

ART ABOUT THE APOCALYPSE

Artist: Keith Haring

Title : Apocalypse

Year: 1988

Medium: Screen Prints in
Color

Size: 38 x 38 in. (96.5 x
96.5 cm)



JUSTIFICATION

This piece represents how individuals deal with personal apocalypse, chosen because it depicts a physical and dynamic reaction using a unique art style with a lot of contrast and lines of expression.

Artist: John Goto

Title: High Summer VIII

Year: 2000

Medium: Digital Print

Size: Sheet Size: 16 1/2 × 23 3/8
in. (41.9 × 59.4 cm)

Image Size: 14 1/8 × 21 1/8 inch.
(35.9 × 53.7 cm)



This piece is more of a representational depiction of what the apocalypse can be regarded as and was chosen because of the vagueness in context yet purposeful emotion created throughout the piece.

Artist: Viktor Mikhailovich
Vasnetsov

Title: Four horsemen of the
Apocalypse

Year: 1887

Medium: Oil on canvas

Size: 53.5 x 28.3 in. (136 x 72 cm)



This piece serves as more of a religious interpretation of the end of the world, using a biblical reference and allusions, chosen because of the bold earthy colors and dramatic scene.

FORMAL ANALYSIS



CONTRAST

Not only is there contrast in the color palette used, using complimentary colors such as green and red, and yellow and blue in opposite sides of the piece, there is also contrast in line weight and boldness. The contrast in color and line thickness represent the chaotic nature of the piece, as it is meant to resemble apocalyptic times. This throws off the sense of unity and allows for the piece to be more dynamic and interesting.

LINE / SHAPE

Keith Haring uses diverse line thickness and weight to create a sense of discord throughout the print. At the top of the image, congested and varied lines are used in different directions, possibly serving as a speech bubble for the character in the middle of the composition. Using these scribbled lines in a way that resembles speech bubbles reflects the characters fear as he's screaming as a result of the impending apocalypse. This is also reinforced by the thick lines depicting the characters physical motion, again, demonstrating his fear. Near the center focal point of the image, thinner lines are overlapped so that the audience can still see what is underneath the surface, possibly alluding to a deeper meaning or hidden truth. Almost all of the colors used in the piece have no form or shape to them, randomly spread throughout the background with no borders or edges. Notably, none of these lines are straight, however they are all curved instead. This could potentially represent the lack of order and organization, reflecting the apocalypse and chaos through shape.

FOCAL POINT

Through the intentional use of bolded lines and colors around the center of the piece, Keith Haring actively encourages the viewer to focus on the character in the piece and not the congested background. He also does this by using a recognizable and famous image of the mona lisa in the middle, distorting it through the use of lines and making the familiar, unfamiliar. This allows for viewers to relate to the content even more through that familiarity and have more personal engagement with a recognizable piece.



BALANCE

Balance is extremely impactful in creating the apocalyptic tone of this piece. Boldness in lines and color are concentrated on the extremities of the canvas, contributing to the chaotic and saturated feeling of the piece. This allows for the audience to focus on the character in the middle, who is outlined in a similar boldness and color as the edges of the print. The background of the picture uses overlapping shapes and colors to make the piece more disorganized and convey an apocalyptic feeling to the viewer.



COLOR

This piece uses a limited color palette consisting mostly of primary colors, giving the print a more youthful and playful feeling in contrast to the relatively serious central theme. Red, Blue and Yellow are at the forefront of the piece, while one secondary color, green, is included on the left most side. This creates focal points around the piece and draws the viewers eye into the boldness of the red tones, juxtaposed by the toned down, pastel shades of the other colors. The use of shape in conjunction with color also creates this youthful feeling as their are splotches of paint with no border in the background.

MAIN COLORS:



FORMAL ANALYSIS



PERSPECTIVE

By including the horizon line relatively low on the page, the painter purposefully shifts the overall focus of the piece. Where there would usually be emphasis on the foreground or focal points, having a horizon line this low forces the viewer to focus on the background instead. Having the ocean floor blend into the sky near the vanishing point suggests a bit of a super natural tone, again relating to the development of the apocalypse throughout the image. Strategically using these horizon lines helps the painter guide the audience through viewing the piece, emphasizing and highlighting the most important aspects like the landscape and scenery, instead of the more conventional, characters or foreground.

BALANCE / NEGATIVE SPACE

The image is relatively empty, having a lot of negative space and vague focal points. This creates a feeling of isolation for the viewer, similar to how the characters appear to feel as well. This is reinforced through how they are spread around the image facing different directions, giving a feeling of separation. The lack of a central focal point also creates confusion and helps the viewer focus on the background and atmosphere. The background and landscape of this image are what give it the apocalyptic feeling and meaning, increasing their importance for the audience. By choosing to include this scenery, the painter allows for the viewer to interpret what the apocalypse could mean to them based on the image, representationally creating meaning instead of literally.

FOCAL POINT

The image creates a focal point and guides the viewer's eyes to the desolate objects in the foreground. Reinforcing the apocalyptic feeling by using dark colors to create a somber mood. Additionally, the sky also draws in the viewer's eye as the grey tones and cloud shapes descend on the characters in the front. The greenery in the front also guides the audience's visual perspective as it follows the bend of the water, drawing more attention to the objects in the foreground and allowing for the viewer to focus on the characters and animals instead of just the setting or background.

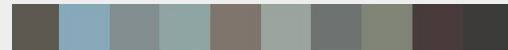
REALISM

This piece is painted in a style of realism, mirroring reality in a life like way. Using this style, creates a level of relatability for the viewer, as this is a scene that appears could be taken from real life because of the mundane objects and characters. However this also allows for the composition to remain purposefully vague, leaving the meaning up to the viewers interpretation as the painter hints at it using realistic destroyed objects like the car and animal in the foreground. This vagueness creates the representational meaning of the piece, allowing for interpretations on what the apocalypse means, possibly linking to isolation or disparity.

COLOR

This painting uses a limited color palette, opting for a neutral colors such as brown, beige and grey for a majority of the piece. In the colors that are used such as the blue and green, earthy tones are prominent, giving the piece a more unified and mature feeling. These same colors are muted, possibly due to the paint being mixed with complimentary colors or black during the painting process. By using more dull colors, the piece feels aged and developed, possibly reflecting the representational nature of the apocalypse through bleak neutrality in the background and characters. Having a simple color palette gives the viewer a sense of eeriness, helping them escape from the very realistic nature of the piece, creating unfamiliarity and intrigue.

MUTED AND LIMITED PALETTE



FORMAL ANALYSIS



COLOR

Extreme contrast is used in the colors and values near the top and bottom of the painting. Light, colder colors such as light blues and cold greys are used near the top of the canvas, whereas neutral warmer colors such as brown and maroon are used near the bottom. This contrast could be done to represent heaven and hell, again relating to the biblical allusions throughout the work. The application of a neutral yet varying color palette creates a feeling of disarray, making the apocalyptic nature of the piece more noticeable for the viewer



FOREGROUND

In this piece, there is a very obvious focal point of the four characters in the middle of the composition. By showing the four horsemen in the center of the page, standing above those at the bottom of the painting, establishes dominance, power and superiority. This is then reinforced by the minimal background details, encouraging viewers to focus on the characters in the foreground. This also makes the painting feel flatter, as the background is relatively simple with less depth than the previous painting (painting #2). Notably, this ties in with the biblical reference by giving the painting a simpler, more dated feeling, showing the importance of the image in a religious context.

TEXTURE

The grainy, almost bumpy texture used in this piece creates meaning as well, as the grainy finish, namely throughout the characters and horses, makes the painting feel more aged as well. This makes the religious reference more clear because the work appears to be from a far older and more religiously significant time period. The texture also reflects the medium that was used for this work, allowing for viewers to see every brush stroke made. This detail makes the work feel more organic and authentic, showing the real emotion behind the apocalypse and apocalyptic art.

BALANCE

The painting is congested towards the bottom of the piece, which again establishes the dominance and importance of the characters in the foreground. By having little to nothing surrounding them, it allows the viewer to focus on the characters and commentary instead of the background. That being said, possibly the most detail in the background is within the people on the floor under the horsemen, emphasizing their superiority through having no detail around them in contrast to extreme detail underneath their feet.

LINES

Thin and calculated brush strokes were used consistently and placed methodically (circled in yellow). By using thin and often curved lines, the painting has a more mythological and light feeling, alluding to the mythicity of religion and the bible. This is also extended to the details on the horses and specifically in the clothing of each of the four horsemen. By using thinner and softer lines, there is more detail in the piece, establishing the main importance and power of the characters at the forefront of the painting.

FUNCTION/ PURPOSE

The main purpose of this series of works serves to inform the audience surrounding Keith Haring's feelings regarding his struggle with his HIV/AIDS diagnosis. This can be seen through the overwhelming variety of congested shapes and vibrant colors throughout the piece demonstrating Keith Haring's stress coping with the disease. However the series also has a harmony throughout, with the purpose of reflecting Haring's perseverance to the audience, upholding his ideology, "You use whatever comes along" - Keith Haring.

KEITH HARING, FULL APOCALYPSE SERIES, 1998, 10 SCREEN PRINTS IN COLOR.



These prints were made to show the relationship between physical satisfaction and apocalyptic death. Each individual print containing imagery relating to themes like: life, death, religion, sexuality and promiscuity. The function of these works could possibly be to warn the audience of physical temptation after Keith Haring's diagnosis with aids.

The purpose of these works wasn't just to reflect Keith haring's personal viewpoints, but also to show the constant change occurring in New York as a result of the HIV/AIDS crisis. "Haring wanted to provide a visual representation to a time the was drastically change the cultural and social landscape of the city"

Another purpose of Keith Haring's apocalypse series was to be read in conjunction with poetry from William S. Burroughs, one poem per screen, creating the Apocalypse 10' series. Each poem and piece were made to be paired together, reflected in the text often times narrating what's contained within the image. The work was also created to go with the introduction of the series, telling a story giving the audience context and further perspective into Keith Haring's feelings at that avenue in his life. The purpose of pairing this work with poems was to help the reader understand more about the apocalypse Keith Haring went thru by depicting and describing dark, apocalyptic and chaotic scenes.

The main reason for the creation of this work was to raise awareness for the HIV/AIDS crisis, using purposeful activism to spread information through his art. These works were then made with the purpose to be read with poetry to get their message across.

POEM FROM HIS WORK



"Oh don't bother – burst from concrete – with all that junk, John – were all spirits, John – covers – the Director is on stage and are melted into – walls – air and you know what that means in show business – of glass – melt into thin air. Hurry up please it's time. Caught – burn – in New York beneath the animals of the village – with madness – the Piper pulled down the sky. This insub – billion crazed – stantial pageant faded leaves not a – roads buck – wrack behind. Closing time, hurry – sidewalks run ahead – up its time. -William S. Burroughs

The function and purpose of this art is to serve as a satirical representation of the modern British lifestyle. It was made to make the audience question the beauty in calamity through the minute details in the background such as the rising ocean levels, somber colors and broken parts in contrast to the beauty of the landscapes and nature. *According to an article titled: "John Goto, Digital Photographic Practice,"* it states that "there is a dark side to most of these works: the obvious raised sea levels, in other picture joyriders using the landscape as a dumping ground for burnt out cars... "There is no doubt that this work is very much a satire on contemporary british life but through his careful composition and the beauty of his work he manages to escape being just another producer of doom laden views of today's society."



"John Goto". *Digital Photographic Practice*, 2015,

FUNCTION/ PURPOSE

PERSONAL EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION

Although the work can serve as social commentary, the personal expressive function of this art piece was to reflect the artists own personal discord in an apocalyptic setting. This is reflected within John Goto's major inspiration being beautiful british landscapes and gardens, in which he subverts the viewers expectations by making them dark and eerie. By doing this, he reflects his own emotions and viewpoints on an apocalyptic world, showing his personal fears regarding the end of the world through the dismantled settings, details and characters throughout his works.

EXPERIENCE WITH DIGITAL ART

Another purpose of the creation of this work was for John Goto to experiment with photo realism and push the boundaries of digital art and photography. John Goto chooses to define himself as a photo-digital artist, who uses photography as his main medium to create technological pieces. These pieces often involve social commentary, critiquing the modern world and serving to make the audience reflect on their own ideologies. High Summer was made using this photo realistic medium, also for the purpose of developing his digital work. As a result, in 2007, the Telegraph listed John Goto as one of the top 100 living geniuses, due to his prôis designing digital art. John Goto fundamentally believes that "digital technology has created a synthesis between forms of painting and photography."

THE ENVIRONMENT

The original reason the work was developed was for the Environmental Agency, funded by the British government and European Union as a part of a commission. The purpose of its' creation was to explore new ways of managing floods within the environment. According to John Goto himself, "The project's task was to develop new ways of managing flood risk. Rather than building ever higher walls and dams, which as we saw in New Orleans, can't always cope with the new conditions brought about by climate change, they looked into other solutions This aspect involved engineers, town planners, landscape architects and ecologists.

ROMANTIC PERIOD

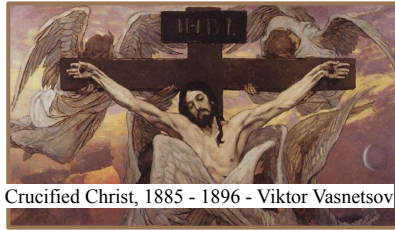
Another purpose of the work was to reflect the dominant Russian viewpoints at the time as the piece was created during the Romantic period of British artists, showing the development through religion and shifting ideologies of the people. The exhibition as a whole was made to consider how British artists have responded to the prospect of an apocalyptic world in the Romantic period, focusing on how they have contributed to a changing understanding of the Antediluvian, the fall of humans during the bible/apocalypse, and how that contributed to shift from a religious to secular mode of thinking.

FUNCTION/ PURPOSE

The purpose of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse was created to reflect Christian theologian through relating to the bible and church. The four horsemen were universal symbols in the bible, and mark a spread of Christian perspectives in the second century. According to an article titled *Victor Vasnetsov. Four Horsemen of Apocalypse*: it states that “Irenaeus, an influential Christian theologian of the second century, was among the first to interpret this horseman as Christ himself, his white horse representing the successful spread of the gospel.”

Another function of this work was to reinforce Viktor Vasnetsov's connection with church, religion and his father. At the time, Russia was a semi-religious nation with the Marxist Social Democratic Party coming to power shortly after this painting was finished. Because Russia had polarizing views on religion, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse was made to have a large biblical significance. This is reinforced by the work Viktor Vasnetsov's father did as a pastor, working closely with the church, further inspiring the content of Viktors work. This is shown through the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and numerous of his other paintings, being concepts taken straight from the New Testament of the Christian Bible made with the purpose of connecting art to religion.

Uploads0.Wikiart.Org, 2021, <https://uploads0.wikiart.org/images/viktor-vasnetsov/crucified-christ-1896.jpg>. Accessed 5 May 2021.



Crucified Christ, 1885 - 1896 - Viktor Vasnetsov

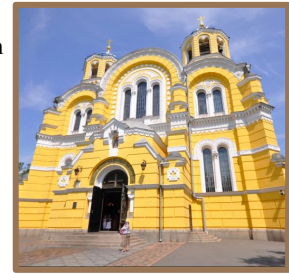
EXAMPLE OF ANOTHER OF HIS
PIECES WITH SIMILAR PURPOSE

MADE TO SHOW RUSSIAN ROMANTICISM

Viktor Vasnetsov made The four horsemen of the apocalypse to represent the overall state of Russia at the time of its creation. The purpose was to reflect the tragedies civilians had to experience as a result of the mass famine and disadvantage occurring in the country. The piece was created during the romantic movement as a way of contrasting some of the prominent ideals of the time period. According to an article titled *Romanticism*, “Among the characteristic attitudes of Romanticism were the following: a deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature; a general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the senses over intellect; a turning in upon the self and a heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities; a preoccupation with the genius, the hero, and the exceptional figure in general and a focus on his or her passions and inner struggles.”

Another purpose of this art piece was to reflect Viktor Vasnetsov’s passion and love for Russian folklore. The painting was made in inspiration, part by Russian urban legends and folklore. According to an article by *Britannica* titled *Viktor Mikhaylovich Vasnetsov* “Vasnetsov’s main theme was the world of folk poetry: tales, epics, and legends. He discovered the means to give visual expression to legendary and epic verbal phrases and imagery. Dark forest wilds, fiery sunrises and sunsets, stormy clouds—all these elements of his works helped make the legendary episodes depicted in his paintings seem to be actual events in Russian history” The depiction of these folk stories and spreading of epic urban legends such as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse was one of the major purposes behind the creation of this piece.

The actual purpose behind the creation of The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse by Viktor Vasnetsov was actually an original sketch, then painting, for a commission to be made for a fresco displayed in the Cathedral of St Vladimir in Kiev (depicted to the right). It was then displayed in the State museum of history of religion in St. Petersburg, Russia.



- Jorge Láscar, St Petersburg, Russia

CULTURAL CONTEXT

Keith Haring was born in 1958 in Reading, Pennsylvania. He was always politically conscious, with an inclination towards social activism. This activism was usually represented throughout his art and the apocalypse series was no exception. Namely, Keith Haring had done work to bring attention to the HIV/AIDS crisis and was sadly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 1988. After his diagnosis, Keith Haring went on to collaborate with William S. Burroughs on the Apocalypse series, which according to an article titled *Apocalypse By Keith Haring*, “offers an insight into Haring’s personal struggle with the disease.” Unfortunately, Keith Haring passed away two years after the creation of this series due to complications with the disease.

THE AIDS CRISIS

Keith Haring's apocalypse project began at a time in American History where the HIV/AIDS epidemic was extremely prevalent, and was made as a response to his own diagnosis. The epidemic began in 1981 in New York where 5 previously healthy men were reported to have a specific type of phenomena. After just one year, that number had risen to 335, killing 136 of the patients. In September of 1982, the CDC officially used the term HIV/AIDS to describe the sexually transmitted virus and in less than a year, a number of reports came from European countries as well. The virus kept spreading, eventually affecting Keith Haring as well. The apocalypse series serves as a visual representation of NYC during the HIV/AIDS pandemic, showing how the epidemic shaped social interactions and the landscapes of the city. To feel more relevant, each image is accompanied with a piece of poetry that's written in a stream-of-consciousness style to reflect the constantly changing world at the time.

KEITH HARING FOUNDATION

Shortly after his diagnosis and the creation of the apocalypse series, Keith Haring established the Keith Haring foundation, aimed to provide funding and imagery for AIDS organizations and children programs as well. He used the Apocalypse series as well as his other imagery to discuss his own illness and bring light to the issues surrounding AIDS as well as his own personal struggles with the disease.

ACTIVISM

As an openly gay man, often times, activism and social justice work were a driving force in Keith Haring's life and throughout his artwork. That is why, after his passing, the entirety of the 10 apocalypse silk screen prints were donated to the Gay and Lesbian center in California. In an article titled: *Keith Haring's 10-Piece Apocalypse Series Donated to Gay & Lesbian Center*, it details different individuals' reactions to receiving the works. “Haring’s work is so iconic; we’re honored to receive and exhibit this series,” says Jon Imparato, Director of the Center’s Cultural Arts program, “I hope and believe Keith Haring would be pleased that his passionate vision has found a home at the Center,” Cassity said.”



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RELIGION

Keith Haring's apocalypse also has religious implications as well. As an adolescent, Keith Haring was exposed to evangelicalism, choosing to involve religious references in his work. He did this by playing on views of the 1970's Jesus Movement around Revelation, using it in his own art through apocalyptic content, fire destroying the earth and the devil appearing as sperm, a motif to link the HIV/AIDS crisis to the religious implications in his art. The work serves as a warning and dangers of promiscuity, parallel to some religious beliefs, also serving to destigmatize the public's view on the HIV/AIDS virus and bring awareness to the problem.

IGNORANCE = FEAR



Ignorance = fear, Keith Haring, 1989

-Quote from Exhibition
co-curator Rock Hushka

“Art reflects and reacts to social, cultural, and political climates, and in the past 30 years, HIV and AIDS has been a constant presence,”

- Rock Hushka.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

High Summer is a portfolio consisting of 15 digital prints made by the photographer and artist John Goto from 2000-2001. Goto works to incorporate contemporary characters into more historically significant landscapes and backgrounds. He draws inspiration from historic landscape gardens and famous religious works, using them in his own art to contrast contemporary looking characters due to the modern digital age his art is being created in. John Goto started using digital technology to create art in 1992, in an interview saying: "The computer gave me much better control and opened new possibilities for a montagist – it was like a dream come true!" (Interview, John Goto)

INSPIRATION OF WILLIAM HOGARTH

One of John Goto's inspirations was works by William Hogarth. Specifically, a series of four paintings titled *An Election Entertainment* painted in 1754, served as some of the largest inspiration for the High Summer series. John Goto says that the biggest thing he learned from this body of work was the use of ironic contrast, a prevalent technique in all of the High Summer series. The content heavy composition features people pertaining to conflicting political parties and creates ironic contrast through the paintings themes. John Goto says "Hogarth creates an ironic contrast between that painting's sense of obligation and sacrifice and the corruption and fatuousness of the present scene. In 'High Summer' I too attempt an ironic contrast, between the idealised Arcadian setting and antics of the contemporary tourists wandering through it." John Goto continues that High Summer resembles other older historic works as well such as Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, due to the muted color palette.

INFLUENCE OF OTHER ART

Another major influence on John Goto's High Summer are the landscape paintings made by Claude and Poussin. John Goto appreciated the formal geometric garden design with straight vistas and clipped trees. Something John Goto appreciated from their works is how the environment and landscape took the focal point of the piece saying "The genre now placed nature centre stage." John Goto had constantly been fascinated by nature as a source of pleasure yet personal contemplation.

TECHNOLOGY IN HIGH SUMMER

A technique that has shaped the development of John Goto's art and applied in High Summer specifically, has been the use of technology. John Goto uses several technological resources like photography and digital painting to create his works. In an article titled *An interview with John Goto*, he talks about how he uses photography in art saying: "We are working with Augmented Reality, which is achieved by combining three functions of a smartphone GPS reading, internet connection and camera to create an image layer in front of the everyday scene observed through the camera. John Goto consistently uses new ways to create art using technology, drawing inspiration from our digital world.

IDEA FOR HIGH SUMMER

John Goto first got the idea for High Summer 20 years before its creation, when he first visited Rousham Park, a park near his hometown of Oxford. The winding paths, landscaped garden and classical statues all inspired the themes present in High Summer. This also tied in with the English landscape garden architecture featured at the park, by designers Charles Bridgeman and William Kent, emulated through the structures we see in John Goto's works as well.

Claude Lorrain, 1639



Nicolas Poussin, 1650

DIGITAL ART

John Goto praises the use digital augmentation because of its variety and effectivity in creating art. He says "One advantage of working digitally is that images that look like big productions, can actually be made cheaply on a tabletop. The internet offers great opportunities for artists, young and old, to find new audiences and markets." John Goto advocates for the use of digital art in the 21st century as technology is advancing and becoming more accessible to the public.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse, painted by Viktor Vasnetsov in 1887 was painted during the time of Russian Revivalism and the Romanist movement. The semi religious russian nation saw extreme wealth disparity, with classes consisting of peasants struggling to get by. This made the four horsemen of the apocalypse more relevant as it reflected the famine and inequality Russian people were experiencing at the time and showed how they would view the Apocalypse if it happened. This significance is also personal for Viktor Vasnetsov because his father was a peasant and priest for the church in rural Russia, giving Viktor Vasnetsov exposure to the bible and religious teachings that were implemented throughout the creation of his art.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Possibly the largest and most obvious inspiration for this art piece is the bible. The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were notable characters in the last book of the New Testament of the bible, specifically in the book of revelations, chapter 6. The chapter introduces how the Horsemen came to be and their characteristic, saying : “They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.” (Revelations 6:1-8) These descriptions and religious implications greatly inspired Viktor Vasnetsov as he was so ingrained in the church because of his father, serving as the main ideas behind several of his pieces.

FOUR HORSEMEN:

In his painting, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, each horsemen represents a different trait. Traits that are due to his childhood, extremely relevant to Viktor Vasnetsov and his art. In this painting specifically, from right to left, the horsemen symbolize: Death, Famine, War and Conquest, which, growing up and living in Russia at the time, these traits are all relevant to his works. The first Horseman rides a white horse, carrying a bow. He symbolizes anarchy and conquest, often referred to as pestilence. The second horseman rides a red horse and wields a sword. He is often associated with war and slaughter and in the bible is known to “make men kill each other.” The third horsemen is on a black horse and is carrying a scale. He symbolizes scarcity of resources, famine and struggle. This is extended not only to food but also represents the unfair allocation of resources and the exploitation of the poor, something that Viktor Vasnetsov has had to deal with throughout his life. Lastly, the fourth horseman rides a pale green horse and is ridden by death itself, another relevant theme in his works.



The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 2016, David Hulme

DEVELOPMENT IN ART

One of the many influences on Viktor Vasnetsov's content and art style was Russian Folklore. Viktor Vansentov strove to paint representation, often times depicting peasant characters in folklore inspired works. During his youth, Viktor Vasnetsov learned to paint religious frescoes, and worked as an assistant to an exiled Polish artist. These religious references and representation can be seen throughout Viktor Vasnetsov's work, coinciding with the implementation of social realism and eventually Naturalism, in France and other European countries. Both art styles applied in the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse painting and throughout numerous of Viktor Vasentocs other works.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN ART

Viktor Vasnetsov made several notable and incredible contributions to art and Russian society and culture alike. He designed the Tretyakov Art Gallery, using his experience in construction to contribute to culture in Moscow with this building. Viktor Vasnetsov has also painted several frescos in the St. Vladimir's Cathedral of Kiev, reinforcing his affinity for religious works and the implementation of his fathers religious teachings in his artwork and architecture. Viktor Vasnetsov also contributed and drew inspiration from several artistic movements as well, having a worldly perspective drawing innovation from according to a biography written about him: “France, Ukraine, and Russia, along with many other European art enclaves as well.”

COMPARE & CONTRAST

SIMILARITIES

One of the similarities between these two pieces are the overall colors used. In High Summer, blues, greens and beiges are very important throughout the piece. This is similar to Apocalypse because of the blue, beige and green accents being what captures the viewer's eye and contributes to the chaotic feeling of the piece, ornamented throughout the foreground just as they make up the foreground of High Summer.



COMPARISON 1

One notable difference between these two pieces is the inclusion of human subjects in the foreground. High Summer depicts two characters running around the landscape whereas the Apocalypse series has no human subjects. This gives High Summer a feeling of reliability as the audience can connect with the humanity of the characters. Another notable difference between the two works is the style they were created in. High summer was made digitally and reflects realism whereas the Apocalypse series is a more artistic and cartoonish representation of the apocalypse. High summer makes use of a tiny build up of brush strokes creating extreme detail in comparison to the relatively simplistic nature of Keith Haring's "Apocalypse" series.

A similarity between the pieces is through the abstract representation of the apocalypse. Both pieces both depict the apocalypse in abstract ways, leaving it up to the viewers interpretation what the scene means. Some may interpret High Summer to reflect the need for human connection in apocalyptic times whereas the Apocalypse series shows the chaos that the apocalypse creates.

Another similarity within these two paintings is the inclusion of a dark grey sky. Using dark greys and blacks surrounding the top of the piece also conveys an apocalyptic feeling as darkness and ominous clouds are often associated with tragedy and loss, giving the audience that same perception about the content of the paintings and reflection of apocalypse.

COMPARISON 2

A difference between High Summer and the Apocalypse series is the human subjects in the foreground. Throughout the Apocalypse series there are no recognizably human characters, instead using inanimate objects as the focal points. This is distinct to high summer, as humanity is often a major focus throughout this series of prints. Another distinction between the two works is the cartoonish style of the Apocalypse series often using bolded curved lines to depict movement instead of drawing active motion in a realistic style.

DIFFERENCE IN BALANCE/ COLOR SHADE

An aspect that sets both these pieces apart is the use of balance and color. The painting High Summer is a very empty piece with the landscape at the forefront of the image. This is contrasted with the disorganized and congested feeling of the Apocalypse series. Additionally, High Summer makes use of warmer earth tones whereas Apocalypse uses vibrant, bright colors, reflecting the cartoonish vs realistic styles of both respective pieces.



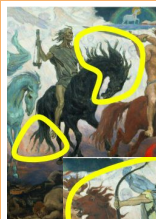
COMPARE & CONTRAST

SIMILARITIES

One of the biggest similarities between these two works is the inclusion of recognizable imagery in the foreground such as the Mona Lisa and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, allowing for the audience to better relate to the content of the painting and for the meaning to feel more personal.

Another similarity between these two paintings is the lack of negative space in each. Both pieces are extremely dense images, with few background details, allowing for all of the focus to be on the subjects in the foreground. This creates a feeling of apocalyptic chaos present due to the disorganization and discord in both works. This is then reinforced by the inclusion of a white background in both images, allowing for the characters to be the main focus of the scene, showing both of their reactions and roles in the apocalyptic scene being presented.

Another similarity between the two pieces is the use of thinner curved lines. These sweeping lines are often used to create motion and makes the image feel more interesting and lively. Both images make use of these large and thin curved lines in the foreground to make the painting more interesting and dynamic.



COMPARISON 2

In contrast to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Keith Haring's 'Apocalypse' uses vibrant and saturated colors instead, using warmer colors like reds and oranges near the center of the piece. Additionally, there is a dark sky with patterned clouds at the top of Apocalypse, that was painted with black bolded lines and darker colors. This sky envelops the top of the piece, creating the feeling of chaos and apocalypse as darkness descends on a panicked character. This is distinct to the Four Horsemen, as the sky in that piece contributes to the feeling of unity.



COMPARISON 1

One of the major differences between the two pieces is the hues of the colors used. In the horsemen of the apocalypse, muted earthy tones are used with predominantly oranges and browns. Similarly, there are a lot of dark purple tones near the bottom of the painting as well. This is in contrast to Apocalypse which uses brighter primary colors instead. Another notable difference between the works is the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypses' inclusion of the white sky at the top of the painting. There is a white sky that bleeds into the background with lighter colored clouds, giving the painting a feeling of cohesiveness and unity, something not present in Apocalypse.





COMPARISON 1

One of the biggest differences between the two works is the respective style they were both painted in and the process used. High Summer was painted using digital art and technology as large part of the artistic process. This was done to paint High Summer in a photo realistic way, using a seemingly life like style.

Another difference between the works is through the representation they symbolize. High summer has an abstract meaning that is up to the viewers interpretation. There is an empty foreground with limited space used, leaving the meaning of the work up to the viewers interpretation. The painting is mostly landscape based on not driven by a particular definitive focal point.

COMPARE & CONTRAST

SIMILARITIES

Throughout both pieces, a muted color palette is used. Earthy orange tones are prominent in the buildings of High Summer as similar shades are also present in the focal point of the Horsemen of the apocalypse, the first horse. This is also reinforced by the brown trees in High Summer, having a very similar shade at the center of the piece as well. A very limited color palette was used focusing complimentary colors like blues and oranges/browns.



SIMILAR COLOR PALLETTE BETWEEN HIGH SUMMER AND FOUR HORSEMEN

Another similarity between the two paintings is the reason they were both created. The four Horsemen of the apocalypse and High Summer with both made for the purpose of social commentary on the prospect of an apocalypse. Although both works were original commissions, they were used for differing purposes. High Summer was made for the environmental agency to reflect urban development. In contrast, the four horsemen of the apocalypse was made for religious reasons, to be a mural in the church.



Something present in both works is the inclusion of animals in the foreground. Both these animals function as symbols in their respective pieces. The horses symbolize Death, Famine, War and Conquest, whereas the lone dog in High Summer symbolizes isolation.

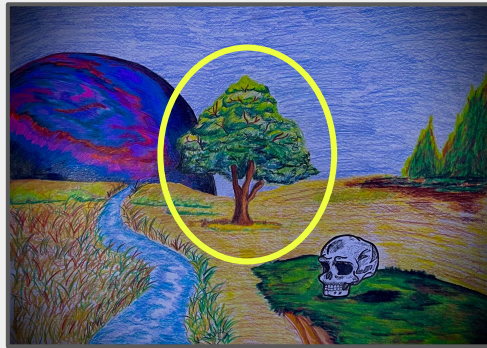


COMPARISON 2

The Four Horsemen of the apocalypse was painted using more definitive, thinner line strokes making it look less realistic and more like a painting. Additionally, compared to High Summer, the foreground is filled conveying a feeling of chaos to the audience. There is much more content in the foreground in comparison to High Summer, giving the work a more substantive feeling.

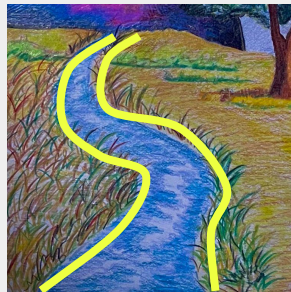
The horsemen of the apocalypse has a clear definitive message behind it with symbolism rooted in religious context. Each horse symbolizes a different vice, from right to left symbolizing: Famine, War, death and Conquest. Compared to High Summer, the symbolism of this piece is more concrete because of the religious allusion and not left to the interpretation of the audience,

CONNECTIONS THROUGHOUT ARTWORK



One of the major ways in which both of these pieces are connected is thematically through the conveying the feeling of solidarity by not having definitive focal points. This is also then emphasized by the tree in the middle of both pieces, highlighting the empty space surrounding the landscape making the viewer feel alone and isolated. This is also done through the organization of the piece, having a very dispersed and spread out composition instilling that feeling of alienation in both works.

Another connection between both these pieces is the overall scene depicting a landscape with a lot of greenery and organic shapes like bushes, the sky and the water in the foreground. The curve of the river was experimented with using the original image, which I eventually used the perspective of the river in the final piece to have it flowing directly towards the audience. This made the drawing feel more personal and helped the viewer connect with the work, making the 'apocalypse' feel more real for the audience.



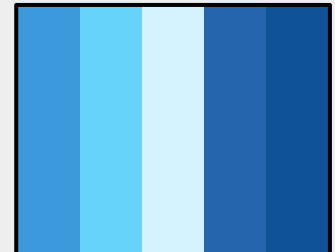
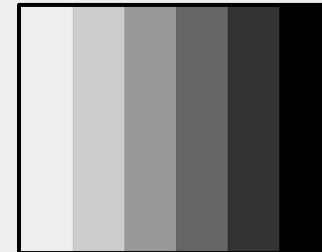
COLOR SCHEME

A tangent between the two works was the use of a limited color palette using a multitude of cold and earthy tones like different shades of blue and green. Although both pieces used a lot of these cold tones, High summer's scales are closer to grey whereas Isolation uses bluer undertones and more pigmentation. This gives the pieces distinct feelings as the great scale can be associated with hopelessness and despair vs the association of the color blue with tragedy, loss and sadness. Playing off of these associations is what creates the apocalyptic nature of this piece.

HIGH SUMMER



ISOLATION



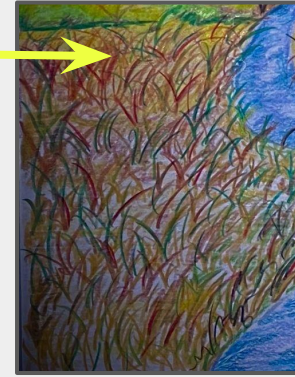
CONNECTIONS THROUGHOUT ARTWORK

One of the biggest connections between the art is through the sky and clouds at the top. Having blank backgrounds near the top of each piece make the composition more empty and eerie, contributing to the apocalyptic tone of the piece. In *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, this is seen as clouds crowd the top of the painting, contrasting the apocalyptic nature of the characters with a relatively peaceful background. This was then taken and applied to my piece, opting for an empty sky and blue background to allow for the viewer to focus on the message and focus of the piece on the skull (similar to the horses)



The colors brown, red and black were also used specifically towards the bottom of both pieces underneath the characters to contrast the sky and establish the apocalyptic feeling through aggressive colors we associate with death, carnage and destruction.

LINE DIRECTION/ THICKNESS

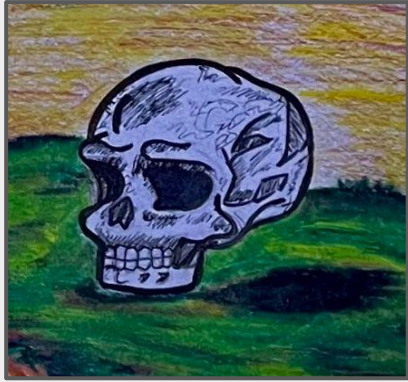


In both *Isolation* and *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, thin black lines are used to represent dynamic movement. Whether it be in the flowing manes of the horses in the wind, or straw getting blown around by the river, these thin lines give both pieces movement and bring their subject to life. In *Vastentovs* work, they are primarily used around the horses' manes and clothing of the men riding them. This was applied to the straw and grass on the floor as it is a similar texture and also meant to be blowing in the wind. Drawing each individual piece using these thin curved lines made the grass look more realistic and detailed.

Another similarity between the pieces is the blending of the warm tones. Both images make use of blending to make the piece more interesting and cohesive so that everything is rendered effectively.



CONNECTIONS THROUGHOUT ARTWORK



The largest way in which these pieces are connected is through the use of a cartoonish style to represent apocalypse in both pieces. In Keith Haring's work this is through the character design of the subject, screaming with his arms up. In Isolation, this is done through the skull in the foreground, which almost looks like a collage, representing the implications of an apocalypse and how it affects those that are related.

In both pieces, a combination of very thick and bold black lines similar to the ones used in cartoons and comics, vs thinner and more precise lines. This combination gave the piece a youthful feeling, interestingly contrasting with the apocalyptic tone. This was used in my own art, especially when drawing the skull, emphasizing the different thickness of line.



Another similarity in between the two pieces is through the use of pigmented and vibrant colors like pink, red and light green. Vibrant colors were used to contrast the seriousness of the topic being portrayed, giving the viewer a more interesting viewing experience. These colors were also used to make the piece more dramatic and interesting, using the vibrancy to show the intensity of the apocalypse.

Another connection between the two works is through the feeling of solidarity and aloneness. Especially because Keith Haring decided to only paint one character, actively screaming as if pleading for help, it serves to emphasize that character's individuality and aloneness. This was then carried over to my work by strategically choosing not to include any human characters which could draw the focus away from the theme. Instead, I chose to more literally represent the apocalypse similar to Haring's character.

