



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

APPROPRIATION IN INTERACTIVE ART

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Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honour
(Fine Art)
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Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

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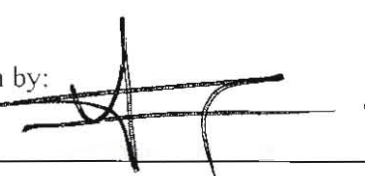


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APPROPRIATION IN INTERACTIVE ART

KHAIRUN NISA BINTI SOHAIMI

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of bachelor of Applied Arts with Honors
(Fine Arts)

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2019

VALIDATION

I **Khairun Nisa binti Sohaimi** with my project entitled **Appropriation in Interactive Art** hereby this project as a part of fulfillment for the conferment of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honor (**Fine Arts**) is accepted.

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(Encik Anuar bin Ayob)
Supervisor

DECLARATION

The project entitled **Appropriation in Interactive Art** was prepared by **Khairun Nisa binti Sohaimi** and submitted to the Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honor (**Fine Arts**).

Accepted to be review by:

(Encik Anuar bin Ayob)

Supervisor

Date:

APPRECIATION

I would like to thank Encik Anuar bin Ayob and Cik Aslina binti Mohd Jainal for their kindness, patience and guidance throughout the years. Apart from that, I would also like to thank my fellow friends for their moral support. Last but not least, I would like to thank my parents for supporting me financially for this research. Without each and everyone of you, I would not be able to conduct this research successfully. Thank you.

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Abstract

This research is done in order to understand appropriation in art, to explore interactive in art and to create an interactive artwork by using appropriation technique. Thus, this research is entitled 'Appropriation in Interactive' art. Researcher collect the data for this research through online survey, observation, journals, books and websites. Throughout the research, researcher can concludes interactive art as a form of art that will requires audience participation. Meanwhile, appropriation in art is the act of using everyday object or existing artwork into a new artwork to give it a new meaning. After being able to understand interactive art and appropriation in art, researcher then create an interactive artwork by appropriating digital game technique into it. The artwork entitled 'For You' and with that, researcher hope people's perspective towards fine art will change.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dilaksanakan bagi memahami appropriasi dalam seni, mengeksplorasi seni interaktif dan menghasilkan karya interaktif dengan menggunakan teknik appropriasi. Maka, kajian ini dinamakan 'Appropriation in Interactive Art.' Pengkaji mengumpul data melalui borang kaji selidik di atas talian, pemerhatian, jurnal, buku dan laman sesawang. Melalui kajian ini, pengkaji dapat merumuskan karya interaktif sebagai satu bentuk seni yang memerlukan interaksi audien. Manakala apropriasi dalam seni pula boleh didefinisikan sebagai prilaku menggunakan objek yang digunakan dalam kehidupan seharian atau karya yang sedia ada dalam karya baru bagi memberikan objek tersebut makna yang baharu. Setelah berjaya untuk memahami apropriasi dalam seni dan juga teknik-teknik yang digunakan dalam karya interaktif, sebuah karya yang bertajuk 'For You' dihasilkan agar dapat mengubah perspektif masyarakat terhadap seni.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Researcher will be discussing on the importance of this research in this section.

1.1 Background Summary

Interactive art is an artwork which allow viewers to communicate and be a part of the artwork itself. The history of interactive art can be seen as early as in the 5th century B.C. during the historical painting duel that happened between two talented Greece painters, Parrhasius and Zeuxis. Apart from that, it is believed that Marcel Duchamp's 'Rotary Glass Plates' was also contributing into the history of interactive art. However, the pioneer of interactive art should be the one and only British artist named, Roy Ascott. His awareness on viewer's participation in art is the one that manage to change people's perception towards art.

Next, there are several approach that artists could implement in their artwork. Those are instrument, achieves, labyrinth, rhizome, system, network, spectacle and game (Kluszcynski, 2010). These approaches can be classified as appropriation in art. Appropriation in art can be seen when an artist properly adopt, borrows, recycle certain aspect of existing artworks or readymade objects (Wilson and Lack, 2008). The history of appropriation in art began in the early 20th century – when Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque experimented with paper collage while creating an abstract artworks.

However, it was the famous 'Fountain' by Marcel Duchamp that changes the context of art today. Without Duchamp's act, appropriation in art could not exist. Nowadays, artist could freely appropriate any subject, technique, concept and artwork into their own artwork. Van Soverwine is one of them. In 2002, she created an artwork called 'Play With Me' to tackle social issues that was happening on that time – suicidal

thoughts and adult efficacy issues. Researcher find that artwork amusing and has decided to create an artwork like Sowervine. Thus, this research paper will discuss more on interactive art and appropriation in art.

1.2 Problem Statement

Researcher wants people to understand how interesting art could be by appropriating digital game technique in interactive art. This is because of the society (Malaysian) who are sadly convince by Gautier's ideology on art - "l'a art pour l' art" – art only exist for its own sake (Life, 2015). A survey was conducted by researcher using a Google Form. Researcher asked respondents to pick a picture of what do they consider as fine art artwork in a question. The truth is, all of them is an artwork by an artist. The first picture is a picture of 'Water Lilies' by Claude Monet. The second picture is a picture of an artwork by Christo and Jeanne Claude, 'Pont Neuf,' wrapped, Paris (1975-85). The third picture is a photograph of a half onion by Edmund Weston. Next, a picture of 'HYBYCOZO' (sculpture) by Yelena Filipchuk. Last but not least is an animated GIF of an interactive artwork, 'Play With Me' by Von Sowerwine. Respondents can pick as much picture as they want. However, only 13% of her respondents pick 'Play With Me.' With that, it is safe to assume that most people would not consider game as an art. They might be oblivious about it.

Meanwhile, 71% of the respondents acknowledge 'Water Lillies' as a fine art artwork. Thus, they probably think that fine art students are only capable to do paintings like Da' Vinci and Cloud Monet. Truth to be told, there are so much more that art can do. In fact, art today is no longer exists for its own purpose. As said by Katerina Gregos in her TEDx Talks "Today, more and more artist are inspired by the reality than the formal

shape of reality – colours, shapes, beauty.” Today’s art is more likely to be engage with the socially and politically issue. This is due to the problem that arises in our society today. Therefore, this research should be conduct to change society perceptions towards art by introducing them with digital game technique based interactive art.

1.3 Objectives

- i. To understand appropriation in art.
- ii. To explore method and techniques used in interactive in art.
- iii. To create an interactive artwork by appropriation technique.

1.4 Research Question

- i. What is appropriation in art?
- ii. What are the method and techniques used interactive in art?
- iii. How to create an interactive artwork by using appropriation technique?

1.5 Research Importance

- i. To give awareness towards UNIMAS students about the use of technology in creating artwork.
- ii. As a references for fellow researchers who wanted to conduct interactive art or appropriation in art based research.
- iii. To change people’s perspective towards art.

1.6 Conclusion

The purpose for this research is to understand appropriation in art, to explore appropriation in art, and to create an interactive artwork by using appropriation technique.

This research is important as it can give awareness towards UNIMAS students regarding the use of technology in creating artwork, act as a references for fellow researchers and to change people's perspective towards art.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Researcher will be discussing on the history of interactive art, history of appropriation in art and artwork references.

2.1 Reading Materials

a. Interactive art

Interactive art is defined as a genre of art in which the audience participation is important as a part of the artwork itself (Edmonds, n.d). In the traditional work or art, the audience can only interact with the artwork mentally (Paul, 2003). On the other hand, interactive art requires the audience to involve, communicate and be the part of the artwork itself. By doing this, the audience can connect with the work both mentally and physically.

Next, how did interactive art exist in the first place? According to a new media artist and theorist named Maurice Benayoun, the first interactive artwork exist in the fifth century B.C. in Greece, during an art duel between Parrhasius and Zeuxis. According to Kunze (2000), both Parrhasius and Zeuxis are Greece ancient painters. They are both famous for their magnificent realistic paintings. However, they were not content with that title as they both wanted to be the best painter at that time. But no one could choose between them as they both possessed such a great painting skill.

Thus they decided to resolve it with a painting duel. The rule is simple yet strict. Each of them was required to paint a mural on a wall. The walls were invisible to each other so that none of them could see what the other was painting. The murals were then judge by the audience as the jury.

Zeuxis was the first to show his masterpiece to the audience. As soon as he pulled the curtain and revealed his painting, the audience gasped. How could Zeuxis feel so confident to draw a bowl of fruit in this duel? They were expecting Zeuxis to draw something more majestic than a bowl of fruit. How disappointing. The audience were silence for a moment until a bird flew towards Zeuxis's painting and tried to peck the painted fruits with its beak. "Hitting a wall with a smack, the bird fell to the ground, a victim of illusion" (Kunze, 2000). The audience then come with a conclusion that Zeuxis's painting were beyond realism as it had fooled the bird as real fruits. Zeuxis were feeling content and confident that he will win the duel. With a pride and poised voice, Zeuxis asked Parrhasius to reveal his painting to everyone, "Would you honour us by drawing the curtain?".

"Can't be done," Parrhasius responded. Everyone were then convinced that Parrhasius was at his breaking point. Zeuxis, who was feeling so majestic at that time then continued to ask Parrhasius to reveal his painting. After a moment, Parrhasius replied "You are looking at it." Everyone then began to focus on the wall and were astounded to realize it was a painting of a curtain this whole time! Zeuxis painting was only managed to fool a bird but Parrhasius painting managed to fool everyone, including the famous and professional painter – Zeuxis. It was a no brainer that Parrhasius was the winner. After reading this anecdote, researcher agree with Benayoun that Parrhasius painting should be consider as an interactive art as it

connect the audience both physically and mentally with the painting. It is undeniable that Zeuxis himself is a part of Parrhasius's artwork. If Zeuxis did not ask Parrhasius to reveal his painting, no one would even notice that they were looking at the painting this whole time. Researchers find this story amusing and researchers are inspired by it personally.

The other earliest example of interactive artwork includes Marcel Duchamp's Rotary Glass Plates during the 1920s. The artwork consists of four painted rectangular Pyrex plate (Reinfurt, n.d) that will spin and look like a complete circle – optical illusion - when the audience turns it on and stands a metre away from it (Voon, 2016). In Duchamp's case, the artwork will not function – the output cannot be seen – if the audience does not switch it on. Therefore, that is where the interactivity process happened.

The existing idea of interactive art began to grow more in the 1960s. According to Frank (2007), Roy Ascott was among the first artists to start an interest in total audience participation. This can be proven by a quote stated by Ascott himself,

“The fusion of art, science and personality is involved. It leads to a consideration of our total relationship to a work of art, in which physical moves may lead to conceptual moves, in which Behaviour relates to Idea.”

(Frank, 2007)

He believes that art is a matter of freely developing ideas and creating forms and structures which symbolize them and the entire universe is open to investigation and reconstruction. Ascott is aware of the audience's role in art. He personally believes that the audience should participate and be a part of the artwork itself – they are

responsible to give an artwork a new meaning (Ascott, 1964). Thus, he created an artwork named Change Painting. Ascott created the artwork in order to change human involvement in the way that ideas themselves are. Hence, participants were given the power to change that painting by sliding the painted glass panes inside a wooden frame (England and Co Gallery, 2016). With that being said, it was only natural for one to assume that Roy Ascott is the pioneer in interactive art.

Interactivity in art began to develop more during the 1970s. Artists then commenced to use new technology such as video and satellites to experiment with live performances and interactions through the direct broadcast of video and audio (Paul, 2003). During the 1990s, interactive art had become a large phenomenon due to the advent of computer-based interactivity which will lead to a new art experience. Hence, museums and galleries began to incorporate the art form in their shows and some even dedicating entire exhibitions to it. This positive development in art then continues to flourish until the world today. Nowadays, different artists produce different approaches in interactive art. One of the approaches in creating an interactive artwork is called appropriation.

b. Appropriation In Art

Appropriation in art can be defined as the use of pre-existing objects or images with little or no transformation applied to them (Chilvers and Graves-Smith, 2009). Meanwhile, Wilson and Lack (2008) would prefer to define appropriation in art as “the taking over, into a work of art, of a real object or even an existing work of art” which means, an artist could use an existing artwork or any readymade object and recontextualizes it as a new work of art – by giving it a new meaning.

Appropriation in art had already begin during the early 20th century. Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque had started to appropriate non-art context objects into their work. This can be proven by a Picasso’s paper collage artwork entitled Bottle of Vieux Marc, Glass, Guitar and Newspaper (1913). Picasso use different pieces of newspaper and combined them together on a piece of canvas to create an abstract still life painting (Kear, 2016). He created this artwork with one goal in mind,

“To give the idea that different textures can enter into a composition to become the reality in the painting that competes with the reality in nature. We tried to get rid of ‘trompe l’oeil’ to find a ‘trompe l’esprit’... If a piece of newspaper can become a bottle, that gives us something to think about in connection with both newspapers and bottles, too. This displaced object has entered a universe for which it was not made and where it retains, in a measure, its strangeness. And this strangeness was what we wanted to make people think about because we were quite aware that the world was becoming very strange and not exactly reassuring”

(Parloff, 2003 as cited by Kear, 2016)

Though the existence of appropriation can be seen as early in the 20th century, it was Marcel Duchamp who completely changed the art world. It all started in 1917, when Duchamp first submitted his famous Fountain into the Society of Independent Artist exhibition under a pseudonym R.Mutt (Cabanne and Snowdown, 1997). The artwork is made from a readymade object – a porcelain urinal. Of course, the committee rejected the work several times as the artwork challenge the traditional perceptions of fine art, ownership, originality and plagiarism (Plant, 1992). But Duchamp insist. He defended the artwork by saying,

“Whether Mr.Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—and created a new thought for that object,”

(Plant, 1992)

Duchamp bravery act had managed to change the art world and many genre of art existed one after another. Started with Dadaism, Surrealism, Fluxus, Pop Art followed by the subsequent art genre until today's art. Each can be proven by the artwork made by the artist in that particular era. Therefore, everyone should thank Duchamp for making all this possible.

2.2 Artwork Reference

a) 'Play With Me' By Van Sowerwine (2002)



Figure 1

'Play with Me' an interactive installation Artwork by Van Sowerwine.

'Play with Me' is an interactive installation artwork created by Van Sowerwine in 2002. She created a big wooden house and placed her stop motion video animation inside the wooden house. The visitors that came were invited to play with a doll inside the video. That doll will invite the visitors or participants to join her in a tea party and in order to communicate with her, participants should click on the glowing subject inside the video. The doll will then respond to their input by ending the tea party with a tragedy (Art Gallery NSW, n.d).

Researcher personally choose this artwork as a reference because Sowerwine use game appropriation approach in 'Play with Me' (2002). In order to grab the audience attention and change the way people perceive art, researcher believe that creating a game-like artwork is a must. This is because, people nowadays are more attracted towards game than books. This can be proven by a statistic made by Entertainment Software Association 2015 sales, demographic and usage data report. Out of 321 million of American citizens, 155 million of them are gamers with the average age of 35.

Apart from that, Sowervine also use her artwork as a platform to convey message. Flanagan (2009) interpreted Sowervive artwork as the challenge that adult faced in real-world domestic crises while trying to find an efficacy. This can be proven when the doll refused to listen to the participant's order. For example, the participant click on a tea cup and expected her to pour tea and drink the tea. But she ended up breaking the tea cup and used the pieces to hurt herself and she even stared eerily at the participant, knowing that there's no way the participant could stop her.

Therefore, researcher chooses 'Play with Me' by Van Sowervine as artwork reference.

b) 'Mrs Potato Head' By Melanie Martinez



Figure 2

One of the scenes in 'Mrs Potato Head' music video by Melanie Martinez.

'Mrs Potato Head' is a song written by an American Singer named Melanie Martinez. The singer wrote a sarcastic lyric to critique female obsession towards beauty. It can be seen in her lyrics:

*It's such a waste,
When little girl grows into their mother's face,
But little girl are learning how to cut and face,
And pucker up their lips until they suffocate.
Kids forever, kids forever,
Baby soft skin turns into leather,
Don't be dramatic it's only some plastic,
No one will love you if you're unattractive.*

(Az Lyrics)

Researcher is inspired by Martinez's song and has decided to make it as a reference. The way Martinez convey her message through that song is amazing! The lyrics clearly critique how ungrateful the female society can be. Female society always trying to strive for perfection. They are obsessed with beauty and are willing to do anything to achieve the beauty standard that the society made. They did all this things, in order to get people's recognition, because they wanted to be acknowledge

as beautiful, they wanted to be praised and they wanted to be love. Martinez lyrics clearly convey this message with a sarcastically word arrangement.

Apart from the lyrics, the music video that was directed by Martinez herself really helps to convey the message effectively towards the audience. The music video started with a scene of Martinez watching commercials on the television. She was influenced negatively by the commercials that she decided to take diet pills, wear makeup and stuff tissues inside her dress in order to make her breasts appear bigger. The music video continues with a scene of a man came into a woman's house, he bought her gifts. One of the gifts includes a medical card appointment with a surgeon. The woman agreed to took the surgery in a hope that she could please her man. However, the surgery result did not go as expected and the man then left the woman for another woman. The heart-breaking music video clearly tells the audience to be grateful with their own physical being and they should not change for others.

Therefore, researcher would like to appropriate the way Melanie Martinez conveys message to the audience because researcher believe, a successful work of art should be the one that manage to touch the audience's heart.

c) Anime Wedding Makeup Perfect Bride By Kiwi Go



Figure 3

Part of the process that player will have to go through while playing Anime Wedding Makeup Perfect Bride by Kiwi Go.

In order to appropriate digital game technique into an artwork, researcher feels the need to refer to a real makeover game in order to create a successful artwork. This is a makeover themed game developed by Kiwi Go. The game requires its player to clean and groom the avatar that they choose. This game implement the importance of skincare routine and makeup in order to look beautiful. Player will be rewarded with coins after they passed a certain level. The coins can be used to unlock new item like blusher, mascara, hairstyle and clothes. This game is simple yet addictive.

2.3 Conclusion

To sums things out, researcher look up to three events in order to understand interactive art. The events are, the painting duel between Parrhasius and Zeuxis, the