The Democratization of Art
Media and the Art of Publishing on Art

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Abstract

The historical approach to democratic ideals is based on the relationship between art, technique, and industry in its creative conception and the cultural influences of its practice in the process of economic, social, and political development. However, in order to better understand this relationship, this article seeks to understand the place of art and communication in the origins of Western knowledge through a brief retrospective of the evolution of verbal and visual languages. Through this panorama, essential to the meaning of art and communication, the article presents an analysis that considers the historical significance of art publications in the process of democratization, freedom of expression, the press, and art from the Renaissance to modern times, while focusing mainly upon the period from the 20th century to the present day. The purpose of technique in its global dimension is fundamental to human existence. Such technical transformations are the consequences of social achievements in the search for conquests and freedoms. However, the quest for freedom is paradoxical. Consequently, through a theoretical foundation in art, culture, and technological evolution, the article seeks to understand the development of art publications better, using examples of significant publications in the history of Western culture. On the one hand, the creative practices considering the resources and socio-cultural stimuli from Johannes Gutenberg's work with the printing press to the 20th century and the transition to the 21st century are observed. On the other hand, within this article, this publication practice is also related to the leading art magazines, and aesthetic and social reflections upon the cultural context in Europe and today's globalized world.

Background of Art, Technology, and Media

Studies on human origins report our ability to develop and adapt to the most adverse conditions in nature. The primordial need for the development of what we now know as societies and cultures began when our ancestors abandoned nomadic life for the cultivation of land, housing, and group living by building villages and communities. These studies have focused upon registries left by our ancestors from the Neolithic era (4,000 B.C.) and the first civilization, the Sumerians in Mesopotamia. Without these registries, we would have little knowledge of the beginning of civilization, that is, of the first inventions, techniques, and development in the formation of a community.

Furthermore, there is nothing more essential to the formation of community than the evolution of human perception and cognitive capacities that seek relationships and mutual understanding through the constant improvement of communication, thereby, building common beliefs and habits. At first, Paleolithic man communicated through sounds. The understanding and meanings attributed to the different sounds are what we understand as the origin of language, and also visually represented. This first visual representation is what we know as the origins of writing. Since its beginning, writing has evolved in association with the sophisticated evolutionary capacity of the human species with regard to language, as a result of a constant and cumulative learning process. This capacity of the human species is related to many abilities that differentiate us from other animals. Among them, the most commonly identified are memory, abstraction, imagination, thinking, reasoning, creativity, and problem-solving. Searches through historical records support the notion that the origins of writing and visual language arose through an association between the symbolic representations of needs and objects within the environments in which our ancestors lived. The drawings and lines indicated simple ways of transmitting information and ideas, which approached a written language system.

Thus, the technical evolution of writing and communication has been the main driver of civilization and the possession of knowledge. Without them, it would not have been possible to preserve or acquire knowledge. We would not be present today, thinking about our legacy and the future of our species. In this sense, what would the possibilities be for the continuous development and evolution of our environment through the implementation of creativity, techniques, and learning processes to problem-solving and improvement through design?

Intriguing problems drive creativity and the development of techniques to overcome the limits of language as the representations of imagination, ideas, and thinking, which involves the search for greater understanding, knowledge, and, above all, a better capacity to communicate and relate within our environments. Nevertheless, what do we know about the meanings of visual and written languages? What are the references in our history of design in support of social and technological development? Let us consider the following achievements of prehistory, progressing from the first civilizations to the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, from the Enlightenment to modern times, to our most recent history and the starting point for our analysis — the beginning of the 20th century to the current time. First, we witness the creation of the first figures, such as the well-known Venus of Willendorf and, then, the utilization of tools and utensils for survival. This is followed by the evolution of visual representation with geometric and abstract signs, points, squares, and other shapes related to animals. There are records of these paintings — pictographs — in the caves of Altamira in Spain, and Lascaux in the South of France. In many regions of Africa, the Americas, and Asia, petroglyphs have also been found. These consist of figures recorded upon rocks, which are pictographs or ideographs, a symbolic language that represents ideas or concepts.

These representations originated both in written and visual languages. In relation to writing, these representations are graphic depictions of the spoken language, which from Paleolithic man onwards progressed through a reductive process until reaching what we know as the alphabet and its letters. This achievement greatly facilitated the human communication that, over time, gave rise to languages. Nevertheless, the visual language developed in Mesopotamia and Egypt, along with the hieroglyphs, papyri, and illustrated manuscripts produced by the Egyptians, represent a legacy of visual communication. Philip Meggs and Alston Purvis, in the book *Meggs' History of Graphic Design* (2016), record these innovative achievements in Mesopotamia, which led to the development of the alphabet and graphic communication in the Phoenician and Greco-Roman world. We must also consider the Asian alphabet and all its contributions to the world of the arts, techniques, and design. However, this article does not detail the rich history of the Middle Ages, of its illustrated manuscripts, the work performed by the copyists in the production of the flowing text, and the organization of the production of these manuscripts crafted in the *scriptorium.*

What matters most is the full development of the reproduction of art and publications on art from the Renaissance onwards. That was the moment in which artistic activity in the face of the desacralization that was occurring found another meaning in the world and gradually engaged the interest of an audience that was slowly gaining access to reading books and various printed materials. All of this was a result of printing techniques and their continuous development and improvement. One of the most important and most utilized techniques both in the West and in Asia was xylography — the art of "making woodcuts or wood engravings, especially by a relatively primitive technique."[1] This was a printing technique using a wooden base with the relief of the content as an image — characters, ideograms, drawings, symbols, texts — to be reproduced.

In China, with a language consisting of more than five thousand characters, xylography was an essential technique. However, in the West, like written language, typography represents one of the most significant inventions for the development of civilization. Most Western languages are composed of approximately 24 letters, rendering the typographic technique the most appropriate for printing with its independent, mobile, and reusable types. This new technique facilitated not only reproduction and the wider distribution of printed matter but predominantly a growth in the number of literate people and the transmission of information and knowledge. Moreover, the documentation of knowledge and techniques promoted discoveries and the development of science and technology.

Typography
The Most Significant Advance in Communication

The Gutenberg press, the printing technology with the movable type, was invented in Germany, where together xylographers, artists, and printing presses developed illustrated books and pamphlets. The press then spread to Italy, Holland, England, and France. However, in the Renaissance, the significant contributions of Albrecht Dürer to the development of the press are still notable; the artistic quality of his productions is highly regarded along with his valuable publications. He was not only an editor but also an artist, author, and theorist. His first book, *Underweysung der Messung, mit dem Zirckel und Richtscheyt, in Linien, Ebenen unnd gantzen corporen* (1525), is a course on the art of measuring with a compass and a ruler, which details all the learning that he obtained during his stay in Italy with the great Renaissance artists and intellectuals. The book incorporates theoretical discussions upon linear geometry and two-dimensional geometric construction, the application of geometry to architecture, decoration, engineering, and letter design. The other illustrated book, entitled *De Symmetria Partium Humanorum Corporum,* is a treatise on human proportions, which was published posthumously in Nuremberg (1528). These two books contain Dürer's knowledge of geometry, drawing, human anatomy, and the advances of the Italian and German painters and graphic artists. Of course, we would not be here reading or enlightening ourselves, or reviewing, or learning if it had not been for the invention of writing, followed by typography and the Gutenberg press. The latter allowed the reproduction and distribution of the Bible, which, while still restricted, contributed to disseminating ideas through pamphlets that supported the religious Reformation. Thus, the printing technologies improved in the following centuries and contributed to the Western social, economic, political, and cultural development that ultimately resulted in the Industrial Revolution and, above all, in the expansion of the capitalist process.

Later, in Cartesianism, the technical evolution prevailed, and the consequences of the doctrine of reason produced controversies around the notions of perception and imagination and influenced most of the creations that occurred in the following centuries. All of these events in the arts were part of a period of political and social transformation that favored the new ideas and behavior of thinkers and artists. At that time, at the end of the 18th century, the bourgeoisie gradually gained in self-assertion, mainly with the advent of the French Revolution and the progressive conquest of the public space by commercial and industrial development.

In this sense, another historical moment that motivated technological development arose in the 19th century with the relationship between the arts, crafts, and industry, which gradually crept toward the Industrial Revolution, consumer culture, and local and global markets. This was the event conceived by Henry Cole and Prince Albert and known as The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, staged within the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, London (1851). Following this, further advances in printing processes produced significant results for the development of the printing industry. In addition to posters, brochures, and books, several journals and magazines emerged along with the development of the printing press as the primary vehicle of communication. A remarkable moment in this history took place at the beginning of the 19th century in London when the German Friedrich Koenig presented a project for the construction of a steam-driven printing machine using a single cylinder, which was later perfected using double cylinders. This machine was able to produce a large print run. At that time, printing 400 sheets per hour was considered a high rate. Such a rate meant the immediate distribution of material to readers in a short time, that is, the transmission of news to a broader audience in less time. The machine was immediately purchased by John Walter of *The Times* in London. On November 28, 1814, *The Times* was printed using automatic, steam-powered printing presses and this was announced to its readers within the paper. On December 3, *The Times* followed up their original announcement with an article defending the introduction of the new technology.

A steam engine had replaced the mechanical machines, and, consequently, the speed of production increased. In a short time, the printing machines contained up to four cylinders and the printing capacity per hour doubled. Paper quality was improved to provide the primary substrate for printing. Thus, as the print run increased, the lower the unit cost became. Accordingly, the processes of the printing industry were optimized, making production cheaper.

What is essential is how human beings came to be in a civilized environment. Firstly, as a result of writing and typography organizing the types into sequence and alignment, linear thinking and individualism were conditioned and literacy increased, which became increasingly prevalent in Western societies, along with an appreciation for registering information and archiving memory. The second factor concerns the creation of painting techniques with the use of perspective in the Renaissance. The perceptions of Western humans have developed since then, guided by these two

visual systems, perspective and typography. Furthermore, these forms of perception still prevail in the advances made in communication technologies, even if they were potentially developed through the illusion of four dimensions and moving images. Nowadays, according to Clay Shirky (2010), the author of *Cognitive Surplus*, arguments about the behavior of current society deal with forms of collaboration, that is, contemporary society democratized through its access to information: "the Gutenberg printing press produced the Reformation, which produced the Scientific Revolution, which produced the Enlightenment, which produced the Internet, each move more liberating than the one before" (Gopnik 2011).[2]

A Milestone in the History of Art Publications:
A Synthesis Between Aesthetics and Social Consciousness

With the successive social and cultural changes that occurred as a result of technological and scientific innovations, we highlight the Arts and Crafts movement, precisely because of the representativeness and influence of the precursors of the art publications, John Ruskin and William Morris. John Ruskin was a British art critic and historian and the leading articulator, along with William Morris, of the movement. According to Ruskin, in the middle of the Second Industrial Revolution, industrialization and technology advanced the gradual rift between art and society to a critical stage, thereby, isolating the artist. The consequences of this Industrial Revolution directly affected the division of social classes and the exploitation of workers. Mass production was also introduced without any concern for aesthetic or functional quality. Moreover, this increased interest in the accumulation of capital through false and misleading advertisements for the provided products. The consequences were the pastiche of historical models, and a decline in creativity and appreciation for design, which was executed by engineers without any aesthetic concern. Conversely, behind Ruskin's theories was his belief that beautiful things were valuable and useful precisely because they were beautiful.

Morris and Ruskin then founded the Century Guild. The goal of the Century Guild was "to render all branches of art the sphere no longer of the tradesman, but of the artist." In addition, the arts of design should be elevated to "their rightful place beside

painting and sculpture" (Meggs 1998). The guild developed projects imbued with the characteristics of Renaissance and Japanese design and represented a significant moment in the Arts and Crafts movement by influencing the floral stylization of Art Nouveau. In addition, all these ideas needed a medium of diffusion; however, in the absence of this means, the best approach was the creation of a space that would allow freedom for new ideas. Thus, *The Century Guild Hobby Horse* was born (Fig.1); the first magazine of refined impressions exclusively dedicated to the visual arts was published in 1884. *The Hobby Horse* was the first periodical in the 1880s to present the point of view of the English Arts and Crafts movement to the European public and to treat printing as a serious form of design. According to Meggs (1998), in an article entitled "On the Unity of Art" in the January 1887 edition of the *Hobby Horse*, Selwyn Image vehemently stated that all forms of visual expression deserved the status of art. He rebuked the Royal Academy of Arts for its very limited scope in representing art and design forms and recommended changing the name of the entity to the Royal Academy of Oil Painting for this reason.
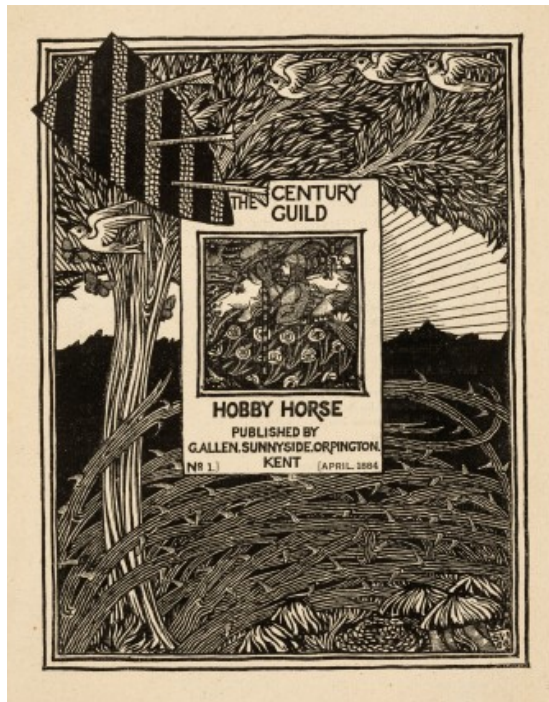

Figure 1: *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, 1884.
William Morris Gallery, London Borough of Waltham Forest.
Image in the public domain.

Designing an Art Magazine

The initiatives of William Morris and John Ruskin were essential for the development of publishing, primarily, of the arts, which encompassed not only artistic aptitude, arts, crafts, and the evolution of printing techniques, but primarily discussed and substantiated a critique of the artistic and cultural universe of that time and published its results. This editorial and conceptual innovation manifested basic ideas for design in its aesthetic and functional aspects, which were aimed not only at unification between arts and crafts but also between art and industry — a milestone for art publications. Furthermore, Morris strove to maintain the manual and artistic quality of print production by founding his private press, the Kelmscott Press. Among his leading publications was *The Story of the Glittering Plain* with illustrations by Walter Crane. Subsequently, the notion of the private press became a trend. Among the best known were Essex House Press, the Doves Press, and the Ashendene Press in London and, in New York, the Roycroft Press. One notable instance of this editorial trend was the inaugural April 1893 edition of *The Studio*, another essential highpoint and a milestone in the publication of European art periodicals from the 1890s. Along with *The Studio*, a great talent in illustration and graphic design emerged in the world of art publishing, that of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898). Beardsley was one of the precursors in editorial design and later became the art editor for one of London's largest publishing successes, *The Yellow Book.* He also illustrated the literary works of Oscar Wilde, among which the illustrations for the play *Salome* in 1894 are infamous.

In Germany, the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement gave rise to new types and significant advances within the printing industry, while in Holland tradition was maintained. In France, the graphic arts were developing into the Art Nouveau style with an emphasis upon the manifestation of this style in posters. However, the significant names in this art form, Eugène Grasset and Jules Cheret were also the precursors, along with British artists, of the introduction of publications on art to North America during 1889 and 1892, highlighted by *Harper's Magazine*. The first editions of *Harper's*, with designs and covers by Grasset, were printed in Paris and shipped to New York and, "the magazine soon began to print the work of American artists and writers."[3] *Harper's Magazine* was followed by *Scribner's Magazine* and *The Century Magazine.* In early 1894, Will Bradley's illustrations appeared in *The Inland Printer and The Chap-Book* (Fig. 2), and in his own periodical *Bradley: His Book* (1896). Beardsley's style heavily influenced all of his work; however, he gravitated toward new techniques, such as photomontage and graphic arts as innovative design, thereby, avoiding any allusion to imitation.

Figure 2: Will Bradley, *The Chap-Book*, 1895.
This image is available from the United States Library of Congress
Prints and Photographs Division. Washington, D.C., USA. Image in the public domain.

At the height of the Art Nouveau movement in France and of the Liberty store in England, Jugendstil (youth style) also emerged in Germany, where the *Zeitschrift Jugend* was founded by Georg Hirth and published from 1896 to 1940. It was the primary media for the dissemination of this movement (Fig. 3). In Vienna, artisans and artists interested in the new sense of the arts concentrated their creations and ideas within the Vienna Secession (*Sezessionstil*) in early 1897. However, this movement followed a different style and did not use the characteristic curves of the French and German styles. They also focused attention on the national issue, without acceptance and inclusion of foreigners, which is no reference to fundamental democratic ideals. Therefore, what we seek today, mainly for the arts and the freedom of the press, are democratic ideals, cultural diversity, and respect for differences. However, at that time, the artists of the Vienna Secession did not consider these issues that are now regarded as paramount. On April 3, 1897, the young artists of the Viennese Creative Artists' Association (*Kunstlerhaus*), in revolt, ceased participating in this association by refusing to allow foreign artists in the *Kunstlerhaus* exhibitions. Among the most prominent names in this movement was Gustav Klimt in the leadership role, joining the architects Joseph Maria Olbrich and Josef Hoffmann and the artist-designer Koloman Moser. However, specifically with regard to this movement, its leading artists also defended the new forms of art. Their ideas were supported by the magazine that specialized in this original art, entitled *Ver Sacrum*[4] (Fig. 4). This magazine was published between 1898 and 1903 and focused not upon criticism and artistic theories but mainly upon the graphic and aesthetic quality of its contents, valuing a breadth of design and mastery of the visual arts. The magazine was innovative in format and the pages were designed with perfect harmony between text and images.

In Western societies, in the late nineteenth century, many of the poorer classes were beginning to read. Through reading, they were seeking to understand the changes in their social environment along with the innovations and knowledge derived from the Industrial Revolution and primarily from scientific discoveries. Subsequently, many popular kinds of literature appeared that were aimed at this population who remained on the margins of progress. All that wealth resulting from the Industrial Revolution could be turned into something tangible for those who lived on the margins so that they might feel "included" in society. The second phase of the Industrial Revolution generated significant changes in the social and economic roles of communication and behaviors. Before the 19th century, the dissemination of information through books and pamphlets was the most dominant communication function. Given the pace and scale of the urban expansion and the increasing level of mass communication, the industrialized society responded by rapidly expanding the number of printers of advertising material, posters, periodicals, newspapers, thus, further stimulating industrial and technological development.

Figure 3: Otto Eckmann, Jugend cover, 1896. Image in the public domain.

Figure 4: Koloman Moser, *Ver Sacrum* cover, 2/4, 1899.
Image in the public domain.

In general, the possibilities of communicative mechanisms as factors of change in society do not come from technology itself, but rather from what humans do with it. There is no other way to relate except by communicating — a process achieved by humans through technology and media. In this sense, the arts, intrinsic to their techniques, can be considered precursors in the process of evolution and the access to knowledge in Western societies, idealizing and forming the spirit of the time.

Modernity, Graphic Arts, and Publications

The transformations that took place at the beginning of the 20th century were essential for the manifestation of the avant-garde and its influences on design. Amid these transformations, art and design were the paths that artists and intellectuals used to question values concerning tradition and innovation in society. Therefore, the objective linearity of social life no longer had the same meaning. These transformations were the consequences of the Industrial Revolution and a booming capital market. The art of the 18th and 19th centuries no longer represented the reality of this new pace of society for the European vanguard. Therefore, artistic and intellectual expression was divided between the conservatives and the modernists. Avant-garde ideas were always controversial and questioned the *status quo.* Through new representations of shapes and colors, they protested against the social context. A series of modern movements such as Fauvism had a limited effect upon graphic design in the 20th century. Others, such as Cubism and Futurism, Dada and Surrealism, De Stijl, Suprematism, Constructivism, and Expressionism, directly influenced the graphic language of visual communication within the century, according to Phillip Meggs (1998).

During this period, through World War I and the Russian Revolution, creative innovation was relatively frequent due to the widespread devastation and social instability, when the need for the reformulation, reconstruction, and rethinking of society stimulated artistic and cultural production. Thus, throughout 1917, with the strong influence of the Arts and Crafts movement and Russian Constructivism, the Deutscher Werkbund emerged in Germany. The Werkbund focused on the unification of arts and crafts with industry to elevate the functional and aesthetic qualities of production to offer quality, functionality, and low cost. In this same sense, the De Stijl movement also emerged in the Netherlands with Theo van Doesburg at its head as the founder, associated with the artists Piet Mondrian, Bart Anthony van der Leck, Vilmos Huszár and the architect Jacobus Johannes Pieter Oud, among others. In De Stijl, geometry and abstraction predominated, within which not only the simplicity of shapes with horizontal and vertical lines were considered, but largely and differently from Cubists, the use of the three essential colors — red, yellow, and blue. Mondrian and Doesburg developed these characteristics based upon the thinking of the philosopher M.H.J. Schoenmakers[5], who considered juxtaposition of primary colors and the horizontal and vertical lines to be fundamental opposites of the formation of our world. Accordingly, for Mondrian, this was the reality of the sense of visual art expressed by De Stijl. However, similar kinds of art projects were common among the

De Stijl artists. For example, between Van der Leck and Van Doesburg, who gradually began to form their styles with neutral colors — black, gray, and white — not only in painting but also in architecture, sculpture, and typography. It was precisely with this latter technique that Doesburg began his graphic and editorial project by publishing and financing the *De Stijl* magazine from 1917 until his death in 1931 and disseminating the movement's theory and philosophy to a wider audience (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: *De Stijl,* Vol. 1, no. 1, Delft, October 1917.
Design by Vilmos Huszár. Image in the public domain.

De Stijl defended the absorption of pure art by applied art, justifying that it would not be reduced to the level of the everyday object, but on the contrary, it would be raised to the level of art. The *De Stijl* magazine was an important medium for spreading the principles of this new art and bringing the universe of artistic transformations closer to those interested in art and culture. With De Stijl movement, the rationalization of the design was conceptualized with an aesthetic of reduction that was marked in the Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany. This period was the birth of the Bauhaus, founded by Walter Gropius, an art school focused on the interests of industrial development and social needs, paying attention to the functional and technical aspects. Then, in the passage from 1919 to 1920, from the housing culture and with the social principle of consolidating art to the people, Bauhaus influenced the way of life. The basis of an aesthetic and social theory of Bauhaus was characterized by the relationship between art, technology, and industry, exerting influence—especially with the advent of design—from the early 20th century. In 1926, the Bauhaus was renamed Hochschule für Gestaltung (Superior School of Form), and the influential Bauhaus magazine began to be published (Fig. 6). This magazine and the series of fourteen Bauhaus books (*Bauhausbücher*)[6] became relevant to the dissemination of advanced ideas on art theory and its application to architecture and design. Kandinsky, Klee, Gropius, Mondrian, Moholy-Nagy, and Van Doesburg were the editors or authors of volumes within the series.

Moholy-Nagy designed twelve books and explored photography in all its technical possibilities with regard to mastering light in frames using ordinary, everyday objects. Although the photogram technique was not new, the innovative aspect was the use of such a technique to derive formal results by means of light in abstract compositions. Moholy-Nagy, one of the Bauhaus artists, was alerted to the growing importance of the media from that moment on. He suggested to his colleagues at the Bauhaus that they consider creating artworks involving photography, as imagery works were gaining more space as a vehicle of communication in modern society. In other words, László Moholy-Nagy was showing the Bauhaus artists the emergence of photography as a new communication tool, which was being increasingly solicited in the messages and reports of the time. In principle, within the artistic universe, the modern period was essential due to the perpetual new forms that characterized the context, within which ideologies almost always defined the purposive content of the arts, bringing them closer to industry, the market, and the socio-political reality. To think about art, artists, freedom, and equality is also to understand that within the last hundred years, new

forms of art and their techniques were essential for cultural transformations that concerned the rupture of values, the constant search for solutions to social problems, and the changing of habits and behaviors. As a result of the Bauhaus lessons, any form of hierarchy that compared both art and design and outlined the differences between the artist and the craftsman would no longer be accepted by its members. Undoubtedly, many innovative results in the world of the arts and between artists were due to the freedoms and equality experienced during the existence of the Bauhaus.

Figure 6: Bauhaus Magazine (*Bauhaus: Zeitschrift für Bau und Gestaltung* 2:1)[7] 15 Feb 1928. Editors: Walter Gropius and László Moholy-Nagy. Image Cover by Moholy-Nagy. Image in the public domain.

The Rise of the Mass Society
Time as the Meaning of Art

With reference to Pierre Francastel (1956), modern art, which is frequently imaginative, abstractly presents time and space and can participate in the daily life of the individual as much through purely figurative signs as through artifacts. We deduce, therefore, that even before language can evolve, arrive at writing and reach an almost perfect capacity for communication, language — still pictorial — continues to unify the communication of different cultures, according to new forms of representation. Indeed, new technologies offer new possibilities, regardless of the similarities among images in a particular art at all times and in all places. Again, under the effects of modernity, Francastel (1956)[8] inserts us into evolution by means of the temporal rhythm of life. For instance, in French society a century ago, by recalling that in 1850 in the work of Victor Hugo, the world traveled by wagon and spoke French and that in 1950, the author himself in his work affirmed that the world would travel by plane and would draw and sculpt as in Paris. Today, I would say the world is moving towards being deterritorialized, and we no longer notice the time or place. Morin (2010) poses the question: where is the world going? (*Où va le monde ?*) I would question how humans can further configure our world as good and commonplace.

Drawing became technically reproducible through xylography, while the technical manager of the reproduction of writing was ultimately the press. The beginning of reproduction took place with the first technique, xylography, then lithography, printing techniques, and copper plate etching. It was through employing these techniques that the graphic arts illustrated everyday life. At the end of the 19th century, with the appearance of photography and cinema, the process of reproducing images was at the same level as speech. Accordingly, the work of art has always been reproducible. The process of the technical reproduction of the work of art has developed throughout history with great intensity, yet what has differed throughout history are the techniques and means of reproduction utilized along with the purpose of the reproduction and the relationships of the images as expressions, representations, narrations, or communications.

In Walter Benjamin's essay on technical reproduction (1936)[9], through his reflections, we can understand that technical reproduction does not permit the loss of a work's visual value in its moment of existence. Nevertheless, transformations of the original work overtime permit the eventual loss of its content and authenticity, but not its visual value. This authenticity represents an origin, a material statement, and its testimony, which transmits a historical tradition as value. Through reproduction, everything is diffused and tradition disappears because there is no longer any testimony of each of these historic moments. When the criteria of authenticity changed in the art production relationship, all the social functions of art changed. Art is no longer based on ritual but politics and that new situation has led art to acquiring a new meaning. In this way, the most important social function of art has been to create a balance between humans and their environment. This balance is achieved in humans through their representation of the world through technology. Therefore, the consequences of this technology and the mass resources available are the collective perception of the public appropriating forms of individual perception to configure the contemporary image in urban centers. Thereby, the spectator's association of ideas is immediately interrupted by the change of image. Thus, the masses are responsible for all the new attitudes linked to the image. Hence, the increase in participants increased participation.

By the turn of the 19th century, the Gutenberg printing system had already become a thing of the past. Photomechanical processes replaced the metal types and opened new horizons for design just as the radio replaced the telegraph. This was the transformation of the media well observed by Marshall McLuhan with regard to the role of the mass media and the effects of new technologies – television from the 1960s, and, more recently, the computer and the Internet. After all, each medium generates its own economic, political, and cultural implications, although they are often poorly assimilated due to the increasing speed with which new technologies are emerging. As a result, even as we realize the changes wrought by a new media in society, a newer one is already emerging. The memory of the time before the technological revolution, of the manual work and the printing press smelling of oil-based ink, established a quality reference and have elevated that print to beauty as an aesthetic experience nowadays, such that the printed publication presents itself as another resource. And it will always be printed. Even with the high level of technology used, it is a technological evolution parallel to mechanical publishing — the different technologies contrast. The differences are in their content and target audiences.

Author Biography

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Notes

1. Cf.: Xylography dictionary definition, xylography defined.
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2. Cf.: Adam Gopnik, "The Information, How the Internet gets inside us."
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Zeitungen und Zeitschriften online:
http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=vsa&datum=1898&size=45
Ver Sacrum [PDF] © Belvedere, Viena:
https://www.belvedere.at/sites/default/files/media-
directories/1898_versacrum_v16_72dpi.pdf
5. Cf.: "In 1915 the painter and theorist Theo van Doesburg encountered
the work of Piet Mondrian, who had developed a visual style consisting of primary colors and
asymmetrical, orthogonal grids. Mondrian was inspired by the mystical ideas of the
Theosophists, particularly the eccentric mathematician M.H.J. Schoenmaekers, who devised
a Neo-Platonic philosophy based upon pure geometric form. Influenced by Schoenmaekers'
publications *The New Image of the World* (1915) and *Principles of Plastic Mathematics*
(1916)." In: Johnson, Michael. "De Stijl (1917–1932)." The Routledge Encyclopedia of
Modernism. Taylor and Francis, 2016. https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/de-stijl-1917-
1932. Doi:10.4324/9781135000356-REM166-1
6. See Bauhaus books (Bauhausbücher): https://monoskop.org/Bauhaus#Books
7. See Bauhaus: Zeitschrift für Bau und Gestaltung 2:1(15 Feb 1928). Editors: Walter Gropius
and László Moholy-Nagy. Image's Cover by Moholy-Nagy. Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für
Gestaltung, Berlin. The archive est. 1960 in Darmstadt, in 1971 moved to Berlin, the museum
opened there in 1979. The PDF was assembled from scans on IADDB.org;
https://monoskop.org/images/b/b5/Bauhaus_2-1_1928.pdf
8. Pierre Francastel, *Art et technique aux XIXe et XXe siècles,* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956) p. 225.
9. Walter Benjamin, *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*
[first published 1936], Trans. by J. A. (Underwood. London: Penguin, 2008).