

UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN OF CLUJ-NAPOCA

# VALORISATION POLICY IN VISUAL ARTS

ABSTRACT OF DOCTORAL THESIS

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR  
PH.D. PROFESSOR FLORIN MAXA

DOCTORAND  
RIDICHIE CONSTANTIN LAURENȚIU

2010

The doctorate thesis, *Valorisation Policies in Visual Arts* reviews the change of conflict in terms of meanings, contrasting conceptions, and topic discredit by substitution with their own performance. The purpose of this thesis is a policy of content from a perspective of innovation. The policy of content considers some discredited topics, revived by the novelty of meanings offered by artists. For some topics, such as vanitas, we made a historical study of meanings, due to lack of this topic in the specialized theoretical studies. Concerning other topics, the emphasis falls on their significance in contemporary art, rather than on the historical one. These themes, subject of the thesis, discredited in contemporary art, are universal rather than particular. The particular character is a feature, to which contemporary art has shifted; hence its contempt for universal topics. In the order listed in the thesis, the topics are as follows: conceptualism, alternative, vanitas, religion and creation. The inventory of the discredited issues we leave it open for a further study.

In the first chapter entitled *A late conceptualism*, we argue the discredit by conceptual art of the visual paradigms and the issues the conceptual art has acquired in, nowadays. Also through this chapter, it is reviewed the transformation resulted in failure of the impact of the conceptual art on goods status. We conclude this chapter by analyzing new policies of the content, betook in late conceptualism, referred to the Romanian space.

Conceptual art removed the non-linguistic communication from its forms, forgot about the studies in semiotics as logocentrism, which tried to re-find a language in the non-linguistic communication. One of the radical manifestations of this trend, we find in contemporary art by "statement", which changed in artistic product. By its presence as a work of art in an exhibition, the statement continues a conceptual line that exploits, aesthetically, parts that compose the structure of an exhibition, showing them as aesthetic products. Void in the gallery, food, remains of an opening, interaction between spectators, all these were remnants, controlling or participating in a protocol, with appendage status.

Therefore, came as a reaction to formalism, the statement introduces itself to the contemporary process of exposure as a manifestation of a scheduler, rational and meaningful modality, whose image outcome, resulted more as a bonus.

As a requirement of postmodernism, in order to establish a value hierarchy of image in the inflated landscape created by technological means, statement, reached all categories to the other extreme, the abusive significance. Hence, the emergence of some manifestations as new-formalism and image decontextualization.

Opposing the concept of "opera aperta", by imposing a single meaning, the statement relates formalism to significance, generating indifference towards formal value and the materialization of concept in image. Under terms of the degree of aesthetic value, reported at each other, the images are equal in the light statement.

Conceptual art has not abolished the goods status, as previously believed. Today, more than ever, this art is commercialized. About resolving the issues of conceptual art purchase by collectors, there are representative the Daniel Burren's declarations: "How to sell a work that represents, to say, a point on a wall and a small text stating that point is the center of the universe. ... How could a gallery sell such things to a collector or a museum, especially if they wished to conclude an agreement through which these works should have the same status as paintings or sculptures? Maybe, it is ridiculous to sell something like this, maybe it is not. But if you do it, you immediately face the problem of authenticity and exposure. One of the easiest solutions is that of a certificate."<sup>1</sup>

Alternative in form of inheritance, tandem, reporting, reverse, location and disappearance are the subjects of chapter two.

The alternative and the official were always simultaneous, but in unequal proportions. Alternative concept of the theme is taken in both directions, both by

---

<sup>1</sup> *Idea Magazine*, Nr. 21, Idea Design & Print Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p.153.

succession and by different solution compared to the already existing one. The alternative in art has different faces. The history shows that initial alternative is underground, and then, with its growth it evaporates, becoming official art. Nowadays, contemporary art has no longer a dual division so clearly ascertained. Due to the interest groups regarding promotion, the alternative broke into several fragments. After the success of the alternative along history, most of these groups have assimilated the alternative as their program. In fact, most of these groups have no alternative program. They resemble the official ones. They are alternatives until proven otherwise by success. The only program in the alternative pseudo-program is to promote in any way. Among these so-called alternative and officials, there is a permanent exchange and not a clear placement, based on different and contradictory views, as we know from the art history. In the contemporary art, the alternative has disappeared. It acquired an impure form, a confusing mixture of formality and self, i.e. a quasi-alternative. The visual representation of the conceptual frameworks is vast; in this chapter, we review only the important reference marks from the Renaissance to contemporary art.

So far, a history of conceptual frameworks in visual arts or a history of consciousness of death related to artists was not achieved. Henri Jeudy in “*Body as art object*,” said that it would be necessary to start a history of conceptual frameworks in visual arts, as the imaging material exists in abundance in art history.<sup>2</sup>

Trying to make a short photo documentary on the theme of conceptual frameworks in the visual arts, we noticed, at the end of the collection, a surprising aspect, comparing this theme along the two periods: modernity and post-modernity. Where we expected to occur less (in Postmodernism, due to its remoteness to other topics), the conceptual framework appears to a larger extent

---

<sup>2</sup> Henri Pierre Jeudy; *Body as an Art object*, Eurosong & Book Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 185.

than in other periods and with a wealth of meaning, more varied. We would have expected this theme to have a higher preponderance in Baroque, Romanticism, the peak Modernism and less in Postmodernism, which is swept by a rational, social, and political side and less by a psychological one.

*Religious reminiscences in postmodern art* (chapter 4) deal with the religious themes in visual art, avoiding its culmination period, due to an approach too ample. The emphasis is on this theme involution, externalized through its appearances, scattered in the postmodern art and detection of original perspectives in approaching religious subjects. Also in this section, it is raised the use of religious themes by artists, by reasons of promotion caused by the scandal.

Aspects of postmodern creation as: lack of skill, its clear-minded rational process, the ready-made consequences, namely the creation of leisure time, loss of self, radiography of avant-garde creation, the importance of dating the art object, overcoming the originality through copy&paste, painting after photography, duplicity, ephemerality versus the documentary, frame the last chapter, which is interested in creation as subject. Briefly, the last chapter considers the creative ways in postmodernism and their consequences.

The art treaties in history would focus on the technical realization. From Duchamp, through ready-made, the artistic mastery receives a heavy, even lethal blow. Leonardo da Vinci and Duchamp are two meaningful personalities thanks to their contributions to the valorization criteria: the former develops the valorization criteria and the latter gives rise to radical change.

Beyond the profound difference between the two ones, there are found similar features in terms of streamlining the creative process, based on idea, carefulness of work purpose and awareness of the whole creative process, directly from the beginning. For them, creation is not an adventurous journey, with unknown elements, which clarifies during the creative process, as happens in the creation of an abstract work.

The artist's leisure results from choosing of a restricted artistic production or from excluding the manual mode. The Duchamp process instigates to a rational respite in a modernism lost in subjectivity. No more focus on certain issues of technical implementation of a work of art, as we see in the *Treaty of painting* by Da Vinci, but on the external technical issues of the artistic product.

The historical studies focus precisely on the date held responsible for original artwork. This analysis is required when you can see very little similarities between works of art and the valorization is made according to innovation criteria. Most of the times, coincidentally, in the top modern period, the artists create new works at the same time, or at very short distances. An example is the debate between Benjamin H.D. Buchloh and Joseph Kosuth, within the conceptual art, based on *Proto-Investigation* work dating.

Two artists' coincidence of works in the actual context brings forward the artist who is popular within various platforms (artistic groups, galleries, museums, magazines, etc.). This is also due to the fact that, in such a context, there is more evidence regarding the dating of the artwork.

One of the stakes of Postmodernism was the challenge created by the modernist bias of romantic origin, as in art ideologies create pseudo-art or mediocrity. Postmodernism tried the opposite to escape from the novelty. To create an identity to the modernity, it was used copy&paste, creating, by literally taking over, ideologies or works of art with the aim of growing over the paranoia of modernist originality. The artist Sheri Levine photographed the work of artists modern, managing to give a partial solution to the new postmodern paradox by overcoming the novelty as a standard for valorization. The postmodern paradox arouse from denial attempt or exacerbation of difference compared to modernism. To try to differentiate you from modernism by means of denial, it means to continue it in its well-known essence. By extension of art, we can say that the paradox of postmodernism is what creates its different trait compared to the previous periods: "if the paradox was

intolerable in classical and modern science, post-modernity finds in itself the very force of argument." <sup>3</sup>

Postmodernism solution could emerge from a development in which contemporary artists would imitate each other responsibly. The pseudo-solutions as regards the paradox of postmodern in visual art are less, since copy&paste method fell into disuse. The situation is different as for the essence, which transpires out of the creation method by copy&paste, that is reversing, which becomes a trick which under the spotlight of many conceptual artists. Reversal is another way of being different. Being different is an inevitable criteria, unresolved for post-modernity, so we could say that nowadays we are all academics. In contemporary art, the impression is that we still rely on the modernist consideration of overcoming, a slalom through historic landmarks, we continue the avant-garde, the neo-avant-garde as performance by the solution of the verb "copy", within Krauss's meaning for whom this mode of creation "[...] is not just imitation, but invention. This was illustrated by analogy with the game <<round robin>>, which makes that a message sent from one person to another to be transformed into something completely new, just through the ritual of transmission [...]."<sup>4</sup>

At the end of this abstract, structured in short preamble to each chapter, supported by few suggestive examples from thesis, we assert that we did not want a benchmarking among the subjects that lost their power of novelty. This benchmarking, even if it is a creative way to achieve the novelty, we think it has a dose of superficiality, of started and unfinished work. All top modernism leaves this impression of new topics but not completed, however, postmodernism leaves the impression of resumption of these topics and their completion, creating its novelty by a deepening of the subjects in terms of

---

<sup>3</sup> Mircea Cărtărescu, *Romanian Postmodernism*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Dan Ratiu, *Modernism – Postmodernism Debate*, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, p. 156.

performance. This approach was pursued in the thesis, even if in some places we diverted for the analysis and clarification of some aspects that have occurred during work.