Comparative Study: Forms of Beauty

Introduction: My comparative study focuses on the beauty between two dissimilar artists who were brought up in distant time periods, and endured various traditions, which diversified their form of expressions and meaning towards thematic issues. The artist in this comparative study - Alphonse Mucha, has impacted my thoughts regarding self worth and the obstacles seemingly placed upon myself. The other artist who was included as one of my gallery visits - Patrick Earl Hammie, has influenced my workmanship and view regarding global issues and the self-restraint that came about due to brainwashing of cultural norms. Alongside the aesthetic aspects, I will also compare and contrast the application of their mediums and how much of an impact it had on the appearance of the artwork.

Formal Qualities of Alphonse Mucha 'Job' cigarette paper



Job Cigarette Paper By Alphonse Mucha. Colour lithograph, 1896 26.3 in x 18.3 in. (66.8 cm x 46.5 cm) One of the first things that I noticed about this piece is it's smooth **texture**. The poster's perfectly **symmetrical lines** enhances the **organic form** of the alluring woman who is seen to be enjoying a cigarette while overshadowing Mucha's poster.

In addition, her Pre-Raphaelite hair twists and twirls as it interlaces with the rising smoke which also provides a distinctness contrary to the poster's **rhythmic** golden zigzag **frame** and hard **lines** which were inspired by Byzantine Mosaics. As the border is combined with the rich purple **colour** of the background, it creates a sensual and a luxurious **mood**.

Mucha's flamboyantly stylized representation of hair, during the time as vermicelli or macaroni, presents an indispensable decorative segment, likewise **emphasizing** the aesthetically pleasing and eroticism aspects of the woman.

As the woman is enjoying her cigarette, she wears an ecstatic **expression**, closed eye and half smile, which entices us hypnotically, with some inexpressible yet captivating spectacle. This poster utilizes **colour** to accentuate a woman's beauty that seemed to display her sexuality in order to attract viewers, likewise, the purpose of an advertisement.

In addition to the **colour** and **frame** of the poster, the women is covered with very little clothing, which suggests reveals her arms, chest, and neck. And taking into consideration that during the 1898s, there was no exposing of a woman's body, it aided in displaying the sexual reference that is most likely to entice many viewers. It also provokes their own idea of acquiring such beauty if the action was imitated, in other words, purchasing of the product, Mucha's main goal.

Function and Purpose of Alphonse Mucha 'Job' cigarette paper

As stated by Mucha, "To talk in my own way to the spirit of the nation, to its eyes which carry thoughts most quickly to the consciousness."

My interpretation of the phrase "eyes which carry thoughts most quickly to the consciousness" is the greed one gains at the moment one's eyes fall upon a unique element. Thus fueling one's desire to manipulate and acquire its own principle. Mucha acknowledges human lust towards intimate and aesthetically pleasing **images** through the usage of **smooth** and beautifully represented mediums.

In 1898, smoking meant sex, not terminal illness or coughing. Even in today's age, media has portrayed smoking as a sexual allusion. It allows a woman to display their wrist and open her body to a man. Yet not displayed in Mucha's Job poster, smoking a cigarette is a **symbolic** display of masculinity. What at first appears to be an innocent and a beautiful **image** is, in fact, an exceedingly sexually charged one.

For example, Mucha's *Lance Parfum Rodo* displays not only the product; a perfume, but also a European appearing woman with milky skin and face as soft as a babys. The woman's skin and body is revealed through the poster, similarly to the JOB Paper. In addition to the product being a perfume, the woman is illustrated to spray it so sensually, glancing at it with half closed eyes, suggesting women's desire to have an aroma that attracts the opposite sex, while **emphasizing** a woman's ability to fool a nation with one look.



Lance Parfum Rodo

By Alphonse Mucha Colour lithograph, 1896 17.5 in. x 12.6 in. (44.5 cm x 32.0 cm)

Cultural Significance of Alphonse Mucha 'Job' cigarette paper



Mucha moved to Paris in 1887, while attending Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi while producing magazines and advertising illustrations. Around Christmas 1894, Mucha happened to chance upon a print shop where there was a sudden and abrupt demand for a new poster to sponsor a play starring Sarah Bernhardt, the most famous actress in Paris, at the Théâtre de la Renaissance on the Boulevard Saint-Martin. Mucha offered to produce a lithographed poster within two weeks, and on January 1, 1895, the advertisement for the play Gismonda by Victorien Sardou materialized on the streets of the city. It was an overnight achievement and declared the new artistic style and its creator(Mucha) to the citizens of Paris. Bernhardt was so satisfied with the success of that first poster that she entered into a 6 years contract with Mucha.



Alphonse Mucha Photography, 1906 2,877 × 3,574 pixels Due to having produced a poster for Bernhardt, Mucha established his style of manipulating women's beauty to benefit the production of products. Thus, it began his approach of targeting consumers thought and subconscious desires; the women want the sexual allurness a cigarette causes, male population generate curiosity towards the woman's image and the breaking of conventions that were placed upon women during the 1898s.

Sarah Bernhardt

By Alphonse Mucha Colour lithograph, 1894 29.8 in. x 21.8 in. (75.7 cm x 55.4 cm)

Formal Qualities of Patrick Earl Hammie Significant Other

A few things I've first noticed were the **contrast** of the hair **textures** and the difference in the skin **tones**. Having such distinction delivers the **theme** of **ambiguity** and opposing views, even perhaps the responsibility of each diverse race. In addition to the **organic forms**, Hammie utilizes oil paint to **emphasize** the shadows that appear on the bodies and the dark **colour** of the woman's face which seem to present a burdened expression, filled with responsibility that she can barely cultivate.

The **colours** plastered upon the body appears jaggedy, yet creates a perfect portrayal of definite **shadows**, while they **blend** together to create the **shapes** and **figures** they were meant to surface while facing the light that seems to be shining upon the figures from the left. Illuminating the male's face, while the woman turns away to avoid such hinderance.

The background appears to be of a wall, perhaps inside a house, yet her expression appears as if she's running away from something. Commonly, when so much detail is applied to an art piece, that only **emphasizes** its significance to the artist and strongly originates its expressiveness.



Night Watch By Patrick Earl Hammie Oil on linen, 2011 68 in. x 96 in.

(172.7 cm x 243.8 cm)

Function and Purpose of Patrick Earl Hammie Significant Other



While in an interview, Hammie says, "My work is situated in the discourse of contemporary art that questions and present visual alternatives to historical masculine traditions, constructions of identity, gender politics and race"

Hammie utilizes the nudist demeanor to contribute a stronger theme to the expression of the artwork. As we can see in *Night Watch*, the woman is struggling to carry the unconscious man. It suggests the idea of gender roles which placed men to carry all responsibility while protecting, and the women who nurture and protect their offspring while providing love to their exhausted partners. The couple, whose naked bodies engage in striking, riveting compositions, are originally a shock to the system of any youngins raised in our still-Puritanical culture; we are, even now, not acquainted to perceiving the naked human body, and when we do, we view it with a hyper-critical eye. As the nudity provides beauty to those who have yet to find it.

Contact

By Patrick Earl Hammie Oil on linen, 2014 70 in. x 90 in. (177.8 cm x 228.6 cm) As we can see in *contact*, they are naked to portray the dependence upon each other rather than having materialistic things that may influence greed and lust towards worthless things. Similarly to *Night watch*, utilizing the same characters of different ethnicities that represents equality to all, and represents the beauty of human relationships and the passion it takes to maintain them.

Cultural Significance of Patrick Earl Hammie Significant Other

Patrick Earl Hammie draws from art history, **visual** culture, and personal experience to analyze ideas related to cultural identity, masculinity, beauty, and sexuality, while repeatedly using **allegory** to implicate power structures, and question systems of racism and sexism.

Having come from an African American background, the issues that Hammie chooses to focus on come directly from his experiences and thoughts towards matters of hierarchy, which is also influenced by his background in the study of psychology, that aroused his thirst to comprehend the effect of behaviour in space and time.

As we relate it to his art pieces, he mainly focuses on issues that is presented today by our modern world, and has been issues fought against in the past, some won and others remain fought for. Significant Other is utilized to portray his role as not only a husband, but a man of colour that is looked down upon by the closed minded people who are blind by unrealistic ideals and false hope of supremacy. Although the artwork represent an intense expression, it aesthetically binds the viewers eyes to the detail and beauty of his techniques as he intertwines the couple's bodies, providing a sense of wilderness and endearment.



Patrick Earl Hammie Photograph, 2011 1,000 × 662 pixels

Compare and Contrast

Hammie Other Significant Other

- Nude yet unsexual
- Painting
- Manipulation of **shadows** and colour value.
- Contemporary art
- 2011
- Expression of art depicts own experience
- Art for expressing oneself
- Continuous series
- Portrays society's issues
- Does not follow the standard beauty
- Feel of wildness and fear

Manipulation of colours

- **Organic Figures**
- Gender roles
- **Art** for money
- Convey beauty
- Dark background
- Women
- Attracting viewers
- Wild hair
- Showing skin
- Male artists

Line designs

- Covered yet sexual
- Alphonse Will.

 Cigarette Paper Lithographic poster
- Art Nouveau
- 1896
- Expression of art utilizes women
- Art for advertisement
- Same product advertised for different companies, different posters.
- Takes advantage of society's issues
- **Emphasizes** the standard beauty to attract consumers
- Feel of sexual vibes

Formal Qualities of Alphonse Mucha The seasons



The seasons

By Alphonse Mucha Colour lithograph, 1896 Four separate posters, 40.6 in. x 21.3 in. (103.0 cm x 54.1 cm) Things to notice while gazing at the paintings are Mucha's signature **organic figures** that he manipulates beautifully to attract viewers with desires to obtain such intensity. He formulates **soft colours** that fit the **theme** of the four seasons; winter, fall, spring, and summer to to illustrate feelings felts through each experience.

In addition, he utilizes the seasons weather as the background of each piece, placing snow in winter while covering the figure, in summer the figure's feet is submerged in water, in spring the figure is surrounded by flowers, and fall the figure is surrounded by decaying, red tree leaves. Mucha captures the **moods** of the seasons - innocent Spring, sultry Summer, fruitful Autumn and frosty Winter, and together they represent the harmonious cycle of Nature.

Unlike Mucha's other pieces, *The Seasons* was utilized to portray innocently, and straying away from the theme of lust and sexual arousal.

Formal Qualities of Alphonse Mucha The seasons

- Colour flows naturally together, soft warm/cold colours intertwining, no hard colours splattered to disturb the peaceful mood.
- Organic form takes full space of the poster, equally proportioned, balances out the objects within the piece and provides movement silently taking place.
- Creates an **emphasis** on **mood** and **theme** with each season.
- Nature fills entire background.
- Women used to portray the seasons to **emphasize** on beauty, delicacy, and fragility.
- Long hair, stands for youth and beauty, intertwines with tree leaves and branches to **illustrate** women being one and the same with nature.
- Spring, fall, and winter feel chilling while one gazes at them, as for summer, it feels warm and lazy.
- No usage of **straight lines**, as all **lines** twist and twirl creating the **shape** they were assigned to represent a certain aspect of the piece.
- Imagery utilized to contribute to it's value.
- The women in summer and winter face the viewers, while the ones in fall and spring gaze towards the flowers/branches, away from the viewers.
- The body **shape** of the women in the four posters are very similar, if not, the same person, disregarding the hair colour.
- Every poster contains tree branches.
- Mainly one colour stands out from all posters is the red flower crown in the summer poster. Portrays summers recklessness, youth, fun, and unafraid demeanor. Summer associated with heat, and heat is associated with red.

Function and Purpose of Alphonse Mucha The Seasons

Mucha once said, "Art exists only to communicate a spiritual message" having gained fame through commercial art contradicted what he originally stated. Applying the woman figure in every one of his pieces only for attracting consumers has no spiritual message. Yet, if we think about it, women during the 1890's were not free to shows their skin, thus, Mucha's art must have provided encouragement and rebellion.

Although his *JOB poster* was utilized for commercial use, *the seasons* was a piece he truly wanted to portray, the nature that set against the seasonal views of the countryside. Although the seasons were all combine to create a compelling **harmony** of perception whose intention is to inspire and elevate the observer. He was not advertising for a product to be bought, merely to inspire the viewer, and to give them a new perspective to ponder towards the seasons and their beauty and effect on daily life.

For example, in *Dawn and Dusk*, he once again manipulated women to attract viewers, and although there are half naked women laying atop beds, with sensual appearances, it provides a pure sensation as the day ends and another day begins, as people lie or rise. This relates to *the seasons*, as he provided different perspectives, not for commercial use, but perhaps to send a spiritual message, what he's been truly attempting to do since the beginning of his career.





Dawn and Dusk By Alphonse Mucha Colour lithograph, 1899 Two posters 36.5 in. x 20 in. (92.7 cm x 50.8 cm)

Formal Qualities of Patrick Earl Hammie Recognition



Recognition
By Alphonse Mucha
Oil on canvas, 2009
84 in. x 60 in.
(213.4 cm x 152.4 cm)

I first noticed the **organic form** naked, sitting atop the stool, appearing distressed and deformed in its actions. The wall has no shadows accompanying a **warm colour**. The cloth that is lying on the floor has a **cold tint** to it, as it twists and intertwines with the dark **shadows** created due to the folds

The figure sits **asymmetrically** in the painting, as the right side is further away from the body than the left side, illustrates imbalance. The figure is shaded in a very dark tone to emphasize race, while portraying men as fragile. As it is naked, it indicates powerlessness, while extracting authority and the dominant male perspective. **Lines** have been utilized to create **shapes** and converge to illustrate a **theme**, not seen used alone.

Shadows cover the figure's face, hiding their identity and masking them with a frightening expression that is unseen. The body sits, slumped and looked defeated, holding no air or power and no air of a man that it is supposed to carry. Depicts stereotypes that are being pushed upon the male population, which eventually drags them and and crumbles their bodies into heaps of defeated expectations. The figure stares towards the spectator, as if questioning their intentions, and presenting his defeat.

Function and Purpose of Patrick Earl Hammie Recognition

Hammies style of storytelling through allegory can be noticed through his painting *Recognition*, as he says, "I want to reinvent and remix ideal beauty and heroic nudity" as he illustrates his paintings of nudity to to embroil power structures, query systems of racism and sexism, and inspect how male artists have visualized the nude. Not the idealistic one that is pressured upon people and jammed into their brains, brainwashing them to believe that being different is unforgivable and must be avoided at all cost. Thus, many people tend to go to the extreme to keep their youth and appearance in order to satisfy others.

For example, as we see in *Study for Bend*, we can see the vulnerable sides of a human being, hating oneself for carrying extra elements that would exclude them from fitting into the normal standards of the population. As we can see the hands squeezing the skin, thinking and hating it for being there and taking away the sense of beauty they would have harbored. *Recognition* is portraying oneself despising itself for being weak and unattractive. It also explores the idea of coming from a different ethnicity than the ones in the norm. As the media depicts "white" as beautiful, and the only beautiful and dominant race. Many other races are discouraged and are inspired to recreate the feelings they harbor towards such ideas in the form of an artwork that conveys self hate and self doubt.

Hammie works with body language, narrative, lighting, scale and gesture as metaphors to consider the notion related to cultural identity, masculinity, beauty, and sexuality.



Study For BendBy Patrick Earl Hammie
Charcoal on paper, 2007
60 in. x 42 in.
(152.4 cm x 106.7 cm)

Compare and Contrast

· atrick Earl Hammie phition

- 2009
- Shadows are prominent
- Indoor
- Dark/depressing colours
- Male Figure
- Painting
- Message regarding norm/ issues
- Outside of the norm of beauty
- Figure is bare
- Exploring inequality
- **Imbalance**
- Open space
- Painting emits self doubt and conveys self dislike.
- Artist holds strong feelings within the painting.

- Non-sexual
- Lines form shapes, no line is noticed alone.
- Light background
- Convey a message
- Continuous series
- Non-masculine
- Male artists
- Attracting spectators
- **Organic figure**
- Throughs viewers out of comfort zone.

- 1896
- The Seasons Mucha Soft shadows/unnoticeable
- Outdoor
- Soft, lazy **colours**
- Female Figures
- Lithographic poster
- Message regarding spirituality
- Fits the norm of beauty
- Figures are clothed
- Conveying purity
- Balance
- Poster is filled with shapes, no open space.
- Poster emits beauty and harmony.
- Artists is emotionless compared to Hammies,

Evaluation of Application of Medium and Expression of Emotion

Alphonse Mucha
'Job' cigarette paper
& The Seasons

- Medium softens picture, allowing smooth reflection and portrayal of figures.
- Medium allows for thin **lines**, creating delicate **shapes**.
- Emotions expressed mainly for commercial use, meant for spirituality, ends up being to attract consumers towards products.
- Focuses on **shapes**, and details.
- Although medium may not be the case, shades are light and unnoticeable.
- Earthy **colours** suggests classic sense of nature.
- Aesthetically pleasing, sexually attracting, no strong view.
- Having purpose to attract
- **Lines** intertwine and connect with each other to display a pleasing **form**.
- Symmetrical appearance

Patrick Earl Hammie Significant other & Recognition

- Medium conveys a jagged and hard image, giving it a **textured** appearance.
- Medium creates tough appearance, does not allow lines to create delicate presentation.
- Emotions expressed through piece due to encounters experienced for being part of the minority.
- Layering of mediums creates detailed shadows.
- Focuses on **texture**.
- Medium allows for stronger and darker shadows.
- Cold **colours** suggests sadness, and sorrow.
- Holds a sense of responsibility and burdened with expectations.
- Having purpose to convey
- Nonsymmetrical appearance

Connection to Own Art - Alphonse Mucha



Beauty Representative

By Mariam A. Adams Self-portrait, acrylic on canvas, 2015 36 in. x 36 in. (91.44 cm x 91.44 cm) My inspiration and connection to my self-portrait is Alphonse Mucha's *The Seasons*. Like Mucha, I attempted to focus upon the portrayal of beauty that women emit, while lengthening the hair to imitate the **organic figures** in the seasons. I also imitated the body language, as I recreated one of the poses he developes in his other versions of *The Seasons*. The body language is alluring and expressive, and very thought provoking as I display a woman voluntarily presenting her body, not for unwanted attention, but for relaxation. As she stands her ground and speaks out through her body that she is fighting for herself. She is attempting to create a world of her own in which no judgments shall be passed, a world that excludes everyone and attends to her wants and needs.

I utilized Mucha's border technique and I create a halo effect surrounding the figure, while the flowers stand atop her body and intertwine with her long and luscious hair. Unlike Mucha, I utilized very dark and expressive **colours**, mainly to deliver my point across strongly, over having the viewer decide the meaning. In addition, I used **brushstrokes** that detailed and outlined the dress, while utilizing different **value** and **shades** of **colour** to give **depth** and **perception** to the image, rendering it **realism** and intensity.

Connection to Own Art - Alphonse Mucha

I created depth and perception through my shading which t is also applied to the flowers that are atop the figures body. The flowers mixed in with different shades of blue, purple, and white to provide a realistic appearance. However, in Mucha's *The Seasons*, the **shades** are not as prominent and does not provide a sense of realism, although it may lack **value shading**, it maintains it's mesmerizing beauty.

Due to being a part of a conservative culture that prohibits the revealing of the female body, I took a very large step once I decided upon the idea for my self-portrait. When I utilized the body expression and the alluring feel and **colour**, I felt a sense of relief due to acting upon my own desires. Mucha's art provided me with the courage to express my own views and beliefs. It aided me to have a better **perception** of the community, the standards of beauty, and the values brainwashed into people. Although Mucha's art may be mostly commercial, it inspired me to view aesthetics much differently than I used to. I began to value things I never really did before, such as my hair, my weight, and my beliefs that I thought nothing of.



Connection to Own Art - Patrick Earl Hammie



Bare Rose
By Mariam A. Adams
Oil/Acrylic on canvas, 2016
36 in. x 36 in. (91.44 cm x 91.44 cm)

Hammie focuses on issues that are occurring throughout the world, unfairly to a minority of people. I decided to base my second self-portrait off of Hammie's methods of portraying global issues, his canvas *Recognition*, recognizing who he is, and accepting the way he was born. Having grown up in a middle eastern country, I was taught to cover myself and obey the men. I could not raise my voice, or I would receive punishment, nor was I able to disagree with anything. Especially, we have to respect our elders, and as respectable as that sounds, some elders were set on old conservative ways that made them extremely racist bigots that spoke of nothing but old traditions, including the ways that held freedom and the right to speak for your own self.

Thus, I utilized Hammie's encouraging method of painting his inner beliefs and issues that he has been facing. I created this portrait to convey my personality unleashing and standing up for myself, as Hammie did to receive the right of respect and privilege.

Although I attempted to shade the skin that isshowing, it did not come out similar to hammie's deep and **perceptive** level of **shading**. I attempted to layer **colours** on top of one another in order to demonstrate the **texture**, although I did not succeed with the skin **tones**, I was fortunately with the flower. I utilized brushstrokes to demonstrate the petals every **shadow**, curve, and overlap.

Connection to Own Art - Hammie & Mucha



Artist in the City
By Mariam A. Adams
Acrylic on canvas, 2016
12 in. x 24 in. (30.48 cm x 60.96 cm)

I decided to base my triptych piece on both artists - Mucha because of the aesthetics he illustrates with the management of his medium, and Hammie for the meaning of the piece. In the further right piece, I am portraying myself wrapped in a cloth, not because of the weather, but due to concealing my beauty and keeping my purity. In my culture, if we cover ourselves, it would not only keep us safe, but it would hide us away from bad attention and keep away people who are only attracted to aesthetics

For the background, I utilized red, black, and white to enhance each colour and mix them together to form a beautifully **shaded** and realistic flower. Red flowers represent seduction and desire, it is what is hidden, and although it is hidden, many people have no dignity but to act unsightly while representing our puristic culture and norms.

Connection to Own Art - Hammie & Mucha

Through the art piece, I have represented my evolution over time. It represents my thoughts before coming to America, as I had a very strict and conservative mindset, then I began flourishing. The fruits represent new perspectives, ideas, thoughts, emotions, feelings, images, scenery, people, relationships, and even inspiration. **Things I have learned while observing the two amazing artists:**

- To represent my personality even if I was different and had no ally to stand beside my passion and beliefs.
- There is no copying in art, as you evolve overtime, you will find what is truly suited to your skills and your inspiration.
- To recreate and practice, because that is the only way you will perfect something and better an element you disliked in the past.
- Being a minority is a strength, as it allows one to illustrate their life, and grow as a person, while learning from others, and being independent.
- You are able to manipulate a whole nation, merely by portraying a hint of something they've never tasted before.
- Utilizing dark **shades** and applying more than one layer of paint allows a darker **shade** and a thicker **texture** that stands out against any lighting.
- Manipulating like colours allows for a delicate appearance, portraying purity, sincerity, warmth, kindness, and becomes easy for the eyes to gaze upon.
- Intense **images** causes a thought provoking impression and continued pondering.
- **Balance** is achieved when the artist's satisfaction towards his art piece is guaranteed.

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