

SYNTHESIS OF ART AND MEDIA

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Abstract: This theoretical work deals with hybrid artistic practice and its determination by media and technology. As an inevitable example of thinking about art through the context of media, Vladan Radovanović is highlighted, who is the only theorist who systematically proposed a classification of art in relation to media. Through his theory of polymedia art, as an interdisciplinary form that synthesizes within itself various disciplines with the aim of achieving "total art," and the visionary thoughts of Marshall McLuhan on media, we will try to find an answer to the question of the possibilities and significance of media for the development of art. I will interpret hybrid artworks that have emerged from the integration of different media using the method of textual analysis and interpretation, which allows for their semantic, narrative, and sensory extension in the site, in which we will explain the significance of media possibilities in relation to art.

Keywords: media, technology, art, polymedia art, opera, film, digital, screen, spatial montage, perception, senses, progress

Introduction

In artistic practice, the way of externalizing content through an appropriate form, or through the medium that serves as a link between the work and the audience, is often questioned. Many authors are trying to improve their work and elevate art to a higher level by using new media and the possibilities it offers in expanding information and performing ideas. Art, media, and technology represent an inseparable trinity. What distinguishes traditional art from contemporary art is primarily the use of new techniques, digital technologies, and media as the main means of conveying information, expressing thoughts, and emotions. During the evolutionary progress of media and technology in the last century, there was also a sudden development of art, creating new artistic disciplines (film, photography, video art, etc.).

This has provided opportunities for the development of the artistic avant-garde. In today's age, when the progress of media and technology has reached its peak, the question arises whether this pace is accompanied by progress in art, or if perhaps a disbalance has occurred, as there are almost no new artistic disciplines. Thanks to media progress, today we have an integrated synthesis of art that encompasses film, photography, performance, TV, video, and sound-music. What attracts attention are certainly post-opera spectacles and expanded cinema - as some of the more complex forms of polymedia art. In the following text, we will address the classification of polymedia art and the significance of media as an expressive component, which allows the content of an artistic work to reach the senses of the recipient, as well as their influence on the perception of the work. We also address the relationship between media with unlimited possibilities towards the development of new hybrid forms in art.

Media in art

The media is a broader concept than the media of mass communication and can be understood in several different ways depending on the scientific, artistic, or social context. The word "media" comes from the Latin word "medius," which means "middle" or "between," and denotes an auxiliary means or channel through which something comes. In the theory of mass communication, this concept is defined as a material medium that, by transmitting a message, connects individuals and groups. In the context of mass

communication, the medium is not just the carrier of the message, but it is also part of the message itself, which fits into the well-known thesis of media theorist Marshall McLuhan that "the medium is the message" (Markovic D. 2010, pp 30). McLuhan primarily has in mind the environment of social communication, both classical and modern: speech, writing, press, radio, television. It implies technological means that replace and supplement the work of human organs and capabilities, tools, devices, weapons (Radovanovic D. 2010, pp2). McLuhan's understanding of media are significant for reflections on the future of art. Since our subject of interest is the media potential for the development of art, it is useful to note that contemporary art, in most cases, builds its unclear classification and division based on the media, the following terms are used in everyday usage: intermediate, multimedia, new media, expanded media, mixed media, transmedia, etc. Despite the poetic and aesthetic differences that dominate in these fields, they share a media and technological aspiration towards the development of art.

For pragmatic reasons, we accept the media classification of Vladan Radovanović as the most relevant and logical. Vladan Radovanović makes a general division of art based on sensory-media criteria. According to media criteria, all arts are divided into monomedia and polymedia.

The monomedia arts are: painting, sculpture, music, literature, poetry, photography, etc. The polymedia arts are: film, video art, theater, opera, ballet, performance, etc.

According to Radovanović, polymedia art involves the synthesis (into artwork) of several different media that differ from each other by:

- sensations on the senses (visual, auditory, kinetic, etc.)
- by the type of signs (distinction between speech and musical media within sound)
- by type of technology (materials, devices, signal carriers)
- and procedures (pigment, acoustic element, film, etc.)

According to Radovanović, all media in art should participate equally, but they should alternate in dominance.

Perception and integration of media

The sensory nature of media in art is best explained to us by the theorist and composer Michel Chion with the concept of audiovision- which in film, television, and other similar media represents a special kind of perception that arises in the audio-visual combination, when one perception influences another and changes it in the process. Or, as Michel Chion says: "We do not see the same thing when we listen at the same time and we do not hear the same thing when we look at the same time" (Chion M. 2007, pp 5).

Contemporary artistic practice aims for interdisciplinarity and multimedia creation—a synthesis of art, for example, increasingly combining poetry with visual elements (video, photography, performance), the so-called visual poetry (it ceases to be a monomedia art and begins to be a polymedia art that acts on multiple senses simultaneously).

The futuristic significance and need for polymedia art - as a synthesis of artistic disciplines within single artwork, emphasized by German composer and theater director Richard Wagner. He called such complex artistic forms the term "Gesamtkunstwerk" ("total work of art," "comprehensive art"). For him, opera was the best example of "gesamtkunstwerk", as it encapsulates: theater, music, dramaturgy, literature, painting, ballet, directing, etc.

Polymedia spectacl

As we pointed out, with the development of media and digital technologies, art is evolving, but in

modern times, this is happening in a different way (not as many new artistic disciplines are emerging as in the time of avant-garde) but innovative hybrid polymedia artworks are created. The development of media has significantly influenced opera (as a "Gesamtkunstwerk" - "total art"), best evidenced by the video opera "The Cave" and "Tree Tales" by composer Steve Reich and video artist Beril Korot. While in traditional opera the work is created in the order of libretto¹ - music - direction, in post-opera it "emerges as a performance and opposition of operatic signifiers simultaneously" (Novak J. 20026. Pp 23).

In the post-opera spectacle (video opera), the way of directing and composing is different. While creating the work, Korot and Reich are in different, electronically connected studios, and they send carefully measured fragments of musical and video documentary material to each other that "network" into the artwork.

The Tree Tales and The Cave is a post-opera, an opera after opera, or an opera after the completed history of opera. This work uses the media of film, photography, magazines, TV interviews, video, theater, and concerts simultaneously. This art work begins by highlighting the documentary potential of musical theater. The video "text" work is broadcast on multiple screens whose operation is coordinated and composed by the decisions of video artist Beryl. In the rhythm of the spoken words on the screen, titles and texts from the New York Times are "typed out." (Opera The Tree Tales). One of the most commonly used compositional techniques of these authors is the placement of verbal text on screens at the moment when the voices in the opera speak it.

The humanistic dimension of the work is reflected in the expanded use of certain screens that are used to clarify operatic events with verbal text, making video opera more accessible to the audience with hearing impairment (Opera The Cave). Such a function of artistic media that we use as "aids," as "extensions of human senses," refers us to Marshall McLuhan and his thesis is that the media have become extensions of man, , and they expand the spectrum of abilities (Makluan M. 1971, pp57).



Figure 1. Video opera's The Cave and The Tree Tales

However, what is the sharpest offense in the context of these two parts is the fact that the medium of opera has been significantly altered by the introduction of video and film in the world of opera, videos that have replaced the theater stage. The violation of the operatic order can also be found in the simultaneous live performance of the music ensemble with digitally reproduced with voices and sound effects. The screen has become a stage on which an opera is performed. Reich emphasizes that it is the "main theatrical action on screen"² The screen is divided (split screen) - it itself becomes a collage of different screens, where the

¹ A libretto is a textual template based on which a musical stage work is written.

² "The main theatrical action is on the screen" Steve reich, u David Allenbi, A tether of ideas, Steve Reich and Beryl

multiplication of information occurs. Split screen is a technique with great possibilities that has the power of dynamically displaying temporal and spatial simultaneity, the possibility of direct comparison of two presented objects/events or more.

The video opera's works of Stiv Reich and Beriyl Korot stand out as complex polymedia forms—between film with music, video art with music, television shows, and opera, and printed media (press). By integrating different media in the post-opera section that aims to expand the boundaries of opera art, there is an expansion of human consciousness. The audience participates more actively perceptively, connecting various cultural texts with the context of the work and the nature of the media.

Media extension of film

The extent to which the development of art is conditioned by the development of media and technologies is evidenced by film art. The improvement of registration media (cameras - which operate on the principle of the human eye, as a "technological extension of human senses"), the projector and later the sound equipment, the film standardizes the speed of image/frame projection- It gains a stable time dimension of duration, the ability to listen to human speech, the ability to see colors, and the expansion of the image in space using multiple screens.

At the beginning of the 20th century, even though cinema was just a newly born art form, some authors already understood the power of new media and began to experiment with cinematic aesthetic form. Avant-garde French artist Abel Gance is the first person in the history of art to film the media-extension feature film "Napoleon" (1927) simultaneously with three cameras, from three different perceptual angles and projected it simultaneously on three screens. "With multiple screens, the audience was given an evolutionary task - to follow the events simultaneously on multiple screens , and thus there is a spread of information and a deeper experience of the work of art. It was a unique media spectacle far ahead of its time. At that time, such a media spectacle required the application of complex techniques on film, such as spatial montage (split screen and coordination of multiple screens), multiple exposures, monochromatic texture of the image, as well as simultaneity of display on polymorphic screens" (Agel H. 1962, pp 18). It required much more work, money, and time than would be necessary today.



Figure 2. Napoleon movie

The technical innovation of this part consisted of simultaneous recording using three cameras that they capture the same character, object, or event from three different angles. The triple screen provided the possibility of composing and editing different movements and dramatic situations. within the frames that are shaped into a unique visual whole, as well as the possibility of achieving an attractive visual counterpoint. The main action is usually displayed on the central screen, while the other two were for simultaneous

Korot on Tree tales, CD/DVD booklet, nonesuch 7559-79835-2, 2003.

information supplementation, visualizing the same scene from different perspectives. This filming and editing technique (discovered in 1926), which aims to media-expand film in space, Abel Gance called the technique of polyvision³.

At the moment he is finishing the film (1927), Gance writes: "The boundaries of space and time will be erased by the possibilities of a polymorphic screen that adds, creates and multiplies the image as desired by the creator or as artistic reasons require. The omnipresence of the action. The omnipresence of time and age. The past, present, and future merge into their own destruction" (Angel H. 1962, pp18). The main technique from Gance's polyvision that successfully connects various spaces and times within the frame and directly enables the depiction of the simultaneity of events is spatial montage- montage within the frame. It involves the use of a divided (polymorphic) screen and the process of applying multiple exposures (superimposing transparent multiple images), At moments, with the desire to fill the screen with as much information as possible.

This media expansion of images in space using multiple screens provides the viewer with the opportunity to expand their own perception, as the medium is considered a "technological extension of human senses." (Makluan M. 1971, pp 57). This statement largely agrees with the theory of Gene Youngblood, which states that film functions as human consciousness, or that "film is an extension of human consciousness" (Youngblood G. 1970, pp 159).

Media theorist and digital arts expert Lev Manovich (Лев Манович), in his book "Metamedia," discussing montage and new technologies, states that there are two basic types of film montage in the 20th century "time montage" and "spatial montage, which is referred to as montage within the frame. Time montage enables the process of alternating images of different realities: one after the other, in a temporal sequence. This editing technique is widely used, defines conventional, "standard" film, and is most commonly used in practice. According to Manovich, temporal editing is not an efficient enough method, as "the representation of each additional piece of information requires a certain amount of observation time, which slows down communication" (Manovič L. 2001, pp 65-67). The second type of montage, which Manovich considers more efficient, is spatial or montage within the frame, and it implies the coexistence of different realities within the same frame, the use of split screens (which appeared as far back as 1908), the technique of multiple exposure, as well as the use of multiple screens. In the past, the realization of montage within the frame (spatial montage within a split screen) was an expensive and complex process, which is why this technique was only used fragmentarily in films, rarely and exclusively for dramatic purposes, while today, with the use of digital technologies, the process of creating such a collage film composition is much more accessible to artists.

We also encounter spatial montage (split screen) in other media forms (television-sports shows, live broadcasts, video games). Heidegger reminded that "technology does not exist only where technical instruments are used, but rather it exists more universally and problematically where all observation, thinking, and action are technically structured" (Velš V. 2000, pp 234).

The use of spatial montage technique with the aim of expanding information is widespread and significant, because we live in an "accelerated" era, so this type of editing speeds up communication by providing a simultaneous display of many informations. The split screen allows for visual analysis of the work, establishing a visual collage, and cinematic embodiment of cubist principles. By using spatial arrangement with a split screen, where information is displayed simultaneously, we achieve time efficiency (economy of time). By merging diverse shots within a split screen, they seek to activate thought processes in the viewer who connects, analyzes, and draws conclusions. This use of artistic media refers us again to McLuhan, who says of the media that they do not only transmit a message, but that the medium itself is the message. The

³ Polyvision is a term that the French film critic Émile-Jean Vuillermoz gave to a special film format in widescreen, designed exclusively for the filming and projection of the movie *Napoléon*.

media unequivocally tells us that the future and development of artistic communication: The public's work depends exclusively on an innovative approach to the media - so that the idea and content of the work are as complete as possible: artwork- public realtions depends exclusively on an innovative approach to the media - so that the idea and content of the work are as complete as possible and an experience enhanced through actions on different senses.



Figure 3. Polymorphic screen (split screen) and the technique of spatial editing. Film-Vremevidac (2021)

Conclusion

By using different media, techniques, and technologies, the artist can create an artistic whole that transcends the boundaries of tradition arts. The future of art depends on the development of media and their critical application. Media in art, besides conveying information (messages), I can also be a message about their inevitability in creating complex artistic projects that require the multiplication of information. Additionally, the media in art have a humanistic task as an extension of human senses, as they enable individuals with impaired senses-, as through various media, they have the opportunity to perceive and experience art. The camera, as a media extension of the human eye, has the opportunity to move and explore spatial-temporal relationships in a way that is impossible for humans. The media provide the opportunity to expand artistic works: informationally, semantically, narratively, spatially, and temporally. Media can expand human consciousness and offer a completely different experience of artworks - at a higher level of understanding. Digital transformation of media has drastically changed the way artworks are created and performed, providing new opportunities for innovation and experiments.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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