



Pat Holscher's *The Class Clown* is a 2009 24 x 38 inch watercolor work which depicts a group of five seagulls with four of them looking in different directions, standing rigid and alert. One in the center is standing straighter than the others and has its head cocked while looking directly at the viewer, but next to it is one that is bending toward the viewer with its back leg lifted off the ground and balancing on its left leg, as if it were about to fly toward them, with its beak and eyes are gaping open and it appears to be the only one that is moving, as though someone has startled it or attracted its attention. The piece is colored with bright pigments and drips of paint that make vertical and horizontal lines all over the scene.

Though the birds themselves are asymmetrical, the drips of paint form a grid in a subtle fashion so that squares are covering the entire piece while not taking away from the seagulls. The straight lines that the birds' legs make are also in compliance with the drips and therefore aid the vertical lines, making line one of the main elements. The work uses color as a key element through the analogous color scheme, from orange-reds to blue-greens which capture the viewer's attention; the bright yellow-greens that are splashed on the seagull that is bending forward and the red-orange on the middle bird's wing brings them out. Texture is shown in the light and fluffiness of the birds' wings and the fresh/wet look of the splattered watercolor and the drips.

The space of the painting is almost non-existent since the birds are standing at the forefront of piece and besides there seeming to be no ground on which they are standing, there is also no depth or distinguishable horizon line in the background which brings the objects up-close. Though shape is not dominant in this artwork, Holscher provides it in the triangles of the birds' beaks and the circles of their knees and also in the squares that the drips form. Harmony and variety are important principles in this artwork; harmony is displayed through the line formation of the seagulls and the grid while variety is shown by the birds' eye movement, their positions, and their colors. The movement throughout the work starts at the red-orange on the two right birds and then goes to the one bending forward, then finally to the other two birds and the paint drips.

The focal point is the center of the painting which includes the bent bird and the one standing straight with bright orange-red. They are emphasized with location and convergence since the two end birds are standing inward and seem to be pointing toward the middle. It appears that the work was created as a lighthearted mood and though there does not appear to be much emotional depth to the piece, the bright colors suggest a happy theme by making the focal point a silly bird among serious ones. The title itself may bring to the viewer's mind, the image a young child making jokes in the middle of class. The intense and unrealistic colors on birds that are usually plain white could also be trying to make seagulls interesting and entertaining to viewer.

Introduction

In the introduction, the author gives us the basic facts about the artwork and a simple description of the subject matter. Notice the vivid words used to help us "see" the artwork... "colored with bright pigments"

Body

The author makes a point to explain the impression of the color scheme and how the dripping paint interacts with the subject matter.

The author describes the space, shape, harmony, variety, and movement.

Interpretation

The author explains the focal point and interprets the work.

This artwork is well presented, but there does not seem to be enough content to provoke deep thoughts or emotions on the part of the viewer because of the straight-forward subject of the piece. Though that could be a hindrance to some, it does not take away from the beautiful technique that is presented through the carefree application of paint as shown with the splatters and the drips. The paint also creates a natural outlining of the birds. The chosen subject is unique and unusual which also helps in entertaining the viewer and holding their interest.

Judgement

The author judges the piece based on what she sees. She does not find much evidence of content but expresses her approval of the painting technique and how it effects the artwork.