

Elements and Principles of Art for The Post-Modern Age

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Appropriation



One of the most striking things about many of the curriculum projects was the routine use of appropriated materials. For the students, recycling imagery felt comfortable and commonplace. If one lives in a forest, wood will likely become one's medium for creative play. If one grows up in a world filled with cheap, disposable images, these easily become the stuff out of which one makes one's own creative expression.

Juxtaposition



The term juxtaposition is useful in helping students to discuss the familiar shocks of contemporary life in which images and objects from various realms and sensibilities come together in intentional clashes or in random happenings.

Recontextualization



Often the meaning of the artwork is generated by positioning a familiar image in relationship to pictures, symbols, or texts with which it is not usually associated. Hannah Hoch, one of the early Dada proponents of the new medium of photomontage created many provocative works by recombining found imagery.

Layering



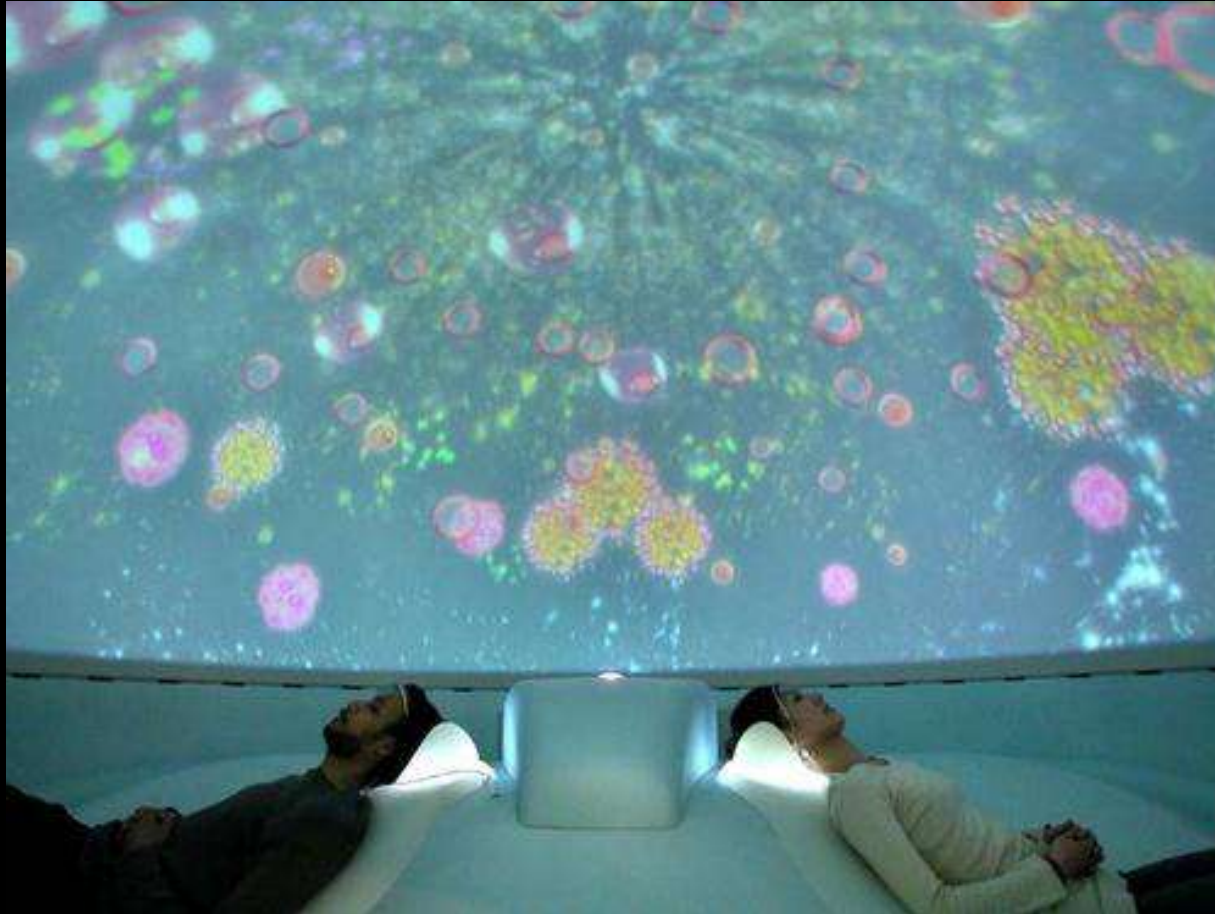
As images become cheap and plentiful, they are no longer treated as precious and placed carefully side by side, but instead are often literally piled on top of each other. Layered imagery evoking the complexity of the unconscious mind is a familiar strategy of Surrealist art and of early experimental approaches to photography.

Interaction of Text and Image



The text does not describe the work, nor does the image illustrate the text, but the interplay between the two elements generates rich, (and ironic), associations about gender, social possibilities, and cleanliness. Students making and valuing art in the 21st century must to be taught not to demand the literal matching of verbal and visual signifiers, but rather to explore disjuncture between the two modes as a source of meaning and pleasure.

Hybridity



Today artists see the continuity of their bodies of work as the themes they explore, rather than the particular media they use. Many artists routinely incorporate various media into their pieces--whatever is required to fully investigate the subject. New media such as large-scale projections of video, sound pieces, digital photography, and computer animation are all routinely used by contemporary artists to create sculptural installations—indeed a multi-media approach to artmaking is now encountered in contemporary museums and galleries more frequently than traditional sculpted or painted objects.

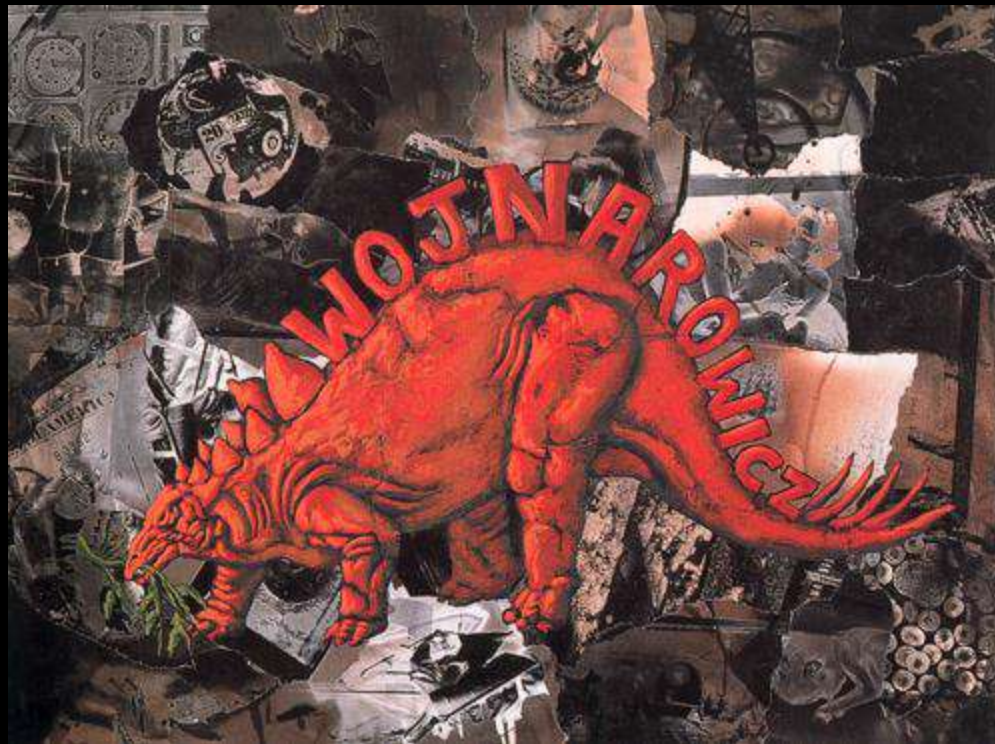
The concept of hybridity also describes the cultural blending evident in many artists' productions. The New York and Tokyo-based Mariko Mori draws on costuming, make up, popular culture, and traditional Buddhist beliefs to create increasingly complex photographic and video installations. Her work explores boundaries between spirituality and cyberculture, between the human and the re-creation of the human through technology (Fineberg, 2000).

Gazing



The term gaze is frequently used in contemporary discourses to recognize that when talking about the act of looking it is important to consider who is doing the looking and who is being looked at (Olin, 1996). Gazing, associated with issues of knowledge and pleasure is also a form of power—controlling perceptions of what is “real” and “natural.”

Representing



U.S. urban street slang for proclaiming one's identity and affiliations, Representin', describes the strategy of locating one's artistic voice within one's personal history and culture of origin.

One of the goals of most art classes is meaningful self-expression; students understand how to be a representing, self-creating self when they see examples of contemporary artists using artmaking to explore the potentials and problems inherent in his or her cultural and political settings (Gude, 2003).