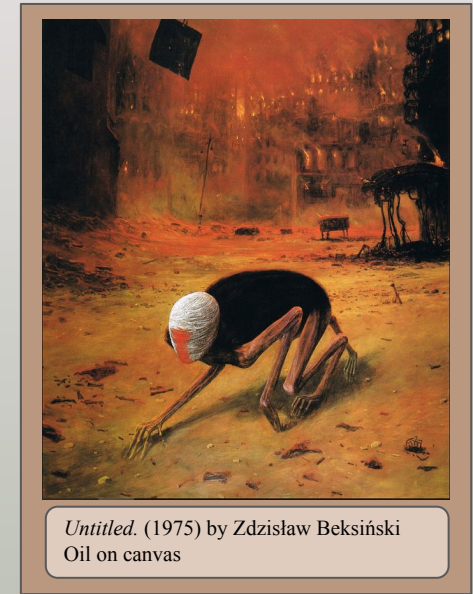




Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo
Oil on fiberboard



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński
Oil on canvas

Comparative Study

By Lizbeth Chavez

For my comparative study, I want to closely analyze two artists from different cultural backgrounds, differing experiences. Both primarily being a part of the surrealism era, I wanted to see how and what influenced their styles, and their different approaches to the formal qualities of art. To analyze the two artists and their movements respective to their time periods as well as the living situations that influenced their art. To see their versions of Surrealism and the role it plays in portraying their messages whether historical or cultural. Two artworks would be by Spanish artist, Remedios Varo. The other by Polish artist, Zdzisław Beksiński. Rather than compare styles, this will compare how their background tied into their artwork, and how it influenced their stylistic choice, from color, to tone. Diving into the paintings to see their bigger picture, the purpose of the colors, the subjects, that all tie into the artist's background and life story. To figure out what part of their lives showed and influenced greatly into their artwork.

Cultural Significance - Zdzisław Beksiński

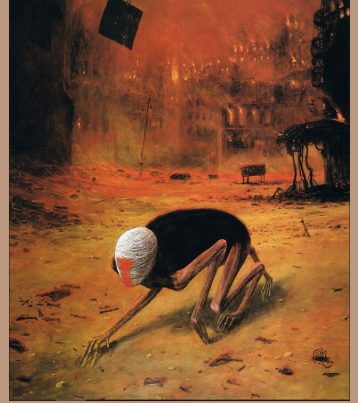
Zdzisław Beksiński was a Polish painter born in 1929, most known for his photography and his work with Dystopian Surrealism. He quit photography to pursue painting as in his mind, he felt it would give him more visual freedom. Living during the most communist times of Poland. He lived through World War II for 10 years. Later on, he lived during the communist times of Poland, where art was very frowned upon. His work consists of untitled pieces full of gruesome imagery depicting as what he calls it, the opposite of utopia, a place full of grotesque, horrific nightmares. It can be assumed that his work was closely related to the tragedies he endured during his life. His works can be seen as influenced by WWII dealing, and the things he saw closely relating to Nazi's, as one of the main subjects for his pieces revolve around death and sorrow. Although he denies such themes, it's almost visible that this is exactly what he was going for, as many of his pieces have subjects of death, soldiers, graveyards and destruction. Seems as though his denial of such meanings relate to the fact that Zdzisław Beksiński had frequently argued that art should be more aesthetic to the eyes rather than to have a set meaning, leaving his work for interpretation.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas



Through this piece made in 1975, one can see a sense of destruction, tying into the extremities of the events in war, it's almost unavoidable to assume he made it in relation to the war. One can see how he that he made these works after his experiences or as it's called. This phenomenon is known as Post-War Art, which most of the time is made with the intention of inflicting fear onto the watchers, for one to understand how said person felt during those times. This painting in particular depicts a creature in a post-apocalyptic world, that is sometimes referred to as "The Creature" or "The Crawling Death".



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński
Oil on canvas



Cultural Significance - Remedios Varo



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Remedios Varo is a Surrealist artist from Spain. Remedios fled Gerona, Spain at a early age during the Spanish Civil War, moving to Paris in 1937, due to her fleeing, her and her family were never allowed to step foot into Spain again. Her stay in Paris gave her many connections where she met a variety of artists whom she later exhibited paintings with. However during this time, she also experienced a fair share of sexism in her time there by fellow male artists. This caused her to not produce as many paintings as she could and as she wanted due to the constant harassment she faced. Some time later, she was captured during World War 2 on suspicion that she was involved in spying on the government. Due to this event, she fled to Mexico where much of her success came from, producing many pieces, she found fame through her Surrealistic paints. *Star Maker* most known as *Papilla Estelar* presents a lady and a star, getting rid of its essence. This painting was painted after she fled to Mexico depicting how trapped she felt in Mexico as she and the rest of the European artists were not welcomed. Her feeling of isolation was due to Mexico being her homeland and rejecting her, hence the cage. However, this painting can have many meanings, another interpretation of this painting can relate to motherhood and the restrictions women had back in that time period. Women had to do a lot of domestic work, stay at home and take care of children, Remedios Varo didn't exactly want that life, she saw it as repetitive and isolating. The woman in the painting is working and making a mom, similar to that of creating a baby, this creates a cycle for generations to come.

Continuing her success in Mexico, she started her first exhibition that became an instant hit, getting lots of clients with the intent of buying her works. Following this new found success, she later died of a heart-attack at the age of 54. Even after her death, the list of buyers kept getting bigger and bigger. *Armonia* (*Harmony*) was one of her biggest hits, auctioned for \$6.1 million, breaking the record of \$3 million. This piece in particular is the epitome of bringing a painting to life. Depicting an alchemist who is in some sort of a daze as he works, unbeknownst to the woman coming out of the wall. One can say, the success of the painting is due to how much thought she put into the composition and meaning of the piece. More about this particular painting, *Armenia*, it is said that this piece represents the unconscious mind of a person as they create a work of art. Perhaps this is to symbolize how she had to catch off everything affecting her around her in order to create her art. To be in a sort of entrance to focus solely on what you are doing rather than what is going on around you.



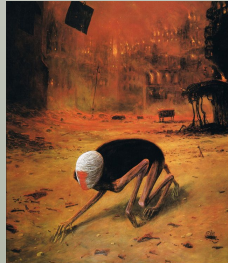
Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

C&C: Similarities in Cultural Significance

Remedios Varo's *Harmony*, uses imagery through metaphors to get her message across. Due to her way of thinking, she is able to turn unrealistic/inanimate objects into something more. Through the manipulation of **space** she is able to convey her personal experiences. These objects/creatures are made to represent her desire to escape the misogyny, war and overall chaos going around her. Similarly, her other piece, *Star Maker*, focuses heavily on the sexism she endured while around fellow colleagues. Again, she uses **imagery**, and gives inanimate objects another meaning. The messages she depicts are done metaphorically and generally rely on your own **superstition** about it rather than her own explanation. Their whole idea is to add subjects here and there that **COULD** potentially relate to that history in their past, however there is no definitive answer.



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Untitled (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński. Oil on canvas



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo. Oil on fiberboard



Untitled (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński. Oil on canvas



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo. Oil on fiberboard

Remedios Varo's *Harmony* and Zdzisław Beksiński 1975 piece both convey the feelings of desperation. In *Harmony*, the feeling of desperation is portrayed through soft **tones**, with a mixture of **cool** and **warm colors**. Both of the **compositions** of the artworks is taken into part, as both artists focus solely on conveying the cultural significance of their pieces through the background of the piece. Zdzisław Beksiński, portrays the idea of destruction, having debris take over the land, and well as fire

all around the creature. Remedios, uses background to convey a comforting feeling, manipulating space to create moving creatures. Going into another comparison, both pieces work to create **movement** in their piece, as mentioned,

Zdzisław with the falling debris, and Remedios with creatures.

Star Maker and the *Untitled* piece conveys this ominous feeling. This feeling is much more evident in Zdzisław Beksiński's piece as he's able to create such a **united** piece as everything put onto the canvas works together to create an apocalyptic world. This dystopian world he was able to create work in explaining his experience during war, even without no one no knowing the meaning, his application of each element lets someone know this is a rather sorrowful piece. *Star Maker* is a lot more subtle in conveying this feeling compared to Zdzisław Beksiński, this is due to her **color** choices, using soft color in comparison to harsh reds, will make someone feel more calm than uneasy. However the whole **composition** of the piece is what makes it ominous. She was able to convey the sexism she endured in the **form** of a small enclosed place. This claustrophobic building the character is in helps convey the feeling of being trapped, which I feel is what brings the uneasiness of the piece.

C&C: Differences in Cultural Significance

Star Maker & The Creature: The cultural value of both pieces is very prominent in both pieces, Star maker touches more onto that meaning and Zdzisław Beksiński on the shock value of it. Zdzisław Beksiński defied what is appropriate for art where he was from, however, during those times, any type of art was prohibited, he explored dystopian surrealism and popularized it. His apocalyptic paintings explore the idea of death in relation to World War II and the amount of suffering and catastrophes he saw during these times. Remedios Varo piece, *Star Maker*, instead delves into the idea of growth of oneself in relation to feminism and the rejection of her home land, relying on hope to guide her, the moon representing this hope and growth she had to force herself into.



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas

Harmony & The Creature: While the creature was made to represent parts of time, *Harmony* was also made to represent the mind. Zdzisław Beksiński emphasizes on the idea of war, sorrow, and destruction. Continuing to relate and make his art represent the horrible times of World War II. Going against the communist beliefs, and taking it upon himself to do Dystopian art although prohibited. These feelings of fear and control are hiding beneath his eerie pieces as he tries to tell his own stories through apocalyptic scenes. Remedios Varo wanted to represent the feeling of being in a gaze. Representing how she had to accommodate to everything going around her by just, forgetting about it by putting her mind in a subconscious state. Letting her hand guide her through the process of art. As during these times she had to escape two places she lived in only to be rejected from her homeland, not only that but she also experience sexism, and the only way she was able to move through it all, was through art.

Star Maker & Harmony: *Star maker* and *Harmony* both have similar cultural contexts, inevitable due to them being made by the same artist. *Star maker* however, dives into how she felt stuck and lonely during her times in Spain, Paris and Mexico. Due to having to escape from two places, and then to be welcomed to her homeland in a way she wasn't expecting caused her to feel heartbroken. However she still grasp to hope, hoping one day everything will grow for the better for her, hence the stars in her piece, representing that said hope. *Harmony*, has a similar approach however instead this piece was made to forget all she is going through.

C&C: Cultural Context of Student Work and Artworks



Pills by Lizbeth Chavez



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas

Compare Cultural Significance:

Zdzisław Beksiński's piece and my piece help convey the cultural significance of **crawling** away from a traumatic experience. Zdzisław Beksiński's piece is closely tied to World War II (presumably), in turn he is creating disturbing creatures to convey this event. My piece in comparison, is closely related to the constant pressure I was put by my family to get better, as in my household mental health has never really been talked about and was frowned upon. Pills represents this in the **form** of a person "crawling" out of a pile of depressive pills.

Contrast Cultural Significance:

A contrasting thing between both pieces of cultural significance is the feeling it evokes. Zdzisław Beksiński's piece works well in conveying a shock factor, even without knowing its meaning. Due to the colors and even the small details (texture), Zdzisław Beksiński creates a scary image that can make one look away. In comparison to my piece, the overall meaning of it comes very self explanatory while Zdzisław Beksiński's is much more open ended.

C&C: Cultural Context of Student Work and Artworks



Eyes on You by Lizbeth Chavez



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Compare Cultural Significance:

Harmony's overall **theme** is to be in a daze, the representation of an unconscious mind. During her career in the making of this piece, Remedios was still dealing with much chaos in her life, related to the piece, one can assume painting was her escape from struggles. The struggles in question revolve around gender, and ethnicity. Compared to my piece, both pieces work to create **symbolism** through **metaphors**.

Star Maker cultural significance revolves around the idea of feeling isolated and trapped. As Remedios Varo, felt like an outcast in her homeland. Eyes on You follows a similar verdict. The piece is a representation of feeling watched, which can be related to the idea of feeling trapped and they both coexist with one another.

Contrast Cultural Significance:

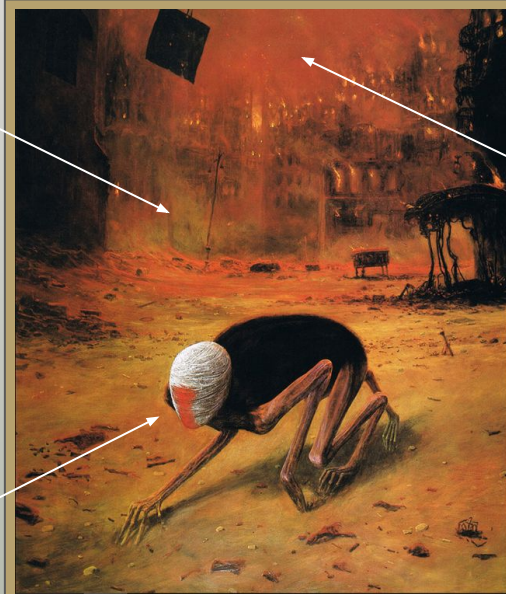
Although Harmony and Eyes on You work similarly in the symbolism aspect of the piece. Overall the application of these elements are done differently. Remedios Varo's overall style is much softer in these pieces, the **colors** she uses create a calming aura to the artwork. My piece has harsher and **darker** colors in contrast to her piece and plays around more with **movement** and lighting.

Both pieces have incorporated one's personal experiences, however when comparing the two, Star Maker holds a stronger cultural significance, as it is tightly tied to her time in Mexico, and the struggle over self-identity regarding one's culture. My piece relates more with emotional experiences, focusing less on the cultural aspect of it.

Function and Purpose - Zdzisław Beksiński "1975"

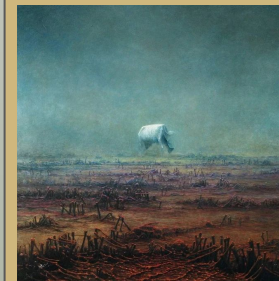
The fog plays a big role in the piece, working together with the other subjects in this piece. Painting was we see as a vacant, deserted scene. Smoke being the only thing around. As related to World War 2, the bombing and execution of many in their own towns, we can infer this is what Zdzisław Beksiński wanted to interpret with this piece.

The creature as a whole can be a representation of survival. We see its all bandaged up and bleeding, walking or more so crawling away from the destruction that is going on in the back. Depicting the death of many as they tried to flee the destruction of their city in World War 2, as well as the suffering they had to endure. This imagery is depicted through many of his paintings. Whether it is a eerie setting, scary creatures, or depictions of death, they all correlate to the trauma he endured and saw during his life during war.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas

He wanted to portray an 'apocalyptic' scenery as to evoke that feeling of dread and fear. A vacant place, with no human life around plays a role in the type of tone the artist wanted, in this case it would be eery. His usage of the red in the sky, give us the impression of a apocalyptic scenery, red can be associated with blood, fire and demise, all tying into the death and destruction that was World War 2. The hue of the painting being this eye catching but full of dark and bright reds and yellows.



This is another piece of his, here one can see the depiction of a isolated and a torn down place.

Zdzisław Beksiński *Untitled.* Oil on canvas. (accessed March 7, 2022). <https://darkartandcraft.com/blogs/news/zdzislaw-beksiński-dystopian-surrealism>

Function and Purpose - Remedios Varo “*Star Maker*”

All around the painting we see stars, it is believed that the stars hold the meaning of hope, as related to Remedios Varo time in Mexico, she began to feel down, hope was the only thing she relied on to keep her going. Stars are a big symbolism of guidance. Throughout her time in the art industry in France, she experience sexism from her co-workers. The stars once again representing what she felt at this time, whether she was looking for hope to continue this path or guidance to help her find a place that will respect her. Her sucking in the essence of the stars represent the strong desire she had and longed for.

The moon and the person both are inside a very small cage like building. The purpose of this small building is to represent how isolated she felt in her homeland. After fleeing from Spain to Paris and having to flee Paris due to false allegations from the government only to be rejected in her homeland made her feel as though she was trapped. This place seems claustrophobic, enough space for only one person to stay. Portray her how she felt after the rejection of the place she called home.



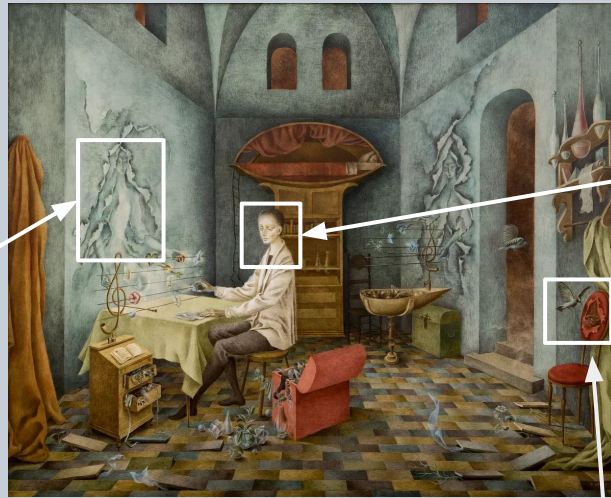
Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Going back into the purpose of the stars, the moon works with that part of the piece, together showing the **unity** of the piece. The moon is one of the eye catching parts of this piece. We see as the creator is feeding it the essence of the stars. Believed to represent how she wanted to use this hope to succeed in the art world, in hopes of finding opportunities for her to express her art to others.

The moon can also be a representations of feminism and female power, using the essence of the stars to represent growth and the betterment of oneself. Related to the sexism she dealt with in her time in Paris from male co-workers. She used this energy and instead turned it into hope and that hope she used to grow into a better person.

Function and Purpose - Remedios Varo "Harmony"

One of the more noticeable and memorable parts of this piece is the wall coming to life. We see this creature helping the person make a melody. Perhaps she represents the unconscious mind. While the person is in the trance, the creature is the one leading him/her, guiding them to make this piece. The whole premise of Surrealism was doing art with an unconscious mind, which happens to be the main idea of this piece. This creature being the whole representation of that idea.



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

It's abnormal where the bird decided to start its home, not only that but we also see another bird fleeing from the room. This is perhaps related to how she had to flee from two different countries just to not be accepted in her homeland. She had to live there knowing it hurt that she wasn't welcomed. However eventually, she was able to call it home after being accepted in the art community where she became successful.

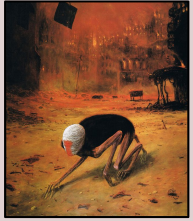


The face of the person in the piece seems very relaxed and entranced in whatever they are doing. Oblivious to the fact that the wall is coming to life before his/her eyes. Remedios believed, one can create art with one



critical component, having a unconscious mind. We can tie this into her time in Paris and the point she moved to Mexico. During her stay in Paris she experienced a lot of sexism, men putting her down for the sole purpose of being a woman. In Mexico, she was not welcomed at all. This took a toll on her as an artist and as a person. She began producing less work. She began putting herself back together and began creating more art which brought her success. The reason this could be tied to this artwork is the whole "entranced" aspect. To produce this much art, she had to block any self doubt and everything going on around her to become successful.

C&C: Similarities in Function & Purpose



Zdzisław Beksiński piece, was made not to convey a meaning, more so, he made sure he never explained his art as he wanted to be up for interpretation. Without putting a meaning, or tying his art to his life history, one can see that this painting was made to convey human emotion, and the tragic outcome of going through an unfortunate event. Remedios Varo's *Star Maker*, was made to convey and depict her life experiences, although like Zdzisław Beksiński, it is open for interpretation, however, this artwork is talked about more closely in terms of its meaning. As this artwork was made conveying self expression. The overall approach these two artists choose to focus on shows what they want the audience to focus on or take from the painting. Zdzisław Beksiński wants viewers to just enjoy the painting for what it is without theorizing on it, while Remedios Varo wants people to not only focus on the art but the meaning behind it too.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas

Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard



Star Maker is more meaning focused compared to *Harmony*. *Harmony* itself is one of Remedios Varo's biggest hits, the meaning of it revolving on art itself. Both pieces were made with the intent of showing self-expression. However, the meaning behind *Star Maker* is something the audience can think much more about conceptually. Another difference is that *Harmony* holds a much more calming atmosphere compared to *Star Maker*, this in turn makes the paintings interesting to look at and more drawn to it, perhaps the reason it's one of her most popular pieces.



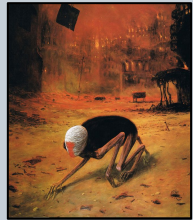
Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

Zdzisław Beksiński painting and Remedios Varo's paintings are extremely different. Zdzisław Beksiński painting expresses fear while *Harmony* expressed hope. Their intent in what they want the audience to feel is both different and similar, as they both want the viewer to feel strong emotions when they look at the piece, in a way luring them to continue looking at it. People are fascinated by the unknown which is something that these two artists manipulate to make work.

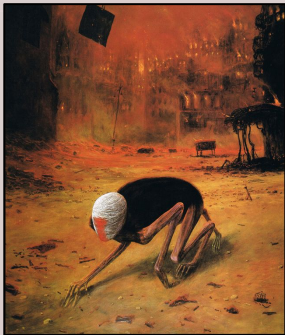


Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas

C&C: Differences in Function & Purpose

Function and Purpose: Zdzisław Beksiński purpose is to **shock** the viewers with his terrifying creatures. Rather than show clear purpose for it, he rather likes disturbing the viewers and conveying a feeling before they dissect his pieces. Remedios Varo looks for meaning and **symbolism** before looking at her pieces, because when seen at first glance, her pieces can have multiple meanings and this is what the viewer thinks about first, the meaning rather than being shocked or disturbed like Zdzisław Beksiński painting. Zdzisław Beksiński purpose in general was to shock the viewer as to convey the feelings during war, as throughout those times shock and fear is prominent, perhaps a feeling he wanted to dive more into, showing how expressive he is with his art.

Remedios Varo takes a more soft approach, letting the reader come out with their own interpretations and conveying a general calming feeling throughout, showing how conceptual she is.



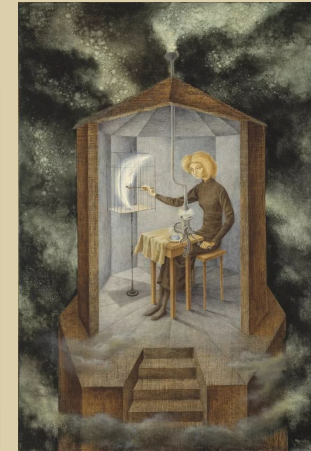
Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński
Oil on canvas



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

Function and Purpose: Remedios Varo purpose was to portray an action or feeling with her piece. The whole idea of the unconscious mind is what the painting revolves on, putting the subjects in situations that wouldn't happen in real life. Turning an inanimate object, the wall, into a living thing, and giving it a symbolic meaning. It wasn't necessarily made to shock the viewer, but instead to make them think. She taught more metaphorically things and gave meanings to things that wouldn't necessarily have it. As for Zdzisław Beksiński, he did in fact want to shock the viewer. His approach is a more straightforward one, right away you see destruction in the piece, fire, and overall begin to feel fear. This shock factor used to represent a historical narrative in time. The sole purpose of this artwork was to preserve what happened in this point of history.

Function and Purpose: In *Star Maker*, the purpose of this piece is to symbolise the essence of hope and the feeling of being trapped in a cage. Her piece has metaphors like this, portraying a person in a cage to represent how lonely she felt and how “trapped” as she had to deal with a lot of rejection and war. This piece purpose is to portray a feeling, to represent a person holding onto hope in the form of stars. In *Harmony*, it's purpose is to portray a calming atmosphere, done with colors and the general composition of the piece. Bringing its meaning to life; the unconscious mind, into a painting. This portrayal is done with unrealistic subjects like the moving walls helping the person work.



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Both painting have meanings that work with each other but both work separately in portraying a different feeling. *Harmony*, is more calming while *Star Maker*, is more sad and in a way makes you feel closed in; claustrophobic, due to the cage, portraying the feeling of being trapped.

C&C: Function & Purpose of Student Work and Artworks



Eyes on You by Lizbeth Chavez



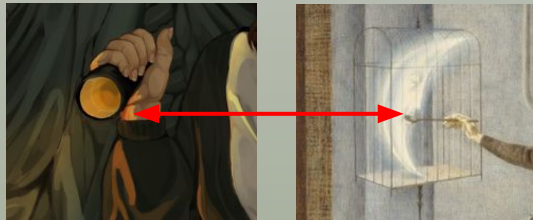
Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



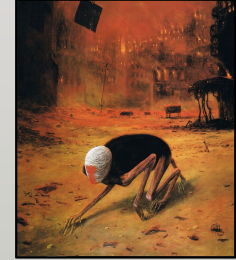
Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

My piece, Eyes on You, and Remedios Varo's all convey a strong meaning without making it entirely obvious. The intent was to have the audience decipher the pieces themselves, to see what they can come up with when they first look at it, keeping in mind the **colors** used and the over **composition** of the pieces. A big difference between them, does come in the meaning of it, and what they want the viewer to feel. My artwork relates closely to anxiety, the whole idea was to get people who have similar experiences to relate to the piece. Therefore, I in a way, cater to one demographic when it comes to conveying the meaning. Remedios Varo does not relate to one demographic, really there's no mention of her trying to cater to one group.

Lighting source comparison between *Star Maker* and *Eyes on you*



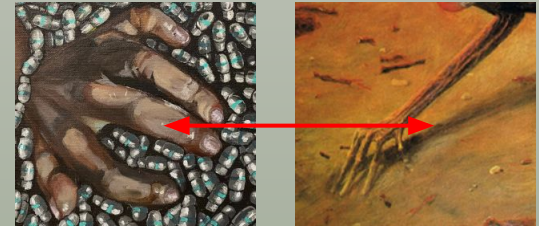
Pills by Lizbeth Chavez



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński
Oil on canvas

Pills conceptually is much more different compared to Zdzisław Beksiński's piece. Again like Eyes on You, Pills is something catered to people that can relate to my experiences. However, the idea of medication is very universal which can be related to a larger group of people. Zdzisław Beksiński, does not have an intended audience, his goal was solely to make art, no confusing meanings, and so on. He wanted to make viewers make up their own meaning to these pieces, which is what makes my piece and his piece much more different. While I have a set in stone meaning, he does not.

Crawling theme evident on both pieces to signify a struggle.

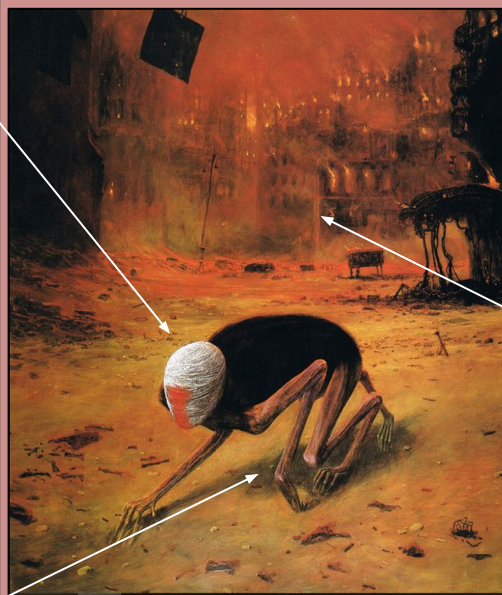


Formal Qualities - Zdzisław Beksiński "1975"

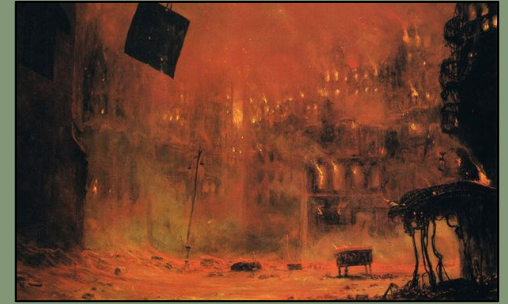
The creature that Zdzisław Beksiński really emphasizes his use of texture, evident throughout this subject. The head has a **texture**, seeming of that of a ball of yarn or spiderwebs clumped together. The red could symbolize blood.



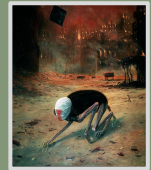
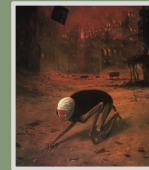
Another part of **texture** this creature emphasized is in its arms, if you were to touch them, they would feel rough and raspy. The **contrast** between the dark and light colors, work well to create dimension to the arms, emitting that rough look. The slight color of red/orange on the arms shows a light source, working together with the background, adding **unity** to the whole piece.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas



The dark red background works well in creating the boundary for the piece. The different **values** of red work together to evoke this feeling to the viewer. The fog adding sense of **movement**, Guiding our eyes to figure out what is going on. We once again see the usage of red/orange hues, red being such an eye catching color, I believe the artist did this purposely to bring more attention to certain details in the piece. Depictions of this artists original color seems to vary, Some having more red tones while others having more of a blue hue, whichever it is, all portray that same usage of that strong red color.



Formal Qualities - Remedios Varo “*Star Maker*”

The color scheme Remedios uses in *Star Maker* is very muted, however, she made it in a way where the **values** work extremely well together that everything stands out. Although the colors are very muted, they seem vibrant as well. The painting as a whole works well in making each **element** shine on its own while also working well together.

The person, the moon, the inside of the building in general has very light **colors** that add **emphasis** to that part of the piece. By her usage of the light colors against the dark background we automatically know it is an important part of the piece and our eyes are **moved** to that object.

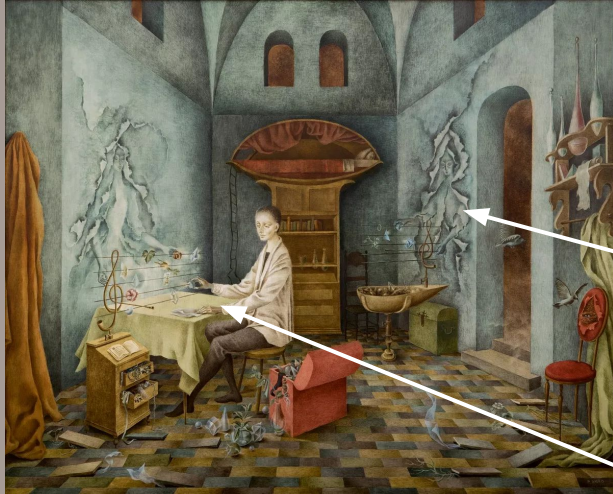


Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Shape is very prominent in this piece, if we look at the building we see various types of rectangle and triangles. Looking at this building and the **space** it creates, we really see the symbolism she was going for, making the small geometric building on of the main points of the piece is it's right in the middle of everything. Remedios also makes sure the inside of the building is scene, as we see her usage of **space** to add more structure to the piece.

The way the stars the move around the building into it shows a great sense of **movement** as it guides your eyes to the main focal point of the piece. Not only that but it shows a sense of **unity** throughout as they all work together to show a bigger meaning. Even if you didn't want to look at the building in the middle of the piece the star guide you right to it.

Formal Qualities - Remedios Varo “*Star Maker*”



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

Remedios uses **color** to emphasize where she wants to lead your eyes (**movement**). She does this by making a subject a **color** that will stand out amidst the other cool tone colors. The color she uses for this is red, as against all the browns and blues, it stands out greatly.

Where we see the most **texture** in this piece is in the creatures in the wall. We can tell the material is rough due to all the ragged folds and the cracks on the wall. This pattern is again repeated at the opposite side of the creature where we see another one of this creature emerging causing the same effect on the wall.

There is a big usage of **value**. In some areas there is more light, like where the person and the creature emerging from the wall, that is where most of the light values are, making that area the main centerpiece of the whole painting. The darker values work in unison to add **contrast** between these different **colors**.

We see a repetition of **color** palette throughout the piece, the main colors in usage being blue, grey, and browns. With these colors I believe the painter wants the painting to portray a feeling of loneliness, as the reason for all the cool toned colors. All these colors work together to create **contrast** between cool and warm colors, as well as dark and light colors. Towards the back, there is an area with what seems to be a bed, that area is a lot darker than the front as to show that it is farther away from us.

C&C: Similarities in Formal Qualities



Remedios Varo Star Maker. 1958. Oil on fiberboard. Accessed March 2, 2022. <https://artistsproject.com/artists/remedios-varo/star-maker/>

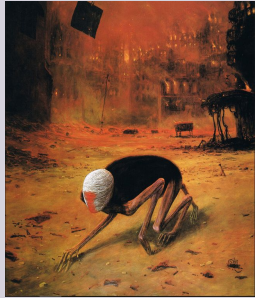
In both pieces, Remedios Varo uses the smallest subjects of the piece to make them have a bigger meaning. In *Star Maker*, the stars are a representation of hope, the hope she had to so harshly grasp onto during her time in Mexico, as during those times she had absolutely no support from the place she was supposed to call home. In *Harmony*, we see this same meaning being touched on except in form of two birds and a nest. On one side of the piece we see a bird fleeing, a **representation** of her fleeing Paris and Spain, the second bird is seen flying to the nest, the bird not once touches the nest, a representation of how she was not accepted in Mexico after having to flee two other countries. The nest is also placed in an abnormal place, perhaps a representation of how she felt out of place in her homeland. Both pieces represent these ideas with **movement** and **color**, as the bright red chair adds emphasis to the birds making them seen while the stars are against a very dark background making them very prominent. Then both subjects lead you to other parts of the piece. The stars in *Star Maker*, leads you to the woman and the moon, as if you follow the stars, each in a way point to the center structure, and in the top the stars are actually going inside of it. Leading you not only to another part of the piece but to a greater meaning, adding more onto what Remedios wanted to portray with this piece. It leads to the moon and person whom are a physical representation of feminism and isolation, the moon being the idea of hope in a world where women are seen below men and the person stuck in a small enclosure with the only light in their world being the moon.. The isolation aspect of *Star Maker* can also be compared to the bird, evoking the feelings of not belonging somewhere.



Remedios Varo *Harmony*. 1956. Oil on Masonite (accessed March 2, 2022). <https://www.wikiart.org/en/remedios-varo/harmony-1956>

The usage of **value** is prominent in both pieces as it is used to **light** colors and **dark** colors to bring an object to life. In *Harmony*, the artist uses more light values and colors to add contrast to the piece to bring attention to the the person, table and the woman near them. As if we see the second woman in the background, she has more darker tones while the one in the front is much more light in comparison, making the viewer's eye move and focus on her rather than the other figure. Light and darks are used to maneuver **movement** and what parts should stick out more than others, to be made memorable. In *Star Maker*, we see this same usage of value, the main focal point being the moon as its the lighting color in the piece against really desaturated dark colors. Also a bunch of light hues of gray for the background of where the person is makes it seem like there is a light source around (perhaps the moon) really accentuation the person there.

C&C: Similarities in Formal Qualities



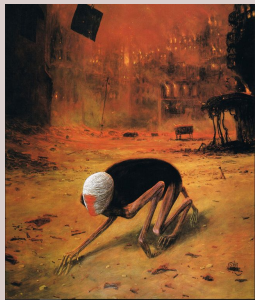
Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

Zdzisław Beksiński piece was his portrayal of war and total destruction it brought to those it set foot on. The painting provokes this uncanny feeling, it's **purpose** to make you feel fearful. He does this by using harsh **colors** and makes the main subject of his piece a fictional creature with disproportionate **elements**. Remedios Varo, *Harmony*, was made to evoke the feeling of calmness, although not the same approach to Zdzislaw piece, they both rely on their color palettes and the subjects of their pieces to make sure that feeling is presented well. Both artists metaphorically make their messages prominent, although may be hard to know from first glance. As well as fact that they make unrealistic creatures the center of their piece. These creatures are made to represent non-physical things, rather meanings and experiences. In Zdzislaw's piece, the creature is made to represent death, a hopeless creature in an endless loop of suffering. In

Remedios piece, we see women like creatures coming out from the wall, a visual representation of the unconscious mind, the creature helping the person finish a piece seen unnoticed by them. They really made sure to show the art of Surrealism, as well as working with the idea of **juxtaposition** and how far they can take their pieces to make them evoke their past experiences while also leaving the viewer with unanswered questions. The idea of juxtaposition is very broad, Remedios Varo does this by making inanimate objects come to life, the wall, and its creature coming out of it. Zdzilaws approach is very playing with the idea of reality versus fiction.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

Color is definitely a drastic difference between both pieces. Zdzisław Beksiński uses only red to yellow **hues** and makes the **darkest** tones very prominent, using jet black to show the general outline of objects. Even colors who are not in the red range, the white of the monster, have a small outline of red around it, not very noticeable but its their, showing how he likes to stay in that range of colors rather than add contrast between different colors. Remedios Varo rather uses warm and cool tones, that are very muted.

Both pieces create **contrast** between the darks and the lights, as well as creating **texture**, most evident in the skin of the creature by Zdzisław Beksiński and the stars on *Star Maker*.

C&C: Differences in Formal Qualities



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard



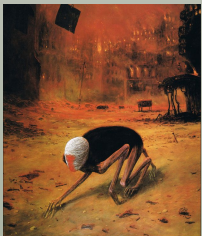
Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas



Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite

In *Star Maker* Remedios Varo goes more in detail towards what she wants to show in her piece. She wants to portray her feelings of isolations and the hope she so desperately build up to keep going. In *Harmony*, she wants to forget about these feelings all together, to stop thinking for a moment of time while she does artwork. *Star Maker* focuses solely on one topic, while *Harmony*, can be tied into multiple.

The usage of color and value are very different to one another. Although both work to make you feel something, their usage of colors play a role in what that said meaning is. Zdzisław Beksiński stays in the same color range and uses very rich colors, from black to really bright red. Even though he uses very bright colors, they portray this eerie feeling, grabbing your attention. Remedios Varo uses more soft muted colors with *Harmony*. These muted colors make her painting feel calm, evoking its purpose of a unconscious mind, as to be in that state, you must be incredibly calm with your surroundings.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas

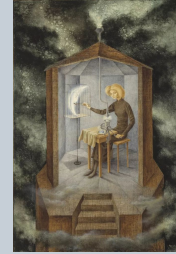
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C&C: Formal Qualities of Student Work and Artworks



Eyes on You by Lizbeth Chavez

A big difference between both pieces are the overall color palettes used. *Eyes on You* uses much harsher color, creating a strong contrast all throughout. There's Also a huge usage of lighting. Lighting isn't the strongest point in both of Remedios Varos' artworks, as both pieces are already very bright in color and have an evident light source all throughout. I used to like to illuminate the important parts of the piece. Remedios Varo herself uses very light and soft colors, these colors create an equal sense of lighting all throughout the piece.



Star Maker (1958) by Remedios Varo Oil on fiberboard

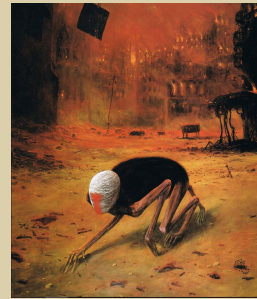


Harmony (1956) by Remedios Varo. Oil on Masonite



Pills by Lizbeth Chavez

Compared to my other piece, the color used for these two pieces are very different. Both create very strong contrast between the objects. In my piece, the **contrast** is very evident within the pills. Contrast is especially needed here in order to show that the pills are 3-dimensional rather than 2-dimensional, as well as to show how they overlap with one another. Similarly, in Zdzisław Beksiński piece, the only 3-dimensional object seen is the creature, as the shading done makes it feel almost alive.



Untitled. (1975) by Zdzisław Beksiński Oil on canvas