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主論文の要旨

論文題目

DISRUPTION, CHANGE AND AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE: A theoretical consideration, cognitive model and empirical study of emotion, appraisal, understanding and scheme-change in transformative encounters with art

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論文内容の要旨

In this thesis we explore the concept and the empirical consideration of "aesthetic experience" through the theoretical lens, and the empirical study, of viewer interactions with art. The phenomenon of aesthetic experience represents one of the most important and intriguing elements of human existence, inspiring, from the days of Plato to the present century, accounts, and the essential ground for, ideas of perception, creativity, insight and growth, and, most often coming to rest in the specific field of art; and in turn suggesting the essential aim for a theoretical or empirical analysis of art interaction. This in turn comes to hinge on three essential questions or elements noted throughout the historical and psychological discussion of this event—concerning: 1) the occurrence of peak moments of harmony and insight, which themselves have come to form those above-mentioned archetypes for learning, personal growth and perception; and, bracketing this event, 2) the phenomena of disruption, whereby the environment in some way "breaks in upon us," creating novelty or cognitive-emotional distinction; and 3) change, whereby a viewer psyche is altered from, or often within, the experience itself. It is these three elements, we argue, that offer an essential focus for discussions of psychology and certainly for art, offering a frame for multiple discussions of human behavior and outcomes in information processing, as well as, according to researchers, perhaps the most important demand for academic study of human-environmental relations: essentially, how might these events themselves be theoretically explained and empirically recorded, in "real life." A question, which, because of its long tie specifically to the aesthetic experience, the study of art and museum behavior might be uniquely suited to approach.

However, while accounts of "aesthetic" experience inspire art study and drive its cognitive goals the current modeling of art perception, based on the analytic tradition emphasizing successful assimilation of art information, is unable to truly address this phenomenon, leaving us without means of accounting for disruption and fundamental change—either perceptual or self-referential—as well as epiphany and insight

themselves, within the experience of art; and no means of addressing art's ability to mark and change lives.

To address this, we consider, in Ch.1, the present deficiencies in the study of art and by proxy aesthetic experience, and, then in Ch.2 and 3, introduce a five-stage model of art-perception, organized around initial disruption and subsequent meta-cognitive reflection and self-transformation, which allows for this needed discussion of perceptual and conceptual change, and a connection of art-viewing to viewer personality. In Ch.4 we then offer a large number of measures that might be tied to a consideration of the various stages of viewer-artwork interaction, considering emotion, cognitive evaluation of meaning, artwork appraisal and viewer self-conception, and ultimately offering a number of hypotheses for the specific indication and empirical study of aesthetic experience, and its effect on viewers. Based on this, we then offer, for the first time, in Ch.5, empirical results clearly documenting the aesthetic experience in the "real life" interaction in the art gallery, utilizing studies made in Japan, America and the U.K. and involving three sets of artworks by the American artist Mark Rothko.

Following this analysis, we then expand to consider three case studies of specific aspects raised by our theoretical and empirical analysis of art, concerning: 1) the analysis of tears or crying as a potential specific physiological indicator, the first such found, of aesthetic or insightful experience in Ch.6; 2) a specific consideration of museum design and quantification of viewer experience based on a comparison study of pre- and post-renovation in one of the Rothko rooms, based on the model proposed in this paper as a means of illuminating these results in Ch.7; 3) and finally in Ch.8 a cross-cultural, cross-topic consideration of "satori" or Zen Buddhist enlightenment considered via its parallels with aesthetic experience and analyzed in an empirical study via this model.

Throughout these explorations, it is hoped that this study will find appeal with four classes of researcher, with or without interest in the arts: psychologists, philosophers, museum professionals and educators. More importantly, by drawing between these groups, we do not aim to restrict this discussion to only art, but to expand to more general questions of learning processes, emotion, cognition, pedagogy, and the philosophical and political ramifications from our choices in these areas. Ultimately, as we hope to show throughout this work, the most important contribution of this research is the ability, through this new conception of "aesthetic" interaction, to attach numerous contextual aspects—be they concerned with design, sociology, education or cognition—to this central frame of human interaction with their environment, and this central set of questions regarding how we perceive, what we see and how we change.