|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Artist | Chris Ofili  Image: Image result for ofili no woman no cry |
| Title | No Woman No Cry |
| Date | 1998 |
| Medium | Oil paint, acrylic paint, graphite, polyester resin, printed paper, glitter, map pins and elephant dung on canvas |
| Scale | 2438 x 1828 x 51 mm |
| Scope | Portrait |
| Style | Neo-expressionism |
| Patron |  |
| Location | Tate-London |
| Function | To be a tribute to the London teenager Stephen Lawrence who was murdered in a racially motivated attack in 1993.  Influence from political factors:  No Woman No Cry is a tribute to the London teenager Stephen Lawrence who was murdered in a racially motivated attack in 1993. A public inquiry into the murder investigation concluded that the Metropolitan police force was institutionally racist. In each of the tears shed by the woman in the painting is a collaged image of Stephen Lawrence’s face, while the words ‘R.I.P. Stephen Lawrence’ are just discernible beneath the layers of paint. As well as this specific reference, the artist intended the painting to be read as a universal portrayal of melancholy and grief. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Formal features | |
| Composition | There is a women’s side profile (from the shoulders up) in the centre of the composition with patterns spreading across her and the background breaking the focus on primarily her. The background is painted with a mixture of pale green and bright yellow, criss-crossed by conjoined sequences of circles that each contain concentric rings and are gathered to form the rough outlines of diamond shapes. |
| Colour or texture | There is an interesting use of colour in this painting with yellow, oranges and reds primarily standing out which look like a fire creeping up her neck. The violent, vibrant colours draw on several cultures and her blue eye lids fit in with the other primary colours whilst also representing the amount of water and tears she wept for her son. The red on her lips is exaggerated indicating her lack of shame about her race and ethnicity. |
| Light & tone | There isn’t much to say about light and tone other than the slight indication the whiter material there could be light coming from all sources around her darkening as it draws closer into her. |
| Space & depth or relief | The composition is chaotic with maps in the background layered up with crosshatching and then painted over in yellow. The lack of space and depth could suggest she is stuck in her own world of loss and anguish for her child. |
| Line or brushwork | There is a thick black outlining her figure and he blends the paint around her figure but appears to dab on the surrounding yellow paint. Conveys a sense of dream and memory by superimposing the outlines of one image on top of another, thus minimising distinctions between the figure and the ground. |

Stylistic comment and artistic influence:

Ofili used violent, vibrant colour in figurative paintings, drawing on several cultures - African, Aboriginal, African-American history to mention a few - all worked out in intricate pattern and texture, with glitter and collage and paint.

His paintings are marked by a broad range of influences including the black funk style and drooling resin layerings of German artist Sigmar Polke.Its use is also borrowing from black American artist David Hammons.

Critical text quote:

‘Ofili was deeply moved by the way in which Doreen Lawrence’s overwhelming silent grief at her son’s tragic death had been transformed with each successive interview as she became even stronger in spirit and emboldened to speak with great dignity’- Judith Nesbitt

‘Modern master of radiant colour’- Richard Dorment

Use or development of materials, techniques & processes:

The painting was executed on a single piece of rather coarse linen fabric that is stretched extremely tightly around an eight-membered rigid strainer and attached with stainless steel staples along the rear edges. For display the painting is placed on two lumps of elephant dung and is allowed to lean back against the wall. The phosphorescent paint was then used to write the words ‘RIP Stephen Lawrence 1974–1993’ in four lines across the surface. This is particularly visible in UV illumination or if viewed in the dark after it has been lit or irradiated with UV. The map pins were inserted into the pieces of elephant's dung which were then stuck to the canvas with a hot glue gun. Then the surface of the painting was flooded with the polyester resin, which bonded the pieces of dung in place. The actual paint used was a combination of oil (painted dots and dark brown outlines) and acrylic emulsion (black hearts). Other materials used were polyester resin, collage, glitter stars and spots, map pins and (sealed and dried) elephant's dung. The order of application was as follows: First the pencil lines were applied, followed by the collaged elements which were adhered to the surface. Then the black hearts were painted in acrylic. The weakest part of the structure is the dung pieces on the actual work, which will probably fall off at some point. It is also not known how well the pieces of dung are sealed in the polyester resin and for how long this will prolong their natural deterioration. The artist has left instructions should they ever need replacing. They do not need to be exact copies, but should be remade from dried elephant dung from London Zoo.

Influence from cultural/social factors:

The title of this work is the name of a 1974 song by the Jamaican reggae musician Bob Marley that entreats a female listener not to be sad. The phosphorescent inscription in the painting indicates that the crying woman depicted is Doreen Lawrence (now Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE), the mother of Stephen Lawrence, who was murdered as a teenage boy in an unprovoked racist attack in London in 1993, and the photographs inside the tears in this work are all images of Stephen. After five years of campaigning by Lawrence’s parents, the home secretary, Jack Straw, announced a judicial inquiry into the police investigations into their son’s death. When it was published two years later the 1999 Macpherson Report found police conduct had been marred by professional incompetence and institutional racism. The report made seventy recommendations, which led to an overhaul of Britain’s race relations legislation.

Influence from technological factors: