

Essay good practice for illustrated essay

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Module Title and code: Research in Context

(ADAD5003)

Course: Fine art and illustration

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Question 1: Explore how artists have expressed Gender in art practice providing evidence from at least 2 artists and thinkers.

Word Count: 2250

Introduction:

In this assignment for this module, I will examine and entail an in-depth aspect about artists that express gender in their art practice. I will be researching two artists, and two specific images focusing and reflecting on how it helps gender expressionism grow from today's impact society and from the past, today it makes us feel a certain emotions and feelings whilst looking at a piece of artwork or a specific painting created and structured from the before times. For that reason, I have chosen Frida Kahlo, with a particular focus and specific paintings on the 'self Portrait with cropped Hair' in 1940 and 'body painting' by Keith Haring, in collaboration with Tseng Kwong Chi and Bill T.Jones. To find academic research for this essay, I will be using resources from websites and books throughout to find correct literature related to this topic. The artists which have been chosen have inspired many people of all walks of life around the world, to feel emotionally moved by the art piece and connect with the audience throughout their art paintings. One of the artists selected is worldwide known as Frida Kahlo who is famously known for her surrealism, feminism, figurative style of work, expression of gender and her magic realism. Likewise, with Keith Haring, his style of art is a manifestation of gender and represents what queer art means in

modern day society in comparison to the history of gender expressionism. Gender expressionism can be presented in many forms such as, behaviour, femininity or masculinity and an outside appearance such as hair, makeup, clothing styles, body language or voice is how a person publicly presents their gender. Furthermore, Gender expressionism has been a big part of society for many years but has increasingly grown over the last several years for transgenders, gender neutral, Nonbinary, pangender, queer, etc. In previous times, a person's gender was irrelevant, however in modern day society it is expected of people to embrace who people truly want to be. The purpose of conducting research on both artists is to find out how they express gender in their artwork and how it impacted people who saw their work.

Main body:

Artists that express their gender today raise a very important issue for many people around the world. The majority of society still experience difficulty with expressing themselves, a term that is used to describe this issue is Gender Dysphoria (NHS, 2023). Gender Dysphoria is when an individual has a sense of unease, they experience a mismatch between their gender from birth and how they truly want to be identified (NHS, 2023). Therefore, this theme of gender expressionism is vitally important to shine a light on the various gender expressionisms, that can have a negative and positive affect on people's lives (Healthline, 2023). Unfortunately, this has caused many people to be bullied, harassed, unsupportive, and often met with no offered help or guidance (Healthline, 2023). Gender Dysphoria and different stereotypes is often not given enough attention in today's general publicity, people on numerous occasions overlook the problems cause by other people and they often cannot see the individuals' visibilities that suffer from the various gender dysphoria's. The main purpose of gender expressionism is to present the outcome of the different cultural processes of defining social and sexual identity. Male and female artists have qualities shown in their artwork which are domesticity, beauty, power, dominance and social status. All these cultural processes define sexual and social identity. Any form of art,

from different media to 3D art as a meaning of expression through stylization and transformation, this can be a predominant media repeating its cultural growth.



Figure 1. Self Portrait with cropped Hair made in 1940 (Moma, 2023)

In this painting seen in figure 1 we see the image of Frida Kahlo painted by herself in neutral and a small number of vibrant tones. Kahlo was born on July 6th in 1907 in Mexico City, she is known worldwide as one of Mexico's greatest artists (Frida Kahlo, 2023). She made this self-portrait painting to show women that appearance doesn't matter, in her right hand she held a pair of scissors which means she cut her hair herself which symbolised in her own sacrifice (Frida Kahlo, 2023). After researching into depth upon the topic gender expressionism within art I have come to realise that this art piece and art is an especially important way of being able to do this as it allows us to express ourselves freely and confidently without having to speak or use a lot of words but just to simply use any art formation from, such as paint to any material and to also be able to express these emotions through the colours that are used like many other artists (Frida Kahlo, 2023).

It appears on the self-portrait that there is different lengths and thickness of hair strands spread across the floor which has a meaning of its own life, in a room with an empty insubstantial expression (Johnston & Kahlo, 2006). This self-portrait acknowledges her private life, and shows her true story behind closed doors, emotionally and physically reflecting her own life to an art piece has a very strong meaning (Johnston & Kahlo, 2006).

This painting represented to the public back then was crucially judged more now than today's society. The words and musical notes on top of the portrait was painted descriptively relating the separation with her old spouse Diego. These musical notes are from a popular Mexican folk song, the song is about a man who loved a woman for her beautiful hair, but now that she's chopped it off, he doesn't love her anymore (Moma, 2023).

Frida Kahlo touches upon emotions within strongly abandoned her feminine image after this art piece. Diego was obsessed with Tehuana dresses, therefore Frida decided to get rid of the dress, cut her hair short and to wear men's suits as a revenge relating to Diego's voguish fashion sense of clothing, Kahlo kept her fashionable earrings in decoration (Berne & Kahlo, p.76 2009). In addition, the self-portrait conveys a desire of independence as an independent woman and not to rely on men after her past relationship with Diego (Berne & Kahlo, p.76 2009). She defined her part with the relationship to her husband, like many women have, an expressionism coming from her own autonomy. Kahlo is empowering us to see the person she is with her ability and agency (Moma, 2023). I think that the way Frida Kahlo describes the artwork as a perspective of art can be a self-expression form and I feel as though her art is often an emotional one, the use of anger and portray that she went through with her ex-spouse. The perspective to the viewers is in interesting as each viewer looks at the artwork in various ways, they are looking at with a unique perspective of what it is or means (Moma, 2023). Therefore, this means Frida Kahlo was trying to show her understanding of understanding human's emotions and feelings within her artwork taken out on this piece of artwork.

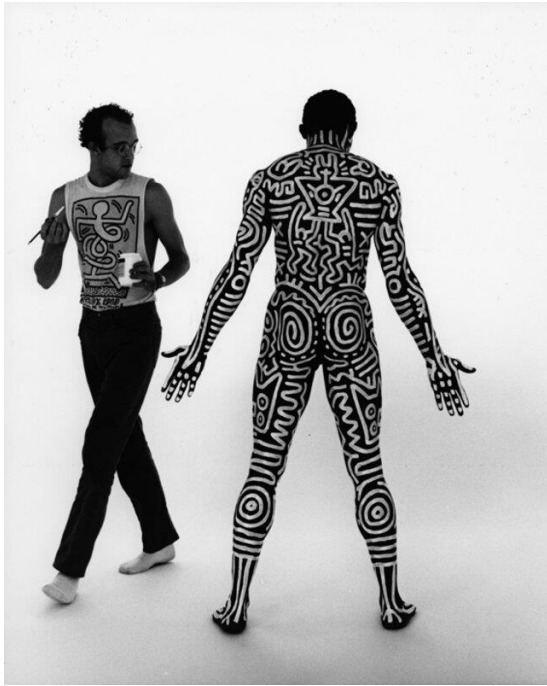


Figure 2: Untitled (Artsy, 2023)

Keith Haring was born on May 4th in 1958 in Pennsylvania, he was a popular artist and activist who was part of the legendary New York scene in the 1980s (Yood, 2007). Haring was and still is known as a gay artist who became a household name and a gay icon in American culture (Yood, 2007). He was best known for his legendary, continuous repetition in graffiti-inspired drawings and filled his work with symbols, stylized shapes, signs in vibrant colours and outlined in black on different medias (The Art Story, 2023). As seen in figure 2 Haring borrowed Bill T.Jones body as the canvas to paint on from head to toe for his work (Phillips, 2023). Towards the end of a process which took over four hours to complete, the choreographer had found himself covered in white acrylic paint with bold pictograms which represent Harings artistic signature (Phillips, 2023). Haring made many body paintings, but this piece instantly captured my eye. This piece in the 80s was a massive visionary of Harings support for the gay community and he tried to show people it's okay to come out (Phillips, 2023). Keith created this piece to show any form of gender is equal to be treated the same as anybody else, which means in figure 2 he boldly pursued social justice with his genius creative ideas, he put himself forward as a figure for queer excellence without ever compromising credibility.

Furthermore, after researching into depth upon the topic gender expressionism within art I have come to understand that this art piece and Keith's art has an immense importance way of being able to express ourselves in our figure, form, physique and frame. Keith Harings fearless self-expressionism and activism speaks enormously with the use of words and patterns, using black and white acrylic paint captured the generation history back then, but Haring also played a significant role in raising awareness about gay rights, the Aids epidemic and the LGBTQ community (Yood, 2007). It appears on figure 2 that there are different lengths and thickness to the white acrylic paint, all perfectly symmetrical and in an all-white room for the figure to be forwardly projected out. Keith Haring standing beside Bill T. Jones allows a message of love, togetherness and connection which he represents in most of his meaningful and outstanding work. Harings untitled work has a fetishization of men in colour, he's trying to spread to the world the fixed narratives of race and colour of this topic which needed more awareness and consideration of people's individuals needs and rights (Montez, 2020). The photograph/ body painting represented to the public back then was critically judged by the self-expressionism that Keith put himself forward as a queer pop artist to show empowerment, the art that he did in this piece was to navigate society back then and now that it was essential to know that different genders and sexualities deserve to be treated equally. Unlike many other homosexual artists who have been hiding their sexuality and not expressing it in their work, Haring wasn't afraid to express his sexuality and showed pride in being gay throughout his work. Also, as a gay man he used his platform to address issues which affected him by promoting others to have safe sex and showed awareness to AIDS.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Frida Kahlo's articular techniques are self-expressionism and feminism relating her life story and forming it into her artwork has inspired many female or male artists or non-artists. Frida Kahlo massively played a key part on the evolution of modern feminism; she is one of today's most inspiring women. Furthermore, Frida Kahlo implied her tragic story into her work which is seen in figure 1, this art piece is a declaration of Kahlo's self-reliance and independence. She's trying to show to the world a purposeful statement rejecting stereotypes about what traditional beauty must look like. This self-portrait with cropped hair is a biography of Frida Kahlo's life, where she expresses her emotions, her feelings, her love, her hatred, her pain and her political beliefs, which are all presented into her magnificent artwork. From going through the pain and anguish caused by her ex-husband she managed to paint this art piece, which today is known for inspiring women and other genders to feel beautiful in their own skin. Kahlo's work and her life story illustrated into her art, soon became beacons for the feminist movement. Frida Kahlo's inspiration to every gender is from her talent which mirrors her empowering persona, she shined a light on raw and touchy situations that women still today undergo.

In addition to this, when it came to looking at Keith Haring's artwork in figure 2, he shines a light on different genders sexuality and to raise awareness of aids, in comparison to what Frida Kahlo's artwork expresses. Haring had given the opportunity for Bill T Jones and Tseng Kwong Chi to play a key part in the evolution of gender expressionism back in the past. The photography documented was a series of body paintings taken iconically around the world. Capturing the performance on camera was very moving for every person who gazed their eyes on Haring's work. Usually, people only get to see the artwork constructed by the artist in front of us. Instead in figure 2 we can see what's been going on behind closed doors which has been captured by Tseng Kwong Chi to show Haring's work and how he accomplished it. In Haring's time he was gradually known as a contemporary activist who made a massive impact in the 80s for his American pop art, his vibrant outstanding works

and his iconic motifs. Keith's bold expressive patterns, colours, texts were to express his gender, mentally and physically to respond to the whole world for who he was. Overall, from looking at Frida Kahlo's painting and Keith Haring's body painting, both of their art pieces express gender in their own unique way. Frida does it by promoting female equality and showing no matter how you look or what gender you are, that everyone is entitled to being treated fairly. Also, Haring promoted that no matter what sexuality you are, you shouldn't be afraid to express who you are and supported gay rights.

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