



Frames

Q8. - Signs and symbols.

Many ~~artists~~ ^{artists} have demonstrated a use of sign and symbols to communicate messages and themes of their artworks. However the use of signs and symbols are limited as they rely upon a common understanding of interpretation between artist and audience. A cultural barrier between the artist and audience can lead to some confusion between the interpretation of the artwork. A selection of artists use sign and symbols in their artworks. This practice has occurred through many centuries of artmaking and ~~more~~ over many cultures. "Guernica" (1937) is a famous artwork by Picasso, demonstrating the tragic affect of war. A common understanding of the signs and symbols will lead to a better interpretation of his work.

Jan Van Eyck painted "The Arnolfini marriage" in 1434. He ~~depicts~~^{powerfully conveys} many signs and symbols through his work, also giving ~~with~~ good luck to the married couple.

Zofrea is a more modern artist who constructed a relevant interpretation of the Psalms through a series of his work.

"Psalm 49" (1991) contain many more modern sign and symbols of this bible book.

Picasso painted "Guernica" in 1937 as a social comment and protest against the bombing of the small defenceless Spanish town, Guernica, ~~before~~ during the Spanish Civil war. The painting consists of grotesque figures and disturbing images of death and human suffering. ~~The~~ The painting is monochromatic, consisting only of dull greys, whites and blacks, with tinges of blue. The use of jagged caotic lines help to heighten the tragedy of the incident.

A minotaur appear in approximately the centre of the artwork, a symbol of approaching death. This symbol has relevance within the Spanish world as it relates to the violent abuse of bulls in Spanish bull fighting. Other signs and symbols consist of a mother grieving over her dead child, reflecting human suffering. A soldier clutches to a small flower, as death approaches, showing defiant opposition. The Spanish people are depicted as a horse reeling in pain and torment. As well as signs and symbols other techniques of the artwork help to convey the message. The large scale of the artwork, approximately 3x7 metres helps to heighten the emotional impact of the event.

"The Arnolfini Marriage" (1434) was painted by Jan van Eyck. It depicts the

newlyweds, and a series of signs and symbols, to aid in the blessing and luck of the marriage. ~~The~~ The couple's shoes are removed revealing that they are on holy ground. Many other religious signs and symbols make-up this work.

The husband raises his hand vertically as a sign of heaven. Above the couples head hangs a chandelier with only one candle lit, ~~this~~ this is a symbol of the ever-seeking Christ. An apple rests on the window^{ill}, a reminder of the biblical story of Adam and Eve, reflecting a loss of innocence. On the best post a statue of St Margaret rests, the patron of child birth, as well as peaches within the work of symbol of fertility. Many other signs and symbols within the work demonstrate the religious and social significance of the event. An understanding of these signs and symbols

definitely helps in the understanding of this artwork.

Salvatore Zofrea painted "Psalm 49" (1991), as part of a series based on a modern interpretation of the psalms.

This artwork gains greater understanding through the reading of the bible, particularly Psalms. In this artwork a variety of performers and circus people sit around the table, the artwork is covered in signs and symbols. An upside-down bird hangs lifeless demonstrating tragedy or chaos within the world. A young boy opens the bird cage door, but ~~is~~ with no reaction from the bird. A clown sits at the centre of the table, a symbol of the trickster. He also looks unhappy, as does everyone within the work, the image adding to the sense of disorder. A row of lit light bulbs hangs at the top of the artwork. These

images of the light bulbs are a common theme within Zofrea's work.

They symbolise the lights of heaven.

A number of other performer make-up the artwork, each adding to the theme.

This work is understood only through a common cultural background to the artist.

Signs and symbols ~~can~~ help to communicate the message of the artworks. However on their own they are limited and do not effectively convey the entire message.

Many techniques add to the understanding and creation of artworks. Only if this techniques work together effectively do the message of the artwork take on its entirety.