

“The later colonial artists William Piguenit, Nicholas Chevalier and Eugene von Guerard, differ somewhat to those before. Explain what the difference was and what influenced those differences.”

Later colonial artists such as Eugene von Guerard, Nicholas Chevalier and William Piguenit were largely landscape painters. Their works were picturesque and romantic forms of landscape art and differed from works by earlier artists, due to their content and nature. These differences were mainly influenced by the changing needs of the society at the time, as well as other artistic movements.

The nature of the works of art by later colonial artists differed from works by earlier artists. The main purpose of earlier works was to illustrate the discoveries of voyages and to promote scientific discoveries. Paintings such as ‘A Family of New South Wales’ by William Blake and ‘An animal of New Holland’, by George Stubbs depict individual drawings of animals and native people. These earlier artists had difficulty in capturing the character of the landscape and the essence of Australia’s natural scenery.

Later colonial artists painted picturesque and topographical forms of landscape, carefully selected in order to express the essential qualities of a particular type of geographical environment. Their works emphasised dramatic effects of light, atmosphere and colour to evoke awe and grandeur. The artists embellished the splendour of the natural scenery and emphasised the beauty of nature.

Eugene von Guerard worked in a “highly finished topographical style” and painted detailed and accurate representations of vegetation and terrain, and plants and rocks. In his painting ‘Valley of the Mitta Mitta, with Bogong Ranges’, the expanses of the forest conveyed the depressing effects mentioned by travellers and settlers.

Nicholas Chevalier’s ‘The Buffalo Ranges, Victoria’ is characteristic of late romanticism. It shows the distinct dignity of pioneering labour and has an ambience of alpine character and geographical ostentatiousness.

William Piguenit sought dramatic and exciting subjects for his work and took an essentially romantic approach. His painting ‘Mt Olympus, Lake St Clair, Tasmania’ shows the beauty of the mist covered mountains and exudes grandeur.

These changes in technique were due to the changing needs of the society at the time. The requirement to document new discoveries was not necessary anymore. The enhanced beauty of picturesque landscapes were aesthetically pleasing and appealed to the artists, and attracted interest in the community.

Artistic movements around the world and works by other artists, especially in Britain would also influence changes in techniques and style.

The later colonial artists such as William Piguenit, Nicholas Chevalier and Eugene von Guerard, employed techniques such as romanticism to enhance and emphasise the natural beauty of the scenes they depicted. These works differed from earlier artists, as they was no need to continuously document discoveries and the emphasis and embellishment of natural beauty appealed to the artists, as well as the community.