Title page

Arts and culture of Canberra

Canberra is famous for its art and culture all across the world. The city is known for its abundance of artistic expression and culture. The museums and galleries contain numerous artwork of different artists that reflects the artistic skills of the creators. A city is a place for many iconic cultural attractions. The last ten years have a significant role in defining the art and culture of the city. The art collections include visual art, calligraphy, sculptures, ceramics, graffiti, drawings, photography and performance and folk art. The visitors explore the treasures of the nation in the museums and galleries of Canberra. This city is the perfect place that narrates the story of the country through its art and craft. The galleries offer versatile creation that ranges from fine art to solemn memorials. Canberra is the best place that brings the past and the present together, allowing people to understand what this nation is about. Annual art festivals are organized in the city that provides opportunities for viewing enriched history of Australia.

National Gallery of Australia is one of the prominent art galleries of Canberra that attracts millions of tourists and local visitors each year. Art lovers meander the gallery and admire the spectacle collection of amazing artists. Some famous artwork includes Jackson Pollock's ‘Blues Poles' Sidney Nolan's ‘Ned Kelly' series. The gallery was renovated in 2010 and contain unique masterpieces having relevance with the cultures of Australia, Pacific, Indigenous, Asia and America. The contemporary art of Canberra includes moving images, post-millennial art and performances. The Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander art contain around 7500 art pieces. The Aboriginal Memorial (1987-88) included 200 hollow log coffins that revived the history of the indigenous populations of Australia.

The colonial paintings of Canberra have a connection with the colonial history of Australia. The colonial artworks were created by British immigrant artists. Different artworks created by the artists have relevance with the Australian themes and culture. Watercolours and unique textures are used for transmitting the themes of history. The paintings and the artworks are also used for representing the indigenous populations of Australia. The Aboriginal Dreaming Gallery share an amazing collection of aboriginal artists. The gallery has been involved in presenting the artwork and talents of the aboriginal community for 30 years. Aboriginal art contains huge artworks that represent the history and the culture of indigenous populations. The prominent painters include the Old Master, Rover Thomas, Emily Kame, Clifford Possum and Turkey Tolson. These artists have focused on a common agenda on portraying the life of the aboriginals. Distinctive colours and textures are used for creating an extraordinary piece of artwork. Art was used by the artist for transmitting social issues and economic injustices (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016).

The aboriginal art goes back to 60,000 years that was initially used for transmitting the stories of settlements of the indigenous people in Australia. Remains explored by the archaeologists reveal that art was created on the walls and rocks by carving. Many important cultural stories were conveyed through such artwork. The analysis of the archaeological sites depicts that art was used by the artists for preserving their culture. the art reveals that “over 350 different Aboriginal Nations in Australia, creative expressions of knowledge are unique to each Aboriginal Nation as designs, symbols, techniques and mediums are bound within customary laws associated to Creational periods” (Cameron, 2015). The aboriginal art transmitted customers, rituals and beliefs of the indigenous community. The images created on the rock surfaces and caves in the ancient times conveyed different themes such as stories of sacredness.

The modern aboriginal artists are using canvas paintings and sculptures for transmitting aboriginal themes that are presented in the Aboriginal Gallery of Canberra. it explains how artists use natural events to display concealed facts. Through the analysis of artwork, it is easy to learn about the hidden themes of inequalities and injustices. It further reveals the issues of demographic differences. It represents the analysis of the socio-economic dynamics. The art holds significance for uncovering the social realities. Racism remains a dominant aspect of Australian culture so artists aimed at using the art for addressing the issues of social inequality and injustice. Art plays a significant role in identifying the cultural aspects and techniques allow artists to capture various scenes. every photograph and artwork has a story behind it that the artist tries to convey through his artistic skills. The caption and the experience of artists matters a lot in capturing the realities through a camera lens. The aboriginal art is useful as it helps in identifying various themes used by the artists in each creation (Jefferson, 2017).

The aboriginal art consists of different ways of presenting ideas such as paintings on leaves, wood carvings, sculptures, canvas paintings and craving on rocks. One of the amazing work displayed by the gallery is the Sculpture Garden. It is created by the group of artists including Henry Moore, Alexandra Calder, Inge King and Auguste Rodin. Similarly, Pullman Burial Poles (1979-84) also represents the stories of the Melville Islands. The purpose of aboriginal art was to show respect to the indigenous population and accept them as part of Australia. Art was thus used for promoting a social cause of empowering the aboriginals and Torre Islanders. Art “within a cultural framework illustrates knowledge and therefore has little relevance to aesthetic pleasure in viewing, or acquirement within a sense of ownership, but reflects vital information based on living” (Cameron, 2015). Aboriginal visual Knowledge presented symbols having relevance with cultural aspects and rituals. The interpretations of the ancient artwork depict the role of various semantic perspectives.

The contemporary art culture of Canberra is a collection of versatile art forms. Moving art remains one of the dominant aspects of contemporary art in which the artists aim at presenting the ACT. Canberra Contemporary Art Space provides numerous opportunities to the modern artist for presenting astonishing artworks. The CCAS has focused on offering a platform where artists can produce work by testing new ideas and innovations. Murals remains another prominent feature of the contemporary art culture of Canberra. Community murals have been used for the last two centuries for brightening and enriching the city spaces. This is used for developing a sense of ownership, pride and feelings towards the community. Murals have been created in public places for adding elements of excitement and surprise for the public. Canberra emphasized creating murals with the aim of reducing control of graffiti at specific locations. The concept of murals is also used for enhancing understanding and values of the community groups in the locations where art is created (Jefferson, 2017). This is also focused on minimizing the vandalism to community assets.

The National Museum of Australia is located in Canberra that integrated modern art and craft such as the creation of skyline. The gallery presents a cultural and diverse collection of including beautiful textiles and modern reconstruction of bark cone. It offers "several antiquated vehicles, including a portable steam engine; and a number of thylacine specimens” (Timeout, 2017). The broader collection presented in the gallery highlights the talents and artic skills of the artists.

Another aspect of the contemporary art of Canberra includes sculptures. Forty-nine sculptures were exhibited in the Lake Burley Griffin and performances were used for sharing the cultural stories. The festival organized offer different forms of art including sculptures, projection, poetry, storytelling and texts. The city festival provides an opportunity to learn about the history and past of Canberra and Australia. The government of Australia is also focused on “making Canberra beautiful, noting that Henry Rolland Park had just been successfully transformed from a carpark into a community park” (Musa, 2018). The city is focused on bringing public art into the limelight by encouraging local artists to become part of the event.

Canberra Theatre in the civic square represents unique artistic aspects. Theatre is part of the city's art and culture that allow actors to perform in from of the audience. Canberra is known for its theatre art and has created many performances. This is one of the visible forms of art used for transmitting different beliefs and ideas. This form of art portrays different settings and characters that demonstrate dealing with real-life problems. The theatre of Canberra has taken an unflinching look by recreating situations having relevance with the real world. Theatre art capture realistic themes that have a correlation with Australian cultures such as the aboriginal community and social inequality.

The art and culture of Canberra hold great significance in the world due to its uniqueness and distinct features. brings the past and the present together, allowing people to understand what this country is about. The purpose of aboriginal art was to show respect to the indigenous population and accept them as part of Australia. Art was thus used for promoting a social cause of empowering the aboriginals and Torre Islanders. Murals remains another prominent feature of the contemporary art culture of Canberra that is used for brightening and enriching city spaces.

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