

Yinka Shonibare Highlights the Importance of Patterns in Fine Art

Perhaps one of the most thought-provoking exhibitions I have been able to explore, Yinka Shonibare's *Criminal Ornamentations* in the Longside Gallery at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, offers an interesting curation of pieces that allows patterns and decoration in the Fine Art world.

Yinka Shonibare's own catalogue deals heavily with pattern in modern and contemporary art, creating pieces that are absolutely covered in various and clashing patterns on various forms and figures.

The title, *Criminal Ornamentations*, comes from Adolf Loos' 1908 'Ornament and Crime' in which he claims decoration and craft are the lowest level of cultural development. Shonibare has curated a range of works that are a response to this ideology.

Using his knowledge of patterns and decoration, Shonibare was able to curate an exhibition that is made up entirely of works that demonstrate these rhythmic patterns, some on canvas, others on sculptures. Getting to be immersed in such a unique exhibition such as this allows the viewer to get lost in the works, the patterns drawing them in and enticing them continue to scan over the form.

There is not one section where the viewer is not viewing some type of pattern, and it's exciting getting to see how each artist utilizes pattern in their works.

There are some familiar patterns that some viewers can easily relate to, immediately making the exhibition more personal because this realization of understanding what you are seeing is cathartic and encourages you to continue looking throughout the gallery space.

This feeling of universalness is evident in one of Yinka Shonibare's works being exhibited. *Food Faerie*, features a human figure covered in Dutch wax print. This print is also known simply as African textile. Dutch wax print actually has origins in Indonesia, but later became popular throughout Africa. This work gives off the feeling of globalization, which is essential to patterns. So many are distinct and distinguishable, and having works that incorporate these familiarities make the exhibition more relatable.

This sense of the personal now in the Fine Art world extends to the pièce de résistance that is *Tattoo*, by Ed Lipski. In Loos' 'Ornament and Crime', he states that someone that is tattooed is a degenerate or a criminal. This work features a limbless torso and it lays in the middle of the floor. The torso has been etched in countless images, enticing the viewer to continue searching through the maze of pattern. *Tattoo* once again allows the viewer to relate. They can easily identify what they are seeing, and in art that is incredibly important to keep the viewer engaged.

The countless images that begin to swirl around your mind the minute you step into the gallery is a testament to Yinka Shonibare's skill at curating an exhibition that engages you properly while also tackling a topic that deserves more discussion. This exhibition has enraptured my mind and has been at the back of my mind after I finished exploring it. I highly recommend everyone to explore what this exhibition has to offer.

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