

Analysis of alex pardee's artwork

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What is a leper anyway? In the past, it was simply a disease. When you caught this disease you were isolated. Taken out of society, never to return again. Your life would never be the same again. As time passed this disease obviously died out. Nowadays not many people have leprosy in its serious form. But we do have leprosy of a different sort. This leprosy is even worse than the physical illness. It is something that gets worse over time and will continue to do so unless we as human beings decide to change our actions.

Today, those who are different are thought to be lepers. These people should be rejected, shunned. They are unusual, strange; we cannot accept what they believe in. Why is this so? Why have we been brainwashed so thoroughly by the media that we don't see that being different is something we humans create in our minds. People are "different" only because we label them to be that way. They are lepers, only because we make them so. What is so bad really about being a leper? Being different? This image addresses these questions.

We can see that in the image there are two odd looking creatures who are bleeding onto a hand with a chicken's head. This chicken's head is dripping in blood while there is a small bar of soap at its feet. The only thing in colour is the blood which signifies that it symbolises something important. And so he bathed in the blood of the lepers. By this phrase we understand that the creature in the middle is the object which is "bathing in the blood". Again, why would anyone want to bathe in the blood of leper? Well why not?

In this case the two odd looking creatures would be the lepers. If the lepers in this image represent people who are different, then it could also mean

that these people are so different that they could be considered to be a subculture of some sort. It is understandable to believe that some subcultures are actually desirable to some people. This obviously depends on the person's personal taste. They may want to be involved in the subcultures of nerds, jocks, emo's, scene kids, goths, etc etc. The leper character may not even be focusing on a particular subculture.

They can also represent the chameleons of society, changing themselves to appeal to people. Again, this depends on your perspective. The leper character only represents a chameleon of society if you choose to believe that it does so to persuade you to join the subculture that it is portraying itself to be. Why would people choose to believe this? Only to feel accepted. They may be so rejected that all they want and need is a feeling of belonging even if it is found a way which is not entirely truthful or right. Rather, it is an illusion.

So do we humans warp what is there to suit our cases and make certain situations more pleasurable to us? Definitely. This leads us to the importance of the blood in the image. The blood can be viewed as the initiation process. The blood, which is the only coloured thing in the image symbolises this initiation process. This is the only part of the image in colour, because this process is the most important part of belonging to a group of people or a subculture. Bathing in the blood would be catching the leper's disease, or otherwise, finally being a part of the lepers.

The feeling of belonging settles in for the first time. Now that the person is a part of the lepers, can they really think of themselves as lepers? They are

now able to understand and empathise with the subculture they have joined so would it actually seem so different to them now? No it wouldn't, further underlining the fact that we only label people as being different, of being social lepers, only because we do not understand them. However if we were a part of what they believe in, i. e. a part of their subculture, then we would no longer think they are so different.

Only an outsider to this subculture would consider them to be lepers. Again, we humans label that which is not. We have established what it means to be different and why it is important, but what about the bar of soap at the chicken hand creature's feet? What would this symbolise? This symbolises the other perspective of this two sided argument of acceptance. The soap represents the cure for leprosy. The means to be cleaned from this disease. In the modern world this soap bar would represent the views of people who believe that removing yourself from a subculture is the true path to acceptance.

However, like the size of the soap bar, these people are very few because we all have an innate need to belong to a community, society, club, culture or subculture. In short, we all need to feel like we belong somewhere, no matter how much of an illusion this feeling of belonging is. We desire to be persuaded to believe in something only to feel accepted and wanted by a community. This image drawn by the talented Alex Pardee shows us all these innate human desires in a way which persuades us to believe that we do have them. Of course this is achieved by this talented artist by using a great many visual techniques.

First of all the area of the image with the highest salience is the blood because like we established, the blood - which represents the initiation process - is one of the most important aspects of the process of belonging. The importance of this transition stage is further underlined by the fact that the rest of the image is black and white hand sketches making the blood also the area with the highest colour modality. When we look further into the image and analyse the finer details we notice that the background is non-contextualised, in fact, it is completely white.

This helps us to not stray from the main message that the image is trying to give. It keeps us focused on the foreground while also giving extra information on what might be going on in the image. This information is given to us in the text written at the top. The foreground in question is the chicken hand with the blood being poured onto it. It is not in fact the text. This is because the image is in the centre and the gushing blood attracts us to the image at hand. This image would also be the focal point again highlighting the important message being given by the image.

The perspective that we see the image also gives us a whole new view on the scene. We see the main subject (the chicken hand) in the frontal view. Seeing as the subject is the most important part of the image, it is safe to say that the whole image is viewed in the frontal perspective. However, it is important to note that we see the "lepers" side on. This suggests to us that we are not part of the lepers, that we are detached from them, that in fact they are different from us. The gaze of the subject is demanding.

It is looking straight at the audience as if it wants to get its message across. Its message that it wants to be involved and included. The lepers on the other hand do not even have eyes. This suggests that they have nothing they want to communicate to people and are unaffected by what people think of them. The image in general is in a low modality because it is already trying to communicate a complicated message. By keeping it in simple sketches, the artist is making it easier for the audience to understand the message.

The artist uses all of these visual techniques with one purpose in mind: to get the message across. The message that being different is not a negative thing. It is simply a means of feeling like you belong. Being a leper does not mean everything is lost. There will be a deformity, but one ought to bear in mind that they still have their God-given potentials in them. It is the duty of society, to give a helping hand, in order for these "lepers" to exhibit what they have in them to world. You see, it's not them. It's you.