

20th Century

## CUBISM

Cubism was an art movement that took place in the twentieth century. Cubism involves the deconstruction of objects, analysis of their parts and planes and finally, their re-construction in an abstracted way. Cubist works often include surfaces intersecting at random angles. A cubist drawing would depict the subject from a multitude of viewpoints; thus the cubist image gives more information or represents greater context than the realist's image.

Picasso wrote about cubism,

“a manifestation of a vague desire on the part of these of us who participated in it to get back some kind of order... We were trying to move in a direction opposite to Impressionism. That was the reason we abandoned colour, emotion, sensation and everything that has been introduced by the Impressionists, to search again for an architectonic basis in the composition, trying to make an order of it...”

The cubists were clearly trying to create something very new and innovative with their actions; to move away from the ideas and methods of the impressionists. The caption implies to me that the Cubists stripped their work or limited it of the emotion created by the use of colour that the impressionists' art had formerly thrived on. Their focus must have been on the structure, composition, shape and line that could be defined through art; rather than the effect that value and colour can have on the mood and feeling of a piece of artwork.

Picasso refers to re-gaining an “order” with the introduction of cubism which I assume relates to the lack of feeling, emotion and mood that can affect an audience's judgment. There is an absence of the influence that the personality of the artist can have on their art, based on the way they felt at the time of production, or how the subject affected them. Cubism is much more of a fixed and followed process or procedure which isn't influenced by our feelings but the reality of the presence of space, shape and line within a subject. I don't detect an emotional relationship between the cubist artist and their art; neither can I interpret mood and emotion myself.

Cubist sculptures and paintings, for me, are about displaying much more information about the subject that you could take in from the reality seen in a realistic sketch or even a photograph because these only capture a limited amount of context; only capturing the subject from one viewpoint.

In philosophy, existentialism was a movement that happened in the nineteenth century at the end of the period of romantic philosophy. Personally, I think the existentialists were searching for a meaning behind the myth; and in doing so deconstructed, and stripped down their understanding of the world to what was

plain and definitely true. They were individuals and believed in distancing yourself from groups. I think that the cubist movement in art history ties in with the mind set of the existentialists. They were both looking back at things to find a real meaning (what exists and is clear to see), rather than having our influences clouded by emotion and misunderstanding. Picasso said he was, "searching again for an architectonic basis in the composition, trying to make an order of it..." Both parties were ceasing order and truth through what existed in reality seen through everyone's eyes.

## Analysis of Pablo Picasso's Cubist Guitar

This cubist sculpture of a guitar, produced by Picasso, appealed to me because the original subject matter which was something three dimensional has been deconstructed into flat planes or shapes and then re-constructed in such a flat medium (card) to produce something with interesting form again. The guitar takes on a whole new perspective but the subject Picasso is working with is still very clear.

The sculpture is simplistic-looking, as if the pieces that made up a guitar were just flattened and assembled a little inaccurately. Like the original subject the sculpture is also very much three dimensional with similar angles shapes and sizing; it reminds me of when surrealists will produce an everyday object out of a different material so it becomes totally useless. The media used is cardboard so the sculpture itself is much lighter, more flimsy and fragile than a real guitar.

Picasso has cut out his shapes carelessly – there aren't any smooth edges which slightly removes the subject away from reality. It looks scrappy and there is no attention to the effect of colour (instead its absence). Picasso clearly didn't want to convey striking emotions through his tonal work, values or use of colour; like many cubists' work his colours are limited or muted. I think the overall effect is a focus on the form present. Even though there is no tonal definition, shadows in contrast to highlights cast by the lighting aids in defining the form; in some areas.

Lines found within are similar to that found in a guitar; with straights and curves outlining. I believe the piece as whole to be harmonious due to the presence of similar shapes and the sole use of one media and one thickness of card. Personally, I see the sculpture as balanced with the circle in the centre as the centre of gravity or even a pivot point.

Picasso brought together two dimensional shapes in the sculpture to create form. I was influenced by his method when creating my paper and cardboard constructions; that were also based on every day objects. I noticed the way that Picasso saw two dimensional shapes within three dimensional forms and then managed to re-create the subject. I focused on flat shapes that I could see within a still life and drew a sketch of this. I then produced these shapes out of flat

medium and tried to re-connect them in a similar way to how they were originally found in reality.