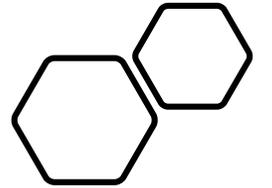


# Comparative Study

IB Visual Arts SL



# INTRODUCTION



In this comparative study, I will be looking at three paintings; Mad Woman by Chaïm Soutine, Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump by Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Adieu by Georg Basquiat. The first one belongs to the Expressionist movement and the last two belong to the Neo-expressionist movement. In this study, not only do I strive to gauge the differences and similarities between all three artists and the two movements, but I also aim to compare how the different artistic styles and methods are used to portray the emotion which is the main goal of the two artistic movements.





# Chaim Soutine

(1893-1943)

“It is the first time in my life that I have not been able to do anything. I am in a bad state of mind and I am demoralized, and that influences me. I have only (made) seven canvases. I am sorry.”

- Chaim Soutine, 1923

Chaim Soutine is a Russian-French painter born in 1893 in Smilovichi, Belarus, however, he is from Jewish origins. In 1913, Soutine moved to Paris to attend the École des Beaux-Arts. From there, he would grow to become one of the most influential painters in the school of Paris at the height of the modernism era.

Soutine belonged to the expressionist movement, a movement originating from Germany in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Expressionists aimed to stray away from the impressionists by aiming to focus on portraying emotional experiences rather than real life situations. This was achieved through techniques such as distortion of figures and excessive brush strokes.

Soutine’s art mostly portrayed darker themes such as death, war, and depression. He achieved this through the use of methods such as figure distortion and rough textures. He drew his experience from his own depression and short temper and the world wars going on during his lifetime.

Soutine died from a perforated ulcer in 1943 while on the run from the Gestapo because he was a Jew.

# Mad Woman (1920)

This is an oil painting from a series of two paintings by the Expressionist artist, Chaim Soutine. In this painting Soutine aims to depict a mysterious and unnerving woman. Soutine's use of darker color values in this piece helps to generate the dark mood of this piece. Additionally, the contrast between the mottled brown background and the bold red coat helps to draw the viewer's attention to the woman. The woman's features are very angular, and she draws herself in which helps to create the unnerving tension within this painting. In addition, the woman's beady eyes, messy hair, and asymmetrical features also help add a sinister feel to the painting. Lastly, Soutine created this piece with harsh brush strokes and disorganized lines. This helps give the impression that the woman is twitching and shifting about nervously. Also, Soutine places the subject of this piece, the woman, in very close to the frame. This helps create a feeling of uneasiness and waiting. All these elements help this art piece feel more unsettling and alive with movement.



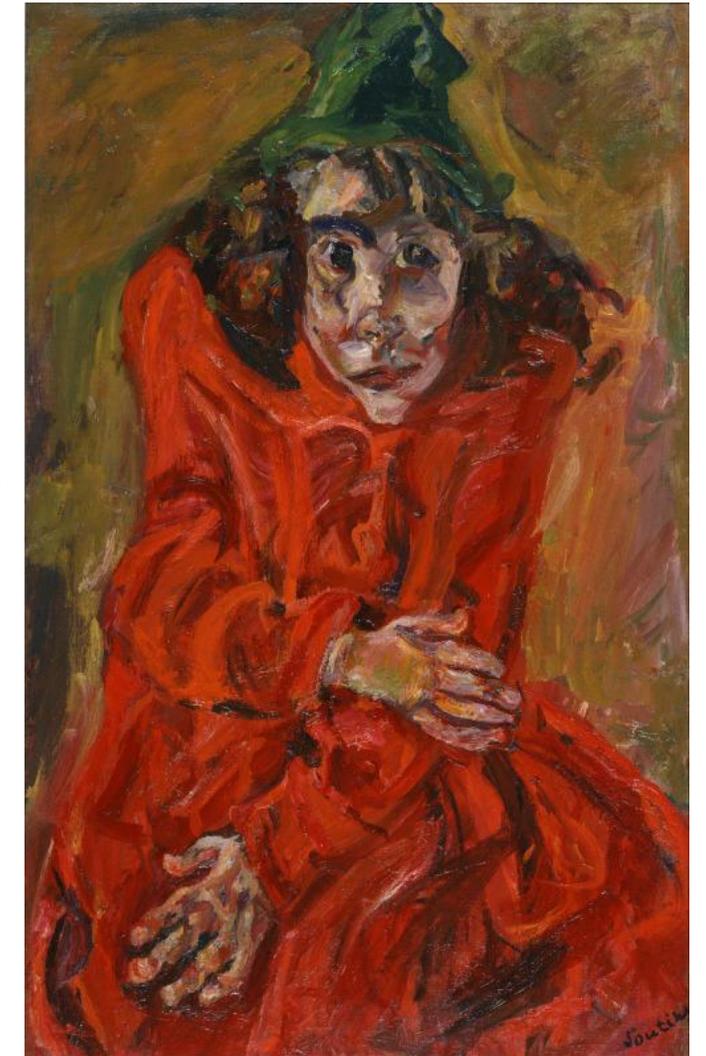
**Beady eyes**

**Messed up hair**

**Asymmetrical**



**Harsh brush strokes (texture)**

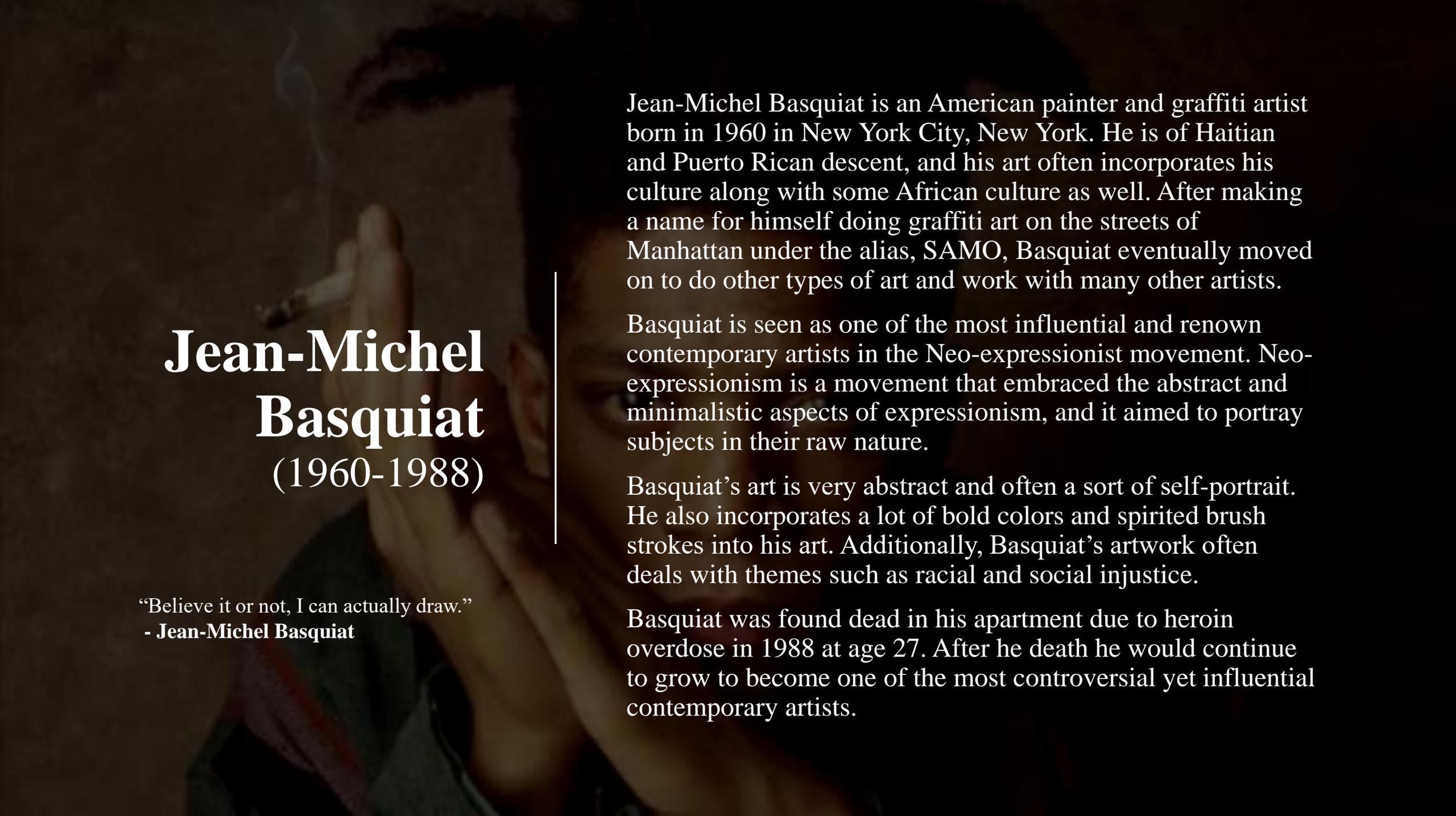


Chaim Soutine

Mad Woman (1920)

96 cm x 60 cm

National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo



# Jean-Michel Basquiat

(1960-1988)

“Believe it or not, I can actually draw.”  
- **Jean-Michel Basquiat**

Jean-Michel Basquiat is an American painter and graffiti artist born in 1960 in New York City, New York. He is of Haitian and Puerto Rican descent, and his art often incorporates his culture along with some African culture as well. After making a name for himself doing graffiti art on the streets of Manhattan under the alias, SAMO, Basquiat eventually moved on to do other types of art and work with many other artists.

Basquiat is seen as one of the most influential and renown contemporary artists in the Neo-expressionist movement. Neo-expressionism is a movement that embraced the abstract and minimalistic aspects of expressionism, and it aimed to portray subjects in their raw nature.

Basquiat’s art is very abstract and often a sort of self-portrait. He also incorporates a lot of bold colors and spirited brush strokes into his art. Additionally, Basquiat’s artwork often deals with themes such as racial and social injustice.

Basquiat was found dead in his apartment due to heroin overdose in 1988 at age 27. After he death he would continue to grow to become one of the most controversial yet influential contemporary artists.

# Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump (1982)

This is a Neo-expressionist art piece by American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. This painting depicts a boy playing in a johnnypump with his dog. A johnnypump is a Manhattan term for a red fire hydrant. Basquiat takes this otherwise happy and blissful scene and twists it to become something wild and bursting with chaotic energy. Basquiat achieves this primarily by taking this simple artwork and adding a primitive twist to it. Additionally, Basquiat's use of wild brush strokes and bright colors help generate the chaotic energy and movement of this piece. There are also a lot of sharp and angular lines in this piece that help create instability within this piece. In addition, Basquiat painted the boy and the dog black, and he gave the dog sharp teeth. All these elements of this painting come together to attribute a chaotic and rabid energy to an otherwise happy scene.



**Sharp and Angular lines**



**Wild brush strokes (movement)**



**Sharp teeth**

Jean-Michel Basquiat

Boy and dog in a Johnnypump (1982)

240 cm x 420.4 cm

The Stephanie and Peter Brant Foundation, Greenwich

A photograph of Georg Baselitz, a German painter, standing in a gallery. He is wearing a dark suit and a black hat, smiling. Behind him are two large paintings on the wall. The painting on the left is a dark, abstract work with some figures. The painting on the right is a large, abstract work with a blue background and dark, expressive brushstrokes.

# Georg Baselitz

(1938-present)

“I had always loved expressionist painting, like every European. In fact I admired it all the more because these were precisely the paintings despised by my father's generation.”

- **Georg Baselitz**

Georg Baselitz, born Hans-Georg Kern, is a German painter, sculptor, and graphic designer born in Deutschbaselitz, Germany, in 1938. Baselitz was born and raised in the World War II era, and this aspect of his life is often portrayed in his paintings. Currently, Baselitz is seen as one of Germany's top living artists.

Additionally, Baselitz is known as one of the artists that pioneered the revival of the Neo-expressionist movement in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As mentioned before, many of Baselitz's art portrays his experiences growing up during World War II. However, he is most renowned for his paintings of upside-down figures which aim to draw the viewers' attention away from the figures and towards the overall artwork. Additionally, Baselitz's work is characterized by his use of rough brushwork and bold use of color.

# Adieu (1982)

This is an oil painting by German Neo-expressionist artist, Georg Baselitz. According to Baselitz, this painting is his take on the separation between two people. The painting is done in Baselitz's upside-down style in which he aims to remove attention from the two figures and direct it towards the overall painting. The figures are drawn in a circular shape while the background is in a checkerboard square pattern. Although Baselitz does not give away the meaning behind his pieces, I believe this contrast means that the subjects are separated from the situation. Therefore, it can be seen that their separation is being interpreted as a minor affair by Baselitz. In addition, the painting is primarily yellow and white which is a bright color choice considering the possible sadness there would be in the event of a separation. This supports my earlier interpretation that this separation is seen as a minor affair. Additionally, the painting is done with rough brushstrokes which gives the figures a feeling of movement which helps to bring the painting alive.



**Circular  
bodies**

**Square  
checkerboard  
background**



**Rough brush  
strokes (movement)**



Georg Baselitz

Adieu (1982)

205.2 cm x 118.3 cm

Tate Gallery, London

# Mad Woman vs Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump



Although both artworks discard realism in favor of depicting emotion, the Neo-expressionist piece goes to a much more extreme point. In the Neo-expressionist painting the artist has completely abstracted the figures and places complete attention on the emotion generated by the painting.

Both paintings use colors to creation an emotional experience through this piece. While Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump generates chaotic and primal emotions through the use of multiple splashed of colors, Mad Woman generates emotions of uneasiness through the contrast of darker colors and the bold red.

The expressionist pieces uses a lot of clustered and disorganized wavy lines while the Neo-expressionist pieces uses sharper and more angular lines. This causes more wild and chaotic energy and movement to be generated from the Neo-expressionist piece, while the expressionist piece generates more uneasy movement and energy.



Both of these paintings use rough brushwork. However, it can be seen that the brush strokes used in the Neo-expressionists piece is much more excessive than that of the expressionist piece. This difference cause more wild energy to be generated from the Neo-expressionists painting.



# Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump vs Adieu



Although both of these paintings belong to the Neo-expressionist movement, color is being used in a much different way in both pieces. In Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump, Basquiat uses color to generate raw and chaotic energy. However, in Adieu, Baselitz uses color to generate emotional unattachment from the scene.

The brushwork in both of these paintings are very characteristic of the Neo-expressionist movement. In both paintings we can see how wild and excessive brushstrokes are used to generate movement and energy within the pieces.

Although both of these pieces differ in their artistic styles and methods, it can be seen that they both belong to the Neo-expressionist movement. This can be seen through their focus on generating an emotional atmosphere for the viewer rather than creating a realistic piece.

Both of these pieces use some form of figure abstraction to help further enhance the emotion experience generated by the paintings. This is highly characteristic of my Neo-expressionist pieces. In Adieu, the figures are drawn in round geometric shapes which helps to separate them from the square background. This is done to further elevate the theme of emotionless separation between two people. In Boy and Dog in a Johnnypump, the figures are done with more jagged and angular lines. This helps to enhance the feeling of chaos within the piece.



# Adieu vs Mad Woman



These two pieces are highly similar because their main focus is to create an emotional atmosphere. This aspect is highly characteristic of the Neo-expressionist movement and the expressionist movement. Mad Woman aims to generate emotional uncertainty and nervousness. On the other hand, Adieu aims to generate emotional unattachemnt and lightheartedness.



Both of these pieces use excessive brushstrokes to help generate the emotion of the piece. From this similar aspect, we can see how the

style of the expressionists, exemplified by Mad Woman, influenced the style of the Neo-expressionist, exemplified by Adieu.

We can see how both pieces have discarded realism in order to generate an emotional atmosphere through the abstraction of the figures. However, while the expressionist piece takes a more subtle approach to this, the Neo-expressionist piece takes this to a much greater extreme.

The pieces differ in the way the figures are used as the subject of the painting. In Adieu, Baselitz draws complete attention away from the figures by placing them upside-down, and he direct attention towards the emotional experience created by the painting. However, in Mad Women, the woman in placed in the complete center on the frame at center of attention, and although the woman herself is not the subject of this piece, she is used to generate the nervous and sinister mood of the piece.



# Conclusion



To conclude, this comparative study has taught me a lot about the similarities and differences in the artistic methods used by different artists in order to create emotion within their pieces.

Additionally, I have come to understand for myself how the Expressionist movement directly influenced the Neo-expressionist movement in terms of artistic style.



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