Student’s name

Course id

Submitted to

Date

Identification:

The Artist: Salvador Dali

Title of work: The persistence of memory or soft watches

Time: 1931

Style: Surrealism

Channel: Oil on canvas

Location: Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Summary:

The persistence of memory or the soft watches, it is also known as one of the most typical paintings painted in 1931 by the Spanish painter Salvador Dali. Using the technique of oil on canvas. The work belongs to the artistic movement of surrealism, one of the most representative vanguards of the twentieth century, which emerged in France in the 1920s, around the personality of the poet and dramatist André Breton. Starting from some Dadaist principles, Surrealism was characterized in general terms, by pretending that the artist freed himself from reality, breaking with all traditional ties, and entering a world ruled by the omnipotence of dreams and imagination, appealing to the subconscious. And is that when we dream we do not usually have the daily attachments, but our psyche takes over our being with healthy doses of obsessions, delusions, fantasies that are anything but real, that's what Dali wanted to represent with his works more known next to the Great Masturbator, the Persistence of the memory, that at the moment is conserved in the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) of New York.

Visual elements:

In a generalized view of the canvas, the first thing that strikes us is the presence of four clocks, each in a different position, but all in an apparent situation of decadence. Dali, according to the same count in a public interview said that for the realization of these watches, he was inspired by Camembert cheese relating them by their quality of "tender, extravagant, solitary and paranoiac-critical." One of the clocks hangs from the branches of a dry tree. This has been related within the fantastic world, with the concept of Thanatos, of death. Another is lying like a kind of face, where those who say it could be a self-portrait of Dali. A third clock seems to be represented just at the moment of falling from a wall. Above it, we see a fly, one of the most representative elements of the painter. He used to say that he was passionate about clean flies. Finally, we see the only clock that moves away from the concept of the previous three, as it is a pocket watch. This is full of ants, an insect, which in the different works of Dali has ​​always been related to eroticism. It must be said that this type of watch is usually still carried close to the genital area, so this time the relationship seems clear. In short, the artist has presented us in all its splendor a world that is not real at all, with forms that are not conscious but have become soft, warning us of the fluidity of time. Also, his feelings, repressed eroticism, his inner world are appreciably appreciated in a scene located in one of the places most appreciated by the painter, and reminiscent of the famous plains of Cadaqués with the sea of ​​the Costa Brava.

Regarding spatial conception, we see a transparent, bright and translucent space with considerable depth, dominated by horizontality, only altered by the verticality that marks the tree in the background. On the other hand, the central figure with its curved and undulating forms seem to give a slow pace to work. The drawing is linear and quite precise demonstrating once again his academic skills, and that despite being a oneiric landscape with surreal elements, Dali has ​​been able to capture each of them with great detail and perfection. About the color, the Spanish artist has marked a clear division with the use of warm tones dominated by earthy tones for the foreground, which contrast with the colder and brighter dominated by the blues of the second plane. Another point to take into account is light, given that it plays a significant role, which is none other than contributing to configure a more dreamlike and delirious atmosphere. For this, it establishes as a kind of division in the painting, where the wall and the background appear strongly illuminated by the light of the sunset, while a gradation is established towards the darkness from the face to the lower right corner.

Design principle:

Dali creates a delusion of the senses by painting abstract objects in a realistic, detailed and natural color as if there were no doubt about the reality of them. This creates a dreamscape because our dreams are confusing but still seem real. This unreal and fantastic extension of human experience marks surrealism. Through the dark ground, the dried up tree and the inanimate objects, the landscape is dead. Unrest brings the ants and the fly into the picture because they live. The fly on the clock stands for the rapid progression of time because one says, the time "flies." The ants on the closed pocket watch seem to eat them up, which symbolizes transience and consequent putrefaction. The dead landscape supports the theme of transience. Ants are common of Dali, for him they mean death, decay and are a sign of distressing and restlessness.

In addition to these Dali- typical ants, and his abstracted facial profile, there is another symbol of Dali in the picture: the soft or dissolving clocks. These can be interpreted differently. For one thing, they also stand for transience, because it seems as if even watches can literally pass away, so melt away. On the other hand, it could also mean that no matter what happens, time goes on and on. In this interpretation theory, either the "flow" of time would refer to the soft clocks or one sees the flow as apparent destruction of the clocks with continuing time. Another symbol interpretation would be the timelessness of the world, as all watches seem to have stopped at a different time but the actual prevailing time for all observations is the same, and the earth continues to turn despite standing timepieces.

Dali contrasts the symbol interpretations of colors with the theme of transistorizes. This Contrast is the strongest to understand the closed pocket watch. This pocket watch is orange. The color orange stands for optimism and zest for life, while the clock is being eaten by ants, which symbolizes decay and death. The artist's white abstracted profile expresses light, lightness, and perfection through this color, while the lifeless appearance of the figure and the clock on it are more likely to stand for death and decay. This seems very contra verse.

On the other hand, he might also want to associate time with this symbol color. This is perfect and pure because you cannot distort or stop it and it cannot decay or die. Dali with his painting, he defies the unstoppable transience of time by capturing time in his art and leaving the picture itself indelibly in the minds of the beholder.

Conclusion:

The work came into being in the moment of inspiration when the Surrealist believed that it was possible to prove with a painting that everything in the universe is linked to a single spiritual principle. Under the brush, Dali was born to stop time. Next, to the soft fading clock, the author portrayed ants covered with solid bags as a sign that time can move differently, either fluently or eroded by corruption, which, according to Dali, means decay symbolized here by the drifting of insatiable ants. Sleeping Head is a portrait of the artist himself.

The image conveys to the viewer a multitude of associations, feelings that are sometimes hard to put into words. Someone finds here images of conscious and unconscious memory, someone "fluctuations between ups and downs in waking and sleeping state." In any case, the author of the composition succeeded the main thing - he managed to create an unforgettable work that has become a classic of Surrealism. According to Salvador Dali, neither friends nor enemies nor the public in general. No one understood the images that emerged in his imagination and were translated by him into the language of his paintings. And that's not surprising since, according to Dali, he did not understand their meaning. However, this fact does not exclude the fact that the images still have a purpose - deep, complex, multi-valued, and involuntary, which are inaccessible to simple analysis and logical definition and which, in the artist's view, require particular scientific study and objectivity.

Concluding with the point that I like everything about this artist, besides being a great creator his work reaches me, I feel it deep in me, it is also immense I think that the artists cannot be compared, only if it is to appreciate the differences of styles. He shows the relationship between the real and the imaginative. The paranoiac-critical theory that consists of the appearance of objects that are opposed and at the same time complement each other is reflected in it. For example, the sea has no limits, watches do not melt, the face does not have those features, but we identify them correctly. Therefore, seeing the picture you have the feeling that the clocks will pass, the front will move, the dry tree will go too, because everything is fleeting and time is relative but what will always remain there is the space they occupy and the landscape that will not change.

References

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