Introduction

A significant amount of art forms have been used in order to express the emotions and thoughts of others, be it through music, writing, or paintings. It can convey emotions such as happiness, anger, sadness, and many others. Art is also used as a form of protest. It has been used often in order to express the urge to protest against the violence of society, and to search for peace.

Research Question

How did the East Side Gallery art show reflect themes such as freedom, justice, and peace.

Background

• The Berlin Wall was built during the Cold War, August of 1961. It’s purpose was to separate the Eastern Communist and Western Capitalist sides of Germany.
• The artwork expressed the peoples’ need for freedom, justice, and peace between Germany’s divisions.
• During that time period, a numerous amount of females artists either used a male name, their initials, or remained anonymous.
• The wall was torn down in 1989, and the creation of the East Side Gallery began in February of 1990.
• Many female artists contributed to the East Side Gallery by rebuilding and restoring their pieces.

Materials & Methods

Materials

- Seven Pieces of Artwork: These pieces of artwork were chosen based on the titles as well as whether or not the paintings were worked on by a female artist.
- Fourteen John Jay students
- A Survey: Likert Scale was developed to present the data collected.

Methods

Through the website gallery website, we found that there were 118 artists who originally took part in the East Side Gallery. Of the 118, 40 artists took part of the restoration. Of the 40, 14 were made by a female artist. And of the 14, 7 pieces of restored art were chosen to see how those pieces fit the following themes: freedom, justice, and peace.

Findings

Through the survey one can see that most paintings were commonly associated with freedom and peace, while justice scored low. This may be due to the fact that the paintings in the East Side Gallery were created after the collapse of the Berlin Wall when it seemed justice was finally brought to the country of Germany. It may also be that the meaning of “justice” varies from person to person, while the meanings of “freedom” and “peace” have a common meaning.

Conclusions

The general message of the East Side Gallery was to “document that time of change and express the euphoria and great hopes for a better and different future that characterized the time of when the Wall came down.” With the urge to express euphoria and great hopes for the future, one thinks of a sense of justice that will spread through the country, a sense of freedom that every citizen can obtain, and a sense of peace.

As seen through the graph:
• Freedom scored the highest.
• The score of Peace fluctuated.
• Justice scored the lowest.

The current data has been collected from recent students, while the paintings depict a time period before our own. The historical information gathered from that time period may alter our perception of the artwork. However the reconstruction of the East Side Gallery depicts the past being brought back to show a time of change.

References

- http://www.eastsidegallery.com/
- http://www.eastsidegallery-berlin.de/
- http://www.dailysoft.com/berlinwall/photographs/eastsidegallery/eastsidegallery_02.htm
- http://www.newseum.org/berlinwall/