

ART IN THE POSTMEDIA AGE

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The media and new technologies have a significant impact on modern culture and art, and no one disputes on this. One of the main subjects of discussion among researchers is what is being created in art in the post-media age. Behind this topic there are numerous research questions. Does the new media somehow erase the boundary between pop culture and so-called elite art? How easy is it for new modern art to be understood by modern man? Is the social media one of the forms of art, and what are prospects of new media art?

Firstly, before we discuss the art of new media in particular, we need to clarify what “new media” is in general. It is not clear when the concept of “new media” appeared. Most researchers have linked it to the creation of a global network, the Internet. Some think that the process of creating “new media” began in the second half of the 20th century, when the world’s media began to work to form worldwide systems, satellite or cable. Some experts believe that with the advancement of technology, the new media is emerging at every stage, such as photography, motion picture, radio, and others. Russell Neuman, a professor of media technology and author of numerous studies, gives us a definition of new media in his works and concludes that the new media is within the framework of digital technology with content of all types, including traditional media, in a digital form, potentially allowing everyone to cover the spread of new platforms and present their product online. Also, he suggests that if the “new media” have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Neuman, “We are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication”¹ (Neuman cited in Croteau and Hoynes 2003: 322). Neuman argues that New Media:

- Will alter the meaning of geographic distance.

- Allow for a huge increase in the volume of communication.
- Provide the possibility of increasing the speed of communication.
- Provide opportunities for interactive communication.
- Allow forms of communication that were previously separate to overlap and interconnect.²

Most researchers believe that the term *new media* is associated with the advent of the digital age, perhaps that is why new media synonyms include terms like *online media* and *net media*. Generally, all types of the new media are combined with the digitization of its product, which directly connects it to the global network. The adaptation of the media product to the Internet space is linked to an important feature for the new media, interactive dialogue. This is the main feature that distinguishes traditional media from the new. There is also a fundamental difference between the capabilities of the information provider and the receiver. Choosing programming is no longer exclusive to the media, given the news. Compared to traditional media, the new media is faster, more democratic and open to the public. While traditional media has an audience, new media has customers, which increases the interactive component and allows it to be actively involved in the content of the product in order to spread the news itself (“share”). By the thesis of Manuel Castells, the first, most important structural feature of the modern media is the integration of telecommunications technologies. The second structural feature of the current communication revolution in the media is the growth of interactive media. The third feature of the new media is the (technical) digital code. The new media combines all three features simultaneously. In the book “The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy” (Castells M. Cardoso G. Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2005) authors came in to conclusion, that in the late twentieth and 21st centuries, the media is integrated interactive and uses digital code.

1 N. W. Russell, *The Future of the Mass Audience*, 1991, p. 29

2 N. W. Russell, *The Future of the Mass Audience*, 1991, p. 30

Basically, traditional media prefer one form of communication: newspaper, print periodicals opt for reading, radio for listening, and television for watching. In defiance of this strict definition, the new media has not established a form of communication with its customers. The form of transmission, in this case, depends on the perception of the story to be told by the author. Classification of what can be ascribable to the new media is not clear, however, most of researchers, in the term of “new media,” discern the following categories: blog, internet, various types of publications, including video, photo materials distribution / sharing groups / portals (YouTube, Instagram); Social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, etc.); Hypertext groups for structuring a variety of information (Wikipedia); Gaming sites; Instant messaging systems (ICQ, AOL Messenger); Video conferences, and others.

The emergence of New Media is a kind of echo of the change in the space of social communication. The demand of the media product users obviously led to the diversity of media product delivery platforms. The process of media evolution is underway, which is accompanied by numerous changes in the journalistic profession, but despite this evolution—digital technology, changing the forms of journalistic product, the essence of the profession—to broadcast, spreading checked information, is unchanged. As soon as personal computers became available, a new, digital communication environment was immediately created, which is in the process of constant development.

The new media significantly changes not only journalism, but it also gives birth to the new genres of art. On the way to the evolution of art, the search for new forms of expression is a natural, irreversible process. Accordingly, the new media has created a new artform, media art. It is an artform whose works are created by the digital platform, or use new technologies.

The field of media art was formed in the 1960s. The interest of artists in new technologies conditioned the dominant role of mass media over the public. Media art, like television, is a product of the postmodern era. Some researchers even call it post-cinematic because, in their view, the new media art offers similar virtual artefacts. However, unlike cinema, it chooses not a collective but an individual “relationship” style with the audience. According to artist and art curator

Peter Weibel, (many researchers agree with his arguments) media art, or the art of using various technical devices, is based on human media experience, which has become a norm for aesthetic perception. “This media experience has become the norm for all aesthetic experience. Hence in art there is no longer anything beyond the media. No-one can escape from the media. There is no longer any painting outside and beyond the media experience. There is no longer any sculpture outside and beyond the media experience. There is no longer any photography outside and beyond the media experience”.³ The researcher explains that all traditional art trends share media experience today. In the publication “Media Art from Simulation to Stimulation”, P. Weibel presents an interesting thesis: As in the case of old technical media (photography, cinema), the achievements of new media have not only introduced separate directions or means of expression, but also influenced traditional media such as painting and sculpture. Previously, painting and sculpture were not considered as media, but as P. Weibel describes, under the influence of new forms and genres it was recognized as non-technological old media. The emergence of new media art allows us to reconsider old media art, we can also present the following thesis that the real success of new media is not only that new forms and opportunities for art have been developed, but also that new media has given the opportunity to use new approaches to old media art and by this way it helps to prolong its actuality. Notably, the artist uses the term traditional media instead of traditional art. Generally, some modern researchers like Weibel view art as a medium. As much as any work of art will appeal to the audience (for whom it is created), it also includes the communication process, which in the case of art is within the boundaries of aesthetic communication. However, it should also be noted that aesthetic communication was carried out in different eras with different technologies. With the advent of new media, these technologies have become more and more in line with media technology, which means that digital technologies are the main means of transmitting any information, including aesthetic communication.

New media art is often considered part of postmodernist culture, although Weibel and other like-minded researchers, while analyzing the history

3 P. Weibel, *From Simulation to Stimulation*, 2015, pg.151

of the new media art, assert that this process is the so-called post-meditative echo. History shows that technology has made some changes in art. Today's processes show that the new media art takes the archetype of the old, traditional media and, therefore, is being remedied, where the medium is the means, the material, and it does not matter whether it is paint, natural stone, or modern technology.

Based on the above, we can assume that the rapid development and popularity of the new media is due to the fact that the majority of the population has a much better "material" (computer, Internet) to create samples of modern art than the so-called traditional material (paint, brush, notation system, and the like). From this logical chain, we come to the conclusion that the new media art is more understandable, easier to understand, and therefore more acceptable to modern man. This is probably one of the reasons why researchers believe that modern art is becoming more and more similar to pop culture. In addition, the hybrid creative, which is typical characteristic of the new media art, brings it closer to pop culture, where a combination of different art genres and forms takes place. Media technologies allow the modern artist to create art objects with various, already existing classic texts, works, photos, and others, through compilation included.

Terms themselves: New Media Art, or Media Art, Digital Art, Net Art, the same Internet art, we hear more and more often. Media art combines several genres (video art, entertainment, media installation, and others) that differ by media technology the artist uses. The typology and forms of media genres cannot be defined by any listing because this direction of art is based on hybrid principles, assumes new forms of expression and evolves with technological evolution.

The theory of transmedia is noteworthy in discussing the current artistic processes in the media space. In this case we have to mention that transmedia is often equated with cross-media and multimedia, but all three phenomena differ from one another and have their own specifics. The similarity between Cross media and Transmedia is that in both cases we are talking about the participation of several different media platforms, and the difference is that transmedia tells us a few small stories that together form one

whole. Cross media offers the same story on different platforms. As for Multimedia, it, like transmedia, refers to the so-called story. It is an interactive study and offers several media forms, but unlike transmedia, it uses one media platform. Henry Jenkins, an American philosopher, professor of communication, journalism and film art, is one of the first media researchers who analyzed the role of audiences in the development of digital technology. The author of the theory of media convergence clearly shows the difference between the traditional understanding of transmedia and modern transmedia. Screenwriting of fiction, comics, a novel based on a movie, etc. are traditional form of transmedia. Modern transmedia, according to H. Jenkins, means the use of common characters by different media platforms: soap operas, movies, animation, computer games, comics with different characters create different stories and each of them contributes to a whole fictional world. "Soon we may be seeing the transmedia principles applied to the quality dramas that appeal to more mature consumers—shows such as *The West Wing* (1999) or *The Sopranos* (1999) for example, would seem to lend themselves readily to such expectations, and soap operas have long depended on elaborate character relationships and serialized plotlines that could easily expand beyond television into other media."⁴ Then he adds, that: "Kids who grew up in this media mix culture would produce new kinds of media as transmedia storytelling becomes more intuitive".⁵ H. Jenkins's view is extended by Christy Dena in the work "Transmedia Practice: Theorizing the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World across Distinct Media and Environments." The researcher concludes that transmedia begins to merge with intertextuality. Intertextuality, gives a chance to make much more multifarious different types of works, as a full story, as well as specific characters, episodes, motives, certain accents, and so on. K. Dena's emphasis on intertextuality is important, because today, as never before, from the view of "network society", in the perception of art, context becomes one of the decisive factors. There is an illusion that a particular work is linked to another work of art. In the so-called media age, the audience already have certain attitude towards the short stories, motive, visual solution, etc. from the

⁴ J. Henry, *Convergence Culture*, 2006, pg. 129

⁵ J. Henry, *Convergence Culture*, 2006, pg. 130

separate works spread by the media. Therefore, the new product is perceived by the public from a specific perspective. Transmedia as well as intertextuality is not a product of the new media. In fact, they have always existed and maintained the integrity of the cultural space, its development, transformation and also the peculiar perception of the work of art by different generations of audiences. For example, ancient mythology and the Bible can be considered as epochal transmedia events. Despite the time and space, transmedia means the interconnectedness of different artistic worlds. It is a kind of eternal but at the same time spontaneous process. According to modern perceptions, the transmedia project may be planned and distributed to different media platforms according to a preliminary scenario.

Most researchers consider the new media art as a kind of multidisciplinary field, where we can see all directions of modern art. Many researchers see the main goal of Media art in its multidisciplinary nature. The new media art world came about as a multidisciplinary arena of research, a reaction to the rigid conventions of a whole series of other worlds: that of contemporary art, but also the performing arts, music, design and industrial research. Its “borderline” status and dynamism should not only be acknowledged but also cultivated, and if possible, reinforced. Historically the New Media Art world filled the gaps between one creative arena and another, between arts and science, arts and technology. This was its mission, its destiny.”⁶ Modern researchers

working in various disciplines believe that we are in the early stages of the post-media age and make assumptions about how media art can develop in these conditions. If we accept the fact that we live in a post-media age, this is just the beginning. The integration of art, (known as the new media art) into the world of contemporary art, is just the beginning of a large-scale reorganization. As numerous researchers ensure the continental drift has already begun.

There has been a lot of discussion about the future of media art and the development of art in general. BBC Culture published “What Will Art Look Like in 20 Years” (April, 2019). Based on the opinions of various artists and art curators, several trends emerged that are likely to be relevant in the art space in 20 years. According to the forecast, by 2040, under the influence of the media, art will become more inclusive and accessible. Presumably, the situation at the art market will not change radically, and the paintings created in the first half of the twentieth century will still be in greatest demand at auctions. Presumably, the concepts of exposition in museums and exhibition spaces will change radically. Climate change will be one of the main sources of artist inspiration. There will be activist artists who respond and participate in political uprisings. There will be experimenters who will explore new (including cosmic) spaces. Finally, according to BBC’s forecast for 2040, art may not look like art in the modern sense, but it will still reflect the spirit of the era.

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⁶ Domenico, Q. New Media Art, 2013, pg.196