

The cultural context of rebellious silence and home décor essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Rebellious Silence is a photograph by Shirin Neshat, who is also the subject. In the work, Shirin Neshat's face is covered by Islamic calligraphy and is divided (left to right) by a rifle (assumedly but not necessarily held by herself). The calligraphy covers the parts of a woman's face that one must hide in Iran's theological state. The photograph is black and white, adding to the already serious tone of the work.

The first impression received is one of oppression, it seems as though the woman feels oppressed and her eyes are very bleak. The gun may symbolise oppression as it is not necessarily the subject who is holding the gun but possibly an aggressor. The gun could also be considered a symbol for warfare, possibly in Shirin Neshat's country, Iran. There is also a strong sense of religion involved in the painting, Neshat is wearing the Muslim clothing and where her face is supposed to be covered is the writing.

Before any of these details can be used to interpret the artist's intention it is important to learn of Shirin Neshat's background. Born in the middle of the twentieth century into a wealthy family in Iran. Her parents, particularly her father, worshiped western culture and in doing so, sent Neshat to a Catholic boarding school – Neshat recalls the school as being cold hearted. Neshat left Iran slightly before it's revolution for Los Angeles to study art. Upon the revolution (into a strictly Islamic state), Neshat's parents, who planned to retire, were left without welfare and put on a minute salary.

The fact that the revolution ended so badly in Iran (with violent ramifications being seen now particularly) could indicate the combination of guns and religion in Rebellious Silence. The work also uses this combination to hint at

the concept of martyrdom, although it is not clear what opinion she possesses on this topic.

There are many techniques used in the construction of this work, it is largely symmetrical, unusual for a photograph (the subject is usually slightly off-centre) and unified. Because of the photograph's positioning, there is a vague sense of distortion and hierarchy. The elements used are colour (or the lack of) and tone as well as line. Possibly the most important part of this work is its simplicity, not in its construction, but in what is shown – if the work was crowded some of the emotion in the picture would be lost.

Home Décor Gordon Bennett is an Australian Aboriginal artist born in 1955. He grew up in Victoria and then Brisbane and was affected by the way Aboriginals had been subjected to harm, both by others but primarily themselves through the abuse of drugs.

If one were inclined only to briefly glance at art, they would be surprised to know that Bennett was an Aboriginal as his work is largely post-modern but there is a clear influence of aboriginal art, particularly in the right of this work – it should also be noted that the painting is on linen, used by many Aboriginal artists. On the left of his work is a Christian influence; Jesus is pictured as well as various other things. In 'home Décor' Bennett uses appropriation and pastiche to clutter the painting, quite the opposite of 'Rebellious Silence', which boasts sparseness.

In the background of 'Home Décor' are two patterns by Piet Mondrian, the first is 'Composition With Grid 3' and the second 'New York City'. Basically,

Bennett uses works from different cultures and eras to compose his works.
<https://assignbuster.com/the-cultural-context-of-rebellious-silence-and-home-dcor-essay-sample/>

This could indicate the fact that the world is a lot less segregated than it used to be, there are two black birds that could symbolise humanities ability to travel freely and mix. The work is also divided into two parts by a line, hinting at the opposite of what is mentioned – that the world is still divided. The works by Piet Mondrian (the background) are symmetrical – this could imply that the world is divided but the divided sides are similar.

Bennett uses symmetry, distortion, abstraction and juxtaposition principals – he uses line, colour, surface (he paints on linen) elements to create a complex, interesting work.

Comparison Shirin Neshat and Gordon Bennett use completely different styles to create culturally aware works of art. Bennett uses colour, pattern and crowds his works to create this, Neshat uses emotion, bleakness and a monochromatic palette. Both works are largely symmetrical and they share a sense of pattern, although more strongly in ‘ Home Décor’.

What both artworks do is provoke thoughts about culture in an unbiased way, even in the naming of the two works. ‘ Home Décor’ suggests that the contents of the painting are things that people immerse themselves in; ‘ Rebellious Silence’ indicates the oppression in Iran (the fact that even in silence people can be oppressed or rebel). ‘ Rebellious Silence’ uses shock to broadcast its message; ‘ Home Décor’ requires greater study but it is clear both artists have witnessed problems created for and by their own cultures.

Tom Hardman Bibliography:

<http://arti.pbworks.com/f/Shirin%20Neshat.jpg> – rebellious

silence[http://www.ngv.vic.gov.](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/gordonbennett/education/images/EXHI004492_600.jpg)

[au/gordonbennett/education/images/EXHI004492_600.jpg](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4042888,00.html) – home

decor[http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0, 4273, 4042888, 00.](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4042888,00.html)

[htmlhttp://www.bombsite.com/neshat/neshat.html](http://www.bombsite.com/neshat/neshat.html)[http://www.theage.](http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/04/27/1082831550074.html?from=storyrhs)

[com.au/articles/2004/04/27/1082831550074.html? from=](http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/04/27/1082831550074.html?from=storyrhs)

storyrsh<http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/gordonbennett/education/intro.html>