

# Comparative Study

## Visual Arts SL



Title: *"The Spanish Ballet  
(1862)"*

Artist: Edouard Manet

Media: Oil on canvas

Size: 24 x 35.63 in

Movement: Realism

{1}



Title: *"Dance Waltz"*

Artist: Leonid Afremov

Media: Oil painting

Size: 75cm x 50cm x 2cm

Movement: Impressionism

{2}



Title: *"The little fourteen-  
year-old dancer"*

Artist: Edgar Degas

Media: Bronze, Muslin, Wax,  
Silk

Size: 97.8 x 43.8 x 36.5 cm

Movement: Impressionism

{3}



# Evaluation of cultural significance.

Edgar Degas  
1834-1917



The Dance Class; a painting of Degas' {4}

### The Dance Class

This painting is one of the most ambitious paintings devoted by Degas to the theme of Ballet. It consists of 24 ballerinas and their mothers; the class is lead by Jules Parrot, who is a famous ballet master. This painting is realistic and again captures the dancers in an unprepared manner.

{9}

Degas chose a slight bird-eye view for this painting, in addition to a slight side-view.

The ballerinas in the painting were in contrast with the background as they were lighter in colour which made them gain more focus from the viewers, in addition to use of a thin layer of paint, allowing us to see Degas' reworking, such as retouching the legs of some resting Ballerinas. Through this piece, it can be confirmed again that Degas was truly influenced by dancers, specifically ballerinas.

{8}

The Ballet Rehearsal on Stage; a Degas piece {5}



The little fourteen-year-old dancer {3}



The human hair, Cotton/silk tutu, Coloured beeswax.

The little fourteen-year-old dancer, located in Tate Liverpool, is a statue made by Edgar Degas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The components that Degas used in the making of this statue are coloured beeswax, clay, human hair, silk and linen ribbon, cotton and silk tutu, cotton bodice, and linen slippers. This piece was created by Degas with the intention of depicting an "opera rat" as the young dancers incorporated with the Paris Opera ballet were called. He wanted to show people in Paris who were considered high class society the downfalls and hard truths of the ballet which were not seen often in the open.

{10}

### Critical investigation on Edgar Degas

Edgar Degas who was a French artist was born in the 1830s, and is famous for his paintings, sculptures, print making, and drawings. He is thought of as one of the initiators of Impressionism, although he preferred to be called a realist. He's mostly linked with dance since more than half of his works show dancers, and since he had adequate skills in the depiction of movement. Edgar Degas was fond of experimentation with different and unusual techniques where an example would be him mixing pastels heavily with liquid fixative until it turned into a paste and using it in his artworks. I am very fond of Degas' work as I myself am interested in trying as many techniques as I am allowed and since I too am interested in dance and depiction of movement; this is apparent in my first studio work.

{11} {12}



Edgar Degas {6}

Many of Degas' works depict dancing and things significant to that, especially Ballet, and I believe that this was because of Degas' French culture and time era he painted in, where this was a topic that many people were interested and enjoyed because of the lack of technology as entertainment during that time.

### Critical investigation on Edgar Degas and his connection to ballet

A reason of Degas' interest and fascination with Ballet is that Ballet aligned with his taste for classical beauty and his interest in modern realism. He spent a lot of his time in the Paris Opera, and the city's poorest and young aged girls who struggled and competed to seize an important role on the stage just for the amusement of the rich; that shows in his paintings where he tried and succeeded to capture the dancers at awkward moments which showed the truth behind the Ballet act. In the process, he invented new techniques for drawing and painting those scenes. At the beginning of his career, he had to have help from his rich friends to slip him into the ballet, which furthermore proves his immense interest, until he became a Ballet season ticket holder himself. Proof of this is when he wrote to Albert Hecht, which was a friend of his, "My dear Hecht, Have you the power to get the Opéra to give me a pass for the day of the dance examination, which, so I have been told, is to be on Thursday? I have done so many of these dance examinations without having seen them that I am a little ashamed of it."

{13}





**Dance under the rain-Leonid Afremov**  
 As most of his other paintings, this one is an oil piece done with palette knives featuring a couple dancing in the rain with the following message intention: "no matter what untimely problems may befall, as long as those in love have each other, nothing else matters. Instead, they are **dancing in the rain**, awash in the **light of the street lanterns** which gently caress and warm them with their glow and thinking only of each other, in this moment, right now. The trees in the alley help the couple to hide from other people by covering them with their branches."

**Critical Investigation on Leonid Afremov**

Leonid Afremov, who is a Russian-Israeli artist, creates mainly impressionistic art pieces using oils and palette knives. He is known as a self-representing artist who sells his work exclusively via the internet and usually avoids exhibitions and involvement of dealers and galleries. Before he became successful, Afremov was a struggling artist, although that was until he became successful through selling his paintings on E-bay. Leonid usually keeps his art politically neutral, where it doesn't offend anyone or send hidden messages; they are usually inspired by certain personal memories or emotions instead. His artistic aim is to draw the viewer to have a certain feeling rather than tell a story through his work, or allow the viewer to see the world how he sees it. He also doesn't use the true colours of what he intends to paint and instead uses bright colours in order to send positive vibes through his paintings.

{37}

**Critical investigation on cultural context of "The Spanish Ballet"**

This Manet piece, with the unusual choice of happy colours, is of the Die Spanish company who were performing at the Hippodrome in Paris at that time, including Lola de Valence, sitting, and Mariano Camprubi, who was a famous dancer, standing. This painting shows Manet's fascination with Spanish art and culture. At that time, all things Spanish were admired and popular in France, and in the 1860s, Manet took an interest in a troupe of Spanish dancers, and requested that the members pose for him at Alfred Stevens, who was his friend's, studio.

{36}



**The Spanish Ballet – Edouard Manet** {1}

Dance Waltz, an oil painting by Leonid Afremov, is one of my personal favorites of his. It is a typical work of art in Afremov's style since it's made using palette knives and is politically neutral, in addition to being inspired by an emotion, in this case emotions related to a moment in time in the Waltz dance. The Waltz dance is actually a famous dance in Russian culture. In fact, the Waltz is part of Russian history where when it was forbidden by some countries like Switzerland, and unappreciated by others like England, it became known as the imperial waltz and was taken as a serious type of ballroom dance when it was being danced at Almacks by then Emperor Alexander (Russia), Princess Esterhazy, and finally Lord Palmertson; this shows how the Waltz is a part of the Russian culture and might be considered a reason why Afremov chose to paint this dance and treasure it in one of his works.

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{39}

**Evaluation of cultural significance.**  
 Edouard Manet 1834-1917

And Leonid Afremov

**Dance Waltz - Leonid Afremov**



Palette knife strokes showing Waltz movement

**Critical investigation on Edouard Manet**

Edouard Manet, 1834-1917, was a French artist of the upper class who was associated with Impressionism mostly, although recently acknowledged for having ties to Realism and Naturalism, and these two movement played a part in the foundation of his revolutionary approach of injecting new content to art or altering already existing elements. A famous technique of Manet's is the wet over wet technique which was observed in the Alla Prima painting, where it was contemporary at that time to paint wet layers over dried ones. I personally have tried the wet over wet technique and was fond of it as I'm an impatient person, and it added a wondrous effect to my painting.

Manet also had a direct approach to painting since he didn't take the time to sketch the subjects in his painting but directly put them on the canvas with an under-painting of cream white and burnt umber.

{20}

The Spanish singer - Edouard Manet

Another painting of Manet's showing his interest in Spanish dances and singing, where he painted a realistic portrait of a Spanish man holding a guitar in his studio. This painting, although, was criticized by people since the man in the painting was right handed with a guitar posed for a left handed person; nevertheless, this painting was one of the painting that drew attention to Manet when he first started.

{36}



{36}



## Analysis of formal qualities – Elements of art



In this part of Afremov's piece, *Dance Waltz*, shown on the left, there was various use of line in order to give meaning and definition to the painting. Although the lines were abstract and undefined, they had direction. There was use of **vertical lines** which created a feel of height making the figures in the painting more attractive and alluring, which made the Waltz dance depicted in this painting **more magnificent and elegant**. In addition to that, the **diagonal lines** in the work captured and showed movement and unstableness showing continuous motion.

{31}

Afremov, with this painting, strived to achieve a 3-D effect in a 2-D artwork. For example, he added the shades beneath the woman figure's dress to create an illusion of shadow which contributed to the 3-D effect of the painting. In addition to that, Afremov created the illusion of space around the figures by leaving background around the sides and top. This contributed to a cheerful and happy feel in the painting.

As for colour, Afremov used many qualities to achieve capturing a moment in a dance; he used light values such as yellows, pinks, and cool blues. He also used a balance of warm and cool colours, although the feel of the painting's atmosphere turned out to be more warm and that added to the happiness felt in the painting since it indicated sunlight. The light values in this painting show a source of light surrounding the figures and not only coming from a small source. For example, the figures could be dancing outdoors or in a very well-lit room, although it cannot be certain due to the abstract background. The colours used were also of medium intensity due to them being diluted with ivory white. On the other hand, although diluted, they still could be associated with positive energy and heightened emotions. {31}{33}

This painting also hosts organic shapes and forms with no geometric shapes in sight. The use of these shapes in my opinion is because of how abstract the lines and strokes are in this work, and this gives the painting a smoother, more elegant feel.



Use of curvy diagonal lines

Use of duller yellow ochre to show shadow



This Degas piece, made of wax and miscellaneous materials, is a sculpture with depth, width, and height taking a 3-D form, where it can be seen from more than one side. It's mostly made up of organic shapes and forms since most shapes seen and found in this sculpture are irregular. Although organic forms are found in nature, Degas created a man-made form of a human being. To top that off, a little amount of geometric shapes is found in this sculpture making it more real and intriguing. {31}



Degas used beeswax in the creation of this sculpture, although the beeswax was coloured. The use of this certain colour of beeswax could be as an attempt to show skin colour of this dancer as Degas created this sculpture to show the story of these poor, low-class dancers who are stuck in a rich world. I think that his use of this colour of beeswax put his point across and strengthened the impact and majesty of this piece {33}



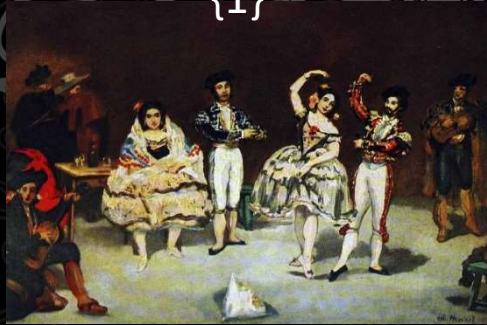
Since this artwork is a sculpture, its texture and surface quality can be sensed by touch. The beeswax of this sculpture would have a soft and smooth texture creating balance with the roughness of the silk and cotton tutu. In addition to that, the human hair Degas used would also contrast with the smoothness of the beeswax. This would overall make the sculpture seem more professional and pleasing to the eye since the human eye naturally seeks balance and satisfactory perfection. The different textures in this work also helped add a tactile quality to the work. {31}

As for texture, this painting holds a variety of textures due to the fact of Afremov using palette knives as a means of applying the paint. The texture of the dress strokes and strokes of the background are very similar to one another while the skin is smoother and less clumpy. A factor that gave the painting a sense of strangeness and uniqueness is how the texture and strokes of the dress almost blend with the background where it's difficult to find where each begins or ends although the colours hint at a separation of the two.

{31}

# Analysis of formal qualities through the Elements of art

{1}



In this piece, Edouard Manet chose unusual colours to paint with; those colours were considered happy, such as brilliant red, signifying energy, various tinted whites, signifying purity and so on. His choice of colours in this piece shows how he was happy at that moment in time while he was meeting the Spanish troupe of dancers. These colours also send a message of energy and happiness to viewers making this painting more pleasing to the eye.

{33}

The lines in this painting are perpendicular where horizontal meets vertical at almost 90 degrees which is understandable since all figures are vertically positioned against the floor whether standing or sitting. The lines in this work are also mostly thin making the painting more intricate and detailed. Manet also used diagonal curved lines to paint the dancers as to show movement since diagonal lines are observed as unstable and interpreted as not still {31}

Organic shapes and forms dominate this painting as the figures in the work are human, and it's only natural for Manet to use irregular shapes rather than regular ones since the figures in the painting are a man-made replication of 2-D human beings by Manet. {31}

This is an example of Manet's work where the difference in his use of colour in this painting from *The Spanish Ballet* shows, as the colours are more neutral and less intense, with the use of light blues and greens.



Banks of the Seine at Argenteuil  
Example of Manet's work

In this painting, Manet depicted texture in a 2-D piece of art. He used the rest of the elements of art to show texture of the clothes he painted on the dancers where some appear smooth and velvety like the men's clothing, and others look rough and puffy such as the women's clothes. There's even some depiction of leather in the leather boots of the men which was successful due to the use of several shades of browns with the right light colour placement to indicate the shine on the boot. {31}



The colours used in this work are of dark value indicating an interior feel. As for the intensity, all colours are quite intense with little to no dilution causing the painting to be stronger and more prominent. Manet also showed a lot of space all throughout the various parts of the painting, which in my opinion emphasizes the happy and free feeling showed by this work, although not enough space was showed as to that it becomes lonely.

{33}{31}

In these parts of the painting, the colours have a darker value which contrasts with what's in the center of the painting. Manet used various browns from burnt umber to burnt sienna, in addition to reds such as brilliant and crimson red. The way he painted these parts gives the figures a blurry quality where the viewer can't really make out much of their body language or facial expressions.



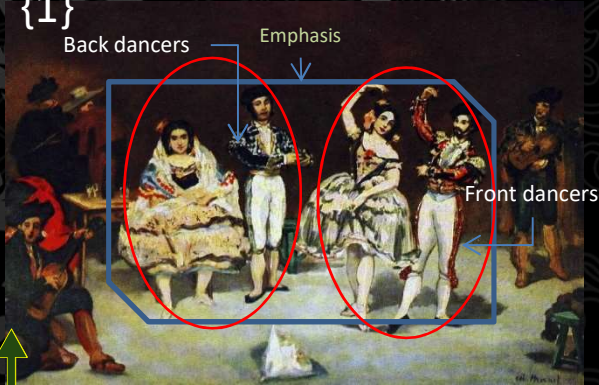
Manet's strokes in these parts were also abstract showing little definition of line although he was still able to depict textures in the leather of the boots and the wood of the guitar and was able to distinguish their textures from each other.

{31}



# Analysis of formal qualities – Principles of Art

{1}



Proportions in this painting are as they should be with the human bodies being of the right and realistic proportions, with the dancers in front being larger and placed lower than the ones in the back. This makes the painting more realistic and shows the artist to be more professional and mature.

There is a certain pattern painted within the floor in the painting, with blotches of yellow ochre spread out onto a mix of ultramarine blue and zinc white. This pattern also contrasts with the smooth and plain wall background, which is burnt umber in colour, creating a different angle of balance in the painting.

The viewer's eyes are directly lead to the main two dancers (standing), due to their colours being the brightest, then to the other two people behind them whose colours are less bright, then to the corners of the painting to the figures painted in dark values.

{32}

In this sculpture, made by Degas, the proportions of the young ballerina are realistic where her body parts are in correct and natural proportions to each other. The emphasis in this sculpture is on the upper body of the ballerina due to the contrast of colour between the figure's skin and the silk bodice, made of real fabric, being greater than the contrast of the colour of the tutu and the skin of the figure's legs.

{32}{10}{11}

{3}



Balance in this piece was achieved through textures of wax, cloth, and human hair; colours of hues of browns, yellows, and bronze; the 3-d form of 360 degrees, being combined harmoniously in a way that creates a sense of peace and satisfaction to the viewers.

{32}{10}{11}

Here, in this Manet piece, the emphasis lies on the four people in the center of the painting because of the light colours such as tinted whites, blues, reds, yellows, etc... used to paint them being in contrast with the corners of the work painted in burnt umber, different browns, grays, etc... This contrast in colour created balance in the painting making it more prominent and professional.

{32}{17}

There was no intention of rhythm through repetition in this art work due to each part of it being unique. This sculpture also wasn't symmetrical due to the left leg being outstretched and not matching the right one, thus creating variety in the sculpture. Being meant to be seen from a 360 degree angle, this sculpture is a sculpture-in-the-round making it have a larger impact on audiences and making it more realistic with a larger display presence.

{32}{10}{11}

## Analysis of formal qualities – Principles of Art

In this Afremov piece, balance was created and is present due to the rough look of the background and the dress and suit, which were done with the use of palette knives of different shapes and sizes, and the skin of the female's back, painted with a brush with no rough texture added, where the skin shows a smooth feel. The rough look of the background and the smooth texture of other parts of the painting like the dancer's back evened each other out and that is why balance was present. {32}

The proportions in this painting are very normal from the female to the male although their proportions can not be compared to anything else due to the background being abstract and no other object or scene being there. Overall, the painting possesses unity where all principles are within harmony of each other creating a sense of calm and joy for the audience. {32}



There is contrast in colours and textures between the skin of the female's back and arms, which are darker and display shade in order to aid the 3-D look of the painting, and the background, which is very colorful with little hint of a source of light, due to it being abstract. This contrast gives the painting an alluring feel where viewers would be attracted to it. {32}

Because of all the contrasting and balance present in the painting, an emphasis on the two dancers in the painting was created causing the viewer's eyes to be drawn to them. This emphasis gives the painting a mature quality since it is hard to centralize objects in a painting without it looking immature, giving the artist better credentials. {32}{17}

Due to the many diagonal lines and curves in this work, created by the use of palette knives, movement is present where the curves lead the viewer's eyes from the female dancer's back and face, to the beginning of the curve near her lower back and finally over the curves of her dress till the corner of the piece. This enhances the capturing of the dance, since the Waltz is a smooth and elegant dance which Afremov was capable to capture graciously, making the viewer feel more involved and moved by this Afremov work. In addition to that, there are no apparent contour lines in the painting, and the lines in this work were painted thickly and boldly showing confidence on the part of the artist. The way Afremov used lines supported movement captured in the artwork making it of a better quality.





## {2} Analysis of formal qualities

## –Rules of composition

For this sculpture, Edgar Degas used the simplification rule where he decided not to add any background to the dancer making the focus of the viewer undistracted and fully on the dancer making them notice details and be more in awe at the sculpture itself, after all, as Robert Browning said –according to *Andrea del Sarto*, 1855... “*Less is more*” {25} which proved to be true by Degas in this sculpture. Degas also used the golden triangle rule, where as shown on the bottom right corner, he created visual harmony through the sculpture, which pleases the viewer’s eye. Instead of making the sculpture fully symmetrical, he made the dancer’s foot stick out which made the piece more interesting and requiring the viewers’ eyes to be more challenged.

{9} {23}

In this work, there are several compositions Afremov used in order to enhance it and make it more professional and mature. For example, he used the rule of simplification where he decided against background clutter which can distract the viewer from the main objects in the painting, enhancing the focal point of the Waltz dance. Afremov used less detailed palette knife work towards the edges of the art work again drawing most of the attention of the audience towards the dancers. Through using the simple background as a technique, Afremov also achieved the rule of space which enhanced the idea of movement in the painting, where the viewer’s eye is tricked to think of the space as the margin of movement for the dancers.

{23} {24}

Degas, Afremov, and Manet all resorted to the application of the rule of space in order to emphasize the focal points of each piece and In my opinion, they succeeded since my eye was truly drawn to each focal point of emphasis such as in the *Waltz dance*, and the *fourteen year old dancer*. Afremov and Degas both applied the rule of simplification where they decided upon simple backgrounds with the swirly pattern on Afremov’s part, and the decision of keeping the dancer on its own in Degas’ part. As for the golden triangle rule, it was only Degas who was brave enough to venture there and apply it to his work which in my opinion worked wonderfully in attracting the viewer’s attention alongside the rule of odds in using only one dancer.

{3}



Here, in this piece, Manet applied the rule of odds to what ever is in the corners from the man with the guitar on the right side, to the other musician in the left corner. This helped make the figures of the dancers in the center of the painting who are in pairs attract the focus of the viewer. Manet also applied the rule of space to allow the illusion of movement in order for the Spanish Ballet depicted to be more meaningful and full of life; We see that space on the top and bottom of the painting. The painting could also be perceived as somewhat symmetrical, which I think helped the painting look mature even though the focal subjects of the painting were centralized. {23}





{2}

## Comparing and contrasting cultural significance

As this work was made in recent time of the 2000s, Afremov had a wide range of materials and techniques to use and apply for this painting in which he decided to use many hues of the colour spectrum infusing warm and cool tones together to create this uplifting piece of work. He applied the unconventional way of palette knife use creating an abstract effect in addition to some realism seen in the form and proportions of the dancers. In this piece we see some modern art in the expressive use of color, nontraditional materials, and new techniques and mediums showing us a part of how art in modern times takes form as.

{27}{29}

Through the evaluation of cultural significance I saw how each time period induced change in art and how it started having many forms, and how several different techniques were created because of this shift in art. Throughout time, movements varied from the renaissance period, to romanticism, to modern art, etc... I was elated when I found that the differences between time periods were evident in the art works I chose for this comparative study; Afremov's piece being more modern, Degas' sculpture being more classical, and Manet's painting being most realistic. Comparing and contrasting materials, and techniques used in each artwork would give us a very good idea of the difference in art within different time periods. For example, Afremov's use of palette knives with oil paint gives us a hint of modernity while the realistic and steady strokes of Manet in his piece shows us the more classical and tradition side of art where realism dominated.

{29}

In the time era (1880s) when this sculpture was created, Romanticism was a main movement that artists worked with especially in France where Degas was from. Artists started emphasizing on emotion and individualism, preferring medieval to classical, and affecting politics in a way; the main inspiration of the artists in that era working on romantic pieces were the French revolution and industrial revolution where they induced artists to have severe and raging emotions and feelings that they expressed through their art works. This period was associated with liberalism and radicalism which is evident in this Degas sculpture as the focal point is showing a side of the "opera rats" as the children ballet dancers were called which might be seen as a way of liberating them of the ignorance of the richer society. The time period of the 1800s also shows in the materials Degas used in the sculpting of this piece where there weren't many choices of materials at that time hence him using beeswax. After all it was Degas who said "*The most beautiful things in art come from renunciation.*"

{26}{29}{30}

{1}



In this piece a lot of realism is tangible from the various textures of the clothes to the prominent shading and realistic forms and proportions. Although during the time period of the 1860s Impressionism was becoming more and more dominant in the artistic world, Manet still didn't resort to capturing little detail with bold colours as per the norm, and instead he resorted to use of maximum detail in order to show his appreciation of the Spanish ballet troupe. This worked in his favor since it enhanced the painting and made the focal point clear, bold, and defined.

{29}



{3}



# Comparing and contrasting formal analysis through the elements of art

Regarding line, both Manet and Degas incorporated vertical lines as both works were featuring figures either standing up or sitting perpendicularly to the ground which gave both paintings the illusion of space ; the space, although, in each work indicated different things as the space in Degas' sculpture hinted at loneliness and in Manet's painting, the space enhanced the idea of movement.

{31}

Manet, in this piece, used contrast of colours in order to grab the viewers' attention where for instance the deep browns of the background clash against the light whites of the figures' clothes and floor. On the other hand, Both Degas and Afremov went for utilizing contrast through textures more than colours as can be seen in Afremov's rough background and smooth figures and Degas' contrasting textures of using beeswax and different rough cloth materials. This could be interpreted as insight into different time eras where we see Degas' time resurfacing in our modern day, embodied by Afremov's piece.

{31}

In terms of colour, Afremov opted to use vibrant and energetic colours to portray the positive vibes most emitted by the Russian waltz, and while Manet wanted his painting to emit feelings close to Afremov's, his colour use was bolder with reds, blacks and whites, and although this particular colour scheme might opt to look gloomy, Manet was able to arrange it in a way that whispers the word "happy".

{31}

In my opinion, Degas, Afremov, and Manet were all able to utilize the elements of art in a professional and sophisticated way even though they all had very different focal points and emotions playing into their artworks and through studying these pieces of art, I understood how to harmonize the elements in order to deliver a certain emphasis, and harmony is a very important aspect of dance, which I don't think is a coincidence in this case, and I appreciate the artists ensuring it is present in their works since it better serves the concepts presented.



{1}



{2}

In the formation of this sculpture, Degas had a monotone colour scheme of browns, whites, and a tint of yellow ochre, unlike Manet and Afremov who used colours that stood out, and this was a way of delivering the emphasis.

{31}{10}{11}



{3}

Unlike both other art pieces, this Degas work was the only one with a 3-D form as it could be viewed from all angles whereas the other two artists used the elements of art to induce the illusion of the figures being 3-D instead.

{31}{10}{11}

This sculpture was the only work of my comparative study that enabled viewers to feel textures by sense and not only sight and I think this gave the sculpture a better quality delivering the emphasis more clearly to viewers.

{31}{10}{11}

Afremov was the only artist who used abstract strokes in his painting which was a contrast by itself with the realism of the dancing figures while both Degas and Manet's works were focused on realism shown through textures, colours, and proportions, and this in my opinion hints at the difference of time eras more than anything else.

{31}

Afremov, in this painting, mostly incorporated diagonal lines which showcased his focus on movement displayed in the dance unlike both other artists' use of line and this was to better support his emphasis, which deferred from the others..

{31}



# Comparing and contrasting formal analysis through the principles of art

Unlike both of the other art pieces, Degas was the only one who incorporated the rule of odds into his to create focus and satisfying balance in the painting, and I believe it was also a reference to the loneliness of the ballet dancer as previously explored while exploring the function and purpose of this art work, since choosing to sculpt the young dancer in her lonesome invoked a feeling in the viewers' eyes because children are usually found with adult supervision, and it doesn't quite feel right that she isn't which would evoke a feeling of empathy and maybe slight protectiveness. {31}



This sculpture like many of Degas' works has an asymmetrical balance since the sculpture is almost symmetrical had the outstretched leg mirrored the other, and he differed from Afremov and Manet in that as they both steered away from symmetrical figures. {31}{32}{29}

This is the only one of the three works in which a pattern was utilized since the yellow blotches covering the ground and were spread out onto the bluish floor created a sense of unkempt pattern, and this caused a kind of rhythm in the painting and was a source of balance unlike the other two works which had balance through different elements. {31}{32}

Studying these artworks, I see that all artists kept the figures in the art pieces with natural and accurate proportions allowing the movement of realism to mostly shine through, and I find this quite fascinating as the concept of dance, which is a common theme here, to me is magical and it's far from reality as it allows the dancer to be in a different world and time for a while, so the realistic movements present in these works actually contrast with the idea of dance. They were all also able to achieve balance in their works although each used the principles of art to their advantage differently.



This work was the only work that I studied in my comparative study that had hints of the impressionism movement with impressionistic strokes in the female's dress and background causing the proportions of the dancer figures to be the only thing that can be used to indicate proportion, and this in my opinion is because of its modernity as opposed to Degas and Manet's works, which portrays the works' different cultural backgrounds and how the idea of dance changed over the years where it was previously very traditional and well-practiced as opposed to how spontaneous and on the spot it is in our modern day. {29}{32}



Here, emphasis was on the majesty of the Russian waltz dance, through putting focus on the two figures, which were also centralized by using contrast and texture, and through incorporating elements that convey movement. {29}{31}

In this oil piece, movement was very clear as the use of horizontal and vertical lines helped in directing the viewers' eye through the painting starting from the dancer's back and ending over the curves of her dress till the corner of the piece, in addition to enhance the impressionistic background which wasn't present in either of the other artworks. {31}{32}

Like Afremov, Manet also painted the dancers in even numbers, although the even number of the dancers contrasted with the odd figures in the corners of the painting, and that is how focus on the dancers in the center was made, in addition to the contrast created by the use of dark and light colours. {32}



## Interpretation of function and purpose – The little fourteen year old dancer

A diary of a Parisian man called Edmond de Goncourt was obtained in which several entries about Degas were found. I find it very interesting as those entries were written in the 1870s, especially one that was dated back to 1874 where he says: "Yesterday I spent the whole day in the studio of a strange painter called Degas," "Out of all the subjects in modern life he has chosen washerwomen and ballet dancers . . . it is a world of pink and white . . . the most delightful of pretexts for using pale, soft tints."

At that time, Degas at the age of 39, started his long journey of painting and sketching ballerinas. {18} {19}{20}

"People call me the painter of dancing girls," Degas told an art dealer, "It has never occurred to them that my chief interest in dancers lies in rendering movement and painting pretty clothes." {18}

The girl who Degas sculpted in *The little fourteen year old dancer* was one of the poor young girls who strived to become an étoile (star) of ballet, Marie Van Goethem. She was one of Degas' neighbors who lived near his studio in the low class neighborhood. She was one of three sisters who were training to be ballerinas at a ballet school in France. Degas actually sketched them all at one point. According to Martine Kahane, a person knowledgeable with the history of the opera house in France, Marie was a very talented dancer and became part of the corps de ballet when she was 15 years of age, after Degas sculpted her. It was later discovered that her mother, Madame van Goethem was prostituting her daughters, and as a result of that Marie was dismissed from the ballet troupe because she was often late or absent from there. After that, Marie was never to be seen again. {18}{20}

Of the quote above, it can be felt how humble Degas was; always purposefully lessening what people thought of him. Degas at a point of time in his life joined the tradition of the use of pastels that was popular in France, after dreaming about becoming like Michelangelo and Raphael as a student. In his lifetime, Degas lived in a world where photography and electricity were present, as of Manet and Paul Cézanne who were artists of the same time frame, and thus Degas shifted focus onto more modern topics such as poor neighborhoods and brothels to practice sketching. He once mentioned Rembrandt in which he said that Rembrandt was lucky for painting Susanna at the bath, while he painted women "at the tub". Later on Degas stumbled upon the world of dance and ballet at the Palais Garnier, where some of the poorest young girls competed for spots of high importance on the stage; here, he invented new techniques in drawing and painting the world he found. While Cézanne emphasized landscape, Degas emphasized ballet for modern art. In our modern time, all of Degas' works of several medias of ballerinas were gathered for an exhibition titled "Degas and the dance". {18} {19}

Recently, Palais Garnier featured a new ballet performance, *La Petite Danseuse de Degas*, showcasing the story of the ballerina featured in Degas' work *The little fourteen year old dancer* aiming to show the world of ballet that enthralled Degas and urged him to paint it, and to capture the atmosphere in Degas' works. The choreography is like an act symbolizing Marie from the sculpture's life where in the ballet dance, a little dancer becomes a star of dancing and then is corrupted by an evil mother and goes to prison.

After that, there is a scene when the little dancer becomes a laundress with the stage being full of white blankets, as she fades. At the end of the ballet, the glass box (like the one the sculpture is held in) comes up from the ground and the little dancer becomes trapped inside.

{18}





## Interpretation of function and purpose – The Spanish ballet,

Edouard Manet didn't always aspire to become an artist. In fact, in his adolescence, being the son of an official in the French ministry, he had hopes of becoming an officer himself. His hopes didn't come true as he failed the training school's entrance exam a couple of times, and so he went to Paris in hopes of pursuing a career in the arts. He later submitted some of his works to salon juries which were exhibition houses in Paris and as time went on got awarded a salon's honorable mention for one of the works he submitted. At a certain point in time after that, his success ran thin as more than half of his submissions for the Salon of 1863 were rejected. By then he faced many hardships as an artist as he was criticized for many of his works.

{15}

Because of that, Napoleon the third created the salon of refuses where Manet then exhibited some of the rejected artworks such as *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* which was considered scandalous at that time because of its subject of a nude woman having a pleasant picnic with two fully clothed men, with a second nude woman bathed in a river. Critiques by then attacked Manet's style of painting as *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* was deemed a modified version of *Concert champêtre*, a work of Titan's.

{15}



{1}



After Manet faced the wrath of critics in Paris, he decided to travel to Spain, which was not very surprising because Manet already had been interested in the Spanish culture for years previously as he painted several paintings featuring Spanish singers and musicians where he used to dress people up in clothing resembling that of Spanish clothes and painted them. Here started his fascination with Spanish ballet, and the result was "*The Spanish ballet*"

{15}

In 1886, an article about Edouard Manet was written by Emile Zola, who showed interest in Manet's works. In his article, Zola defended Manet against the critics who were out for Manet's blood at that time. He also helped Manet the year after by setting up a private exhibition in which Manet was capable of exhibiting his works. Zola showcased Manet as "an artist of the future" in his article that was published in *La Revue du XXe siècle*, and later on Manet showed gratitude toward Zola by offering to paint his portrait, where it happened, and Manet painted Zola in his studio with items representing Zola's personality. The painting is now named *Emile Zola*.

{14}

"Insults are pouring down on me as thick as hail."

-Edouard Manet {15}

Edouard Manet and Degas were artists who existed within the same time era and even took part in the impressionism movement. In fact, they met once in 1859 while they were both copying paintings at the Louvre in France. Manet was friends and was acquainted with many different artists of the century such as Berthe Morisot and Claude Monet, although Manet and Monet's relationship wasn't ideal at first as there was a conflict and misunderstanding between them which was that Manet thought that Monet was copying his style of painting in "despicable pastiches", and that his signature was close to Manet's, but later on the misunderstanding was cleared and both became very close.

{15}{14}





## Interpretation of function and purpose – Waltz,

“Waltz” was painted by Afremov as a tribute to ‘the rhythm of love’ as he stated, where Afremov believed that a dance can tell about the relationship between a couple, and that it is capable of uniting them as they devote themselves to it. He has a specific fascination with the Waltz as it’s the first dance that couples choose as husband and wife, since it’s a dance that’s not as passionate as salsa, and instead shows tenderness and compassion. That is also because Waltz is slow and because that is it’s reason for being so beautiful, with it’s delicate and romantic melody. Afremov also appreciated that Waltz came from the renaissance period, where a person needed to put a lot of effort in training for the dances.

{35}

Not many articles can be found about Afremov. In fact, not more than a couple of lines could be found. I find myself admiring that because it isn’t the result of not being famous or skilled, but because of his care for art and not any other side interest. He is a fairly modern artist and that shows through his paintings which are full of vibrant colours. Due to his upbringing in the Vitebsk Art School founded by Mark Chagall, he was able to come up with his own style of painting consisting of palette knife use and the most energetic colours of oils. This shows within his painting Waltz with it’s vibrant and captivating aura capturing the essence of the Waltz dance perfectly.

{34}



“I tried different techniques during my career, but I especially fell in love with painting with oil and palette-knife. Every artwork is the result of a long painting process; every canvas is born during the creative search; every painting is full of my inner world.”

-Leonid Afremov {35}

In regards to the purposes of each painting of my comparative study, each was very different in it’s own way. While Afremov was fascinated by the dance itself with no to little affection casted towards the figures in the painting, Degas had a very deep connection to the girl (Marie) in *the little fourteen year old dancer* with him creating the sculpture as a tribute to her hard work next to her being a model in addition to him finding what was missing in his life within the world of Ballet and Ballerinas.

Manet on the other hand, similarly to Degas, was also fascinated with the poise of the members of the troupe he went to watch, although he unlike Degas was interested in the Spanish culture in general which showed through his several painting of different models posed with Spanish clothing and props. He also was propelled into the world of arts as opposed to Afremov and Degas willingly entering it although no traces of that peek through his artworks. In conclusion, I admire every single artist of this comparative study as I was positively astonished and motivated with all of their reasons for creating their artworks, and although every one of them had a different motive and muse, they all were able to create amazing works of art showing different parts of different cultures and dances.



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