

Approaching the ARTS (2)

So, how do we approach the arts?

Role:

1. creator
2. critic
3. product
4. audience

Consideration:

1. goal (intent)
2. standards
3. impact
4. subject matter

1. Artist as emphasis:

1. We examine the life, background of the artist in terms of influence
2. We see to know the intent of the artist in the piece or production
3. We examine the creative process as it relates to this artist
4. We study the product(ion) to see the artist's views on particular themes to topics

Thus, the **intent** of the artist is imperative to this critical perspective.
And, if the artist had no intent, then critics will say the piece is **not** art.

Also, if creative pieces were made with a practical or social purpose (the hand carved trunk, for example) then critics will say these pieces are **not** art. There was no aesthetic intent in their making.

2. Product(ion) as emphasis:

1. We consider the design and composition of the piece/production.
2. We evaluate skill in the design and production.
3. We accept that the various fields of the arts have criteria and an expectation of being applied (followed) or broken for a specific purpose.
4. We apply generally accepted rules concerning principles of design as a form of 'measurement' or comparison

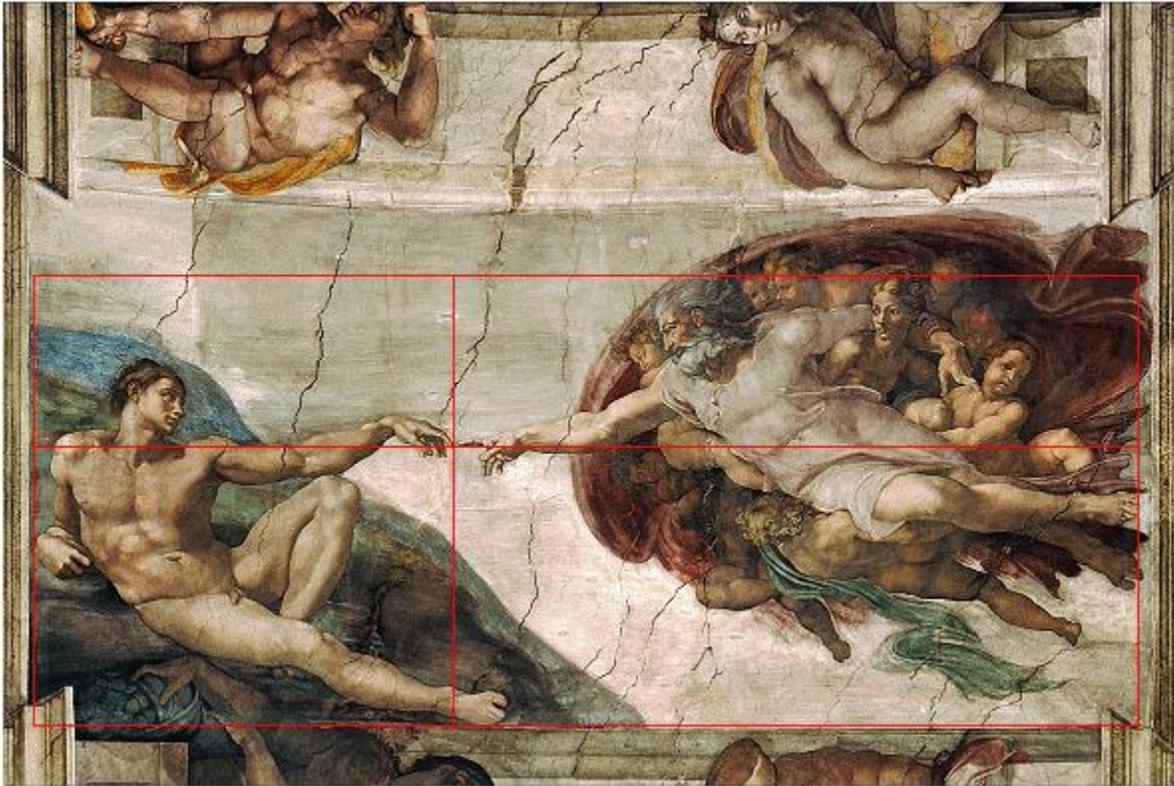
Thus, **quality** of the work is assessed.

We look to experts to assist us in our assessment.

Some experts feel for production to be good, there must be beauty involved (aesthetics).

However, 'ugliness' can be 'overridden' as it were if standards of beauty apply to form and composition.

Also, there appears to be universal standards of what appeals to us, ie. The golden mean:



3. Audience as emphasis:

1. Art is considered in its **impact** upon the audience.
2. Art can therefore be considered didactic (meant to teach).
3. Art can be considered to serve as catalyst or catharsis (to spur emotions, to purge emotions) to evoke some visceral response in the audience.

Thus, there must be some stirring upon the receiver (my connotative sense of animation).

Thus, some pieces will live on long after their makers; others will not, and for some critics, the longevity of the art is its greater value in terms of defining a piece *as* art.

Art is intended to inspire, educate, provoke, expose social issues, satirize, compel action and change.

4. Society/natural world as emphasis:

1. Art is considered in how well it represents society or the world.
2. Art is considered in how well it depicts the past or sheds light on past cultural practices and traditions.
3. Art is considered in terms of historical illumination or as artifact.

Thus, with this critical perspective, art is considered in terms of how well it reflects particular societies, mores, ethos, and/or the natural world.

Thus, art can take us into the worlds/experiences of others in a way we could not otherwise explore.

It can lean to particular stances: feminist, post-modernist, Marxist, post-colonial, etc.

It can depict the individual at odds with/in alignment with a specific society or trend, showcasing what art 'should or should not' do.

Open or Closed?

There can be overlap in terms of these four critical perspectives.

Further, one can accept something as art and still not like it.

We cannot help but carry some subjectivity, some bias with us. It is part of our ways of knowing and arts are not isolated from the whole person appraising what is before him.

Background knowledge comes from prior experience with similar works and cannot be dismissed (similar to perception; every present action is compared to...perhaps unconsciously...to actions of the past).

Expertise within background application is what creates **familiarity with accepted standards** and leads to an informed response.

Thus, we can disagree as to how we feel about art, but agree as to how standards are/not met.

Expertise leads to **discernment** (the knowing view) and **taste** comes from exposure and past experiences and both can be considered **subjective** and not in a **negative** manner.

Thus, debate and dissent can be encouraged, provided they are informed in nature and expressed clearly (go back to rationalism and why ad hominem is a weak form).

ALL OF WHICH LEADS US TO CONSIDER

The 'value' of the arts:

Subjective understanding:

experience an endless array of points of view and ideas

Human comprehension:

observe behavior and societies both from within and beyond our own experiences

Challenge to paradigms:

Provoke thinking differently, expanding our stance

Meaning making:

See meaning and pattern in the unpredictability of life

Beauty:

Resonance within, emotional release, reflection and engagement