

Art and architecture: museum paper essay example

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This is a picture of the Virgin Mary done on a wooden panel by Lorenzo Monaco an Italian artist between 1370-1425. It is currently in Norton Simon Art Foundation Museum. It is a painting of the Virgin during the annunciation by Angel Gabriel, and her quiet moment of reading is interrupted by this startling news. The Virgin's pose depicts her marvel at receiving the news that she will be the Mother of Christ. The artist has done an excellent painting her blue drapery complete with highlights of yellow, pink and green in its fall. The halo on her head is also immaculately done. The artist, Lorenzo Monaco is also known as Piero di Giovanni. He was a monk in the monastery of Santa Maria Degli Angeli. His works most of which are on a gilded background showed spiritual virtues and had no profane elements. This paper research on the work `Virgin Annunciate` by Lorenzo Monaco.

The subject matter of the work is in Christian iconography, it is the story of the birth of Jesus Christ to the Virgin Mary by Angel Gabriel. The painting uses visual arts to illustrate this aspect of religion. The work is a picture of the Virgin Mary seated with an open book on her lap showing she was reading before the angel appeared with the news. The Virgin is clothed in a blue drapery. Blue symbolizes heavenly grace as well as hope, servitude and good health, all of which are Virgin Mary's attributes. She is ready to serve God by being the mother of God. The yellow highlights on the drapery symbolize renewal, hope, light, and purity. The green highlight represent nature, fertility, hope, and bountifulness. The work is of the Virgin during annunciation; a time of life beginning. The piece is a devotional work as it is in religious worship and narrates the story of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In terms of formal elements used in the painting, the artist has mainly used light colors. There are few shadows on the walls of the drapery. The colors used are also not only eye-catching as they are also symbolic. Lorenzo Monaco has used the space on the panel correctly so that the Virgin Mary is occupying most of the space: active area has thus been well used. The panel is with wood. Motion has been employed in the piece of art; motion is the intended path that an artist uses in the painting that the viewer follows. The Virgin Mary is seated, and her left hand is raised to show that the appearance of an angel has startled her. The surface of this painting looks smooth thus it has visual texture. The artist has used narrative art in his work. His piece narrates the story of the beginning of the salvation of mankind; the birth of the savior is.

The work of art affects me positively as a twenty-first-century viewer. Even though the painting was done in early fifteenth century, it vividly depicts the annunciation of the birth of Christ. Particularly for the Christians, this painting has an enormous impact on their religion. It is a pleasing composition that shows the gentle form of the Virgin Mary, her simplicity, and humility. The artist is skillful, and the result is a well-crafted piece of work; her graceful form fills the panel, and one can see from her pose; attentiveness, awe and a carefully measured gesture. The Virgin Annunciate has rendered the subject. From her dressing, the presence of a halo, the color of her drapery and the devotional book lying on her lap, Christian iconography cannot escape a viewer.

The painting is on a tempera panel onto which gold leaf has been applied and were thus a panel painting (a painting done on a flat panel made of

wood). The fact that it is done on a wooden board and not canvas is significant to the time during which this painting was done as canvas is a later invention. Also, when a panel painting is done on a gold leaf it gives them a sense of heavenly and divine. The scale used is in relation to human size. When looking the shape size and orientation format The shape is a rectangle, and it is in human size. The orientation is rectangle as one views the panel. The Virgin Mary is sitting on alert, and this pose brings to a rectangle orientation of the group. It is clear that shape and orientation work together.

This piece of art was originally a part of a flanking panel on which the Angel Gabriel is announcing the message to Mary. According to its iconography, it looks as if it was an altarpiece that was commissioned by the Virgin Mary. One can tell it is the Virgin Mary from her blue drapery as well as the halo on her head that are common Christian iconography. One can depict its original location of the work, despite it now being in the museum; one can see that the piece was intended for a church. It must have been an altarpiece: this is from the serenity depicted by the Virgin's pose to the halo on her head showing her divinity as the mother of God. The work's function is to narrate the story of the annunciation of the birth of the savior. This is a message of hope and renewal to mankind. The piece was intended for public consumption and the most eligible audience being catholic followers. The painting carries a lot of meanings to the catholic faith as it illustrates the beginning of the salvation story which then leads to nativity of the savior. The Virgin Mary is revered for her divinity since she humbly accepts to be the mother of Christ.

Works Cited

Rosemary M. Wright. Sacred Distances: Representing the Virgin Mary in Italian altar pieces. Manchester University Press, 2006. Print.