

A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte (Georges Seurat) 1884–1886

- Seurat used as his setting a small section of the elongated island in the Seine just beyond Paris's city limits.
- Seurat's canvas incorporates 3 dogs, 8 boats, and 48 people who congregate on a Sunday to enjoy and parade around in "nature." The cast of modern characters includes soldiers, boaters, the fashionably and casually dressed, the old and the young, families, couples, and single men and women.

Oil and Canvas

Using newly discovered optical and color theories, Seurat rendered his subject by placing tiny, precise brush strokes of different colors close to one another so that they blend at a distance. Art critics subsequently named



this technique Divisionism, or Pointillism. The artist visited La Grande Jatte many times, making drawings and more than 30 oil sketches to prepare for the final work. With his precise method and technique, Seurat conceived of his painting as a reform of Impressionism. The precise contours, geometric shapes, and measured proportions and distances in Seurat's masterpiece (not to mention its monumental size) contrast significantly with the small, spontaneous canvases of Impressionism.