Effects of World War II on the Arts

1914 gave birth to World War I; it lasted about 4 years and caused 37466904 Casualties (1) among the countries participants. To that date, it had been the bloodiest war; this event caused and influenced the path to be followed by artist in multiples fields like music, paint poetry and some other. This conflict paved the way for what is known as Dada. This movement lasted about 10 years. This movement influenced artist as: Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Marcel Duchamp, Beatrice Wood and many other in different countries in Europe and America.

Politic and Governments had a big influence on the trend to follow by artist in their respective fields, In 1914 when Russia joined the global war, Tsar Nicholas II send the Russian army into the conflict unprepared to do war. This mischief caused more than one million casualties in this army and another million had deserted from the Russian army. This miscalculation gave way to the 1917 Russian revolution where the Tsar was overthrown from power. This revolution influenced music composer as Igor Stravinsky or painter as Kasimir Malevich, film maker as Sergei Einstein.

For the next two decades the political field remained stable and provides a safe path to develop new ways to express art. In The United States, 1920’s was a decade where cities began to built an allowed an influx of people from different regions of the country, those people brought whit them a foreign influence that pave d the way to the Harlem Renascence in New York as example. European countries also where experimenting with new way to express their point of view think one of the leading in this expressionism was Sigmund Freud(3), he was born in Austria in 1856. Since 1897 to 1920 Freud was more an intellectual than a participant after the war he became more inclined experiment with the application of his theories 1920’s and earliest 1930’s where a good platform to lunch new way to promote art, but once again political conflict began to inflict changes around the world but specifically to countries in Europe.

September 01, 1939, Germany invaded Poland; this political and military event gave birth to a historic moment that will remain for decades to come, it was World War II. History repeated again. Once again Germany was at war. World War I had been a bloody one, the next four years will surpass anything that had happened before, Europe, America, Asia, Australia almost all countries became involved again. New technology had been developed and it was untested. This new war gave the excuse to use all form of armament, the price paid by those countries was more than 48 million (4) casualties between civilians and military personnel.

After the war, again art was a way to express either the approval or repudiate for how the society was behaving. Europe was divided in East and west, there was a clear difference between art from the west compared with art from the east. Those countries under soviet command had a harsh way to release art in any form. Music composer had to get the approval from their political party leaders to release new musical composition. The Bann from the political leader was a way to control what was classified as a help for the state or if not it could be censured because it was in opposition to the state. In the Soviet Union, the government wanted music and art, but it had to be easy to be comprehended and on top of that, it had to portrait how good the government and the communist were. If it failed to comply with those two requirements or it was too difficult to perform, it became to be called “Formalism” and his composer was not allowed to perform it or to be performed by somebody else.

Painting is a gift from nature and through history many great painter had left their touch or expression in the canvases. One of those artist could be included Sir Winston Churchill, He was an officer, since joining the Calvary in the British army he had several post from a simple officer to become “ prime minister” through Second world war. He had a gifted talent as a painter. He became influenced as a painter when he was in the middle of a military disaster at the battle of Gallipoli. He produced some painting where he was influenced by Margaret Nairn, she had been a professional painter before. Usually war politic or other mayor event will influence the way art behave, and Winston Churchill was proof of that.

Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich, he was born in Saint Petersburg on September 25, 1906. People had said that he was one of the musical symbols from the Soviet Union. He wrote his first symphony in 1925 to be used on his graduation ceremony. The conservatory staff knew he was a very promising candidate for the future. He had been influenced by Ludwig Van Beethoven and, [Piotr Ilyitch Tchaikovsky](http://www.classical.net/music/comp.lst/tchaikovsky.php) . After the war, government had in place many restrictions on arts, he became disillusioned, he was always afraid to offend the party and get an official condemnation. He began to wrote music with the real theme been buried under other themes that do not offended the government. Lately he had been recognized as a one of the best 20th century symphony composer. Another gifted talent he possessed was the ability to write music for String Quartets.

While the east was suffering from censorship on art, the west was having an explosion in every field of the arts. Music, painting and, poetry had experienced evolution whitout precedents.

Jazz from the 20’s had given way to a different kind of music and musicians. Cities like New York, Chicago had become the musician hubs. IN 1950’s Rock and Roll was the new trend in music, Chuck Berry and Little Richard had become popular in the south. This new music style combines Electronic Instrument with traditional Blues to create a rhythm. This new rhythm also was exploited by other white performer like Elvis Presley.

After World War II, America entered a period of consumer good been produced locally. This gave way to increase the power to acquired products available to the public. The avalanche created, produced a supply and demand making affordable many products because those began to be a mass production. TV was one of the electronic items that became available for public distribution, with this item reaching at least one per household, music and musical group as solo singer were given a chance to be discovered and to be seen on TV.

New artist had a chance to perform live on many TV stations on show produced live. In 1956 Elvis Presley (6) was presented on 5 different occasions, Two of those was on a show called “ The Steve Allen Show” two more appearances on “The Ed Sullivan Show” and two more on “The Milton Berle Show” those appearances in live TV launched Elvis to fame and later to become a movie star. He participated on 31 feature film. TV access to all American was experienced in the 50’s, thus changing how American live or expend their free time.

Politics have been a great influence in arts. Wars, revolutions have lead the way in how one generation will be in total contrast with another about arts. Artist in the other hand react in an unpredictable way after politicians made decision. After each war, arts are going to be influenced to behave in one way or another either to approve or to disapprove government official or mandates. The last century saw many changes on how art was been produced at the same time, many talented artist were lost either because censorship or as a response to the government reform. In our days we have the opportunity to enjoy what was produced in the last centuries, music, movies, paintings, poetry all of that has been left to gain a knowledge on how artist from decades ago had a way to express their feelings.

References:

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