

Complement A Master Artist Statement & Reflection



In Art class, I was assigned to complement a well-known painting by copying all of the picture's aspects, instead of its colors. The first step in this process was to find and research an artist's painting off the Internet. After finding a painting that interested me, the next part was to print a copy of the picture with a grid on it. Then I created a color wheel and sketched a rough draft of the portrait on a grid, which helped me keep the painting in proportion without leaving any details out. Lastly, I sketched and outlined the picture on a canvas and then painted it with acrylic paints. The piece I chose for this project was Roy Lichtenstein's *Whaam!*, a work of Pop Art created from 1963-1964.

To those who have never seen the original painting, *Whaam!* portrays an exploding fighter aircraft after being fired upon. The onomatopoeia, "Whaam!" is visibly worded in yellow on the right side of the frame and is used for the exaggerated subject matter. While the background is blue, the explosion is very dynamically colored in yellow, red, with white and some black. Various brushstrokes flow to make the illusion of engine smoke and other strokes are meant to look flat and inorganic. Generally, Lichtenstein found inspiration for style from comic books and advertisements. The typical colors in Pop Art are primary colors because they are easy to print. *Whaam!* is supposedly based on a picture from the 1950s comic book series All American Men of War (created by DC Comics). From what I've read, *Whamm!* is meant to look more melodramatic than perilous, and supposedly is kind of spoofing the heroic face of modern America.

For my comparison of *Whaam!*, instead of using the colors blue, yellow, and red, I replaced them with orange, purple, and green. What I noticed was that I

replaced primary colors with secondary colors. I really had to focus on making the brushstrokes alike and by doing this I used different brushes and several types of the same colors to blend everything in. If some paint smeared to a different spot, I just painted over it and tried it again. Although the depiction of war and combat is still expressed, I do think viewers will find this darker because the orange background makes it look more dangerous.

One reason I chose Roy Lichtenstein's *Whaam!* was because I am fascinated by Pop Art, but I mostly chose it because Pop Art seemed challenging to paint. The most difficult part was to copy the painting's spacing or try not to paint something over unintentionally. Despite the minor mistakes, I think I used my time wisely making most colors look solid. What I learned from Lichtenstein's work was that with many different styles of Art, anyone could still make someone feel a certain way using the simplest elements of the picture, such as the spacing, the colors, and the brushstrokes. And what is absolutely incredible is that to another person it could make them feel completely different!

Sources:

Tate.org

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/lichtenstein-whaam-t00897>

Comics Grid

<http://www.comicsgrid.com/2011/04/whaam-becoming-a-flaming-star/>

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whaam!>