



The soulless art

Esha Singh

AIS Pushp Vihar, X A

Italy, 1914

My eyes narrowed as I stepped into the dim attic. How could anyone paint here? If a room reflects its owner's mind, then Amedeo Modigliani's mind must've been a bleak one. I had been a muse for many artists. Yet none truly painted me, only a figure that looked like me. Over time, I developed a strange sensitivity: I could almost hear the voices hidden inside paintings. Isn't that why people create art? To express what the world often forgets. But as I sat before Modigliani, I heard nothing. His brush moved quickly, and his eyes were lost in a trance, but they were too empty for someone who painted emotion. Even his name felt unsettling, Modigliani, so close to maudit, the French word for 'cursed'. A feeling of unease grew inside me.

In the corner lay an incomplete painting, covered in dust. It showed a pale, blonde woman with a sad expression. The uncoloured irises made the eyes appear hollow, yet they seemed to hold meaning.

Hours passed before he finished my portrait. Light fell on it, but something still felt incomplete. "It's an impressive piece," I said, forcing a smile. "But... where are my eyes?" He looked at me, tired and distant. "When I understand your soul," he said, "I will paint your eyes."

July 24, 1918

Nervously, I walked through the exhibition, searching for my portrait. And there it was 'Beatrice Hastings, 191'. People paused, but none truly connected with it. Even I felt no story, no emotion... just silence.

A crowd had gathered around another painting beside mine. My heart skipped.

But as I sat before Modigliani, I heard nothing. His brush moved quickly, and his eyes were lost in a trance, but they were too empty for someone who painted emotion.

The woman's once-empty almond-shaped eyes were now painted. They seemed alive and glowing, as if they were speaking. I recalled a line by Leonardo da Vinci: "Art is never finished, only abandoned." Her portrait proved this. "Who is the muse?" The crowd, curious just as I was, asked. Amidst the murmur, the artist revealed that it was his wife, the woman who grounded him, who gave his life meaning. For years, he had left the painting incomplete because he wanted to know every bit of her, in the minutest of detail. Finally, he felt he had come to know her and understand her. "With true feeling, even distorted art becomes beautiful. Without it, everything falls apart," Modigliani said.

And in that moment, I understood why my eyes were left unpainted. To him, my soul had not yet spoken. But it also meant that our journey together - as muse and artist - had just begun.



Illustration: Aditi Poddar, AIS Pushp Vihar, XI B

After the



Poem

Shambhavi Sharma, AIS PV, XII F

Looking for meaning; there is none
Blithely, expectantly, and deliriously
In swirls of frocks, in shrouded nights
Hiding and laughing in veils I can't see
Behind words I do not seem to conquer
There's one painting which isn't a blur

Prying and prodding till it falls apart
I attempt to inject thoughts into words
Perhaps it'll show pity, maybe mercy
And surround me like a flock of birds
But hope taunts me, healing undone
As I remain plagued with starvation

The painting was in my hospital room
Strokes of my youth, devoid of pain
I did not comprehend its value then
How strength drenched me like rain
Careless strokes rough at the edges
Now on my horizon unease stretches

For I fell victim to the sands of time
My health drained, suffering reigned
I imagine it jeer at my naivety today
Laughing at how I cornered it once
Until I saw it whole, its true form
And now I must brave the storm.



Illustration: Trisha Biswas, AIS Pushp Vihar, XII B

Read Play and Win

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Reading your favourite GT can fetch you a prize too. Complete all the boxes below. Click a picture and send it to editor@theglobaltimes.in or submit your responses by visiting The Global Times website (<http://theglobaltimes.in/readplaywin/>). Three lucky winners will win a prize every week!



Q.1 Which book is reviewed on page 3?

Q.2 Who is the illustrator for the article 'Guidance or gimmick?' on page 6?

Q.3 Which strait has been covered in the ABC of News on page 9?

Q.4 What is the name of the establishment reported on page 10?

Q.5 What is the headline of the autobiography on page 5?

Q.6 What is the name of the artist in the short story on page 8?

Q.7 How many steps are there to tackle minimalism?

Q.8 On which page can you find the article 'Paying to be owned'?

Q.9 Who is the EIC of Amity International School, Pushp Vihar?

Name:.....Class:.....School:.....

Results of Read Play & Win-103: **Prakriti Das**, AIS Gur 43, V A; **Shubhi Kaushik**, AIS MV, VIII D; **Ritvik Gupta**, AIS Gur 46, V I