

DOT DOT DOT . . .

Pointillism and Beyond 1885-2018

November 2 - December 10, 2021
at Jill Newhouse Gallery

Hours: Monday through Friday 10 - 5

Special Saturday hours: November 6, 12 - 5

Closed November 25-26 for Thanksgiving

Digital catalogue with essay by Jovana Stokic available.

Jill Newhouse Gallery presents an exhibition on **Pointillism** and its influence on art of the 20th and 21st centuries. The show brings together late 19th century French works by artists in Seurat's circle together with the work of later artists such as **Pierre Bonnard, Roy Lichtenstein, Terry Winters, and Barry Le Va** to show how the lessons of Pointillism were carried forward in important ways.

The name **Pointillism** originated with the French Art critic, Félix Fénéon, who in the mid 1880's used the expression *peinture au point* ("painting by dots") to describe a painting he had seen by Georges Seurat. Seurat's technique was based on a scientific methodology of **applying precise dots of different color side by side in order to create a composition.**

"From a couple of steps away, the eye no longer perceives the brushwork: the pink, the orange and the blue are composed on the retina, coalesced in a vibrant chorus, and the sensation of the sun imposes itself.... the optical mix creates luminosities that are much more intense than the blending of the pigments."

Félix Fénéon, July 1886

Seurat and the Pointillists drew heavily on a scientific theory in an 1839 book by French author Michel Chevreul. Titled *Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Color*, Chevreul discussed the use of colored threads in tapestries, trying to solve the problem of how to make the colors appear stronger. His book put forward the theory

that the **placement of one color next to another would greatly impact the strength of each.**

Pointillism as a movement lasted only a short time (Seurat died at age 31 in 1891), but its impact was enormous. The movement was also called Neo-Impressionism or Divisionism, and attracted famous artists such as Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), Van Gogh (1853-1890), Paul Signac (1863-1935) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954) along with, **Hippolyte Petitjean** (1854-1929), and **Albert Dubois-Pillet** (1846-1890). And when Belgian artists such as George Lemmen, Theo van Rysselberghe, and Jan Toorop formed the group Les Vingt, the doctrines of Neo-Impressionism spread far outside of France as well.

In curating **Dot Dot Dot . . .**, we took the impetus from the Pointillists to focus on the concept of both **revolution and idyll**. As Seurat famously depicted ordinary people's leisure, he implicitly invoked democratization and a promise of shared joy in viewing, outside the canon of academic painting. **This was our starting point, to offer works that remind us of modern and contemporary art's desire to be probing, revolutionary and joyful, all at once.**

In this selection that emphasizes open-endedness rather than tracing any linear trajectories, we gathered diverse works of art that celebrate the optical, and speak of the Pointillist legacy in multifaceted ways that all share a conviction in the joy of image making. **In this spirit, we invite you to connect the dots with us in a celebration of the Pointillist vision of the world that once promised a reality of heightened luminosity and vibrancy, and to observe the work of abstract painters who use dots and circular shapes to find the compositional and structural scheme necessary to liberate themselves from representational constraints....**

Curated by Jovana Stokic, this exhibition is the fifth in a series by the gallery which includes
A Contemporary Perspective: The Origins of the Modern Landscape (2020)
The Enduring Power of Image: Eugène Delacroix and 21st Century Artists (2019)
Pierre Bonnard: Affinites (2018)
Edouard Vuillard: Under the Influence (2017)

Jovana Stokic is on the faculty of the MFA Art Practice, SVA and NYU Steinhardt Department of Art and Art Professions. Stokic is a former fellow at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; a researcher at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the curator of the Kimmel Center Galleries, New York University; and the performance curator at Location One, New York.