Vincent Van Gogh And His Artworks

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Introduction

The history of Western arts cannot be complete without the discussion of Vincent Willem Van Gogh. He was a Dutch painter of post-impressionism (after the French art movement). He was among the most notable figures of the nineteenth century. His contribution to the field of arts is remarkable as he produced almost 2,100 art-related works in a span of a decade, with approximately 860 oil paintings. In the last two years of his life, he created most of his paintings, which is also an achievement. His artworks comprise landscapes, big and small portraits, still life, and self-drawings (Van Noord et al.). He skillfully used colors and considered them to represent different stages of his life. His paintings are renowned as refined pieces of art with proper use of brushwork. Also, his artworks represented the modern concept of art during that time. Initially, he used watercolors in his paintings, and then, with the passage of time, he moved to landscape painting and other forms of artwork. Van Gogh's great source of inspiration was nature; he was truly fascinated with the beauty of farms and vegetation during his stay in Arles (South France). Nature was Van Gogh's source of inspiration, and he had a great sense of colors as well, which is why his paintings and artworks are reflections of his fascination.

Vincent Van Gogh's Artistic Development

Gogh's development is mostly associated with the time he spent residing in different places across Europe. He was very keen to adapt himself to the local lifestyle and conditions. While living in various parts of Europe, he developed a sharp visual sense to undertake artwork. He evolved as a complete artist gradually because he was very well aware of his abilities. He shifted to different places to create new visualization and thought processes and to enhance his artistic skills. In this regard, a well-known art historian, Melissa McQuillan, believed that Gogh's skills were reflected in the later part of his artistic works, which he developed as a result of different moves. He experienced the realities of life through living in a different parts of Europe, these realities clearly reflected in his paintings and different artwork.

Techniques Used In Paintings

Initially, he used lighter slabs of red, orange, green, and blue colors with a broken brush as a mark of impressionists. Gogh also tried to adopt a pointillist technique that belonged to neo-impressionists; he also drew opposite dots of pure color, which were embedded into the resultant colors of the viewer. This experimentation was clearly visible in a self-portrait with a still life of 1885. He also took inspiration from Japanese prints, and he painted dark outlines around different objects with sharp colors in areas where thick color was prominent. Also, he opted to use different colors depending on his mood. Often, on purpose, he limited his slab, for example, with sunflowers, which is a complete composition of yellow color. The adoption of Gauguin's painting technique from memory started giving attraction to Van Gogh's paintings. Van Gogh's reacted emotionally to the use of colors and his brushwork. His purpose in using colors was to attract the mood of the viewer rather than using them realistically. Van Gogh once said that he used colors to express himself more intensely.

Landscapes

Gogh painted various landscapes with flowers, including roses, irises, sunflowers, and lilacs. The use of colors shows how much he was inclined toward the language of color (Letizia et al.). Also, ukiyo (A Japanese art) has two series of dying sunflowers. He painted the first one in Paris by showing flowers resting on the ground, while after a year, the second one was completed in Aries, and it was of bouquets in a vase placed in the light of dawn. Both these pieces were designed by a thick layer of paintwork; they both were refined and nicely textured. He completed these series of paintings to demonstrate his technical skills, he was not driven by his emotions and senses in such artwork. He also expressed the methodology of Gauguin's work. Also, there was a period of optimism among artists in the year 1888, and he developed his artwork during that time. When Gauguin came to visit him, he painted walls with big sunflowers to give him a warm welcome. Gauguin was thoroughly inspired by his work and also acquired two of his works in Paris versions. Once Gauguin made a departure, Gogh included two main forms of sunflowers in the Brussels exhibition. It was the result of his imagination. Van Gogh, unfortunately, died two years later but left a remarkable piece of artwork. He painted La Berceuse- it was thought to be as creative as his sunflowers. It contained a limited palette, different brush marks, and simple outlines. The portrait represented a shift in artistic style from fluid to steady brush marks, and the uppermost part of the Portrait of the Postman has wide brush marks, a different style, and an approach in Madame Roulin with Baby with the use of a knife.

Self Portrait

In the span of five years before his death, Gogh produced more than 43 self-portraits. He completed those self-portraits in series, especially those which were pained in Paris during 1887; he continued that until the short period before his death. These portraits clearly reflected the intensity of his critical

self-observation. Usually, these portraits represented significant stages of his life; for example, he painted the mid-1887 Paris series at the time when he got to know Paul Cezanne, Signac, and Paul Monet. One of his most popular works was the Self-Portrait with Grey Felt Hat; heavy marks of paint expanded outward around the canvas; this work was highly organized and based on the sophisticated use of brush marks. Also, the novel Halo, taken from Neo Impressionists' repertoire, was labeled as a purposeful canvas by Van Gogh. His portraits differ in variety and color, the use of pale colors gave a reflection of his skin. Some of the self-portraits presented him in beards while others were without. Also, he used bandages in some portraits after he inflicted harm on his ears. In few of his paintings, he depicted himself, he also painted himself as a reflection in the mirror.

Cypresses And Orchard

Nature was a great source of inspiration for his paintings. Therefore, fifteen canvases represented cypresses, a tree he was fascinated with. He made these trees alive, which were normally deemed a symbol of death. He started the series of Cypresses in South France; he showed these trees in the distance, and as the wind blew in the fields while he was at Saint-Remy, he took them to the ground (Van Heugten, Sjraar, 2018). He called them beautiful in line and proportionate like an Egyptian shaft. Van Gogh painted many smaller forms of Wheat Fields with Cypresses. The work was attributed to the swirls and heavily painted impasto; there was another painting named The Starry Night, in which cypresses are dominant in the foreground. During that period, he created others with a landscape of olives. Also, in a letter he wrote to his brother, he mentioned that he had at least some landscapes with olives.

His first group of paintings involved Flowering Orchards, which he started after arriving in South France in February 1888. These fourteen paintings depict nature and are expressive representations of the spring season. He was a firm believer in the new beginning in South France, especially in the city of Arles, where he resided. Van Gogh was pleasantly surprised by the beauty of South France. He developed an image as a result of his inspiration, which he later reflected in his paintings of Flower Orchard and other landscapes. He used to spend most of his time on the farms of Arles just to get close to nature and get fresh ideas for his paintings of landscape. He also brightened his palette as a result of his inspiration from nature.

Conclusion

Vincent Van Gogh contributed greatly to different styles of paintings. His contributions are great concerning landscapes, portraits, self-portraits, and still life. Also, he was the person who gave new concepts and dimensions to still-life paintings. He was famous for using bold and bright colors in his paintings. He developed his skills gradually while living in Arles (the city of South France); he was fully aware of his capabilities, which is why he moved to different places in Europe to enhance his skills. His artistic style was very much evident in almost all of his paintings. The main idea behind his

paintings is to represent his mood and mindset rather than the viewer's preferences. He often depicted different stages of his life through self-portraits. He mastered different techniques and used them skillfully in his paintings. Further, the use of Gauguin's painting technique earned his painting's attraction and colors. He depicted himself in different styles through self-portraits. His great source of inspiration was nature, which is why his fifteen canvases represented cypresses. He successfully created masterpieces of landscapes, still life, portraits, and self-portraits. Also, until shortly before his death, he kept creating self-portraits. Unfortunately, Van Gogh committed suicide in 1890, but his artwork is still alive.

References

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