

Conventions of representation in art



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Conventions in Art

Throughout time, conventions of representation in portraiture dynamically transformed throughout history, considerably changing each artist's genre of work supporting personal conventions portrayed in the time periods heavily varied. To an extent understanding, the change of convention in portraiture is crucial, allowing the society to move forward from all limitation from the past and extend its news innovation. 'Conventions of representation' define as a set of a regulation of undertaking something. This allow the human society are signified in the art movement between intervals of time and places further describing an accepted way of representing something in a symbolic representation.

Many periods of art depicted conventions of representations. The Renaissance; exemplified through the work of Leonardo da Vinci 'Vitruvian Man' during the Renaissance period, portrayed the rebirth of Classical Greek and Roman ideas, Modernism; Neo-Expressionism, Edvard Munch 'The Scream' thrived from the Modernist period of Neo-Expressionism primarily adapting the world solely from a subjective perspective evoking moods. and contemporary art; Feminism; the work of Barbara Kruger accentuates the conventions of Feminist movement conveyed through post-modern techniques. Thus, through the adaptations of conventions of representations in portraiture, it dynamically altered through history in works of these artists.

Portraiture has changed throughout history simply the wide range of materials utilised in the early years of art throughout the contemporary society thus changing the conventions of representation. This is described

through the imperative notions of culture depicted in Renaissance & Greek era which was extensively prevalent and mastered with the widespread forms of art during the periods of Renaissance, Modernism and contemporary.

Representations in Egyptian shadowed strict traditions 'Frontalism'. Every example of Egyptian art strictly highlighted in this style. This is portrayed where the head of the character is always symbolised to the side, a right angle to the body, while the body is perceived from the front. The eyes are portrayed in the front side perspective as Egyptians valued the eyes more than anything else, valued in highly on prosperity, adolescence and well-being.

Ancient Greeks also had a fascination with portraiture, mostly in its sculpted form. This is indicated by the 'Golden Ratio' used to create aesthetics and visual harmony, based on the idea of mathematical equations and science to create perfected, idealised proportions. This can be demonstrated through The Parthenon of a mathematical approach. The creations of Greeks strongly portrayed the success of their society; strong athleticism, philosophy or power.

The Renaissance between 1400-1600 revamped portraiture in its modern sense and is an essential. Predominately portraying nobles, and religious figures. This was a period of the Rebirth of Classical Greek and Roman ideals. Also, utilising the idea of perfect and idealised proportion, adapting to the convention of maths and science to create beauty, perfection and religious ideals.

Conventions of representations were highly significant in Renaissance art. The conventions during Renaissance represented their way of life, this was often portrayed in many religious paintings. It was a way to characterise of cultural traits.

The idea of the concept is signified in the convention of oil painting. Oil painting was extremely implemented in Northern Europe during the early fifteenth century, later becoming popular in the late century. A slow drying process, allowing modification while its drying procedure. This allowed an artist to create luminous effects because oil could be applied lightly. Oil painting allowed the ability to paint with a more dominant variety of colours which allowed to further explore and visualise human figures, architecture and natural environment in a realist aspect. This was often utilised with well-known Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo.

Renaissance artist also had a volume of knowledge on the fundamentals, anatomy, composition, line, light and shadow as well as having the artistic mind of creating a scene to emphasise the perfection and beauty. The optical linear perspective was exceedingly used to create a high central depth by shadows and interposition, and a depth of emotion which suggests human feeling instead of static and passive icons. The Renaissance brought back the idea of figures being realistic, using new ideas about maths and science to these realistic figures. More so, It also represented idealised figures such the work of Michelangelo ' The Creation of Adam' demonstrating strength and power of society, often embodying religious figures and ideals.

Major issues occurred during the Renaissance period. A factor was the Protestant Reformation throughout the 16th century in Europe removing its tradition of Catholic art. A new artistic practice developed, followed Protestant tradition and divided drastically from the southern European tradition and art produced during the High Renaissance. More so, the Catholic Counter-Reformation both reacted against and responded to Protestant reproaches of art in Roman Catholicism to produce style of Catholic art. Both countries later expanded into secular forms of art, history, landscape, portraiture and still life. Through the influence of this concern, this created massive tension between notions of art. The influence of the 'Wars of Religion' transformed the way of Renaissance artist viewed their religious ideals.

In the work of Leonardo da Vinci 'Vitruvian Man' the pen and ink illustration, exemplifies this concern representing the conventions of the Renaissance period. Famous artwork portraying the study of the male human proportions. Da Vinci symbolises the combination of science, mathematics and art to represent of his vision of the world attempting to create perfect proportions of the male in myriad forms of geometric shapes. The Golden Ratio and Fibonacci is both a mathematician concept to contributing to the perfect ratios and proportional sizes of the human body. This concept represents the conventions as during this period many artist and audience viewed their perfections in the anatomy and perfect idealised body. For many this, many of high class religious patrons highly valued the satisfactory of these works paying high amounts of money to be displayed in religious areas (churches,

chapel). Thus, through this idea it significantly demonstrates the conventions of representation in portraiture.

Furthermore, during the modernist period, Neo-Expressionism was a modernist movement, initially in poetry and painting, originating in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. An idea to present the world exclusively from an independent perception, distorting it radically for emotionally effect to evoke attitudes or idea. Neo-Expressionist artists sought to express denotation or emotional experience rather than physical authenticity. An inspired movement by the Symbolist currents in late 19th century.

‘ Fin de Siecle’ was a major influenced on the way he views the world trailing his downfall. A period of degeneration but also of a new beginning of new global economic and political system. This movement affected many European countries and artist.

More so, The Industrial Revolution Turn of the Century’ in Europe, shifted in artistic styles and create major changes of the society. Innovative technologies and immense urbanisation efforts reformed the individuals’ perspective, and artists replicated the psychosomatic impact of these developments rendering into artworks.

The work of Edvard Munch ‘ Scream’ exemplifies fin-de-siecle feels of remoteness, disillusionment and psychological anguish conveyed through distorted forms. An icon and a metaphor of man’s existential loneliness and angst. Throughout his life, Edvard Munch struggled with anxiety through

personal levels. His mentally ill sister was hospitalised during *The Scream* was painted in 1893. This damaged Munch in myriad of individual ways, undergoing both physical and mental suffering in the modern age and thus representing his ideas through this painting. This sparked the emotions demonstrated in this work executed with pastel and crayons to create these exaggerated, harsh, gloomy colours highlighted in the rough expressionistic lines and swirling, swaying and exaggerated brushstrokes. Thus, through this work supports the idea of conventions of representations are significant in different periods of time and events occurring.

In addition, contemporary art's conventions are significant. Contemporary art is the art of today, the twenty-first century. The change of innovations allows artist to move on from the past and allow new technology to create new styles. Feminist art, an aim to make the audience question the social rules of society hoping to make a change to women society, 'Women's Right Movement'. This statement can be reflected upon all the audiences of men and still today this has not been achieved. It often uses Post-modern techniques; humour, appropriation, parody, sarcasm and a unique political statement.

Barbara Kruger, 'Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)' demonstrates this concept, conveying a political message. The two halves of the image, the negative and the positive interpretation, emphasise the dual nature underlying of matter. The feminine figure becomes a combat zone that women both struggle for. The advancement of technology in the contemporary society allowed Kruger to create a graphic design, phrases to catch the viewer's attention using the language of contemporary

publications. Kruger changes the way women have been traditionally depicted for centuries by artists as sex symbols who are dominated by men. The message addresses the issue of the continued feminist struggle, connecting the physical body of female views necessitate the feminist demand.

Kruger utilises the appropriation of images from their original context in magazines and sets them as the background against which she illustrates expressive phrases. The use confronting of red, white, and black, each element of the final artwork is crucial to its effectiveness as a significant protest. Through this artwork, Kruger evoke an immediate response for the audience highly from the opposite gender. The creation of digital art conjures a larger audience to create an implication, expanding the demand shared in social media platforms to a larger social and cultural response.

In conclusion, each phase of historical period exerted distinctive styles of work. The change of convention in portraiture is vital, consenting humanity to advance from all constraints from the past and outspread its innovation. Through the artworks of 'Vitruvian Man', 'Scream', and 'Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)' it demonstrates a clear understanding of the difference of convention utilised between the unique eras. Each era had a distinctive philosophy. Different problematic concerns continued to influenced society influencing artists whether its emotionally or physically, thus rendering into paintings to explore notions. Conventions of representation in portraiture vigorously reformed, as the world is constantly is changing mythology, hence conventions modify.