

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Edges of Atmosphere: Color Boundaries in Impressionist Landscape

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Abstract

Impressionist landscapes are commonly described as atmospheric, yet that label can obscure the pictorial decisions through which land, water, sky, and weather remain spatially related. This article asks how color boundaries create atmosphere without dissolving form. It compares public-domain landscapes by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, and Alfred Sisley through close analysis of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated sites. The readings indicate that soft edges can intensify spatial relation rather than weaken it; reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky; and repeated sites make weather an analytical variable of pictorial construction. These findings locate atmosphere in relations among boundaries, reflections, and serial variation rather than in generalized softness. The article contributes an object-led account of color boundaries while distinguishing visible evidence from claims about intention or reception and acknowledging that the generic artwork entries, missing collection data, and unspecified reproductions prevent object-level and image-level verification.

Keywords: Impressionism; landscape; color boundary; atmosphere; serial painting; visual perception

1 Introduction

The visual and performance reading developed here explores how Impressionist landscapes make uncertain boundaries carry spatial and environmental meaning. Its corpus comprises public-domain landscape paintings by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, and Alfred Sisley. The central claim is that soft edges can intensify spatial interaction rather than dissolve form. That proposition has force because environmental perception in painting emerges through boundary management rather than through isolated color patches. Attention therefore falls on horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs.

The analytical problem is intentionally narrower than a general history of atmospheric boundary. Within these works, color boundaries are assessed through horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs. Its definition changes only when those features alter the interpretation.

Three results give the discussion its structure. First, soft edges can intensify spatial link rather than dissolve form. Second, reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky.

Third, repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction. Collectively, the findings establish that atmospheric boundary is neither a decorative effect nor a label attached after interpretation. The argument remains proportionate to the selection.

Accordingly, the guiding question is: How do Impressionist color boundaries produce atmospheric depth while retaining spatial relation? The objective is to answer it by comparing horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated sites across public-domain landscapes by Monet, Pissarro, Morisot, and Sisley. The article argues that atmosphere is constructed through relational boundaries: softness can intensify spatial connection, reflection links zones, and serial variation makes weather formally legible. The contribution is to replace a generalized atmospheric label with a set of observable pictorial relations. The sections that follow establish the critical context, define the corpus and method, test the topic-specific propositions, discuss their combined implications, state the evidentiary limits and future research needs, and conclude by answering the question.

The analysis of atmospheric boundaries is grounded in historically specific

studies of Impressionist practice. House shows how Monet's pictorial construction transforms observed nature through selection and series [1]. Smith relates Impressionist surfaces to the social and material conditions that conventional accounts of optical spontaneity can obscure [2].

2 Color Boundaries in Impressionist Landscape

The selected works include *Selected Landscapes* by Claude Monet [3], Camille Pissarro [4], Berthe Morisot [5], and Alfred Sisley [6]. The analytical framework brings together theories of visual perception, narration, performance, and spectatorship. Arnheim's account of visual perception supports the analysis of relational form rather than isolated motifs [7]. Bordwell's theory of narration provides a comparative vocabulary for examining ordered visual information without treating still images as films [8]. Schechner's performance vocabulary clarifies how spectatorship may be organized as an event [9], while Rancière's account positions viewers as active interpreters [10]. Fischer-Lichte's performance theory is used comparatively to frame processes of transformation and response rather than as evidence of historical reception [11].

The research problem in *Edges of Atmosphere* has two parts. The descriptive

part asks where horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs enter the selected works and how their placement changes. The interpretive part asks why those changes require the vocabulary of color boundaries rather than a simpler account based on convention, chronology, or genre. Keeping the two parts separate prevents the conclusion from being built into the description. It also clarifies the article's novelty: the new contribution must lie in the explanatory connection, not in the mere presence of the chosen material.

In this article, color boundaries do not name a mood, topic, or value detached from form. It names the interaction among preparation, allocation, and revision. Preparation concerns the expectation built around horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs; allocation concerns who or what can act on that expectation; revision concerns the ensuing event that changes its status. The definition is intentionally operational. It tells the reader what evidence would support the term, what evidence would weaken it, and why the three findings belong to one argument rather than three parallel themes.

The primary corpus is public-domain landscape paintings by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Berthe Morisot, and Alfred Sisley. The sample is comparative and concept-driven rather than statistically representative. Each item offers a distinct configuration of atmospheric boundary and permits comparison through the common unit of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs.

The research design uses comparative visual analysis that distinguishes observable color relations from claims dependent on conservation or display conditions.

The comparison begins where color boundaries become traceable—in horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs. The method records position, recurrence, interruption, and effect before assigning interpretive weight. That order carries weight for the object-based inquiry: a repeated feature may retain its appearance while changing function, whereas a single event at a boundary may redirect the whole sequence. The critical vocabulary is drawn only from scholarship that bears on the named structural problem. Claims about intention, reception, or prevalence are

withheld unless the cited sources supply that evidence.

Source control is integral to the claim about color boundaries. Differences among editions, transcriptions, reproductions, restorations, recordings, or performance documents can alter the very feature being compared. The article therefore treats the version named in each reference as part of the evidence. Where the supplied bibliography does not yet identify that version precisely, the interpretation is provisional at that point; it cannot support a locator-dependent assertion until the author checks the consulted source.

3 Soft edges can intensify spatial relation rather than dissolve form

The opening analytical pattern can be stated directly: soft edges can intensify spatial interaction rather than dissolve form. This temporal dimension is essential. The finding therefore concerns organization, not inventory.

The resulting form is recursive. Interpretation advances, but it also returns to revise what seemed settled. This recursive quality explains why atmospheric boundary can remain coherent without becoming predictable.

The first proposition is strongest where horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs do more than recur. To count as support for the claim that soft edges can intensify spatial connection rather than dissolve form, an occurrence must be prepared by an initial expectation and must alter the consequence of what follows. Edges of Atmosphere therefore reads recurrence with placement: identical words, sonorities, shapes, gestures, or interface elements may carry different force when their structural position changes. This criterion keeps color boundaries tied to sequence instead of treating visibility alone as proof.

4 Reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky

The next result proposes that reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky. This pattern shifts analysis from isolated form toward distribution. The selection repeatedly makes such allocation perceptible.

The second proposition asks who or what receives the force identified in the first. If reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky, then position is inseparable from access: a voice,

instrument, figure, object, space, or interface option matters partly because it can initiate, interrupt, answer, or withhold. Edges of Atmosphere traces this allocation through horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs. The resulting hierarchy is not assumed in advance; it is inferred from the capacity to redirect subsequent action or interpretation, including cases where peripheral placement proves more consequential than structural centrality.

The initial case is Claude Monet's *Selected Landscapes*. The reading tests the proposition that soft edges can intensify spatial link rather than dissolve form by restricting attention to horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs. It then identifies which surrounding relations are necessary for that account.

In Claude Monet's *Selected Landscapes*, the proposition that soft edges can intensify spatial link rather than dissolve form is evaluated through placement, not keyword recurrence. The reading asks what prepares each occurrence of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs, which agent or compositional layer controls it, and what consequence follows. A detail counts as evidence only when its surrounding sequence changes the available judgment. This restriction prevents the case from being reduced to an example chosen after the thesis was formed.

A close reading of Claude Monet's *Selected Landscapes* must therefore document the first relevant occurrence of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs, the expectation active at that moment, and the effect that distinguishes it from background recurrence. The case supports Edges of Atmosphere only if those three points can be located in the consulted version. A general parallel to the other cases is not enough; the segment must show why the proposition about color boundaries is called for to explain its organization.

The following case, Camille Pissarro's *Selected Landscapes*, tests the distributive dimension of the argument. Here the governing question is whether reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky. This is not read as a defect in reliability.

The case drawn from Camille Pissarro's *Selected Landscapes* changes the scale of comparison. Here color boundaries are read through the distribution

of access, emphasis, and response among works and documents. The relevant question is not whether the same surface feature returns, but whether its return gives a different participant, voice, register, or position the capacity to redirect interpretation. That distributive test supplies the pressure behind the claim that reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky.

For Camille Pissarro's *Selected Landscapes*, the principal counter-reading treats the observed distribution as a genre convention with no special bearing on color boundaries. The article answers only at the level of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs: it asks whether a transfer of access or emphasis produces a later effect that convention alone leaves unexplained. If it does not, the second proposition recedes. If it does, the case clarifies how compositional hierarchy becomes an event rather than a static arrangement.

The third work examined is Berthe Morisot's *Selected Landscapes* and gives priority to revision over initial recognition. The interpretive test is whether repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction.

The value of Berthe Morisot's *Selected Landscapes* is retrospective. Following passages are reread against the first account of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs, allowing the article to distinguish repetition from revision. If the following event merely restates the prior one, the proposition that repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction receives little support. If it changes the status of what the reader, listener, or viewer already encountered, the case reveals how color boundaries acquires formal memory.

Verification in Berthe Morisot's *Selected Landscapes* depends on two locators: one for the initial treatment of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs and one for the moment that alters its status. The interval between them is analytically important because it determines what can be remembered, anticipated, or misrecognized. Recording both locations prevents the following reading from being projected backward as if it had been available from the start, and it gives the claim about color boundaries a visible temporal basis.

The fourth work, Alfred Sisley's *Selected Landscapes*, functions as a resis-

tant comparison.

Alfred Sisley's *Selected Landscapes* remains in the selection because it resists easy synthesis. Its treatment of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs tests how far the claim that soft edges can intensify spatial link rather than dissolve form can travel before medium, genre, or historical circumstance demands qualification. The comparison does not convert resistance into confirmation. It records which part of the proposition holds, which part recedes, and which further source would be called for to adjudicate between rival explanations.

The resistant role of Alfred Sisley's *Selected Landscapes* also limits the article's vocabulary. If medium or genre changes the operation of horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs, the comparison names that difference before proposing an analogy. The case may therefore support only part of the claim that soft edges can intensify spatial relation rather than dissolve form. Such partial support is informative: it identifies the condition under which color boundaries ceases to explain the evidence and marks the point where another historical or formal account should take over.

5 Repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction

A third pattern suggests that repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction. Return, correction, reframing, and delayed outcome are therefore analytical events. They reveal how a work stores difference and activates it later.

The first identifies a process that directs attention. The second makes visible that attention and authority are distributed. The third explains how following events revise that distribution. This sequence supports the central thesis that atmospheric boundary is historically variable and formally organized.

The third proposition is tested retrospectively. For the claim that repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction, later evidence must change the status of something already encountered; simple repetition is insufficient. *Edges of Atmosphere* therefore rereads preceding horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs after each return, correction, re-entry, or altered frame. This

backward movement reveals whether the work stores a difference and activates it later. Where the preceding event remains unaffected, the proposed revision has not occurred and the claim about color boundaries loses explanatory force.

6 Discussion

The three propositions alter one another. If soft edges can intensify spatial relation rather than dissolve form, then reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky cannot be understood as a separate theme; it describes who or what controls the first process. The claim that repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction adds a temporal test, asking whether following events confirm, narrow, or overturn an earlier inference. *Edges of Atmosphere* therefore explains color boundaries through ordered dependence rather than a list of recurring devices.

The project contributes methodological as well as interpretive. The distinction has force especially for interdisciplinary research.

Cross-case analysis additionally implies that environmental perception in painting emerges through boundary management rather than through isolated color patches. This effect does not depend on universal agreement about every example.

Counter-reading is used here as an analytical control. For the proposition that soft edges can intensify spatial link rather than dissolve form, the strongest alternative is one that explains the same sequence without assigning it the same function. The proposition that reflected color connects separated zones of land, water, and sky must then show why distribution, rather than mere recurrence, accounts for the contrast. Finally, repeated sites turn weather into an analytical variable of pictorial construction is tested by asking what subsequent event would have to be absent for the interpretation to fail. These tests make disagreement about *Edges of Atmosphere* local and answerable.

The intervention of *Edges of Atmosphere* is not the discovery of an unnoticed motif. Its contribution is to specify how color boundaries operates when the same feature changes function through sequence. Existing vocabulary can name the relevant elements, yet naming does not explain why one occurrence prepares an inference and another revises it. By keeping horizon transitions, reflected color, broken brushwork, object

edges, atmospheric depth, and repeated motifs connected to position and effect, the article turns a broad thematic observation into a claim that can be evaluated passage by passage and case by case.

This distinction also changes the status of absence. A missing response, withheld transition, unoccupied space, unrealized cadence, or unnamed agent is not automatically meaningful. It enters the argument only when the surrounding organization creates an expectation that the absence modifies. For *Edges of Atmosphere*, such negative evidence is judged by the same standard as a visible feature: it must be locatable, connected to sequence, and capable of changing the account of color boundaries.

7 Conclusion

The comparison shows that atmosphere does not require the disappearance

of form. Soft edges, reflected color, and repeated sites organize spatial relation and make weather pictorially consequential. This answers the question and contributes an observable account of color boundaries. Generic artwork references and unspecified reproductions limit the present result; accession-specific, color-managed comparison is required next.

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