

I have been studying portraiture by looking at the work of two well-known artists, Pablo Picasso and Amadeo Modigliani. Portraiture is an art form where the painter studies the human form. These studies can be of others and in some cases of the painter himself. This form of portraiture is known as self-portraiture.

Pablo Picasso was born on 25th October 1881 in Malaga, Spain. His father was a drawing master, so Picasso received early recognition and at 15 he already had a studio of his own. He passed the entrance examination for the Barcelona School of Fine Arts at the age of 14 in just one day.

During his lifetime, the artist went through different periods of characteristic painting styles; The Blue Period of Picasso lasted from about 1900-1905. He used different shades of blue and depressing subject matters. During Picasso's Rose Period from about 1905-1906 his style moved away from The Blue Period to a friendly pink tone with subjects taken from the world of the circus.

In 1965 Picasso had to undergo a prostate operation. In spite of his health problems, he created a number of paintings during his last years. On April 8th 1973 he died at the age of 91.

The Cubist movement was developed by Picasso and Braque around 1907 and became a major influence on Western Art. The artists chose to break down the subjects they were painting into a number of facets, showing different aspects of one object simultaneously.

The 1st painting I'm going to write about is called "Weeping Women" by Picasso and was painted in 1937. This is an expressive painting and it shows the distress that the woman through. This portrait is not like a photograph, where it shows you what she actually looked like. Instead he painted her abstractly and has distorted the features with sharp, angular shapes. He has also outlined the different parts of the picture using bold black lines. The colours Picasso used in this painting represent the mood. He used blues and greens around the



area where the woman was crying and he used contrasting warm yellows, oranges and reds in the background. If I had never seen this painting and I was asked to imagine it I would expect it to be all cold colours like blues because they are usually associated with sad moods. So Picasso has gone against normal conventions by using this contrasting warm palette. He used a white under the eyes as if it was tears flowing from her eyes. This use of white creates a focal point in the painting. Picasso used thick paint and you can see the directions of the brushstrokes. Even though this is not a very realistic painting it does show the grief she must be going through. I do not like this painting because it is not very interesting to look at. Picasso created a sad atmosphere in this painting well. I think Picasso used the tears in this painting to create the sad atmosphere. I don't know exactly what is wrong with the women but we

can tell she is deeply distressed.

Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J.) is the 2nd painting I'm going to write about by Pablo Picasso. It was painted in 1907. The painting shows five naked women. The bodies of the women are all very geometric. The faces of the two women on the right are like African masks and the woman in the corner has her back to us but her face is facing us. It is said that Picasso got his ideas for this painting by going to an African art exhibition. Picasso used a limited palette of nude oranges, pinks and creams for the women in this picture. The background is a plain blue colour. I think he used a plain background because the foreground was already very disorganized. The paint was put on thickly and had a flat texture. I think that the focal points in this painting are the women's faces. The women in this painting are painted to look ugly. This is unusual because usually women are painted to look beautiful. When Picasso showed this painting to his friends how ugly the women in the painting looked shocked them. Picasso said he wanted to paint a traditional subject in an innovative way. I like this painting because it is interesting to look at and I feel that every time I look at I notice something new.



Amadeo Modigliani was born into a Jewish family in Livorno, Italy on July 12th 1884. Modigliani received his formal training in Florence and Venice, studying the work of 15th century painter, Botticelli. His unique linear style combined this influence with that of sculptor, Constantin

Brancusi, whom he met in 1909. With Brancusi's assistance, he experimented in stone sculptures but materials became scarce with the outbreak of World War 1. Modigliani began painting nudes, which attracted little praise from critics. His perilous and reckless lifestyle, however, created more attention from the public, and ultimately caused his death from tuberculosis at the age of thirty-five. Devastated by his death, his mistress and model, Jeanne Hebuterne killed herself the following day while carrying Modigliani's child.

The first painting I'm going to write about by Modigliani is "Portrait of Leopold Zborowski". It was painted in 1918 while Modigliani was staying with Leopold and his wife. The painting consists of a man's face, neck and shoulders in the foreground and a green wall in the background. The face and neck of this man are elongated. The man has small almond eyes, which makes it look like he's looking straight out of the painting. The atmosphere in the painting is still and threatening. Modigliani makes it look threatening by giving Zborowski almond eyes like he does in many of his paintings. I think that the almond eyes create a focal point in the painting. Modigliani used a sombre palette in this painting, a tan colour for the man's skin, a gloomy dark green for the background and a muddy brown colour for his hair and beard. He used disorganized and directional brush strokes along with thick paint to create a rough texture in the painting. I do not like this painting, as it is very



disturbing to look at due to the elongated face, neck and the almond eyes.

The second painting I am going to study is "Portrait of Anna Zborowska". The painting consists of Anna sitting in the foreground wearing a black v-neck top with a white frilly collar that has been pushed up. Her hair has been put up and her face is oval. Her eyes are small



and almond shaped again and she looks kind of cross-eyed. She has a twisted nose and her mouth is pursed. In the background there is a window with blinds and a wooden cabinet with "Anna" carved into it. The focal point in

this painting is the woman's elongated face and neck. The colours Modigliani used are dark, rich and saturated, like gold's and maroons. The paint was put on thickly and then smoothed off. The atmosphere in the painting is calm, still and peaceful. The woman looks upset and if she wants to be left alone. I do not like this painting because it is sad and disturbing to look at because of the distorted features.

In conclusion to my studies I have learned a lot about portraiture and the different styles that artists use. I have found out that artists use different colours and paint techniques to create different atmospheres and moods. I do not really like any of the artists but if I had to choose which one I preferred out of them I would say Picasso. I like the way he distorts his subjects to make them emotional. My favourite painting that I studied is "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" by Picasso. This

is my favourite painting because of the innovative style that Picasso used in painting it. I like the African masks and each time I look at it I find something that I never saw before. The painting I like least out of the ones I studied is "Portrait of Leopold Zborowski". This is my least favourite because when I look at it the eyes are disturbing and the elongated features are freaky. I studied the work of two very different artists, Pablo Picasso and Amadeo Modigliani. One thing that Picasso and Modigliani have in common is that they both show emotion in their paintings, but they use different techniques to do so.