

Title: Night Attack on the Sanjo Palace

Artist: Unknown

Date: 1250-1300 C.E

Period/Culture: Kamakura period

Location: Japan

Scale/Size: 16.25 x 275.5 in.

Patron: unknown

Materials: ink, color, paper

Techniques: Handscroll



1. Subject Matter/Content:

- The battles for domination between the Minamoto and the Taira. It is full of action: flames engulf the palace, horses charge, warriors behead their animals, court ladies try to hide. The sense of energy and nonviolence is pervasive conveyed with sweeping power. There are images of weaponry the samurai are utilizing such as swords, bows and arrows. The scrolls read from right to left, and all the action flows to the left. A few people hurrying flow into a confused throng of warriors and nobles, epitomized by a wayward bystander being crushed by an ox cart. Out of the confusion, attention shifts to the palace, where Fujiwara Nobuyori can be seen ordering the retired emperor into the cart. Wisps of smoke appear, leading to a conflagration at the palace, with hapless supporters of the Taira being killed. Gradually order is being restored, and a band of warriors, including Fujiwara and his co-conspirator, Minamoto Yoshitomo, surround Go-Shirakawa's cart in a triumphant procession.

2. Symbolism Used (iconography):

- The main characters are presented in traditional status order: Emperors and former Emperors first, Fujiwara ministers second, and military clan warriors third. But apart from this not much symbolism the painting is straightforward.

3. Contextual Issues:

- The rulers of the Heian era became so into their own refinement that they neglected governing the country. Samurai leaders soon became the real powers in Japan. The two most powerful warrior clans were the Minamoto and the Taira, whose battles for domination became famous not only in medieval Japanese history but also in literature and art.
- The art of narrative painting on scrolls, originally introduced to Japan from China with Buddhism, was secularized in about the eleventh century, when works of fiction were illustrated, notably Lady Murasaki's famous *Tale of Genji*. Such paintings are called *yamato-e*, "Japanese paintings," to distinguish them from those in the Chinese manner
- Kamakura Period (1185-1333 CE): Samurais ruled, Minamoto Yoritomo was the shogun (General-in-chief), kept military and political power to himself, set a tradition of shogun ruling until 1868
- Minamoto and Taira were the two warrior clans that fought to get power
- Gone was the era of poetic refinement

and an objective need to sell to white buyers. He included the grass dance as to not be making a controversial political statement, but representing Shoshone culture.

4. **Formal qualities of this work:** Most of the images of this work were accomplished through stencils. Therefore, they employ simple lines and replicated figures. It appears to be a random composition, but is strategically planned, with the most sacred rituals in the center. In addition, Cody uses bright colored pigments to make the images stand out. Many of the figures, such as the hunters, the dancers, and even the buffalo, have been positioned strategically so that there is a sense of energy and movement in the painting.
5. **Intended audience for the work:** The intended audience for the work was the tourists who would visit the reservation and would be perspective buyers.
6. **Function:** The primary function of this work is to make money and provide food and economic stability to the people on the Wind River Reservation. The secondary function is to show the great culture and tradition that they are now being forced to lose.
Symbolic function: The symbolic function is to represent the Native American identity.
7. **Meaning:** The message that is being conveyed to the intended audience (Euro-American tourists) is that Native Americans have a rich culture and tradition that goes back so many years. Cadzi Cody needed to create something to sell to tourists, a representative of Shoshoni identity that people would buy when they visit. In order to do this, he implemented the ancient pictorial tradition of hide painting and adapted the subject matter. This painting was sold at the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming which confined so many Shoshoni and stripped them of their culture. They were the "other" that Euro-Americans would come to observe. Cadzi Cody took this situation and created a way to make money and to find nostalgia in treasured traditions in these paintings. The Euro-American visitor who came to the reservation wanted a representation of Native American life and Cadzi Cody wanted to hold on to his sacred traditions. Therefore, these paintings show the deep culture of the Shoshoni people, pleasing the tourists and allowing Cadzi Cody to pride in his traditions.
8. **Related Themes:** Related themes include change over time, religious rituals, politics, and nostalgia.

Title: *Portrait of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz*

Artist: Miguel Cabrera

Date: c. 1750

Period: Neo-Baroque (European)

Location: Chapultepec Castle, Mexico

Scale: medium scale

Materials: oil painting

Techniques: oil on canvas



1. Subject Matter/Content:

- This is a painting of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz. She was a nun of the Jeronymite order, which she chose so that she could pursue intellectual interests instead of getting married.
- Sor Juana was not only a creole nun, but also a famous poet and playwright, and she corresponded with the great scientists and theologians of her time.
- Sor Juana was criticized for her secular studies and poems written about love, and was even eventually accused of heresy.
- Here, she's shown at her desk, writing and studying in the convent library.

2. Symbolism (Iconography):

- She wears an *escudo de monja*, a medallion which has a scene of The Annunciation, which could symbolize the important role of women in religion.
- Her book that is open is a text by St. Jerome, the saint for whom her order is named.
- She holds her rosary beads like reins, recalling the imagery of equestrian statues. This relates to how the image heroizes her and how she conquered traditional norms.
- Her habit, rosary beads, and cross show that she is a nun.
- The library symbolizes her interest in secular studies.

3. Contextual issues relevant to work:

- Women were barred for pursuing intellectual knowledge, Sor Juana was even forced to renounce her studies.
- Women were often expected/forced to get married if they didn't become a nun.
- The Jeronymite order allowed more studies for women than the Carmelite order.
- Mexico was an extremely religious country, as conquistadors and priests had come to the country years before to convert natives to Catholicism.
- Creoles did not have the same status as Mexicans of European descent, but they were beginning to form their own identity.
- Catholicism in general had always been a male-dominated religion.

4. Formal qualities of this work:

- She faces the viewer in an assertive way, showing her courage.
- Her positioning at a desk in a library is similar to many other portraits of intellectual scholars.

-Oil painting highlights the details present in the folds of her habit, the scene painted on her medallion, and the books. It also accurately depicts her facial expressions and actions.

5. **Intended Audience for the work:**

-This painting was public and seen by many.

6. **Function:**

-Primary function: memorializes the pious nun.

-Secondary function: shows the importance of Sor Juana's religious contributions.

7. **Meaning:**

-Meant to celebrate Sor Juana's bravery and to show her courage.

-Shows her intellectual interests and successes.

-Challenges the traditional religious institution.

-Depicts the nun as graceful, pious, strong-willed, intelligent, and committed to her faith.

8. **Related Themes:**

-Religious vs. Secular

-Changing Women's Roles in Society

-Women in Religion

-Colonized Society