


# Comparative Study

## Chihuly ++ van Gogh



In this study, I compare the intentions, themes, use of color and other formal qualities of various artworks by well known local artist, Dale Chihuly, and famous post-impressionist, Vincent van Gogh. There are obvious connections between these two artists, including their use of bright yet contrasting color, as well as differences in medium types and presentation.

Both artists have greatly influenced my own art, as well as millions of other modern artists across the world. Their techniques and color choices are highly influential, and resonate well with many current artists themes and meanings.

# Evaluation of Cultural Significance of Chihuly 176w

In Wisconsin, Chihuly is known for "*Isola di San Giacomo in Palude Chandelier II*", his installation in the Milwaukee Public Art Museum, which is so popular, it's placed in the wing, rather than the main building.

Chihuly studied at University of Wisconsin in 1965, the only college at the time that taught glass blowing. This is where he learned how to blow glass on a non-industrial level, using new, individual furnaces, only available in the US in Wisconsin.

This class one of the first in the world that didn't use glass primarily for its functionality, but for its artistic value. Rather than create forms with a function, he created intricate sculptural forms. Chihuly is considered a pioneer of art. He's one of the first to combine aspects of decorative arts and fine arts.

Chihuly's exhibitions are on display all across the nation, and in some international locations as well. His studio, "Chihuly Studio" is responsible for approximately 30 original art installations per year. To do this, he works with a large group of helpers and underlings. He needs this aide to work on large glass pieces he wouldn't otherwise be able to make, because of physical and mental disabilities, and the sheer scale of the pieces of glass he uses.

Chihuly is one of the most famous modern glass artists, known for his distinct use of color and form, to create extremely colorful and intricate sculptures. His large exhibits are usually made of many, *many*, small pieces, and his smaller pieces are usually one or two pieces of glass.



# *Isola di San Giacomo in Palude Chandelier II*

Out-reaching, twisting glass shapes, looks like tentacles reaching out away from center of sculpture

Blown glass circles decorate the parts that would be bare without it

Analogous color scheme with a complementary color keeps the piece from having an overbearing, warm color scheme, and to add some variety in color



Contrasts plane white background with bright colors

Warm colors (reds, oranges, and yellows) contrasted against cool color (dark blue)

Sculpture held by a single black pole at bottom, to keep the support system unobtrusive to the piece. By wrapping a glass piece around the pole, it hides it while also making it look intentional



# Sunset Boat

Wide, shallow boat allows glass to overflow outside while remaining balanced

Warm color scheme, (red yellow orange) and white

Glass pieces include large spikes, thin and thick twisting pieces, and some blown glass balls

The sharpness of the spikes contradicts the softness of a sunset, and the softer shapes of the other glass pieces.

Installation place creates a reflection, making the piece seem to have symmetry, and making the spikes and color travel in both directions

Boat is similar shade of green to water and surrounding environment, letting it blend in while still keeping it part of the main piece



Some floral shaped pieces, some resembling large leaves or petals, and some resembling bulbs



# Analysis of Formal Qualities of Chihuly



A close up look at the individual glass pieces show intense, free-form shapes.

As for color, his pieces also usually have bright, vibrant color schemes, which are only improved by light interacting with the semi-transparent glass.



Each piece of glass is a line coming from a general central area. In *Isola di San Giacomo in Palude Chandelier II*, this is the cylindrical pole that supports the sculpture. In *Sunset Boat*, this is the inside of the boat. These give individual pieces a feeling of emanating outward from this central point.

Both pieces use a combination of spherical shapes and winding, twisting lines. In *Sunset Boat*, there all soft, natural lines juxtaposed by sharp lines, radiating in all directions.

Chihuly's installations are less about providing a message so much as tying an area together with color and form.





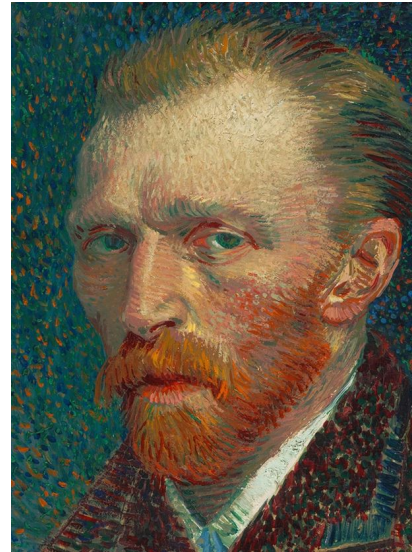
# Evaluation of Cultural Significance of van Gogh

Van Gogh uses his surroundings as inspiration, often painting still lifes, including flowers and wheat fields, in which he usually uses bright colors. He has many paintings of irises, sunflowers and orchids, all of which use bright and dynamic colors.

He also does many landscapes, which vary in their use of color. Before he went to live with his brother, Theo, in 1886, more of his landscapes used darker, less saturated colors. Once introduced to the impressionist movement in France, he used brighter colors and thicker applications of paint to imitate the popular art style.

Many of his paintings feature people working in fields, and portraits of people around him, which gives modern viewers a look into late 19th century Europe, specifically into field workers and peasants in France and the Netherlands.

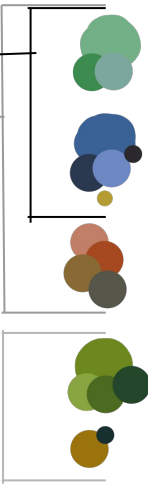
Van Gogh's art has had a long lasting effect on artists use of color, their attempts at creating realistic paintings, vs ones that are aesthetically appealing. He is considered one of the most recognisable artists, and the best Dutch artist since Rembrandt. His paintings sell for an average about 80 million dollars, but at the time of his death, he had only sold one painting for 400 francs (or about \$2000).



A single white iris in a patch of purple irises provides some contrast

# The Irises

Mid-ground color palette  
Foreground color palette



Background color palette

Eye immediately drawn to the mid-ground. Travels to either foreground or background.

Distinct breakdown between background, midground and foreground

Oil paints create texture, especially when used in thick layers like van Gogh uses.



Shading changes hue as well as value, while keeping a high intensity, resulting in an interesting color palette



# *Women on the Peat Moor*

Colors are much less vibrant and less saturated. Especially compared to some of van Gogh's other works.

Distinct background, midground and foreground



Figures hunched over from time working in fields, adds to the feeling of depression.

Still has distinct texture from oil paint on canvas, but is less textured than other works of van Gogh's



# Analysis of Formal Qualities of van Gogh



Line weight varies depending on his art style and time period of his life. Can use either broad outlines with little blending or no outline with some blending. This also changes the colors he uses from more realistic colors to highly saturated, and exaggerated colors.



Lines are, for the most part, organized in a traditional way. Most are more or less blended.



The lines go in semi-organized patterns, but is erratic compared to his older works.

The sense of space is a bit skewed in both of these works, but his use of color and line gives it a whimsical feeling, like it doesn't quite exist in the real world.

# Comparison: Inspiration



Connected to the workers of 19th century workers, both in the peat fields and crop fields.

People would work long hours cutting the sod to get peat, which would be used to heat furnaces.

Irises and other flowers were planted around plots of farmland in villages, to encourage bees and other pollinators to visit. This not only helped produce more food, but also provided them with flowers for decoration or to sell.

These were painted in person, with live references. Van Gogh experienced views like this on a daily basis.

Main goal was to create an aesthetically pleasing exhibit.

Uses bright, noticeable colors in interesting forms to create a piece that compliments it's surroundings while also drawing the viewer's attention.

“Sunset Boat” is meant to imitate a sunset, and how it reflects off the water. Some of the other pieces imitate sealife.





# Comparison: Use of Color



Colors are less saturated and darker, which greatly changes the mood of the piece to a dreary day working for hours at a time

The theme of farm workers is a common one in van Gogh's paintings, but the color scheme *greatly* affects the mood of the painting.



Uses primarily blues, greens and yellows, in bright shades to create a bright, cheerful painting.

The shading of the flowers isn't blended very much, which gives them interesting shadows. This also ties together the thick outlines of the flowers and leaves.



Uses a very large variety of high-saturation colors, including yellow, red, blue, pink, orange, and some yellows, in bright colors.

Also has bright colors, but is limited to a yellow-orange-red color scheme for the glass pieces, and a single-shade green boat.

This ties it to its inspiration of a sunset, and only uses colors that will reflect of the water well



# Comparison: Mediums

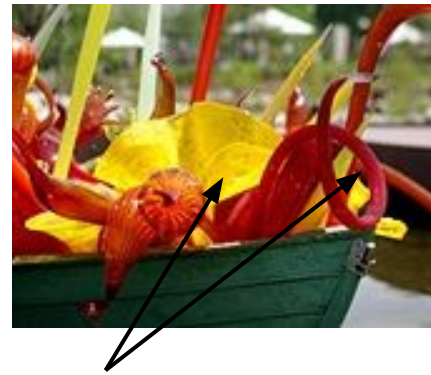
Oil paintings create a 2D image, and color isn't affected by lighting as much, as it doesn't create a semi-transparent surface

Over time the image can crack and fade if not protected and sealed correctly

Oil paint can be applied in thick coats, which can give the picture a surface texture. Color also doesn't go on completely even, do to canvas texture



Glass is breakable, which means it can be damaged easily, but if taken care of, can last a very long time



Creates a 3D object.

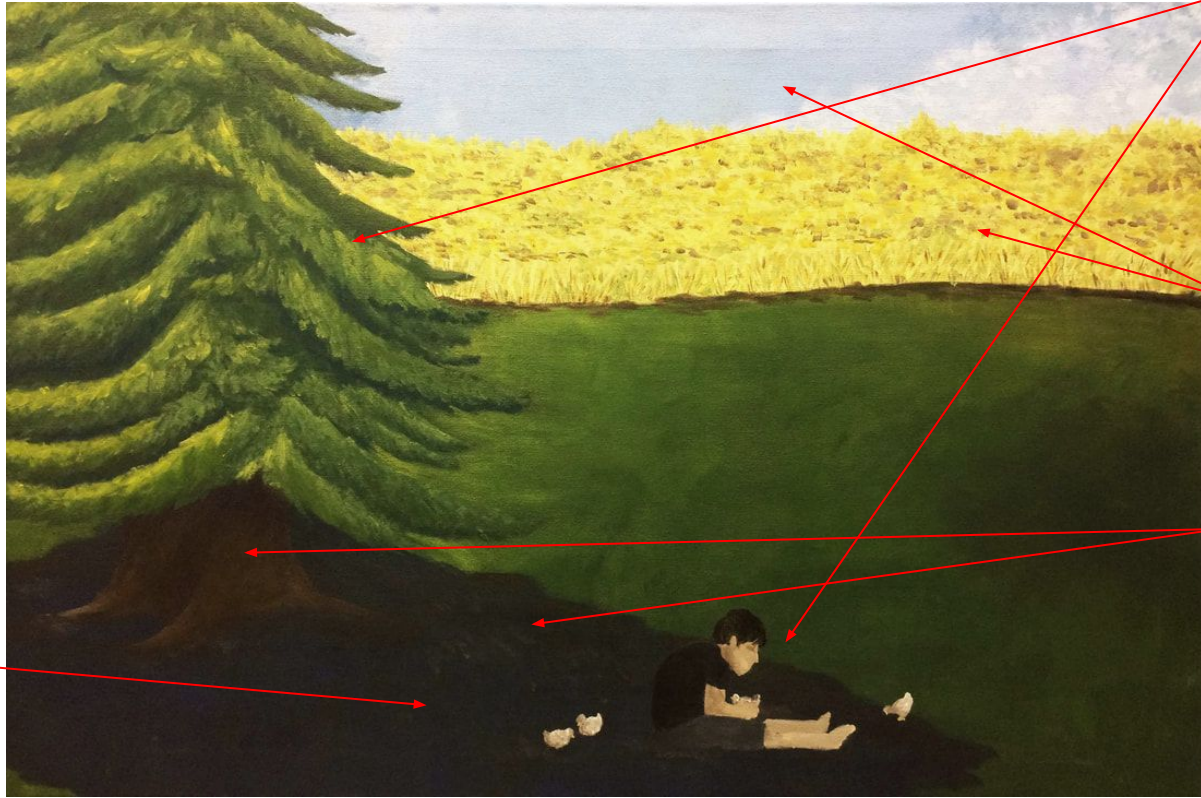
The process of blowing the glass allows different textures to be made on the surface of the glass, from completely smooth to rippled. This also lets interesting shapes be made.

Transparent glass means the perceived colors are partially dependent on the amount and quality of light





# My Art: *City Boy with Chickens*



Inclusion of animals and humans, but not the main focal point of the piece. More focus on the surroundings.

Most common color is various shades of green, with darker colors, like browns and blues, in the foreground, and yellows and lighter blues in the background.

Shadows below the tree are more blue, rather than just adding black to the green of the ground. Creates a more vibrant, colorful image.

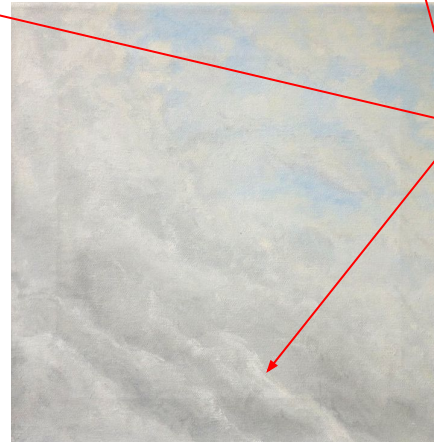
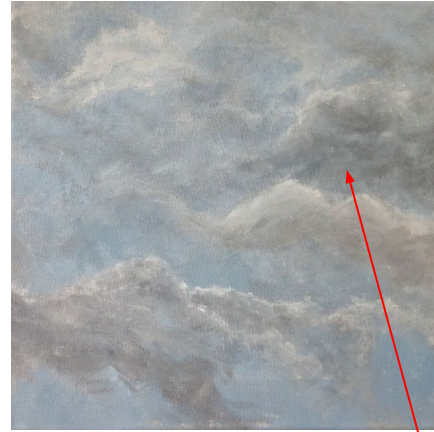
# My Art: *Quick Clouds*

Gradient in the background, imitating the sunset.

Repeatedly layering darker colors to create natural looking shading in the clouds.

Use of Asymmetric layout using positive and negative space.

Impressionistic (not Post-Impressionistic) style,



Painted in shorter periods of time, usually under 3 hours.

Each panel is based on a different time of day, and different weather patterns. Creates variety in works and allows for more variation in technique and color choice.

More subdued colors, most mixed with white or light greys to make lighter colors. Makes blending easier and look more natural.



# Connection to Own Work: Technique



Layers of short, thick lines used to create a patchwork of colors, rather than blending them together in a more traditional way. Layering technique and short lines of bright color is a staple of impressionism / post-impressionism.

Lighter and darker colors used for background, with highlights layered on top makes it look like it's speckled with lighter *and* darker colors.

Painted with heavy brushstrokes and solid lines. Less realistic and more stylized, but lends well to post-expressionist styles.

Quicker brushstrokes than most traditional paintings, because it doesn't need to be blurred or accurately placed.



# Connection to Own Work: Color Choice



Yellow-tinted shades of green in background and foreground



Dark shadows in tree = shadows in clouds



Shadow under tree = silhouette of women



Overcast clouds using blue-tinted greys



Muted yellow in skyline to show sunlight through clouds





# Connection to Own Work: Theme



Both of the pieces I've included have themes of appreciating the beauty of daily life. I painted things I see in my daily life, like clouds and my grandma's farm. This is a common theme in van Gogh's works, too. He usually painted common scenes around his town, like fields and flowers, or people going about their day.

The goal of Chihuly's sculptures is to create a center point for wherever it's placed, whether that's in the middle of nature, or a blank, white room. Three dimensional pieces are usually better at this than a two dimensional ones, because it is less likely to have an obvious border.

