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The Art of Death

Time is a virtue where great inventions, inspirations, and achievements all come together as one for the new generation which lies ahead. These achieves had went through a stage where life itself had to be drawn out in order for others to comprehend, to master, and recreate with a new initiative. These drawings have foreshadowed the art of man and its existence. For man has a plethora of genuine conceptions and theories as to how they view the world around them through the artist mind of man. These drawings depict the meaning of how people see death and how death is now a common-day event where the reaction is less dramatic than before. Paul Delvaux is one of these inspirational creators who made a contribution to surrealism which opened the minds of his audience from one of his 1944 drawings, *Venus Asleep*. “A representative Delvaux painting is *The Echo* (1943), in which three somnambulist, doe-eyed nudes walk in tandem past empty Classical temples, as if walking through time. His oeuvre is notable for its unvarying use of the same style and set of motifs.” For this vividly descriptive art that opens the minds of individuals, “Venus Asleep” is more than just a bunch of naked women surrounded by skeletons in a roman city area at dusk time. The art is simply more than just a woman named Venus laying naked on a couch fitted for luxury while being surrounded by the norm of life. “Venus Asleep” is a wake-up call for the individuals who wish to see the painting in depth by the effects of the painting’s surrealism.

“A picture is worth a thousand words.” Paul Delvaux, as a surrealist painter, demonstrates his intellectuality and theories based solely upon the art he draws. Delvaux targets his audience to both the open-minded individual who wishes to find the answers to why life occurs in such a manner in which it does. It can be assumed that college students are the prime targets for this drawings to that it can allow their minds to be based on a critical stand-point that generates both an equal balance of logic and a social definitive of the drawing. Delvaux wants his audience to understand that art is not what is merely composed on a board, statue, wall, etc. That art is really a foundation; a base towards what we must see around us in a way in which we do not use our eyes. Rather, we use our minds instead to determine what is really meant in a piece of art.

The primary reason as to why Paul Delvaux composed such a portrait in *Venus Asleep* was to not only keep his audience in “awe” from the surreal images of naked women and skeletons in one scene. Delvaux wanted the world to comprehend that we see explicit and unappealing experiences where we must confront regardless of how high or low may the severity of the experience may be. To a great extent people should not be afraid of what they see, hear, feel, or have to endure because these are matters that we will overcome some time now or later. The skeletons in *Venus Asleep* symbolize how death is part of our social norms in our everyday lives. We talk about death, joke around about death, some may claim to be able to speak to the dead, even wait for death. Death, in Delvaux’s drawing demonstrates how our society is basically at ease with the idea of dramatic, explicit, and vulgar images we see today.

This portait is important to our society because without the genuine art, people would not be able to elaborate their thinking in terms of how to express their thought when it comes to a

topic of death, sex, etc. Delvaux's portrait can be interpreted in multiple manners, not just death alone. Some people may see it as life, the beauty of it all. But the reason for the skeletons in almost every portrait would reach to a certain conclusion that Delvaux saw death as an inspiration and that people need to see it in that manner. That death is continuous and we'll never know who will be next to bite the dust. And in regards to the naked women, including Venus, is to show some sort of emphasis as to how women blind the judgment of men.

Venus being the Goddess of Love, is represented in both Greek and Roman historical art which promotes power and determination of love. Where love can blind people and cause them to commit certain actions that were never thought to be taken. Risking one's life to save their lover, ensuring the safety and well-being of others regardless of the consequential effects that would inevitably occur, loving someone to a certain extent even if one passes away falling into a never-ending remorse for the love. The power in which Venus has, and even more, exemplifies why Delvaux utilizes Venus in his portraits. Delvaux wants his audience to see the power that both women and Venus have over society in a manner where judgment can be deferred in a secondary manner.