

FROM ANALOG TO DIGITAL ART: NEW CONTEXTS AND NEW PROPOSALS

Although digital art has been a reality since the 1960s, the ease of reproducing these works made it almost impossible to assert the originality and value of the medium. Just recently, the media reported that Christie's sold *Everydays: The First 5000 Days* for just over \$69 million. The work, a collage made with 5000 images over more than thirteen years, has made its author, Mike Winkelmann—better known as Beeple—, one of the three most sought-after living artists in the world, along with Jeff Koons and David Hockney. This phenomenon shows once again the current disruptive trend in the art market. NFT digital assets ensure the authenticity and ownership of a work with no margin of error and they guarantee that this work is not a copy, operating as digital units of value that allow interaction on networks based on codes while acting as a container that transforms a digital work of art into a virtual object that can be collected. This phenomenon implies an evolution of art collecting: now, digital art has the same value than a *physical* work of art—i.e. rarity and uniqueness—and, at the same time, it maintains its unique quality of infinite visual accessibility in its native format. NFTs will not replace traditional artworks but they will enable a market that develops around a new generation of artists and functions as a catalyst for digital art linked to the Ethereum monetary network. This new system allows for all kinds of exchanges and investments in photos, illustrations, podcasts, news, reports, videos, memes, gifs, etc. Nevertheless, is crypto-art here to stay or will it be just a fad? And, if so, what value do works of art have in the new context favored by the Internet? We face with a new and complex reality where everything is relative.

In the field of today's creativity in general and in artistic creativity in particular, the values of corporeality, temporality and tangibility have given rise to new modes of creation that require a new way of investigating the

artistic phenomenon. It is no longer necessary for works to be material: the virtual and the ephemeral reign in this new world. Art historians will have to deal with the processes of digital creation and the circulation of the work. The blockchain—a data structure whose information is organized in chains of blocks connected with metadata and which, among other applications, has allowed the development of cryptocurrency monetary networks—will be the equivalent of the archives and documents that have so far allowed us to advance in academic research, since they will provide information about the work and its journey. The owners of artistic works will not be anonymous individuals or museums, but a long chain of owners who will potentially have a work that will be at the same time in millions of places for their enjoyment and enjoyment. The aesthetic experience will be conditioned by the distance between the virtual object and the digital subject (creator and spectator) and will have a potential character, in the Aristotelian sense.

We are facing a paradigm shift regarding the conception of what art is and all that it entails since, for example, we are not talking about the possession of material goods but of digital goods. This leads us to reflect once again on the main questions raised by postmodernism, such as the questioning of the author and the possibility or impossibility of contributing something new, something that has not yet been done. Artistic appropriationism bets on fragmentation and collage, among other procedures, with the purpose of recovering the past or certain works of art and rereading them in a new context. A new appropriationism emerges by transforming analogical works into digital works. The fact that these works become ubiquitous, distributed objects makes possible new markets, new forms of commercialization and new channels, more adapted to these new supports. The Gutenberg revolution seems to be repeating itself today. The democratization of art revives a new episode in the history of creativity. The elitism flaunted by wealthy social groups when owning a material work is called into question, since it completely alters the notions of property and ownership.

The dissemination and consumption of creative content is radically revolutionizing the art market. Works created with NFT and Blockchain can become money immediately thanks to the so-called *decentralized finance* (DeFi), which are fully in tune with new payment tools, identification and smart contracts without intermediaries that allow reaching a wider audience, to propose a more global promotion, and to favor a new model of collecting and patronage.

There is an artistic example that I find interesting to bring up: the case of Refik Anadol, whose work, based on artificial intelligence (AI), can be found in Nifty Gateway. Anadol, faced with the incomprehension and disin-

terest of galleries and traditional art centers, has chosen to make him known through this new digital system. Thanks to Blockchain technology, it can keep track of its works and know at all times where they are and who owns them.

Digital artists can market their works, establish their value and sell them to collectors who now have a record of ownership. The value of the work is related to the number of people interested in it and the starting price determined by the artist.

There is no doubt that, in the more or less near future, research in the artistic field will continue to be carried out according to traditional methods and practices. However, it will have to accept this new reality that the digital environment offers us. The processes, methodologies and results will go through all the changes implied by the digital, by the augmented realities and the channels of co-creation, by stimulating interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinarity. But all this that we relate in these pages is yet to begin and what we still have now are the academic art history researches based on the analogical, such as those presented in this miscellaneous issue that includes very interesting authors and themes from very different periods, with very heterogeneous research angles and perspectives.

«Els ulls del Vescomte. Mirades, mutacions i trasbalsos del sepulcre gòtic de Ramon Folc de Cardona, el *Prohom Vinculador*, a Poblet», by Pere Beseran, focuses on the recent restoration of the tomb of catalan viscount Ramon Folc VI de Cardona and its relocation inside the church of the monastery of Poblet. His essay raises the hypothesis about the factitious character of the present structure of the tomb and the possible *damnatio memoriae* inflicted on the face and eyes of the recumbent, based on the legend about the viscount's fight with the diabolical bats that blinded him, in an interesting case of rereading medieval representations after they had been manipulated.

«Dos manuscritos en busca de autor: Pedro de Toledo, copista e iluminador en Sevilla», by Jorge Jiménez López, deals with the grouping made by Archbishop Diego de Anaya (1357-1437) of one of the most remarkable book collections of late medieval Castile. The two selected manuscripts (BGH, Ms. 2638 and Ms. 1906) allow us to delve into the commissions of his final stage, at the head of the Sevillian diocese, taking into account the testament to Pedro de Toledo and the proximity of the repertoires with his works that outline the artistic personality of the controversial character.

The research by Lucía Lahoz Gutiérrez, «Apostillas a un debate historiográfico. La capilla de San Jerónimo del Estudio de Salamanca», is focused on the Chapel of the Study of Salamanca. She determines its original location in the chapel, which was a religious, civil and representative area,

essential for the institutional functioning. The enclosure hosted both the meetings of the cloister and the celebration of the festivities scheduled in the school calendar. The construction of a library in upstairs implied a complex renovation work for which an altarpiece was commissioned to Felipe Bigarni and Juan de Flandes, and which concluded with the unification of both spaces. The author also questions the authorship of the *Cielo* de Salamanca, traditionally attributed to Fernando Gallego, and proposes an iconological reading of this architecture.

«Les col·leccions bibliogràfiques d'Alexandre de Riquer a la Biblioteca Joaquim Folch i Torres del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya», by Yolanda Ruiz Ruiz, focuses her attention on the private library of its former owner, as well as on his collection of artistic bindings and on an incunabulum copy of the *Breviarium cartusianum*. Thanks to Alexandre de Riquer, the Joaquim Folch y Torres Library of the National Museum of Art of Catalonia (MNAC) preserves an interesting bibliographic heritage collection.

«Traditional Japanese pottery and its influence on the American mid 20th century ceramic art», by Johannes Tsoumas, aims to address the significant influence that post-war American ceramic art received from traditional Japanese ceramic ideals. The author, in order to document the reasons for this new order of things, studies and analyzes the work of important American ceramicists of the time, and highlights the social, philosophical and cultural context of the era in which the whole endeavor takes place.

Pablo Sánchez Izquierdo, in «Tan nuestro, tan de nuestra tierra. La consagración del paisajismo en Alicante a través de la literatura de Gabriel Miró y la pintura de Emilio Varela», establishes interesting relationships between the writer's novels and the artist's oil paintings, as well as their reception in the city according to the interest shown by the critics and the exhibitions held thereafter.

As far as cinema is concerned, the article «La representación de los niños en los largometrajes de ficción de Flora Gomes: diálogo entre el arte africano y el cine», by Bárbara Beatriz Laffita Menocal, shows the points of convergence and divergence between the representation of children in African art and in the fictional film production of Flora Gomes, a native of Guinea Bissau. She presents, in a summarized way, the plastic typologies in which the child appears, identifies the contexts in which these themes appear and analyzes how Gomes show it in his films.

Guadalupe Lucero, in «Saraceno y la araña: la figuración posthumana, entre reapropiaciones y derivas no antrópicas», makes a critical reading of the recent work of Argentine artist Tomás Saraceno from the perspective of posthuman materialism to point out how this example reproduces a logic that makes everything that exists a quarry available for the extraction of

resources teleologically destined to the human existent. The author coins the term *posthuman figuration* to think of non-anthropocentric alternatives that enable imaginary modes of being beyond any human prerogative.

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