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Essay 2

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Photography in the Streets of Brooklyn

Photographs may differ in subject, size and color, however, the prominent element that makes a photograph unique, is its composition. The details in which the photographer decides to include or exclude can impact the image as a whole. My love for art drove me to primarily focus on painting, specifically mural paintings. Although John Berger, an english writer, claims to believe that photography has no property value and no purpose, other writers, such as Susan Sontag and Joseph Anastasio think otherwise. While both of my photographs are different in angle, size, and color, they share some similarities that combine them as one image.

My first photograph “Walking on the Mysterious Woman”, is a painting of a woman portrayed as an erudite female who lived in the 80’s. I took this image at 3:15 pm on October 21st, 2017, in front of a restaurant called Ma’s Fish and Chips located on 508 Nostrand Avenue. While taking the picture, I took two steps backwards in order to show that the woman was painted on the sidewalk’s ground. I took this picture diagonally, so that her shoulders become a part of the photograph. This woman, in the center of my image holds a straight visage with no emotion. The color of her blouse is mixed with three different colors, green, mostly on the collar, four black stripes on the clothing, 2 black circles near a thick black line on the right side, and white stripes and dots filling up the areas in the blouse revealing the concrete. She wears a red lipstick, with a short kinky black hair having few curls spreading out as she tilts her head downward. About 3 feet from the woman’s painting, lies a board menu with 4 wooden legs, the fourth one on the left corner, appearing as a silhouette. In the menu, it is written “ $ 5 Fish and Chips Mini Chicken Meal, Mango and/or Strawberry” and “Thirsty?”, followed by a small drawn circular crying face. Near the menu, there is a green colored wall, with a metallic stick, a small light green plant, half of it cut into the photograph, and 2 folded wooden chairs leaning on the green wall. The angle of the image forces the sidewalk to have a pyramidal configuration, and the brown mud right above the woman’s painting appearing in a triangular shape. The dominant impression, that I get from my photograph is a feeling of satisfactory, due to the placement of the painting, being on the ground and a feeling of seriousness, due to the woman’s facial expression. This documentary photo allows the viewer to clearly see the woman’s appearance and how the painter used the objects around to cooperate with the painting itself.

My second photograph “The King and his Golden Crown”, is a headshot painting of a famous rapper who once lived in Brooklyn. I took this image at 3:30 pm on 1091 Bedford and Quincy on October 21st, 2017, across the street from the painted wall. The studium in the photograph, is a giant wall centered with four Windows, 2 on the right side of the man’s head and 2 more of his left side, each windows containing 12 mini squares. The wall is covered with red paint and black scripts, having a font size of 18. The man has an angry facial expression with a gold crown designed in form of graffiti, tilted sideways on his head. The crown has four purple circles about 2-3 feet from each other, his lips and nose colored in gold, with a gold rollo chain around his neck. Above the wall, the London Planetree leaves helps bring a clear focus to the painting, while it hides the sun by blocking the sky. There are Neem tree leaves placed on the right side of the wall blocking the lower right window. John burger urges that photographs “ have no rarity value”, but, it is rare to find a mural painting of an individual specially in Bed-Stuy, therefore it can be inferred that photographs do have rarity values, not only are they rare, they also have a purpose because, this photograph is taken to honor one the biggest rappers in the streets of brooklyn (Berger 291). Susan Sontag stated that “Photographs furnish evidence” of reality and this is agreeable, because all humans are not familiar with this rapper nor the location, but this image is an evidence showing that the rapper once lived, and is painted on this red wall located on bedford (Sontag 531). The dominant impression that I perceive from my photograph is a feeling of anger due to the rapper’s irritated countenance and the red wall, creating a sense of danger. Joseph Anastasio, once loved graffiti, because he felt that being a writer would make him a legend. As he matured, he realized that he could “ achieve the same effect of graffiti” through photography. Photography is definitely a way of becoming respected, and well known because, a person is recognized for what they create (Anastasio 138).

The main similarity for both photographs is the idea of mankind on mural paintings. In these paintings, the main subject for both images include a human being, for example, the first photograph contains the mysterious woman, painted directly on the ground, and the second photograph, having the male painted right on the wall. The images also share similar punctums, because I have witnessed the commencement of both mural paintings. On a sunny sunday morning, walking to work, I noticed a young male artist holding several paint cans and different brushes, as I stood near him, and watched him draw the woman’s left eye. In the second picture, I remember heading to school on Bedford and Gates, and seeing two males painting a red wall, which turned out to be a mural painting of a legend. Some differences include angle, area and composition. The first Photo was situated on the ground with a 180 degree angle, while the other photo’s painting was placed on the wall, with a 90 degree angle and windows that are not included in the first photo. Ultimately, I learned to read photographs by looking at the element that is essential, which occupies a large portion of the image, and identifying the studium from the apex to the lowest point of the photograph.

(1148 words)

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