Art History

Art is major form of expression of emotions, feelings and thoughts. Artists use various forms of art to express their moods, emotions and feelings. Moreover, artists also use various forms of art to express their concerns or grab the attention of the general public towards some important concern or issue prevailing at that specific time. Many pieces of art are famous for serving this purpose whole-heartedly and not disappointing the critics. One of such famous pieces of art ever recorded in history is a painting named “The Starry Night” by Van Gogh.

Starry Night was painted by Vincent Van Gogh in 1889. Although it is just a painting of a village under the night sky, simply looking at it elevates it to another level. Van Gogh uses a flowing style of painting to emphasize nature in particular. At first glance t noe viewer may notice a tree erupting like a great flame into the dark sky, rising higher and higher almost touching the zenith. Next, the mountains far off, which are a darker blue than the sky. The viewer can see them almost towering over the peaceful town like large tidal waves, threatening to engulf all in their path. Then there is the sky itself, swishing and whirling about in an exuberant rush. The stars are like large vortexes, emitting radiant light and pulsating with the rest of nature. The sky around it ebbs and flows around these balls of light in great rushes. In stark contrast to all of this is the town itself, stationary and rigid, within each window you can see a light burning signaling people settling down for the night, completely oblivious to the great commotion of nature.

After looking at this painting for some time, a person will notice how Van Gogh wanted to depict nature. There is a certain cyclical aspect to nature which contrasts the uniform forms that humans have built around ourselves. While people have fixed schedules where days have defined beginning and ends, nature has no such constraints, it is constantly in motion. An individual can observe it if only they take time off their busy schedules to observe it more, even if that just means a short walk through a park. By observing nature more humans can be humbled by its immensity and thereby take solace in realizing how little their everyday problems matter in the grand scheme of things.

The fact that the painting was an early acquisition by the Museum of Modern Art in NYC and a prominent part of their permanent collection also meant it found its way as fixture into standard textbooks of modern art. Then, of course, there is the Romantic mythology surrounding the artist, his mental illness and his time spent in the asylum at St Remy (in addition to other institutions). Despite the fact that van Gogh worked almost exclusive from nature, this was a work of pure imagination and that makes it a curiosity in the artist’s oeuvre as well.

What makes any work “famous” has to do with marketing as much as innate quality. The former director of the Getty, John Walsh, said the following at a presentation at the Des Moines Art Center around 1988: “People say to me, ‘I don’t know anything about art but I know what I like.’ That statement is about half right. They DON’T know anything about art. And they like what they know.” People get attached to what is familiar. What is familiar is what has been presented to them with frequency. Familiarity and a sense of value are closely linked. Vincent van Gogh is a justly famous painter and that this particular work is one of his best known.

The question here arises that from whom Van Gogh was inspired when he thought of painting “The Starry Night”? Was it the invention of his own mind or was hen inspired and impressed by the artwork of some other artist? Many scholars and art experst agree upon the fact that “The Starry Night” was not a brainchild of Van Gogh, in fact it was painted in inspiration from the celebrated Japanese ukiyo-e artist Hokusai. Was Van Gogh enlivened by Hokusai's The Great Wave when he painted his Starry Night? The connection between these two perfect works of art of nineteenth century workmanship doesn't appear to have been made previously. In any case, Vincent was an extraordinary admirer of this Japanese print, composing clearly to his sibling Theo: Hokusai's "waves are hooks, the vessel is trapped in them, you can feel it".

In the Hokusai print, the wave towers over the volcanic pinnacle of Mount Fuji, while in Van Gogh's work of art the whirling mass in the sky plunges towards the more delicate slants of Les Alpilles, the slopes which untruth simply behind the shelter of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole, where he was then remaining. Through the bars of his cell, the Dutchman would much of the time watch out towards Les Alpilles and look up into the night sky. Tumbling over the focal point of Van Gogh's sky is the Starry Night painting's most remarkable element—a whorl of glinting brushstrokes that move over the canvas, bestowing a solid impression of development to the scene. Vincent could well have been thinking about the ocean and he had visited the Mediterranean half a month prior to he composed the letter about The Great Wave. The two works additionally share a comparative shading of rich blues.

In my personal opinion, Van Gogh, was inexactly motivated by The Great Wave and it was in his mind when he painted Starry Night. Obviously, Starry Night is a result of the craftsman's unbridled creative mind, started off by the Provençal scene and, in particular, the hours that he would spend gazing toward the sky. In any case, all things considered, the impacts likewise incorporated The Great Wave, made a little more than 50 years sooner on the opposite side of the globe.