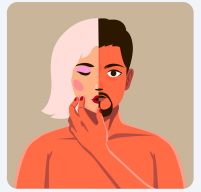


Male Gaze

Name:

Date:



Introduction

In this worksheet you will learn what the Male Gaze is and how it influences our society.

 **Have you ever heard of the Male Gaze? Think about what this term could mean and write down your thoughts.**



Male Gaze

Name:

Date:



The Male Gaze: How the media shows the world from a male perspective

Have you ever noticed that women are often portrayed very differently to men in films, series or advertising? This is often due to the so-called male gaze. This term was coined by film scholar Laura Mulvey in 1975. It describes how women in visual media are often not shown as independent characters with their own plot, but rather as pretty objects - in other words, as something to be looked at. This is because many films and works of art are told from a male-dominated point of view. Men are usually shown as active heroes who act and make decisions, while women tend to take on a passive role and are often staged through their bodies. This can be seen, for example, in camera angles that emphasize certain parts of the body or portray women in such a way that they appear more decorative than driving the action.

This pattern is not new - it has existed in art and culture for centuries. It has shaped our visual behavior, often without us consciously noticing it. But if we look at it and question it, we can discover new, more diverse ways of telling stories. The more people become aware of how women and men are portrayed differently, the sooner things can change - towards stories in which everyone can act on an equal footing.

 **Explain in your own words what the Male Gaze is.**

Male Gaze

Name:

Date:



The Male Gaze in Classical Painting


The concept of the Male Gaze, though widely discussed in film theory, has its roots in earlier art forms, including classical painting. The Male Gaze in classical painting refers to the way women were depicted from a male perspective, often embodying male fantasies and desires. This phenomenon can be traced back to the Renaissance, an era that marked a revival of classical ideals and a new focus on the human form. Artists like Sandro Botticelli and Titian painted women in ways that emphasized their beauty and sexuality, often commissioned by wealthy male patrons who sought to display their power and taste. The function of female imagery in classical painting was multifaceted. While these images served an aesthetic purpose, they also reinforced societal norms and gender roles. Women were often depicted as passive, beautiful objects meant to be admired by the male viewer. This objectification is evident in the idealized and often unrealistic portrayals of women's bodies, which were designed to conform to contemporary standards of beauty and virtue.

The creators of these works were predominantly male artists who operated within a patriarchal system that dictated the norms of representation. These artists, driven by both personal and societal influences, produced works that catered to the male gaze. The patrons who commissioned these works were typically men of high social standing, further embedding male perspectives into the art.

The depiction of women in classical painting followed a specific pattern. Female figures were frequently shown in passive poses, often nude or semi-nude, emphasizing their physical beauty and sensuality. This portrayal not only reflected but also perpetuated the view of women as subordinate and existing primarily for male pleasure. The use of soft lines and curvilinear forms to idealize the female body was a common technique employed by artists to enhance the allure of their subjects.

The influence of the Male Gaze in classical painting extended beyond its own era, influencing later artistic movements and continuing to shape representations of women in art. The legacy of these portrayals can be seen in the works of artists who followed, many of whom adopted similar approaches to the depiction of women. However, the 20th century saw a shift as feminist artists and critics began to challenge and deconstruct these traditional representations, advocating for a more authentic and self-determined portrayal of women in art.

Understanding the Male Gaze in classical painting provides valuable insights into the historical and cultural contexts that shaped the representation of women. It also highlights the ongoing impact of these early depictions on contemporary visual culture and the importance of critically examining the power dynamics at play in the creation and consumption of art.

 **Research the painting 'The Birth of Venus' by Sandro Botticelli and describe the work.**

Male Gaze

Name:

Date:



✦ Here you will find information to help you recognize the characteristics of the Male Gaze. Use it for the next task.

Key Features of the Male Gaze in Classical Painting

1. Idealized Female Beauty

Women are depicted with idealized and often unrealistic beauty standards.

Tip: Look for exaggerated physical features that conform to contemporary beauty ideals.

2. Passive Poses

Female figures are often shown in passive, non-dominant positions.

Tip: Notice if the female subjects appear relaxed, submissive, or inactive.

3. Emphasis on Sensuality

There is a strong focus on the sensual and erotic aspects of female form.

Tip: Observe the use of nudity or semi-nudity and the attention to curves and soft lines.

4. Objectification

Women are portrayed as objects of male desire and admiration.

Tip: Look for depictions where women are positioned for visual consumption by the viewer.

5. Male Perspective

The artwork is created from a male viewpoint, reflecting male fantasies.

Tip: Consider the historical context and the likely male patronage and artists behind the work.

Male Gaze

Name:

Date:



The Female Gaze in Classical Painting


The term Female Gaze describes how women perceive the world and represent themselves. Unlike the Male Gaze, which portrays women as objects of male desire, the Female Gaze emphasizes women's subjective experiences, thoughts, and inner worlds. Instead of reducing women to their appearance or sexuality, it highlights their complexity. Women can represent themselves and tell their own stories without adhering to male expectations or stereotypes.

In classical painting, the Female Gaze can be seen when women are depicted not just in passive, idealized poses but as active subjects with their own thoughts and emotions. Female artists and those influenced by feminist perspectives might focus on the authenticity and diversity of female experiences rather than emphasizing external beauty norms or sexual attraction.

An example would be the portrayal of women in everyday, meaningful moments rather than in scenes that cater to male fantasies. Their bodies could be shown in their natural form, free from the pressure of specific beauty standards. The focus would be on their personalities and experiences rather than an idealized representation of femininity.

Additionally, women of various ages and life stages could be more prominently featured in art—not just as young, attractive figures, but as evolving personalities with rich histories. The Female Gaze in classical painting would allow for a multifaceted portrayal of women as complex individuals. Their experiences and perspectives could reflect the diversity of human emotions and relationships, making the art world more realistic and inclusive.

In summary, the Female Gaze in classical painting enables a richer representation of women as multi-dimensional beings. It allows for the depiction of their experiences and perspectives, mirroring the vast array of human emotions and connections, and thus making the art world more inclusive and true to life.

 **Can you think of any other characteristics that would correspond to female gaze instead of male gaze? Write down your ideas.**

Male Gaze



Name:

Date:

 Create a drawing of the example from the perspective of the female gaze.

 Describe which features of the Female Gaze are included in your drawing and what effect they are intended to achieve.
