

Rembrandt's the mill essay sample



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Rembrandt van Rijn (1606 - 1669) is a well-acclaimed Dutch painter who has been recognized for his work during the Baroque period of 1645 to 1648.

One of his works is *The Mill*, a 41.3" x 34.3" oil painting on canvas. This piece of work was about his landscape theme and is currently on display at The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C.

The Mill is considered as one of the greatest art pieces of Rembrandt because of two major reasons. The art piece is naturally very attractive and it has served as a major inspiration to the taste of the viewers, as well as painters during the epoch. This painting has thus resulted in a signification transformation of the quality and standards of paintings. *The Mill* was well acknowledged by connoisseurs and artists because of the lasting impression the painting projects to the viewer (Schama, 1999). The painting impels a romantic atmosphere through the scene that is depicted in the painting. In addition, the presence of the silhouette of the mill that is positioned against the turbulent sky imparts a dramatic effect that compels the viewer to further imagination. There has been speculation that the painting actually depicts the mill of Rembrandt's father, who is a miller himself. Another story that had circulated was associated with the stormy weather captured in the painting. It has been said that the stormy weather represented the terrible financial problems that Rembrandt experienced in the 1650s.

A recent restoration of *The Mill* has exposed that the background depicted in the painting was made up of blue skies that was earlier covered by varnish that had been discolored. Such discovery has further strengthened the expression of the art piece. Rembrandt's extends a sensation that natural forces express some kind of dramatic conflict between the mill and the sky.

Simultaneously, the persons situated within the landscape provide a human element that the viewer can react to on a personal level.

Rembrandt is regarded as one of the greatest painters of all time because of the quality of his art pieces. The details of his life were not many and it remains a mystery as to how he acquired or developed his intricate ability to capture specific scenes and landscapes onto canvass. It has been documented, though, that Rembrandt served as apprentice to the artists Jacob Isaacs van Swanenburg and Pieter Lastman. It is most likely that his talent in painting was influenced by these two artists who had acted as mentors to the young Rembrandt. In another painting of Rembrandt, the *Stoning of Stephen* (1624), analysts determined that his style was evidently influenced by Lastman. Rembrandt also spent time with another artist, Han Lievens, and it has been reported that these two artists exchanged ideas.

After almost a decade of mentorship, Rembrandt gained the ability to follow his own path with regards to painting styles and themes. In his painting, *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp*, Rembrandt was able to show the details of his religious and mythological subject matter. In addition, he was able to illustrate human nature in his later works, which included demonstrations of misfortune and sadness in his paintings. Rembrandt also generated several self-portraits so that his image could be captured in time. These self-portraits also provided a method for him to provide introspection and melancholy, which in turn reinforced his maturity and dominion for the rest of his life.

By the 1640s, Rembrandt switched his theme in painting to landscapes. As depicted in *The Mill*, he provides a narrative approach to his paintings. He also includes the use of light and the atmosphere as integral components of his landscape paintings. His quality of work was set apart from what the majority of artists were painting during that period. He would ignore suggestions from his colleagues as well as traditional methods in painting styles.

The Mill shows a reddish brown layer that had been covered with a yellowish gray layer of paint. Under the mill, a thin dark brown underpaint is also present. Rembrandt's painting style changes, depending on the area of the landscape he is working on. In the supposedly dark areas of the mill, he uses thin paint, while in the sky, water and plants, he employs broad brushmarks and minimum impasto. Analysis of *The Mill* through x-radiography showed that the hill in the painting was lowered on the left side and the bridge and reflection were removed from the entire painting. In addition, the water adjacent to the mill was readjusted, and the boat and the man holding the oars were added on a later stage of the painting's development. These detailed analysis of the painting shows that Rembrandt did not have a definite picture of what to paint during that time, and he simply continue on with his painting spontaneously.

The Mill is a romantic piece of art work than surpasses the interpretation of reality and nature. The main subject of the painting is peace and calmness that covers the land during dusk. The presence of shadow magnifies the effect of the calming mood of the painting. This piece of art work has influenced most of the English landscape artists then and now and it is still <https://assignbuster.com/rembrandts-the-mill-essay-sample/>

considered as a very memorable painting in the theme of landscape portrayal. Other analysts have expressed that *The Mill* alone is enough to form an epoch on landscape painting because he was successful in using fine and detailed features of his topic through the use of different brush strokes and colors.

Reference

Schama S (1999): Rembrandt's eyes. New York: Knopf Publishers. 768 pages.