

History in art essays examples

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Many art researchers have pointed to a contentious acquisition made by the Canadian National Gallery fourteen years ago as the most notable art disgrace in history. The issue touched on a well-known modern art by Barnett Newman commonly referred to as “Voice of Fire.” The piece of art is approximately 18 feet tall and is characterized by a simple red band of color and two blue stripes. The artwork did not cause any serious concern when it appeared in the U. S. Pavilion Expo in 1967 and later on loan. It became a topic of public condemnation when, during the spring of 1990, the arcade bought the piece of art for an approximated \$1. 76 million. According to the reports made by Capital News, the purchase became so highly controversial within the media and the public that it made an appearance in the House of Commons and triggered a physical struggle of ties and T-shirts patterned in honor of the painting. The art was a serious flaw because it does not do what architecture should do.

The man in charge of the House of Commons commission on communication and culture, Felix Holtmann mentioned that the piece appeared like a couple of cans of paint and a pair of rollers and an approximated 10 minutes would work wonders. The Western museums have failed in their role as contemporary institutions. They have refused to progress with time. They still live in the nineteenth century when people believed in one special way of experiencing art: religiosity. Artists and their arts were not part of everyday life, connected to higher spheres of cognition. Similarly, modern museums have not changed in their way of thinking, with the exception of some few. Museums still present aesthetic objects completely removed from any reality. They modify the meaning of art immediately they enter the cubic

spaces in the gallery. Curators maintain that the public should look closely and hard to understand the painting. This line of thinking negates the role of modern museums. This is because paintings do not talk. They cannot communicate anything to the public.

Artwork gives the public clues, which must be connected to history in order to make some sense, to be interpreted. This means that anybody can deal with it by looking at a picture. Any painting without any idea about the reason behind its production, without knowledge relating to its conditions of production and a description of the aesthetic and political culture from which the image originated from is wrong. Museums should be formalist institutions, dedicated to authentic form to help avoid misunderstanding. In his piece, Newman claimed that the art was inspired by the “ voice of God speaking from the burning bush as a way of commenting on the literal metaphorical conflagration of the Vietnam War” (Case Study). Such claims limit individual imagination in understanding artwork.

The genre of art to which Newman and other controversial artists belong is often classified as minimalist or abstract expressionism. Such pieces appeared to be a strong link with the actual world. The widow of Newman sold the piece of art to the National Gallery at a haggled basement cost, to ensure it went to a public collection. The value of art should not be financial because when one values in monetary terms, it loses its inherent worth. That goes for other expensive abstract paintings. Art means what it is worth and not the other way round. Twenty-three years after its purchase, “ Voice of Fire” may be worth more than ten million dollars. However, it is a useless piece that cannot fetch the amount that the government used to purchase it.

The painting had more relevance to Canada more that it had for the United States. Using 1. 8 million to purchase a painting widely perceived as three stripes of color was a colossal waste of taxpayer's dollars.

However, the supporters of the purchase claimed that fine art should not have to be accessible. It should challenge and push boundaries. The painting achieved that, especially when on display in the Gallery, where its enormous size and bold colors were remarkably startling to behold. Additionally, it was a piece of some relevance to Canadians, even though Newman was an American painter. The House of Commons could not have commissioned purchase of a painting that had little significance or relation to Americans. Newman and Gehry tried to shape the environment of the viewer, but they terribly failed in achieving that.

In conclusion, it is hard to call three lines art. The investment was a pure waste of public funds, and those who claim their love for this painting, are in reality justifying their existence. However, some have suggested that the controversy revolving around the piece was a profound questioning of accountability of the elite in the public sphere. Based on the controversy that the “ Voice of Fire” has received, such approach could lend new meaning and importance to otherwise arcane objects, by giving modern art social relevance, which it has been denied. Artists, as well as the society, should welcome other means of analyzing art, rather than maintaining that such pieces always have hidden meaning.