

Biography in Art: A Source for Exploring Authorship, Influence and Intention.



Statement of Research:

The twentieth century saw the position of the artist as the source of meaning for their work being greatly questioned. A number of essays were produced which sought to remove the artist as the authority over their work. The space created by the removal of the artist as the author of meaning encouraged the rise of the critic. However, biography and biographical events are still referenced repeatedly in relation to the work and do provide an excellent source for understanding a meaning, or lack of meaning and intent beyond that proposed by critics, theorists, and the commercial art market.

Methodology:

The nature of this thesis requires the exploration of a number of theoretical approaches to the biographies of the selected artists, Phenomenological, Hermeneutical, Sociological, and Marxist. It has also been necessary to consider visual art using aspects of literary theory as the three artists worked in a period which saw the production of the essays, *The Intentional Fallacy*, 1946, and *The Affective Fallacy*, 1949, by William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, *The Death of the Author*, 1967, by Roland Barthes and *What is an Author?*, 1969, By Michel Foucault.

Findings to Date:

There is a vast disparity between what the critic, theorist and art world claims of the art produced and what the artist 'intended'. In many cases there are underlying egotistical, sociological, financial or personal causes for the artist selecting a particular subject or means of production which are explored in the biography. The celebration of the selected artists in particular can often be related to how much it will benefit the critic, the commercial art world and the furthering of America's efforts to be the centre of the cultural world following World War Two.

