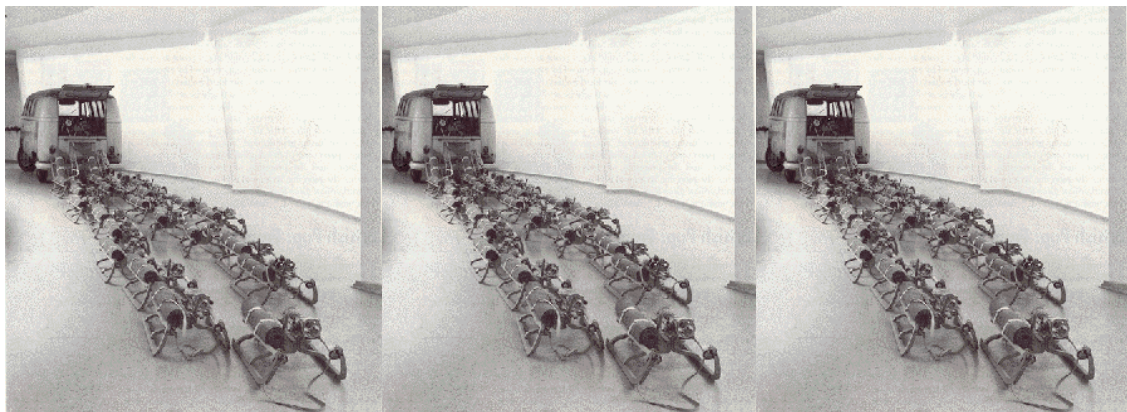


附錄：視覺藝術初探 (只限英文版)

(參考：<http://www.para-site.org.hk>)

Everything You Want to Know about Visual art *but are afraid to ask*





Visual Arts, to put it simply, are art works which appear mainly to the visual sense. You appreciate them, in most part, with one of your most important senses... your eyes!

So visual arts are different from, say, performing arts (e.g. theatre, ballet) which are disciplines that Hong Kong is more familiar with.

Many art practitioners (although this changes with times) see there is a distinction between fine arts and the crafts (or sometimes called applied arts). Crafts generally refers to skills like ceramics or wood crafts. Some see these as “inferior” to the so called “high arts”.

Here, we will only concentrate on visual art in contemporary times, which basically means the last 50 years or so. It is not easy to put different forms of visual art into categories but one way to look at it is this :

Painting, drawing or photography is called two-dimensional art because, well, they are two dimensional;

Sculpture or installation is sometimes referred to three-dimensional art because they involve the use of space;

And video or performance art is called time-based art since the artwork involves a particular time and space.

These are all different types of visual art and they may be different from what you originally expect. It is a little difficult for us to have access to all of these forms of art partly because Hong Kong does not have a contemporary visual art museum like the Guggenheim or the Museum of Modern Art in New York or the Tate Gallery in London. But we do have independent spaces in Hong Kong, which shows these different forms of art.

Let's take a look at a few types of visual art :

1) Painting / drawing : These are by far the most popular and one of the most important type of visual art. It is one that we are most familiar with. China has a long tradition of painting which is related to the art of calligraphy and print making so much so that calligraphy is sometimes appreciated as painting. But in recent times, many Chinese artists adopt western techniques.

We here in Hong Kong are more familiar with modern paintings of Van Gogh, Cezanne and Gauguin and indeed these modern artists has important influence in all forms of visual arts, from architecture to design. But in the last 50 years or so , after the second world war, many new forms of painting techniques and styles emerged. Abstract artists like Jackson Pollock and pop artists Andy Warhol became house hold names. These artists not only use different techniques but their subject matters and the ideas they wanted to convey were also revolutionary. These artists are generally called contemporary artists as opposed to modernists like Monet or Van Gogh.



Campbell's Soup Can
1964
Andy Warhol - American Pop Artist c.1930-1987
Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Silkscreen on canvas

But some art critics may argue increasingly painting and drawings are losing their importance. Indeed, if the international Biennales and Documenta in Germany are measures of where contemporary is heading, then indeed painting and drawing do seem to have taken a back seat when compared to other forms of visual art (those will be described below). Nevertheless, paintings and drawings are still very much appreciated by many and are the most accessible form of visual art here in Hong Kong.

But if you think visual art means painting and drawing, then read on....

2) Found art : or found object are art created from ordinary every day object that are normally not considered to be art. So what “makes” it art, and you are not the only one who are puzzled here, is the context into which it is placed i.e. the meaning that the artist want to convey in his/her art work.



This challenges what the public deemed as art. You know you see it when this happens to you :

When you go to see a pile of things in the middle of the museum and you exclaimed : what? You call that art! Even I could do that! I want my money back!

Important artist : Marcel Duchamp is the one to put an urinal, like the one you see in a man's toilet, signed it, and named his work "Fountain".

DuChamp Fountain original lost 1917 Height 60 cm readymade Porcelain urinal Philadelphia Museum of Art

3) Installation art : a form of art started in the 1970s, it uses all sorts of materials and media to change the way we experience a particular space. It's not confined to a gallery space like Para/site Art Space but could happen in public places. Some installation art are designed to only exist in one certain space and these are called site specific. Many installations utilise found objects as described above.

It is not easy for the public to understand why these art works are made and what/who they are made for. Many would wonder if they have any collection value. And if the art work is put up only for a period of time in a certain space, then the art work only exist temporarily and therefore what, then, is its value ? You may even think it's not beautiful to look at. It's not like your Picasso or Van Gogh that you could put up and show off, pass on to your next generation and fetch millions of dollars at the Sotheby's.

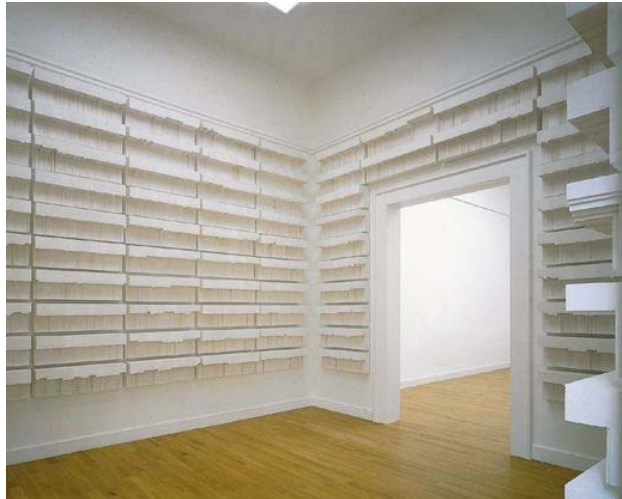
There is a gradual movements in art that started , somewhat around the 1960s (some argued even earlier), that the ideas embodied by a piece are more important than the means that were used to create it.

So in the past, a sculpture made of bronze with beautiful proportion of the human body may be seemed as the ultimate achievement in art. In our modern times in the past 50 years or so (or contemporary/post modern but nevermind this for the time being), however, the form or how aesthetically beautiful that particular sculpture is made is no longer the main point of the art. Instead, their art works would

explore the relationships between people or issues within societies like race, gender, their human observations etc.

See an example below of an installation art exhibiting at The Museum of Modern Art and how they describe the art.

Example from the New York The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) :



Rachel Whiteread. (British, born 1963)

Untitled (Paperbacks) 1997

Plaster and steel

Overall (450 x 480 x 632 cm).

Note how they describe the work :

“Untitled (Paperbacks) is a room-sized installation that feels empty but isn't quite: on all four walls hang rows of long white objects that look like shelves but are not, for they are

plaster, not wood, and their surfaces are uneven, and vacant. These regularly spaced tiers suggest a library without books, yet books were here, and their traces remain.

Whiteread made these objects by casting shelves of paperbacks, whose slightly differing sizes account for the plaster's uneven surfaces. Look closely, too, and you may see a residue of paper embedded in the casts, the edges of the pages caught as the plaster dried.

Whiteread specializes in the sculptural reversal that makes a solid object speak less of its own material presence than of objects that are no longer present, yet maintain a ghostly presence in their absence...”

If you have no clue as to what they are saying, that's fine. Neither do I. Increasingly, although many art practitioners may disagree, art has become more specialised and need a certain knowledge to appreciate it. Therefore may seem more distant to the general public. That's one of the many reasons why the role of today's curator has changed. One role of the curator is to act as a bridge between the artists and the public.

4) Performance art : this is not the same as perform/ING art like the theatre or ballet.

Performance art is art in which the actions of an artists or a group of artists constitute the work. This type of art would occur in a particular place and time and could take from just minutes to hours. It doesn't necessarily need a stage and could take place anywhere. Sometimes, the performance would be accompanied by music,

The main element of this type of art is the relationship and interaction between the performer and the audience. Sometimes, what the performer do would shock the audience and would to change their notion of art and its relation to culture.

Again, this had its beginnings in the 1960s or even earlier.



Artists : Joseph Beuys's (1921-1986) is regarded as one of the most influential European artists in the last 50 years. His most famous work is called How To Explain Pictures to the Dead Hare (1965). He walked around a gallery with his face smeared with honey and covered in gold leaf, carrying a dead hare to whom he talked and explained the pictures before them. The artist said the work was concerned with issues such as human and animal consciousness and the problems of thought and language.

5) Photography : photography here do not refer to the photos you see on newspaper, certainly very different from your Kodak moments. Sometimes, this form of art is called art photography and they refer to high quality photographic prints of pictures that are created to fulfill the creative vision of an individual artist. These are therefore like a work of art, but in the medium of photography. These prints are reproduced but only in limited editions. They are normally not sold to publishers but to art dealers and are collected by individual collectors or museums. This kind of art is not taught at all in schools and exhibitions of this kind is very difficult to find in HK.

The Museum of Modern Art began to collect photographs in the 1930s and now holds more than 25,000 works and is considered to be the most important collections of photography in the world.

Below is an online exhibition from the MoMA website :

Olafur Eliasson (Icelandic, born 1967)



“For the past six years, Olafur Eliasson has photographed his native Icelandic landscape. Arranged in grid-like configurations, the images record geographical formations that are characteristic of the terrain. Each series focuses on a single aspect of the land—ice, islands, or caves. Within these groups, individual photographs document specific places at particular moments. But when viewed together, the works describe broader themes. Nature is shown in a process of constant change. Shifting patterns of light, shape, and color emerge when pictures hang side-by-side, and the specifics of a single image give way to an overall subtlety and abstraction.”

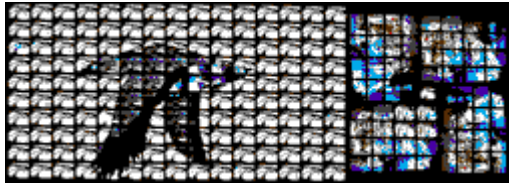
MoMA online exhibition *New Photography 14*: Jeanne Dunning, Olafur Eliasson, Rachel Harrison, Sam Taylor-Wood October 15, 1998—January 12, 1999
<http://www.moma.org/collection/depts/photography/>

6) Video Art : whilst your home videos or DVDs aims to entertain the goal of “video art” is to explore the boundaries of the medium itself or to shock and stretch the viewer’s expectation of video as shaped by conventional cinema. A film would normally have a storyline, plot, your favourite movie star, but video art may not have a definitive story, may not even contain dialogue, could be black and white, may have music as the background or may be silent. Video art does not mean that it is only on video, more and more work is on DVDs, CD Roms and hard-disk.

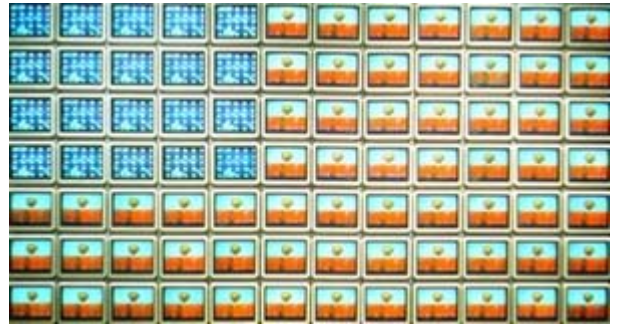
Artist: one of the pioneers of video art is considered to be Nam June Paik.

Nam June Paik (Korean-American, 1932-), *Global Groove*, 1973, photograph of a video screen / still from 3/4 inch color videotape, sound, 30 minutes, Museum of Modern Art, New York.





Nam June Paik, *Megatron*, 1995, Guggenheim Museum, NY.



Video Flag Y, 1985
84 TV sets, 3 videodisk players, 8 electric fans, plastic frame

**OK... this all sounds pretty cool.. but
why do I want to teach this at school and
what does it do for my students?**

Is visual art a new subject? How is this different from art classes in the traditional sense? And for students in secondary school, is this part of liberal arts?

Many schools have changed their name of the subjects from just “art” to “visual art” in recent years although sometimes that doesn’t mean they change their syllabus.

Contemporary visual art and its appreciation has become an important subject for many schools in the west. But it is not because visual art is just something beautiful to look at, it is because it is regarded as an important part of a child’s education and development.

Training in visual art gives a child an appreciation of beauty, inspires creativity and develop their thinking and analytical skills. And because many visual art works are inspired by current affairs and human relationships, children naturally develop their interests in

history , politics, gender studies, and many topical issues affecting our world today. Some schools include this as part of their liberal art education whilst others may offer more specialist training.

Knowledge and training in this field are not just for professional artists but are important as a foundation for architecture, design, film production, advertising and many other jobs in the so called creative industries. As our economy moves towards knowledged based industries and as we need to compete more and more with the rest of the world, we need to give our children exposure to what is happening now. So it is not enough to teach art and art appreciation of past centuries; we need to teach them the art that is being made in more recent times.

Where do I start?

Contemporary Art in Hong Kong (For reference only)

There is contemporary art in Hong Kong. Visiting the galleries would be a great way to start. Some of the galleries are suitable for art teachers to visit and others would be great to take students too. The galleries are a bit difficult to find but can be very rewarding once you made your way around. You will not only see interesting works by local and sometimes international artists but also get to know some interesting people. T

The Art Map, a flyer you can find in most galleries is a good guide, or you could click on <http://www.hongkonggalleries.org>. The South China Morning Post has an art page on Tuesdays and HK magazine has a good listing of what is going on.

The centers for contemporary art are on Hong Kong Island around Hollywood Road, SoHo and on the Kowloon side, the Cattle Depot is close to the old airport. Hong Kong does not have a big public contemporary art institution. You cannot really find contemporary art at the [Hong Kong Arts Museum](#); the [Hong Kong University Museum](#) and the [Heritage Museum](#) sometimes have contemporary exhibitions.

Hong Kong's contemporary art scene is dominated by small, independent art spaces. We will only show you the non-profit making institutions here and we will exclude the commercial art galleries.

Para/Site Art Space, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, shows a good mix of exciting Hong Kong and international contemporary art. On Hollywood Road, the Asian Art Archive is a great institution that collects books, films and magazine about Asian art. This unique library is the only place in Asia that does so extensively and is a great resource center for everybody who is interested to find out about contemporary art. Further down to Central you pass the Fringe Club with its gallery. Sometimes interesting projects – sometimes flower watercolors, it's difficult to be more extreme or less selective in what you show.

The Hong Kong Arts Center in Wan Chai was once the place for contemporary art but at the moment has fewer shows. Also located in the Art Center is the gallery of the Goethe Institut that shows interesting projects in a nice gallery on the 14th floor.

On Kowloon side, 1A space in Cattle Depot shows local and international contemporary art, some great shows are produced there. Videotage is more an organizer for video and multi media art but organizes an important festival called the Microwave Festival. Artist Commune shows primarily local arts but from time to time, it showcases real cutting edge international artists as well.