

Theresa Gill Paintings

Introduction



“Art imitates life”

The saying above states that arts are the key to understanding our humanity. It is the window to the soul of what we hold to be important – to the beliefs and values of our culture.

Art is the products of human creativity. Basically, there are numerous types and classifications of art. Be it dancing, singing, performing on stage, designing, film, photography, computer graphics, architecture, comics and many more. But the most common form of art is painting and sculpture. Written here is a comparative essay between the famous paintings namely Ecce Ancilla Domini worked by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and The Yellow Christ worked by Paul Gauguin and the sculptural works of Francois Rude which is The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792 and the work of Auguste Rene Rodin which is the Honore Balzac.

Paintings



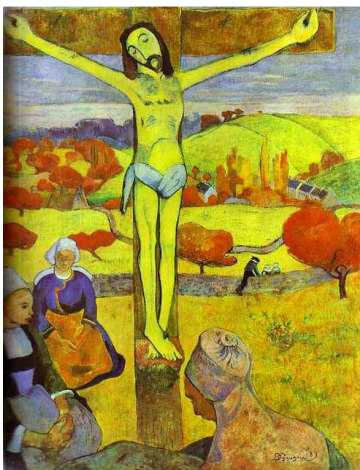
Ecce Ancilla Domini

The painting beside is the Ecce Ancilla Domini or The Annunciation. This painting is a work by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the chief member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. This painting portrays the commonly illustrated moment when the Angel Gabriel comes to the

Virgin Mary to tell her the news that she will give birth to the Lord. Although Rossetti depends on earlier traditions for many of the symbols he places in the scene, his method of employing these symbols, his depiction of space, and most significantly his portrayal of the two figures represent significant departures from earlier tradition. Here you'll see Angel Gabriel holding a stem of lilies giving them to Mary and presenting her with a quintessence of the chastity and purity she is fated to continue throughout her life. You'll also see an embroidery hanging at the end of the bed, which Rossetti depicts her working on in *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, plays a relative role – this is a young girl's bedroom and so one might expect her to find her needlework in this space – as well as perhaps representing her active choice to live purely since she has chosen to embroider a lily. It is also observed, that rather than dressed in blue (which was usually the color being used in painting Mary), Mary wears a simple white dress. However, Rossetti does not ignore the significance of blue as the color associated with the Virgin and heaven: he places a blue screen directly behind her, and out the window, the sky is a similar shade of blue, alluding to heaven. Rossetti also paints a wall sconce with the hint of a flame which is a different presentation of the entrance of the Holy Spirit. Rossetti includes a dove, embodying the Holy Spirit; however in this one case he does not drastically transform a traditional symbol. Rossetti's imagined space shows great novelty. The Virgin's bedroom is shockingly simple. Rossetti places Mary in a room that is almost claustrophobically small. The use of perspective is unconvincing: Mary's bed appears about to slide out of the painting and the floor on the left of the painting blends into the wall, furthering the precipitous plane effect. In addition, the view out the window at back, which Rossetti could have used to give the scene depth by employing the

plateau composition and allowing the viewer to see a scene in the distance, instead shows only blue sky and a part of a tree. Rather than a winged, long-haired boyish angel, he paints an androgynous Gabriel without wings, his face only visible in highly shadowed profile, with the hints of yellow flames around his feet. Another observation is the figure of Mary who sits on her bed and slumped against the wall. It also depicts Mary as an adolescent with her beautiful young features, unbrushed straight hair, childish skinny body and the hesitance, fear and downhearted with which she responds to the angel Gabriel's glorious pronouncement. Wisps of her messy auburn hair spread around her neck, silhouetted against her white dress, evocative of Christ's thorns or a bloodshot eye. Rossetti has no use for the stiff, exaggerated poses of primitive Virgins. He seems most concerned with the sincere response of a young girl who has been encumbered with a burden that is both wonderful and laden with responsibility. In this endeavor, he truly succeeds. The confined nature of the room, the bleakness of the surroundings, Mary's intense expression and her expressive pose all further the image of a young girl who is confronted with her own adult identity and is terrified.

The Yellow Christ



Here is another painting. It is called The Yellow Christ painted by French artist Paul Gauguin. He sought to incarcerate the primitive strength of the region through strong colors and simplified forms, as seen here in Yellow

Christ. This painting is constructed of flat planes, intense colors and bold delineating outlines. The painting is in many ways the pinnacle of Gauguin's early "synthesist" style. The plane of the canvas – the surface which must be respected – is held by the foreground figure, the strong upright of the crucifix, and the terminating horizontal bar. Against the repeated bands of field and sky and cross, the swinging curves of the women and the trees (closed forms that contrast with the movement of the straight lines) play a graceful counterpoint, the whole drawn together by a bright and simple pattern. The colors are gay, but the starkness of the Breton landscape is conveyed; the women are gentle but their peasant force is still evident. This is a striking canvas. How much more so it must have appeared at the time it was painted, when the subtle delicacies of the Impressionists' divided brush stroke were still considered revolutionary. The uniform color surfaces, the lines that ring the figures are deliberately crude and simplified, at the opposite pole from Impressionism. Yet Gauguin has observed with care: the costumes are accurate, the light is the cold light of Brittany, and the field contains harmonies of green, rust, and yellow. And we know besides that the figure on the cross is closely derived from a Crucifixion in the church of Tremalo not far from Pont-Aven. The artist has gone beyond naturalistic observation to emotional expression. "The Impressionists," he wrote later in his *Intimate Journals*, "study color exclusively, but without freedom, always shackled by the need of likelihood. For them the ideal landscape, created from many entities does not exist. They regard only the eye, and abandon the mysterious centers of thoughts, so falling into merely scientific reasoning. This ideal expression is Gauguin's goal. He may be a sophisticated painter, traveler, and a man from the capital and no peasant, but he wants his canvass to convey,

because it contains, the great rustic and superstitious simplicity he found among the Breton people. And so he has simplified the construction of his picture, flattened its space, coarsened its outlines, and heightened its colors, to make it no longer merely an objective record set down by an external observer, but the direct, visual symbol of a naïve and trusting religious faith. As Gauguin wrote from Brittany at this time” A child’s tears, are also something and yet they haven’t much worldly wisdom.”

Contrast to Both Paintings

Both of the paintings were beautiful. They were painted using oil canvass. Each of the details of the pictures has a meaning, and both were centered to religion. The first painting depicts the visiting of Angel Gabriel to Mary and the other painting is the crucifixion of Christ. Both artists applied their own imagination on what they would want the painting to appear. They created it in their own creative way and imagination and their taste. Rossetti was stalwartly fascinated to the dramatic and the supernatural, both of which represented in his work. His art is subsequently developed through other phases, in which sense of human beauty, intensity of abstract expression, and richness of color were leading elements. He has a depressive past and the death of his wife became a bad impact in his life. Gauguin on the other hand is a postimpressionist painter, whose lush color, flat-two dimensional forms and subject matter helped form the basis of modern art. He is passionate to his work. He retained the qualities of expressive color, denial of perspective, and thick, flat forms. He also is a depressed painter after his failed suicide attempt.

Each artist had different goal while creating their masterpieces. Rossetti's goal is to revitalize his art through medieval inspiration whereas Gauguin's goal is to regard only the eye, and abandon the mysterious centers of thoughts, so falling merely scientific reasoning. Both of them succeed with their goals from the way their art has resulted.

The differences between the two pictures had nothing to do with art at mid-century and art at late century because there is no competition between the times. The only difference is that, their way of doing things and the way they imagine things that made them to create the paintings. In many ways, Gauguin's work is closer to twentieth century because it was at this time where people are so religious. As you can see on the painting of Gauguin, the details of the picture is so old fashioned. The costumes, it depicts during the old times particularly during the time of Jesus. Rossetti's work on the other hand, looks towards our own time. Observe the way he painted Mary, it was so different from the other paintings created by other artists. Her face is so innocent, and so adolescent-like. Moreover, the confined nature of the space, the barrenness of the surroundings, Mary's intense expression and her expressive pose all further the image of a young girl who is confronted with her own adult identity and is terrified which make it different from the other paintings of The Annunciation from other artist's work.

Sculptures

The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792



In 1833, the time came to complete Napoleon's unfinished Arc de Triumph. It was at this time that Louis-Philippe saw an opportunity to validate that the new government would present something to every segment of the French people. Francois Rude (1784-1855), an intensely loyalist and devotee to Napoleon was bespoken to complete one of the four groups on the arch: "The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792". Rude's talent had been perceived at an early age by the director of the local academy of design in Dijon. This provided him with an introduction to Paris and another native of Dijon, Napoleon's Superintendent of Arts. Rude entered the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1809 and won the Prix de Rome in 1812. In "The Departure," he raised the subject of the French people defending the Republic to one of mythic splendor. The volunteers surge forth, inspired by the winged Liberty above them. The huge relief so completely embodied the patriotic zeal of the French that it came to be known as the Marseillaise, after the Revolutionary song adopted by France as its national anthem. In fact, Rude's father, a locksmith, had been among those volunteers and presented his eight year old son for enrollment in a children's brigade of volunteers. Despite its great public approval, however, 'The Departure' failed to give Rude the artistic honors he deserved. He eventually found

himself more and more in opposition to the regime, and his later works were direct expressions of his Bonapartist political beliefs.

Honore Balzac



Due to his earlier training at a technical school of drawing and mathematics, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) was cast off three times from entering the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. For that, at the age of 24, he studied under Barye and several years later studied with Carrier-Belleuse. He finally made an appearance at the Salon in 1875, and sculpted his first major piece which was “The Age of Bronze”, in 1876. In 1844 the town Calais opened up a competition for a monument honoring the resistance of the town for 11 months against the King Edward in 1346-1347. Rodin worked for ten years on a composition of the six burghers that were held prisoners. The municipality felt that the figures were not heroic enough, and many of his generations did not understand his group. The bodies of the six ‘Burghers of Calais’, as they prepare to terms of surrender, is wrought with emotion—sublime, sad and great. Rodin preferred to have the group stand on the soil, to become part of the population again, but this plan was not adopted. The most remarkable event of Rodin’s career was his work on the statue of Balzac (found in the picture). In 1888, the Societe des Gens de Lettres (the president was Emile Zola) had wanted the statue of the great romanticist for a site in Paris. Chapu had begun the project but died in 1891. Rodin offered to deliver a statue 18 months. Many years went by, and the delay became the

butt of many jokes. There was a lawsuit, and in exchange for no time limit, he had to return the 10,000 francs advanced for his materials. Rodin found that this was the most difficult sculptural interpretation he had ever commenced. He wanted to create the great thinker in action, with all of Balzac's intensity. After years of various interpretations and studies of his subject, the statue was finally exhibited at the Salon of 1898. It was without delay greeted with a chorus of scorn and ridicule. The Societe accepted the popular ruling and verdict and refused to recognize it as a statue of Balzac. The current president, poet Jean Aicard, resigned as a result. The commission for a new statue was awarded to Alexandre Falguiere. Rodin did not fight the Societe, and was invited to exhibit it in London and Brussels. He refused generous offers to sell the piece, but stated that it belonged to Paris. Rodin felt that the statue was his best work, stating, "My evolution was complete." And to show that he was not angry with his friend Falguiere, the two executed busts of each other which were exhibited together in the 1899 Salon.

Contrast to Both Sculptures

Both sculptures has a subject matter of their masterpiece. Rude's subject matter is centered to the French people defending the Republic to one of mythic splendor. The volunteers surge forth, inspired by the winged Liberty above them. The huge relief so completely embodied the patriotic zeal of the French that it came to be known as the Marseillaise, after the Revolutionary song adopted by France as its national anthem. Rodin's work on the other hand is centered to create Balzac, the great thinker in action with intensity.

On the other hand, both of them have their own purpose for creating the masterpieces. On Rude's side, he created it because as an intensely loyalist and devotee to Napoleon, he was bespoken to complete one of the four groups on the arch. On Rodin's side, he created the bust of Balzac because the Societe des Gens de Lettres (the president was Emile Zola) had wanted the statue of the great romanticist (Balzac) for a site in Paris. Chapu the artist who was appointed to do the statue had begun the project but died in 1891 and with that Rodin offered to deliver the statue for himself.

Their creations relate to the traditional hierarchy of history of painting because their creations were of important people in the pass. People who were admired for their past works and people who were in history. However, it was unfortunate for both artists because their goals weren't that successful as they expected it to be. When Napoleon finished his masterpiece, he found himself more and more in opposition to the regime. Other people sees his work as a direct expression of his Bonapartist political belief so despite its public approval, there are many people who are against it also. In Rodin's case, when his work was finished, it was immediately greeted with a chorus of scorn and ridicule. And because of that, the Societe accepted the popular ruling and verdict and refused to recognize it as a statue of Balzac. And because of that, Alexander Falguiere, was assigned to do another statue for Balzac instead. However, it is really good that Rodin did not choose to fight and compete with Alexander. He really is a humble artist and accepts his fate without hard feelings at all.

Their works were not that successful as they expected because there are always people who disagree with us. There are people who misunderstood what the artist wants to say to their audiences. And because of that, they would say something bad about the artist's work which would eventually lead to his failure. But despite that, there are also people who appreciate their work and were able to understand fully about the meaning. The artist's role within society has changed because nowadays, especially artists they are careful on their painting or sculpture to avoid criticism. They have to choose a subject that would avoid bad criticisms. However, there are also some artists who have the guts to create on whatever they like and not be afraid of the audiences disapproval. After all, some artists express themselves through their paintings.

Conclusion

There are many works of arts. There are many artists worldwide. Some are successful with their endeavor and some were a complete failure. Some were known and some were not. Some were professionals while others amateur. It takes complete effort to become an artist and it takes art appreciation and talent to become one. Through art, we can express ourselves either by dancing, singing, painting, sculpting depending on what you are good at. The result of your creation depends on what mood you are in. Again, as what is stated above, art is the window of our soul. It reflects our personality, moods, characteristic, style and taste.

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