

Question 3: The distinction lies in the fact that fine art is the idea (brought to life) while an illustration is a depiction (or explanation) of an idea. Fine art is simply art for art's sake. (Apatoff 2011). Discuss the factors that typically determine whether an artwork is labelled fine art or illustration (giving examples), and the connotations of this labelling.

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Fine Art and Illustration are two different practices but seem so similar; This is more evident nowadays since people's styles are evolving and takes inspiration from many various art forms. People have been neglecting Illustrators and saying they are not real artist, but that perspective is slowly changing.

In the art world, there's a lot of talk about choosing between fine art and illustration. Many define fine art so that it comes up solely from the artist's own creative expression when illustration illustrates a story or can easily be used with the text. (Eerola, 2019).

In this essay, I will be defining and comparing works from artists that identify themselves as either a fine artist or an illustrator and see how similar or different their work is. I am going to be looking at their style choice, all the way down to the materials they use. "Comparing experiences, therefore are essential to building a sound understanding of number." (Franco, 1987, p.3). This essay will be split into three subject areas; subject one will touch upon the starts of fine art and how it has evolved to modern times. Subject two, similarly, will delve deep into the beginnings of Illustration and how it is used today. For both these subjects, I will also be looking into artists to help define the two terms further. Finally, for the third subject, I will be

looking into comparing two or more artists and explore how similar or different fine art and Illustration can be; how thin the line between these two terms can extend too.

First and foremost, what is fine art? "Traditionally, fine art is defined as having an aesthetic purpose, as opposed to the practical functions of applied arts." (Shapira, 2015). According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (2011), fine art branches out into multiple areas such as painting, architecture, sculpture, music and poetry. Kenth Bender (2020) has said that back in the day, fine art was confined to those five forms of art, but nowadays, it has grown that even visual art and performing art are considered fine art. I am going to be focusing on three of the five branches of fine art: Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture.

Painting is one of the best ways a person can express what is going on in that head of theirs since even a thousand words might not be enough to convey a single emotion; however, paintings have this sort of power to tell hundreds of stories in one image.



Da Vinci, L. (1503)

Mona Lisa

Paintings are usually the first thing most people would think of when someone mentions the term Fine Art. The Mona Lisa, painted by no other than Leonardo da Vinci, is one of the most well-known paintings in the world. According to a video made by the YouTube channel Great Big Story (2017), people only started to take notice in the painting after Napoleon hung it up in his bedroom. After Napoleon's exile from France, the Mona Lisa finally made its way on a wall at The Louvre. Paris was in an uproar when the Mona Lisa was stolen by an Italian carpenter, even though the painting still wasn't as famous. A fun fact about this case was that the police suspected Pablo Picasso as a potential thief. After the Mona Lisa's safe return back to The Louvre, it became the darling of the art world. Even though the Mona

Lisa is just a portrait of Lisa Gherardini, wife of Francesco Giocondo, critiques have come up with what they think is the meaning behind Lisa's iconic smile.

"Architecture is frequently considered a fine art, especially if its aesthetic components are spotlighted." (Wikipedia). Buildings don't always have to be mild to be functional; stories and information shouldn't be contained only on the inside of the building; it should be able to be expressed and seen on the outside as well.

Antoni Gaudí hardly needs any introduction. No other architect has had so many books written about him and his work. It is necessary, though, to rectify a certain mythology which shows him as a lone genius, a revered mystic. This image derives from his later period when he was exclusively dedicated to work on the Sagrada Família church. (Mackay, 1985, p.11)



Mackay, D. (1883)

Sagrada Família

The Sagrada Familia church is located in Barcelona and is the most visited place in Spain. The pillars of the church are like no other, "It's a combination of a simple cylindrical pillar, the classic striated Greek column and the Baroque Solomonic column and its broadly used all around Sagrada Familia structure." (brightside, 2020). By the time of Antoni Gaudi's death, the Sagrada Familia church wasn't complete and is still under construction till this day. When will this beautiful piece of architecture finally be completed?



Belanger, G. (2019)

Holding Pattern

"Sculpture, an artistic form in which hard or plastic materials are worked into three-dimensional art objects." (Rogers, 2020). There can be plentiful of diversity in sculptures; ranging from multitudes of genders and races, each telling its own story through body poses and facial expressions. It can also capture moments frozen in

time and in most times, are very abstract; Genesis Belanger's work falls into this category. Genesis' sculptures take the form of everyday objects and giving them a sense of life by adding human features to said objects. Her work is quite strange to look at and are "made uncomfortably familiar as they begin to resemble us."

(Perrotin, 2020). One of the messages Genesis' work touches upon the fact that "our cultural fetishization of branding and our over-the-counter coping mechanisms."

(Dafoe, 2019).

The next thing we are going to discuss is the factors that make up Illustration. "The "label" illustration or illustrator is ambiguous. The definition of the form is amorphous and indefinite, constantly challenging notions and perceptions of contemporary image-making." (Federico,2020). Nowadays, illustrators can be freer with their style and choice of medium; That's one of the reasons why there's confusion on whether or not a particular piece of art is considered an Illustration or something completely different. There are a lot of things a person can work with when becoming an Illustrator; like helping kids understand stories better and build their creativity, drawing out science lessons to make things easier for students, or even creating an advert that reaches out to millions.

Illustration can be split into two groups: traditional illustration and modern style. These two groups hold a variety of mediums, and techniques illustrators can use to bring their visions to life, such as woodcutting, metal etching, and lithography for traditional illustration; and freehand digital, and vector graphics for modern

illustrations. I will be looking into and talking about woodcutting and vector graphics since I have personally never used these techniques myself.

The oldest form of printmaking, woodcut is a relief process in which knives and other tools are used to carve a design into the surface of a wooden block. The raised areas that remain after the block has been cut are inked and printed, while the recessed areas that are cut away do not retain ink and will remain blank in the final print. (Zanis, 2020)

The woodcut carries its virtues of harmonizing with the printed page, from the black letter of the Incunabula to the newest of modern type faces. Its use increases in popularity with each year, wherever the modern book is printed. Some of its leading exponents such as Clare Leighton in England and Lynd Ward and J.J. Lanks in the United States, have given great impetus to what seems to be renewed interest in true book illustration. (Simon, 2013, p. xvi)

Steven Noble is an Illustrator most commonly known for illustrating "the back of the \$1 bill, refreshed the White House logo and is the artist behind American Express' centurion." (Directory of illustration, 2019). Steven originally went into economics. However, he would always be doodling and creating illustrations on the side. It was after he met a professional illustrator, who later became his mentor, that Steven decided to follow his passion and become a full-time illustrator. Steven has built a

reputation of being reliable and working fast and efficiently to complete commissions, especially those under tight deadlines. He has trained his skills over the course of nineteen years, "using X-Acto precision knives carved into pre-inked clay boards which generate very fine line strokes which allow a versatility in the detail from bold woodcuts to very fine traditional 19-century steel engravings." (artavita, 2020). Steven Noble illustrated for the story of Zathura, a children's book, which was adapted into a movie at the same time as his illustrations.



Noble, S. (2015)

Zathura

Vector graphics are used when Illustrators need to work with scaling designs, either making them bigger or smaller, without any loss in quality. These type of Illustrations stand out more because of the cleaner, more defined lines and coloring of sets and character designs. "Conversely, regular pixels are blended together to form a color. This makes changing colors easier when editing vector graphics." (Todd, 2020).



Garza, B. 2012

Beat 'em up

Beto Garza illustrated this character to showcase what system and tools he uses to create a vector graphic. He uses the rectangle tool to create the shapes of the character, erases the bits that are not needed, and finally uses the dropper tool to color in the character design. The process makes it easier for when he needs to create the character's turnarounds, facial expressions, and poses. Just from the character design alone, people would be able to get a sense of what role this character would play in the video game.

Nowadays, a person could label their work under any form of art, and no one can fight them on it since mediums and styles have evolved to the point where all forms

of art seem to blend and get mixed up. Although some pieces from fine art look like they could be considered an illustration, it isn't always the case; it's hard to confidently say how thin the line falls between these two art forms when there are so much diversity and inconsistencies. Take Liu Xiaodong's work, for example; Liu paints people and objects in different scenarios, trying to emulate what a camera can do. "Liu locates the human dimension to such global issues as population displacement, environmental crisis and economic upheaval, but through carefully orchestrated compositions, he walks the line between artifice and reality." (Lisson Gallery, 2020).



Xiaodong, L. 2009

Waheed in lord's robes

In this painting, we can see a group of people gambling their money away. The room is small, and the people are quite cramped together, which could tell you that this isn't a fancy casino and that the people in the painting are probably close associates. Although most of his work isn't inspired by books or advertisements, they are still moments in time of real people, each with their own story; so, when looking at specific pieces of his work, people would be able to form a story and maybe even relate to the painting. Now let's look at Kathryn Rathke's work. Her works are considered illustrations even though they aren't so different from Liu Xiaodong's. Not only does she illustrate for books, but clients will commission her to draw portraits of them and their loved ones.

With her fluid, natural drawing style, **Kathryn Rathke** has a rare talent for capturing the individual look of the person she's drawing in just a few quick lines. Authors, singers, politicians – her portraits are instantly recognisable but so simply drawn that they're always easy for people to relate to.

(illustrationX, 2020)



Rathke, K. 2010

Ballet Dancer with Boiserie

In this illustration, a man is depicted to be dancing in what I assume is a ballroom; even though it is a still image, you can really sense the passion this man has for dancing. The piece isn't based off a storybook but is also a moment in time captured digitally rather than traditionally; that is one of the only differences between these two artists, yet one is identified as fine art, while the other is an illustration. No matter what genre of skill and artist chooses to pursue, there is no limit to what materials they can and cannot use; there's a great feeling of harmony when it comes to this. Most artists will start with sketching out the design with a pencil and paper, paint over the sketch, then later scan it into their computer to digitally edit. "The difference is only in who pays for the art and perhaps the seed of inspiration for a

work. There are many so-called fine artists who look down upon commercial artists." (Bond, 2010). Some fine artists don't believe in using their work for advertisements or creating pieces just to be sold for profit. Fine artists seem to paint more based on their own emotions; not necessarily catering to anyone else. Even though illustrators are more product and commercial found, it doesn't mean there isn't any emotion or feeling that goes into their work. "We can only speak off one side and then off the other, by leaving a space between one sensed image and another where what cannot be said can be 'known' by feeling." (Hobson, 2013, p. 80)

Fine art is mainly surrounding the idea of individuality; the state of being present and in the moment. They are continually looking for themselves and seeking out new paths to take. Whereas for illustrators, it is slightly harder to branch out since they mainly focus on catering to an audience and making many more people satisfied rather than just themselves. "Many spiritual teachers and traditions talk about finding what we need within ourselves. We're encouraged to look within, rather than seeking salvation outside ourselves." (Robertson, 2016). From an outsider's perspective, when it comes to fine art, we are always trying to find the deeper meaning, whereas, with illustration, the intention is usually handed to us on a silver platter.

In conclusion, the line between differentiating fine art and illustration isn't as straight forward as one would think. They are able to share factors that define them

but still be unique in their own ways; no matter the style or medium. A fine artist can tell a whole story with one sculpture just like an illustrator designing an entire storyboard. On the other hand, Illustrations don't always have to be story-driven and can have its own flow of sensations, just like fine art. Typically, illustrators tend to be more money-driven, whereas fine artists create from the heart; they are always out seeking and never settling down to be a crowd-pleaser. People should be able to express themselves in whatever medium or platform they decide suits their lifestyle best, and should be allowed to place their work in either genre of art since it is entirely various. We should stop looking at things at face value and try to find the hidden message; there will always be a reason for an artist to create a piece of work, even if they don't know it at the start.

All in all, we should bring one art form down to boost another, since at the end of the day we are creating extraordinary images from the top of our heads or beautifying the world around us. Art is art, and we need to accept that there will be crossovers amongst any form of art. Both fine artists and illustrators are real artists.

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