

# Kara walker, marcel duchamp and andy warhol essay sample

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' All great ideas are controversial or have been at one time' All pieces of art that have challenged, questioned or opposed stereotypical beliefs or traditional values are regarded as great ideas. Artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol and Kara Walker are all significant memorable artists that have a tendency to disregard high art and produce works that break down conventional ideas of the time. These outrageous and opposing perspectives of the time period have been developed via conceptual art practises that intend to challenge attitudes and values of popular culture which in turn have been great ideas.

Marcel Duchamp was a post-modernist whose approach to art was very much about appealing to the intellect rather than the eye. His ' ready-mades' were highly conceptual and challenged conventional traditions about artistic process and the art itself. In 1913 Duchamp produced his first ready-made; Bicycle Wheel which was simply a spinning bicycle wheel placed on a stool. The original use of the art was just a distraction that was not intended to be shown and had absolutely no degree of skill involved. By using this method of ' appealing to the mind' audiences could experience more emotion than appreciating its beauty alone. The overall aim of these ready-mades was to shock people into self-awareness using the new post-modernist craze of experimentation with unorthodox materials such as the common bicycle wheel.

This object was a well-known everyday object but now it was used to serve a new purpose. This psychological experiment of breaking down conventional traditions was a great idea that established the beginning of the post-modernist era. Andy Warhol was another post-modernist who depicted <https://assignbuster.com/kara-walker-marcel-duchamp-and-andy-warhol-essay-sample/>

values and attitudes surrounding popular culture of the 1960s to express his central theme of disregarding fame. “ If you want to make a person miserable give them everything they desire”. Warhol believed that anyone or anything could be ‘ famous’ which led to his notions through art practise that questioned what is fame? He used high celebrities like Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger in his works; icons who appeared to have everything but were subsequently ‘ miserable.’

The concept of fame fascinated Warhol as he explored concepts of miserable and mundane objects that could become classified as high art in 15 minutes. The infamous “ 15 minutes of fame” quote was an expression coined by Warhol in 1968 that challenged the psychology of celebrities and fame in an attempt to undermine their role in society. Warhol believed that “ in the future, everyone would be world-famous for 15 minutes.” In 1964 Warhol produced a silkscreen on acrylic canvas portrait of Elvis Presley. This was a popular icon of the 1960s that represented the American success story.

Elvis went from a singing truck driver to an idol of an entire generation. Warhol had adopted the methods of mass production to make images of celebrities who were themselves mass produced. Like Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe existed not only as a flesh-and-blood person but as millions of pictures in magazines and newspapers, on album covers, movie screens and film posters. She was infinitely reproducible. In his work Warhol highlighted Monroe as merely an object of pop culture. A victim of ‘ fame’. Warhol’s complex views of celebrities and the concept of fame, via his iconic

representations, has resulted as being timeless works that now symbolise the time period whilst ironically degrading the icons themselves.

Kara Walker is an installation artist, an artist who uses their genre and presents it via a three-dimensional work space with the intention of transforming the viewer's perception of the space itself. Through Walker's live installation's, her silhouette paper cut outs, she challenges traditional mediums of the silhouette straight onto the wall of the gallery, creating theatrical silhouettes that fornicate and inflict pain on one another. Her work intends to shock, disturb and make the audience feel uncomfortable but at the same time to make them think about this graphic and provocative statement.

Walker's installation piece Darkytown Rebellion describes the brutal nature of humanity during the treatment of the slaves in 20th century South America. The simple cut-outs describe the anger, fear and barbarity of the South American slavery. These cut-outs are an attempt to explain the reality of slavery and make the audience feel angry about how they were treated. The silhouettes are literally used to explore the colour line, the boundaries between black and white, and their interdependence.

By using the silhouettes here she conveys themes of stereotypes, slaves and masters, colonists and the colonized. She includes a contrast and irony in the installation of an idealized white woman; clean and pristine as oppose to 'pickaninny' images of young black women with big lips and short little braids who appear dirty and dishevelled. This particular piece is not only a re-

interpretation of the slavery in South America during the 20th century, but

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Walker's personal opinion of the ongoing controversy on the subject that's still exists today.