

a media art (manifesto)

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In a mass society, the public is not in direct contact with cultural activities but is informed of them through the media. For example, the mass audience does not see an exhibition; it doesn't experience a happening or a soccer match first hand but, instead, sees its projection in the news. Real artistic production stops having importance with its diffusion since it can only reach a diminished public. "To distribute two thousand copies in a big modern city is like shooting a bullet into the air and waiting for the pigeons to fall," said Nam June Paik. Ultimately, information consumers are not interested in whether or not an exhibition occurs; it is only the image the media constructs of the artistic event that matters.

Contemporary art (principally Pop Art) sometimes makes use of mass media elements and techniques, divorcing them from their natural context (in, for example, the work of Lichtenstein or in D'Arcangelo's road series). Unlike Pop Art, we aim to make works of art utilizing the qualities fundamental to this medium. In this way, we undertake to give to the press the written and photographic report of a happening that has not occurred. This false report would include the names of the participants, an indication of the time and location in which it took place and a description of the spectacle that is supposed to have happened, with pictures taken

of the supposed participants in other circumstances. In this way of transmitting the information, in this way of “realizing” the nonexistent event, in the differences that would arise from the separate versions that each transmission would make from the same event, the sense of the art work would appear. The work would begin to exist in the same moment that the consciousness of the spectator constitutes it as having been accomplished.

Therefore there is a triple creation:

- *the formation of the false report*
- *the transmission of the report through the existing channels of information¹*
- *the reception by the spectator who constructs—based on the information received and depending on the manner that information signifies for him—the substance of a nonexistent reality which he would imagine as truthful.*

This way we take on the ultimate characteristic of the media: the de-realization of objects. In this way the moment of transmission of the work of art is more privileged than its production. The creation consists of liberating its production from its transmission.

Currently, the work of art is a combination of results from a process that starts with the realization of a work (traditional) and continues until such work is converted into material transmitted by the media. Now we propose a work of art in which the moment of production disappears. In this way it will be made clear that works of art are, in reality, pretexts to start up the apparatus of the media.

From the spectator’s point of view it is possible, for this kind of work of art, to have two readings: on one side, the reading of the spectator who trusts the media and believes in what he sees; on the other side, the reading of the informed spectator who is conscious of the nonexistence of the art work that is being transmitted.

In this way the possibility of a new genre is open: the art of the media where “what is said” is not fundamentally important but instead thematizes the media as media.

This report addresses not only the second type of reader but also “notifies” some other readers and thereby also performs the first part of the work that we described.

NOTES

1. The message would vary, depending on the material characteristics of the transmitting channel. “The medium is the message” (McLuhan).

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