

Museum paper

Literature



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The true appreciation of art does not come easily to an individual without gathering information and truly trying to experience the whole essence of beauty of art itself. Art is beautiful in its sense that it tries to convey a message or portray something in nature. In this particular scenario, I decided to focus my attention into American art. While Romanticism tends to focus in emotion and spontaneous design, American art has its characteristics. American art tend to be more inclined towards presenting self-determination, achievement and liberation of the colonies. However, American art was always overshadowed by the European art and was popular at that time contrary to popular belief. Consequently, Romanticism focused more on emotions, paint textures, and highlights to truly capture the heart of action and emotion. American art is more modern compared to the Renaissance art and European art. The American colonial period consisted of portraits as colonists wanted to establish their identity in the new world. After the new nation achieved liberty, American painters shifted their focus more towards nature and worldly aesthetics. When the revolutionary war began, portraits were often created that appealed to the senses of the patriots. One of the key paintings that drew my attention was by Benjamin West, Colonel Guy Johnson and Karonghyontye (Captain David Hill). The painting was beautiful as it showed Guy Johnson, the British superintendent of six Indian nations. The piece was painted beautifully in oil and right away caught my attention Guy Johnson looked really charismatic while the Indian seemed determined and confident. West does a fantastic job of really capturing the dynamic personality of the two leaders. One of the most prominent paintings reproduced in the American eighteenth and nineteenth century was Benjamin West. This current painting is now part of the Andrew <https://assignbuster.com/museum-paper/>

W. Mellon Collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C, which was our place of study. History suggests that West clearly painted this work at his studio in London where most of his famous paintings were produced. The portrait was painted during the 1776 time era and captures the essence of an important event that occurred in London, which secured the royal appointment of Johnson and his friend Karonghyontye. Karonghyontye, is a Mohawk Chief that was also known as David Hill. The beauty of this painting is the fact that it portrays the beautiful alliance between British and Indian forces against the colonists. Although one might wonder at the fact why Benjamin West as an American chose to paint this portrait, it does depict a solid relationship between two sides. The goal of West with this portrait was not to offend the colonists but rather to give his appreciation to the American Indians, who have taught him their way of life. West insists that the Indians had taught him to how create paints from Berries and clays. Although this does not give clear indication of the position of West in this conflict, history does indicate that West was a supreme diplomat. He served as a painter for George III and begged the king to grant independence to the colonies. The painting itself is an immaculate masterpiece. West portrays the significance of the general as he paints the leader with a red-coated uniform along with his moccasins, wampum belt and an Indian blanket. Again, this shows the strong allegiance and cooperation between the two parties will be maintained at any given situation. In addition, West embeds the vital concept of family values and culture as he has an Indian family gathering in a British tent. Surprisingly enough, West always uses light hues to paint the American Indian. Many critics point out the fact that West wanted to show that American Indians were “ noble savages.” West portrays the alter ego of <https://assignbuster.com/museum-paper/>

the Indian's character by showing war paint and feathers. These aspects clearly indicate that the Indians harassed the colonists in New York and Pennsylvania. West's portrayal of the Mohawk warrior was greeted with much applause and the Europeans viewed the natives as "noble savage." Hence, West emerged as Europe's prominent artist and quickly earned the name "Western Raphael". After the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the new nation was emphatic with visual art. Painters such as Benjamin West and Gilbert Stuart painted scenes of the revolution war. Without a doubt, Benjamin West has been a key figure in creating ties with items and artifacts of the past and bringing them in his paintings. West is also notorious for giving the modern society key artifacts about the past. West has painted several paintings that depict the era of the revolutionary war. His close ties with the American Indians no doubt facilitate the process. Undoubtedly, West has left an ever-lasting legacy and has influenced many future American painters. He has instilled the fundamentals of important painting techniques to portray emotion that is utilized by modern painters. No doubt, he will be remembered as one of the prominent figures in history. Works Cited Colonel Guy Johnson and Karonghyontye (Captain David Hill). (n. d.). National Gallery of Art. Retrieved July 27, 2011, from <http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg62/gg62-569.html>