

Question 2. Within a given time period, select examples of what could be considered high and low cultural artefacts. Discuss these, taking into consideration the surrounding social, political and historical context.

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In this essay, I will be discussing examples of what could be considered high and low cultural artefacts and taking into consideration the surrounding social, political and historical context. The definition of culture means a way of living and the behavior of a group of people or individuals in today's society. According to Williams (1958, chapter. 9), "For Williams the word 'culture' meant both 'a whole way of life' (culture in the anthropological sense, synonymous with everyday life)" this suggests the way of living is varied from human to human, culture is the structure of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors that us humans have learned and continue to pass on to future generations. In today's society technology has advanced and social media plays a massive part in our culture this can be positive for example you can share your opinion with people from different countries, backgrounds and it is used on a business front for communicating and marketing but has a dominant adverse effect on our culture as people can share videos and pictures that aren't appropriate, and also it has affected people's opinions because people are more conservative when it comes to what they say in relation to politics, religion, freedom of speech and culture, this can cause a lot of diversions as the world we live in is split into groups and people have been brought up in different cultural backgrounds. Social media can also have a significant adverse effect as in the past people have used propaganda within the media, and through the power of social media, this can lead to a significant amount of conflict. There are also individuals which are related to 'subcultures' this would be a group or 'set' of individuals having their own beliefs and way of living for example 'hipsters' and 'emos'. Emo's are popular for wearing black and standing out from the crowd, they are known for listening to hardcore music and 'punk'. The reason most emo's wear black is because most bands who have emo genre use merchandise related to 'black' this is because they want their fans to stand out and

be different and want their music to relate to their culture and genre. High culture involving art would be a one-off or unique painting that is exhibited and has high value and educated paintings whereas low culture related to art would be associated with the mass culture/popular culture and would be reproduced and used in films, tv, and advertisement. High culture also relates to the well-educated, rich, and a set of cultural products that are respected by society. High culture would belong to opera music, and classical music compared to low culture where this relates to rock, and pop music and music that is more mainstream in the media.

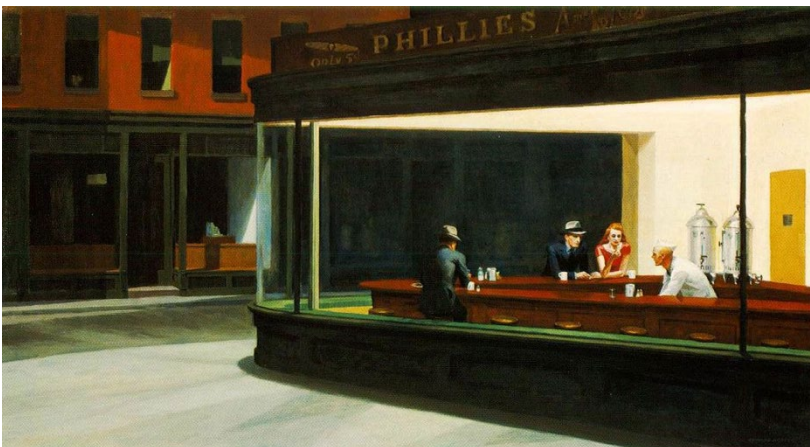
Edward Hopper created the painting below in reflection of his time during the second world war in 1942. (Figure 1) The lighting was used to create the atmosphere of the scene; it looks like he has been influenced by a clip from a 'dark film.' He gained inspiration from a restaurant on New York's Greenwich Avenue, and American Novels also influenced him. (AZ QUOTES, 1996) "The only real influence I've ever had was myself" this evidence highlights that even though Hopper does take some influence from films and places most of his ideas have come from his own background. The man and women standing by the bar are in complete silence, and it looks like the person facing them is on his own, and everything is just quiet and dull, and nobody is to be seen. Hopper uses narration to make the person viewing the painting question the painting and its surroundings. During this time movies were starting to become popular and this had a part to play in the painting, he took a lot of inspiration from Hollywood scenes, detective agents and also from other artists such as Van Gogh. (Figure 1) Hopper included loneliness and alienation throughout this painting; he wanted to address this as it was the time that the Pearl Harbor attack hit America and New York City was on edge, and everyone was feeling extremely

anxious. This did not stop Hopper from being his mysterious self as he continued to go out in the night on his own and also left his studio lights on when the city was holding blackout drills as another attack was likely. The future was uncertain at the time during Nighthawks he expressed this in his painting through the use of the dark lighting and expressions on the characters faces. Hopper also made sure the characters were in the correct position in his paintings because he wanted the effect of the viewer to feel the emotions from his perspective and also to see the full image from inside the character's perspective and to make the viewer feel curious and vulnerable as if it was a real scene. The two people sitting by the bar may know each other but the hands are crossed over and are not touching, and he uses the expressions on the characters face to suggest they could be strangers. His paintings are related to high culture which are normally exhibited in a gallery and sold for a high price because of the value of his work. Hopper's paintings were a one-off and not reproducible and have had and still has a significant influence on mass culture. For example, David Lynch used several pieces of Hopper's artwork in his film production because of the affects and the realism within his work. His painting was revered as a cultural object and has fed into mass culture for example film, and Hopper has influenced tv, for example, the 'Simpsons' uses the scene of the downtown dinner from the painting 'Nighthawks', this includes the bar and similar positioning of the characters and the lighting and objects. Hopper was from a middle-classed family which he was highly educated and showed this throughout his paintings. He was rather 'weird' as he used to go out in the middle of the night to get photos, but this had a massive effect on mass culture as it was unique. (figure 1) He used his wife as a model for this painting.

Most of his paintings show individuals -- often his artist-wife, Josephine, was the model -- glimpsed in isolated or mysteriously uncommunicative poses, looking weary or defeated or bored, and set against some sort of void such as a darkened street, a window or a stage. (Daniszewski, 2004)

To this point, it is still important to recognise the scene of 'Nighthawk' and how he used the characters to show the loneliness of New York at this time and the problematic situation in America. Hopper spent his spare time listening to classical music as well as being an artist (Schweitzer, 2018) "a one-act opera inspired by five of his paintings" this evidence shows Edward hopper was inspired by his own paintings and created an opera out of his own interest.

Figure 1: Nighthawks



(Hopper 1942)

The artist David Lynch was born in Missoula, Montana in on 20 January 1946, he is well known for paintings, animation, sculpture, and film production. He takes inspiration from High culture, in particular, the series Twin Peaks and has gained a significant amount of inspiration from Edward Hopper. Sharf (2017) provided information "David Lynch's cinematic style owes a lot to painters like Francis Bacon

and Edward Hopper.” He has taken inspiration from these artists and used this within his film production and focuses on unusual individuals and unique characters and the realism of the characters to populate his films. Colin Odell & Michelle Le Blanc (2007) says "progression to moving Art that led him into films." this reveals evidence that he started his career with art but then fed into films, the first film he created was in 1966 and was called 'six figures getting sick' he then created 'The Alphabet in 1968 and The Grandmother in 1970 these were all appealing to mass culture. He took inspiration from high culture Edward Hopper and applied this to his work, in particular, the series 'Twin Peaks' 1990. (Figure 2) Lynch uses paintings from realist artist Edward Hopper in his films, for example, the painting 'Office at night' was used in one of the scenes in Twin Peaks, the character wears the same dress. You can notice in the film, the collar, in particular, is the same, the layout of the desk is similar for instance the lamp, phone and paper, the only things that are missing is the man sitting on the chair. He also took inspiration from his painting Summer Evening and used the girl going into the house in his film and the famous painting 'Nighthawks' by artist Edward Hopper is also used in Twin Peaks.

Figure 2 – office at Night.



(Hopper 1940)

Graffiti has played an important part in society and culture, as a movement it started in 1967 where a high school student from Philadelphia began tagging city walls to be recognised by a girl. The reason people used graffiti in this period was due to individual expressions and to be seen, heard and felt as they wanted to leave a mark anywhere and everywhere. During the 1960s this was when graffiti became popular due to counterculture in America, and it was a time of 'unrest' (Figure 3) This was created in 1965 and used in mass culture, it is a hugely popular piece of artwork and used as a poster advertisement in order to protest against the Vietnam war and to get the message across to the public, it was also a significant phrase during this time period and used in order for peace during the time of 'anti-war'. It wasn't just subcultures for example hippies that used this it was also students and other people that were protesting against war and wanted peace resolved. People used graffiti to express their feelings during this time and not only that but it infuriated people as it was everywhere and in the late 60's early 70's it became a public nuisance, this was during a difficult time in America where there was a lot of social problems. Raymond Williams quoted that

the best that has been thought and written in the world"—is in danger, or is indeed already "lost," because of widespread popular education, popular communications systems, and what is often called "mass society. On High and Popular Culture: Raymond Williams 1974

This suggests graffiti is no longer as important because technology has advanced, and people now express their feelings on social media. In 1968 it was the death of Martin Luther King the leader of civil rights movement the black people were unhappy, and the police officers were targeting blacks, and this was another reason

graffiti was used as a result of frustration and for 'peace.' Beato explained the advantages of Graffiti (2011) "graffiti outdid the Internet. Sites like YouTube offer access to anyone, but they can't guarantee an audience." This outlines the advantages of using graffiti on the streets and how powerful it was regarding getting your message across, it was also used to target a wider audience and was very difficult to remove and used for protesting during this time. Graffiti only began to display within museums and galleries in the '80s. Bubble writing started evolving in 1972 this was when the Hip-Hop culture became popular, and this turned artists from the streets into well-known graffiti artists because the media were promoting the work and culture. This work also went on to be used in galleries and to be sold at an extremely high value. Banksy who was born in Bristol started using graffiti on the streets and created a lot of political work for example 'anti-war' and anti-establishment. His work began on the streets but has fed into a high culture as time has progressed, they are now being sold for millions and are being exhibited and displayed in galleries for a significantly high price. Banksy's art continues to make money now and has gone from the streets to museums because of its value and public interests. (Figure 4) is an example of Banksy's work and how it's gone from street art/low culture where it began with 'no value' but now has fed into high culture artefact where the original copy of this picture is being sold at auction for immensely high value.

(Danica 2012) "Banksy's often satirical works have fetched up to \$1.8 million at auction, and his images have been controversially stripped from walls and sold for high prices."

This evidence suggests even though Banksy continues to make millions from his work, but he is disappointed_due to his work being 'stripped' from its original_starting point as it's losing its original meaning.

Figure 3 Make Love, Not War



(Penelope, **Franklin Rosemont** and Tor Faegre 1965)

Figure 4: Kissing Coppers



(Banksy 2004)

The evidence presented in this assignment has shown that high and low culture has progressed as the years have gone. In addition to this, some of the work of the artists mentioned have been influenced by their past and present in relation to their cultural background, political, social and historical experience. The work of the artists progressed into other cultural artefacts, Banksy's work started on the streets and are

being exhibited and displayed across the world for millions. David Lynch's work has taken inspiration from high cultural artifacts and has developed through to mass culture/popular culture; he has gained a significant amount of inspiration from Edward Hopper who's work belongs to high cultural artefacts but has fed into a Low culture, for example, Tv and film. Throughout the history of high culture in the form of governments and businesses (consumer culture) has used some of the propaganda to market towards mass cultures, such as propaganda in war (posters) for elections and media in general. From viewing the different historical and present-day cultural backgrounds of different people I have come to the conclusion there will always be high and low cultural artefacts, and these will always inspire other people in society.

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