



THE STUDY OF VISUAL AND ART LITERACY FROM THE SEMIOTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE POINTS OF VIEW

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CONTENT

Visual literacy
Cultural literacy
Art literacy

Languages of art
Symbolism in art

Changing representation as a way to reconsideration art
Symbolic approach in art in the context of place and time

Conclusion
References



Visual literacy

Cultural literacy

Art literacy

Visual literacy

Developed visual skills enable a person to discriminate and interpret visible actions, objects, and symbols, natural or manmade encounters in his environment.

Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he can comprehend and enjoy the works of visual communication (Debes, 1969).

Understanding how people perceive objects, interpret what they see, and what they learn from them (Elkins, 2010).



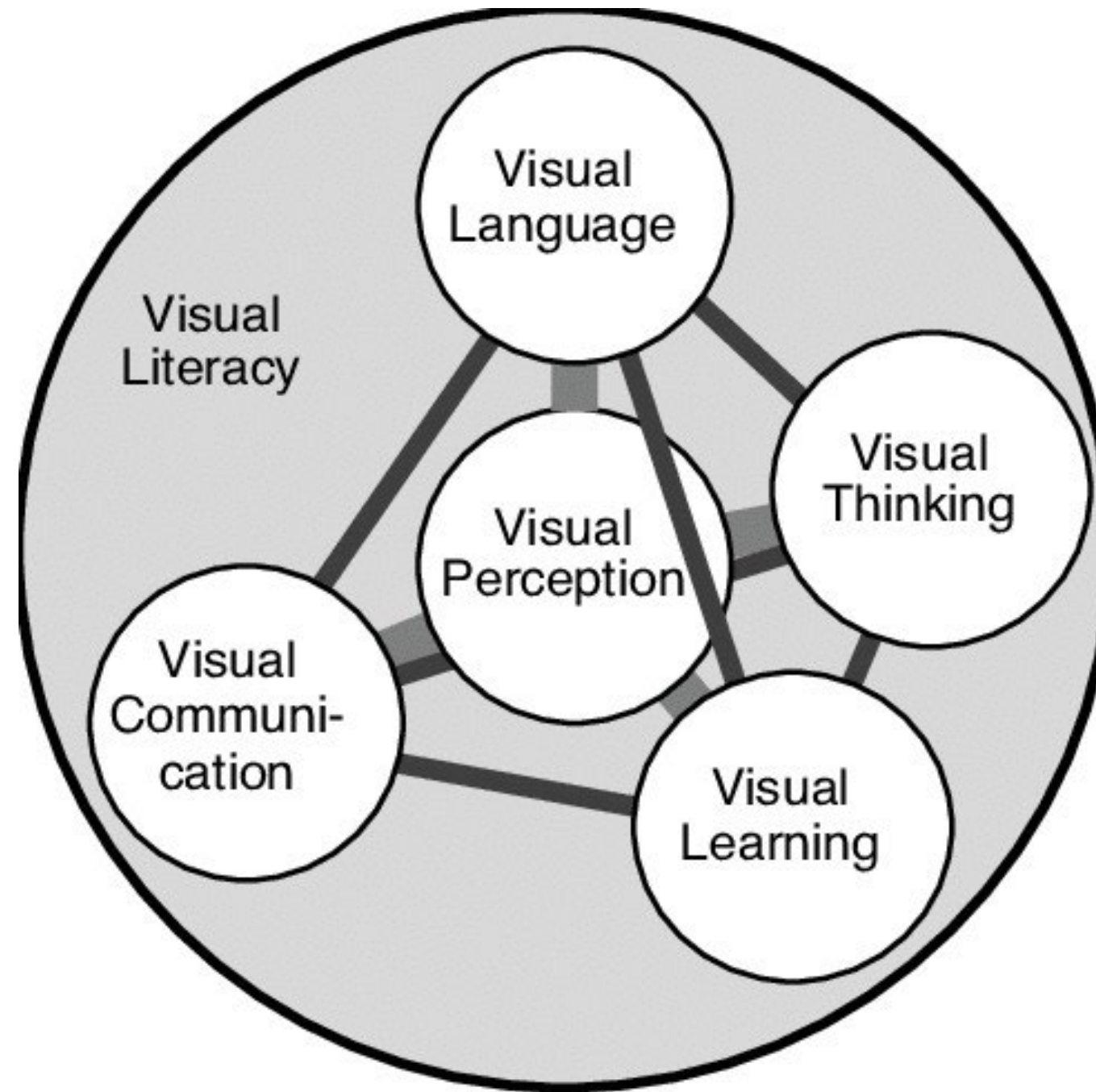
Visual literacy

The concept of visual literacy is based on the statement that visual languages exist.
(Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997).



Components of visual literacy

(Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011)



Cultural literacy

The term was introduced into a scientific sphere by **E. D. Hirsch.**

People in each of the national communities are united not only by political institutions and laws but also by shared values and a common language.

This language contains not only common lexical and grammatical elements but also a variety of cultural associations.



CULTURAL MEMORY

It is one of the basic components of cultural literacy. With its help, a person can explain the works of art of the past or build a logical connection between the past and the modern interpretation of the same piece of art.

It exists inside the culture and uses the language of symbols in literature, music, paintings, and sculpture. Due to cultural memory, people are never exclusively contemporaries of their times (Assmann, 2014).

It is understood not as a memory of the historical past, but as its symbolic representation. People subconsciously use the knowledge integrated into cultural memory to interpret various visual objects, including works of art.



ART literacy

It was defined by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards as ``the knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts`` (Robelen, 2020).

Four core practices for the arts:

- imagination,
- investigation,
- construction,
- reflection.



Language of Art

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graph TD; A[Language of Art] --> B[FIGURATIVE]; A --> C[LEXICAL]; B --> D[FIGURATIVE and LEXICAL]; C --> D;
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FIGURATIVE

LEXICAL

FIGURATIVE and LEXICAL

Episteme

Is the way of ordering things in words .

Renaissance (XVI century)

A word is a symbol.

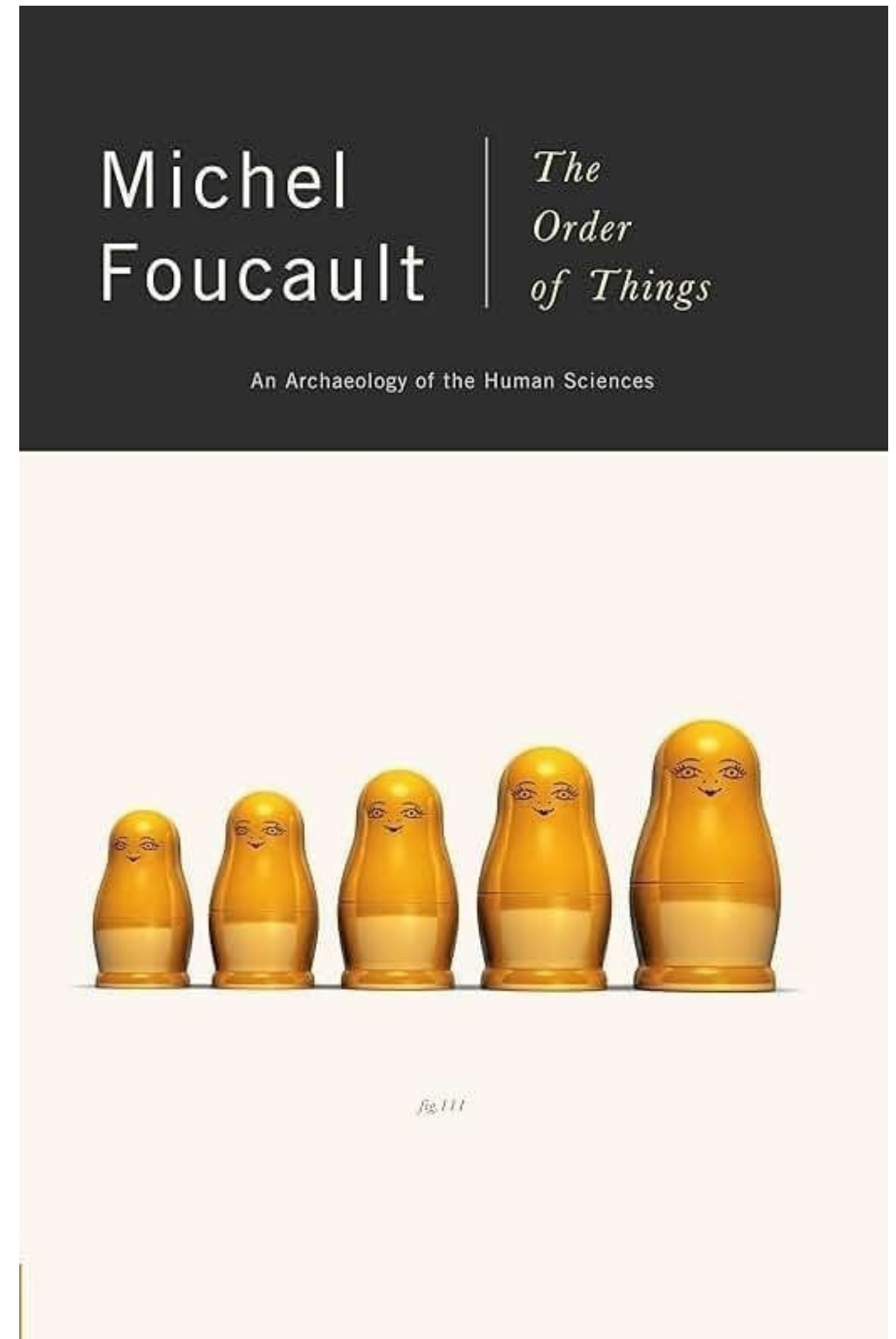
Classical (XVII–XVIII centuries)

A word is an image.

Contemporary

(end of the XVIII — beginning of the XIX century)

A word is a sign.



Figurative or Lexical?

The separation between linguistic signs and images was one of the bases of classical art.

Classical painting spoke to the viewer, building itself completely outside the language.

Magritte connects verbal signs and images, making them equivalent.

Michel Foucault





What do pictures really want?

W.J.T Mitchell

The images have a kind of social or psychological power of their own is, in fact, the reigning cliché of contemporary visual culture.

He shifts the focus of reflection from the question of the power of the image to its meaning and the produced effect. Paintings want to have equal rights with language, and not turn into language itself.

Other ways of expressions in the art language

Abstract paintings

W.J.T. Mitchell Abstract paintings are pictures that want not to be pictures.

Mark Rothko realized that he could no longer depict human figures. At the same time, he did not consider himself an abstractionist: ``I'm not interested in the ratio of colour and shape. I'm interested in expressing basic human emotions - tragedy, ecstasy, rock, and so on``.

W. Kandinsky believed that colour could not exist outside a geometric shape and did not allow unlimited propagation. The boundless colour can only be thought of or spiritually contemplated.



What do artworks want?

Michael Fried

The painting desires to change places with the beholder, to transfix or paralyze the beholder, turning him into an image for the gaze of the picture.



Attentive viewing and interaction with an artwork helps the viewer to understand its meaning more deeply.

A quick look can form a false idea about the piece of art.

Retention of the attention of visitors of cultural spaces has become a real challenge for curators worldwide.

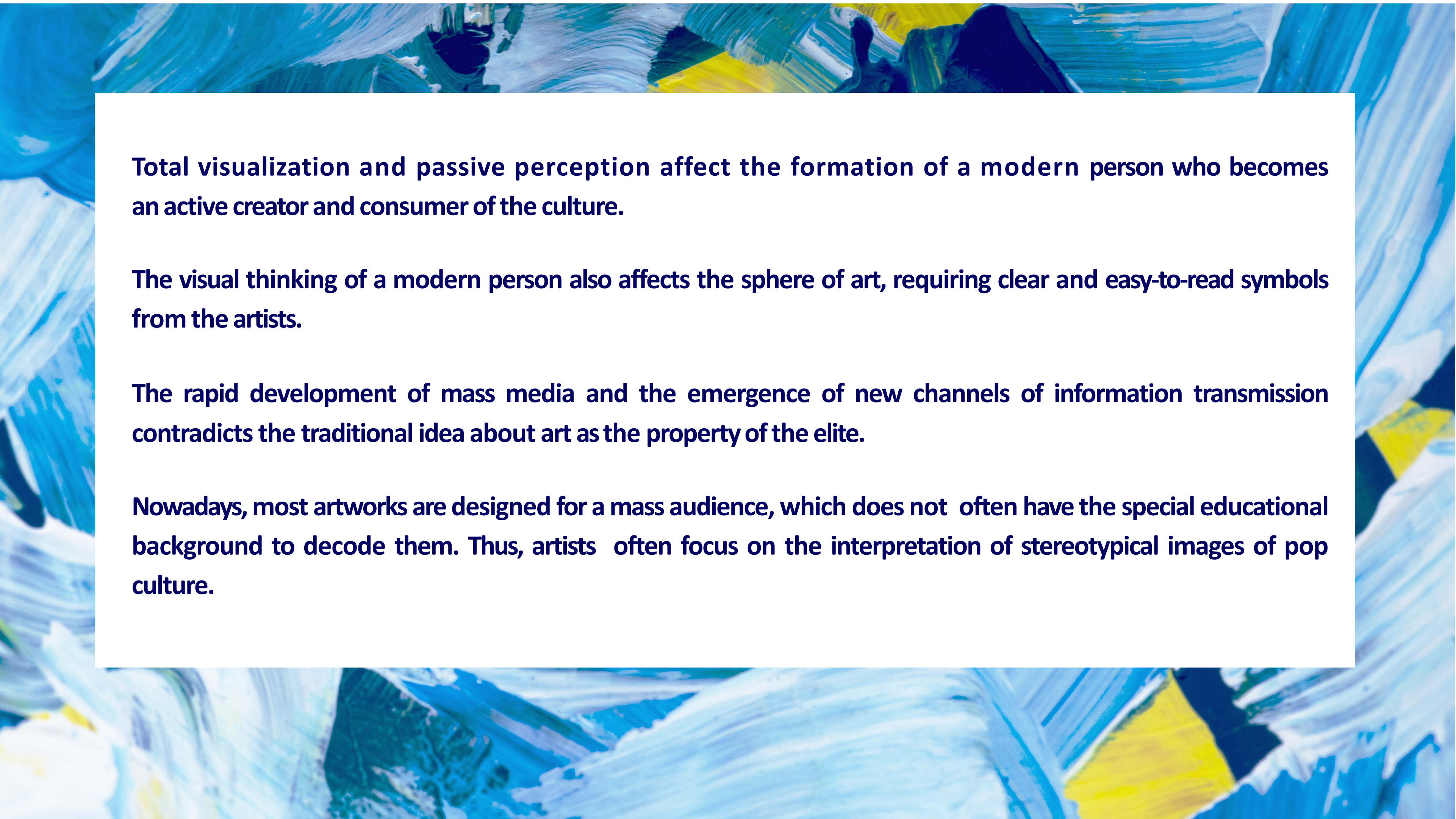




ShareArt Device System

A group of researchers from the National Agency For Modern Technologies (ENEA) has developed a ShareArt device system that calculates how long and closely visitors of museums watch a particular work of art.

The average observation
time was only
4-5 seconds.



Total visualization and passive perception affect the formation of a modern person who becomes an active creator and consumer of the culture.

The visual thinking of a modern person also affects the sphere of art, requiring clear and easy-to-read symbols from the artists.

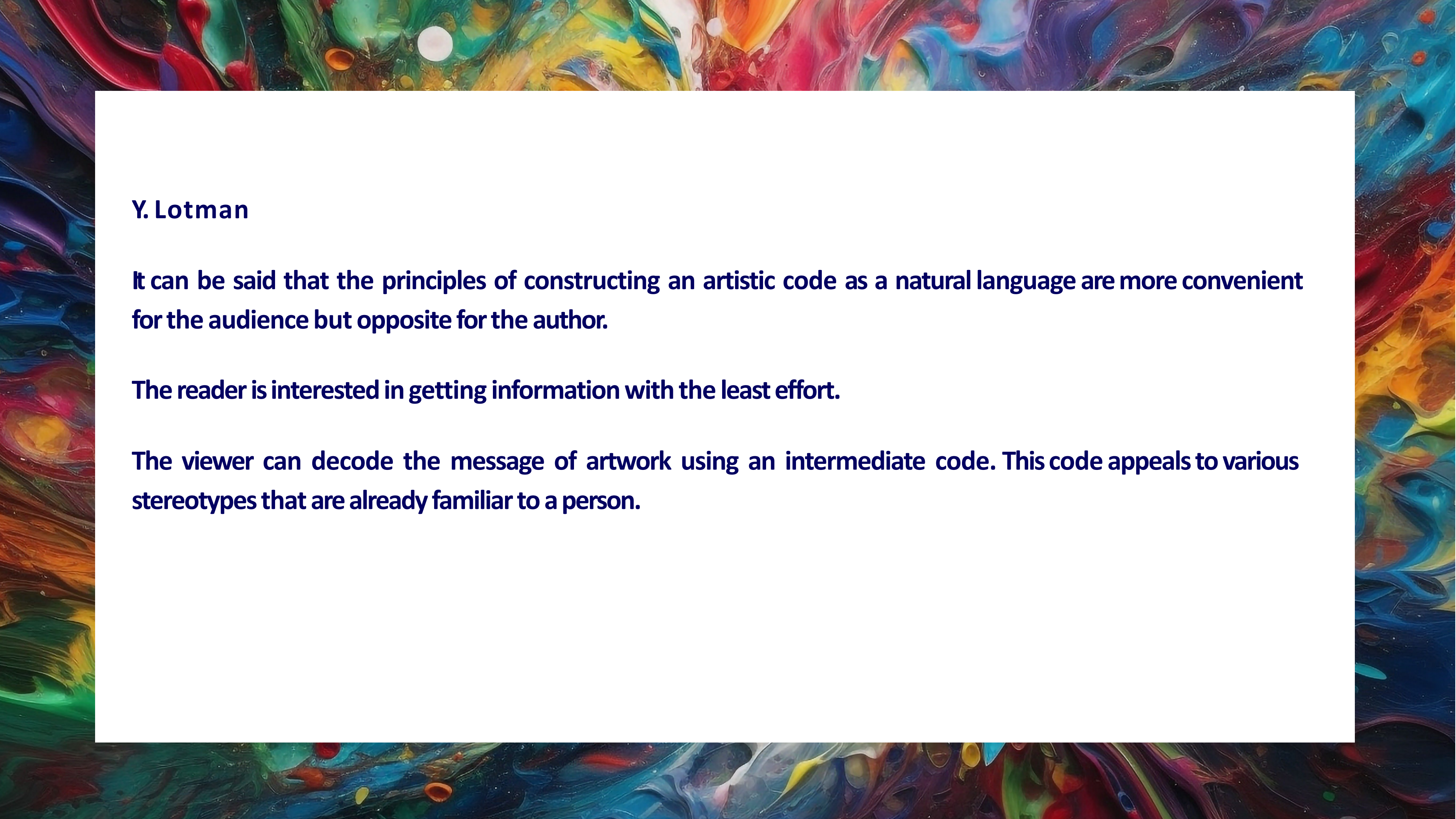
The rapid development of mass media and the emergence of new channels of information transmission contradicts the traditional idea about art as the property of the elite.

Nowadays, most artworks are designed for a mass audience, which does not often have the special educational background to decode them. Thus, artists often focus on the interpretation of stereotypical images of pop culture.

THE PARADOX

Artists strive to fill their works with understandable images, to be close to the audience.

Viewers are not ready to perceive this in the context of art.



Y. Lotman

It can be said that the principles of constructing an artistic code as a natural language are more convenient for the audience but opposite for the author.

The reader is interested in getting information with the least effort.

The viewer can decode the message of artwork using an intermediate code. This code appeals to various stereotypes that are already familiar to a person.

VANITAS

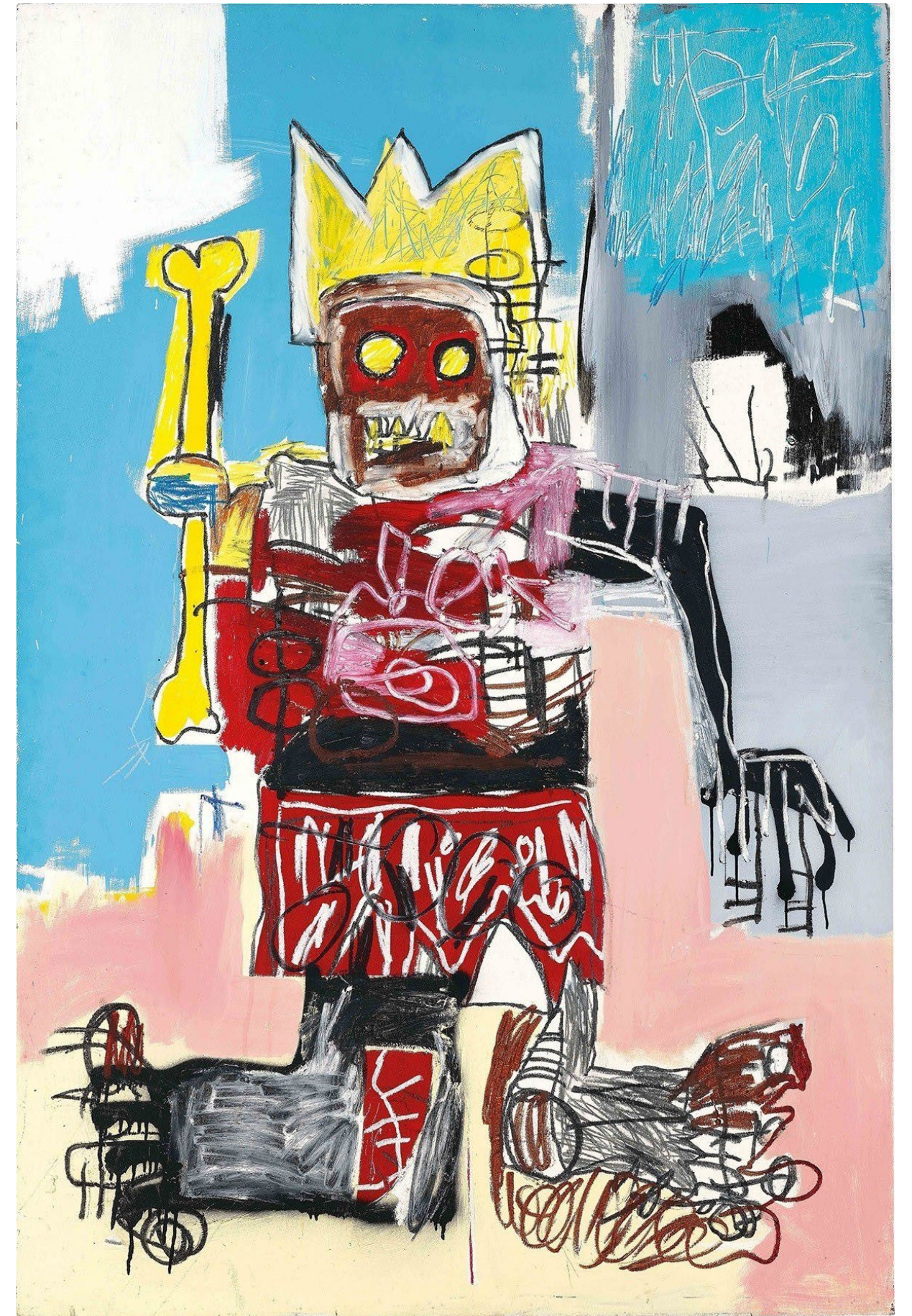


Evert Collier, Vanitas - still life with a book and a skull (1663)

J.M.BASQUIAT

The Retrospective

ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna, 2023



INTERTEXTUALITY

Artists interpret familiar images in a new way, giving them new meanings. This process is described as intertextuality (Kristeva, 1980).

It creates a new sign system by imbuing multiple sign systems with new meanings.

Intertextuality should be understood in the way of exchanging between two or more texts (Alfaro, 1996).

Catherine's Room, Bill Viola, 2001



Andrea di Bartolo, Catherine of Siena, 14 century

The Greeting, Bill Viola, 1995

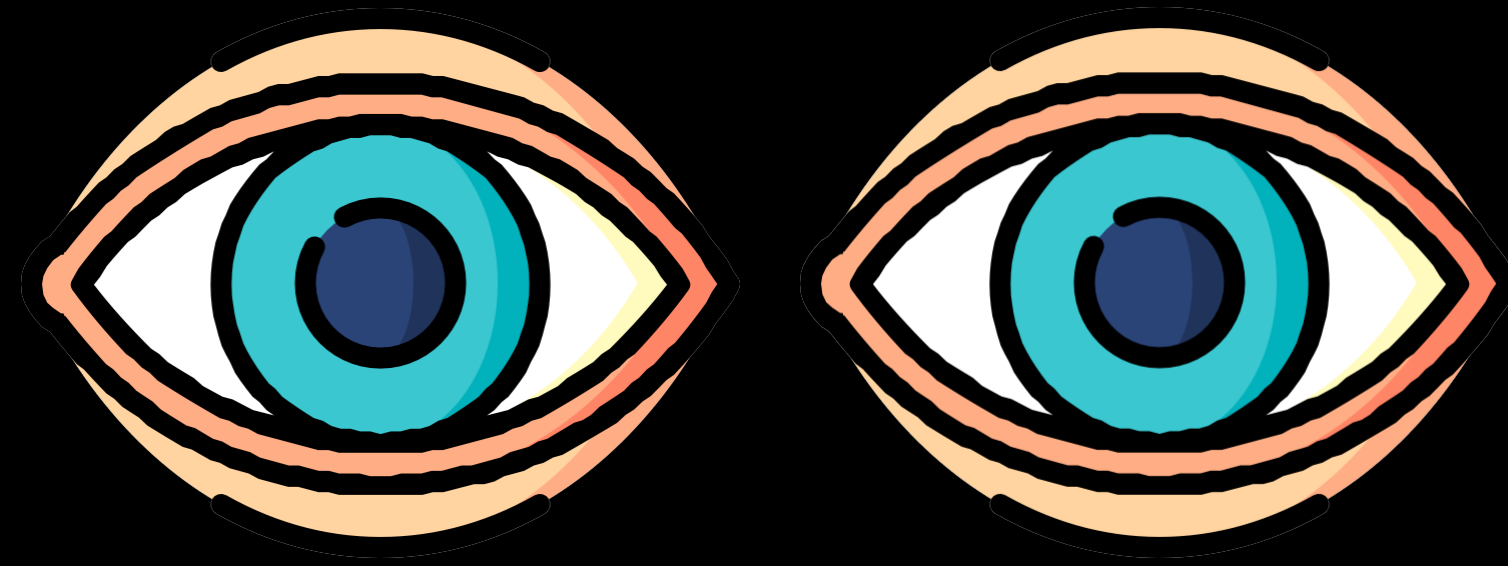


Jacopo da Pontormo, The Meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, 1528

Emergence, Bill Viola, 2022



Masolino da Panical, Pietà, 1424



An effective way to keep the viewer's attention is to use modern and understandable forms of representation.

This approach is supported by trends in the development of mass communication media and social networks.

According to statistics, video content consumption is increasing every year.

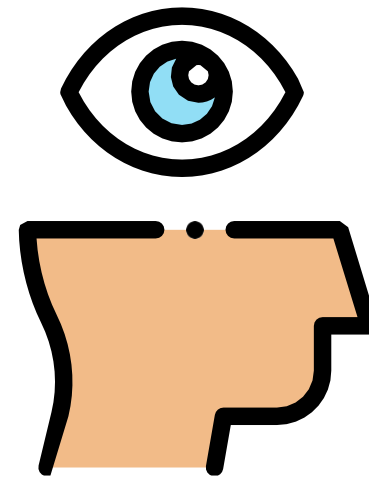
Peter Greenaway

Nightwatching, (2007)



Symbolic approach in art in the context of place and time.

It is important to read the symbols in the context of a particular situation and time.





Chinese ivory figurine depicting a rat



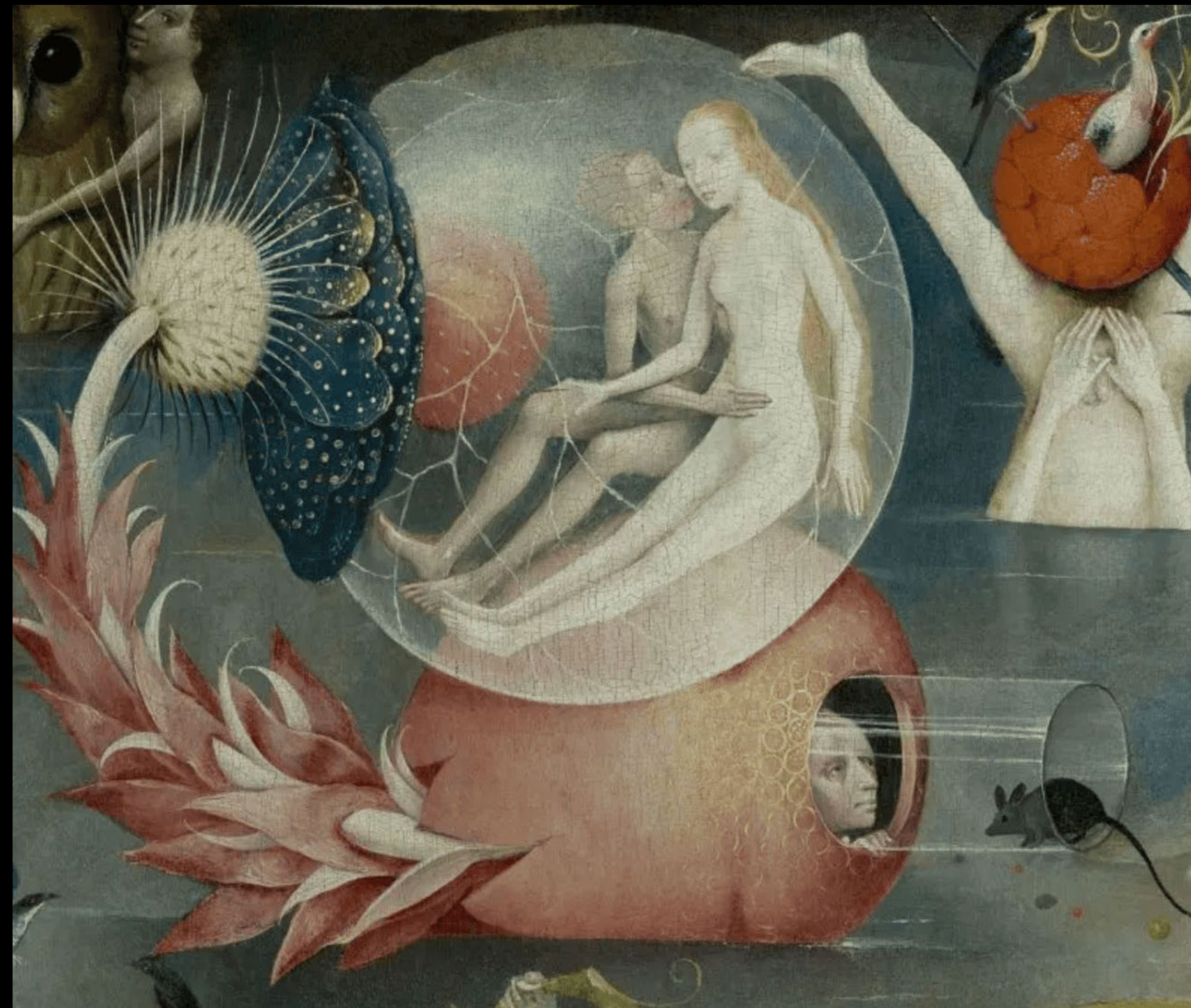
Ganesha riding a rat



Meal with a Mouse and a Parrot
George Flegel, 17 century

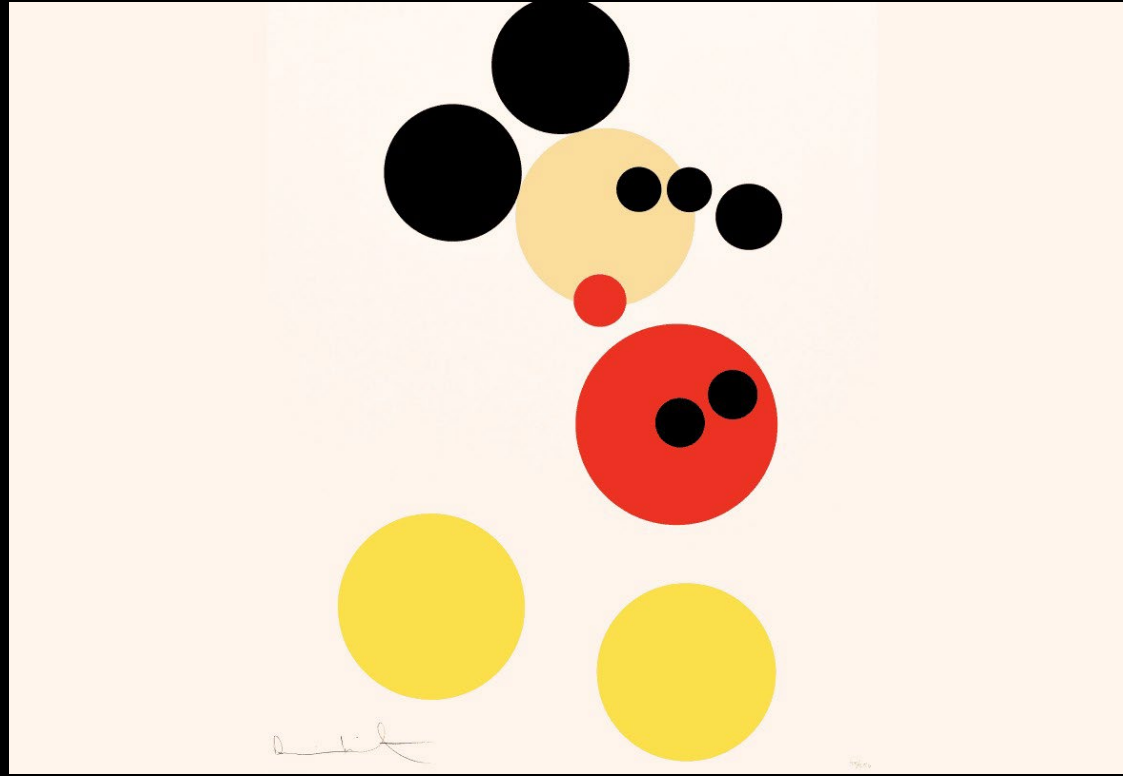


Et in Arcadia ego,
Giovanni Francesco Barbier, 1622

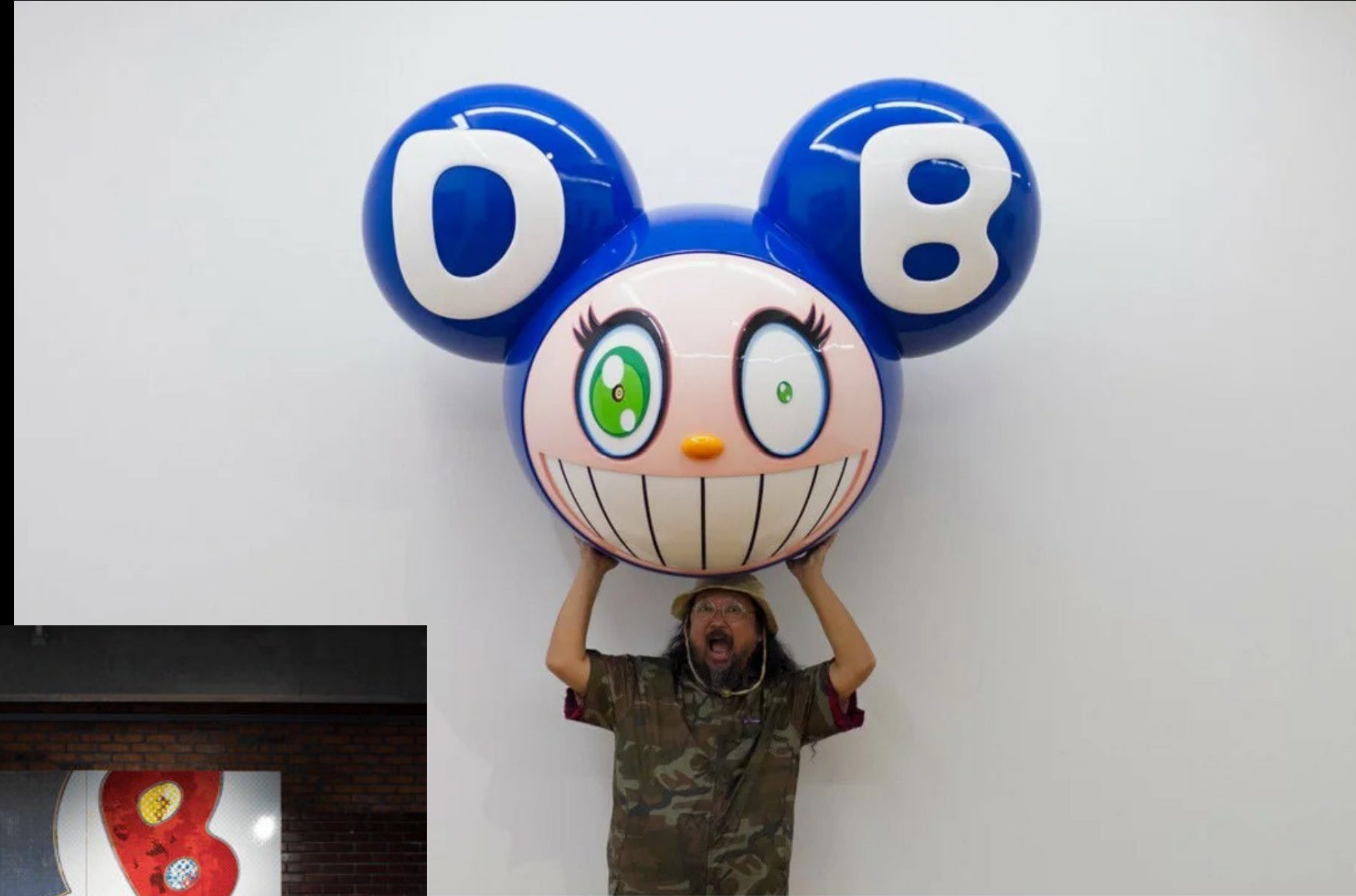
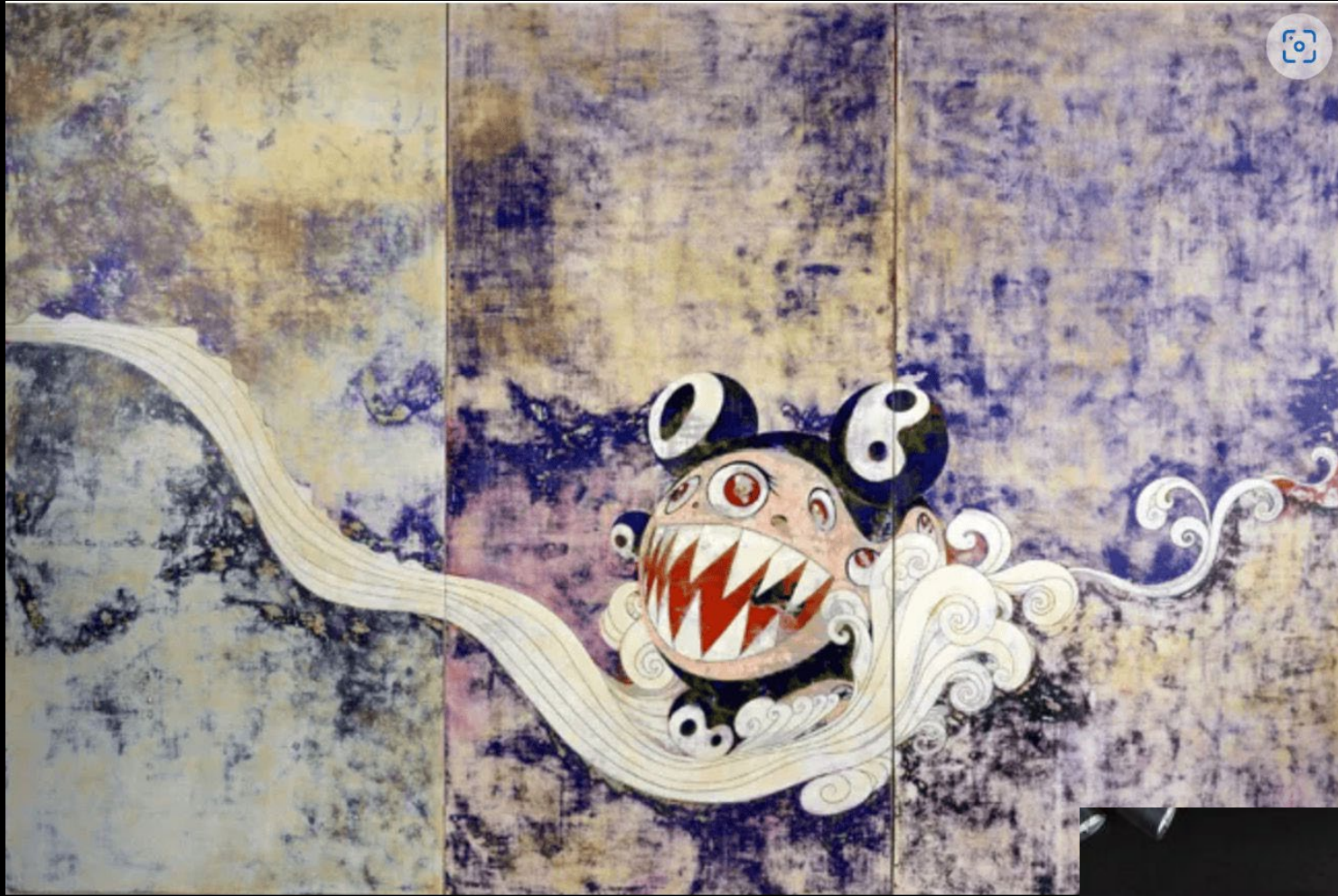


The Garden of Earthly Delights
Hieronymus Bosch

Mickey Mouse in the artworks of Damien Hirst



Mr. DOB in the artworks of Takashi Murakami



Banksy



Napalm, 2004



Rat Babe, 2015

A symbolic-oriented approach to art education could be used to teach deaf people.



People with normal hearing read by transforming phonic sounds into words.

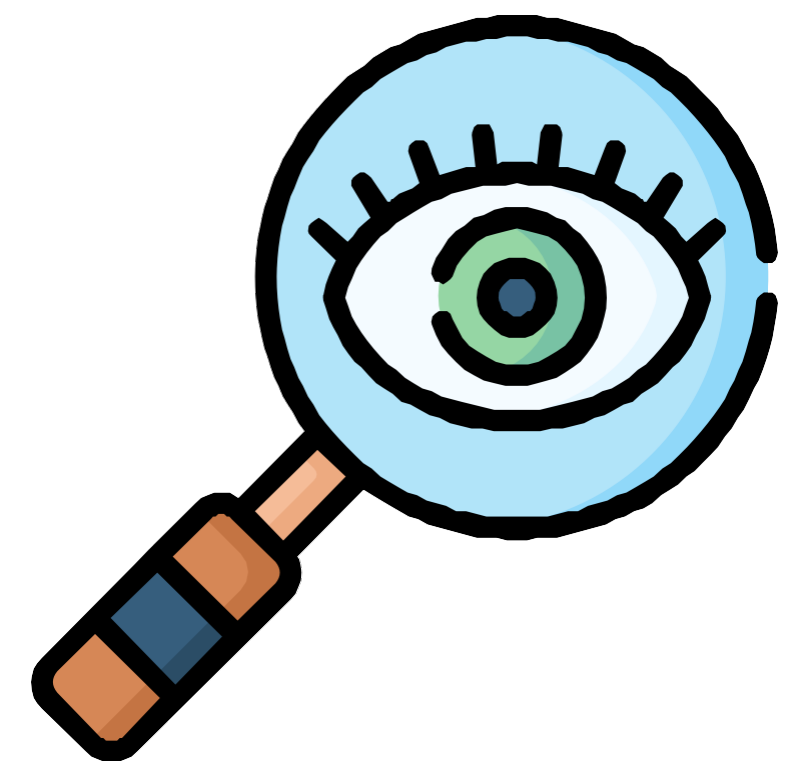
Hearing-impaired people have little to no psionic ability, making them visual readers who rely on images while reading (Thakur et al., 2023).

Therefore, it is easier for them to perceive pictures rather than written text.

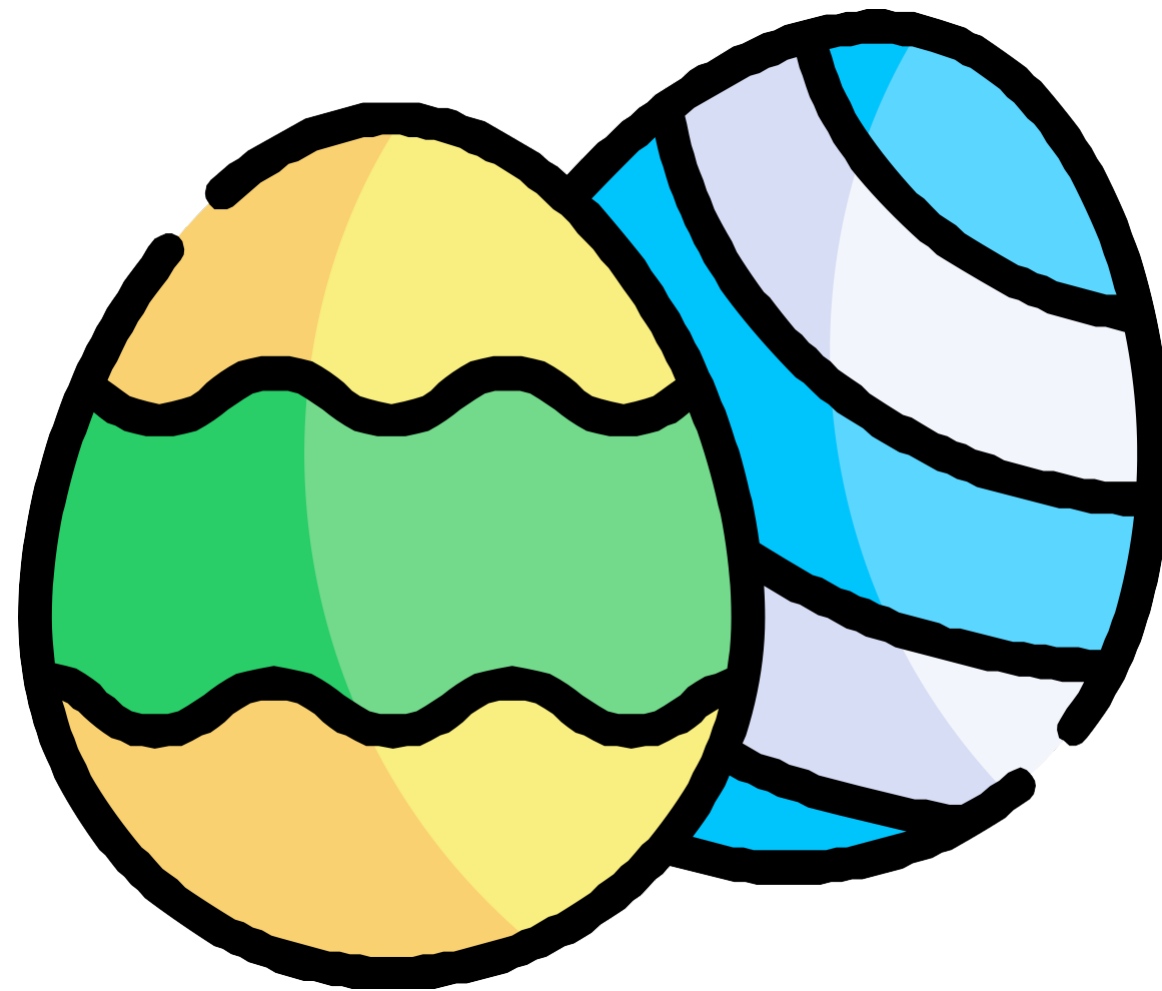


Symbolic understanding of information is based on the visual perception of the people.

A person realizes 90% of information through the visual channel,
the brain processes **80%** of the information **in a figurative form** and **20% in a verbal form**
(Suyundukova, 2021).



Our subconscious intuitively tries to recognize familiar symbols and decode the message (Barthes, 2013).



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THANK YOU!