Intersection of the New Technologies in the Creation of Images (Fine Art) at the End of the XX Century

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Introduction

Technology has always been developed into perfecting the image and this may be seen as our beliefs and wills for understanding the world through its appearance. Technologies have always been present throughout the art history due to their intrinsic connection with image production, therefore we will reflect to what extent digital technology interferes with contemporary artistic procedures.

The work is a combinatory addition of mobile probabilities, where the spectator is placed and transformed, allowing a mutation of attitudes, creating a complex and paradoxical situation, because nobody wants to state a model (in the sense of a truth), but an opening path for the physical and intellectual experience of art.

Framework of the problem

The focus of this paper is the result of the intersection between technology and interactivity, which drives us to perceive the development of the idea of shared production. The work, on being revealed in the aspiration of interactivity enounces a positioning that is linked to the technological means, on space and proceedings issues.

Art is indeed a product of the human freedom, not seen as a need of the instinct face to the intention, but a primordial freedom, without direct intention as an orientation, where one finds out the causes and tries to foresee the consequences.

Images — from technology to desire of interaction

When speaking of images (fine art images), we believe they have always been a dialogue between matters, subject and mediums, chosen by *Man* to communicate their surrounding world — being it of a religious/spiritual nature, a translatable/verifiable nature or even of emotional/abstract nature.[1]

Between the XV and the XIX centuries we witnessed an *esthetization* of the image. Artists started, in a conscious way, considering the ways of production for art works and writing with the intention and aim of spreading their purposes. Artists, as a reflection of society in general, became further aware of the development of science. A strong reason for the end of the classical period and the start of modernity stands essentially in the transformation operated by technology as a result of the Industrial revolution.

Representation supported by devises/apparatus — images were a result of observed situations — as were before us — theatrical in the sense of the physical observer in the physical theatre, which Peter Galassi (1981)[2] talks about, and now (after photography) it has became fictional. This connection is undoubtedly a hint of modernity. Notice that art — value freed from the transcription of the visible — is only possible form the middle of the XIX century onwards, where technology (photography is highly responsible) allows that representation to get way from Men's hands. The change from handcrafted made technology into industrial technology aroused one of the main crises installed in the value of the artistic object as a consequence of the technical processes of reproduction and the consequent growth of visual practice, as stated by Walter Benjamin (1936), verifying a direct relation between "reproducibility" and "loss of aura" of the art work.

The second half of the XX century can be designated as the "civilization of the image", or more precisely according to Font Doménec (1985) "the era of simulation". The world becomes absorbed by images in a desperate act of consumption, resulting in a peculiar form of seeing and understanding it. As Baudrillard

(1992) claims, we live in a world of simulation, in a world where the largest function of the sign is to make reality disappear, and at the same time to mask this disappearance.

There exist an almost fanatic religiosity of this "civilization of the image" in possessing images that are associated excessively with the idea of desire. Knowing the world through their images, we meet the "Real" through their iconic representations. The image takes charge of covering the distances, the absences and the unknowns.

The arrival of the numeric binary (digital) at the image is a technological advent that became a hinge point to understand images nowadays. The artist is equipped from now with a model of a completely new machine, the computer, which no longer seeks, in its primacy, to represent the world but to simulate it. Besides, the image and subject now have the capacity to interact instantly in real time. This immediate situation (now) is quite relevant, because it brings into the artistic field of the image the concept of producing an instantaneous surprise, the decision in the moment — without the responsibilities of the continuous. We no longer care about what is represented but what it represents. We adopt an ideological attitude where the consequences are not true consequences but results.

The numeric advent not only has an effect on the subject, it also affects the image and the object. Object, subject and image are now in the same pool, and none of them have privileged positions. The real world and the virtual world are forced to commute. Object, subject and image derived in relation to each other, pervade and hybrid themselves. According to Flusser (1998), images materialize certain concepts regarding the world, exactly the same concepts that orientated the construction that gave form to them. Therefore, the image — the picture — unlike registering impressions of the physical world automatically transcribes certain scientific theories into images, or to use the words of Vilém Flusser (1998), it "transforms concepts into scenes". The symbolic forms (images) that those machines build are already, somehow, previously enrolled (advanced-written, programmed) in its own conception and in the conception of programs through which they operate. That means the apparatus (computer) condenses in their material and immaterial forms a certain number of potentialities and each technical image produced represents the accomplishment of some of those possibilities.

Computer software comprises formal actions of a group of known procedures, largely a part of the constituent symbolic elementals system. Their articulation rules are inventoried, systematized and simplified, which, as far as the formal actions of known procedures are not related to aesthetic principles, instead of bringing the generic user closer to the act of creativity it puts them in a passive "copy-and-paste" condition. The widespread multiplication of template models around, leads us to an impressive standardization, to a prevalent uniformity of the solutions, to an absolute impersonal way, where we have the impression that everything that is exhibited for the first time we already have seen.

Digital technology does not only alter, in depth, the status of the artistic object, but also the relationship between the producer and the receiver (since the sixties the idea of the public's creative participation is one of the appealing concept/aspects in the artistic universe). The most positive characteristic of the digital revolution appear in the participatory act of constructing the object: instead of the passivity induced by the old-fashioned process of making art objects, the digital material propitiates the action, the physical modification of what is received: a production of possible worlds, an alternative to the existing material world. That is the end of the traditional epistemological position of the subject (we no longer keep the image at a distance). That, more than ever, continues the limitless expansion of the claim of subjectivity.

Conclusion

The production of images has always been conditioned by the presentation space and the medium supported by evolving technologies and techniques in a constant search for an objective search for transcribing reality. According to the symbolic value of the image it has always been considered a substitute of reality directed into the subjective personal construction. Images are a system of beliefs which seek to replace absence. This dynamic system that absorbs and converts the observer transforming the notion of window to the world into a passage in the world. The notion of passage implies a real time action implicated in the interactive system. The observer now has a conscious active role in the space of the image, converting the passive action of contemplation into an immersive space — emphasizing the experience.

Space and time became an influent and decisive condition in the production of the image — committing physical space and observer to be considered as intrinsic elements of the production of the work through the immersion of the observer. Interaction is something that only happens if the observer gets involved (interaction versus convergence). It is in the convergence of actions that the interaction happens, adding the idea that it is in the interactivity that we find the message — where the active quality (the appeal to the intervention of the observer) contrasts with the passive act. By this convergence, digital technology allows a role in the edition of the contents of the images, creating new types of visual structures and assigning subjective narratives — the observer was converted into the user and the passive attitude became consciously active, enhancing the idea of that the work does not inhabit in the imagination of the individual but in the collective. When we try to find through the image participation, we expect a new individual to cooperate, becoming an individual constituent element that qualifies the artistic object in a plural-multi-disciplinary order. By the fact that the interactive spaces provide an immersion, in the quality of active participatory persons, we enter inside the image in real time, becoming simultaneously witnesses and authors of the creative process. The individual creator has been converted into the collective creator that characterizes the dynamism of the interactivity and places the physical and mental space in dialogue with the potential of the work.

By the action of the adjusted participatory interactivity, in the convergence of interest, new territories are developed providing "The Open Work" (Umberto Eco) in the state of work-in-progress. This progress mediated by technological devices allows the spectators engagement physically with the work, totalizing a multi-integration of the senses (kinesthesia). Thus, the technology (over all the digital one) is liberating because it has the ability to transform an end into a beginning. At the end the user completes the work, and by the fact of this kind of work being changeable and not predictable, it never is concluded, but it goes concluding itself for the diversity according to the users expectations given by each individual.

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1   Indeed, since pre-history until today, images, assembled with other mediums, characterized, periods or epochs that are rudely designated for – "Ancient World", "Middle Age", "Renaissance" and "Modern World". Certainly that these designations are divisibles, depending on the type of analyses it brings with it, cfr., Janson, H.W., História da Arte, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkien, Lisboa,1977.

2   Galassi states that photographic vision, its objectivity and informalism of appropriation, was already embedded in painting, and that we can verify , essencialyessentially in portraits and landscapes, that photography took hold of the representation mode – of which already depended communication through images – such as: framing, point of view, themes, etc. Galassi, Peter, Before Photography – painting and the invention of photography, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1981.

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