

The Dada Art Movement

Posted on September 25, 2019

The Dada art movement was created in the early 20th century, during the end of the [First World War](#). It began in Europe and spread across the continent due to its popularity. The Dada art movement gained prominence because it employed controversial tactics to challenge the traditional norms and customs of that day. The primary objective of the movement was to defy the social, economic and political institutions of Europe. This movement enjoyed the support of participants from both Europe and North America. Those who took part in this movement, known as the Dadaists, rebelled against the logic presented in capitalist reason and ideologies. They believed that such reason had led the world to war, and they expressed their desire to challenge that reason through chaos, irrationality, and nonsense in artistic terms.

There has not been much consensus on the origins of the term “dada.” According to various scholars, the term denotes the nonsense and absurdity the movement itself stood for. It has different meanings in different languages; for example, it means “yes, yes” in Romanian and French, and it means a rocking horse. Many manoeuvres were used by the Dadaists to show their contempt for the traditions and practicality of the world, many of which also sparked public outrage. One such case is Duchamp’s artwork, “The Fountain,” which displays a urinal. This piece caused fervour in the public. Duchamp defended his work, saying that it represented his rejection of traditional values and expression of artistic freedom^[1].

The movement ended in 1922, and its proponents went on to produce groundbreaking artistic work, yet the movement has managed to create an impact on the modern world. It affects not only the social scene but also how one perceives art. The Dadaists incorporated the objects of everyday life into their art and made abstract collages. The artworks may have seemed absurd, but they held a strong idea underneath the surface. For example, Hannah Hoch used texts and images from newspapers and magazines and arranged them in such a way they represented the haphazard nature of Germany’s Weimar Republic. Thus, in very artistic expressions, the Dadaists also criticized the political institutions of their time, which they believed had led to war.

Thus, the movement affected the social and political landscape of Europe and North America. Through their work, the Dadaists paved the way for constructivism and surrealism. The former was a movement that originated in the Soviet Union. Its idea was to construct art, as the Dadaists did, and use it not only for social purposes but also for creating awareness in society about its matters. The latter was also a cultural movement that had its roots in France. It is best known for its abstract ideas and illogical and often unsettling paintings, which are created from everyday objects and are used as a means for artists to express their unconscious. The effect of Dadaism on Surrealism was to create a deep but insightful disillusionment with the Western ideals of logic, reason, and rationality. Surrealists used unconventional techniques to unlock the unconscious mind and its mysteries^[2].

One of the influences of the art movement was punk rock music. Similar to the Dada movement, the genre of punk rock used music to break away from the traditional norms of the society and embrace modernity. Both movements came at a time when the world was devastated by war and unstable economies. Punk rock came in the 1970s and was a reaction to the losses America had suffered in the Vietnam war. Dadaists produced anti-art, and similarly, punk rock musicians produced anti-music. This was used as an approach to question the social construction of norms and values prevalent in society rather than accept them blindly. The punk rock artists were so inspired by the Dadaists that many used their artwork as covers for their albums^[3].

Dada has also influenced many artists in terms of how to release their sentiments artistically. As of now, the very idea that art should be aesthetic and appealing to the eye has become a wonder of the past. Instead, the usage of everyday objects, photographs and collage have become common with artists to reveal the truth. The movement has spawned many other movements and artists who use art as a medium to challenge the world and its creation of norms, values and customs.

The Dada movement also helped lead to the neo-Dada movement. The latter movement had many similarities with the earlier one and sought to deny the traditional concepts of aesthetic art. Apart from focusing solely on art, this movement also gave a literary manifestation to the works of the original Dadaists. To do so, the neo-Dadaists began to fill newspapers with seemingly absurd conversations or advertising about everyday items such as typewriters. This again left logic and practicality behind and embraced the absurdity of this world.

The Dada movement simply began as an artistic protest to the damages of the First World War. It protested the horrors of imperialism and the class-based society capitalism had created. However, this movement paved the way for artists to express their conception of the social, political and economic institutions of the world. It has given a voice to those who seek to rebel against the flawed traditions made by men, which have mostly served as a barrier to modernity and human development.

End Notes

Elder, R. Bruce. *Dada, surrealism, and the cinematic effect*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2015.

Prager, Phillip Andrew. "Making an art of creativity: The cognitive science of Duchamp and Dada." *Creativity Research Journal* 24, no. 4 (2012): 266-277.

Sausset, D. "Lipstick traces: A secret history of the 20th century." (2001): 115-115.

1. Phillip Andrew Prager "Making an Art of Creativity: The Cognitive Science of Duchamp and Dada" (2012) ↑
2. R. Bruce Elder "DADA, Surrealism and the Cinematic Effect" (2012) ↑
3. Sausset, D. "Lipstick Traces: A secret history of the 20th century." (2001) ↑