

# Critique on 'a lion attacking a horse' by george stubbs by emily bridget essay sa...

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The topic being studied at the moment is Other Living Things. Although some themes in art are not exotic, this doesn't mean they don't have the power to inspire. Objects that can inspire an artistic ' explosion' can include pets, animals, fruits, flowers, birds, insects, fish and imaginary beings.

The art work being critiqued in this essay is ' A Lion Attacking a Horse' by George Stubbs. It was created using oil paints on canvas, in 1765.

Created in a naturalism style, the artwork shows a lion attacking a horse on a mountainous landscape. The horse has a distressed expression on it's face, while it's body is tensed up in pain, showing a detailed structure on the horse's body. This is what naturalism is: a convincing representation of the real world but it's not precisely realism.

It is easily seen that the theme is war and possibly based on a narrative of what happens in nature everyday. War is preferred because the lion is ' devouring' the horse, even though this is part of nature; that's what a lion has to do to live but for the horse, it wants to live. The lion is the enemy while the horse is the ally or prey.

Stubbs has chosen to place the main subject in the center foreground along with the other objects in the background and painted around the edges, such as trees and bushes. There are clouds in the sky, unlike a sun which would create some kind of happiness within the artwork, but this is not what George Stubbs was aiming for. Along the ground, there is grass too. With all of these things in mind, it creates a bushy scene.

'A Lion Attacking a Horse' has been painted using care and precision along with plenty of focus. There's a lot of detailing, especially within the horse's body. Using thin lines, the details appearing along the horse's neck and legs, are more easily seen.

The art work has been created in a studio using no special equipment, except square and round brushes.

The art work has been composed by utilizing a horizontal compositional format to create the landscape.

The main content has been established by creating an emphasis on a particular part of the art piece by placing the subject in the center of it all and giving it more detail than what surrounds it. Using contrast, the horse grabs more attention because it's very white or cream coloured, compared to the brown, greys and blacks around it.

The art work is a bit symmetrically balanced in this painting. Either side of the main subject is clearly different but Stubbs creates balance through the placement of the subject matter.

There is not a huge amount of principle within this art work but the design elements form part of a sequence to create, at least some, unity. The art work contains a deep type of space as you can see for miles into the painting while looking at the main subject still. George Stubbs has created the illusion of space by using less detail in the background and more on the main subject, the horse.

The most significant design elements in 'A Lion Attacking a Horse' are colour and tone. Colour has been shown by using harmonious colours in the background while the main subject has the opposite colour to its surroundings creating a visual sensation for the viewer as their eyes are drawn to it. Tone has been formed throughout the horse's body where the muscles become nervous. Its neck, legs and stomach have very specific detailing using tone so that you can see where the muscles are and you start to learn that the horse is stressed and in pain while the lion sinks its teeth into the horse.

Curved, fuzzy, horizontal, flowing, delicate and natural lines have all been required to make this piece of art what it is. The fuzzy lines have been used in the background while the delicate and natural lines are used in the main subject, luring all attention to it. Horizontal lines aren't exact but they are there, along the ground and towards the background, building flat terrains where trees stand. Flowing lines are seen in the horse's hair, in the trees and in the background.

Also, natural and soft-edged shapes are seen in the main subject. The natural shapes are noticed in the horse and lion as well as the soft-edged ones. The texture used in the painting is smooth and natural. This is displayed in the background, unlike the foreground where the main subject is rough yet natural because of the tight and rigid body frame the horse has when it is anxious and frightened.

Tone has been used to create the illusion of form over the horse's body, to create texture over the horse's body and also variety in the painting.

Colours such as tertiary, as well as warm, dull and dark colours have been used in the art piece to create a frightening atmosphere about the painting.

In creating 'A Lion Attacking a Horse', George Stubbs' intention was to capture images in nature, ie. The horse and the lion. He was also aiming to tell a story, about the lion attacking the horse. Stubbs wanted a reaction the viewer by painting a picture that gave a personal interpretation of the subject. He was into horses and horse anatomy, so it's no surprise that he painted something like this.

The major influence on Stubbs in the production of the work were the historical climate in which the artwork was created, because around the time he was painting this, 1765, other artists were also painting content like this with the same theme, war and nature.

The main artistic qualities revealed in Stubbs', 'A Lion Attacking a Horse' include the selection the subject; an innovative approach; skill in the use of the medium; and the overall design.

Animals have become vital when it comes to artists imagination. That's why Stubbs painted an amazing image of 2 animals doing what only comes natural. He left his imagination to run free, coming up with a horrifying yet adventurous and dream-like picture of a white horse and a lion. This is the innovation and the skill that brings it together.

I really like the painting because I can imagine everything happen and unfold as I stare at it. I guess it's called your imagination but isn't that what

painting is all about? It's a real-life scene, something Stubbs didn't need to paint this, only a canvas, a brush and a mind full of ambition.

John Lienhard, from the University of Houston speaks his mind on George Stubbs as he finds his painting have "helped shape" a new gothic vision of nature. It was said that when he painted lords and ladies with animals, the ladies and lords were easily forgettable, unlike the animals, who were not. Stubbs was transfixed by the "energy, force and menace" of the horse. Lienhard also says, "George Stubbs dismantled horses with cool, accurate detachment and rebuilt them into the stuff dreams are made of." If that's not inspiring, I don't know what it is.

Natasha Rossington expresses her opinion on George Stubbs. "He has excellent use of the skill in the medium." Others, such as Isabel Hockley, have said 'A Lion Attacking a Horse' is well painted but they don't like the content. Furthermore, Corinda Ferguson doesn't like it all because it looks inappropriate.

After researching this painting, exploring George Stubbs' background and learning what others have to say, I'm glad to say I've discovered more than I could imagine.

For one, I've uncovered a little more about art that I didn't know. I've also realised how easily it is to use your imagination if you try and if you have the strength of mind and the strength to open it, just like George Stubbs did.

This artist, George Stubbs, loves painting but more importantly he loves creativity. That's what I like about it him. He went below the surface to come

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up with amazing and unique artwork, that's ambition; that's passion. Stubbs had the motivation too, another detail I'd like to add. He was all urge when it came to painting and that is how he came up with several exceptional pieces.

As I conclude this essay, I'd like to say that it was great to learn about this artist, his life and his passion for animals because there is nothing better than showing the world what you love.

Bibliography:

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