

Jean-leon gerome's the almeh with pipe essay



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Jean-Leon Gerome's paintings commonly share a same theme and style. The Almeh with Pipe, which depicts an Almeh, a young woman singer and entertainer who roamed Middle Eastern countries, in their usual garb, holding a pipe in her hand while leaning quite unfazed on the wall, shares Jean-Leon Gerome's particular penchant for the Middle Eastern theme.

Just as any of Gerome's paintings, one cannot help but notice his fine eye for detail. His brush strokes are meticulously done, and although the strokes are quite heavy and dark, this particular style adds to the drama and intensity of the said painting.

Looking at the painting, one cannot help but be mesmerized by the young Almeh, seductively standing, leaning on the wall, with a pipe in her hand.

Her facial expression seems to be drawing people closer and nearer, and her eyes reflect her mystery and her aura while her smile makes her almost tempting pose make her less intimidating. Standing on a dark space with the sun's rays delicately touching and illuminating the Almeh, the painting evokes an air of mystery which draws people to look closely and study the painting even more.

The Almeh's sheer black top covers her entire trunk, and a darker shade covers her bosom quite amply. The transparent fabric clings to her body quite tightly which greatly differs from her skirt, apparently made from a heavier fabric. Her skirt does not show any part of her leg, but simply marks how her legs are underneath her heavy skirt. A darker, wide waist band emphasizes the difference between her top and her skirt, clearly marking the difference in her clothes' texture and weight.

The Almeh is slightly off center, and is leaning more towards the right side of the portrait. The painting is greatly made even more dramatic by the setting, which boasts of almost Moorish architecture, the use of heavy stones and intricate windows woven out of rattan which allows a little sunlight to enter the dark setting.

The painting appears to be in dark alley, away from the bustle of city life. This makes it rather thought-evoking. Who is the Almeh, what is she doing in the dark alley, smoking a pipe, which at that time, was not freely extended to women. Was she just free-spirited and liberated?

Since the Almeh, the lone person in the painting, is off-center, one may think that the painting might be quite heavy towards the side where the subject is, however, the entire painting was well-thought of and well-constructed.

One can see the great talent of Jean-Leon Gerome through his paintings. The textures, colors, and shading of all the elements in the painting are well-painted; the Almeh's expression was well captured. In all, the painting evokes whimsy and mystery. It succeeds in putting together a rather dark theme and making it appear light and pleasing.

Jean Leon Gerome was greatly fascinated by Eastern culture. This influence was brought about by his travels and expeditions in Egypt, Turkey, and Greece. This probably explains why he has a number of paintings that clearly depicted Eastern people and culture. Born in France, Gerome grew up in a high-average income family, and excelled in academics before he decided to study with Paul Delaroche.

His long hours of arduous study were devoted to painting and sculpture of the historical genre style. Aside from this, Gerome also took extra time perfecting his personal style. Gerome's skill and talent combined with his diligence and hard work paid off as soon his works got featured in magazines, and was commissioned to do several paintings by noblemen, which continued well after his graduation from school.