

Surrealist inheritance in drawing

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Abstract

Sequential movements in history of art have led to revolutions during the times they originated. Thereafter, they maintained their existence in work of art with their indications. These heritages artists have acquired take them away from their pasts, bring them to present, and at this very point where past and present intersect, enable them to view future. Drawing is the origin of creative practice in all plastic arts, from painting to architecture. Artistic contemplation begins with nature we are part of and a familiar object close by. Examining entity and life-drawing teaches us how to observe. Identifying and contrasting objects are only complete with mathematical discipline, coordination of eyes and hands, and finally with a self-styled line of plastics. In the present paper, drawing is explained in relation to the influence of surrealism. To this end, quotations of portrayable examples of our memories' and dreams' nonvisible worlds, rather than drawings of entities confined in their external appearances, are given. Line, emerging from imitating the visible, has responded to the messages of the unconscious. This paper examines the drawings of three surrealist artists, namely, Alberto Giacometti, Paul Klee, and René Magritte. According to surrealists, the unconscious does not aim solely for the creativity of meaningless facts, yet, it establishes a relationship between facts and objects in human contemplation. In this context, surrealist creation is a rich synthesis for drawing. Today, surrealist aspects can be seen in many drawings. Surrealism will continue to update itself and influence artists' imagination post its time.

Keywords: Drawing, surrealism, dream, nature

1. Introduction

In a western sense, information on the making of the first drawing and sculpture in plastic arts appears in an old myth of Ancient Greek. Early on, lines were drawn around the shadow of a person; this was the beginning of painting, as it was understood in ancient times. Another classic myth on the origin of sculpture tells the same (Plinius, ; Athenagoras as cited in Overbeck no.261; source material by Robert, 1886; as cited in Kris & Kurz, 1981). The daughter of the Sikyonian potter Boutades drew around the shadow of his boyfriend's (who was about the sail away) profile on the wall under the light of a lamp. Her father filled this shadow profile with clay, fired the terracotta relief he obtained, and in this way, the first sculpture was shaped (Kris & Kurz, 1981). First trials done with shadow paved the way for reaching portrayal, however, shadow was not condemned to imitate a line that frames sunlight. Another example comes from a recent work, the installation of Christian Boltanski titled "Shadows" (1986). It is a fantastic work that questions Plato's allegory of the cave on white wall. Boltanski explains his work as follows (Boltanski, 1991, as cited in Stoichita, 1997):

I relate many things to shadows. First of all because they remind us of death (do we not have the expression 'shadowlands?'). And then, of course, there is the connection with photography. In Greek the word means writing with light. The shadow is therefore an early photograph. I once set up an exhibition of giant photographs in the Pompidou Centre in Paris. It was due to go on to Bonn and then to Zurich, but the heavy frames were extremely difficult and awkward to transport. I wanted to work with things that were lighter, things I could put in my pocket. I realized that just by projecting a microscopic puppet I could obtain a large shadow. At least I could travel with the minimum of luggage and work with incorporeal images. Of course, there was Plato's cave, but I have to admit that I only learned that afterwards.

But the shadow is also an inner deception. Do we not say that 'to be frightened of one's own shadow?' The shadow is a fraud: It appears to be the size of a lion but it is in fact no larger than microscopic cardboard figurine. The shadow is the representation within ourselves of a deus ex machine. It is the aspect of the shadow which intrigues me, for it is pure theatre in the way that it is an illusion... What appeals to me so much about shadows is that they are ephemeral. They can disappear in a flash: as soon as the reflector is turned off or the candle extinguished there is nothing there any longer.

Now we can turn to our topic after these works that were produced in times of history that are far from each other...

Nature is the rich laboratory of both science and art that contains discoveries (Emrali, 2007). It is the nature itself where we see the grammar of plastic arts. Artistic thinking starts with objects that are nearest to us, for this reason, we make drawings by first empathizing with body. Inspection of the entity, making the drawing first and foremost teaches looking. Recognizing objects, comparing volumes, grasping movement by looking at directions, finding axes, and committing long duration studies to memory, after a mathematical discipline and with eye and hand training, transforms into line and comes in front of us as the artist's work. The fact of seeing and the process of vision and perception start with optic recording. However, art does not imitate image. It finds what is rendered visible; it views itself as it should be, rather than as it is, through shaped knowledge and its acquisitions at knowledge level, i.e., what is accepted as right and what is known as ideal (Emrali, 2007). Most artists draw what they know, not what they see. Seeing is conditioned thinking. Descartes says that blinds see with their hands. Here, seeing is pushed to thought through the body. In plain paper, the object has an image in the blank area on the condition that the object does not look like its image. What art blesses is the puzzle of visibility from Lascaux to the present. Using emotions, mastering, and transmitting visual experiences with inner observation; they all demonstrate the fact

about visual perception that what is optically seen is not only a fact of reflection on retina. Visual perception is not determined only by distance, angle, colors, depth perception, perspective illusion, and methods that have been tried and tested before. Instead of the confined appearance of nature, the truth inside comes out. Line does not imitate what is seen anymore. Instead of portraying any existing object, dreams, fantasies, and surrealists bury the old art in past. Artists evaluate their world of dreams; by drawing, they expose nightmares, images that accumulate in their memory, their chaotic translocations, and symbols that stick in their minds. Dream controls wakefulness; memory crumbles dream in case of wakefulness. Dream allows the artist to use his or her freedom as he or she desires. As in Plato's allegory of the cave, dream denies the wholeness of the human; they break the body into pieces. The artist believes that only one organ is enough for representation, he or she even draws invisible objects as the messages of the unconscious unfold.

2. The masters of surrealist drawing: Giacometti, Klee, and Magritte

In the era of tragedy and despair due to the First World War, human beings shift existentialism from the conscious to the unconsciousness where dreams, fantastic elements, and internality-externality is questioned and where objects are erased with ego. With this shift, humans construe a new meaning for their existence. Surrealism opens the doors of dream to everyone whom the night is stingy. It becomes a playground where visible and invisible worlds are discussed.

2.1. Giacometti

Surrealist artists are so modest that they say that their discoveries already exist and that they have been lived. Surrealism scans the depths of psychology to voice the messages of the unconscious. At the same time, it mediates between moral and politic levels with class rejections and enlightening twits. The serial drawings of Picasso "Dreams and Lies of Franco" are ideological. Giacometti, who is a sculptor, painter, and a drawing master, says that drawing is the basis of everything (Lord, 1965). He argues that drawing is a prerequisite for painting. According to Giacometti, everything has to come through drawing and after that color will be inevitable. He again gives Picasso as an example mentioning that he always had sketches (Lord, 1965). Giacometti also says that he had seen the objects he drew many times before; but he adopts a non-mathematical perspective when he decides to draw them. Now, the streets, the trees are seen for the first time; they are splendid, they are different than memory belonging to the past. This is a surrealist time and space that is the outcome of the intersection between the past and the present. The subjective experience of Giacometti instead of an objective reality is the transfer of the intangible sensation of visual perception of reality to tangible sensation, rather than a representation of what he sees (Lorde, 1965). The act of seeing is only a response that warns the organism against the world. Giacometti's effort to represent the reality he sees is not only an aesthetic interest; it is his philosophical sensitiveness, intuition, and researcher motion. According to the artist, these differentiate between the known and the unknown and maintain his curiosity and sensitivity for what is unknown (Lorde, 1965).

Yet, we know that Giacometti takes the model in front of him, asks the model to sit for hours, makes drawings for days, sculpt with clay, and deform it without finishing. When working with portraits, the artist is not really interested in facial character, perfection or anatomy. He thinks that it is impossible to draw exactly the same as one sees (Genet, 1990). He gives head as an example, stating that a normal brain would not fit into drawing because it is flat. He says "I have enough trouble with the outside without bothering about the inside" (Lord, 1965).

His relationship with the model he drew and sculpt was the outlook of the image that came and went occasionally. In Giacometti's figures, we see debris, rout, devastation, and loneliness. His confession that he thought of suicide everyday verifies his grievance that he had been working for nothing for thirty years and even that he had to exhibit works he thought he should not have started

in the beginning, and his closeness to neurosis. Still, Giacometti states that his thinking of suicide is not because he finds life unbearable, rather, he views death as a ravishing experience and he is curious about it (Lord, 1965). The objects Giacometti draws are 'lonely' and 'silent'. His drawings, which get further away from us and space, become clearer when we think we have captured a photograph. When we activate our memory, his drawings are ghost people; they are objects whose time and place are overlooked in the crowd of crosscutting and crossing lines.

2.2. Klee

Klee, one of the pioneers of Modern Art, started playing violin at the age of seven. He was also interested in literature and poetry. Klee left the Munich Academy of Fine Arts because his drawings were anatomy-based. His visit to Tunisia in 1914 led him to rediscover light and color. He wrote texts about drawing as he emphasized that elements of the creative process taking place in the unconscious were important. Combining his interest in technical novelties with philosophy, he wrote his article "Ways of Studying Nature". He continued playing violin with professional musicians as music was strengthening his from emotion. He discovered various technical novelties that can be compared to musical notation such as feather technique. He used this technique for differentiating value tones and obtained different degrees of white in his paintings. Lace was another technique of Klee. He used this technique in his large scale works like "A Leaf from the Book of Cities, 1928". Stating that he is a good draftsman, Klee thought that every artist should establish, by using dream, idea, and fantasy, their own time and space that are different from optical sight.

Klee talks about three mediums for forming, namely, measure, weight, and quality, corresponding to line, tone, and color (Klee, 1966). Line is a good measurement for him, it places objects in nature from white to black. He tests the object with these mediums to understand its nature rather than its existence. The world as we see it is not the only world that is possible. As in his tree drawings, the unconscious, with all its dimensions, has to accompany twisting of natural form in the process of creating a work of art. Because nature is reborn with its roots and branches. In fact, line, which is one of the first artistic actions of the human, is not tangible. We cannot show line in nature. For example, in the case of rainbow, Klee mentions that the linear view in rainbow is at the same time an inadequate view and that it does not tell us much about colors. What he considers as the main shortcoming of rainbow is, its limited and inadequate texture caused by atmosphere rather than its linearity (Klee, 1966).

Similarly, the edge of the cupboard we draw is in fact the place where the two surfaces meet. The intangible line is the measurement grammar of design, especially of graphics and topography. Klee mentions about Matisse's art as follows (Merleau-Ponty, 1993):

It is Matisse who thought us to see his shapes not in a "physical-optical" way but rather as structural filaments [des nervures], as the axes of a corporeal system of activity and passivity. Whether it be representational and nonrepresentational, the line is no longer a thing or an imitation of a thing.

Studying nature, seeking for new visions, seeing the universe in a philosophical manner, centralizing humans (ones who look at you) - they all set the artist free of gravity in artist-object relationship and takes him or her beyond physics. The universe lingering in a static order gradually becomes free, the space gets within the object from its outward. Objects in Klee's paintings might look at us serene or severe, tense or relaxed, comforting or forbidding, suffering or smiling. Klee does this with line; childishness of his lines shows us all the mentality in psychic physiognomy that can range from tragedy to comedy.

2.3. Magritte

Andre Breton did not give place to Magritte, who witnessed all the discussions of surrealism, in his book "Le Surréalisme et la Peinture" (Surrealism and Art) (TDK, 1981). He was participating in exhibitions with surrealists for he accepted being a surrealist in practice. However, he did not hesitate to criticize. In his 17-item list for naming objects, Magritte states that the visible external lines of objects touch each other as if they are forming a mosaic and that unobtrusive figures have meanings as essential as impeccable objects. His aim was to dramatize the mystery of images that the world presents with inner analysis at the stage when place, time and matter temporarily lose their vitality. Like many surrealists, Magritte does not attend to what is involuntary. He deals with images that are both real and meaningless and forces us to see binary or double. While claiming that egg is acacia, bowler hat is snow, and hammer is desert, Magritte believes that he makes surprising discoveries (Torczyner, 1992). His drawings reveal a novel reality about entities (or objects); every object gradually transforms into a different one. According to Magritte, there are no crossing lines that differentiate the essence of objects, thus, they are perceived differently than their original sizes. His lines tell a lie to the mind. However, in some of his paintings, trees become transparent as they merge with sky. Magritte describes this as 'compound object' (Torczyner, 1992).

When drawing a rose, the artist is not interested in its optic vision; drawing turns into a puzzle. The artist names his two-months lasting work based on the first lines he draws instinctively. Magritte associates the sloped line he drew for exploratory purpose with flagstick. This association, rather than the petals, gives the work its name.

In addition to western based evaluations about drawing, evaluations of Adonis about Eastern Art are remarkable. Adonis (2012) states that before Islam, artists portrayed the world physically with their eyes; but Muslims tried to construct a different world in this world. It is the 'eye of the heart' who draws and body is merely a witness. The impression that the image creates is abstract; it is formed in mind, soul or heart, it comes from the innermost access of existence. Line is a symbol. If we try to represent what we physically see, we will be limited by the virtual appearance of what we see as an image. In Arabian calligraphy, there is no mechanic medium between the hand and the paper. Arabian calligraphy and ornament represent a perfect example of eternity feeling. They neither portray nor imitate. Ibn Abbas describes calligraphy as a prayer with the tongue of hands. In China, the utmost creativity takes place when ego extends its boundaries and the conscious loses its connection with reality. The work of art produced with such utmost creativity is an extension of one's existence.

3. Conclusion

Trying to understand present as moment and as one is, in a way, killing present before it even starts. We can build the future by looking back from the present. It might be assertive to interpret recent history with psychoanalysis (Passeron, 1982). Understanding the reasons underlying creative performance, linking object, language, and representation from a psychoanalytic perspective was the work of Sigmund Freud, a master of art commentator (Parman, 2007). It is a fallacy in which the unconscious takes the creativity of only meaningless facts as goals. Psychoanalysis relates facts and objects in human thinking. Surrealist production - poetry, painting, drawing or any other production - is a rich production, it is a mental process. Freud was interested in everything produced by humans including pathological behaviors and childhood memories. In the road he set off for meaning hunting, Freud tried to explain the mentality of the artist as well as the relationship between the artist and the viewer, rather than the meaning of the artwork (Passeron, 1982). Surrealism should not be compacted into a specific historical period and also not be considered only as an art movement. Today's artists still begin their first designs, their creativity, with charcoal and paper. We can find surrealist aspects in many artists whether or not they have been involved in this movement, especially in the works of artists who want their initial thought or idea to be seen rapidly. It is like the complex lines of a child. The revolution that surrealism has brought about is a playground where visible and invisible worlds

are discussed. Moving away from the physical aspects of painting and drawing and placing the surrealist quotations in our memory into subjective-intellectual ground has led to what is conceptual. Today, the surrealist aspect still continues.

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