

Art (fauvism)



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Full The Fauve Influence Fauvism is an artistic era made popular by one of its pioneers, Henri Matisse. The artist was a lawyer who was attracted to art when he was twenty one. He sat at the feet of the symbolist painter, Gustave Moreau who emphasized that personal expression was among the most important attributes of a great painter (Dabrowski). With such teaching, Matisse got out of line from the post-impressionist culture and went back to impressionistic subjects and used bright colors as his signature. This started fauvism. The artist focused on his personal expression using contrasting colors which were often bright. Also evident in this era is the use of pure and unmixed colors that identifies Les Fauves literally translated as “ The Wild Beasts”. Intense colors were not only used by the artists as an expression of themselves but also used as a vehicle to describe light and space (theartstory. org).

With the influence of his mentor, Matisse experimented on the use of bright colors to express his emotional state and some other painters followed the same path such as Derain. Their subject matters are often landscapes, cityscapes and scenes of bourgeois leisure, still life, portraiture, domestic and studio interiors and particularly focused on the female figure (Dabrowski & theartstory. org). The Reclining Odalisque is an example of the latter which shows a woman reclining on a bed, half-naked. The woman appears to be resting with one of her hands under her head. She is clothed in a white robe that is partially exposing her body. The blanket is also white with streaks of blue color that is in contrast to the color of the bed sheet hanging over the bed as well as the background which is bright red.

From the characteristics of Fauves described earlier and the objective of the era, which is for the artist to express his state of mind, it could be said that

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Matisse was expressing or communicating carnality. The woman lying on the bed is half-naked and this seems to be symbolical of sexual desires. The color of the background does not only catch the attention of the audience because of its brightness but also for its symbolical meaning in relation to the painting. Red is known to be representative of love, passion, desire and warmth. The color is used as a means to emphasize the meaning of the painting. This could show the painter's state of mind when the painting was done. Of course the statement is not meant to say that there could have been an affair between the model and the painter rather, it is possible that the painter was feeling passionate at the moment and was greatly inspired with it that he used the subject in such a manner and emphasized his emotional state through the colors he used in the painting. The intention of Matisse in the painting could have been to stir the emotions of the viewers as much as he had been emotionally stirred when he made the painting. Art is beautiful but perhaps the real beauty of it is the freedom the artists have in expressing themselves through the media they choose and think are most effective in communication their thoughts and emotions. Fauvism may not have lasted like other eras however, it made a great impact in the art industry because of the belief in one's self to effectively express a person's emotional state. Fauvism has its own contributions to modern art which are still evident through the use of pure and bright colors. This could be the legacy of the era that will forever be adopted.

References

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