

Residence Summary  
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### Communicating Without Words part 2

Throughout the last 15 years, technology has changed every aspect of our lives. Technology has affected the way we learn, the way we communicate, even the way we travel. Technology has taken precedence in this ever-changing world. It seems like everywhere we look technology is consuming every aspect of our lives. This shift in technology seems to be greatly impacting the art world in a significant way.

These changes seem to occur slowly at first, then quickly transform into an overnight phenomenon. We notice this transformation in the art world with pieces of artwork like those of Andy Warhol's screen prints. In these prints, Warhol uses a new technology of the time to rapidly reproduce images. Prior to this time, art was made one stroke at a time and took a long time to make. This process was a byproduct of the industrial revolution that took place in the United States of America during the 18th century. This new way to produce and reproduce art brought upon a very important question. Was it art? The simple answer is yes; this is art.

An example of this can be seen in Chris Burden's "Shoot" where Burden was shot in the arm with a 22mm shotgun by his friend. This was considered art because Burden stated that the act of doing something so severe such as shooting someone, was in itself art. This brought upon a new question. What makes art? The basic answer to this question is very easy to understand;

art is anything that makes you think or communicate some kind of message. Yet, there is a silver lining on the views on what art is, and what art is not.

George Bernard Shaw, an Irish playwright, as a writer, Shaw's main goal was to communicate this message effectively through writing. He understood how important it was to engage his audience by means of effective communication. In doing so, George seemed to come across one of the biggest problems in the art world today, are artists thoroughly communicating a message(s) within their art? Is their artwork meant to communicate with their audiences?

Shaw seemed to understand this new problem. He attempted to clarify this misinterpretation of what is communication by stating; the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. With this quote, Shaw seems to bring reason to a very abstract thought. What is communication and how is it interpreted by the viewer? Even though Shaw was not the only one to bring illumination to this topic, he was one of the first to give a compact explanation to the topic.

Roland Barthes, a French literary theorist, wrote many extensive papers on this topic. One of his works entitled *Death of The Author* implies that the true author of any work is never its creator, but rather, the true author is the receiver of the work. He further explained that the receiver gives birth to the interpretation of the work. Roland expands deeper by stating that the creator never holds the true meaning of their work. He continues on by adding that no work is ever original. This idea is further expanded by the understanding that all works of art are always borrowed or influenced from some other work of art whether it is visual, tangible, or any in the

form of the other five senses. Roland argues that everything we do has been influenced by our own awareness levels. We only act upon what we realize, not what we do not realize.

Many artists today seem to be rapidly losing the ability to connect socially with their viewers. This is mainly due to the rapid changes occurring in today's digital world. Many people find themselves only communicating or engaging through a digital device(s). This change has caused many artists to push their boundaries in this rapidly changing world. One that often times, does not seem to follow the same rules as traditional art.

This transformation in media holds its own unique circumstances which in turn, has led to a plethora of obstacles. One of the main difficulties is the way art is perceived online. The online world has led to the loss of connection between the intended message and the one that is received by the viewer. This has led me into the issue of abandonment. I have chosen to focus not on the physical form of abandonment of an object or a person, but rather, the lingering feeling of a severed connection. A lack of authentic, and meaningful communication. An issue that is rapidly growing in society today.

This lack of communication in today's world can be seen every time a post is made, or an image is shared online through means of social media or email. One cannot, and does not know the true meaning or feeling behind a post or photo most of the time there is no authenticity of the post or image. This can be due to the lack of information or background that artists place in their work online which in turn, leaves the receiver with an interpretation of the work posted. In the early 2000's, an artist suffered repercussions for their image of a baby wrapped in an

American flag. This image went viral causing a mass misinterpretation of the author's true message. Many people interpreted this message in a variety of ways, some negatively, some positively.

One of the biggest and most recent misinterpretations of the twenty first century was Kathy Griffin's work called Beheaded Donald Trump. In this work of art, Kathy is videotaped and photographed holding a severed prosthetic head that resembles the president of the United States, Donald J. Trump. This work of art made national news for numerous reasons. Yet, none of the media outlets consider this art. This supports the theory that Barthes has with his work in Death of The Author. It also explores one of his other works Camera Lucida, where Barthes implies an image's power comes from the ability to invest or transport oneself from a viewer to an explorer of his/her own understanding of the topic.

In this topic, many people had numerous comments, and/or views about not only Griffin, but the president himself. Some were in favor of Trump and some against. The same is applied with Griffin. One quote states, "For the record, I am appalled by the photo shoot Kathy Griffin took part in. It is clearly disgusting and completely inappropriate" Anderson Cooper Twitter. As a result of this extreme act, Griffin is being investigated by the FBI and other investigation agencies.

This is not the only artist that has had this kind of backlash on her work. The work of Sally Mann had a similar response. Mann's work titled *Immediate Family* received similar attention. It depicted at the time, her young kids both son and daughter, naked around her house. This work was described as vulgar, unsettling and borderline child pornography. Some headlines aimed to

discredit her work by stating “It May Be Art, but What About the Kids?” this is how a headline read of The San Diego Tribune. The translation of the artist differs a great deal than that of the viewer.

This topic continues to grow and has expanded into my work. In my topic of study, I have taken to the digital media world. I will be bracken it down in an attempt to try to find a way to show how rapidly technology is transforming and how our true identities and sense of self is slowly dying.

I will use digital sounds and images in an effort see how it will affect the way my image is perceived. I will also find a broad demographic of individuals who feel as though they are not lost but rather even more connected than ever through means of technology. I will research to further find out why they feel lost and disconnected to the world when their electronic device is not with them. I will then in turn, use those feelings and informational interviews in the incorporation of my work relating to my new topic of study. I will assault their senses using audio and visual mechanisms to trigger a time in their lives in which they have felt abandoned.