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### Visual encyclopedia of art history

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Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Visual Encyclopedia of Art History

by

Danielle D. Goueta

July 10, 1996

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Date: 7/9/96

Mary Ann Begland, Chair  
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Date: July 9, 1996

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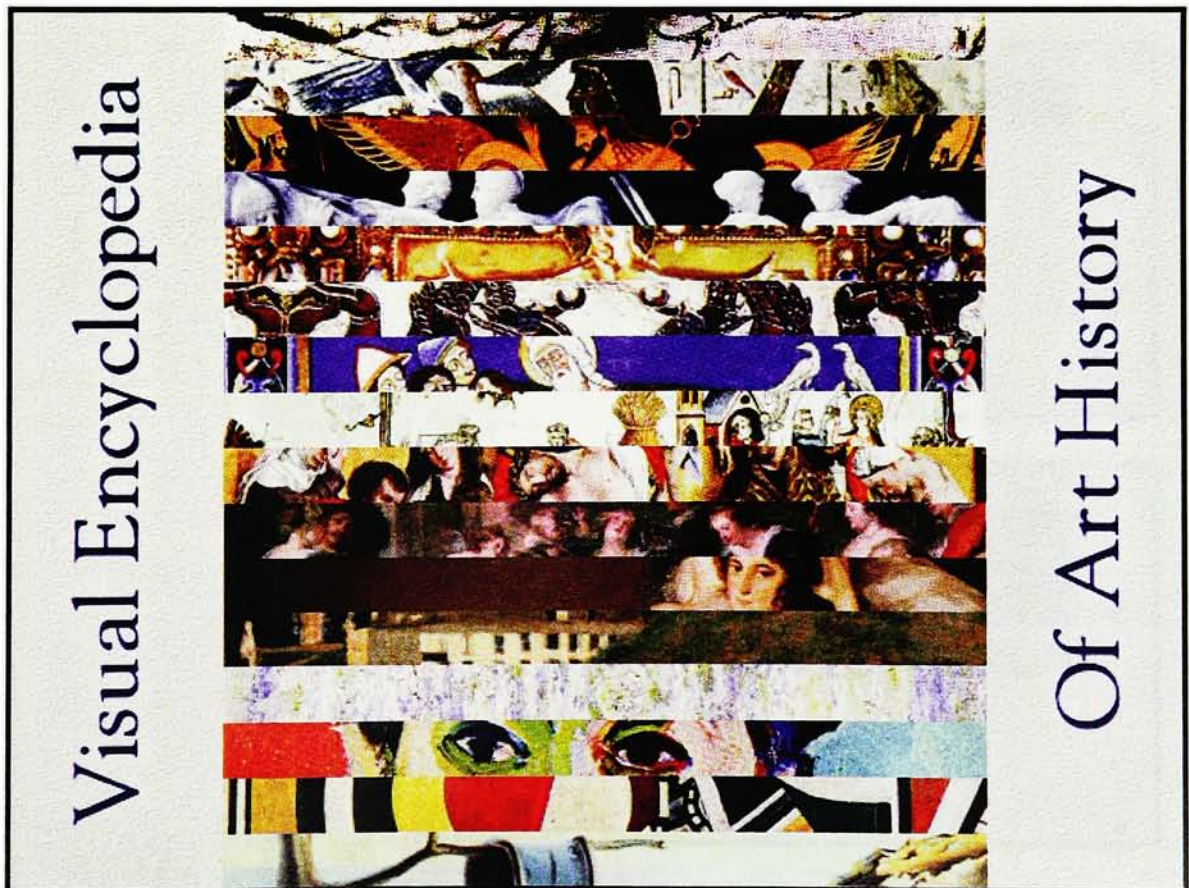
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## Introduction:

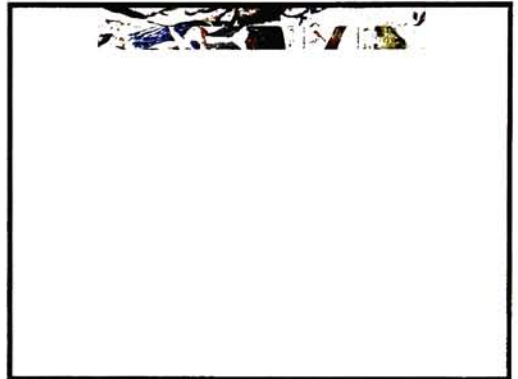
The purpose of this thesis was to respond to a request from Professor Sidonie Merkel Roepke. I worked closely with her in developing an interactive Visual Encyclopedia of Art History, with menus for five different topics: General Styles, Specific Styles, Biography, Artwork and Dictionary menus. This encyclopedia has been designed as a comprehensive guide of art history styles, artists and their artworks, along with a dictionary featuring visual examples, appropriate representation of terms in American Sign Language, pronunciation of terms, styles and artists' names.

This program is created for a variety of users, from the novice to the expert. Users can browse through the encyclopedia and find information in a variety of topics which will help them gain a better understanding of terminology through this multimedia approach. This in-house educational program allows students (primarily students who are deaf) who go to Professor Sidonie Merkel Roepke for assistance in tutoring to develop a complex art history vocabulary. This project offers flexibility and is user friendly.

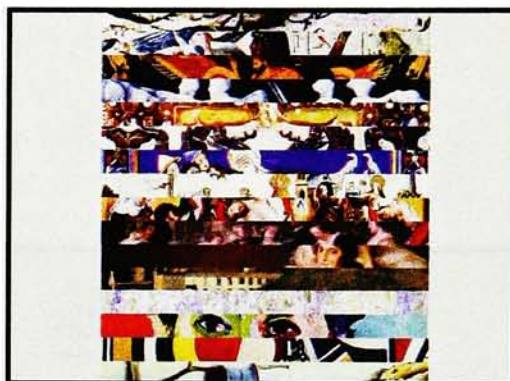


# Visual Encyclopedia of Art History:

The illustrations on the right were designed for the introduction section. The cropped images shown vertically represents a series of art history styles through an animated sequence, from prehistoric to modern times. Music is played throughout the introduction.







As the music fades out, a brief description about the Visual Encyclopedia of Art History is being displayed.

*The Visual Encyclopedia of Art History* has been designed as a comprehensive guide of art history styles, artists and their artworks, along with a dictionary featuring visual examples, appropriate representation of terms in American Sign Language, pronunciation of terms, styles and artists' names. This multimedia encyclopedia is created for a variety of users, from the novice to the expert.

Enjoy your journey through the art historical past.

This is followed by a simple click on the mouse or the keyboard which move to the next the frame.

A timeline of styles from prehistoric to modern times welcomes the user to browse. Clicking on a specific time period, a style timeline will appear with artists' works. Choose an artist and explore.

Each screen provides the user with a variety of options to access at any point during the exploration, including: timeline, history, styles, dictionary, biography and artworks.

Words in italics can be clicked on, taking the user directly to the dictionary for a complete description with visual examples.

Consult the HELP button for specific information on how to use each menu.

Again, a click on the mouse or the keyboard will prompt to the next screen. A brief statement below gives instructions before going into the General Styles Timeline menu.

#### GENERAL STYLES TIMELINE

Move the cursor to the arrow on the far left to scroll the screen dating back to prehistoric time period.

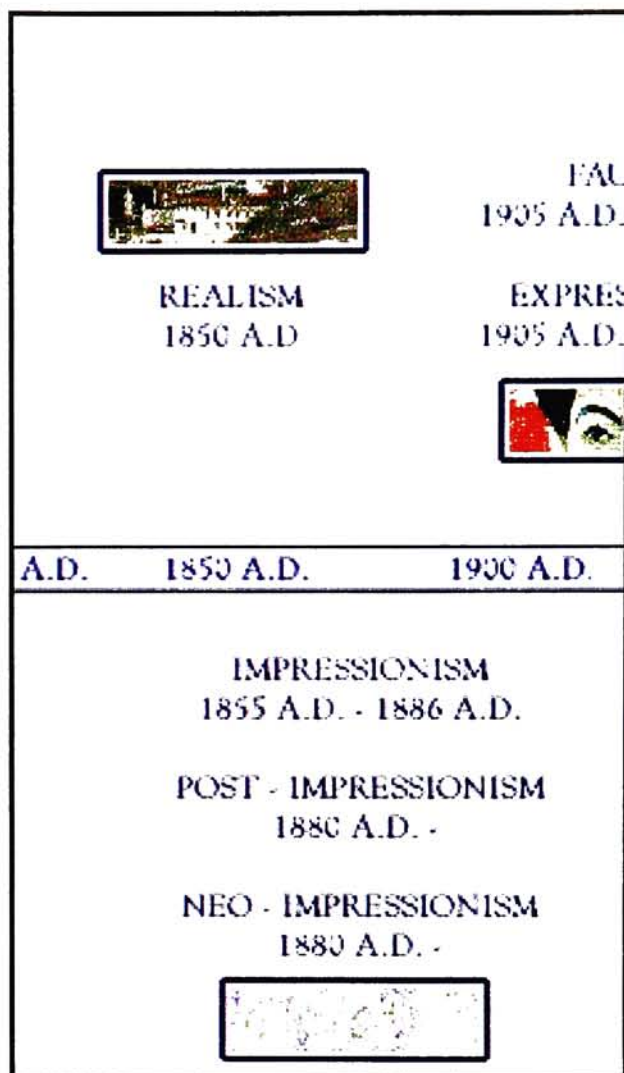
Move the cursor to the arrow on the far right to scroll the screen to advance toward the modern time period.

Click on any image to go to a specific style.

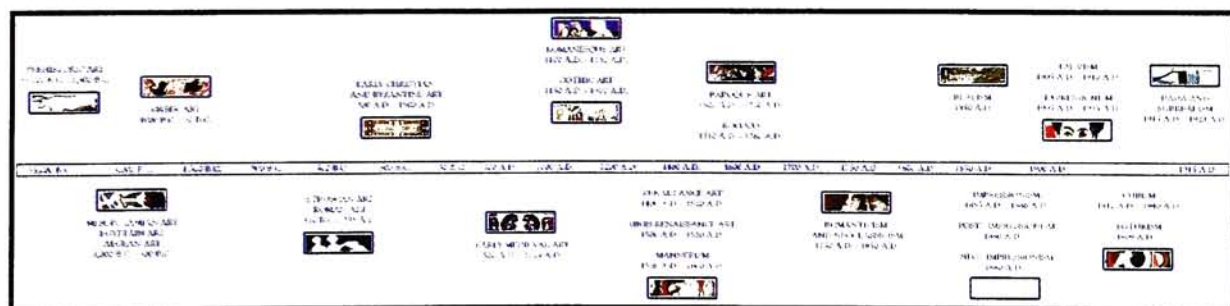


## General Styles Menu:

The General Styles Timeline menu consists a timeline with the art history styles. Users can easily move the cursor to the far left or right of the timeline. As the cursor touches the far right or left of the screen, it will immediately change to a transparent arrow. This indicates the scrolling part is in working order. On the timeline, the cropped images for every style shown are represented as icons. To browse, the user can click on any icon. For example, clicking on Impressionism icon will go to an animated introduction of Impressionism before going to the Age of Impressionism timeline.

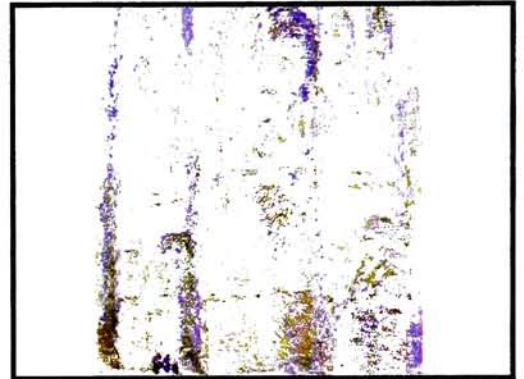
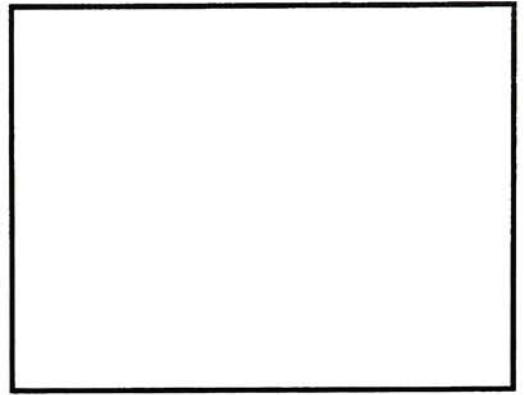


The style timeline in close-up view.



The style timeline in full view.

Brahms music is played through the animated sequence of Impressionism. The music was picked out specifically because Johannes Brahms, a composer (1833 - 1897) was from that style period.



IMPRESSIONISM



IMPRESSIONISM

IMPRESSIONISM

IMPRESSIONISM

IMPRESSIONISM  
*and its artists...*

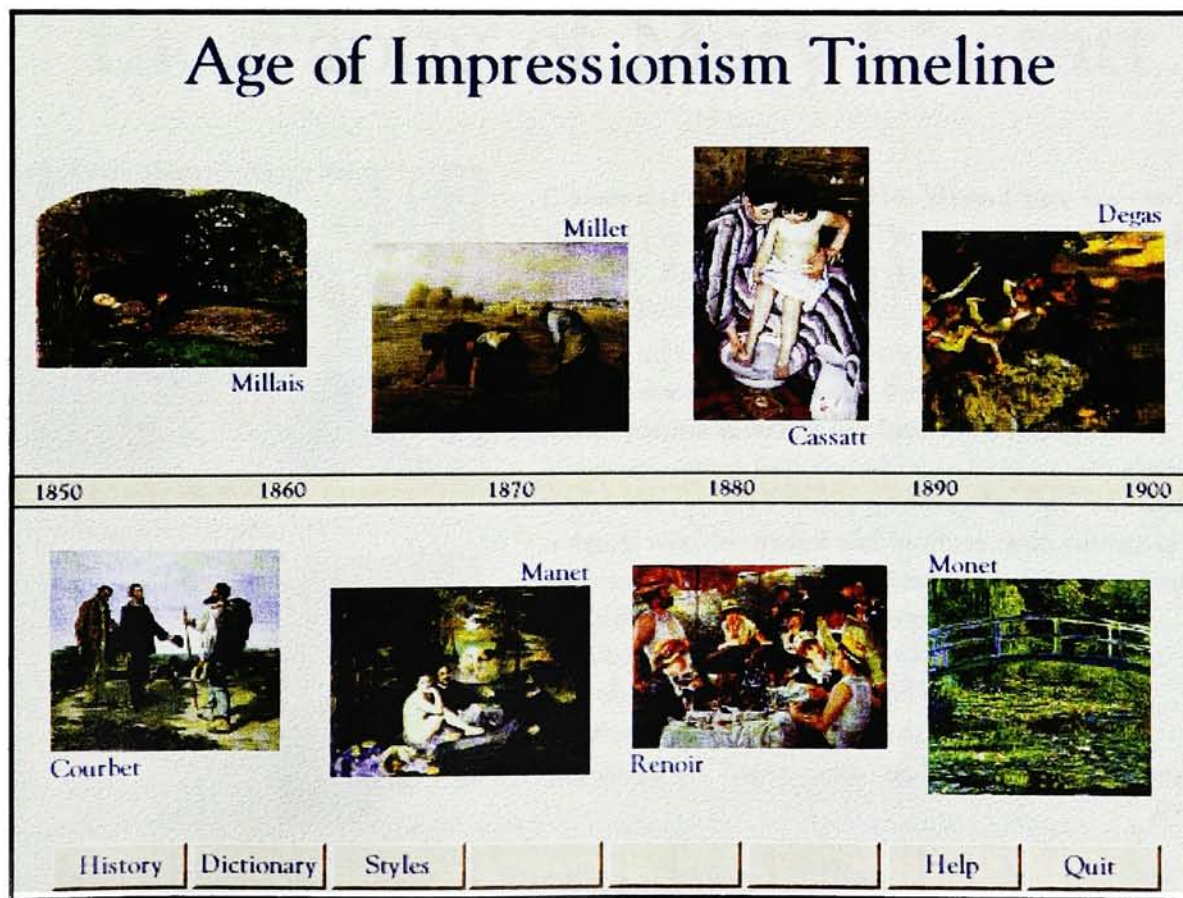
## Specific Styles Menu:

The illustration below is the style timeline for Impressionism with the artists' work. Normally, the artists' names are hidden. When the cursor is moved over the images, the name pops up. This is called a rollover.

Users can click on any image to see the artist's biography and their artworks. The History button is only visible under the style timeline section. When it is clicked on, the Timeline button will appear. This simple navigation will help the user remember the last screen, the style timeline (Age of Impressionism timeline, for example) to avoid confusion.

The Dictionary button is available. The user may also click on words in italics taking them directly to the dictionary for a complete description with visual examples.

The Styles button is also available. At any time, the user wants to change a style period, they can go to the Styles button. The navigation is very simple and straightforward. This will encourage users to enjoy the use of interactive multimedia and not feel frustrated or afraid to try new things that technology has to offer.





## Biography Menu:

As the user clicks down on one of the artists' paintings, the image changes to black and white momentarily before going into the biography section. Notice the Artworks button on the biography menu below. This will take the user to the artworks menu where a gallery of the artist's works is displayed. The same routine is applied to the Artworks and Biography buttons being swapped back and forth when clicked on. The user can click on the Next/Previous buttons to move through the pages as if it were a book.

On page 11 is diagram of the Artworks menu. Like the Age of Impressionism timeline menu, the user can move the cursor over the painting and the title pops up. Clicking on the painting will prompt the user to go to the specific artwork screen, giving a more detailed description of the painting. An illustration of a specific artwork screen is also shown on page 11.

# Biography of Mary Cassatt



Mother and Baby, 1880  
Pastel on paper, 16 1/2" x 24"



Self-Portrait

Cassatt and Degas met in 1874. When Degas saw the work of Cassatt he stated: "There is a person who feels as I do". Beginning in 1879 the two artists worked in close collaboration.

Cassatt never married, yet a majority of her work centers around the theme of maternity. Most often works portray scenes of her family and friends. Victorian women were forbidden to be in a room alone with a man except a family member, thus her only male subjects were her father and brothers, with rumors of a painting of Degas which she destroyed. Cassatt's deep sympathy for her hallmark images of mothers and children are shown naturally with realistic gesturing, sharing embraces, caresses, and kisses. In a review of artwork exhibited by Cassatt, a critic wrote describing her Impressionist style: "Like her brothers

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# Artworks of Mary Cassatt



Au théâtre, 1879



Five O' Clock Tea, 1880



Young Woman in Black, 1880



Children on the Beach, 1884



Baby Reaching for an Apple, 1893



Mother and Baby, 1880



The Bath, 1891



The Garden, 1880

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[Dictionary](#)

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[Biography](#)

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## MARY CASSATT

(1844-1926)

BABY REACHING FOR AN APPLE

39 1/2" X 25 3/4"

While her art became increasingly devoted to the maternal theme, by the mid-1880's, Cassatt, along with many of her French Impressionist colleagues, was moving away from the dissolution of *form* in terms of loose, colored *brushwork* and began to reemphasize a strong concern for emphatic design. The direction in her painting was fostered also by her greater awareness of and fascination with the principles of Japanese art, especially after she attended an enormous exhibition of ukiyo-e prints held at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in April of 1890, which led her, in her subsequent oils and graphics, to emphasize strong outlines, flat areas of color, and spatial compression. Without sacrificing her interest in presenting the figure out-of-doors in bright and rich sunlight, these qualities were abundantly



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[Timeline](#)

[Dictionary](#)

[Styles](#)

[Artworks](#)

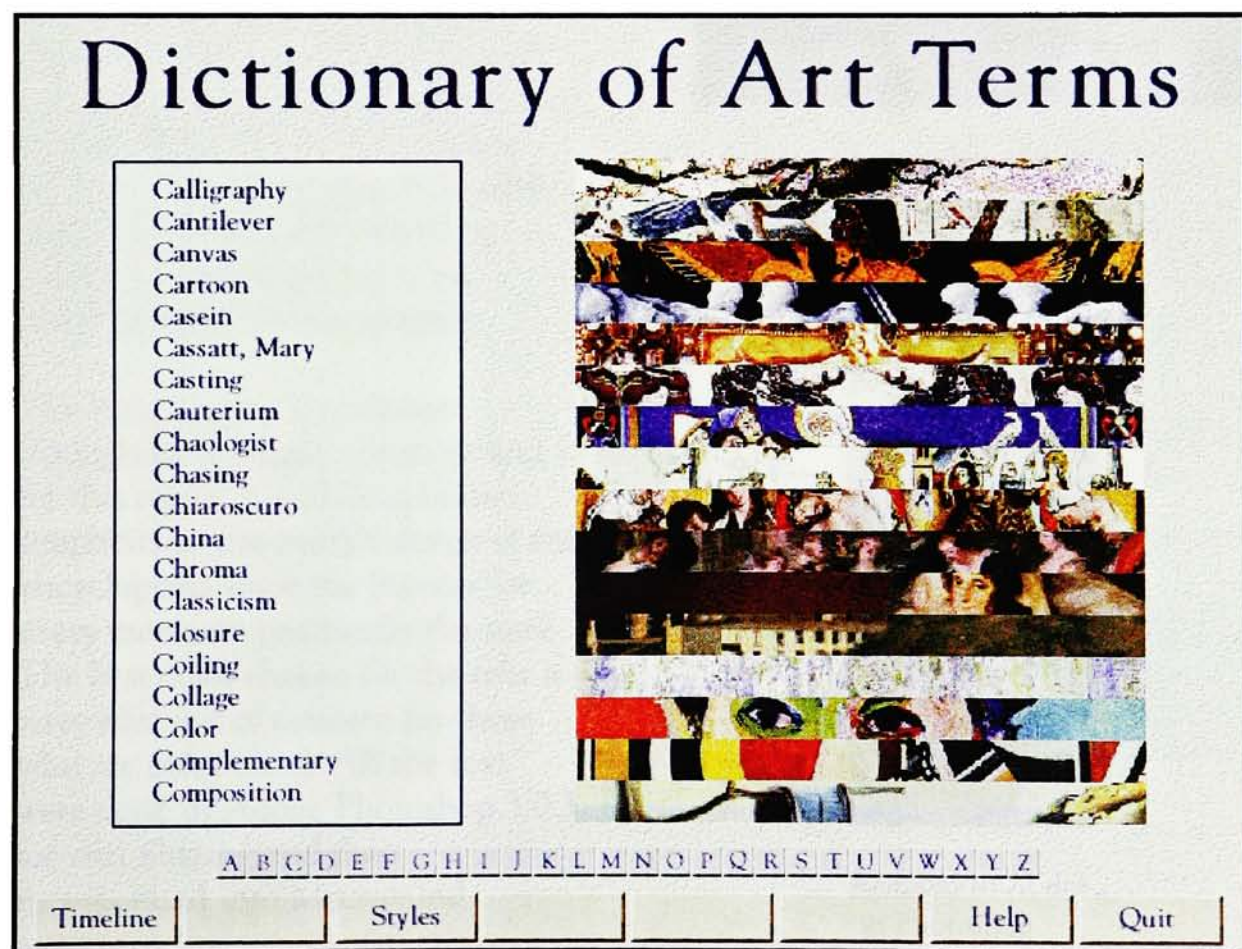
[Next](#)

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[Quit](#)

## Dictionary Menu:

The Dictionary button takes the user to The Dictionary of Art Terms shown below. The illustration on the far right is from the Visual Encyclopedia of Art History introduction. Clicking on alphabetical letters shows a wide variety of art words. A simple click on a word will prompt the user to go to a specific word with a definition and demonstrating visual examples including sign language and pronunciation features.





## Software Programs:

Several computer software packages were used to make this thesis a success. The software programs were Macromedia Director 4.0.4, Adobe Photoshop 3.0.3, Avid Videoshop 3.0, and Soundedit 16.

Adobe Photoshop 3.0.3 was used to scan the images into the computer. It was the most time consuming aspect of the entire production. All images were scanned using a Mustek color flatbed scanner (MFC-600S) at 150 dots per inch (dpi) for smoother resolution and then resized at 72 dpi to match the screen's dpi which is 72 dpi. Images were then cropped, adjusted for brightness/contrast. Color was reduced from RGB mode to indexed color mode to save space in disk. After all the adjustments were made in Photoshop 3.0.3, the images were then transferred to Macromind Director 4.0.4, an interactive/animation program.

The font, Goudy is consistent throughout the entire program and for this report. Goudy emphasizes simplicity to the overall design of the encyclopedia since the formats for every menu are practically the same. The best color chosen for the text is navy blue out of concern for those who are color blind. All the text were done in Adobe Photoshop 3.0.3 for anti-aliasing and then incorporated into Macromind



Scanned at 150 dpi

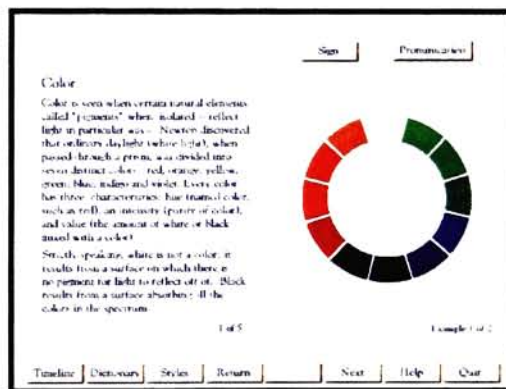


Reduced to 72 dpi  
in Photoshop

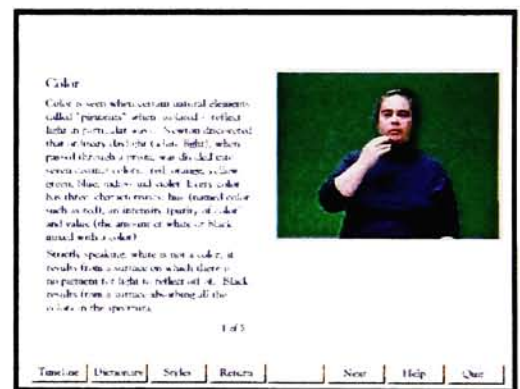
Director 4.0.4 later. Titles were set in 36 points and the text for description at 14 points with the leading (vertical spacing of lines in a paragraph) at 17 points. This makes it easier for the user to read comfortably spaced sentences.

Another aspect of this production was making digital movies. A sign language interpreter was used to do this segment. It was videotaped using a camcorder. The tape was then transferred from the VCR which was hooked up to the computer (Power Macintosh 7500/100) with A/V capabilities to be digitized.

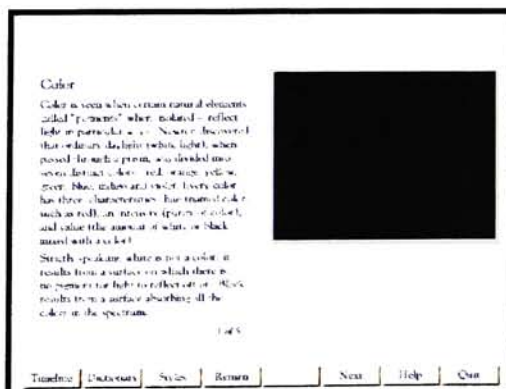
Avid Videoshop was used to edit the movies. Each movie was 20 to 30 seconds long depending on the length of the terminology represented. The video was set to 320 x 240 pixels since this helps enhance the visibility of the video. A compressor in Avid Videoshop was chosen in Cinepak because it keeps the file size smaller and to run smoother. Quicktime format is used to save the video before transferring to Macromind Director 4.0.4 since it can only read this format. A black background with a fade in and out filter is used for the beginning and ending of the movie.



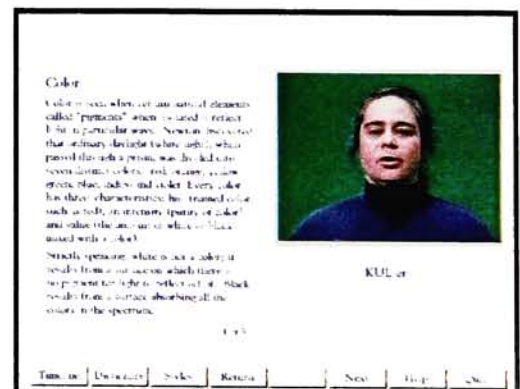
This is the color term screen. Clicking on sign or pronunciation button goes to the video shown below.



Interpreter is doing the sign for color.



This is where the video comes up with a black background.

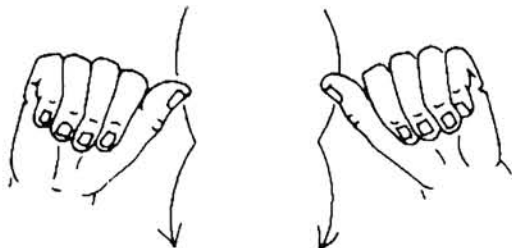


Interpreter is saying the pronunciation for color.



## Signs/Pronunciation:

Since this project focuses on art history, art signs can be confusing with the signs that are not related to art because words can have more

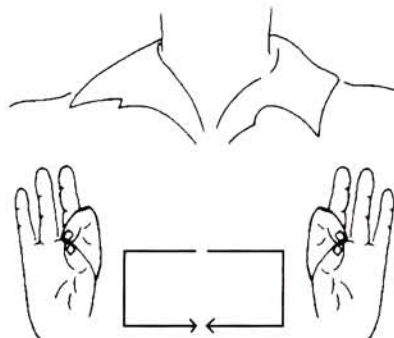


Form (noun)

Trace an imaginary form (shape) in front of you with the "A" hands.

The primary audience are deaf students, interested in art history, and pronunciation of vocabulary words can be confusing for them. Included in this project are phonetics to help with pronunciation. Phonetics is a study of speech sounds and their production, classification, and transcription. During the

than one definition. It is important for the deaf user, fluent in sign language, know the appropriate signs.



Form (verb)

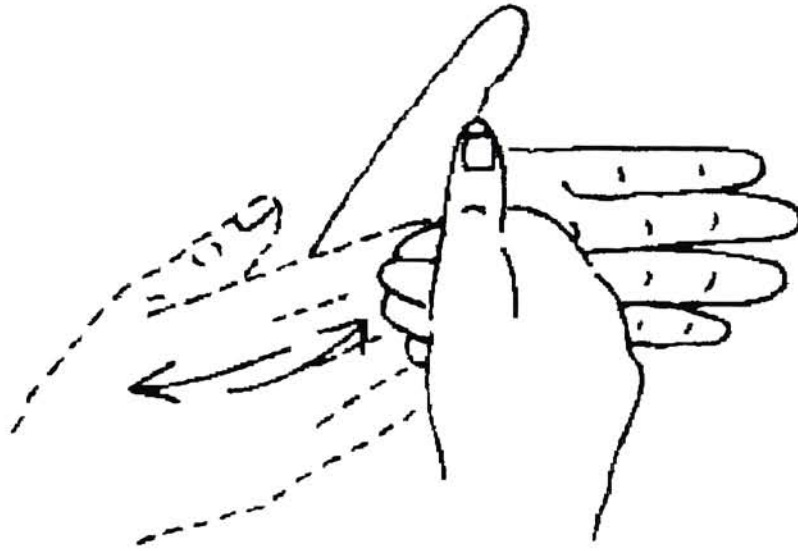
Trace an imaginary document in front of you with the "F" hands.

pronunciation stage, phonetics is shown under the video. This enables the user, especially hearing impaired, to pronounce the word more effectively than diacritical markings that are found in dictionaries for pronunciation purposes. Comparison between phonetics and diacritical markings are shown below.

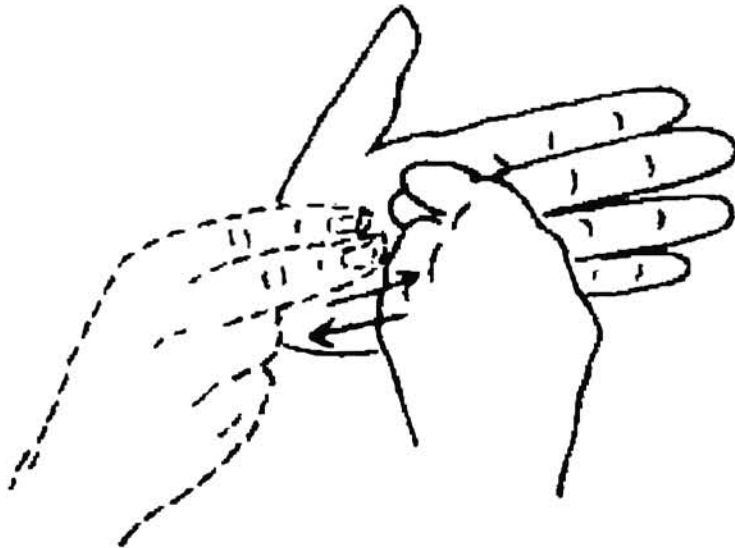
<u>Word</u>	<u>Phonetics</u>	<u>Diacritical Markings</u>
Brushwork	BR-UH-SH werk	brush <u>h</u> wûrk
Color	KUL er	kul' ə r
Composition	kahm pah-ZISHun	kom'p ə zish' ə n
Form	FORm	fôrm
Impressionism	im PRES shun-iz um	im pres <u>h</u> ' ə niz' ə m



# Brushwork



**Or**



Using the fingertips of the right open hand as a brush, draw them back and forth across the left palm hand. Or, use two fingers if indicating with a smaller brush.

# Color



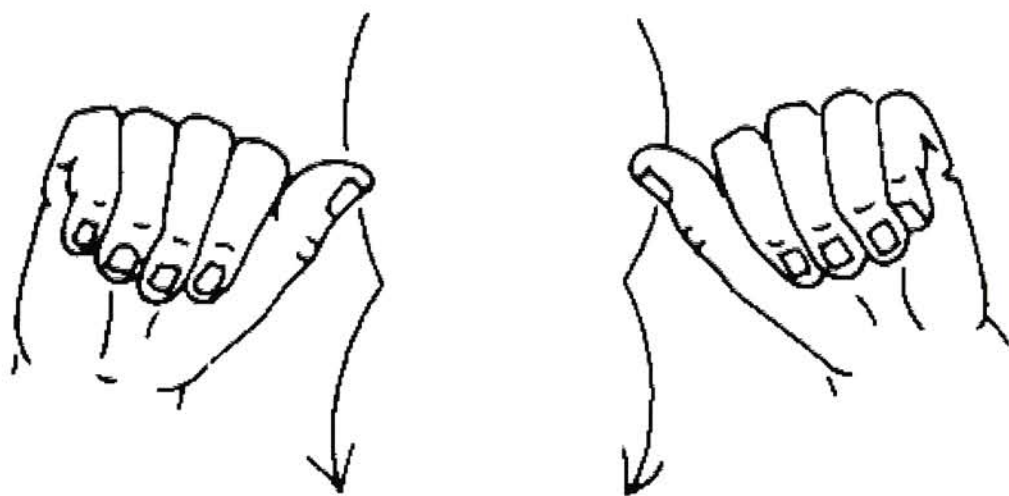
Place the “FIVE” hand in front of the mouth and wiggle the fingers as the hand moves away very slightly.

# Composition



Place both “C” hands in front of you, palms up; move both hands downward in a curvature motion.

# Form



Trace an imaginary form in front of you with the “A” hands.

# Impressionism



I



M



P



R



E



S



S



I



O



N



I



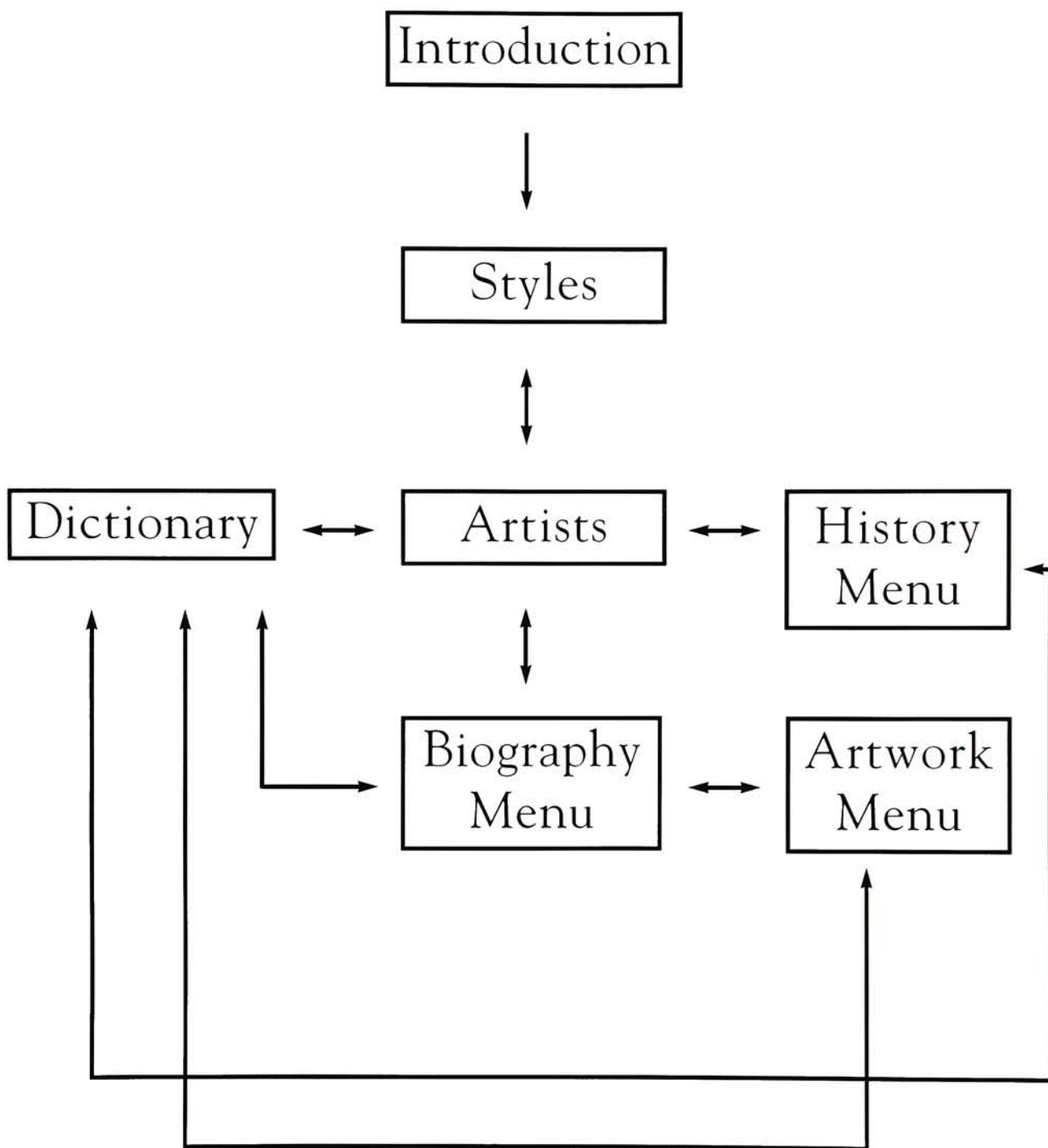
S



M

The word, Impressionism is  
done by fingerspelling.





## Conclusion:

Computer Graphics is the future. It was not too long ago, when it was first introduced. Computer Graphics has been a tremendous advantage to the graphic industry because of its ability to provide us with endless possibilities. The role it plays is very broad. There are numerous applications to learn. Designers can go into different directions such as interactive multimedia, animation, art, photography and electronic publishing.

The overall purpose of this thesis was to learn about interactive multimedia and its possibilities. The final project was satisfactorily completed. I can say that from this thesis, I have become more aware and knowledgeable. This project has been a tremendous advantage to my learning in that area. I am happy to have chosen to be in the field of Computer Graphics. I can pursue my goals in learning new applications that I find challenging and fun and would highly recommend to anyone interested in Computer Graphics or Interactive Media to go to RIT.

I feel my work will reflect a whole new beginning for people who have no experience or familiarity with computers. I love making interactive educational programs and hope that it will enable people to feel comfortable and know learning new things can be fun.

## Acknowledgements:

Special thanks to Professor Robert P. Keough and Professor James C. Ver Hague for their tremendous technical expertise, sharing of their knowledge, great support and sense of humor.

Thanks to my Associate advisor, Professor Jack Slutzky for seeding the idea for this project.

A great debt and admiration to my client and mentor, Professor Sidonie Merkel Roepke for her timeless efforts and encouragement for making this project a reality. Her inspiration and guidance were crucial to the completion of my work.

Thank you to Joy P. Duskin for her assistance with sign production and word pronunciation.

And thank you to Scott P. Leone for his assistance with the sound production.

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The Editors of The Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco. The New Painting: Impressionism 1874 - 1886. Switzerland: Richard Burton, 1986.

## Musical Scores:

Brahms, Allegretto grazioso. Symphony no. 3 in F Major, Op. 90.