Week Xiv: The Cult Of The Virgin Essay, Research Paper

Week XIV: The Cult Of The Virgin

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In the oak artwork of France, Virgin and Child, in 1150 to 1200 AD, distinct contours and curves are used to bring the viewer closer to Mary and her child of Jesus. This piece uses the oak to create an orderly and structured artwork using polychrome paint for its cover. In the gilded silver artwork of France, Virgin and Child, in 1339 AD, the abrupt but flowing curves in around the sculpture give off a more real life emphasis in the emotion and detail between Mary and her child Jesus. It also shows the signs of flowing movement in the sculpture. This is a masterful piece that uses a non-structured basis to bring depth and reality to the sculpture. Both these pieces are a portrait of Mary and her child Jesus, but use different styles and techniques to convey a different message to the viewer. In this paper I will discuss these key differences in technique and what each of sculptures were trying to portray to their viewer in each of the sculptures.

Both art pieces can be understood by looking at the message they are trying to convey to the viewer. In the first artwork made of oak, Virgin and Child, at first glance you see a simple non-chalant and static expression. Both Mary and her child Jesus have a blank and conserved expression that leaves the viewer a feeling of humbleness and virginity. The simplicity of this artwork makes it easy to at first sight understand what the sculptor is trying to portray to the viewer. It at the same isolates the viewer from the scene. In the second artwork made of gilded silver however, you see a loving and affectionate expression between Mary and her child Jesus. This affectionate expression leaves the viewer in awe of the tenderness and beauty of the scene. It also emphasizes the concept of motherly love bringing the viewer closer to the figure.

Both art pieces can be understood by looking at their poses. In the first artwork made of oak, Mary and her child Jesus both hold a steadfast and straightforward pose. Mary is sitting on a pedestal with her child Jesus on her lap. There is no sign of movement whatsoever. They both are proportionally oriented looking straight out to the viewer. This pose is very unnatural looking because they keep a perfect symmetry to the viewer and show no sign of movement. This is to signify order and maybe conserved humbleness and virginity. In the second artwork made of gilded silver however, Mary and her child Jesus both hold a very natural and real life pose. Mary is standing on top a platform leaning to the right, while holding her child Jesus. This shows a sign of movement and motion. Mary has her head tilted towards her child Jesus, which has his hand reaching toward his mother Mary. This extension of Jesus arm and Mary s tilt of her head make the viewer feel like they are seeing a snapshot of a real life pose because both Mary and her child Jesus are truly showing affection for one and another.

Both art pieces can be understood by looking at the individual facial distinctions. In the first artwork made of oak, Mary and her child Jesus have the exact same face. Jesus face does not fit his body at all. Mary s face might be proportionally bigger but it is obvious they are using the same facial distinctions on and around the face. Keeping both faces the same makes it easier to keep bilateral symmetry. It helps preserve an order to the sculpture, but at the same time this further makes the sculpture unreal and unnatural. In the second art piece made of gilded silver however, the facial distinctions between Mary and her child Jesus are totally different. The infant Jesus is a little chubby in the face in comparison to his mother Mary. This difference completely destroys any idea of symmetry further making the sculpture more real life like.

Both art pieces can be understood by looking at the use of colors and coverings on the sculptures. In the first artwork made of oak it is covered with Polychrome paint. On first glance you see the purpose of this paint. The paint was used to blend and soften the color of the oak. It was to make to make the sculpture more humble looking and plain. In the second artwork made of gilded silver it is covered in enamel. The rich golden surface is enlivened by the jewel-like colors of the enamel. When you first see this sculpture immediately the enamel catches your eye. The sculptor did this on purpose to emphasize the beauty and individuality of the piece.

Both art pieces can be understood by looking at the reality of the sculpture. In the first art piece made of oak, it is obvious that the sculptor was trying to create a more orderly and symbolic piece rather than depicting true reality. The faces show no emotion whatsoever therefore making the sculpture more static and unnatural to the viewer. In the second art piece made out of gilded silver however, the sculpture tries to bring a real life pose to the sculpture, by showing the true affection between Mary and her child Jesus. This is emphasized by the extension of Jesus arm and the tilt of Mary s head. The reality of the second art piece is further shown in the use of no symmetry or order whatsoever. In real life there is no true symmetry. The Virgin and Child in gilded silver is a more accurate description of representing the figures in a way that is closer to how Mary and her child Jesus really would act in real life. The Virgin and Child in oak however, uses a more orderly and straightforward representation of the scene.

Both art pieces can be understood by looking at the period and patron they are from. In the first artwork made of oak the sculptor uses the same face for both Mary and her child Jesus. This can be explained because this sculpture is from the Romanesque period from 1150 to 1200 AD. The sculptor of this artwork used the polychrome paint to cover the sculpture, because in the Romanesque period they were supposed to make things plain and not colorful. During the Romanesque period, the emphasis on the majority of Christian artworks was to keep everything the same, orderly and plain. You see this similar facial pattern in the majority of the sculptures and painting from this period. This explains why symmetry plays such a key role in this sculpture. This is further shown if you examine the pattern on the cloth worn by Mary and her child Jesus. All throughout the sculpture it uses the same repeating pattern in the shape of the letter S . This main S pattern creates a foundation for the symmetry in the art piece. From the S pattern everything is created in the art piece. Its this kind of order that the sculptors from the Romanesque period commonly used. In the second artwork made of gilded silver however, the sculptor uses a more accurate and real life depiction of the scene of Mary and her child Jesus. The sculptor of this artwork covered it enamel because the rich golden surface is enlivened by the jewel-like colors of the enamel. This can be explained because this sculpture is from the Gothic period in 1339 AD. During the Gothic period, sculptors were more open to depicting a more accurate and true depiction of real life. To do this they were allowed to use unique colors to represent real life. Everything also didn t have to follow specific symmetrical guidelines. At this period of time they were returning to the old Greek ideals of individuality and motion. This is shown in the bodily differences between Mary and her child Jesus. It is also shown in the use of the rippled cloth to show movement and motion in the sculpture.

Both the art pieces use different styles to convey a message to the viewer but are depicting the same overly idealized scene of Mary and her child Jesus. The first artwork uses techniques from the Romanesque period, while the second artwork use techniques from the Gothic period. In the first artwork made of oak it uses a more plain and straightforward message of humbleness and virginity to the viewer. It uses plain soft colors emphasized by the polychrome paint. It uses no facial expressions whatsoever and uses the same exact face for both Mary and her child Jesus. In the second artwork made of gilded silver it uses a non-direct and real life message of motherly love and tenderness to the viewer. This art piece shows and emphasizes the affection between Mary and her child Jesus. It uses unique colors emphasized by the enamel making the viewer awe in its beauty and elegance. It uses the ripples in the cloth to show motion and shows a more accurate depiction of facial expressions between Mary and her child Jesus.

This makes it hard to determine which in the end does a better job at conveying the message to the viewer because they are both from different periods and patrons. The Virgin and Child in gilded silver gives a more accurate and real life depiction of the scene of Mary and her child Jesus. The Virgin and Child in oak however, uses a more direct and plain way to convey the message to the viewer. So in the end both these sculpture are masterpieces from their period.