

'The Weeping Woman', by Pablo Picasso 1937



LINE

- Broken lines literally cut up the face evoking imagery of shattered glass.
- Thick outlines are used to make the face stand out from the background.
- Wavy lines are used to create the texture of hair.

COLOUR

- Bright primary colours seem to highlight the woman's pain and distress.
- Yellow and especially green could symbolise sickness as green is often used to show that a person is unwell.
- Picasso paints the woman's face grey/white suggesting that colour has been drained from her face.

SHAPE

- Sharp, triangular shapes are used throughout the painting which creates a distorted and unnatural portrait.
- Broken geometric shapes resemble shards of glass, emphasising the woman's pain.

tone and FORM

- Darker tones are used for the hair and coat which contrast with the lighter tones of the face creating visual impact.
- There are shadows, mid-tones and highlights present in the painting which creates a strange three-dimensional form.

TEXTURE

- The texture of hair is created by the use of wavy lines.
- Small dabs of paint are applied to the coat to create the texture of cotton or tweed.

PATTERN

- The repetition of wavy lines creates an irregular pattern in the hair.
- The broken geometric shapes of the face contrast with the vertical pattern in the background.

COMPOSITION

- Two angles are seen at once which is typical of Cubism, an art movement that Picasso helped to create.
- The woman is portrayed in a head and shoulder view suggesting that Picasso wants us to focus on her face.

MOOD/ ATMOSPHERE

- The colour is literally drained from the woman's face and she looks really in distress. This creates a very sad mood.
- The broken lines seem to literally cut through the woman's face which creates an extremely unpleasant and disturbing atmosphere.

MATERIALS/ TECHNIQUES

- Oil paint is applied with smooth brush strokes which make the colours look flat.
- Picasso does not blend the tones so much, preferring to use large areas of block colour. This gives the painting a very bold and graphic appearance.

STYLE

- The use of geometric shapes and multiple viewpoints is typical of Picasso's Cubist style.
- The bright yellow colours seem at odds with the subject matter as bright colours tend to portray happiness. Perhaps Picasso is using bright colours to highlight the woman's pain.

SCALE

- The scale of the painting is relatively small but has a powerful effect on the viewer because the woman's tortured face dominates the canvas.

SUBJECT MATTER

- The Weeping Woman is known as a 'postscript' to Picasso's famous painting 'Guernica' (1937).
- Guernica was a Spanish town that was bombed by the Nazis in 1937. The brutal slaughter of the innocent people of Guernica affected Picasso greatly and he painted a massive mural in response.
- A weeping woman appears in Guernica and Picasso created numerous studies of this character while working on the painting.
- So obsessed did he become by the figure of the weeping woman that he continued to paint her even after the large mural was completed.