

Critique Form

Description:

Berthe Morisot. *In a Villa at the Seaside*. 1874. Oil on canvas.

Berthe Morisot depicts a quiet and relaxed moment shared between a mother and a child at the seaside.

Analysis:

Morisot uses various techniques to portray a relaxed moment while vacationing. She uses a public setting, the seaside, as her background; however the foreground of the painting depicts seclusion. The vertical placement of the free formed woman and child help to create a sense of depth. The overlapping of the woman's shape and the size of the child create depth and space. The juxtaposition of the foreground and the background help to create the illusion of privacy in a public setting. The contrast between the cool blue green water and the sharp rigid lines of the veranda give a sense of separation. Our eye level is immediately drawn to the point where the vertical line of the veranda meets the horizon, focusing our attention on the busy seascape. Morisot's use of organic shapes gives the painting a very relaxed and informal feeling, almost whimsical. Motion is created through the white trim of the woman's dark skirt, and the parallel lines in the gauzy white curtain, as well as the white caps of the waves. To create balance, she places a bowl of bright red apples on the veranda. The bright red of the apples is complementary to the blue greens of the sea. The vague shapes, the play of light, the organic lines, and her color choices help to create an informal but striking composition.

Craftsmanship (technique, medium, etc):

Morisot uses a traditional medium of oil on canvas to forever capture a serene moment while vacationing by the sea. Transcending the traditional, her use of bright colors and quick brush strokes set her work apart from the customary artists of the time.

Historical Precedence:

Morisot, an impressionist artist, works quickly to capture an ordinary moment shared while on vacation. Her quick brush strokes and the use of bright colors are in vivid contrast to the somber colors of traditional artists. Her focus is on a public setting, rather than a historical event.

Interpretation:

In a Villa at the Seaside can be enjoyed by anyone as it depicts a quiet and serene moment while vacationing. This purpose of the painting was to capture an exact moment in time, precisely how the artist perceived it. Morisot communicated a relaxed, informal, and serene setting. She did this through color choice, organic lines, and use of white light.