

NEOCLASSICISM AND SURREALISM IN PABLO PICASSO'S PAINTINGS

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Abstract: Neoclassicism is the name given to Western movements in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theatre, music, and architecture that draw inspiration from the "classical" art and culture of classical antiquity. Surrealist Movement was to revolt against the way things were, a revolutionary idea that swept through the art world after branching off from Dadaism. The goal of the Surrealist movement was to revolt against the way things were, a revolutionary idea that swept through the art world after branching off from Dadaism. Surrealism was intertwined with revolutionary ideas, especially against the idea of a capitalistic system. The Surrealists wanted to liberate art from the constraints placed on it by society, purge politics from its corruptive influences, and free society from destructive forces. Pablo Picasso is the twentieth century's most famous artist. He created more than twenty thousand paintings. Of his most famous artworks are "Guernica", Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. version O), and his many, many cubist style paintings that he created. This research paper will study the impact of Neoclassicism and Surrealism on Pablo Picasso's Paintings.

Keywords: Neoclassicism, Surrealism, Cubism, Pablo Picasso

Introduction

Pablo Diego Jose Santiago Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno Crispin Cripiano de los Remedios Cipriano de Santisima Trinidad Ruiz Blasco y Picasso Lopez, or more commonly known as Pablo Picasso, the twentieth century's most famous artist. He created more than twenty thousand paintings. Of his most famous artworks is "Guernica", Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. version O), and his many, many cubist style paintings that he created. At the age of twenty, he began to sign his paintings with just his mother's maiden name of Picasso. In the fall of 1901, he begins the Blue Period until he begins painting with more red colors in 1904 which is the start of the Rose Period. In the winter of 1908 he and Georges Braque become close friends and his work with analytical cubism turns into synthetic cubism. Picasso also began, as a section of cubism, to add bits of string and other materials to his work. By doing so, he was the inventor of the modern day collage. He also made his first important sale of art to Ambroise Vollard, who he also painted a portrait of in a cubism style. In 1906 he began to paint in the style of cubism that changed the entire form of modern art. He was merely 26 years old at the time. Pablo Picasso was born on the twenty-fifth of May, in October 1881. He was born and raised in Malaga, Spain. He also had two sisters, Lola and Conchita. Conchita died when she was eight. His father was also an artist, and as Pablo grew up, he saw a prodigious amount of talent in Pablo. Not soon after, he began teaching Pablo all he knew about art and painting.

Neoclassicism and Surrealism

Neoclassicism is a revival of the styles and spirit of classic antiquity inspired directly from the classical period, which coincided and reflected the developments in philosophy and other areas of the Age of Enlightenment, and was initially a reaction against the excesses of the preceding Rococo style. While the movement is often described as the opposed counterpart of Romanticism, this is a great over-simplification that tends not to be sustainable when specific artists or works are considered.

Neoclassicism was born in Rome in the mid-18th century, at the time of the rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but its popularity spread all over Europe as a generation of European art students finished their Grand Tour and returned from Italy to their home countries with newly rediscovered Greco-Roman ideals. The main neoclassical movement coincided with the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment, and continued into the early 19th century, laterally competing with Romanticism. In architecture, the style continued throughout the 19th, 20th and up to the 21st century.

Surrealism is a cultural movement that began in the early 1920s and is best known for its visual artworks and writings. Artists painted unnerving, illogical scenes with photographic precision, created strange creatures from everyday objects and developed painting techniques that allowed the unconscious to express itself. The goal of the Surrealist movement was to revolt against the way things were, a revolutionary idea that swept through the art world after branching off from Dadaism. Surrealism was intertwined with revolutionary ideas, especially against the idea of a capitalistic system. The Surrealists wanted to liberate art from the constraints placed on it by society, purge politics from its corruptive influences, and free society from destructive forces.

Andre Breton, who emerged as the leader of the surrealists when he published the Manifeste du surrealisme; Poisson soluble in Paris in 1924, wrote in the publication of the first surrealist journal, La Révolution surréaliste, that "It is necessary to start work on a new

declaration of the rights of man." La Revolution surrealiste was filled with revolutionary and scandalous ideas on issues of suicide, death, and violence. Writers filled the journal with commentary and poetry on these themes while artists represented them in works of art. As the movement grew, the journal took on a more political stance, which was pro-communist and anti-capitalist. It also took on issues of sexuality, with open discussions on sex and even on the perverse.

As the Surrealism movement progresses, Surrealist painting took on two forms:

- Abstract
- Symbolic

This schism in the movement was based on the surrealists' feelings over Carl Jung's view of the subconscious. The Automatist Surrealists believed that art was confined by the dictates of form and should focus more on feeling, needing a more abstract representation to free expression from the subconscious. The Automatist Surrealists rebelled against the use of form in favor of this free flow of inspiration from the subconscious. They snubbed the elite, incited scandal, and mocked the traditions of the art society during the height of the Surrealistic movement in the 1920s and 1930s.

Joan Miro's work is representative of Automatist paintings in that his work seems inspired by a lack of form and emphasis on free flow from the subconscious. "Table with Moustache" is a series of abstract images stretching beyond the boundaries of its structure. The Veristic Surrealists, on the other hand, thought form and structure were essential to grasp the inspiration of images intact from the unconscious. The Veristic Surrealists believed that if images were not recorded quickly and faithfully from the subconscious mind, that they would be immediately lost upon reaching the conscious mind. They believed that the images they represented could be understood if they were looked into, analyzed, and seen merely as a representative of the inner, spiritual core.

Cubism

Cubism is a style of painting and sculpture developed in the early 20th century, characterized chiefly by an emphasis on formal structure, the reduction of natural forms to their geometrical equivalents, and the organization of the planes of a represented object independently of representational requirements. It is an early-20th-century art movement which brought European painting and sculpture historically forward toward 20th century Modern art. Cubism in its various forms inspired related movements in literature and architecture. Cubism has been considered to be among the most influential art movements of the 20th century. The movement was pioneered by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, joined by Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes, Robert Delaunay, Henri Le Fauconnier, and Fernand Léger. One primary influence that led to Cubism was the representation of three-dimensional form in the late works of Paul Cézanne.

Picasso's Neoclassicism

In 1914, at the height of synthetic Cubism, its co-inventor Pablo Picasso began once again to draw and paint in a naturalistic manner. Three years later, when he was working for Diaghilev on the ballet "Parade", the number of these naturalistic works increased. This was, however, Picasso's second 'classical' period, for the Rose period of 1905-6 was in many respects the first run. Indeed the peculiar evolution of Picasso's classicism serves as a reminder that the wartime and post-war 'call to order' was not a new phenomenon, produced by the war, but a resurfacing within the avant-garde of a classicist movement which had been dominant at the beginning of the century, and whose own origins went back as far as the post-Impressionist 'call to order' of the 1880s. Viewed from this perspective, Picasso's Cubism could be seen as a kind of temporary interruption within the continuity of his classicism. Less perversely, it could be seen as another form of classicism - a revolutionary, 'abstract' form of classicism. This was, in effect, the line taken by those critics and artists, such as the Purists, who wanted to bring system and order to Cubism through referring back to the 'constants' of Greek art and its Roman followers.

Towards the end of 1905, a new objectivity entered Picasso's work, displacing the sentimentality of his Saltimbanque paintings. This development was encouraged by the J.A.D. Ingres retrospective exhibition held in the famous 1905 Salon d'Automne and by the neoclassical work of rising artists such as Aristide Maillol (1861-1944). During the course of 1906, especially during his four-month stay in the village of Gosol in the Pyrenees, this classical tendency in Picasso's work was confirmed. His paintings took on a terracotta and grey tonality, forms were treated more volumetrically, and the references to classical Greek sculpture, to Ingres, and now also to Cezanne, increased. His subject matter simplified as he focused on timeless and traditional themes derived from antiquity, such as male nudes with horses and women doing their hair.

Impact of Surrealism

The year of this interview, 1923, was also the year in which Picasso's friendship with the Surrealist poet and theorist Andre Breton became closer, and in December 1924 Picasso was represented in the first issue of *La Revolution Surrealiste* with a sheet-metal construction. Although he did not officially join the Surrealism movement, his work was included in the Surrealists' exhibitions and magazines, and from the mid-1920s it showed many signs of his sympathy with their fundamental concerns. His subject matter did not alter radically as a consequence of this new allegiance, but the violent and expressive distortions to which he subjected the human body were limitlessly inventive, and metaphoric allusions and private symbols gave his work a poetic, imaginative and dream-like character. The brashly colored, wilfully ugly and disturbing, collage-style *Three Dancers* of 1925 (Tate Collection, London) dramatically registers the new orientation, since the subject and composition - derived directly from the traditional motif of the 'Three Graces' - had been explored in many of his earlier elegant classical drawings of dancers.

Despite appearances, however, the ties with the classical tradition held fast during the late 1920s and 1930s when Picasso was in closest touch with Surrealist artists: many of his most grotesquely distorted figures adopted classical poses, and in the use of line and tonal modeling he pastiched academic techniques. Moreover, some of his contemporary drawings were executed in a pure, linear style derived from the painting of Greek pottery, for it was primarily in his graphic work that his absorption in the idea of the classical world and in classical mythology was expressed. It seems, indeed, that rather than discouraging this dialogue with classicism, the Surrealists' obsession with myth and myth-making stimulated Picasso's increasingly mythic concept of the relationship between the artist and his world, and his special identification with the legendary Minotaur. These concerns were expressed in the etchings he made to illustrate a new edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (published by Albert Skira in 1931), and came to a climax in the great suite of etchings, executed in 1933-4, on the theme of the sculptor's studio and the loves of the Minotaur, which became part of the renowned 'Vollard Suite'. In 1930 Picasso had bought the Chateau de Boisgeloup, north-west of Paris, and there he was able to install large sculpture studios. The busts and nudes he created in the early 1930s vary greatly in their degree of

naturalism, but in all of them, he pursued his exploration of the many 'voices' of the classical tradition, without, however, being at any time tempted to work in a straightforward neoclassical manner.

The two factors triggered at the same time: Picasso's new muse Marie-Therese Walter, whose "fascinating face" he desiderated to picture, immediately notifying his new female friend that "we will do great things together", and the closeness to the circle of Andre Breton. It was in the gallery of Pierre in 1925 that Picasso first took part in a group exhibition of the Surrealists (before that, his works were presented at the personal exhibitions only).

The first issue of *La Revolution Surrealiste* published a photograph of Picasso's design from 1914, in the second issue there were two pages devoted to the artist's drawings, and the fourth issue (07.15.1925) published a reproduction of the scandalous "The Young Ladies of Avignon", created 18 years earlier. It was due to Breton that the painting's canvas was rolled out, retrieved from a dark corner of the workshop and sold to a collector named Jacques Doucet. In an article on Picasso from the same fourth issue, Andre Breton analyzed the causes of own admiration of the artist and concluded that "reality is not limited to what we see", and that "artist had to grasp the model, or the 'internal concept'". The numerous portraits of Marie-Therese that make up the surrealist legacy of Picasso can be called the understanding of the model.

In such paintings as "Woman with a Flower (1932)", "Girl before a Mirror (Marie-Therese Walter) (1932)", "Lying Naked on a Red Cushion (Marie-Therese) (1932)" and others Picasso was exploring his latest model like a child, who disassembled a new toy to see what was spinning and beeping inside it. As a study subject, the body is separated into pieces; the fragments twist and fold in a new way. It is as if the artist is trying to figure what will happen if he puts the pieces this or that way.

However, the flowing lines and "coziness" of Marie-Therese's portraits do not exclude the emergence of other works, which could be signed with Breton's credo: "Beauty is either convulsive or it is not there". The first work in which the artist experimented with the sorting of human parts and folding them into new combinations was "Three Dancers (1925)". In 1930, Picasso created another piece full of expression, the "Crucifixion", which is considered a landmark on the way from Three Dancers to "Guernica (1937)".

It was the same period that numerous bathers were created, some of whom were marked with a couple of color spots ("Bather Opening a Cabin (1928)"), other paintings contain yet another vivisection of the female body and the construction of monsters from its constituents: "Bather with Arms Raised (1929)", "Seated Bather on the Beach (1930)", "Young Girl Throwing a Rock (1931)", and "Figures at the Seaside".

Neoclassicism and Surrealism Period - 1918 to 1945

In the period following the upheaval of World War I, Picasso produced work in a neoclassical style. In February 1917, Picasso made his first trip to Italy. He saw the celebrated collections of antique sculpture in the Vatican and the archaeological museum in Naples,

and he looked at a lot of Roman painting and mosaics in Pompeii, Herculaneum and also in the Naples museum. He saw a great deal of Renaissance art both in Florence and Rome, the Primitives as well as Raphael and Michelangelo. In St Peter's he would have seen not only Michelangelo's Pieta but numerous sculptures by Bernini, and he must have looked at Bernini's extraordinary obelisk-bearing elephant and Michelangelo's Risen Christ in the Church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva because these were on the doorstep of the Minerva Hotel where Ansermet, Olga, and the other dancers were lodging. The memory of Bernini's Roman fountains surfaced later in various set designs. Meanwhile his later damning references to Caravaggio – 'your enemy'. Kahnweiler called him – suggest that he also spent time looking at the Caravaggios in Rome. All this 'high' culture was leavened by Roman and Neapolitan popular art in debased forms of the Rococo, Romantic and Realist styles. Moreover, Picasso was seeing all this in the company of writers, composers, and artists – the kind of company in which he always thrived and which always stimulated him.

In 1918, Olga and Picasso got married. The young couple moved to an apartment that occupied two floors at 23 Rue La Boetie, acquired servants, a chauffeur, and began to move in different social circles, no doubt due to Olga's influence. The chaotic get-together Picasso had with his artist friends gradually changed into formal receptions. Picasso's image of himself changed as well, and this was reflected in the more conventional style he adopted in his art and the way in which he consciously made use of artistic traditions and ceased to be provocative.

In the 1920s, influenced by the writings of psychologist Sigmund Freud, the literary, intellectual, and artistic movement called Surrealism sought a revolution against the constraints of the rational mind; and by extension, they saw the rules of a society as oppressive. Among most popular Surrealism painters are Salvador Dali, Joan Miro, and Rene Magritte. Surrealism also embraces a Marxist ideology that demands an orthodox approach to history as the product of the material interaction of collective interests, and many renowned Surrealism artists, later on, became 20th-century Counterculture symbols, along with Marxist Che Guevara.

In 1925 the Surrealist writer and poet Andre Breton declared Picasso as 'one of ours' in his article *Le Surrealisme et la Peinture*, published in *Revolution surrealiste*. *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* was reproduced for the first time in Europe in the same issue. Yet Picasso exhibited Cubist works at the first Surrealist group exhibition in 1925; the concept of 'psychic automatism in its pure state' defined in the *Manifeste du surrealisme* never appealed to him entirely. He did at the time develop new imagery and formal syntax for expressing himself emotionally; a typical example is *Three Dancers*, 1925, but Surrealism only revived Picasso's attraction to primitivism and eroticism.

Conclusion

The immense diversity of styles of art he was engaged in looking at aroused Picasso's competitive and cannibalistic instincts, and over the ensuing years memories of the art he had seen in Italy surfaced in his figurative paintings and drawings, although allusions to specific works are generally rare. What has been called his 'return to order' was not an intellectual decision dictated by the theoretical debates circulating in Paris. Rather, it was driven by his personal contact with works of art which were fresh to him, and by his delighted sense of discovery and recognition. In 1925 the Surrealist writer and poet Andre Breton declared Picasso as 'one of ours' in his article *Le Surrealisme et la Peinture*, published in *Revolutions surrealiste*. *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* was reproduced for the first time in Europe in the same issue. Yet Picasso exhibited Cubist works at the first Surrealist group exhibition in 1925; the concept of 'psychic automatism in its pure state' defined in the *Manifeste du surrealisme* never appealed to him entirely. He did at the time develop new imagery and formal syntax for expressing himself emotionally; a typical example is *Three Dancers*, 1925, but Surrealism only revived Picasso's attraction to primitivism and eroticism.

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