

Student Name: Emilia Sliwinska

Student Number: 1702793

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Most of the information (about 90%) processed by our brain is what we see, visual. People not only appropriate aesthetics they also transmitted emotional connection influenced by art. Some incredible artwork may captivate individuals. Influenced the way of making decisions and how they think.

“The music is intended to inspire people to feel a certain way about themselves, so they’ll be able to encompass, in their own lives, a sense of inner fame that they can project to the world” Lady Gaga (Goodman, 2010, p.48).

This singer wants to create a character to accomplish. Art is meant to appeal to people’s emotions, create reaction, provoke feelings. It is meant to be remembered

and impact the personal memories, usually the way the designer intended. People like to share feelings they experienced with family and friends.

Sometimes artwork evokes emotions or plays with us and leaves an emotional impact over a piece. Key is to understand our emotions. We empathise and try to connect, that is how our brains work. We are pleased with music and pieces of art, also with some effortless things which do not make much sense, but intriguing reactions. "I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells" said American children's author, illustrator, political cartoonist Dr. Seuss (Geisel, n.d.). That sentence intrigued me as soon as I read it.

Artists since the 20th Century were interested in depicting emotions, so they started a movement called "expressionism". There are many approaches the creators took. To create sadness, an interesting way to show was the use of hands, a gesture of hiding face in hands. For example, screaming faces represent fear. Pictures challenging the viewer for interpretation.

In this article (Cheung, Law, Yip and Wong, 2019), is an ongoing debate, study and evaluation of emotional responses to the commercial stimuli and visual arts. Findings suggest positive emotional responses toward visual stimuli, considering their aesthetics. In the results participants judged the creative and aesthetic designs as beautiful or not beautiful. This study creates an objective measure on responses to the brain in frontal alpha asymmetry. Neural processing in art appreciation has evolved to understanding aesthetics and creative products. The significance of fashion displays in which aesthetics and creativity play important roles perceived as beautiful by customers they more likely made entry inside and made purchases. Emotions in response to art are not always related to happiness or pleasing. They are valuable but can be deeply distressing. In emotional engagement with visual

arts, which we find value, we pursue activities and feelings that count as painful and negative emotions. Relationship with artwork to an object or character which we may believe to exist. Possibility of our emotional responses and the nature of representational state from the context based on our judgement or perception. Experienced emotions are various in their intensity. For example, a very deep emotional connection to the art by famous painter Vincent van Gogh he said “The emotions are sometimes so strong that I work without knowing it” (Vincent van Gogh, n.d.). Some responses can be very unique, more deeply rooted for some individuals in human consciousness. Sharing our own experiences of life we create emotional art. Combining conceptual associations of our knowledge and our own emotions. In the film industry “Our primary function is to create an emotion and our secondary function is to sustain that emotions” (Sreechinth, 2018) in the words of Alfred Hitchcock, the known greatest director. “It seems to me that television is exactly like a gun. Your enjoyment of it is determined by which end of it you’re on” Alfred Hitchcock (Sreechinth, 2018). These famous skilled film-maker intended to create many intense feelings, for example: fear and tension, while watching the movie. His ability to create on screen elements and visuals that portray human emotions and psychological states.

Many artists found inspiration from difficult relationships and feelings they went through. Edvard Munch responded to heartbreak from his romance. That makes material for his artwork. Marina Abramovic created the piece *The Lovers: The Great Wall Walk* with her partner; they meet up in the middle to end the relationship. Sophie Calle with her break-up email created the project and unveiled it at the Venice Biennale. Also conceptual artist Felix Gonzales-Torres, reacting to the loss of

his partner, created an installation for personal grief. Similar to English painter Francis Bacon, agony of losing his lover by suicide, his own feelings of guilt and pain. (Gotthardt, 2019)

Artist Frida Kahlo suffered from many surgeries after the accident. She talked about two accidents in her life :one was hit by a car and the second was her husband. Her double self-portrait refers to Frida in love with her husband Diego Rivera and the second figure holds a scissors with blood after they divorced in 1939. She turned physical suffering from heartbreak into art. "Self-portraiture allowed Kahlo to penetrate the outer shell of her physical being and examine the depths of her own psychology" (Hodge, 2007, p. 174). She also expressed through art her pain and depression after miscarriages.

I looked closer into the music industry and found on YouTube incredible visual shows of stages of grief in the songs of young artists. Song is called *11 Minutes* by American singer Halsey, British rocker Yungblud and drummer Travis Barker from Blink-182 (Harrison, Frangipane , Barker, 2019). Romantic single directed by Colin Tilley puts a darker spin about losing a lover in an accident. Perfect tragedy explores the stages of grief in five chapters: "denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance" (Roth, 2019). Song tells the story of modern love and it is full of emotion, which can be felt. I listen to this song, I look at the comments and start crying. People identify themselves with characters in songs, movies, artwork or photographs. The Comments below this song break my heart. People write about their losses of partners, mother or the child. They wrote about the song, it brought back the feelings, trauma, memories, and healing. While standing in front of a painting in a gallery space, we can hide our emotions. On a public platform like this people open up and share their experiences, their loneliness. These comments are a

great example of how art affects us, helps and can bring relief. Unfortunately, because it is so sad it makes you cry and will kill all happy vibes. This song reminds us that our feelings should take priority over other things. We are so distracted, we fail to see what is in front of us, until it is too late. Music, artwork, photography, film, all can help healing. It can be a form of our personal therapy, can help with traumatic experiences or mental health problems. Creating art stimulates, widens perspectives, makes us happier, helps with depression and anxiety. I found some famous artists, whose creating art helps them go through the pain and hard times in their lives. “Jean-Michel Basquiat used art as an escape from his chaotic personal life” (FN, 2022) and difficult childhood. Edvard Munch had a deep depression and nervous breakdowns. Art helps him to express his feelings and enjoy life at a later age of his life. For Vincent van Gogh art reflects his pain from mental illness. Art also became a therapy for British controversial artist Tracey Emin. She represents her traumatic experiences from her past and deep depression after being raped at age 13. Louise Josephine Bourgeois' art became an exploration of her parental issues. Her massive size spider sculptures create fear in viewers and reflection about motherhood power. They represent relationships between parents and children. Behind their threatening appearance, we can feel protected. The same way spiders kill mosquitoes, protecting us from disease spreaded by them. She explains: “The subject of pain, giving meaning and shape to frustration and suffering is the business I am in” (MasterPiece Box, 2020). She focuses on the feminism, but in her work all audience can find something for themselves to relate to.



Fig 1 Bourgeois,L.J. (1997)

Another artist and South African visual activist is Zanele Muholi. Her extraordinary, powerful artwork focuses on gender, race, sexuality through video, installation and photography. She said in a *YouTube* video: "It is my own way of writing South African LGBTI history" (Art21, 2019). The images present personal statements of intimacy, struggle, pride and self-composure. She likes her models to get involved. After photographs are ready they have a chance to see them and write something on the museum wall. Everybody has something to say, tell their own story. In 2012 Muholi started to produce self-portraits full of meaning, metaphorical and also personal. Giving herself multiple looks, from scary, humorous to self-parody. Artist black and white photographs are on a large scale. She doesn't like to be limited. For Zanele Muholi, taking photographs became the way of self-healing from her struggles. She says about that:



Fig 2 Muholi, Z. (2016)

“I was going through a rough period and, when I started photographing, it became better. I discovered that the camera was a tool through which I could speak about whatever was inside – the feelings, the pain, the personal experiences I had gone through. I discovered that photography was a means of articulation” (O’Hagan, 2020).

Photography has a power to create feelings and ideas in the same way as other forms of self-expression. That symbolic representation may help express our emotions and mood. May have an effect on our heart, soul or mind. “The photographer’s way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject” (Berger, 1972, p.10). Photographers create narrative, with an original point of view image that tells the story. John Berger says in an interview with Geoff Dyer (*Marxism Today*, 1984, p.36-37): “Even when I was writing on art, it was really a way of storytelling- storytellers lose their identity and are open to the lives of other people” (Piepenbring, 2014). Dyer describes Berger as a person who, whatever he writes, gets involved.

In the past century painters created stories based on Bible, history and mythology. Today contemporary artists make very original narrative stories. Trying to understand. Narrative art explores culture, personal experiences, human conditions. They are inventing something, which the viewer needs to investigate themselves. Creating many meanings using allegory in all their forms. Visual language created by presenting darkness and Evil as ugly and cruel; sun, sky as allegories of beauty, light and cheerful feelings. Allegory has a link to the female body. Great example I found to present the strength of a female in the book *Women of the world in 500 portraits* (Noroc, 2017). Natural and authentic females in many different environments. Every image tells the story. Presenting connection between all humans. The beauty is to be yourself.

Contemporary Canadian artist Tim Okamura investigates portraits of powerful women, identity and metaphor. For him portraiture is the form of storytelling. He creates positive messages through paintings. He has a very unique way of painting, mixing realism with graffiti and mixed media. He presents black African American women in a strong juxtaposition. Concept of other races of humans is a social concept. By Tim there is only one race, the human race.



Fig 3 Okamura, T. (2020)

Andrew Salgado is another Canadian modern artist whose exhibition I had a chance to see (*TEN*, 2017).



Fig 4 Salgado, A.(2017)

He became a subject of documentary *Storytelling*, he says: "That a portion of my past shaped me as a man" (Salgado, 2015).

Presented his personal triumph by painting himself with blood after the brutal attack on him and on his partner. Understanding issues of underestimating people he transformed his career. Artists' large meaningful paintings are very rich in colour. Abstraction mixed with figuration. His use of brush strokes emphasise different moods. This solo exhibition "Ten" included ten works of art. All very impressive and memorable for me. Absolutely love every painting I saw.

Regarding the power of women, I can't forget about the individuality of Jenny Saville. Rich in texture distorted large female bodies. Feel viewers are a little overwhelmed. She presented human vulnerability.

Best motivation for people to reach for their goals is to engage their emotions. Best way to do that is a good creative story. Powerful enough to be remembered. Key to do that is to know yourself and human nature. Art evokes aesthetic experiences and creates dialogue with the viewer. Abstraction art does not really follow the principles of recreate reality, but expand inner space. Why is abstract painting perceived so strongly? Image difficult to interpret having possibly more meaning than a picture we understand immediately. When we need to try harder to understand, become more appreciative. Regarding abstraction, the question is not how to understand, but how to feel its strange forms, shapes and colours. Emotions play a very important role creating our individual experience. Painting theorists have been wondering for centuries how art can take us on a journey beyond the mind. At a young age before we learn to speak, we begin to perceive the world through images.



Fig 5 Mansfield, M.(2022)

I found a huge connection with artwork I recently saw of contemporary artist Myles Laurence Mansfield at *Elysium Gallery* in Swansea. In exhibition *#iNHUMAN* (Mansfield, 2022) He explores how it is to be a human in our world full of technology. Investigates a future with computer and virtual existence without human bodies. Using recycled materials Mansfield makes kinetic sculptures which talk and move accompanied by paintings. Robotic baby still in womb surrounded by cameras, important, before even being born in metaphorical societal control. In the next sculpture, the child is sitting and swiping the phone. Children in early stages are given tablets and phones to get knowledge and entertainment from the virtual world. They may become strangers for a parent , which may feel excluded from their ways of being. Technology which changes the way of our relations. Artist presents a robotic teenager vision where he tries to find out who is a distraction? Phone or the viewer? Fascination concentrated on the perfect screen of his phone. How can the real world be swapped by the virtual world? Next one presents a sculpture asking amazon echo “Alexa do you love me?”.



Fig 6 Mansfield, M. (2022)

The small device is programmed to reassure humans they care for. That signifies emotional investments. Another sculpture robot which “may represent our future...isolated...detached...doubtful. Not knowing true love” (Mansfield, 2022,p. 24). This exhibition is a reflection about our future with technology growing so fast. Without emotions we are like machines. Repeating for example one set of movements. Both machines and humans have memory and a few similar characteristics, but people experience life like no one else. Art gives us the possibility of sharing our feelings, emotions, and fears. It helps us heal and go through difficult times. It is a reminder we are not alone in this world. For Tolstoy good art is “anything that communicates emotion”(What is Art?,1896). Find a better sense of understanding ourselves and help in our mental health. We can support each other. In my practice I am trying to let the viewer feel the emotions I was painting with or interpret artwork his own way. Through art, express and communicate. Open our minds for new possibilities. Is it really the power of art strong enough to heal and improve quality of life?

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