

Art and Design Expressive Essay 3

Comment on the work of two still life painters whose work has impressed you. Which aspects of their work appealed to you and why? Refer to composition, atmosphere, tone colour and brushwork in your answer.

Still life is a popular type of subject matter appealing to many artists. Many different movements are associated with still life. Due to this there are contrasting means of arranging composition and creating atmosphere. Use of colour, tone and brushwork is also very different in its style under different movements.

The colourists produced distinctive and easily recognisable work with strong colour and the use of fluent brushwork. The colourists were also interested in pattern and the overall composition of the paintings. There were four key Scottish artists associated with this movement. These unique painters were, Samuel John Peploe, Francis Campbell Boileau Cadell, George Leslie Hunter and John Duncan Fergusson. Their paintings were more advanced and original than anything seen in Britain before 1914.

In the 1880s a group of Scottish colourists called the 'Glasgow Boys' discovered that due to artistic training in Paris, many artists were being produced and they realised that there was lots of new work opportunities to be found in Paris. The colourists admired the 'Glasgow Boys'. They spent sometime in Paris at the time of the great exhibitions devoted to Whistler, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Toulouse-Lautrec. This led to them discovering the latest Fauve and Cubist works by Matisse and Picasso. They were also influenced by this work and went on to create modern paintings.

At some point all of these painters painted in France along with some of the most famous artists of the School of Paris. All of the artists spent some time in France. John Duncan Fergusson lived in France for most of his life. Fergusson was from a middle class home and had been left some money but they still had to sell their paintings to survive. He faced much financial hardship.

Fergusson was influenced by Manet and Velasquez before he came into contact with Picasso and Matisse.

Fergusson painted few still lifes in Paris before 1910. Many themes intrigued him the most important of these being pattern, pictorial rhythm and the emotive power of colour.

In the painting *La Bête Violette* Fergusson created a circular motion in the composition, highlighted by the prancing beast on the shawl and echoed through the background arrangement of curtains, lamps and bowls. One of his most successful still life paintings, it looks forward to some of his most abstract arrangements. Below is an annotated thumbnail sketch of this painting.

This painting is very impressive and the strong and bold use of colour is creative and admirable. The composition of this painting is also impressive and the flowing motion of the fabric helps to bring the painting together. The strong use of tone also helps to make the painting more bold and interesting.

Another artist who is interested in still life is Anne Redpath. She is a contemporary artist. Anne Redpath was born on the 29th of March 1895 in the Scottish borders town of Galashiels. The family then moved to Hawick when her father, a pattern weaver, was offered a more reasonable post as head of design with the weavers Robert Noble & Co. of the Glebe Mills in Hawick. Redpath enrolled at Edinburgh College of Art in October 1913 and was a very talented student. At the end of the post graduate year she was recommended for the highest honour the college could confer on a student; a travelling scholarship worth £120. She visited Brussels, Bruges and Antwerp where she was particularly impressed by the paintings of 15th century Flemish artist Rogier van der Weyden. She also travelled to Paris and Florence and was heavily influenced by early Italian Art.

When she returned to Hawick she married James Beattie Michie, an architect whom she had known since childhood and for many years afterwards her professional career was sacrificed to raise her family of three sons. The family lived in France for a long time and when they