Explorations & Redefinitions Of New Media Aesthetic Concepts In Contemporary Art Culture

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EXPLORATIONS & REDEFINITIONS OF NEW MEDIA AESTHETIC CONCEPTS IN CONTEMPORARY ART CULTURE

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

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ABSTRACT

My thesis pursues the exploration, invention, and redefinition of the role of Aesthetics through artistic practices of 3d digital graphics, 2d print, video, and sculpture.

Aesthetic research altruistically generates visual installations informed by utopian idealism, science and technology centric culture, pop culture iconography, art history, international contemporary art and design.
I dedicate this pursuit to my parents, my brother, my entire family, and all those endeared.
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

Manifesto

From underneath the umbrella of contemporary America’s state of prosperity and global prowess, my works reflect an underlying social commentary of the protected, educated, often pointless, and idle, suburbanite youth, which fixates its gaze past the residual effects of the Nuclear Age dilemmas, pining for a progressive, less turbulent, constructive, and utopian ideal.

With art as the intermediary of its creator, personal narratives and cultural statements fuel the visual dialog of the diverse society in which I was raised. Eclectic multimedia fragments of orderly structure, rigidity, avatar insignia, machine, science, invention, and technology propagates the form and content. My interests in anthropology, evolution, interconnection, and progress permeate the subject matter.

As mass media, pop culture, anime, consumer culture, and gaming culture, bombards my suburbanite realm, natural tendencies reveal content in a scientific, informative, escapist, humorous, whimsical, lighthearted, and satirical manner.

My endeavor is to invent, play, wrench, entertain, and experiment with a purpose, in relevant contribution to society, and to provide such developments to a universal discourse in public forums. To that end, my work seeks to personify such intentions by way of an amalgamation of
personal narratives and cultural statements. Recent works find a satiric avatar. A stout, comical, sprite character runs creatively amok, and is delivered by way of Intermedia.

Intermedia is an expansive medium, allowing for a bounteous experience, fostering the artist’s and viewers’ vast sensibilities. It is open-ended, fluid, and progressive; unbound of convention. Intermedia is transporting with conceptual content blurring the lines of reality by existing in various forms of physicality. My subject matter is grounded in time by documentary 2d prints and photographs. The sculptures in clay, wood, glass, steel, organic, and electronic materials, present the true sense of physicality, and the animations reveal a deeper sense of behavioral characteristics in passing time by way of video projection. These physical artifacts are presented to satirically formulate a humanist purpose for aesthetics unto society.
da Vinci and Beuys

Leonardo da Vinci

da Vinci’s legacies from the Renaissance movement have remained monumental, influential, and iconic still today. Inspiration and kinship in theme are found specifically with Da Vinci’s works involving scientific exploration of environments and life forms. His research that sought altruistic inventions, such as the castle fortifications, the various modes of transportation by sea, land, and air, and related technological inventiveness, still continue to intrigue me.

Joseph Beuys

I also strongly identify with Beuys, a German born artist integral to the 1960’s Fluxus Movement, his critical theory of egalitarianism, calls to break esoteric capacities of art communities, and descriptions for utopian direction of art institution and state.

"The dilemma of museums and other cultural institutions stems from the fact that culture is such an isolated field, and that art is even more isolated: an ivory tower in the field of culture surrounded first by the whole complex of culture and education, and then by the media which are also part of culture...Our concept of art must be universal and have the interdisciplinary nature
of a university, and there must be a university department with a new concept of art and science." - Joseph Beuys
CHAPTER 3:
TRADITIONS & NEW MEDIA

Traditions

Traditions of drawing form the foundational building blocks of all my artistic endeavors. It is the root form of all my work.

Drawings

I utilize drawing as the root visual code, as what binary code is to a computer programmer.

Figure 1: "Graphite life drawings series 1 and 2," varied sizes
Its code carries central themes of residual human activity: actions, intentions, process, and precise movements.

Figure 2: "Brush pen life drawings series 1," varied sizes

It is conducive to exploring and documenting the external stimuli, such as the deep curiosities with life forms and zoology.
I’m also inquisitive of life span, of early and later stages, and of mortality by way of photography.
I am inquisitive of residual human byproduct/activity, man-made objects, and objects of legacy. And I seek to explore and reflect cultural place, and what it is to be human.
New Media

Personal scholarship seeks to explore and redefine the role of aesthetics through various artistic practices including 2d print, 3d digital graphics, video and installation. The emphasis is on producing new media that is informed and driven by utopian ideal, science, technology, pop culture, international contemporary art and design.
Rhizome Maps

The first series in New Media, addressed a questionnaire covering the relationships, and interconnectivity between avenues of aesthetic endeavors, personal scholarship, meanings, existentialism, and philanthropy. The resulting works delivered forms of rhizome mappings. Positive results found aesthetic impact to be contemplative and innovative in visual form, yet scientific formalism and heavy didactics creates a disconnection to the inquiry of the common art viewer within gallery settings.

Figure 6: "Rhizome maps #1 and #2," 2d prints, varied sizes
Environment Settings

The second series conceptualized the development of an immersive contemplation setting for presenting the rhizome findings. The resulting forms were surprisingly coinciding with the Gauss bell curve, epistemology, and became the catalyst for the development of a future-planned fifth series dealing with utopian living space, urban planning, and social science.

Figure 7: "Serial form seating series 1," digital graphic prints, varied sizes
Experience Series

In the third series entitled “Punchinello Datum,” a challenge to the esoteric undertone of art spaces occurs. It explores a human fantasy of discovering a different intellectual entity, equal or exceeding. This series projects strangeness in life form, a grotesque in aesthetics, and a transporting experience of discovery. It injects the beauty of satire, yet respect for traditions. It also involves character and caricature of this particular aesthetic endeavor and an aberrant experimentation of “satire” and “homage” within contemporary gallery art space.

A positive relationship was found between the Installation and viewers’ experience. Content provided an entertainingly engaging visual experience as opposed to the more literary read through of the previous rhizome mappings.

To bring about a context for the usage of “strange,” I share a kinship with a sentiment from the following quote:

“I don’t think my work is so strange. It’s just a matter of having the discipline to go the whole way with an idea, to stretch it as far as it can go.” - Mathew Barney
Specific prints pay homage to Eadweard Muybridge, known for his early use of multiple cameras.
to capture motion. Also layered are inquiries of satire and absurdity within gallery spaces.

Figure 9: ”Running Motion #1,” digital photograph, 40” x 28”

Here we were able to discover at one point, two feet do indeed leave the ground.
“Crate Hospice” explores critical perspectives on the visceral experience and the intellectual experience. It received expected responses of maternal instinct, curiosity of mystery, elation, and social interaction with character.
Figure 11: "Crate Hospice," wood, monitor, size variable

Paradox of Art and the grotesque is presented in gallery space.
Figure 12: "Light box #1," mixed media
References to medical culture and scientific methods take place.

Figure 13: "Light box #2," mixed media

Rhizome of character make up is quantified by scientific and artistic processes. Also layered is satire of body-centric perfectionism ideal and homage to art fused with scientific exploration.
The art begins to take on a life of its own, documented by artifact.
Figure 15: "Self Portrait," bird feathers, 8” x 10”

“First Sightings” documents behavioral characteristics, reflection of voyeurism culture, and the looming surveillance culture affecting societies (such as the mass surveillance dilemma affecting entire cities like London, England).
Figure 16: "First Sightings," video projection, live action, computer generated 3d animation, size variable
X-Ray computer generated imagery is explored as a new form of drawing.

Figure 17: "X-ray," 2d print work, 40” x 28”

Artistic distortions relay emotive form.
Artifact documentations are a reoccurring element.
This assemblage explores the nature of organic intake, consumption of air, sustenance, and stimuli.
Figure 20: “Light box #5,” squirrel tail and medicinal tools

Continuing with themes of consumption, this related piece deals with combustion into another material and the paradox of earth and metal material in unison.
Various prints make way for Cold War reference, insignia, and homage to my father’s military service. They pay homage to his battalion’s creations of buildings, bridges, hanger bays, and fortifications, in the altruistic service of country.
Figure 22: untitled, 2d print, 40” x 28”

They reference a past time with affinities for machines, collections of blueprint aircraft specification sheet data, and they make way for an experiment with transport forms.
Within the sequential process, the fourth series continues to explore notions of advancing science, speed, and progress.
Futurist notions of speed and progress still carry a valid voice in the modern day.
Figure 25: "Ingenium Transportare Series," digital prints, size variable

Intentions of creative play in form with virtual engineering, and virtual sculpting for maximum air flow to combustion are emphasized.
Figure 26: "Ingenium Transportare Series," digital prints, size variable

Emphasis is placed on providing iconic form reflecting our contemporary design.
And ultimately this series, within the context of our time, provides a symbolic reflection of the speed of information in our digital age, and our technology centric culture.
Future Research

Future research has social sciences becoming art. Works are progressing to sociological imagination and ideals: urban and environmental planning, how art/science integrates, informs, and impacts government, law, health, utility, and transportation.
Purpose of Aesthetics

Art and Science are one in the same. They are the same in that both are here to improve the human experience. In optimum form, they are philanthropic.

In our current times, a major portion of current trends in contemporary art reveal a defeatist, concluding, grotesque, empty, sarcastic, and angst-filled voice. Perhaps it is due to how critics, curators, and money continue to dominate and corrupt the very source of what art is to be made and/or sold- it corrupts the artist.

We witness daily in academia where a substantial portion of the formative undergraduate fine art students are increasingly less motivated, and intimidated, to become a part of the contemporary art community, opting to become commercial artists, to self-commodify, and to obtain sustainability through various thriving computer graphic industries. In these scenarios, the formative artist is more interested in acquiring trade skills, versus acquiring, and nurturing, a progressive and critical aesthetic theory.

The culprit, arguably being the art market and gallery systems, creates skepticism due to perceived ulterior motives involving lopsided profit sharing, and self-promotional published articles at the expense of artists- empty aspirations to the formative artist. It fixates to brand
artists, to motivate artists by money and fame, to make the artist dependent on appraisal, to make art works into something else other than purely progressive idea. In this common scenario, the “fine artist” is not much different than the “commercial artist,” not much different from a small cog in a machine, versus being a free voice of aesthetic invention. In that sense, youth concerned with sustaining a career involving the arts are most inclined to “earn” quantifiable trade skills and “earn” a well paying art-related job, versus rubbing elbows with critics and curators in order to sell work, or having to prance (dance?) and be audition-minded for potential exhibition opportunities and potential gallery sales. This strongly speaks of a movement in artist empowerment.

The purpose of Aesthetics is to achieve a balance of power within the private sector by addressing artist empowerment. Artist empowerment can benefit by developing sustainable autonomy from the art market driven by fine art collectors and critics. It can benefit by directing the emerging voices, which seek to expand knowledge, to contribute ideas of human progress in alternate spaces, independent film, subculture art niche, independent bookstores, and internet venues- all of which are less esoteric, carry a greater breadth of audience, and currently show promise in becoming the prominent vehicles of choice. Within these venues, the empowered and sustained artist can thrive and carry an extended ability to invent new media and point toward progressive ideals.

Ultimately, in these open spaces where balance can be achieved, the resulting work may manifest a new voice, a forward thinking movement, and a continuation of connecting world community
to innovative scholarship in pursuit of what science and technology continues to successfully make strides for - Philanthropy.
REFERENCES
