



Arts

## REFLECTION OF SOCIETY IN THE REFERENCE OF PAINTINGS

Prof. (Dr.) Pooja Gupta \*1

\*1 H.O.D. Department of Fine Arts, Nandlal Bose Subharti College of Fine Arts & Fashion Design, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, Meerut, India

---

### Abstract

The relation of visual art, artists and society is the focal point around which this paper rotates. There exists a reciprocal connection between the three, which has to be comprehended concurrently. Society needs art, and artists not only for enriching its culture, but also for the very development of humankind. This mutual relationship is consequently set beneath the sociological microscope and an effort has been made to comprehend the diverse nuances of the lives of the respondent artists. An artist is dependent in one way or another on other people around him and is enmeshed in a whole series of social relationships. Social issues are one of the major themes of the artwork of number of the artists. Anything that moves the artists or appeals to their artistic sense becomes their motivation for creation. The other thing that inspired them was that, for the artists, painting is a desire, a need, an urge, or a drive to communicate and express. For some it is like meditation or doing practice. It is more of a psychological satisfaction that they gain by giving this passion an expression. The need to earn a living also at times motivated them to create. The artist's personal experiences in life, their frustrations, joys and happiness inspire them to paint.

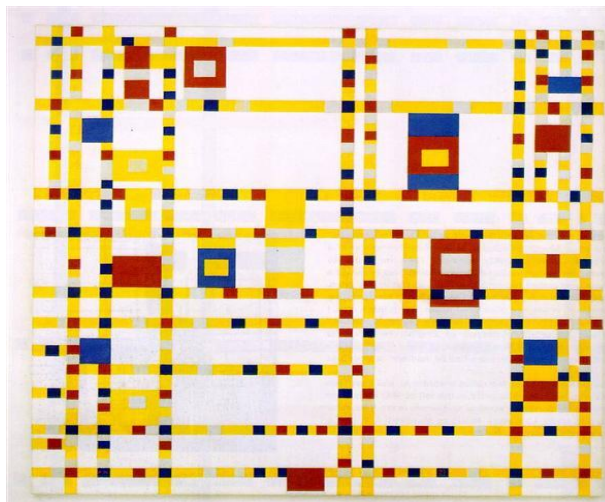
**Keywords:** Reflection; Society; Reference; Paintings.

**Cite This Article:** Pooja Gupta. (2019). "REFLECTION OF SOCIETY IN THE REFERENCE OF PAINTINGS." *International Journal of Research - Granthaalayah*, 7(11SE), 114-145. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3585114>.

---

Art is about connecting with people's emotions. It's personal and at the same time, universal. I am an expressive painter, working from the landscape and my memories. And sure, my work is personal, although it may not appear so at first. Feelings about my relationship with my mother, father and family move stealthily into the work. It's a human recommendation to express emotion through the medium of spot making. We all carry with us memories of our cruel society. An artist has the ability to feel strongly to be sensitive to things and express this in the paint, gesture, and colour. The artist absorbs the ambiance of a place and the memory of a feeling. At times, it's a burden for the artist to hold all this emotion to be so sensitive. Most persons block out emotion. Then, suddenly, a painting speaks to them. At that point, the artist has done their job. It is wonderful to connect with people through the work, when people respond to a painting and really feel the emotions. An artist's painting is mainly about his, self-expression communicated out there on the canvas, but actually it is everyone's expression. Artist is just a vehicle whose expression

took one person on a voyage. Everybody injured. Everybody feel affection. Everybody expects and everybody dies. Mostly, art is concerning our own sense of mortality. Our history is filled with stories about how we made land out of the water and tamed the rivers. Lots of landscapes were painted by the immense masters as Rembrandt, Ruysdael, Hobbema, Weissenbruch, Mauve, Van Gogh and Mondrian. All were enthused by flat landscape and big horizons. With the growth of cities our landscape history is sinking beneath real, buildings, and tarmac. Mondrian, who had escaped to New York from Europe after the outbreak of World War II, charmed in the city's architecture. He was also enthralled by American jazz, mainly boogie-woogie, finding its syncopated strike, disrespectful approach to melody, and improvisational aesthetic similar to what he called, in his own work, the "destruction of natural appearance; and construction through continuous opposition of pure means dynamic rhythm." In the painting, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, his penultimate, Mondrian replaced the black grid that had extended governed his canvases with largely yellow lines that cross at points marked by squares of blue and red. These atomized groups of stammer chromatic pulses, episodic by light gray, create paths across the canvas suggesting the city's network, the movement of traffic, and broken electric lights, as well as the beat of jazz.



Piet Mondrian (1872-1944)

*Broadway Boogie Woogie* 1942 – 1943 (oil on canvas)

*Symphony in Green and Gold* belongs to a group of landscape decorations that Thomas Dewing painted during his summers at the renowned artists' colony of Cornish, New Hampshire. Dewing valued these outdoor themes because they were less easily understood than his interiors, and because they appealed to those choice spirits, as he termed them, who were his most discerning clientele. When Akron art collector Edwin C. Shaw purchased this painting, Dewing wrote him, "The Green and Gold that you bought . . . is as fine as anything of my decorations. *Symphony in Green and Gold* is related to a series of screens that Dewing executed in Cornish. The wooded environment surrounding the chit on-clad figures in the first of these, *The Four Sylvan Sounds* was inspired by that of the art colony. A subsequent commission, *Classical Figures*, depicts this landscape as a mere billowing mist. The jewel-toned background in *Symphony* is even more abstracted, its emerald curtain of colour referring perhaps to the ravines that punctuated the Cornish terrain.



Thomas Wilmer Dewing (1851 - 1938)

Symphony in Green and Gold 1912 Oil on panel

For Thomas Dewing the purpose of art was to evoke memory and imagination. With its classical theme and clear reference to the exotic aspects of Cornish, *Symphony* pays homage to the cultivated and fanciful world of the art colony that had inspired his art for more than two decades. As we are somehow all connected via some form of social media. “The artist is not a special kind of person; rather each person is a special kind of artist.” Edward Munch, ‘*The Scream*’ is a depiction of his crazy behavior. Munch for all time undergo that death was knocking at his door and that he would die screaming. He created four descriptions of this painting and all of them had a pale man screaming with his hands on the face. All these paintings of Edward Munch were sold for millions of dollars at different auctions. The abstract expressionist paintings of Mark Rothko are meant to make us feel completely immersed in the colour. If we see these paintings in person we can stand in front of his oversized art, and experience the colour as it washes over us, it really is breathtaking.

Painting mirrors the aesthetic standard of the day and also provides a window into the historical context of the time. Works such as Andy Warhol’s, *Big Electric Chair* consists of a medium-size canvas that has been screen printed with silver acrylic paint. In the centre of the canvas is depicted an unoccupied electric chair set in an empty room, and the chair bears a high backed frame, as well as leather straps at its foot and longer straps and buckles at its sides. A wire running out below the seat lies coiled in front of the chair. Behind it, a small wooden table is shown against the back wall, and a barely visible sign that reads ‘*Silence*’ is positioned in the top right corner of the composition. The empty floor space in front of the chair is seemingly illuminated, being saturated with silver paint that fades to suggest dark and patchy shadows towards the edges of the canvas. The surface of the work is fairly uneven the silver paint, which appears to have been applied over an under layer of bright green paint, has been absorbed into the canvas during the printing process, and the work has been lined with a second canvas. The lining adhesive has impregnated parts of the fabric of the canvas, creating a rippling effect. The work is signed and dated on the verso.



Andy Warhol (1928-1987)

Big Electric Chair 1967-1968 (acrylic and silk screen ink on Lenin)

The picture of an empty electric chair in an empty execution chamber becomes an emotional metaphor for death. In 1962, Andy Warhol started a series of silkscreened paintings of fatality and tragedy that included photographs of suicides, plane and car crashes, and tragedy suffering celebrities for example Marilyn Monroe and Jacqueline Kennedy. All the images were in use from the print media. He depicted an electric chair in several groups of silk-screens throughout the 1960s, the first in 1963 the same year that New York's Sing State Penitentiary performed its last two capital punishment by electric chair (capital punishment was banned in the United States since 1963-1997). For his 1968 retrospective at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Warhol produced yet another series, of which these works are a part. In these prints, however, he made some variations: he cropped the image to bring the electric chair to the foreground, and screened it in a variety of colours other than black, occasionally printing off-register double images. Same as Picasso's Guernica serve as iconic reminders and powerful statements on social issues of their time. Artists frequently see their place to incite, to voice, to explain. This long position role of the artist as campaigner is at the heart of Social Transformation. Artists suppose, "There is greatly that is needed to be said, to make people stop, look and listen, to confront social injustice issues. Paintings can often say what words cannot. We want to fetch influential artwork to the universal public that reflects on these issues and give confidence change." Nighthawks, by the American artist Edward Hopper, reproduce the serious mood a lot of felt in the World War II. Hopper starts this painting at once after the attack on Pearl Harbor, which had left many Americans shocked and distressed. The artist imprisons this feeling in his painting the scene shows a cafe, which Hopper based on a restaurant in New York's Greenwich Village. Hopper himself was a model for the man seated at the counter whose face can be seen; he used his wife for the figure next to him. Even though the scene takes place in the middle of New York City, the streets are devoid of people, activity, even light. The people seated inside are still and quiet, and the decor is reduced to essentials. The cafe is the only lit place; no light emanates from windows on the other side of the street. The artist remarked later, 'Unconsciously, probably, I was painting the loneliness of a large city'. Despite gathering together in the all-night diner, these individuals appear to be alone in their own thoughts; little interaction takes place between them. A large glass window separating the viewer from the figures leaves the viewer alone as well.



Edward Hopper (1882-1967)

Nighthawks 1942 (oil on canvas)

A painter has endless amounts of fun and experience great joy in his studio. He tries to be very thoughtful and socially and politically aware of his surroundings. Every time he experience feelings of discomfort in his life, he need to find an answer by transforming those feelings through his art. An artist's role is almost that of an Alchemist, capable of transforming a few humble materials into objects which are imbued with spiritual and aesthetic value and then possibly as well material value. There are many roles that an artist fills. But, in slighter cities, having local artists brings a sense of pride to the community. It also sets instance for young people who might be considering careers in the arts. Artists support their communities by teaching their art and craft. Also, in most communities, there are auctions that benefit local causes and charities, and donations of art by local artists are some of the most popular items at these auctions.

## References

- [1] Fichner Lois, Understanding Art, P. 432
- [2] Livingstone, M., Pop Art: A Continuing History, P.34
- [3] Harrison, Sylvia, Pop Art and the Origins of Post-Modernism. P. 261
- [4] Meisel, Louis K. Photorealism. Harry N. Abrams, P. 13-14
- [5] John Lancaster. Introducing Op Art, London: BT Bats ford Ltd, 1973, p. 28.