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clearly the portrait is  
a masterpiece and  
has been successful  
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### Portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross by Thomas Eakins

The Gross Clinic is a work of art painted in 1875 by 31 year old Thomas Eakins. The painting is a depiction of Samuel D. Gross a physician from Philadelphia and his other clinic members performing surgery on a young man. It was painted when Dr. Gross was at the peak of his career working at Jefferson hospital. He was removing a malignant bone from the thigh of a young boy at the same time teaching a student audience about the techniques in a medical amphitheater at Jefferson medical college. The painting is considered America's greatest works of art in the nineteenth century, and has brought out the best of the doctor as both a teacher and doctor.

The painting is a masterpiece in depicting Dr. Gross as the best in what he did. He was coordinating the surgical process at the same time explaining to the audience of students about the techniques. The painting was submitted to the centennial exhibition in Philadelphia but was not accepted because it was considered shocking because of its graphic nature.

The portrait was painted during the Americas cold war period whereby there was a great need for fast and effective medical practices because of military activities. The portrait depicts dr. gross trying to carry out more than one activity concurrently to hasten delivery of the medical services both to the young boy and to the audience.

The focus of Eakins in the portrait was in the surgical procedure depicted by the way he has represented lighting. Even though the lighting is insufficient for such a procedure there is more lighting on the operation table which gradually decreases as you move upwards towards the students. This is a

remarkable way of stressing or highlighting main ideas and has helped bring out Dr. Gross as the emperor of American surgery, lionizing him at peak in his career.

The portrait brings out the horrific nature of medical procedures carried in those days and is depicted by the woman presumed to be the young man's mother who could not bear watch the procedure and looked away. In addition, the doctor himself is doing the procedure in his street clothes which makes it look a little less professional and the fact that the doctor had bloody hands which made the medical convention that had been hosted by the pathological society of London debate about germ theory. Use of a retractor by Dr. Daniel Appel to keep the incision made by Dr. Gross open and also use of a napkin soaked in chloroform held over the face of the patient as anesthesia by Dr. W. Joseph Hearn. It was for these reasons the portrait was banned.

The artist of the portrait Thomas Eakins, uses colors that are easily distinguishable. Mainly, shades of black, white, and grey are used. These colors are easy to differentiate due to the fact that they only present the audience with two options which are the black or white/grey. Black and white make every aspect of the portrait clear from each other.

Apart from bringing out clear differences the colors moreover bring out the atmosphere of the environment the surgery was going on in. The colors are dull depicting various atmospheres which include seriousness, gloom, and sadness. Thomas Eakins did not use bright colors that are associated with fun, happiness, and lack of seriousness in the portrait. He only used dull versions of these bright colors like the red color behind the operation area.

The portrait looks very realistic and an absolute depiction of something that might have actually happened. To some extent it almost looks like a photograph. The artist did not alter the visual reality of the portrait he drew it as he saw it. The fusion of shades of color, shapes, and lines bring out this effect to the portrait thus making it very convincing to the audience.

The artist made the portrait in a way that it emphasized more on educating the audience present at the surgery hall. This is accomplished by the way the artist only portrays small part of the surgical area compared the big part of the area represented by the scholars. The artist also portrays Dr. Samuel facing the scholars. Dr. Samuel's face is directed away from the surgical table and is directed towards the scholars. The whole scenario is more of teaching the audience rather than treating the young man.

The portrait also depicts a sense of confidence on the doctor's part whereby he can easily perform both duties perfectly. This is evident by the fact that the portrait was made when he was in the peak of his career at Thomas Jefferson hospital. He is even seen using one hand.

The whole portrait has been successful in bringing out certain several aspects of circumstances in those period. One of them being that it was during the cold war where there was great need for fast and effective military health services. In addition, the doctor was a professional, the fact that he and his team wore their street clothes, use of the retractor, a napkin dipped in chloroform and blood on the doctor's fingers was a more crude way of carrying out the procedures depicted by the woman next to the doctor and appears a little less professional. The other thing is use of dark

shades of colors and use of dull colors to depict tone, mood and atmosphere of the whole process.

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