

Role of online world and technology in fine arts

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ABSTRACT

In the arts, technology has always placed limits on how artworks are produced and distributed. Art worlds are not isolated cultures but highly influenced by the changes in surrounding society. The production of culture perspectives that have developed in sociology since the 1970s show how the elements of culture are shaped by systems within which they are produced and preserved. The music business is an example of how external factors, such as information and communication technologies (ICTs), have altered production conditions and methods. In the case of fine art, online communication that makes it easy to manipulate, copy, distribute information, and interact with an audience has challenged the exclusivity of artwork and the artist's role.

The Internet technically provides visual artists with an opportunity to directly communicate their art in a global context and to a wider audience than ever before, without going through gatekeepers such as art critics, publishers and galleries. In a few studies, the Internet is primarily looked upon as a conventional platform for display. When looking at comparable fields, such as the music industry where the production conditions have radically changed the business due to file sharing and online social networks, there is an extensive amount of research. The Internet gives musicians a direct channel to their fan base and enables collaborative networks at a distance, but the music industry is still an important gatekeeper when it comes to promoting the artist and setting the norms. The Internet has improved non-established musicians with the means to act without gatekeepers in the music industry, there is an incredible amount of work to create, distribute and generate money from music.

Keywords: fine arts, online, internet, technology.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, fine art prints have become one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the art market, as they provide an opportunity for collectors to own art by master modern and contemporary artists at affordable price points. Serigraphs are a particular type of high quality, limited edition print made on high quality paper in collaboration with the artist. Using the original artwork as the master guide, a different stencil is created for each color that will compose the image. Colored ink is pushed through its corresponding stencil onto the paper, repeating this process with a separate stencil for each color; a single serigraphic print can have as many as 25 colors or even more. Each print is then numbered and signed by the artist. Depending on the artist's historical importance and the specific serigraph's popularity or rarity, the value of a serigraph can significantly appreciate with time. To learn more about the medium, please read our blog post on the techniques and value of fine art prints [1].

In academic traditions, fine art is developed primarily for aesthetics or creative expression, distinguishing it from decorative art or applied art, which also has to serve some practical function, such as pottery or most metalwork. In the aesthetic theories developed in the Italian Renaissance, the highest art was that which allowed the full expression and display of the artist's imagination, unrestricted by any of the practical considerations involved in, say, making and decorating a teapot. It was also considered important that making the artwork did not involve dividing the work between different individuals with specialized skills, as might be necessary with a piece of furniture, for example.[1] Even within the fine arts, there was a hierarchy of genres based on the amount of creative imagination required, with history painting placed higher than still life.

Historically, the five main fine arts were painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry, with performing arts including theatre and dance.[2] In practice, outside education, the concept is typically only applied to the visual arts. The old master print and drawing were included as related forms to painting, just as prose forms of literature were to poetry. Today, the range of what would be considered fine arts (in so far as the term remains in use) commonly includes additional modern forms, such as film, photography, video production/editing, design, and conceptual art.

One definition of fine art is "a visual art considered to have been created primarily for aesthetic and intellectual purposes and judged for its beauty and meaningfulness, specifically, painting, sculpture, drawing, watercolor, graphics, and architecture." [3] In that sense, there are conceptual differences between the fine arts and the decorative arts or applied arts (these two terms covering largely the same media). As far as the consumer of the art was concerned, the perception of aesthetic qualities required a refined judgment usually referred to as having good taste, which differentiated fine art from popular art and entertainment. [4]

The word "fine" does not so much denote the quality of the artwork in question, but the purity of the discipline according to traditional Western European canons. [6] Except in the case of architecture, where a practical utility was accepted, this definition originally excluded the "useful" applied or decorative arts, and the products of what were regarded as crafts. In contemporary practice, these distinctions and restrictions have become essentially meaningless, as the concept or intention of the artist is given primacy, regardless of the means through which this is expressed. [7]

The term is typically only used for Western art from the Renaissance onwards, although similar genre distinctions can apply to the art of other cultures, especially those of East Asia. The set of "fine arts" are sometimes also called the "major arts", with "minor arts" equating to the decorative arts. This would typically be for medieval and ancient art. [8].

Origins, history and development

According to some writers, the concept of a distinct category of fine art is an invention of the early modern period in the West. Larry Shiner in his *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (2003) locates the invention in the 18th century: "There was a traditional "system of the arts" in the West before the eighteenth century. (Other traditional cultures still have a similar system.) In that system, an artist or artisan was a skilled maker or practitioner, a work of art was the useful product of skilled work, and the appreciation of the arts was integrally connected with their role in the rest of life. "Art", in other words, meant approximately the same thing as the Greek word "techne", or in English "skill", a sense that has survived in phrases like "the art of war", "the art of love", and "the art of medicine." [8] Similar ideas have been expressed by Paul Oskar Kristeller, Pierre Bourdieu, and Terry Eagleton (e.g. *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*), though the point of invention is often placed earlier, in the Italian Renaissance; Anthony Blunt notes that the term *arti di disegno*, a similar concept, emerged in Italy in the mid-16th century. [9]

But it can be argued that the classical world, from which very little theoretical writing on art survives, in practice had similar distinctions. The names of artists preserved in literary sources are Greek painters and sculptors, and to a lesser extent the carvers of engraved gems. Several individuals in these groups were very famous, and copied and remembered for centuries after their deaths. The cult of the individual artistic genius, which was an important part of the Renaissance theoretical basis for the distinction between "fine" and other art, drew on classical precedent, especially as recorded by Pliny the Elder. Some other types of object, in particular Ancient Greek pottery, are often signed by their makers or the owner of the workshop, probably partly to advertise their products.

The decline of the concept of "fine art" is dated by George Kubler and others to around 1880. When it "fell out of fashion" as, by about 1900, folk art was also coming to be regarded as significant. [10] Finally, at least in circles interested in art theory, "'fine art" was driven out of use by about 1920 by the exponents of industrial design ... who opposed a double standard of judgment for works of art and for useful objects". [11] This was among theoreticians; it has taken far longer for the art trade and popular opinion to catch up. However, over the same period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the movement of prices in the art market was in the opposite direction, with works from the fine arts drawing much further ahead of those from the decorative arts.

In the art trade the term retains some currency for objects from before roughly 1900 and may be used to define the scope of auctions or auction house departments and the like. The term also remains in use in tertiary education, appearing in the names of colleges, faculties, and courses. In the English-speaking world this is mostly in North America, but the same is true of the equivalent terms in other European languages, such as *beaux-arts* in French or *bellas artes* in Spanish.

Cultural perspectives

The conceptual separation of arts and decorative arts or crafts that have often dominated in Europe and the US is not shared by all other cultures. But traditional Chinese art had comparable distinctions, distinguishing within Chinese painting between the mostly landscape literati painting of scholar gentlemen and the artisans of the schools of court painting and

sculpture. Although high status was also given to many things that would be seen as craft objects in the West, in particular ceramics, jade carving, weaving, and embroidery, this by no means extended to the workers who created these objects, who typically remained even more anonymous than in the West. Similar distinctions were made in Japanese and Korean art. In Islamic art, the highest status was generally given to calligraphy, architects and the painters of Persian miniatures and related traditions, but these were still very often court employees. Typically they also supplied designs for the best Persian carpets, architectural tiling and other decorative media, more consistently than happened in the West [12].

Latin American art was dominated by European colonialism until the 20th-century, when indigenous art began to reassert itself inspired by the Constructivist Movement, which reunited arts with crafts based upon socialist principles. In Africa, Yoruba art often has a political and spiritual function. As with the art of the Chinese, the art of the Yoruba is also often composed of what would ordinarily be considered in the West to be craft production. Some of its most admired manifestations, such as textiles, fall in this category [13].

Performing arts

Music is an art form and cultural activity whose medium is sound organized in time. The common elements of music are pitch (which governs melody and harmony), rhythm (and its associated concepts tempo, meter, and articulation), dynamics (loudness and softness), and the sonic qualities of timbre and texture (which are sometimes termed the "color" of a musical sound). Different styles or types of music may emphasize, de-emphasize or omit some of these elements.

Music is performed with a vast range of instruments and vocal techniques ranging from singing to rapping; there are solely instrumental pieces, solely vocal pieces (such as songs without instrumental accompaniment) and pieces that combine singing and instruments [14].

Dance

Dance is an art form that generally refers to movement of the body, usually rhythmic, and to music, [15] used as a form of expression, social interaction or presented in a spiritual or performance setting. Dance is also used to describe methods of nonverbal communication (see body language) between humans or animals (bee dance, patterns of behaviour such as a mating dance), motion in inanimate objects ("the leaves danced in the wind"), and certain musical genres. In sports, gymnastics, figure skating and synchronized swimming are dance disciplines while the kata of the martial arts are often compared to dances.

Theatre

Modern Western theatre is dominated by realism, including drama and comedy. Another popular Western form is musical theatre. Classical forms of theatre, including Greek and Roman drama, classic English drama (Shakespeare and Marlowe included), and French theater, are still performed today. In addition, performances of classic Eastern forms such as Noh and Kabuki can be found in the West, although with less frequency.

Film

Fine arts film is a term that encompasses motion pictures and the field of film as a fine art form. A fine arts movie theater is a venue, usually a building, for viewing such movies. Films are produced by recording images from the world with cameras, or by creating images using animation techniques or special effects. Films are cultural artifacts created by specific cultures, which reflect those cultures, and, in turn, affect them. Film is considered to be an important art form, a source of popular entertainment and a powerful method for educating – or indoctrinating – citizens. The visual elements of cinema give motion pictures a universal power of communication. Some films have become popular worldwide attractions by using dubbing or subtitles that translate the dialogue.

Cinematography is the discipline of making lighting and camera choices when recording photographic images for the cinema. It is closely related to the art of still photography, though many additional issues arise when both the camera and elements of the scene may be in motion.

Independent filmmaking often takes place outside of Hollywood, or other major studio systems. An independent film (or indie film) is a film initially produced without financing or distribution from a major movie studio. Creative, business, and technological reasons have all contributed to the growth of the indie film scene in the late 20th and early 21st century.

Poetry

Poetry (the term derives from a variant of the Greek term ποίησις (poiesis, "to make") is a form of literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language—such as sound symbolism, phonaesthetics and metre—to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of, the prosaic ostensible meaning [16].

Other

Electronic media – perhaps the newest medium for fine art, since it utilizes modern technologies such as computers from production to presentation. Includes, amongst others, video, digital photography, digital printmaking and interactive pieces. Textiles, including quilt art and "wearable" or "pre-wearable" creations, frequently reach the category of fine art objects, sometimes like part of an art display.

Origami – The last century has witnessed a renewed interest in understanding the behavior of folding matter with contributions from artists and scientists. Origami is different from other arts: while painting requires the addition of matter, and sculpture involves subtraction, origami does not add or subtract: it transforms. Origami artists are pushing the limits of an art increasingly committed to its time, with a bloodline ending in technology and spacecraft. Its computational aspect and shareable quality (empowered by social networks) are parts of the puzzle that is making origami a paradigmatic art of the 21st century.

ROLE OF ONLINE TECHNOLOGY IN FINE ARTS

As scholars from Goffman (1969) to Butler (2004) have shown, identity is not something that is stable but rather something performed and reproduced by constant repetition. By performing the norm for being an artist, one becomes an artist. The fact that identity is created does not however mean that the individual is free to change his or her identity; language and society's norms and rules place limits on what is conceivable and feasible (Foucault, 1982). The artist's norms are decided by the field of art, which according to Bourdieu (1990) includes all social actors sharing the same *illusio*, the belief in art and the importance of this field. Players may include policy-makers, arts administrators, funding agencies, gallery owners, museum curators, the audience as well as artists themselves. To establish a career and acquire influence, what Bourdieu [1] calls a "succession strategy", is made by following the established rules of the field.

This field of art can be described as structured by the tension between two opposite systems of production (Bourdieu, 1985). On the one hand, there is the field of large-scale production where the general audiences who are outside the realm of artistic producers, consume art with low cultural and economic value. On the other extreme there is the field of restricted production, where short-term economic gain always is secondary to recognition from other art producers (Figure 1). In order to enjoy a high reputation in this field, one should be independent and not allow oneself to be guided by the market or the rules of society [5].

An artist's reputation depends on how he or she navigates the artistic field, balancing between playing a role in the small circle of cultural producers on the field of restricted production and gaining a broader cultural significance and qualifications for much-needed scholarships and prestigious assignments. More detailed rules of the game, however, are unclear and in constant renegotiation. The ability to act in the field is limited by "the objective relations" in which the artist's identity is enacted, such as the dominant ideology, normative practices and power structures arising from the unequal distribution of artistic capital within the field. Bourdieu (2000) claims individuals adopt different strategies in the field depending on their *habitus*, meaning that individual variables such as ethnicity, gender and class determine the individual's possible strategies on the field. However, by obtaining a sound knowledge of the field, the individual can change his or her opportunities and also alter the rules of the game (Bourdieu, 2000). In this perspective, online communication changes the objective relations that limits the field, and could thus help some individuals with a high level of digital literacy in their succession strategy [6-8].

Bourdieu's view of the art world as a field in which different subfields and genres are fighting over a limited space has often been criticized as being too concerned with power and domination. Becker (1982) suggests a less structuralistic and more agent-centered idea of the field of art, as a network of smaller interconnected art worlds, consisting of individuals sharing the same interests and belongings. Becker's rhetoric is less warlike than Bourdieu's and more optimistic regarding the individual's opportunities to create his or her own conditions. He stresses the possibility of creating alternative art worlds when the established ones do not fit. In this perspective, new communication technologies, like the Internet, enable the establishment of new art worlds as it makes it easier to connect people with the same interest. Becker considers that

every art world is a meaning-making culture with its own conventions and way of making art. These conventions create both limits and meaning, but without these boundaries, there is no art [10-12].

Even though Bourdieu and Becker represent different perspectives in the sociology of art, they share an approach to art as a collective process. Heinich (2009) questions this collective perspective, suggesting that sociology should create explanations based on understanding the actors' own logic, where art most often is seen as an expression of a unique singular individual and not something collective. She also suggests that motivation in art has more to do with recognition of peers than an urge to gain power and dominate. Heinich (1997) claims that since modernism, singularity has been the central value regime of art. In her study of Van Gogh, Heinich shows how the modernistic concept of art is a matter of belief, where the artist functions like a martyr for a religion that worships singularity. Singularity is not a stable regime but something that coexists in parallel with other values, such as the value regime of the artisan or the value regime of the professional networker. These unstable paradoxical belief systems are what constitute art [13-14].

However, making art is also to make something public. An alternative concept to belief systems, fields or art worlds is therefore to talk about art as public spheres or just publics. Dewey uses the word public as something that is formed when a group of people recognize each other, when they perceive how something affects them, collectively, this gives them a reason to acknowledge each other and to come together (Dewey, 2012). A public is not only something that one belongs to, 'public' is also a property of something one makes, which is why it is an interesting term in research as it connotes an action that can be observed as it is made public. A public is nothing a person belongs to, but something people perform and participate in. The public, the place where identity and interest become public, is thus both a product of social or political action and a ground for further action. This means that the mode of public expression, whether it is a conversation, an online chat, an original painting or a printed book, is central for the forming of publics. Following the thoughts of Latour (2005), this means that not just humans are forming publics, communication technologies also have an active part.

Boyd [2] pointed out how 'networked publics' — online social networks — differ from other distribution forms as technology 'collapses' multiple contexts, making different publics collide as the lack of spatial, social and temporal borders makes it more difficult to control the environment and address specific publics. For the same reasons, the boundaries between the private and the public are more difficult to maintain (boyd, 2011). This convergent architecture of networked publics means that the individual continuously needs to present a coherent identity that make sense from different publics' perspective, while acting this identity on different stages, and in different types of modalities (Papacharissi, 2010). Different stages for an artist can, for example, be blogs, articles, Web pages or gallery openings. Types of different modalities are, for example, artworks, photos, reviews or interviews. Papacharissi (2010) suggests that mastering this art of distributed self-performance creates a sense of place from an individual perspective. The enactment of a public self thus becomes an important literacy.

Identity-performance has been central to the arts since modernism, where artists' brands have been maintained over time and space through the publication of books and articles in newspapers controlled by gatekeepers such as art critics and art historians (Bydler, 2004). It is therefore interesting to see how individuals in this culture enact public selves online [15].

At the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (Kungliga Konsthögskolan, KKH) the emphasis is not on teaching a range of artistic techniques; the majority of students have already spent several years of art studies in preparatory art schools. The focus is more on career management, to create and maintain an identity for the artist on the art scene (Gustavsson, et al., 2008). While the school offers the latest technology for artistic production such as 3D scanners and courses in animation and Web production, KKH is also known as one of the most conservative art institutions in Sweden. Previous studies of the institution were conducted before the introduction of the Internet and mobile communication. Therefore, it is interesting to see how actors in this context adapt to the changes in communication technologies and how they manage their professional identity expressed in aesthetics and other online practices. The main question is how young artists in this context use different online communication tools and what these practices means for the individual when establishing an identity as an artist [16].

CONCLUSION

Most minimalist sculptors used the services of industrial or specialised fabricators to create their works in unconventional ways, using non-traditional materials and manufacturing processes. Primarily, the phrase referred to a group of American sculptors who rethought their environments in an effort to question received wisdom and show everyday items in novel contexts. Rather of relying on symbolism or obfuscation, these artists encourage spectators to reconsider the relationship between form and space. Unlike a figural sculpture, which draws all attention to itself at the expense of its surroundings,

Minimalist art merges into the environment in which it is shown. Minimalism was both a counterpoint to the ascendance of Postmodernism and a significant impact on subsequent developments in Conceptual and Performance art via its emphasis on the influences of context and the theatricality of the viewing experience.

Conceptual art, which has been around for almost 50 years, has shown that aesthetic evaluation is not the only possible technique to evaluate works of art. Although it was first established in New York, the word "postmodernism" has since expanded to include a variety of artistic practises that originated roughly simultaneously in the United States and Europe. Artists that work within the conceptual tradition advocate for the primacy of ideas above technical competence or aesthetics in contemporary art. Little matter the art medium of an artwork, it is seen as no more than a vehicle for communicating the idea. In its purest form, Conceptual art dispenses with the physical item altogether in favour of a purely conceptual presentation.

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