

My experience with romare bearden's at five in the afternoon essay



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Bearden's inspiration for this painting came from the poem Lament for a Bullfighter by Federico Garcia Lorca. The title of this painting, At Five in the Afternoon, usually signifies the end of a working day for a typical worker but in this painting, Romare Bearden, defines this time as the climax of a bullfight. When I first saw the painting I was confused because there was not a clear understanding of what the painting represented. This artist uses the synthetic cubism technique where in his work he uses the effect of a collage, integrating signs and fragments of real things (1). Romare Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1912.

He was raised surrounded by poets, artists, and musicians because his parents had a very close relationship with key figures involved in the Harlem Renaissance (2). My first impression upon viewing Romare Bearden's painting, " At Five in the Afternoon", was that it is a puzzling image filled with geometrical figures but upon observing the painting a few more times, I deciphered the meaning of the painting, which clearly states a Spanish bullfighting tradition. Is this a puzzle or a painting? That is the first question that came into my mind. As a viewer, my eyes bounced around a little but mostly kept me focused on a couple of figures that caught my attention. Some of them were the facial expressions of the fighter, the bright colors and how these geometric figures conveyed to form an expression of the artist.

Of course, at first, I had no idea of the message that the artist, Romare Bearden, wanted to express. Upon observing the painting for the first time there was one particular item that impressed me which was the sword. Who was using this sword? Was it a Pirate, or a warrior attacking his opponent?

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Nonetheless, I was certain that the sword was a meaning of violence and not peace. Once I observed, and observed this painting I had a clearer idea of what the painter was trying to express. The bright colors Bearden chose had the purpose to convey the drama and the intensity of the moment. The use of the color red is considered a symbol of blood, pain, death, and suffering.

The main character in this painting is the bull fighter. The maneuvers of the bull fighter are performed at close range, which places the bullfighter at risk of being gored or trampled. The bullfight usually concludes with the killing of the bull by a single sword thrust which is called "estocada". The bullfight ends when the bullfighter uses his sword to kill the bull, but in this painting it is not clearly stated who is the winner. Critics suggest that Bearden merged the figure of the bullfighter with that of the bull, so that the winner of the fight is determined by the spectator.

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