

Painting, as an Experience (Intro)

Painting is the highest expression of visual art. Through many painterly techniques, it evokes a better sense of color than sculpture, a more imminent sense of dimension than drawing, and more depth than architecture. Like a poem in the world of writing, a painting offers multitudinous ways to connect with its audience. It speaks through its specificity, celebratory aura, and imaginative powers.

I also consider film to be an art medium that holds the same privilege as painting; films are like living paintings with lighting, focus, and action.

As a poet, author, and auteur filmmaker, I have some experience with poetry, painting, and film media. Through this experience, I've made certain observations about the power of mixing these three art forms.

Joan Miro and *The Singing Fish* (Impression)

This painting is called "The Singing Fish" (or "*Le Chanteur*"). Miro once said, "Mastering freedom means mastering simplicity. Then, at most, a line, a color, is enough to make the impression." Though there isn't a lot of background information on this particular painting, it is believed to be one of Miro's later works. Since his youth, he was a regular reader of Catalan poetry. While painting still-life objects, he would transform an ensemble of items into "a magnificent sunset." "The Singing Fish" is no exception. It is instantly recognizable as one of Miro's works because of his signature use of color-abundant composition; dramatic abstract shapes represent his vibrant imagination.

The key focal point of this painting is the head of the fish (which, in my view, is a bird) looking toward the left of the canvas with its eye represented by two abstract circles. The core characteristics include a Fauvism influence in the humanistic gesture of the bird, the distortion of forms, the embodiment of a human soul, the striking colors and unrestrained tones, the ever-freeing lines, the use of dots to facilitate a freeing emotion, the thick brushstrokes used by his unconventional techniques, light-colored stains, and lyrical integration.

A Perfect Work of Art (Look & Feel)

This painting fascinates me. The most moving features of the work are the complementary color palette, the main subject (a bird with a joyful spirit), perfect harmony and balance between the two. The first moment I saw the painting, I was immediately tuned-in. It was almost as if the bird on the gicle was singing and dancing for me. Splashes of pure happiness ooze out of the painting and make me feel energized and content.

I have always loved many of Miro's works, and this is one of my all-time favorites; it is a perfect work of art. I've always been keen on art museums and galleries, especially those with surrealistic aesthetics, which may have influenced many of Miro's works. What rings most true for me in this painting is the bird's complete immersion in freedom. I grew up in mainland China, and freedom is not a topic we discussed very often in school or at home, but it was frequently on my mind. This painting makes me feel liberated, as if I'm immersed in ocean bliss on a beautiful summer afternoon.

Looking closer at the painting, I discovered another layer of interesting elements. I was struck by Miro's considerable use of broken lines, intersecting planes, and varying angles that provide the appearance of depth on a completely flat surface. This is especially apparent in the bird's eye which is portrayed by painting two boldly colored circles. It has a look of deeper integrity than the surrounding black and red dots. What interested me most was how the painting showed Mother Nature and the human soul being indispensable components of natural order.

Color, Shape, Exaltations * Balance (Essential Elements)

The painting feels extremely balanced while evoking exalting emotions at the same time. There is the immersion of green and blue color palettes which, to me, represent either a green pasture (for the bird) or a blue ocean (for the fish). The body of the bird takes on various shades of turquoise with gradation from dark teal to cobalt blue. Its face is lighter green which makes the maroon eye stand out. Its wings and feet cohere nicely with the asterisk sign, symbolizing an emphasis on the protagonist's elation of being in its best-suited habitat.

Furthermore, we see predominant primary colors of bold red and bright yellow in exaggerated brushstrokes at the bottom-right corner. It's possible that this represents the protagonist's curiosity and desire. These thick lines are paired with a broad green line in the middle-right of the painting and a thick cobalt blue line at the upper-left corner.

The other noticeable shape is the round dots in solid colors. The large pink dot overpowers the black in its center, possibly hindering the protagonist's momentary happiness and overshadowing its future threats. The two dominant black dots of equal size balance out the painting from the top-right corner to the lower-left.

Metaphorical and Poetic Expressions

The connected and broken lines of the asterisk show up both in and out of the splashing greenish-blue background. This gives the protagonist moments of worth for its happy expressions. Then we have to focus on the bird once more with its eye focused on something undefinable and its limbs dancing around, merging onto the many asterisks (or daily happenstances) that could have been proclaimed by life itself.

It is both thrilling and threatening to look at this painting on a deeper scale. We are so taken by the bird's joy that we fear the possibility of sadness, even for a moment. This thought process the pure and lyrical painting provokes is what makes it timeless. We think, *What's next? What will our protagonist face after this whimsical moment of happiness?* Miro left many questions for us to ponder, even with such jovial storytelling.

"The Singing Fish" features both simple and elliptical forms while infusing blissful energy of poetic expression. The painting has a childlike simplicity and playfulness which I believe is a result of Miro's desire to escape in nature to fulfill what he was missing in human societies. Here, Miro painted a selection of human parts including an eye, an ear, and a limb to predominantly showcase an "abstract lyricism" style in a more metaphorical and poetic way. This is one of his best works representing pictorial poetry.

In the Desert of Eternity
by Ann Huang

after Joan Miro's *The Singing Fish*

Drain your teapot, a future will
be your emptiness throughout. As
smooth as a feather, you will be
deemed smooth at its branch. Soft
what you are,
you see that altogether—

even though will you fly—
from outcry,

too sweet a trait,
your mind's outreach momentarily.

Then loveliest your nest thrusts,
then will you merge with me
in the desert of eternity?



Mark Rothko and Space



Mark Rothko's "Untitled 1950-2" reflects the melancholy mood and hope of the post-war era through abstract art. It expresses the complex simplicity of a spatial image which is created through action painting. The two-toned gold pigments are separated by a blurred white and purple line which provides us with a calming, gravitational feeling of peace. This feeling is a sentiment yearned by many post-war era artists.

Here, Rothko may have wanted to create a space that withstood the measures and expanse of time from the past (the darker gold) to the present (the brighter gold) and to the future (the blended purple).

The gold tint enveloping each corner implies that the past will always carry over to the future.

Multiverse
by Ann Huang

after Mark Rothko's *Untitled 1950-2*

Someone that you had lived
for then and now
Dreamed of that spring
of lonesome nights.
There was the sky,
there was the square;
That was your heart,
this was your face.
To the moon's reflection
you were laughing quietly
That was your landscape,
that was your ground.
There was your blood,
there was your drive,
You were lured
to the sun's shadow.
The nights came back,
when moths left;
There was your beloved,
not your friends.
Someone you
would never demand
Unveil this earth
like a silver-lining wane.