Chapter 1
Looking and Seeing:
Communication through Art: Creating, Conveying, and Responding to Art

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the artistic process and then encourages the readers to engage in visual and verbal projects. It contains a comparative inquiry about the ways of designing, conveying, and receiving images. The chapter comprises a comparative inquiry and a discussion about creating, conveying, and receiving art as three basic processes in communication in the arts: articulation of a visual message through creation of an electronic picture and its transitions; communication with a viewer; and reception of the artwork by a viewer. They appear to be decisive for both the traditional and digital artwork. Thus, the three levels in a creative process comprise an artist as a sender of a message (an idea), media of art (a process), and the viewer as the receiver (rethinking of an idea, interactive response by reshaping a work, new interpretation or a new idea).

INTRODUCTION

It might be worth a while to consider what would we gain and if we would loose anything due to the advance of new media arts involving web based, interactive, and virtual multidimensional forms. Many years ago Timothy Binkley (1990) described computer imagery as both abstract and concrete; one can produce different kinds of art forms defined by a collection of numbers in a program, each of them being an original. Artists using electronic media may discern a distinction between a natural form in physical sense and a

form in aesthetical sense, i.e., creation of mind. Human-made creations have been seen as art when they displayed traits common to all art works and restricted only to art works. Inquiries about defining the nature and properties of art works expanded into areas of new media art, real-time, interactive, and virtual installations, visualization, and simulation of process/product relations. An artistic event depends often on the viewer's real-time interaction with the computer program. Art does not always intentionally communicate a message to the viewers; it may be created without such intent but there is always a possibility of finding the message by the audience. To employ the full potential of the computer for art creation,

both artists and viewers merge their scientific inventiveness with the demands for artistic quality of the product; it's a well established opinion among computer scientists that computing helps connect the talents of artists with those of scientists. Hence we may ask several questions about how visual communication has been changing in digital environment; how the transfer of an artwork through the web, e-mail, compressed video, or an augmented reality environment changes the meaning of an original work; and what happens to the artist, the message conveyed, and the viewer if the net art, electronic writing, generative imaging, animation, virtual environment, or streaming performance is sent to another continent the same moment it is being created, so manipulation with a message of the image becomes possible for both its sender and the recipients.

CREATING AN ARTWORK

Artwork as Expression of a Message

One can say art saves human perception accordingly. A semiotician and philosopher Umberto Eco (1990, p. 166) writes, "Art is created by imagination, which organizes its own vision, giving to life a harmonious whole. If there exist any rules or preexisting structures (because of tradition, language, culture in general), imagination destroys them and rebuilds them with a kind of nonanalyzable impulse. The creation has a new, original, harmonious form like that of a living being." Phases of visual problem solving may go through looking, seeing, imaging, and conveying our solution. In similar terms we can see nonverbal communication through art as creating a picture, conveying a message, and receiving the message by viewers, which involves articulation and exchanging codes along with social interactions. In further text we will examine the three phases of such creative process.

An artist may choose to create an artwork by looking from a distance at a wall-size image projection from a computer, tablet, or a smart phone, having electronic tools placed conveniently by the hand or using a touch screen visual display that can detect the presence and location of artist's finger or hand within the display area. Thus, there is enough distance for a good examination of the artwork and the effects of applying particular changes in a program. Artists can just see brilliant colors from a distance when they create electronic art. New media take on a growing number of varied forms, mostly digital, often interactive, networked, linked, open-ended and just open to reorganization by its users. For example, there is 2D digital and analog art, 3D digital art and design, time-based art, sound art, animation from traditional frame by frame animation to 3D computer animation, bio-inspired art, the virtual reality art, art using location-based technologies such as augmented reality, GPS-based and mobile applications, alternate reality games, and games as an art form.

The same may apply to the web-based art, visualization, and simulation. The net art combines elements of programming, electronic writing, digital imaging, animation, virtual environments, streaming performances, and it creates a shared social networking space. It has happened once at an art exhibition that a personal e-mail checked by someone on a computer used for a web-based art project accidentally replaced the projection on the ceiling so all viewers could examine it. Thus, for a short moment it became a piece of art.

Saving Good Decisions within the Artwork

The making of a painting or a digital work consists of a round of changes made on traditional materials, computer screen, a touch screen of a tablet computer such as iPad, or a smart phone, leading to the personal, thus the unique expression. Within the digital mode of creating, computer memory gives us the option of preserving brilliant deci-

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