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May 24, 2015

Final Essay

The responsibility of any artist weather it be a musician, dance, painter, or any other sort of artist, should be above all, to inspire the next generation and reach as much people as possible. The negative idea that an artist pursuing fame is selfish, afraid to not be remembered, and just wanting wealth, is something that although true in some cases, should be seen differently. If you take a look at a really good local artist, he might be influencing a couple hundred, maybe even thousand people, but if you are able to reach Sinatra, Picasso, or Michelangelo-like fame, then you will be able to inspire the world of art for ages. Unlike science, or math, there is not a body of work that you can just learn your way up to, but rather you have to create your own. The one thing that history has shown artists, especially in the visual arts, is that the fame of an artist, if big enough, can be influential to a country. When it comes to politics visual artists should express their opinion and weather it is in favor or against what the government thinks, because just like any type of artist, they should express there believes through art.

Any artists that has successfully expressed there opinion on the politics of their country or another’s, has either helped beautify or destroy such empire. When an artist has enough passion for there idea he must be willing to face both the praise and backlash. For example, on January 8th, 2015 the artists of the satirical magazine “Charlie Hebdo” where murdered by Muslim extremists. The cartoonists were known for their uncensored cartoons against all types religion particularly against Muslim extremists. In the end they might have gotten to many people, maybe even inspired someone else to want to change the situation in the Middle East, but was it worth their lives? Well that I something that only the artists themselves know, but one thing that stands is that yes, they I have an influence.

When it comes to making art, I think that propaganda can play a big role if the artist is passionate enough about the topic that they are trying to convey and depending on how popular they are, they can actually create movements under the right circumstances. In a very simple way all art I think, could be considered propaganda because what an artist paints they are always trying to send a message and it is not necessarily the message itself but the act of trying to convince you to see what they want. One example that I think fits with this in a very peculiar way is graffiti. Graffiti was started by people searching for fame through simply writing their names or more likely nicknames all around their city. Graffiti writers like Cool Earl, Cornbread, and Taki 183 made this type of early graffiti very popular and in the beginning everything was about that peruse of fame. It is when graffiti became associated with gangs that it exploded into a lot of big urban cities, yet its core structure also changed. Many of the writers during this time did graffiti as a rebellious act against the government and it wasn’t about being great at the craft but about sending a message of what they believe was “freedom”. It is when children see this derogatory writing towards federal law enforcement that this type of “art” becomes propaganda. If a child is constantly is exposed to this on a daily bases he eventually will begin to adapt the ideas and if he does happen to like art, he might be swayed to do doing it for the purpose of rebelling instead of a more positive one, like inspiring. A lot of the older graffiti writers have become conscious about this and have moved their art from the streets into the museums, such as the graffiti artist Saber1 causing a positive form of propaganda into graffiti. It is not so much about the concepts of what they are painting, but the idea that kids will see graffiti as a form of art just as cubism, and abstract art eventually did.

As artists I think that if you want to have importance in the art world you have to show that you are aware of what I going on in the world and in politics it is something that is a very hard to express your opinions because more than likely you will have another large group of people that will oppose your ideas. In Picassos Guernica he leans towards what the majority of the people in Spain believed and that war would just lead towards destruction. After the bombing of Guernica, I think that people saw just how pointless the bombing was and once the painting was shown to the public it allowed people to rebel and fight for a peaceful nation.

Another big responsibility that an artist has is to push the art form that they practice in a in a direction that has not been explored yet. Although it might not seem like a big problem, some artists in the music, dance, and visual arts world strive to be great at what they do, but not to be different. Imagine if Picasso, Dali or Warhol became great classical painters like their predecessors. Yes, they might have still have become well known, but we wouldn’t have the fields of art that we have today. To do something that has never been done before is something that is hard to ask because you don’t know weather the public will accept it. They might love it in the future; or it might remain irrelevant and eventually fade away in the infinite world of art. Going back to graffiti, I think that this is the newest form of art that has been formed and although it was always seen as a form of vandalism it is slowly being introduced into the art world. In 2006, the Brooklyn Museum displayed graffiti all through out New York in hopes of changing people’s perspective of about graffiti. Works from artists Crash, Lee, Daze, and Jean Michel Basquiat where displayed and it brought a lot o attention to graffiti’s place in the art world. More recently in 2009, 300 pieces of graffiti were shown at the Grand Palais, a large museum in Paris, France. This shows that other countries other than the United States have began to accept graffiti into their art culture.

Lastly I think that it is an artist’s responsibility to uphold their views weather political or of any other sort, because if your view is swayed unwillingly, I think that as an artist you fail to fully express yourself. If you are willing to show the world what you believe through your art, I think that you must be completely honest because if once people find out you aren’t your art becomes empty and fake. An example for this was during the Red Scare of 1950s were we saw that many acting artist were aimed at by the government to instill communist fear into the public. Many actors tried to uphold their view on being innocent, yet some of them fail to do this, which leads to a lot of people becoming paranoid against communism. When Walt Disney and Ronald Ragan accused 40 actors of being pro communists many of them denied it, yet they where fired from work and 10 of them where held for further interrogation. Even then all of them denied affiliation with communist activity until one of the actors, Dmytryk fell under pressure and said that he as well as other actors were guilty. Weather or not this is true or not, many of the artists never recuperated the career they had because there was an uncertainty from the public to about their political views. In the manipulation one artist became the downfall of many actors careers.

Many people think that artist’s jobs are simple and that successful artists become successful through sheer talent, but I think the job of a artist is just as hard as an engineers just that in a different way. Subjects like STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) will always be evolving because we are in constant need of them to better understand our world, but art has no need so if we want to keep it alive it I up to the artists to create new boundaries and go were no other artist has. In order do this in any art category believe that inspiration I the best drive. Once you are inspired you yourself can be a catalyst for the next artist to grow.