetime, but the painting gained appreciation in the 20th century, and today it hangs in the National Gallery in London and is considered one of the great highlights of the gallery's collection.

My bird wants to compete with me talking about Seurat. So just let's go on.

Seurat believed that art had a language. That using colors, lines, shape, and intensity, the artists could express different emotions in their art. He called this language of art chromoluminarism. That is a big word. For example, he believed that warm colors and lines directed upwards could create feelings of happiness and joy. Sadness would mean having lines directed down in cool colors, like blues and dark greens. Finally, the feeling of calm would naturally be the balance of the two horizontal lines in a balance of warm and cool colors.

In the summer of 1884, Seurat began working on A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte. This painting shows members of the Paris social classes enjoying the park activities. The tiny dots of multicolored paint allow the viewer's eye to blend the colors optically, rather than having the colors blend on canvas.

It took Seurat two years to complete this 10 foot wide painting, much of which he spent in the park sketching in preparation for the work. There are about 60 studies of his sketches. Those sketches are now in a permanent collection in the Art Institute of Chicago.

It is thought that perhaps artist Roy Lichtenstein used a method of pointillism in his work, using Ben Day dots in his painting.

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Seurat died in Paris in his parents' home at the young age of 31. The cause of his death is uncertain. It has been attributed to meningitis, pneumonia, or even diphtheria. Seurat's last ambitious work, *The Circus*, was left unfinished. A short but happy life, I believe. He was consumed with proving his theory and his technique, and he stands out as a giant in the world of impressionism.

Thank you for joining me today. We had lively listeners here on my back porch. I think Seurat would be glad about that. And he would want you to remember that, You ARE an Artist!

Love, Nana.

Thank you for listening, artist friends! Please leave a review and share this with a friend. We invite you to join us in the You ARE an Artist Clubhouse at ChalkPastel.com where we have over 500 (Yes, 500!) video art lessons. We would also love for you to join us on Instagram, Facebook, and more, and be sure to tag us when you share photos of your artwork. We cannot wait to see. I'll be talking to you again soon.

