

EVIDENCE OF 'THE HUMAN BODY IN ART'

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The current trend in art has been reaching soaring heights with unimaginable outcomes being poured as the fuel energy from the most creative insights. The stature of presenting creativity today has however not been a sudden appearance rather has been evolving from the solidification of the expressed and untold views of magmatic historical past of creativity. Every era that has gone by has sprinkled its mesmerizing character into the very basic foundation of current position in art. The emotional turmoil that was associated with Mannerism persisted into Baroque and is felt even today, though with a different language of interpretation. Representing the body parts and their emotional baggage are a favorite topic for artists now. The qualities those were seen in the historical Mannerism were artificiality, bizarre colour, illogical compression of space and an anxiety that breaks through a superficial naturalism. Mannerism puts emphasis on the artifice of emotional expression. Curator Norman Kleeblatt of the Jewish museum in New York regards this emotionalism as a positive quality. "When I look at a classic Mannerist art, there is such playfulness he says. " I think that is the connection with contemporary art."

The art that is practiced today mirrors contemporary culture and society offering the audience a rich resource through which to consider current ideas and rethink the familiar. The contemporary art has been progressing and challenging the traditional boundaries also defying the easy definition by bringing forth the combination of materials, methods, concepts and subjects. More over it is distinguished by the lack of uniform principle, ideology or -ism. As from what has been observed, the contemporary artists give voice to the varied and changing cultural landscape of identity, value and belief because of the constantly advancing technological world which is globally influenced and culturally diverse.

The contemporary audience has an equally active role to play in the process of constructing meaning about works of art. Some artists often say that the viewer contributes to or even completes the art work by constructing his or her personal reflections experiences, opinions and interpretations. What exactly is art and its definition in the current context is very well reflected by a wide range of materials.

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media, and technologies used by the artists. The artists today explore ideas, concepts, questions and practices that examine the past, describe the present and imagine the future. In light of such diversity there is no simple or singular way to define contemporary art. The most astonishing part about this art is that often it may seem overwhelmingly difficult, yet at times the viewer might wonder if they are missing something.

The focus of this article is to portray the evidence of body and its significance in art. In recent decades the body has moved from being the subject of traditional portraiture to become an active presence in live and participatory events. To begin with the historical art to socio- political and cultural developments to contemporary scientific breakthroughs, all have had a profound influence on the artist's attitude to the representation of human form. While examining the performance of body in art, the focus of the subject relates not just to the exterior boundaries rather to the internal depths of experimenting with the areas as nature and technologies and the place of the individual in society. The body is being depicted as an inspirational theme which is subjected not just to a definite standard of portrayal rather expands its roots from painting and sculpture to installation, video art and performance. The artists who have exposed the human body as the reflection of their thoughts remind us how the body continues to be pivotal to our understanding and expression of our place in the universe. Many different working methods and processes have been representing the body in art such as creating an installation or collaborating with assistants, specialists, fabricators or audiences. It is interesting to observe that it can very well form itself as a critique too by reframing and redefining the traditional ideas and expectations about art and society such as beauty, original representation and authority.

The human body in art helps one understand the facets of identity such as gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity. The body along with its accessories is being used by the artists to align with or rebel against social conventions and as an expression of messages to others around them. Many artists have used not just body in art rather showcased themselves by using their own bodies in the creative process. The society is the clear image of the art that is produced in its genre for which the reflection of the socio- political and cultural backgrounds is understandable. Citing an example to the statement, was the time of 1960's and 70's when Europe and United states witnessed many social upheavals, among them were the fight for equality for women with regards to sexuality, reproductive rights, the family and the workplace. The body that was being used by the artist to create their work took on

another important role as a medium, around this time. A term coined in the 1960's as the genre was starting to take hold, it was Performance Art. Here the actions performed by the artist are central to the work of art. For many artists using their bodies in performances became a way to both claim control over their own bodies and to question issues of gender. It is a live art work intended not just to denote actions but mainly to engulf itself as a possible instrument of expression and communication, aiming at creating a particular experience.

All performances could be possible only if they could produce meanings. 'Meanings' add the 'soul' to the body of actions. Any actions performed in a performance would lose its impact unless being supported by a meaning. There are usually four major supporting elements of a Performance art: time, space, performer's body and a relationship between the audience and the performer. Although performance art takes the role of live action, it reaches a large audience through documentation of the performance. An important influence on the emergence of performance was made by the photographs of the Abstract expressionist painter Jackson Pollock. The photographs of his action painting were taken in 1950's by the photographer Hans Namuth. Throughout the 1950's artists such as Yves Klein continued to experiment with the application of paint, blurring the lines between painting and performance. He had used the human body as a paint brush when naked women smeared in paint were pulled across large canvases creating abstract tracings of the human form. These works were further enhanced through an audience of spectators dressed in formal dinner wear. Another artist who began evolving ideas about how art could play a wider role in the society started being involved with the performance art around the 1960's was Joseph Beuys. His urgent and public calls for reform of all kinds, and his unconventional artistic style incorporating sound and materials such as fat, felt, earth, honey, blood and even dead animals gained him international notoriety.

Marlene Dumas one of the world's most expensive living female artists extends her interest in the human body, beyond her own those to other people. She creates abstract figurative works inspired by personal memories and a diverse array of printed matter. Her earlier subjects have spanned from new born babies, models, strippers and figures from popular culture both alive and dead.' The First People' 1990 one of her key works is a stark quadriptych of oil paintings, each capturing a new born baby. "I wanted to give more attention to what the painting does to the images, not only what the image does to the painting. At some point in my career I thought, I must only make faces. In the face you can have all kinds of political landscapes."-

Marlene Dumas says referring to her physical approach to painting. "The work is a performance on the surface of the canvas. I don't know what I want until I am actually on it- which is why I wipe off a lot of paint, too."

The art works produced involving the physical human body will very soon have art patrons being able to sign up to donate their bodies to art projects upon death, much like signing up to become an organ donor or donating your body to science. The hyper realistic sculptures of naked elderly women and men by Marc Sijan put the ones at Madame Tussaud's wax museum to shame. His sculptures are hauntingly imperfect: fleshy, pudgy, and sweaty. His application of body in art is super realistic, incredibly life-like, sensuous and graceful. The realistic touches these figures are incorporated in are so full of life that they seem to be on the verge of movement, just a mere blink away from action. Sijan along with the fellow artists Duane Hansen and John De Andrea, implement the life like human figures in their work, to highlight human conditions and relationships through their expressions. "I am seeking to freeze motion rather than suggest life, the sculpture appear passive but there is so much going on inside."-Marc Sijan

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