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CONTEMPORARY ART (SNT 114E)

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1) Contemporary art has undergone many major transformations, since it existed. Considering given artworks, we can list and explain some of the changes contemporary art gone through. We can list those major changes as performance art, pop art, fluxus, video art, feminist art, public art and earth art. One of the best examples of performance art is the 'Cut Piece' (1965) by Yoko Ono and the 'Rhythm 0' (1974) by Marina Abramovic. Performance art is the type of art done with artists' body. This type of art uses artist's body as a material and artist acts with his or her body or other people acts on the body. Pop art is an art movement, that combines art and everyday popular culture. Andy Warhol is one of the best examples for pop art movement, and he says that Pop Art is all about liking things (1963). Pop art artists use items from popular culture, such as comic books, newspapers, references to current tv shows or movies and so on. Fluxus is also another art movement, that many popular artists including Yoko Ono and Nam June Paik, followed and applied to their artwork. Fluxus takes inspiration from zen budizm and claims that art should be fluent and one. Video art, made possible by portable and cheap video recorders, is an art form uses video as a medium. Video art is also important to record other artworks with different mediums such as performance art. Video art supports creating art as Nam June Paik says 'The video synthesizer was actually somehow the beginning of the Internet ... Because you were able to create media content ... It is very important to make media yourself' (2001). Feminist art movement emerged with civil right movements around the world. Feminist art aims to change white male dominant art to more diverse art. As Linda Nochlin says people who are not white, mostly middle class and most importantly male, is having a hard time in many fields due to education system, institutions and culture (1988). Feminist arts affected many art mediums such as performance art, instillation art, video art. One of the best examples for feminist art is 'The Dinner Party' by Judy Chicago. Public art is the art that open for everyone and can be displayed by everyone in the society. Public art questions what art meant for society. One of the best example is '7000 Oaks' (1982) by Joseph Beuys. Altgouht '7000 Oaks' is land art, we can consider it as a public art since its accessible to people, and even people in that society helped completing the art. Earth or land art, uses earth and environmental material as its medium. One of the best examples for land art is Spiral Jetty (1970) by Robert Smithson.

2) In the movie "Do The Right Thing" by Spike Lee (1989) "Wall of Fame" scene shows a conflict between a costumer and owner of an Italian restaurant. This Italian pizza restaurant's customers are mostly African American however, Wall of fame which has famous people's pictures has pictures only from Italian ethnicity. Movie's main character 'Buggin Out' opposes this and asks for African American celebrities on the wall. After that he gets kicked out from pizzeria for a week and starts protesting with his friend 'Radio Raheem'. While the movie progresses protests made by two friends accelerates into fight between them and pizzeria owners. Cops arriving to the scene kills Radio Raheem while intervening. After cops left, neighborhood burns down the pizzeria as a response to death of Radio Raheem. While first conflict happening between Buggin Out and Pizzeria Owner, Owner says that 'But, this is my pizzeria. American Italians on the wall only.'. And Buggin Out points out that, people coming to the pizzeria makes it a pizzeria, and keeps pizza place profitable. He says that 'Rarely do I see any American Italians eating in here, all I see is black folk. Since we spent so much money here, we have some saying.'. Buggin Out defends what can be called Public Sphere

Ideology. According to Gerard A. Hauser public sphere is a place where people can discuss mutually interested topics and conclude a common idea about it. And according to Jürgen Habermas public sphere can be an imaginary or a real place and effect political sense. Those imaginary or real spaces can be media channels, physical gatherings or a pizzeria in this case. Pizza owner defends private ownership for his pizza shop, but Buggin Out defends the existence of a public space inside the pizzeria. He says that '...you own this... Rarely do I see any American Italians eating in here all I see is black folk.'. Starting his statement with 'you own this' confirms that Buggin Out thinks that pizzeria is a private property, however he also says that '...we have some saying.', which indicates that he believes that there exists an African American community in the pizzeria and they should have a saying in the public space. As the movie progress discussion in this public space accelerates into a fight which results with police intervene. And this police intervene results with a political reaction from the neighborhood.

3) Memory, is the place where a mind stores information. And information can be transferred to other minds with various methods such as art. In this context, memory is a historical event or a historical ideology, that current generation thinks it should be passed into the next generation. Classical memorials are the result of creating a reminder for future generations with the purpose of passing on the information. However, given pictures in this context, contemporary art opposes that memorials should be permanent, respected and protected. This type of contemporary art are the result of a philosophy called counter monumentalism and given pictures belongs to two different counter monuments. First one is the counter monument called Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Unlike other memorials, this counter memorial c1963an be touched and experienced. Also, this counter memorial includes names from both sides in the war unlike most of the nationalist, ideologist monuments. Other two pictures belongs to The Monument Against Fascism (1986) by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz. This counter monument slowly descended into the ground and disappeared. People were allowed to write texts and thoughts on this counter monument unlike classical monuments. Currently only the directive text about the counter monument is visible. With such art pieces, memory shifts from solid, unarguable and untouchable form to more liquid and arguable form. Memory in contemporary art is arguable, interactive and open for discussion. And counter monuments are the result of those discussions about memories.

References

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