

First page of an art history assignment where we had to choose two paintings from the Smith College Museum of Art and do a comparative analysis. This work shows analytical thought applied to artistic flourishes and their meaning.

Pissarro's Nature

The Impressionist movement began in Paris in the 1860s ("Impressionism Movement, Artists"), introducing a modern style of art that rejected the reliance on strictly realistic depictions of the world, creating works that



captured the softening effects of light on everyday scenes. Artists like Pissarro, Monet, and Degas were key figures in pioneering Impressionist art. Pissarro was one of several artists displayed at the Salon des Refusés, where the artists that were denied by the Salon went to exhibit their work. Impressionism was largely viewed as not being true art. Pissarro was seen as a patriarchal or grandfather figure of the Impressionist movement as he often inspired younger artists. His body of work also extended into the Neo-Impressionist and Post-Impressionist period, exploring techniques such as Pointillism ("Camille Pissarro"). Pissarro was known to paint outdoor scenes that depicted the natural world, though his style evolved over

time. Two of Pissarro's later works that can be compared stylistically include *Old Chelsea Bridge, London* and *Two Young Peasant Women*. **Camille Pissarro's work *Old Chelsea Bridge, London, 1890*, expresses themes of life, vitality, and the mystery of the unknown through the use of small, dot-like brush strokes and a vibrant color composition.**

Pissarro's *Old Chelsea Bridge, London* is a landscape oil painting that depicts the suspension bridge in West London that formerly connected Battersea Park and Chelsea (Museum wall text). A shipping or fishing boat dominates about one eighth of the portrait in the bottom left corner in front of the bridge, with a cityscape far in the distance behind the bridge. A cloud mirrors the boat in the top left corner of the painting. There are a few small people seen on the fishing boat, but otherwise signs of human life are not displayed in order to focus on the natural aspects of the scene.

Pissarro's use of lines in this painting establishes a mysterious mood that leaves the viewer contemplating the unknown. Though the scene depicts a bridge, a structure that is seemingly everlasting and very concrete in nature, Pissarro wants the audience to find the mystery in the everyday world. He does so by using small, dot-like brush strokes or Pointillism, which was a technique established after the Impressionist movement around the time of this painting. These thin, dot-like strokes meld the different objects together into a piece that is more fluid. In this sense, Pissarro can relate the way in which he paints back to the subject matter. He is painting this landscape scene to celebrate nature, specifically the water, so having a feeling of cohesive fluidity gives the viewer both the visual and psychological stimulation of being immersed in the water.