

History Of Assemblage Art

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Assemblage Art refers to the art of collecting and making compositions of all material things, from junk, wood, paper, stones, and many other things. In the 20th century, many artists worked in this field to utilize different archaeological things. The idea of an assemblage is explored in many ways, the most striking being the movements of Dada and Surrealism. It is a modern way of art first introduced in the 1950s by one of the founder assemblage artists, Jean Dubuffet, who created a series of colleges from the butterfly wings. It is the combination of sculpture and painting, and it made its definition called the art of assembling. It is close to the collage; however, a step ahead of this, in some cases, it is hard to differentiate between the two. This art emerged during several movements, such as Dadaism, Constructivism, and Surrealism. Here, we will discuss the prominent artist and their contributions to assemblage art. Moreover, it will discuss the history of assemblage art and its importance in the field of art and archaeology.

Assemblage Art Founders:

There were many artists who worked to flourish this field of art, here we will discuss some greater contributors to this field. Kurt Schwitters was an active member of the art scene in Germany. The assemblage art evolved and emerged as a separate domain of art, passing through various stages. His famous work was the Merz Picture, which included colleges and assemblages which were created from conceivable materials like wire netting, perambulator wheel, and cotton wool. Some of his work contained imagery and text. However, it was without activism tendencies. Robert Rauschenberg was another prominent innovator of assemblage art, he used some unconventional objects such as trash and things collected from streets in New York and turned them into art. His major contribution to this art was a series of works done from 1954 to 1962, Monogram was his most famous artwork, which was made of cloth, tire, paint, and even stuffed animals. Louise Nevelson was among the greatest assemblage artists who used monumental wooden works. She used discarded pieces of wood and made extraordinary wooden sculptures in gold and white, spanning various movements, such as Cubism, Expressionism, and Surrealism. Jean Tinguely was a painter and sculptor from Switzerland who belonged to the Dada movement. He was also among the founders of Kinetic art and Nouveau réalisme. He was a musician, and his art included music, performances, and recordings, for that purpose he designed giant sculptures. Assemblage art covered the gap between pop art sculpture and collage. It used non-art objects produced unique art pieces, and contributed to modern art installation.

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The approach of assemblage art goes back to the cubist construction of Pablo Picasso, who used three-dimensional art pieces in 1912. He made *Still Life 1914* from scrap wood and tablecloth, which he glued and painted. He continued with this unique idea throughout his career. In 1918, Kurt Schwitters, a Dadaist artist, started the use of scrap objects and made several assemblages, and named this technique “Merz”. Later on, Surrealists were impressed by this idea and surrealist artists used assemblages of unlikely combinations and made surprising sculptures. In the 1950s and onward, assemblage art was widely used, which is the reason behind the notion that assembly art began in this era. This approach was popularized in the USA in the mid-20th century by Jim Dine and Robert. The founders of assemblage art, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, used the anti-aesthetic approach to art, and they used scrap materials and applied their creative ideas to make sculptures and named them neo-dada. The technique of assemblage was extensively used by many contemporary artists, who created large-scale assemblages from scavenged and already existing objects. The modern assemblage includes the use of old shoes, machine parts, boxes, used plastic bottles, baked bean cans and so on. It is the recombination and renovation of natural and manufactured objects which were not considered art materials. “The Art of Assemblage” was the first-ever exhibition in the New York Museum in 1961 to show the works by early pioneers of Assemblage art, including Picasso, Schwitters, Braque, and Dubuffet. It also showcased the work of American assemblages by artists such as Man Ray and Joseph Cornell.

Transforming Trash Into Treasure:

According to Max (2017), artisans can use relics, pieces of jewellery, pieces of broken toys, and hardware to make attractive art pieces. Assemblage art can also utilize certain recycled materials, including newspapers, cardboard, and junk mail. Max further argued that Assemblage art refers to the use of discarded and random objects, and through creativity and artistic skills, artisans can make sculptures that are valuable and indicative of the environment. Most of the sculptures of this art are in three dimensions. Nevelson has done remarkable work to collect objects and create art pieces of interest, he didn't focus on culture and gender, etc. Isaiah Zagar began his career as a muralist in the 1980s and assembled mosaic structures. He also used discarded materials and applied his artistic skills. He created a magic garden with recycled objects in Philadelphia. Manta (2018) argued that assemblage art is the creativity of artists to transform different materials through the social construct. In addition, he argued that creativity seen in the assemblage art doesn't start at the moment an artist picks a brush or other materials, rather it is the interweaving of various flows. It is the process in which flows of materials, and the social flows are connected. Creativity doesn't refer to intrinsic personality traits but a social construct. It is the dynamics of the social world, where the flow of matter, materiality, and social flow are connected in every sculpture and painting.

Assemblage art is explored in many ways, however, in the early twentieth century, the movements of

Dada and Surrealism have flourished this idea. The Dadaist's sculptures and collages included pieces of everyday objects such as photographs, metal cups, strings, and newsprints. They composed these things and produced new artworks. Using the Dadaistic approach artists produced something interesting and new from the scraps of every day (Hamilakis & Andrew, 2017). On the other hand, Surrealists used collages and assemblages by using plastic, bread baguette, and metal. For instance, a loaf of bread was balanced on the head of a woman by Jean Francois, however, the loaf didn't last long, so it was remade from plaster. The implications of assemblage art were associated with social science, as social scientists have explored assemblages with social ontologies. DeLenda (2006a) argued that assemblages are composed of parts which are expressed by external relations. Assemblage is also used in archaeological practices that configure material objects, humans, plants, animals, and places by using ideas, techniques, and technologies. The archaeological research assisted in reshaping and reconfiguring assemblages in modern ways.

Assemblage art is the latest contribution to the field of art and has attracted many artists during the past century. It polished the creativity and artistic skills of artists by using non-art materials and utilizing scrap objects which were never considered art pieces. The modern artists are found keenly interested in this field and doing remarkable work to flourish this innovative idea in art.

Works Cited

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