

EvaluART

Evaluating the Values of Art - promotes an assessment of how we value art objects informed by their essence not their commercial value.

Works of art are received and valued on different planes.

Benjamin, Walter – 1935

Evaluart is a medium listing the fundamental essence of art for people with art backgrounds and education to use. Testing whether art pieces today actually deserve the distinction they have acquired based on parties that appreciate them through history.

Background

According to my observation many distinguished pieces of art have become famous solely because a prestigious company or person purchased the artwork. In many cases, these pieces of art were selected to be purchased for reasons other than criterion that would makes an art piece good art, art with sound fundamental artistic properties.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist whom had studied taste in relation to socio-economic class and 'educational capital' the results are complicated, especially since the assessment cannot be generalized from one country such as France to the others. Though, he found the clear links between social class and preferences in art, music and theatre. (Freeland pg93) For E.g. Wealthy American industrialists and capitalists collected art as an evidence of their good standing in the higher culture. And later on, some of these people founded the museums and galleries. But, not all of them purely collected the works because of their quality or some wanted only things that they considered as bargains. In the autobiography of J. Paul Getty, his tales of collecting is very

much related in how much he wanted to spend. He turned away artworks such as paintings just because the value was not within his expectation. Philanthropists like Getty and many others had driven the society and given them the value of how much the artworks should cost. (Freeland pg96) The irises by Van Gogh sold for \$53.9 million in the 80s. Cynthia Freeland wrote in her book, *But is it art?* – “Can we ever see those masterpieces as art rather than a huge dollar sign?” Because of the value set by their founders and the public, a lot of museums and art galleries collect work mostly based on these preferences. They spend billions just to add another masterpiece to their wall.

Despite of all the existing standard of pure art appreciation, the fame of the buyer is as important as the quality of the artwork to determine its value. the world has been delivering fine artists in every corner of a country. These young and unknown artists are desperately try to win a reputation in the high art society. They are waiting to get lucky on the day a good potential art collector look around some local galleries where they put their work. The same old story is still happening in this century. Not too long ago, Zach Feuer, owner of Zach Feuer Gallery (originally LFL) sold out his friend Kevin Zucker twice which one of them to Mary Boone. This has given Mr. Feuer the privilege to double the size of his space and give another artist Tom McGrath his first gallery show with an initial high selling price. (dArcy – Rhinzome.org)

Knowing the fact also influence the way of the thinking of the artists in creating their art. They pay special attention on collectors who were positive about their work and giving the first look of their later works. "Its like anything in business: you want to discover a new product --something fresh, something hot," says Lea Freid of Lombard Freid Fine Arts. Young artists tend to find the style that are marketable and in the latest trend for their artwork. “Students are already all reading the same art magazines,” says Jay Coogan from RSID (Rhode Island School of Design).

Instead of having the artwork price as a standard to add them into a collection, Collectors should turn their focus more on their originality. With the issues of trends and the technology to reproduce an artwork, uniqueness and originality weigh much higher than its provenance. "If they want to buy 10 people hoping that one of them will turn into a well-known artist, good," says veteran dealer Richard Feigen. "I'd rather see them do that than spend five million dollars on Jeff Koons. They'll get better art, too." The Mona Lisa is already considered priceless and it will be a fortunate thing to stand before it without hundreds of camera flash lit up around you. At the same time, the painting has been reproduced thousand times by many artists whom might have the same level of skill as Da Vinci but they will not earn anything much from selling the reproductions.

It is a great thing that unexposed artists' works appreciated because of its significant boldness and beauty. This awareness needs to be brought into the society to remind them the true reason why an artwork should be called art and why they are all perfect in their own ways.

Motivation

Given the chance for such distinguished pieces to be critiqued by people of art background and education, would these paintings still have received the fame they possess today

Approaches

At first, I was just interested in bringing the awareness of the issue into the public by using a medium such as street campaign. After gathering more information and data on how artworks have been marketed in the society from various articles and books, I came a few concepts for the campaign that at the end leads me to a deeper understanding of the problem. The target society needs to be

aware about how art objects have obtained their status in the history, but in the present time they could also participate in giving their evaluations of those objects to revalue the quality.

I. Choosing the Target Society.

There is a reason why I think choosing art students, artists, people with art interests (gallery visitors, writers, art critiques) to participate on this project. EvaluART is an art evaluation system that is based on basic artistic principals and uses many art semantic keywords that a general public might not understand completely. By having it specially distributed to a community helps limit who can participate on the evaluation process. Even though people with the art background might be influenced already by the trend of popularity in the art market, but still it is also unwise to let anyone who does not have any background to participate and give their input in the evaluation process.

II. Bringing the Attitude

Some of the concepts developed for the street campaign to raise awareness were based on these scenarios:

1. Successful Art – 1%talent + 99% provenance

This idea is focusing on how a piece of artwork can be somewhere because of its reputable history. For e.g. purchased by a well-known gallery or reputable person. The realization of this concept is to compare two qualified artworks where one is well exposed and the other is not.

2. The List Principals of Art plus ‘Posh’

To introduce the art essence plus ‘luxury’ as one of the important matter to judge the quality into the target society.

3. Proportional - Price = Size

This is to criticize on how artworks used to be purchased according to their price in canvas per meter square.

4. True Art

Museums and galleries often represent themselves as 'empty container' for art. I want the target society to start having their own 'container' of selected objects that they consider as true art.

Among all the concepts above, concept number four – 'True Art' seemed to work the best with the direction of this project. This campaign supports the next step of the project approach, which is the evaluation process.

III. Getting the evaluation

The way to collect the evaluation is by having people to write their thoughts over the objects they found in an adhesive media and stick it next to the art object itself. This way, the evaluation is also shared among the public and will slowly build an art critical society. The Evaluart stickers are to be distributed in art galleries, schools and libraries also in events where artists and art appreciators will meet.

IV. Follow up the action

The last method of this project approach is to create a website where people can post their findings and evaluation to share online. This website has the potential to give people more freedom to evaluate artworks that are displayed in a disclosed location, such as museums and galleries. They can document the

piece and enter their evaluation online through the EvaluART website. At this moment the website prototype is online at <http://a.parsons.edu/~mzacharia/evaluart/>

Conclusion

I learn from this project that to get an honest opinion for art from the art society is by introducing the art essence it self to them and to let them evaluate the art by themselves.

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