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Influences of digital media on traditional art
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"Good artists copy, great artists steal," Pablo Picasso. This was the opening statement in Professor Sam Perry's lecture on the *Influences of Digital Media on Traditional Art*. Professor Perry's opening remarks were meant to express his opinion on how without technology, the art world would not have evolved as far as it has today. The statement Good artists copy, great artists steal is a direct example of how artists have always worked. Artists copy from life and steal different techniques from each other in order to make the works of art that we see today.

Professor Perry teaches at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida. He teaches Studio Arts and advocates the use of technology in the arts. Professor Perry's lecture covered technology from as far back as the late 1600's, all the way to present-day digital cameras. He also made cross references to the ability to remix other art work using today's digital media and the implication that it has on today's art world.

In this lecture, Professor Perry made multiple references to today's digital cameras as they applied to tools of the past. He focused mainly on the camera obscura and other similar tools. The camera obscura was one of the most important mechanical tools in the arts. This tool was the first known use of a mechanical tool used in the art world. Before this use artist had to rely on their ability of mark making.

Professor Perry expanded on this notion by showing many examples of how artists have used technology to help make their art better. He did this by explaining how the camera obscura worked and how artists use it. He expressed that this tool was a simple device that would allow artists to trace a projection allowing them to get better proportions while also allowing them to get them faster. Professor Perry argues that before the use of this technology, painters did not always make proportions correctly and if they could, it would take them longer to do it.

For many artists, the camera obscura was a tool just like a paintbrush or palette knife. They used this tool to help to get a quick sketch before they would paint their work. Professor Perry continued on by stating

that the camera obscura was just as important to the painter, as the invention of the paint tube or the color purple. Professor Perry expanded on this notion by showing many examples of how artists have used technology to help make their art better. Prior to the invention of the paint tube, artists could not easily paint outdoors so most of the work being made was done indoors. This was because the use of bulky equipment made it difficult for artists to paint outdoors. After the invention of paint tubes, artists were able to paint el fresco. El fresco comes from the Italian adjective fresco, meaning "fresh," which was used to described painters that painted outdoors in the fresh air.

As Professor Perry went on, he expressed that art is a product of technology and it's past. One of the artists we looked at was Degas. Degas was a well-known painter known for his paintings of ballerinas. Yet, we do not look at his art because of the subject matter, we looked at his work because Degas was one of the first painters to paint in the style of a snapshot. The cropping of Degas' work looks similar to the photos of today with tight cropping, or off-center composition. This could be due to the fact that he was influenced by the camera and the images that one could get by the use of this tool.

Professor Perry went on to say that every generation takes from the generation before it. We discussed this by looking at artists such as Cezanne, a French artist known for his painting of fruits. Professor Perry playfully described him as a direct ancestor to the images we see today on Instagram using the hashtag food porn. He points out that every work of art has already been made and that technology is just allowing us to remix or "improve" the work that has already been made. He points this out with the work of Andy Warhol. In this work, we see the mechanical tool being used not only to help the artist make the work but almost make the full body of work. In this work, Warhol is noted as the artist yet he is just reproducing readymade images.

As the lecture went on he discussed the implication that digital media has on today's art world. One of the main points was the ability to copy or reproduce work. This ability to copy work is not something that is new to art, yet it is something that many artists must think about. Especially in the age if digital media. Where anyone and everyone can take a photo of your work and post it online to any of the many social media sites. This seems now a day to have a bigger impact on the art world today. Now anyone with access to the internet can see work without going to a museum or gallery. This did bring up the question of authenticity of the work. Which Professor Perry briefly spook about simply stating that there will always be a need to see work in person

In fact, in one of my readings *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* by Walter Benjamin, I am reminded that the act of reproducing art work cannot take away the aura of the original work. This is because a reproduction can only act as a catalyst to inspire an artist to make new and compelling work no matter how close to the original that copy is. This is only reinforced by understanding Benjamin's thoughts on the artist's vantage. Where he argues that a piece of art will always hold intrinsic value due to its time and space where the art was made therefore there will always be something missing from the work, and therefore any reproduction is just a cheapen copy of the original.

As we explored more of the history of art and how the introduction of mechanical tools has changed the path of art. I could not help but think how today's digital world has influenced the art world of today. I found that my work has been heavily influenced by technology. This intersection of technology comes in a form of a digital camera which I use to paint my images. Yet without this influence of technology, the art world may come to a slow stop.

In my most recent work, I deal with how social media affects our everyday life causing us to have an abstract sense of connection. Therefore, making a paradox in the way we experience what the norms call reality. We seem to forget that being digitally connected can take us away from the present moment. We stay connected online but in reality, we are disconnected from the physical world. I have found many artists that work in the same vein as I do.

As an example, Maty MO, or as he calls himself, "The Most Famous Artist," is an up and coming Los Angeles-based artist. He began an experiment on social media in which he sent out a message to all of his followers asking them all, both male and females to send him "nudies." The result was a surplus of explicit images. Where he soon saved and printed for a show called Happy Birthday which was shown in New York 2016. It is this type of eccentric work that is keeping art from staying stale.

For this reason, I am looking into my past for inspiration, but at the same time, exploiting my present creativity and incorporating this into my new work. From this lecture, I have gained a great deal of insight of how technology has impacted, and still continues to impact as it evolves, the art world and how I can use this impact in my work.