

Naether

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Renaissance Art

Renaissance art is generally comprised of sculptures, decorative arts, and paintings. This kind of art stems from classical antiquity and has been deemed to be the noblest among ancient traditions. It marks a period of transition in Europe into the Early Modern Age from the medieval era (Efland, 2017). The medieval period's outlook was distinguished by the monuments that represented the Christian faith, like the great cathedrals of the Gothic era; which were products of a joint effort among laity, churchmen and rulers who facilitated their completion by 1400. Furthermore, extensive changes in the social and economic setting catalyzed the evolution into the Modern Age as the fourteenth century ended, giving way to a manufacturing-based economy. City dwellers became members of the middle class, with those in upper levels enjoying the perks of disposable income, leisure, and literacy. Hence, members of the middle class became highly influential in the society and their cultural significance increased; a transformation that had major effects on the European culture, "including in the development of visual arts" (Janson & Davies, 2007, p. 469). Evidently, Renaissance art revolutionized art as it was known in previous eras, giving rise to a new, elaborate and interesting form of expression.

Additionally, Renaissance art in Germany falls under the category of Northern Renaissance. The era was characterized by the artists' needs to attain higher aesthetic value rather than perfecting their craft. This era of art in Germany was influenced by the Italian Renaissance, which the Germans sought to assimilate as fast as possible. This form of art mainly developed because religious art was no longer on demand and the artists had to find new means of generating income. Thus, they turned to landscape painting and portrait art that was sold to the bourgeoisie and noble within the society (Gardener et al., 1975).

Thesis Statement

(Review: I do not like statements like this)

The aspects of Renaissance art that this paper will focus on is self-portrait. A 'self-portrait' is an artistic representation that is presented as a drawing, painting, photograph or sculpture. This form of art existed since the earliest ages, but it was during the ~~Early~~ Renaissance period that artists' ^{frequently} frequency to use themselves as the main subjects of their art, or important characters of the same, significantly increased. Jack van Eyck has been deemed to be the artist whose work in self-portraiture was the earliest to be known through his ^(underlined) Portrait of a Man in a Turban created in 1433 (Campbell, 1998 p. 212-217). This genre of art was considered vulnerable until the Renaissance when people had become wealthier and they were more interested in individuals as art subjects; a factor that facilitated its popularity (Martin, 2002 p. 208).

~~Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze, commonly known as Wols, is one of the other artists that is recognized for his work in self-portraiture. He was born in Berlin in 1913 and he grew up in Dresden, an upper-middle-class region. Wolf was a gifted boy, both intellectually and musically, and thanks to the facilities that were available to him during his early years, his talents were nurtured. Wols' genius was apparent to all during his childhood years but the artist himself openly revealed that he lacked inner integration, claiming that at the end of his unhappy youthful years he was helpless and facing all sorts of problems. He expressed this as 'lack of homogeneity,' a factor that may explain the events that occurred in his later years including; alcohol addiction, financial struggles, sickness and an early death at the age of 38 (Joachimides et al., 1985 p. 463).~~

This is
not a
Renaissance
artist)

~~Regardless of living a short life, Wols became the founder of tachism, poetic abstraction and non-formal art because he believed in the congruency of life and art. His work on the oeuvre is considered an interpretation of his existence that had proven to be chaotic. His friend Roche compares the manner he creates his drawings to the way a snail designs its house; in a natural but painful process (Joachimides et al., 1985 p. 463-464). From the comparison above, it is evident~~

Same

that Wols' art was never a separate object of his life, but an integral part of the same; that represented the events thereof better than any factual accounts could. Based on the need to describe his subjective psychological situation, Wols took up the 'non-formal picture' as his medium of expression because it was more precise than any other form of descriptive art. Wols' photographs, when compared to his paintings, always appeared to have a strained aspect that made him seem embarrassed to make eye contact with himself on the camera. Hence, Wols' often assumed poses and hid under the mask of a dandy crook or a person striking poses that made him appear stupid (Joachimides et al., 1985 p. 464). Perhaps, Wols avoided eye contact with the camera because he did not want to behold the harsh reality of his life that had seemingly deteriorated even though at the beginning it had seemed that he would have a bright future. Same

Additionally, in the self-portrait featuring the ^{under}sticking plaster, the wound appears artificial and deliberate. This is because the clean white plaster, that is also cross-shaped, seems to degenerate into an ornament. The wound is not visible but has an existential quality that makes its external form seem lesser. However, Joachimides and the rest of the authors express that the real self-portraits are those that are created in the form of drawings, watercolors, and paintings. Photographs may also qualify to be termed as real-self portraits in cases where they are close-ups and have surrealistic characteristics (Joachimides et al., 1985 p. 464).

In conclusion, it is undeniable that Renaissance art gave the artistic genre in Germany a whole new outlook. ^{the} Self-portrait, especially, allowed artists to synchronize components of their life with those of their work thus, giving their productions a wholesome characteristic that made them intriguing. It formed the base for further advancements in art by embracing the photography as part of artistic expression, leading to modern day artistry that is mainly centered on photography.

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