

Modernism is a movement in Western art that developed in the second half of the 19th century and sought to capture the images and sensibilities of the age. Modernist art goes beyond simply dealing with the present and involves the artist's critical examination of the premises of art itself. After my visit to the Museum of Modern art, my view of modern art has changed from just a general new style of art after the second half of the 19th century. My definition of modernist art is art that is either abstract and/or expressive with color. The works of art that I have chosen for my exhibition to backup my view and definition of modernist art are Vincent Van Gogh's "The Starry Night", Philip Guston's "Edge of Town", Georgia O'Keeffe's "From a Day with Juan II", Andy Warhol's "The Last Supper", and Anne Truitt's "Twinning Court I". These modern works of art feature either abstraction and/or expressive with color.

The first of my five works of art that I chose to backup my view/definition is the famous "The Starry Night" 1889 by Vincent Van Gogh. This was one of the paintings that I did not expect I was going to encounter at MoMA until I saw a huge crowd of people in one all trying to get a picture of the painting. I got a picture of this painting after five minutes of maneuvering to a good spot through the crowd and seeing it up close was so much better than through a computer screen or book. This painting depicts a sky, a tree, and a village. It uses quite a lot of colors to be expressive. Colors such as blue, green, white, yellow, and brown. The sky is filled with stars and has a moon and there is also swirls in the sky that look hypnotic if you stare long enough. The tree is quite large on the left side of the painting and with the village in the distance, it makes it seem like the tree is a lot closer to the viewer than the village. The placement of the tree and the village in this painting makes a lot of sense, since the caption for this painting is Van Gogh writing to his brother: "This morning I saw the country from my window a long time before sunrise, with nothing but the morning star, which looked very big". "The Starry Night" features what Van Gogh sees from a window in the morning by using expressive colors.

The second work of art I chose for my exhibition is "The Edge of Town" 1969 by Philip Guston. This painting depicts two figures in white masks that are looking at something in the distance while smoking cigarettes or cigars with wood and other things possibly attached to their back (maybe weapons). The two figures are also either in or behind something that is black with a handle. There is not much color in this painting, but the caption states, "They are self-portraits, he reflected. 'I perceive myself as being behind the hood...The idea of evil fascinated me...I almost tried to imagine that I was living with the Klan. What would it be like to be evil?'" After reading the caption, I can finally say that this painting is very abstract and I am most certain that the wood and other things behind the two figures are weapons, because this painting is about the Ku Klux Klan. I don't quite understand the meaning of the title, but this is an abstract painting after all.

The third work of art for my exhibition is "From a Day with Juan II" 1977 by Georgia O'Keeffe. This painting depicts three colors: blue, white, and gray. There is converging rectangular shape in the middle of the painting and as the rectangle converges, the color turns from white to gray. On each side of the converging rectangle, the color of the blue goes from a

lighter blue to darker blue. I did not understand the painting at all when I looked at it, and this is no question an abstract painting (which is too abstract to me without a caption). But after reading the caption it was still very abstract to me because this is painted by a artist that had degenerating eyesight. My theory is that whatever she saw with her degenerating eyesight on that day with Juan is exactly how she painted it.

The fourth work of art for my exhibition is “The Last Supper” 1986 by Andy Warhol. This is one of the many variations of the famous “Last Supper” painting by Leonardo Da Vinci. The moment encountered this piece, I knew I had to take a picture of it and include it into my exhibition because this is a historical piece that was made modern. This piece is depicts a Jesus in the center sitting on the table with many other people sitting around him. It also features three other logos, Dove, 59 Cent tag, and General Electric. The piece looks like everything is drawn in pencil except for the three logos that are painted on. My theory is that the reason why Warhol only added color to the three logos is to use the colors in the logos to represent something that is connected to the historical “The Last Supper” piece. The caption says that this piece was actually in a children’s coloring book and Warhol enlarged it and added the three logos to represent the Holy Spirit, and Religious Monograms.

The last work of art for my exhibition is “The twinning court I” 2001 by Anne Truitt. At first when I first saw this work of art, I thought that it was just a random black block that was here. I did not know it was a work of art. So I walked past it and started looking around at other modern art. Then when I came to its description on the wall, that was when I realize it was a piece of art that was not random at all. I read the caption and realized it was a wooden column (like one of the many columns that were talked about earlier in the semester). The caption was quite long and the column had quite a lot of meaning to it despite its minimalistic stature. After reading the caption, I can say this is a really abstract black column with a few red stripes that holds a lot of meaning. In my opinion without the caption, I do not think anyone can understand this modern abstract column.

There is quite a lot of art categories in contemporary art worldwide ranging from categories like Personal and Group Identity, Political and Social Commentary, Representation and Abstraction, and ‘Architecture, Site-Specific Art, and New Media’. I see similarities in characteristics in my works of art to two works of art in contemporary art. The two works of art that I can see similarities to are Willie Bester’s “Homage to Steve Biko” and El Anatsui’s “Bleeding Takari II”. “Homage to Steve Biko” supports my theme of modern art that feature expressive color, as his work of art is a portrait with lots of color around the portrait. “Bleeding Takari II” also support my theme, as it features a new type of abstraction that was made it with crushed/pierced bottle caps, and aluminum cans all stitched together with a copper wire. I believe that art of the past has had an ongoing legacy because despite modern art coming out with lots of variations of art, there are still some characteristics of the art of the past that still linger around. Good examples are the portrait works of art that were made in contemporary art. Robert Mapplethorpe's “Self Portrait” feature a portrait of a naked person (“Self Portrait”) like back in

High Renaissance and Mannerism in Europe when people would be painted naked. And Zhang Xiaogang's "Bloodline: Big Family No. 2" family portrait also have characteristics of the art in the past, as works of art in the past were also painted regarding a contemporary issue.



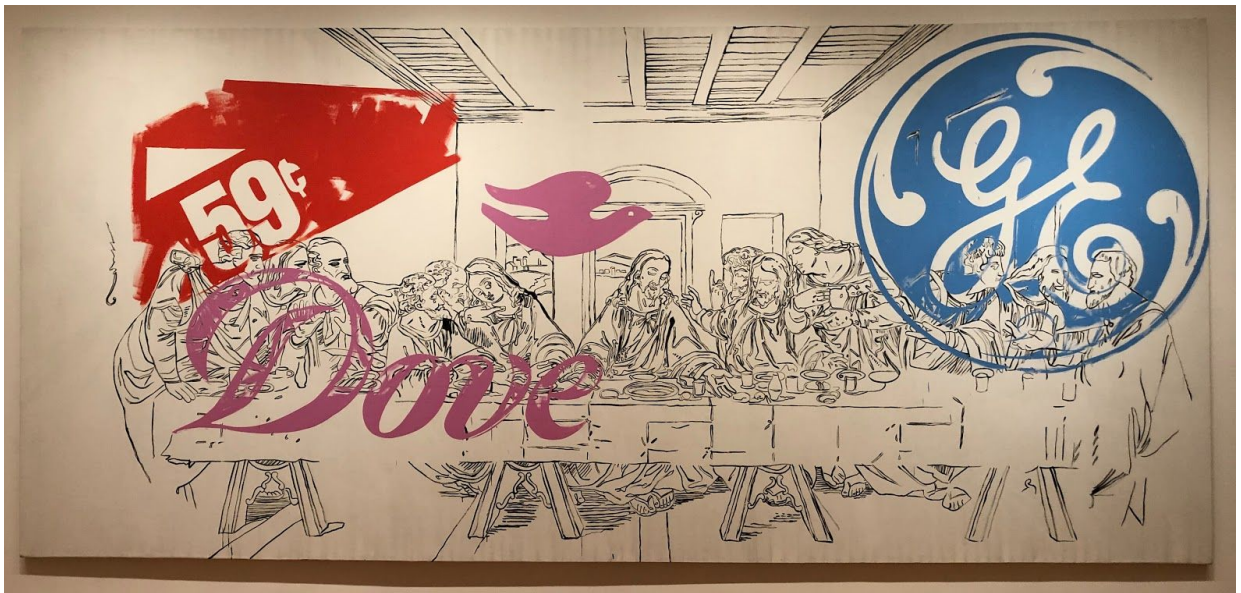
Vincent Van Gogh, The Starry Night, Oil on canvas, 1889



Philip Guston, Edge of Town, oil on canvas, 1969



Georgia O'Keeffe, From a Day with Juan II, oil on canvas, 1977



Andy Warhol, The Last Supper, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 1986





Anne Truitt, *Twinning Court I*, synthetic polymer paint on wood, 2001