

Contrasts of the Morbid Art: Heroes and Details in Thomas Eakin's Two Masterpieces

Introduction. Thomas Eakins (1844—1916) was one of painters, who considered his interest in human body, anatomy, dissection and motion in direct relationship to his artistic output. He additionally studied anatomy, observed surgeries and used photography in his art practice to better understand the human body and enhance the realism of his paintings. “The Gross Clinic” (1875) and “The Agnew Clinic” (1889) remain the two most important American paintings relating to medicine. Both paintings symbolize a perfect union of art and medicine but the differences can be effectively seen by comparing these Thomas Eakins' works. This study was a focused literature review and specifically it aimed to gather evidence and insights on the similarities and differences of the heroes and details in two Thomas Eakins' paintings.

Material and methods: The review concentrated on researches and literature published in English about two Thomas Eakins' paintings: “The Gross Clinic” and “The Agnew Clinic”. Literature searches were run using a number of relevant search historical, art and medical terms. Following a scan of results, more than 50 articles of literature were selected for review.

Results. “The Gross Clinic” represents the surgeon Samuel David Gross (1805—1884), demonstrating an operation for osteomyelitis of the femur in the surgical amphitheater in 1875. He was one of the most prominent surgeons of Thomas Jefferson Medical College in the United States. In a pyramidal geometry are included seven elements: Dr. Gross, the patient, assistants, the patient's mother, clerk, students (20 figures) and two people in the amphitheater entrance. In 1889 Thomas Eakins portrayed Dr. David Hayes Agnew (1818—1892), performing a mastectomy for students in the University of Pennsylvania's Medical Department. This painting depicts Dr. Agnew, the patient, several other doctors, the operating room nurse, the medical students (18 members) and the painter himself.

In both paintings surgeons are portrayed at moments of deep thoughtfulness. They are placed against a darker background with lighted high-domed forehead, furrowed brows and eyes that are averted from contact with anyone around them. Surgeons are turned away from their assistants but they significantly hold scalpels poised for imminent action. In “The Gross Clinic” the patient is completely covered up but there is obvious his thigh. Dr. Gross and his co-workers appear in suits. In “The Agnew Clinic” the face and bare breast of the patient (woman) are visible. Dr. Agnew and his associates appear in lab coats. Dr. Gross's patient is

anesthetized with an ether-soaked cloth on his face. Dr. Agnew's patient benefits from an ether cone. Dr. Agnew and his assistants are visible without rubber surgical gloves. Dr. Gross's bright red blood colors the surgeon's fingers and scalpel. Dr. Agnew insisted that his hands and gown be free of blood. In both paintings are included several visible and invisible arms, hands and variously interested and disinterested observers. All of the medical heroes in the works express themselves by means of forms and interaction with others.

Conclusions. The differences between "The Gross Clinic" and "The Agnew Clinic" are in the expression of the heroes and their characters, the light and colors, number of the women, advanced ideas in sterilization and treatment of the patients. Both masterpieces provide a clear example of Eakins' interest in scientific study, art and medicine.

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Human Proportions in Paintings: Learning from Albrecht Dürer

Introduction. Albrecht Dürer (1471—1528), one of the greatest known artists of the Northern European Renaissance, was influenced by Leonardo da Vinci, Marcus Vitruvius and other significant classic aesthetic painters. He displayed figures of human body of different shapes and sizes in order to show their unique proportions and beauty. The aim of the study was to take a special look at the Dürer's figures and to describe some anatomical and anthropometrical proportions in paintings, according to review of the existing literature.

Material and methods. Data were collected from several articles and scientific publications in English in the PubMed, Scopus and medical history sources.

Results. There were four books ("Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion", 1528) that included Dürer's findings of the different human proportions and physiques (fat, thin, tall, short, baby, child and adult). In the first two parts author discussed the proper proportions of the human form. Book I included five differently constructed types of both male and female figures. All parts of the body were expressed in fractions of the total height. Book II explained the use