

Handy Guide to Viewing and Understanding Abstract Art

What am I supposed to be looking at?

It ranges from nothing to everything. It may or may not be what you have seen in the realistic world around you; it does not need to be. Think about relationships between people. The visual part of it is the by-product of the relationship; which is what you see. However, what you see or want to see may not necessarily represent the purer sense of what it is. Analogously, abstract art can be appreciated better by letting go of the idea that everything that you see has to resemble something that you have experienced before.

Why do I like or hate certain abstract art pieces?

If I grew up around vegetation and I see an abstract art piece that somewhat resembles greenery, I will most likely prefer it, mainly because it will seem to be "connected" to me and my identity, compared to other paintings. Or, if I see a painting that resembles or triggers a negative feeling that I have experienced before, I might hate it; simply because negative emotions are not really pleasant to undergo. This brings us to the next question...

***When I look at an abstract art piece,
am I finding myself in it, or am I finding the
artists' creative expression in the painting?***

This is up to us. Having both perspectives brings out the best of both worlds. An art piece which resonates on a personal level is of course enriching and at the same time, appreciating the expressional output from the artist from an intellectual sense can broaden our depth of feel as well. It is like trying an exotic dish for the first time. You can be very sure that the next few minutes is a going to be a surprise.

*Guide written by Raj Kamal
for Mutatis Mutandis Abstract Painting Exhibition
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