Gabrielle Lopez

Intro to Photography

Mrs.Burkowski

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Barbra Kruger

In such a fast pace society, we as humans hardly have time to eat breakfast in the morning let alone reflect on pieces of art and writing. For most people, bold images and text usually spark the most interest; works that are quick to the point with just as much force as a more involved piece. We simply want a powerful message that is said or demonstrated as simple and as quickly as possible. Barbra Kruger, a famous photographer and designer, knows how life runs in the lives now set with small attention spans. But even so, she still wanted to somehow convey her points of view affectively and raise awareness of social issues. Of course, she had long and tedious jobs and educational struggles, but that soon led to her ability to create very powerful pieces of art work (Artnet.com*).*

Barbara Kruger, born in New Jersey in the year 1945, first started pursuing her interest art at the Syracuse University for the School of Visual Arts. However soon after, she decided to study design as well at Parson’s School of Design in New York. There she studied a general knowledge of design and began to dabble in all the different kinds of designer work. Due to her skill in such a field, Kruger landed a job at Condé Nast Publications for the famous "Mademoiselle" magazine. She had such a talent for design, in fact, that she was promoted to head designer shortly after being accepted into the company. After this, she jumped from all sorts of different companies and types of designer work; everything from a head design to a picture editor. Due to her wide variety of experience in the field of design and art, she was able to accomplish very famous photography in which she is now so famous for (FamousPhotographers.net).

Today, Kruger is famous for her short yet powerful text captions on contrasting black and white pictures in order to spark a certain struggle within the viewer and have them be able to question themselves. Her trademark in photography is black text letters on a straight block background across a photo with short sayings that have been displayed on build boards, train stations, museums, and many areas in France. Such sayings usually have to do with feministic views, consumerism, and touching topics pertaining particularly to core human emotions and instincts. (PBS)

Some of Kruger’s most famous pieces go by the names “Untitled (Business as Usual)”, “Untitled(We Don’t Need another Hero)”, “Untitled (Your Silhouette Must Balance)”, and “Untitled (It’s Our Pleasure to Disgust You)”(PBS). These photos in particular are pictures that appeal to my view points on social issues and popular cultural norms that criticize and almost make fun of how people see these certain issues. In the photo, “Business As Usual”, there is a some sort of canine baring its teeth in a black and white photo with the text “Business As Usual” in white letters on a black square background.(- Skarstedt Gallery*)* This explains how vicious and cruel business is sort of relating to the saying “A dog eat dog world.” She criticize how normal it is now that “business” has turned into a merciless idea that in a sense gives people the right to act heartless and selfish without any sort of moral punishment or remorse. It truly does get its point across, especially by relating a popular belief to an animalistic idea. The only aspect of the photo that I believe could have enhanced the message would be to do either a red text on black background or a white text on a red background so that it stands out vividly compared to the colors of the photograph.

Another famous photo would be “WeDon’t Need another Hero”, a feminist piece criticizing the glorification of men’s roles. In the photo there is bold white text in a red background box that states, “We Don’t Need another Hero” over a black and white photo of a photo of a young boy flexing his arm and a little girl admiring his biceps (Mary Boone Gallery). A common depiction of men is a tough “hero” who is supposed to be able to “save” the women from danger; financially, romance wise etc. whereas the women are simply supposed to be sitting on the sidelines cheering them on. In Kruger’s photo, it shows that we don’t need to follow that picture of men and instead be our own heroes and that we don’t need to keep raising boys to be this “hero” that saves women, but rather as a separate individual that doesn’t have to be the cornerstone for every woman.

Barbra Kruger did not only create art for an emotional standpoint, but created it in a way that would touch human beings for who they are as people and how they live their lives. She challenged society’s norms and got people to think past what seemed to be a universal “right” even during simple times when someone is taking a train ride home. Through this, she has become a very inspiration photographer and now has followers of her work recreating similar photos and art pieces to continue her practice.

Works Cited

"Barbara Kruger." *- Skarstedt Gallery*. Web. 21 May 2016.

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