

Abstract Art (Non-Subjective Art)

The fact that in abstract art the natural aspect of representation is transformed to a certain degree and is rendered more or less unrecognizable leads many to consider that this is what makes it 'abstract'. It must, however, be recognized that there are different degrees of abstraction, which makes every tendency appreciable. Naturalistic art is also an abstraction.

Not everyone is conscious that in abstract art the transforming of natural appearance by which things are rendered more or less unrecognizable is not sufficient to create abstract art. As abstraction is reducing things from the individual to the universal, the universal expression of reality is indispensable.

Plastic art shows us that, in all these degrees, simple abstraction of forms and colors does not really change the essential expression of a work but merely modifies it. While the abstraction of natural appearance may produce more clarity and different plastic values, it does not in itself 'create' abstract art. It does demonstrate more directly the conception and the feelings that lead to the creation of a work of art, and makes us see what is confused and vague in natural representation. This may be the reason why in modern times *plastic values* or their absence are so clearly analyzed.

When we realize that the essential in all works of art is the universal expression of reality, and that this essential is created through abstraction of the subjective vision of things and not through abstraction of the things themselves, it becomes clear that this is what makes a work of art really abstract. Then we see abstraction not merely as simplification but as *intensification*.

Abstraction has emphasized the old truth that art *must be universal*, just as *true reality is*. It shows more clearly that our subjective vision obscures true reality so that we do not see things as they intrinsically are in all their complex beauty. Consciousness of this truth was developed slowly. Only after centuries of search and transformation, more visible abstraction of particular forms emerged. If we understand this, we see the unity of all art from its earliest origins to our own time and recognize that modern art has developed out of the art of the past. All these stages of development had inevitably to be lived through.

For centuries our vision has been increasingly enlarged by science, techniques and economic life. The faculty of intuition, which creates art, has become more conscious in man. But only when man becomes less subjective can art be more objective. It depends upon the use of the purer expressive means obtained through abstraction. In this way the real content of art - the expression of true and universal reality - now can be established more directly.

Pure abstract art is the logical conclusion of all art culture. It aims to represent reality in its closest approximation. It endeavors to express the dynamic movement of life in equilibrium solely by means of lines, planes, volumes and pure color, seeking to avoid the creation of all limiting particular forms which evoke particular feelings.

When the question may arise whether abstraction of natural appearance is preferable to natural representation, the answer is affirmative because it can diminish the number of obstacles to the universal vision of things. It is possible for a naturalistic work of art through its composition to be more universal than an abstract work. But the principal problem in art is not to avoid the representation of objects, but to be as objective as possible. However, it is never possible for a naturalistic work to be as direct and clear as a truly abstract work of art.

Here one may state that the conception of art depends not only on the epoch in which it is created, but also on personal character. Not many people value a clear and direct expression of true reality. Generally they prefer to see it veiled by subjective feelings and their need for romanticism or symbolism - for the expression of the tragic in daily life.

Although subjectivity can never be excluded completely, and is necessary to every human expression, pure abstract art aims at the utmost possible objectivity. For this reason it may be called objective rather than non-objective art. Actually it is *non-subjective* art. Under this heading we may include all true abstract art as found in Constructivism, Suprematism, Neo-Plasticism, and even in naturalistic art if it were possible for us to divest ourselves of our subjective feelings and conventional conceptions. It is in this order of ideas that abstract art becomes 'concrete' for us and is true Realism.