

Guided Critique

Alex Basil Darais

Over Three Billion Served, 1974

mixed media

Springville Museum of Art Collection

Grade Level: High School





Look at this painting and describe what you see.

1. What are the main colors used in this piece?
2. What is the texture like?
3. There is one main form in the piece. What shapes make up the form?
4. Describe the type of lines used in the foreground and the background of the piece.



Respond

1. What does this image make you think of?
2. How does it make you feel? Why? What specific elements of the piece cause these feelings?
3. Does it remind you of anything else you've seen? What parts of the image are familiar? What parts are strange or unfamiliar?



Analyze

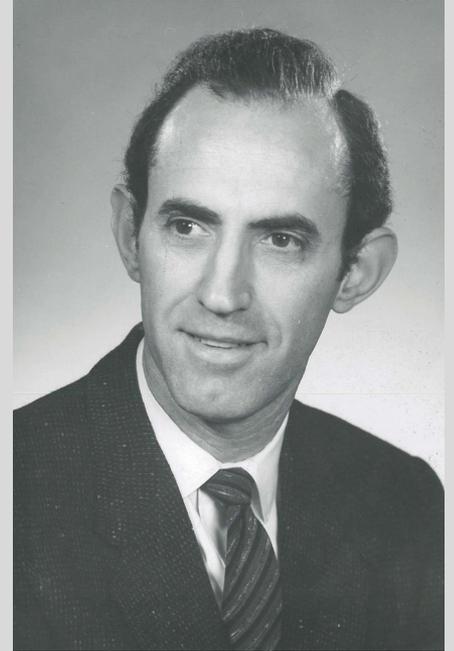
1. Why do you think the artist used a limited color palette? How does the contrast affect your visual first impression of the work?
2. This piece is symmetric. Why do you think the artist made the decision to use symmetry?
3. What statement is the artist trying to make? What makes you think so?
4. The title of the work is *Over Three Billion Served*. What do you think the title means or refers to?

Context

- Painted in 1974 by Utah artist Alex Basil Darais
 - Was a professor of art and design at Brigham Young University at the time

Late 20th century fast food explosion:

- In just 20 years McDonald's evolved from a local restaurant into a billion dollar corporation
- 1937- first Mcdonald's opened by Richard and Maurice Mcdonald
- 1950- 6 franchises were open in Southern California
- 1953- Ray Kroc invested in the company and moved its franchises across the country
- 1965-Mcdonald's corporation went public
- 1972- company passed 1 billion dollars in sales



Connection to Art History

Pop Art: An art movement that emerged in the United Kingdom and United States during the late 1940s as a revolt against the dominant culture and art movements of the time, such as **abstract expressionism**.

- Artists used imagery from popular and mass culture advertising, comic books, and mundane mass-produced cultural objects, isolated them from their original contexts and combined them with a new material.
- Artists often used new reproduction techniques.

In 1957 pop artist Richard Hamilton listed the characteristics of pop art as:

- Popular (designed for a mass audience)
- Transient (short-term solution)
- Expendable
- Low cost

- Mass produced
- Young (aimed at youth)
- Witty
- Glamorous



Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych*, Acrylic Paint on Canvas, 1962, Tate



Robert Indiana, *Love*, Cor-ten Steel, 1970,
Indianapolis Museum of Art



Roy Lichtenstein, *Drowning Girl*, Oil and Synthetic Polymer paint on canvas, 1963, Museum of Modern Art

Compare and Contrast

This is Andy Warhol's famous work *Campbell's Soup Cans* produced in 1962.

1. What characterizes this work of art as “pop art?”
2. Compare Andy Warhol's piece to *Over Three Billion Served*.
 - a. What are some similarities?
 - b. What are some differences?
3. Should *Over Three Billion Served* be categorized as pop art? Why or why not?



Context

Over Three Billion Served utilizes the cross as a symbol.

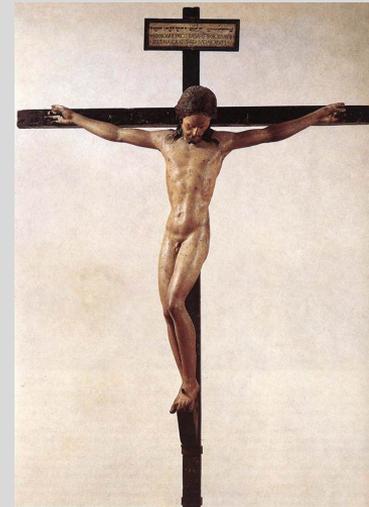
The cross has been the major symbol of Christianity since the 2nd Century CE. It is meant to embody God's love, atonement and sacrifice. It has been used in Christian art through the centuries, often times with the figure of Christ present.

Although the Christian faith has used it to evoke a reverence for God, throughout history the cross has also developed associations with violence, imperialism, and racism.

- Christian crusaders in the 11th and 12th century used the cross as their symbol in conflicts of violence
- The Ku Klux Klan would burn crosses to intimidate and spread their hatred for minority races



Valley of the Fallen, Madrid, Spain



Michelangelo,
Crucifix, 1492

Analyze



1. After learning about the different symbolic meanings associated with the cross, why do you think Darais used the cross as the focal point of his painting?
 - a. Do you think the cross has a positive or negative connotation? What clues in the painting lead you to your conclusions?
2. What connections is Darais making between McDonald's and Christianity? What is he trying to critique? Do you agree or disagree?

Further Learning

- Check out BBC's collection of pop art documentaries about Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and more here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02zyc25>
- Make your own piece of pop art with the help of this website here: <https://www.artyfactory.com/portraits/pop-art-portraits/pop-art-portrait-lesson-plan.html>
- Copy Alex Basil Darais's theme and create a work of art that critiques something within popular culture