

Claude Monet / Field of yellow irises at Giverny / 1887 / Oil on canvas 45 cm x 100 cm / ngv.vic.gov.au



Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

Comparative Study

Angelise Puls

This comparative study seeks to discuss four pieces by two different artists. There is an evaluation of cultural significance, function and formal qualities of each piece. In this study there is comparisons between Claude Monet, an Impressionist painter, and Bill Lemke, a local black and white photographer, as well as my own work. Each piece will be evaluated for purpose, as well as various elements of art.



William Lemke / Untitled/ 2013 / Silver gelatin print 50.8 cm x 40.4 cm / billellemke.com



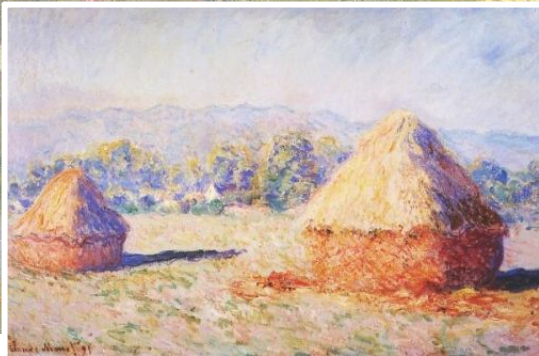
William Lemke / Sunflowers & Clouds / 2013 / Silver gelatin print 40.64 cm x 50.8 cm / billellemke.com

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Monet

Claude Monet was a leader of the French Impressionist movement. He mainly depicted contemporary subjects, but focused on the ephemeral qualities of light and color in nature. He experimented with form and color, and had many different painting series where he explored this by painting the same subjects in different lights, times of day, and times of year. He tried to capture the idea of a “glance”, where the shape and movement of the object he is painting becomes more important than the details. He even called the subjects themselves “secondary” to what he feels is between him and the subject.

Many of his paintings were “en plein air”, which refers to painting outdoors, rather than in a controlled environment indoors. This is done still to this day, and was popularized by him and the Impressionist movement. He often took it to an extreme, where he would switch canvases as the light changed to keep the paintings consistent to each type of light, and resuming it another time.

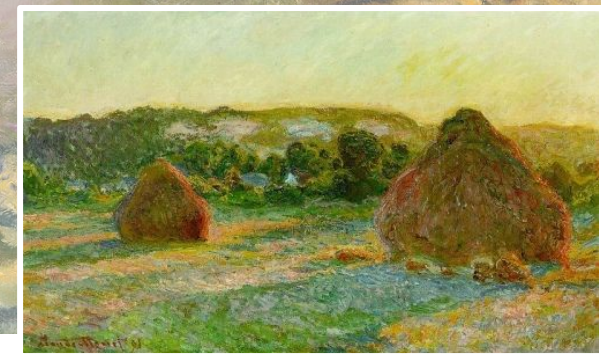
This method was used in his “Haystacks” series of works.



Claude Monet / Stacks of Wheat (End of Summer) / 1890-1891 / Oil on canvas
60.96 cm x 99.06 cm /
easy-oil-painting-techniques.org



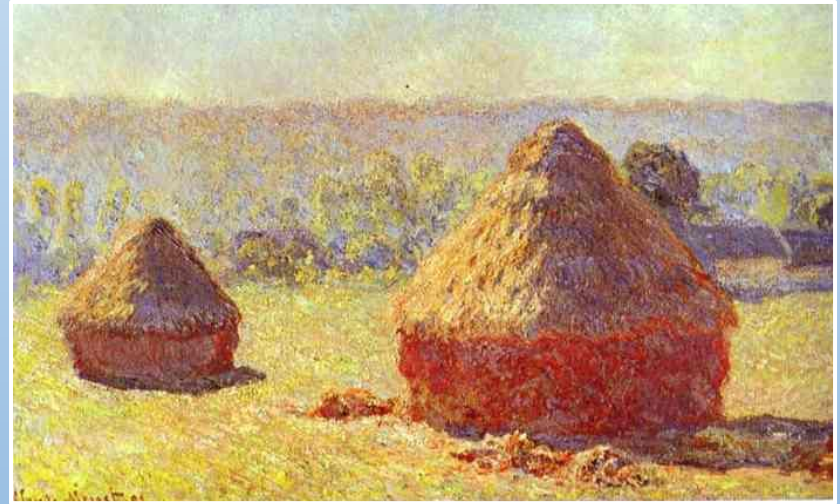
Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas
60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org



Claude Monet / Wheatstacks (End of Summer) / 1890-1891 / Oil on canvas 60 cm x 100 cm / easy-oil-painting-techniques.org

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: *Haystack. End of the Summer. Morning.*

This piece and others in the *Haystacks* series focused on the different colors produced by the time of year and day. This piece specifically was painted as the end of the summer, during the morning.. The goal of this piece, and others, was to record an impression of the colors caused by the sun's position. Haystacks are a relatively inane subject, which allows the viewer to focus more on the colors and details than the object.



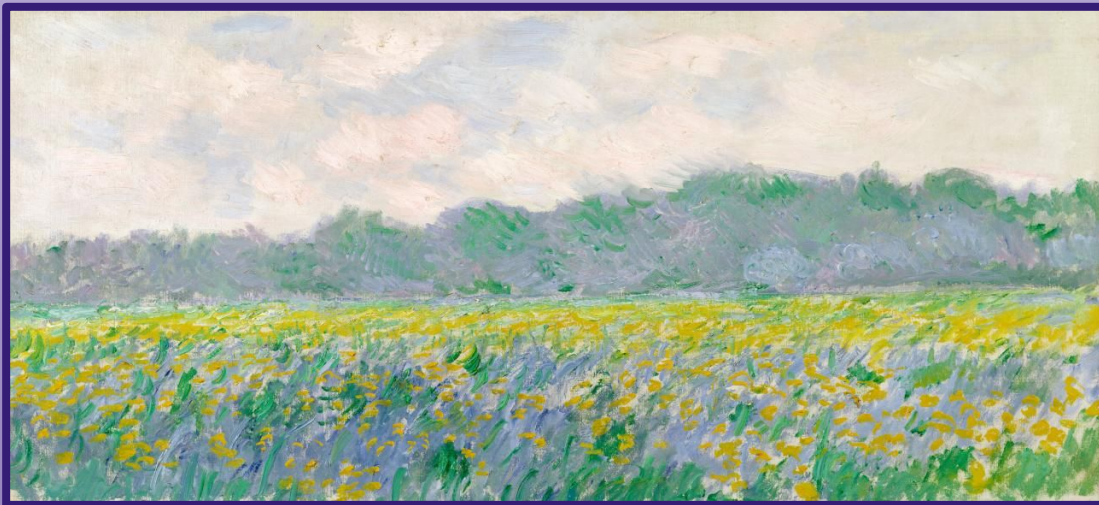
Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

Since his main goal was to simply create an “impression” of the moment, he worked quickly to do as much as possible before the light changed. This led to his short and quick brush strokes. He painted the haystacks because they were readily available, commonly found in the countryside where he lived. They were ordinary enough to be great subjects for studying light, yet interesting enough to be somewhat challenging.

He made around 30 pieces for this series overall between 1890 and 1891.

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: *Field of yellow irises at Giverny*

This piece is simply an “impression” of a field of flowers, focusing on colors and movement than the specific details of the flowers themselves. The fact that they are yellow irises isn’t important, but that they are an expanse of flowers is. The brush strokes come together to form the idea of the garden by being simple and short, creating the general form of individual flowers in order to create the form of an entire garden of flowers. He created many paintings of his garden, but this is one of the most impressionistic, including very few recognizable forms. It is also the simplest due to this, not containing any specific trees or flowers. The only way one would know that the flowers are irises is due to the title itself.



The purpose of this piece was to simply have a nice depiction of Monet’s Giverny garden.

Claude Monet / Field of yellow irises at Giverny /
1887 / Oil on canvas 45 cm x 100 cm /
ngv.vic.gov.au

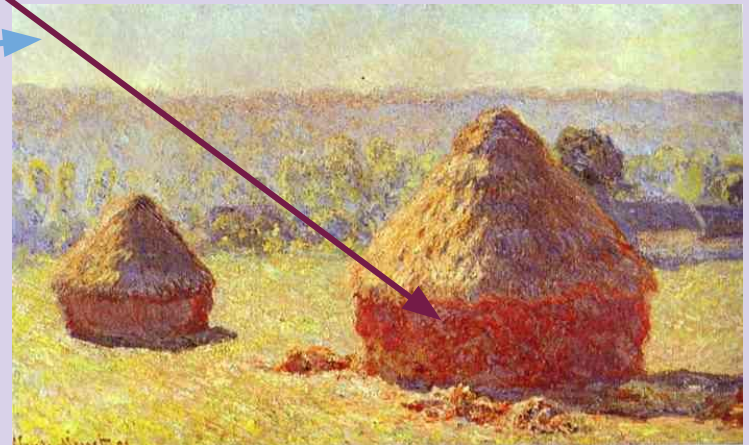
Analysis of Formal Qualities of Monet

Monet's pieces all have loose forms and brushstrokes, as expected from the impressionist movement. They give the "impression" of a form, rather than being completely accurate and realistic. In *Field* especially, there is not any specific shape of a flower in the field, but many strokes of color together which imply a sprawling field of flowers.



Claude Monet / Field of yellow irises at Giverny / 1887 / Oil on canvas 45 cm x 100 cm / ngv.vic.gov.au

They have unusual, almost unrealistic colors. This is especially noticeable in *Haystacks*, where the shadow of the haystack is purple and red. The base of the haystack, which is in shade is also a deep red. Both pieces also have a somewhat lilac sky, rather than just a blue sky with white clouds. The clouds in *Fields* are even slightly pink, which is only found around sunset.



Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

They also both make use of balance, although one has symmetrical and the other asymmetrical. *Haystacks* uses a large haystack to balance with the background hills, and *Field* has an even horizon line.

Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Bill Lemke

Bill Lemke is a local photographer, working in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He visits a variety of locations to take his photos, and is inspired by the varieties of plants and rock formations in many places out west. Most of his images are taken with large format cameras and are silver gelatin prints.

When he takes photos of landscapes and nature, he tries to inspire an appreciation for the environment and encourage others to want to protect it. He uses black and white images to make the viewer focus on the texture and qualities of light.

He also takes photos of people and color photos, however I will not be focusing on those photographs.



William Lemke / Angel Oak / 2012 / Silver gelatin print 55.88 cm x 71.12 cm / billlemke.com

Interpretation of Function and Purpose: *Sunflowers & Clouds*

This photograph is focused upon showing different textures. It juxtaposes the fluffy textures of the clouds and the smoothness of the sky. It also has the texture of the sea of sunflowers, which is comparable to the surface of the center of a sunflower itself. The texture of the flowers fade into the texture of the clumped clouds in the distance, but there is a crisp difference between the

The sunflowers create unease by being seemingly unending, and only being able to see the blossoms of the flowers removes any notion that there is or could be a ground underneath.



William Lemke / Sunflowers & Clouds / 2013 /
Silver gelatin print 40.64 cm x 50.8 cm /
billlemke.com



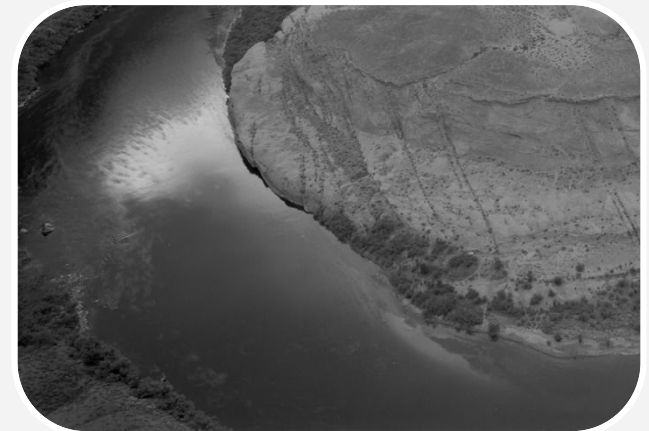
Interpretation of Function and Purpose: Untitled

This image is somewhat imposing, with a focus on portraying the grandness of the Grand Canyon. The viewer can see the top and bottom of this portion of the Grand Canyon, allowing the viewer to feel something about it as a whole. Some even may be uncomfortable due to the perspective being up so high, others may find it mesmerizing to see a whole image, from the top to the bottom of this location.

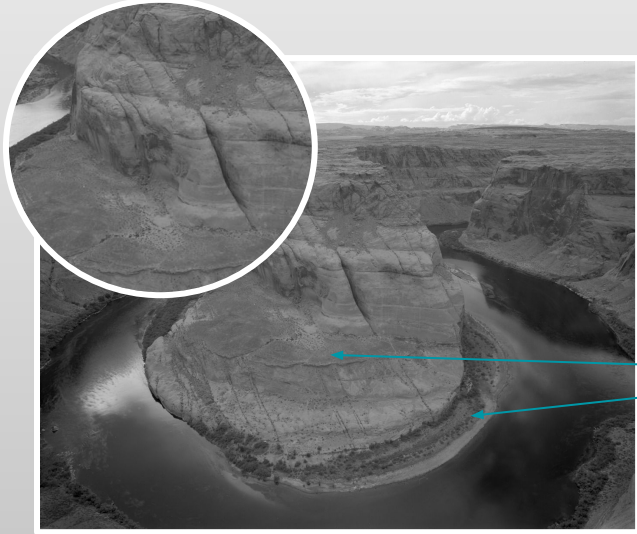
The function of this piece is to showcase the natural beauty of the Grand Canyon. It does this by highlighting its texture and the contrast between the textures of the rock and the water. It has a traditional type of composition, with a central focus and a relatively straight horizon line. There is also a nice contrast between the canyon and the sky, juxtaposing the hard edge of the rock with the softness of the clouds in the sky. This image includes all of the basic aspects of nature itself.



William Lemke / Untitled/ 2013 / Silver gelatin print 50.8 cm x 40.4 cm / billlemke.com



Analysis of Formal Qualities



William Lemke / Untitled/ 2013 / Silver gelatin print 50.8 cm x 40.4 cm / billlemke.com

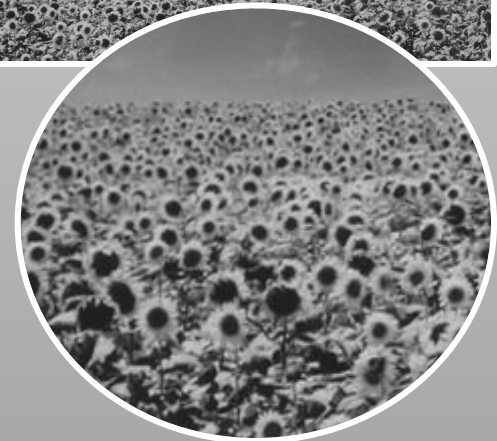
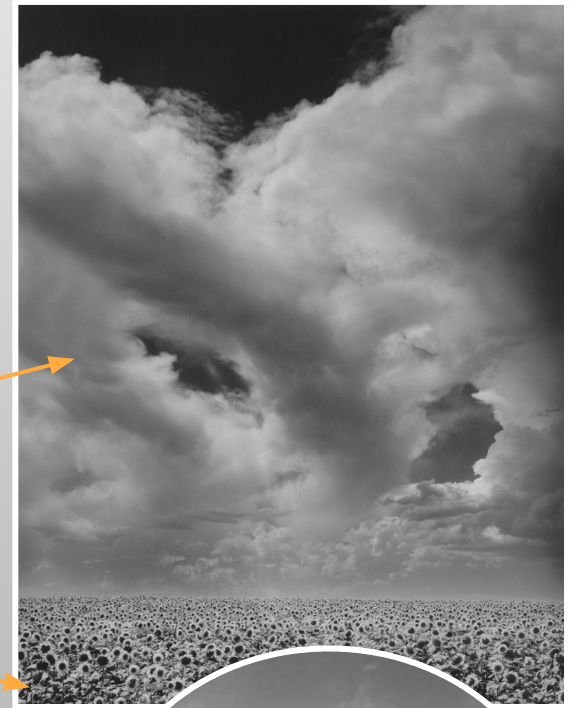
Most of the time, Lemke's images are black and white. Naturally, this leads to a heavy use of contrast, both in tones and texture.

There's often a juxtaposition of smooth versus rough, either caused by perspective or naturally occurring.

There is also a contrast in size, like the small flower heads versus the large clouds.

Most of his images are balanced symmetrically, like the rock formation in the center with the cliffs surrounding, or the straight horizon line of the sunflowers and the generally balanced clouds.

William Lemke / Sunflowers & Clouds / 2013 / Silver gelatin print 40.64 cm x 50.8 cm / billlemke.com

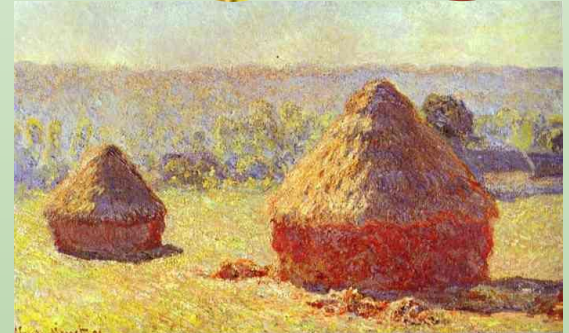


Comparing use of Color

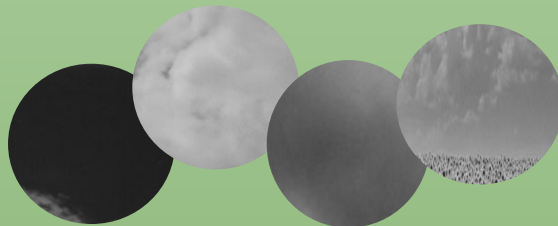
Both artists use colors to draw attention to something within the piece, although with very different types of hues.

Monet purposefully used vibrant colors to represent the colors of light found at different times of day and year, with some being a bit more extreme. He used these colors to create the “impression”, but not necessarily a completely accurate scene. But these colors convey his view of the subject, and make a relatively inane subject look more visually interesting.

Lemke has a more interesting subjects, but somewhat ignores what they are in favor of the texture and contrast they have to offer by using black and white. If this image were to be in color, there would be a wide variety of hues, like a blue sky and bright yellow sunflowers. By using black and white, color won't dominate the image.



Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas
60.5cm x 100.8 cm /
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William Lemke /
Sunflowers & Clouds /
2013 / Silver gelatin print
40.64 cm x 50.8 cm /
billlemke.com

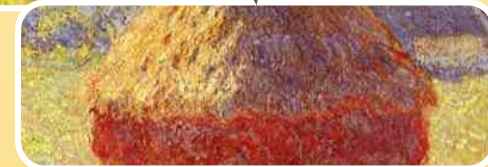
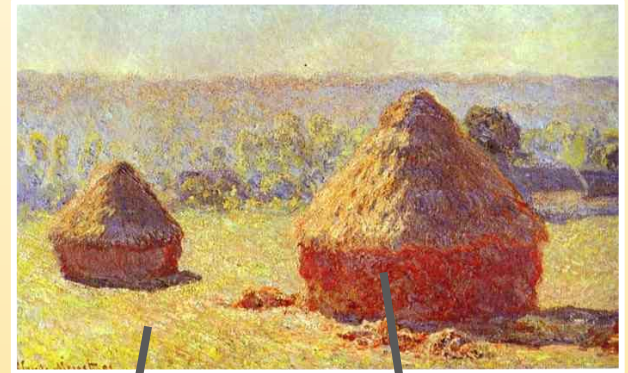


Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

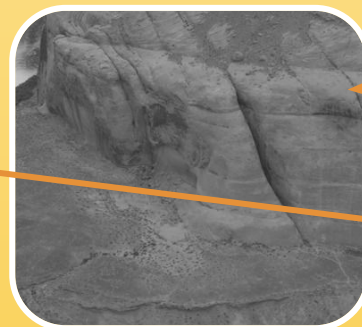
Comparing use of Texture

Monet layered paint thickly on to his canvases and used loose brush strokes, creating physical texture. The haystacks are all textured similarly to actual hay, having the effect of implying the hay itself. The grass below has texture that makes it obvious that it is grass, but doesn't look like actual grass. It is made up of short, varied strokes that move together, which creates this texture.

Lemke makes a point of taking images that feature texture as a focal point. The rock formation in the Grand Canyon has a rough texture, and the black and white makes it stand out because of the shadows that are emboldened by the contrast. There is a contrast between textures in this image as well, as the formation is rough and varied, whereas the water is smooth and calm. This portrays the contrast between different aspects of nature.



William Lemke / Untitled/ 2013 / Silver gelatin print 50.8 cm x 40.4 cm / billlemke.com



Comparing use of Emphasis

Lemke typically has emphasis in the center or top of the image. The rock formation in the middle of *Untitled* is the main focus of the piece. However, the circular shape of the water around it then moves the eye from the rock formation outwards, to appreciate the surrounding rock and the sky. The center formation is the focus, but does not dominate the image.

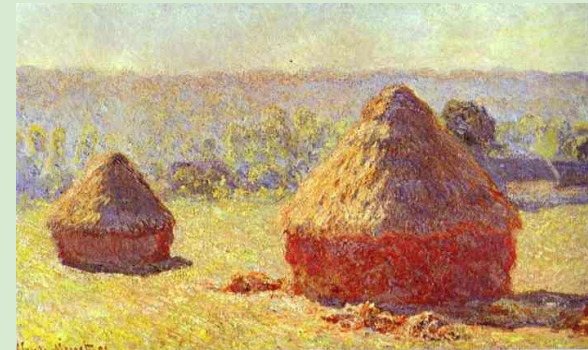
Monet often uses focal points that aren't in the middle, or lack any at all. Most, if not all *Haystacks* pieces have the frontmost haystack off to the side rather than in the center. The closest haystack could be considered the focus, but it often isn't what is drawing about the piece, rather the color. *Field...* has no main focal point, just an emphasis of yellow in the flowers that is a bit more abstract. This also draws people in based on hues rather than an object, as they are calm and bright, like the yellow irises.



Claude Monet / Field of yellow irises at Giverny / 1887 / Oil on canvas 45 cm x 100 cm / ngv.vic.gov.au



William Lemke / Untitled/ 2013 / Silver gelatin print 50.8 cm x 40.4 cm / billlemke.com



Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

Comparing use of Balance

Lemke typically uses symmetrical balance in his images. There is an even horizon in this image, and clouds aren't particularly asymmetrical. The clouds hold similar presence on both sides of the image. The other image has similar rock formations around the center one, all balanced in each direction.

Monet uses both symmetrical and asymmetrical balance. This piece has a symmetrical balance to the foreground, and a bit of asymmetry to the background. Most *Haystacks* pieces are all entirely asymmetrically balanced, like my chosen piece with one large haystack and a smaller, further one with background scenery to balance.



William Lemke / Sunflowers & Clouds / 2013 / Silver gelatin print
40.64 cm x 50.8 cm / billlemke.com



Claude Monet / Field of yellow irises at Giverny / 1887 / Oil on canvas 45 cm x 100 cm / ngv.vic.gov.au

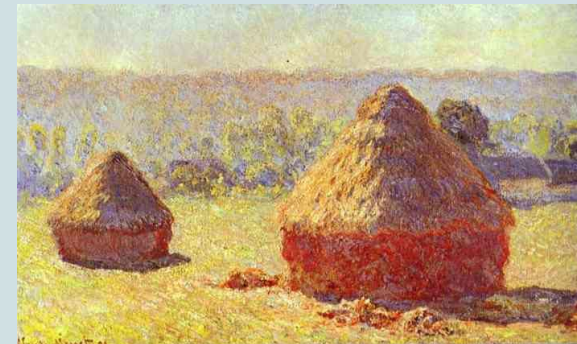
Comparison of use of Value

Lemke uses a variety of values in his images to bring attention to them and the texture of the subject. The fluffy, white clouds imply a clear, blue sky. However, due to the black and white, it appears nearly black. This large amount of contrast between values connects to the idea of showcasing nature, as the contrast of values allows each part of the image to stand out. However, as the horizon line blends the sky and the ground together at a similar value, highlighting their connection as two parts of one whole.

Monet uses values to create a sense of form through shadows and highlights. He does not make as dramatic of a use of value as Lemke, since his pieces are in color. However, the difference in value creates depth. The sky is lighter than the background forest. Then the grass and foreground, including the haystacks themselves are darker, creating a the depth of field. This continues as shadows have a darker value, showing the direction of the light source (the sun, presumably) without including it directly. The value creates layers which separate the levels of the piece.



William Lemke / Sunflowers & Clouds / 2013 / Silver gelatin print
40.64 cm x 50.8 cm / billlemke.com



Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas
60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

Comparison of use of Movement



William Lemke / Sunflowers &
Clouds / 2013 / Silver gelatin print
40.64 cm x 50.8 cm / billlemke.com

In Lemke's image, there is a lot of movement in the clouds. By the nature of capturing clouds there is movement, as they are obviously always moving, but these in particular each curve and point in their own direction. Contrastingly, the sunflowers don't have much movement to them at all.

The stillness of the flowers has an effect however, guiding the eyes back into the horizon line. The curved movement of the clouds contrasts the stoic movement of the flowers to contrast different parts of nature, representing the solidness of the ground and free, floaty sky.



Claude Monet / Field of yellow irises at Giverny / 1887 / Oil
on canvas 45 cm x 100 cm / ngv.vic.gov.au

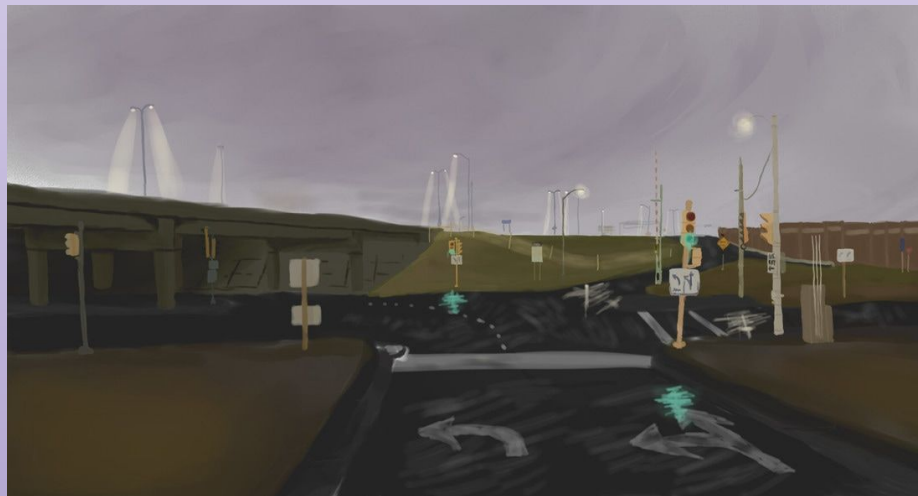
Monet makes use of a lot of movement due to how he made his brushstrokes. They are loose and abstract, creating movement in the direction the strokes go. The flowers are all flowing to the right, guiding the eyes from left to right.

The clouds are also moving from the left to the right, but seem to move downwards rather than up like the flowers. The two movement would meet each other, if not for the more solid forest behind the flowers, preventing the piece from clashing with itself.

Connection to Own Work: Monet

In my piece, *Lilac Evening*, I took some general inspiration from Monet and his ideas. This piece came from a moment I noticed that I felt was relatively unique, with wet roads, a setting sun, and a thick cloud cover. I wanted to focus on this idea of the unique moment, in a similar way to Monet's *Haystacks* and their focus on the specific time of day and year in which they were created. However, unfortunately I could not directly recreate that method of painting, because at the time I was in the car and didn't think to take any pictures of the environment. These hypothetical pictures wouldn't have been quite the same as painting directly from the subject in the moment either. I instead focused on the "impression", the memory of it that I had in order to recreate what I had seen. I used the idea of not focusing on the realism of the piece, but conveying the idea of what the moment was.

Angelise Puls / Lilac Evening / 2017 / Digital painting 43 cm x 23 cm



Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org

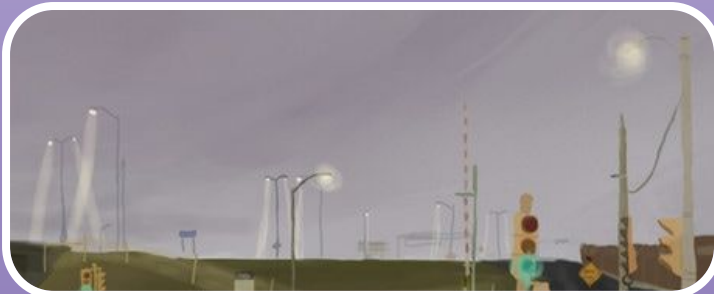
Connection to Own Work: Monet

In my piece, *Lilac Evening*, I made an effort to match the colors I remembered as close as I could. These include a variety of hues, all of which are generally cool colors, like purple and green. It includes some warm hues, like yellow, however they are relatively dull. On the other hand, in many of Monet's *Haystacks*, including this one, there is a focus on warmer hues, such as red and yellow. The cool colors found in the piece, like blue and purple, are generally soft and bright. The two pieces generally share a soft, pastel look without any intense colors.

Claude Monet / Haystacks. End of the Summer. Morning / 1891 / Oil on canvas 60.5cm x 100.8 cm / commons.wikimedia.org



Angelise Puls / Lilac Evening / 2017 / Digital painting 43 cm x 23 cm



Monet's work is known for its level of texture, due to his habit of laying on many layers of paint. However, he also has visual texture without needing to see it up close. I used this as well in *Lilac*, specifically on the road and overpass in the piece. *Lilac* could not have physical texture to it due to its nature as a digital painting rather than a physical, oil piece. The textures that were possible to be included were also affected by the subject matter, as one is a stack of hay and the other is a modern exit ramp.

Connection to Own Work: Lemke

My series *Quiet* was inspired by Lemke's *Sunflowers and Clouds* and other photographs. I specifically wanted to use the same medium as him: a medium-format, black and white film camera. I also wanted to use his type of subject. I followed his lead on a small scale, exploring an environment in my general area which I was not entirely familiar with. He often went out to the west side of the United States to take his photos, and mainly of landscapes and natural environments. I was inspired to go somewhere new and explore the environment, which is also semi-natural, being a park.

I used the medium as an opportunity to also explore the way he uses contrast. In *Sunflowers*, the sky is a much darker tone than the clouds or the sunflowers, creating a contrast between them. I tried to incorporate this by including the sky in the direction the sun was setting to overexpose the sky and create a similar contrast through a horizon line or a lens flare.



William Lemke / *Sunflowers & Clouds* / 2013 / Silver gelatin print 40.64 cm x 50.8 cm / billlemke.com



Angelise Puls / *Quiet* / 2017 / Medium format film photography 10.16 cm x 10.6 cm each



Connection to Own Work: Lemke

I also was inspired to shoot images that have a generally similar composition, including a center focal point. In *Untitled*, there is a focus on the rock formation in the center. In my two photographs from my series *Quiet*, has a more distant focal point and more blatant one-point perspective. In one, there is multiple shadows creating this, where they all point into the distance in the same way. In the other, there's an end to the hallway that becomes the focal point.



William Lemke / *Untitled* / 2013 / Silver gelatin print 50.8 cm x 40.4 cm / billlemke.com

I also found inspiration in the rougher textures of stone and photographing it. The hallway is made up of stone pillars and a stone floor, which has similar texture to *Untitled's* rock formation, albeit with much more pronounced texture. The stone floor has many deep and dark gaps, creating a certain amount of texture not found in the solid rock.



Angelise Puls / *Quiet* / 2017 / Medium format film photography 10.16 cm x 10.6 cm each

Connection to Own Work: Monet and Lemke

While studying these two artists, I have learned a great deal about how to incorporate their techniques and sensibilities into my own work.

These artists have inspired me to:

- Try film photography. I had an interest prior in film photography, and seeing Lemke's photos in person sealed the deal.
- Look more at the details around me. I now often spend more time looking out the window, admiring the hues at different times of day, as well as finding beauty in strange places.
- Have a different view of colors in general. I didn't think that black and white could work as a palette for positive ideas before. I also didn't consider using colors for objects that were less than realistic before.
- An appreciation for older methods and how to incorporate them into more modern ways of art.



Angelise Puls / Quiet /
2017 / Medium format
film photography 10.16
cm x 10.6 cm each



Angelise Puls / Lilac Evening / 2017 / Digital painting 43 cm x 23 cm