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Title

Seeing Beneath and Beyond the Red: Exploring the layers and folds in the Atlas I and Atlas II paintings of Penny Siopis through an understanding of affect theory and a pondering of the affective aesthetic experience.

Abstract

Emotion has always held a significant role in the creation and then the experience of objects of art. Artists have life experiences that eventually seep into their works through the use of interesting materials and techniques, engaging with a range of mediums, and going as far as their imagination takes them. In turn, under varying contexts, viewers get to relate to the feelings emitted from the paintings. Grounded in art historical and visual cultural theorisations of affect, this study explores the *Atlas I* and *Atlas II* (2020) paintings of Penny Siopis (b. 1953) from Stevenson Gallery's *In The Air* (2020-2021) exhibition. It is based on the reading that their formal characteristics, especially the scenes, shapes and red colour appearing in a single painting represent specific emotions, which are to be articulated properly through symbols found in the realms of other media, including music, literature, and film. Additionally, research on the aesthetic experience is also explored, including fanatic responses from digital social media platform Instagram, a book on the emotional expression of crying in front of paintings, an empirical study that focuses on emotional content in paintings and the emotional experiences that follow, as well as a look at the contexts that situate affect in a real and diverse world. I make use of a qualitative conceptual research method to ensure that all present information on the facets and depths of this study are assessed and illuminated meaningfully, to produce a well-rounded and nuanced understanding of Siopis' art as well as the art experience.

Keywords: *Penny Siopis; Affect Theory; Visual Studies; Aesthetic Experiences*