

BASIC FACTS OF THE PAINTING

ARTIST: **Diego Rivera**

GENRE OF ART: **Symbolism**

YEAR CREATED: **1940**

SURFACE LEVEL DESCRIPTION:

A doctor named moore operating on a tree/root, that is bleeding blood

- **Hands, Scalpel, Tree that resembles a woman's body and light, banner with words (1)**

(not analysis, literally what people and things are in the painting. What is it a picture of?)

GENRE OF ART

WHAT ERA OF ART IS THIS PAINTING FROM?

- **This era of art is from the Surrealism era (10)**

WHAT TRAITS DEFINE THIS ERA OF ART?

- **“channel the unconscious as a means to unlock the power of the imagination”(8)**
- **Unconscious is what the brain does/has but doesn't intentionally use, yet impacts the person's behaviour profoundly (15)**
- **They wanted to use the unconscious as above and also dreamlike state to unlock the imagination(15)**
- **-R translate this into something more understandable, make sure to understand and explain “unconscious”**
- **To make the viewer uncomfortable, that what they are seeing isn't aligned with their perception of normal(8) - such as the tree having blood (my idea from the literal artwork) R find examples of this in your picture?**
- **Frequent use of imagery that was usually similar across one artist's work (8)**
- **2 methods (8)**
 - **Hyper-realism combined with trying to create a realistic 3D look (8)**

- “Automatism” - using the unconscious as opposed to the conscious (8)
- Our painting uses more of a Hyper-Realistic style as you can see from the detail in the hands and tree, where the elements of the unconscious are portrayed in a realistic style. (inference from 8 and the picture) **R which style is your painting? Is it either?**

WHAT WAS THIS ERA OF ART REACTING AGAINST?

- The suppression of the unconscious mind, and the use of rationalism - they wanted to liberate thought (11) **R again, you need to put in your own words, saying this in the audio script would be mostly unintelligible for the average listener.** - just by the way this is my own words
- They were against the way the enlightenment was so focused on rationalism and using reason, they wanted people to keep using their free thought (and the unconscious mind) and through that, liberate thought. (11)
- The Enlightenment (it helped accomplish the above ^) (11)
- WWI and WWII (11)
- Most and any types of repression (11)

WHAT ARE THE MOST FAMOUS ARTISTS AND ART PIECES FROM THIS GENRE?

Artists:

- **Frida Kahlo(4)**
- **Salvador Dali (8)**
 - **Persistence of Memory 1931 (21)**
 - **Surrealist - similar to hands of doctor moore(21)**
 - **Very realistic - similar to hands of doctor moore(21)**
 - **Metamorphosis - similar to hands of doctor moore (the tree of life)(21)**

-R instead of having a huge list of artists, look at the works of 1-2 of them and 1-2 of their famous works. Then add notes about what is similar and different from your own piece.

CONTEXT OF THE ERA (HISTORY)

IN WHAT AREA/REGION/COUNTRY WAS THIS PAINTED IN?

- **Mexico**

WHAT WAS GOING ON IN HISTORY AT THAT TIME IN THAT AREA?

- **Mexican Revolution (2)**
- **Rivera belonged to the Mexican Communist Party - This influenced his art because a lot of it ended up attacking socialist parties and rulers in the area (16)**
- **Russian Revolution (2)**
- **The Russian (Bolshevik) Revolution influenced the Mexican Communist Party, in ideas, but also the name (17)**
 - **Since such a great Communist government had arrived, it also would've inspired others to do the same (17, 27)**

- Lenin from the Bolshevik party/Russian Revolution was in a few of Rivera's paintings, one that got taken down by the Rockefellers (27, 25, 26)
- Both Revolutions: His art included figures such as Zapata and Lenin (16)
- WWII had recently ended (8)
- **R You really need to understand two things: The Mexican Revolution and Communism/Russian Revolution. Look into and grab some summaries of them. (Diego was a Communist, and even helped house Leon Trotsky, a super famous Russian Communist largely responsible for the Russian Revolution) These events, Mex. Rev. and Communism, are probably seen in his art.**

HOW DOES THE HISTORY/EVENTS GOING ON CONNECT TO THE GENRE OF ART?

- Diego and Frida had many affairs and were not good to each other. (3)
- WWII ending affected the genre of art because when the artist emigrated it helped spread the genre (8)
- Same as above, figures from the political era were frequently incorporated into his art (25,26,27)
- **R see above**

INTENT OF THE ARTIST

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE ARTIST'S LIFE?

- Most of his paintings can relate to the people in Mexico. "Diego Rivera sought to make art that reflected the lives of the working class and native peoples of Mexico." (2) For Example, the painting "The Flower Carrier" is trying his best to sell or put in market the flowers, ye is on all fours, because of how much weight is there. The wife tries to help him out at the right side. **R give examples of his works that do, and how?**
- He based his painting of these events happening around him. "Inspired by the political ideals of the Mexican Revolution (1914-15) and the Russian Revolution (1917)"..." Rivera and Kahlo shared an interest in radical politics and Marxism." (2) **R this is true, but again, find which political ideas etc...**
- Around the Early 1930's is when soon became known of his art. "In the 1930s and '40s, Diego Rivera painted several murals in the United States... The artist had reportedly included Lenin in his piece to portray the turbulent political atmosphere at the time, which was largely defined by conflicting capitalist and socialist ideologies and escalating fears surrounding the Communist Party." (2)
R fine, but make sure you understand it

- Rivera received a government scholarship at age 10 to study art at the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City, and got another grant from the governor of Veracruz to go to Europe to study in 1907 (14)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE ARTIST'S STYLE?

- He kinda likes to use dark colors then light, and if so, the light colors are usually on the main object/subject.
- **R what about the WAY he painted, not just WHAT he painted?**

WHAT IS THE ARTIST FAMOUS FOR?

- Man at the crossroads "... The Rockefellers disliked Rivera's insertion of Lenin and, thusly, asked Rivera to remove the portrait, but the painter refused. The Rockefellers then had Rivera stop work on the mural." (2) **R this sounds like an interesting backstory, maybe find out more about the Rockefellers? (and if you don't know who Lenin is, that is super important)** On the Rockefellers, It is actually popular building in New York. And Diego was there third choice to paint the plain wall in the center, so people would look and think about it, but It seemed to backfire for the Rockefellers, because It had disturbing images in politics, including Vladimir Lenin, who was a man who lead people into revolution a lot in Russia. (18)
 - The Rockefeller family came into money through oil/Petroleum through John D. and William Rockefeller. The Rockefellers were generally Capitalists, so they would not have liked Lenin being depicted because he was a Communist. However, it was strange because the painting also included Communist symbols such as the hammer and sickle, but they did not oppose these. (25, 26)
 - Lenin, formerly Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov was a leader of the Russian communist movement/party. He was head of the Russian Soviet Gov't from 1917-1924. He started as Marxist and developed the ideas into Leninism. (27)
- The History of Mexico "In Mexico City, he spent from 1945 to 1951 working on a series of murals known as "From the Pre-Hispanic Civilization to the Conquest." His last mural was called "Popular History of Mexico." (2) **R Any important common themes in them?**
- Dozens of more though, not just these two. (4)

WHAT IS THE MOST FAMOUS PIECE/PIECES THIS ARTIST HAS CREATED? WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW ABOUT THAT ART PIECE TO HELP UNDERSTAND THIS PIECE?

- Man at the crossroads (2) + (5) + (6)
 - The original got destroyed by the Rockefellers center in New York. people who were fans of diego protest to protected it, but failed. Why they destroyed it was because the image had Vladimir Lenin in the "Soviet Russian May Day parade" (6)

- Rivera was heartbroken, so he took the scrap of pictures he had of the original, and made another one (not exact however) in Mexico. (6)

HOW DID THE ARTIST'S LIFE INFLUENCE WHAT IS PAINTED?

- “Even the reference in the banner’s inscription to the way in which doctors cut to renew life might be a nod to Frida’s many surgeries that she endured to try and extend her life. So, she did have a claim to some soft spot deep inside Diego’s heart.” (3)

ANALYSIS OF THE PAINTING

WHAT IS THE STORY/INFORMATION BEHIND ALL OF THE FORMS IN THE PAINTING?

- Maybe this piece was that of Diego's love to Frida, maybe even an apology on paint. Since they both cheated on each other, and yet still paint this piece, the Nature of the root and blood, the same as Frida. The doctor’s hand operating on the root. And the banner on the bottom saying that those hands are hands of an educated man of study in Health. (3)

WHAT IS SYMBOLIC?

- The Roots as Frida
- The Hands as a man who works on Health
- In his painting Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park he hides real life problems like confrontation between police and immigrants in a much nicer and happier painting (22)
- Since surrealism focused on dreams it made it easier to contrast different things that normally wouldn’t be together, Khan academy uses the example of Dali’s ants and clocks, but in this painting it would be the blood and tree, and how the tree is so small (22)
- In his painting Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Central Park his and Frieda’s relationship is shown with a lot of contrast, and how he felt helpless when she was sick, and how their relationship was a careful balance. This could be inferred to relate to our painting because how the tree may relate to Frieda, and how the doctor’s hands can take care of her well, possible Rivera felt he could not do as well, so he put her in the Doctor’s care (22)
- Rivera may have also had an interest in medicine, because of some medical background (watching, not practicing), which could help with his interest in the hands and scalpel, or with the procedure as a whole (23)
- Since Rivera had an interest in the science through the education in the revolution, that may be a reason why his tree of life has cells (8, 24)
- **R try to compare other art historian analysis of his other paintings to this one.**

WHAT MESSAGE/THEME IS INTENDED BY THE PAINTING?

- Maybe on the condition Frida was in, she tried to stay young as much as possible, even with multiple surgeries under her belt.
- One message is to show how good the Doctor Moore is, because since the painting was commissioned by his wife, Rivera probably wanted to portray him in a good light (1)
- Another message is that using the tree of life in the inscription that either Doctor Moore is that good of a doctor, or that the tree of life needs this help and upkeep (1)

WHAT ELEMENTS DO WE NEED TO KNOW TO UNDERSTAND THE PAINTING?

- **R break down each element of painting**
- Hands: So the hands as we can tell from the inscription are Doctor Moore's hands. In his other works such as the portrait of his ex-wife Lupe Marin exhibit Rivera's interest in hands. (1)
- Scalpel: As far as I can tell, the scalpel mostly relates to Doctor Moore being a surgeon, and has little symbolic meaning (8)
- Tree: The tree does resemble the female body, drawing us possibly to Kahlo, because she and Rivera had been having marriage problems at that time. The tree was present in Rivera's work at the time, but also again lead to Kahlo's work as she frequently incorporated trees into her work. (1)
- Tree Light Things: As I saw on the comments section of a page, relating to the work of Ramon y Cajal where Cajal used neurons to depict a tree, and related what's in Rivera's work as cells. Another option, looking at the piece, is that it's just his unconscious coming into life through his painting, and that it's unexplainable (8)
- Blood: Again, coming back to Kahlo, this can be related to her in multiple ways. Either resembling her work, which usually included blood, or relating to her surgeries and how the tree could be her. (3)
- Inscription: The inscription reads "These are the hands of Dr. Clarence Moore of Los Angeles, California, pruning the tree of life so that it blooms and doesn't die, they were portrayed by Diego Rivera in 1940." this tells us about the painting, also inscriptions like that were somewhat in style then (19)

WHAT IS USUAL/UNUSUAL ABOUT THIS PAINTING?

- That this painting looks like his former wife's work(The Hands Of Dr. Moore). "Frida Kahlo, for it includes roots, an inscription on the painting, blood, and references the female form, all familiar in her work." (1)
- "Diego Rivera's former wife. The reference to roots, the use of the female body, the presence of blood, and even the banner across the bottom of the work are all Frida's trademarks." (3)
- Maybe the doctor is operating on The root, as Frida's right leg, because she had trouble getting nutrients to her leg, and soon started to realize something was wrong. (7)

- It's supposed to be a portrait, but doesn't ever show more of the person (Dr. Moore) than his hands (12)

HOW DOES THIS RELATE/COMPARE WITH THIS ARTIST'S OTHER WORKS?

- It relates to the portrait of Lupe Marin because of how the hands are featured (20)
- Also in the Detroit Industry mural there's a pair of hands signifying God, but contrasts to this one because Doctor Moore is a real physical person (20)
- His work at this time incorporated a lot of trees and roots as well as starting to go into the genre of surrealism (1)

OTHER INFORMATION (MISC. SECTION)

- Maybe this piece was that of Diego's love to Frida, maybe even an apology on paint. Since they both cheated on each other, and yet still paint this piece, the Nature of the root and blood, the same as Frida. The doctor's hand operating on the root. And the banner on the bottom saying that those hands are hands of an educated man of study in Health. (3) Just a theory though.
- Something that interested me personally is how throughout all our research, it seems as if Rivera has incorporated so many aspects of his own life into a commissioned portrait. (all)

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