



ART THEN AND ART TODAY—A JUXTAPOSITION

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Have you ever heard of people being so strongly affected by a work of art that they end up crying before a painting? Or seen people crying unabashedly during a play? What is more common, perhaps, is seeing individuals severely affected by what they see onscreen in a movie or TV drama. In all three situations, we see how art influences people and moves them to express emotion.

Sometimes, we see images that move us to action. A well-executed photo of animals being mistreated or abused could incite animal lovers to instigate action against animal cruelty. Nothing is more likely to create vivid imagery than what is perceived thru the eye. Images affect us, sometimes more profoundly than we think.

We see a nude woman in a sexy pose with fruits and vegetables covering her private parts and we think going vegetarian or vegan is beautiful. We see a flawless face and the latest anti-ageing miracle cream this side of the planet and we think we can become much more pleasant-looking if we try the product advertised. We see muscled or well-toned bodies seamlessly executing exercise moves and we get inspired to lose weight and live healthily. And with the advent of such technological wonders as Photoshop, we are bombarded by seemingly-perfect images and representations. Things that make us wonder sometimes, is this at all natural?

There was a time when artists and their subjects had to endure hours of sitting to be able to capture those perfect images. Now, we have gadgets that capture everything in a split second and reproduce images countless times. We can even do alterations and enhancements to those images at the touch of a button.

I remember the scene in the movie Titanic where a very nervous Leonardo DiCaprio made a sketch of a naked Kate Winslet. Who knows if Leonardo DiCaprio indeed made the drawing? What I did know was how lovingly the sketch was produced so that it impressed the subject enough to make her fall in love with the artist. It gave way to one of the most poignant love stories to be immortalized onscreen.

In my own country, history describes the likes of great Filipino artist Juan Luna, who painted the Spoliarium. The painting has served as a testament that there were talented Filipino artists that could produce great opuses too, in those times.

We've heard of great masterpieces created by unrivalled masters of art. But I believe that there are still Van Goghs and Rembrandts and Dalis among today's youth. They are those who are willing to chart uncharted courses of their own in order to make us appreciate life more fully. The inspiring and artful way they live life motivates us to become masters of our own fates and captains of our souls.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is your opinion of having photoshopped images of actors and actresses? Is it better or worse than having plastic surgery?
2. Is Photoshop a serious form of art? Why or why not?
3. Has a painting or art piece ever affected you greatly? How?
4. What are art forms that you prefer? What makes this art form special to you?
5. If you could emulate an artist during ancient times, who would it be and why?