

Chapter 5

Art and Design Criticism in Art Production and Instruction

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines some of the changes in views about art, criticism of art works, and art-related teaching objectives, as they evolve with the developments in the new media art, works created through the Web, social networking, art created on portable devices, as well as information technologies. First, this chapter examines the changing meaning of the aesthetics notion in mathematics, science, information art, and information technology, as well as changes in the views about instruction in art criticism. Examination of these approaches is then contrasted with the models adopted in education. The four-part model used in instructional design, based on audience, outcome, environment, and usability, is adapted to suit the needs of art criticism. Materials based on a literature review provide the rationale for a four-part model to facilitate art critique. The next part is about the changing dimensions of criticism in the new media art and product design in respect to the product semantics analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Every act of art creation resonates among perceivers in the form of criticism. Also, education in the arts is under constant critical assessment. It is often considered the first program to cut when budget proves to be tight. In this chapter, discussion of art criticism, juxtaposed with a model of assessment, is aimed to analyze current cultural patterns and place the reader's interactive project in a critical framework.

Few people would contradict the opinion that assessment in art is nearly impossible because there are almost no generally accepted definitions and standards. The idea of the existing standards

tells mostly about formal requirements along with the aesthetic values of the works, and everybody can be right or wrong, with their contrasting statements. Combining the roles of a teacher and an artist (a teacher-artist or an artist-teacher) is often considered valuable because such person is well aware of the creative instructional processes, so one can perform better. However, assessment of the artist-critic may be biased because of a personal art statement this person expresses: a critic has usually his/her own expectations about ethnicity, culture, gender, new communication technologies, new media art, etc. When we encounter a critic-artist or an artist-critic person, we can expect that this individual is familiar with the creative process not only in traditional

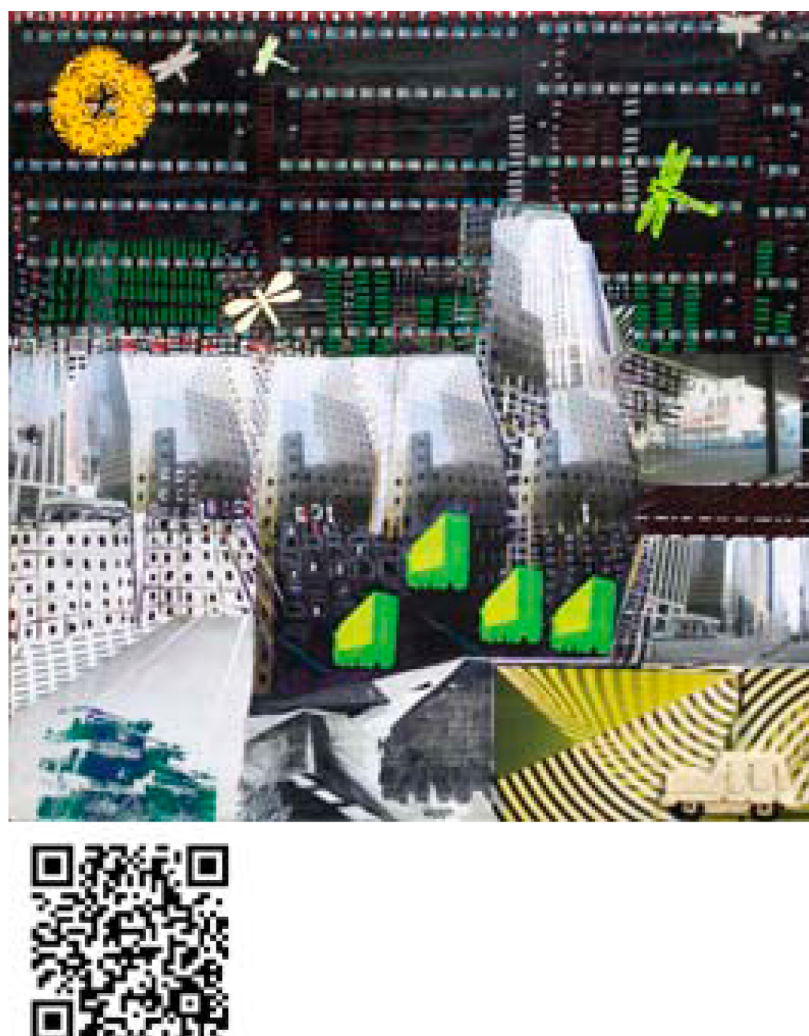
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media but also in new media art. For this reason many hold that we need standards for designing curricula for the new media art critique programs: for this reason, a student of the graduate program in art criticism should complete courses in art to acquire skills in drawing, sketching (on paper and on tablet computers such as iPad), computer graphics, graphic design, computer art/3D, time based art such as video, animation, and web design, and even programming for web, smart phones or tablets. With the growing role of the networked technology in creating and disseminating art works one may expect that understanding the web and

technology driven demands is a requirement for a new media art critic.

Figure 1, “Choice Based Narrative” is a story about a truck driver transporting hazardous cargo who used to detach himself from possible dangerous scenarios by imaging good things he might convey to his passengers when he additionally works as a taxi driver. Not thinking about one’s fears may diminish potential danger. The whole story may in some way relate to some dilemmas concerning the existing standards and formal requirements in art criticism.

Figure 1. Anna Ursyn, “Choice Based Narrative” (© 2010, A. Ursyn. Used with permission)



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