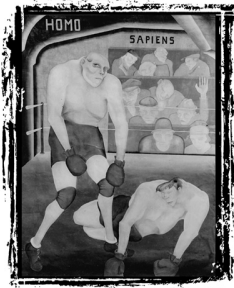


ART OF DISSSENT



The Faces of Dehumanization: “Homo Sapiens” by Willy Fick

Themes

- Dehumanization
- Recreation?
- Devolution

Before the Viewing

- List some of the earliest boxing champions you know. Do you know of any going back to the 1930s and 1940s?
- Do you consider boxing a form of recreation? Define the role of professional boxing in society?
- As mankind evolves, do people become more or less humane/civilized? Provide examples to back your position

Discussion

- What is the purpose of just showing two sides of the boxing ring? Where does this truncating of the boxing ring place you the viewer? How are the spectators on your side of the ring different than those depicted by the artist?
- There are four hands in the painting. The hands of the boxers are bound. What is the other hand doing? What is the symbolism of these hands?
- Describe the irony or sarcasm in the title “Homo Sapiens”
- How does “Homo Sapiens” show the opposite of evolution? What was happening in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s that this work references?

Activities

- Cut out the faces of the people in “Homo Sapiens” and place them in another setting you’ve drawn. What effect do these faces have on your new setting?
- There is the hint of an archway. Use your imagination to draw out the appearance of the room/hall in which the fight takes place. What architectural style have you echoed?
- There are two women in the painting. Sketch their full figures to show the fashions they are wearing. Are you able to date this fashion?

Extensions

- Certain modern musical artists use dehumanizing violence in their words and videos. Is this dehumanization any different than that depicted in “Homo Sapiens”? Why or why not?
- George Grosz’ *Ecce Homo* (Behold Man) a series of drawings and watercolours from 1923 showed homo sapiens in many different dehumanized ways. Select one of Grosz’ works to compare to Fick’s. What was going on in their times that Grosz and Fick wanted to expose?