

Post War German German Expressionism Art

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Expressionism is an art form whose emergence in Germany was simultaneous across different cities in the ^{country} ~~state~~. This form of art became popular in the period ^{pre-World War I} ~~that it did~~ because it was a response to the anxiety caused by the discord in human relations across the world plus the feelings that accompanied the ^(delit) ~~precedent~~ loss of both spirituality and authenticity. Expressionist art ~~also~~ ^{characteristically} opposed the values supported by academic art and Impressionism; drawing most of its inspiration from Symbolist principles that were exhibited in art during later years of the ^{nineteenth} ~~19th~~ Century. Majorly, Expressionist artists advocated for alteration of form and use of bold colors as a means of conveying an array of yearnings and anxiety. Germany experienced this art form in two phases: ^{the} ~~Classical~~ ^{E (capital)} expressionism phase and ~~Abstract~~ ^A ~~Expressionism~~ ^E phase. The classical phase lasted for about ^{fifteen} ~~15~~ years between 1905 and 1920 and it spread throughout Europe. It created the base on which Abstract Expressionism was created, ^{the} ~~whose~~ ^{of which} influence was felt in Germany for the remaining part of the century (Anderson, 2011). ^(pg. numbers) ~~This paper will prove that~~ ^(Avoid statements like these) Expressionist art in Germany was a therapeutic implement that allowed both its artists and viewers to better cope with their depressive living conditions at the time.

One of the artists that made a great impact during the German Expressionism era was Mark Rothko. He created a piece that he named, ^{P (underline)} ~~Colour Plate 15 Black on Maroon~~ ^(form) in 1958. To begin with, the painting was large with dimensions of 4.6m x 2.7m. This painting was one of those created in a series ^{which} ~~which~~ when hung together create a mood that is somber and would be considered ideal for spiritual meditation. At the center of the picture, there are two oblongs painted purple. When viewing the paintings, the oblongs feel like an opening into another realm that makes the viewer feel like they could go through them into the world they appear to open into. From a different perspective, the oblongs look like they are floating ~~relative~~ ^{relative} to the back sections of the

(This is much later than Expressionism)

painting. The main color in the painting is maroon, onto which both black and purple are painted. The shape edges appear blurred and soft thus, adding to their ambiguity. The edges that are painted black on the extreme right and left parts of the painting to appear blurred against the maroon color, in the background; creating the impression of "a black window frame with space beyond." In totally, the size of the picture makes a viewer feel like they could step into it and become part of it. However, the meanings thereof are not certain (Acton, 2004 p. 106).

The series of paintings, mentioned above, were created as decorative features of the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York. Eventually, Rothko terminated the project because he felt that the kind of art that he was producing did not match the characteristics of art that should be displayed in a fashionable restaurant with consumerist and materialistic qualities. Such concepts make Rothko's work appear to have a similarity with Kandinsky's ideas on the spiritual value of art (Acton, 2004 p. 106). Both artists ^{were} ~~are~~ of Russian origin and Rothko's fixation on the spiritual aspect of art is undeniably expressed in his statement indicating that he perceived art as a spiritual anecdote^(C o m m a) and the only means of determining the purpose of its stillness and quickness. This evidences the Expressionist ^{Abstract} ~~believe~~ ^{believe} that paintings can act as a liaison between the soul and the spirit; which in turn leads to Rothko's belief that the size of a painting matters. He explains^{el} that he creates^d his ~~as~~ large pieces so that they ^{could} ~~can~~ elicit an intimate and humanistic feeling from their viewers^(C o m m a), allowing them to feel like they are in them and can command them. Rothko's view on immersion in a painting synchronizes with Jackson Pollock's beliefs, which also lean towards the idea that a series of paintings when viewed together are likely to have a cumulative effect thanks to the total involvement of the viewer (Acton, 2004 p. 107).

In recent years, German postmodernist artists have decided to ^(delete) ~~try and~~ confront their country's harsh past through artistic expression that has redefined German Expressionism⁺ art and

self-expression in a variety of ways. Joseph Beuys, in that spirit, created "*The ^End of the Twentieth Century*." His piece is an installation spawned using clay, felt and basalt. The basalt used is not traditionally crafted. It is left in a natural form and is laid out randomly on the floor of the gallery where it is exhibited. The circles on every basalt piece are stone cones that are fixed in their positions with felt and clay. The use of felt in Beuys's expression is symbolic of an experience in his days as a *Luftwaffe* pilot when he was shot down and his rescuers used fat and felt to cover him and nurse him to recovery. The lack of order in the arrangement of the basalt lumps is meant to not only elicit the feeling of the world being in an uncontrollable state, but also to enlighten viewers on the moral, philosophical and political aspects that affect the state of the world and the responsibility that man has within it (Acton, 2004 p. 108).

Abstract

Oddly, when studying Expressionism in Germany, Daniel Libeskind is mentioned as one of the contributors to this form of art. This is unusual because he was not an artist but an architect; who defined architecture as the 'space of encounter.' He designed the Jewish Museum in Berlin. This building is a form of Expressionism considering that Libeskind had lost most of his family during the Holocaust. The way he structures the museum seems to encompass the entirety of Jewish history in Berlin in a symbolic manner. The organization of space and the building's lighting allow the spectators to feel the Jewish history in Nazi Germany (Acton, 2004 p. 110); especially during the Holocaust when Jews were murdered because of their Jewish affiliations (Bernstein, 2004 p. 21).

Abstract

Finally, it is safe to assume that German Expressionism ~~at~~ allowed the people of Germany to connect with art and each other on a deeper level. It offered the much-needed connection between the soul and the spirit, especially in the period after the Holocaust, when people needed to heal from the obscenity of humanity and believe in the goodness of life again. Expressionism

created a therapeutic atmosphere that the German citizens needed then; allowing them to heal from the horrific history of their country.

References

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