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Research Paper 2

June 2016

Comparative Analysis

In our critical theory class, we studied the importance of art history, literature, culture, etc.; yet, this was not the most important lesson that we learned. The most important lesson was to ask the question “why.” Why did a painter paint? Why did the painters stop painting traditional paintings? Yet maybe the most important question is, "Why were these works considered or not considered art?" It can be argued that Picasso's and Duchamp's works of art changed this very way of thinking.

We also discussed and compared many artists like Courbet, Van Gogh, Pollock, Picasso, Duchamp and many others. Each artist that we looked at had a historical impact on the way art is looked at and discussed in today's world. As we studied each work of art, we dissected their color theory, subject proportion, tonal value even the size of the work itself. However, it was not until we got to Marcel Duchamp's work that a new question seemed to arise.... what was the artist trying to say with their work?

Marcel Duchamp was a French Naturalized American artist whose work is always associated with Cubism, conceptual art, and Dada. Duchamp is commonly regarded as the artist that helped to develop the way we see art in the twentieth century. Duchamp was the first to coin the term "retinal art" which is a term to describe art that was only intended to please the eye. Duchamp's later work was described as work that would pose the question, "What is art?"

One of Duchamp's most important works was called “Fountain” which was of a porcelain urinal, signed "R.Mutt," made in 1917. This work was said to test the limits of what constitutes a work of art. Duchamp was not the first to test the limits, in fact, his greatest of rivals-Pablo Picasso-was said to be making art around the same time in a similar manner. For instance, Pablo Picasso was regarded as one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. He is known for co-founding the Cubist movement. Among one of his most famous works was the proto-Cubist *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)* (1907). He also was testing

the limits of his works with work like Still Life with Chair Caning made in 1912. This playful work of art depicted a café in a way no one ever did before. Picasso dissected his traditional way of painting and was changing the way he would paint by making works of art that made the viewer question what they were seeing.

Between Picasso and Duchamp, the art world was changing in a way that no one saw coming or would understand for many years. Up to this point, art was making slow yet powerful changes. Art was no longer just for the rich. Now art could be found in almost everyone's house. This was not the case before the 1800's when the cost and size of a painting by a master artist were just too costly. It was also around this time in the early 1800's that the mass majority of the world had started to step into the era of enlightenment, as the vast majority were starting to become educated the role of art started to change. This change in education meant that more people could appreciate art for more than just a painting that was used to portray a message.

In line with that, the neoclassical art form was now becoming obsolete. Art was no longer just for political information or the vanity of the rich. Again, art became a way to express oneself. This birth of education gave the commoners a new way of getting their information and they no longer needed a painting to show them what to fear or who was in charge.

The art movements that followed started to change the way people looked at art. Some of the new movements challenged the traditional ways of painting, such as impressionism, which came after neoclassicism. This radical change in the way art was now being viewed had an impact on how art was being made and for who it was being made for. Art was now evolving from its primal form to the next generation. This new expansion of work led to post- impressionism, cubism, abstract, Dadaism and eventually encompassing today's digital art world.

In class we questioned how the new movements altered the path of where art is today and how it might be viewed in the next ten years. As technology continues to grow so will the way art is viewed, which is where I find myself now looking for my own voice. In today's world, the digital print is the king and the high definition screen, its queen. With this marriage, many artists have taken to digital art, better known as

pixel pushing. This new form of art is rapidly changing and has made an impression on the art world today, much like Jackson Pollock or Andy Warhol did.

In today's fast-paced world, artists need to be innovated like Pollock yet make work fast and affordable like Warhol. Which brings us back to the work of Duchamp. Duchamp's work made it possible for new work to be looked at as art. Breaking ground for a new artist like Salvador Dali and his work called Birth of man. This is just one example out of many that we discussed in class.

As class went on, we talked about how our work fits in today's art world. As an artist, I took a long look at how and where my work fit. I found that the best way to do this was to look at the past to help me find my inspiration. I pulled from many works of art including that of Henry Fox Talbot, a photography pioneer who invented the salted paper and calotype processes. His work is important to me because in my new line of work I plan to work much like he did in a raw process to explore degenerate of images. I plan to show how an image can still tell a story even when there is a loss of information. I plan to show subjects that have been rejected for our day to day lives. It is hoped that I can pull a feeling of anxiety or loneliness. I want my viewer to feel overwhelmed, much like how Pollock's work made others feel. I also want to push my work like Duchamp and make my viewer feel at a loss for words.