

# Massurrealism's Relevancy

Art Media Journal / Sept. 2015



The direction of contemporary surrealist art has been evolving for as long as people have had the desire to replicate dreamlike imagery in a physical medium that could be experienced by everyone. The result is an emerging category of visual arts that bends rules and questions existence through a closer look at the subconscious. The different tools available to artists have predominately driven the evolution of art. With the rise of technology, the gravitation has been toward its utilization in creative endeavors. With the help of digital imagery, surround sound, and visual movement, artists can now redirect their skills to captivate audiences through multimedia experiences. The result is the grass-roots transformation: Massurrealism.

This art genre coined in 1992 by James Seehafer, is used to identify work that blends the elements of contemporary surrealism with our current ideas and reach of mass media. Different layers of imagery, with the help of technology, are used to heighten the experiences we share as people through illusion and shared imagination

Technology offers the use of clearer pictures, brighter colors, and techniques that can't be perfected by hand. For works that were previously static, one example, like photography, creates spaces to incorporate movement, transition, and metamorphosis. Another example such as in film, we have the ability to capture reality in real time and with the guarantee that we will all experience it the same way at playback. By manipulating video, we can create one of the most vivid forms of the surreal. Real images can be crafted and replaced in a seamless transition. Because the result is so convincing, it elevates what we know about past surrealist works. The ability to manipulate real images and sounds provides a truer form of the surreal in juxtaposition to personal reality.

The varying methods behind massurrealism lends themselves to different creative displaying and viewing formats. In the example of digitally based works, almost everyone is equipped with the technology needed to experience this form of stimulating art. This is where the idea of Internet museums and interactive art exhibitions comes from.

The goal of massurrealism is to engage the public and offer people a chance to explore their own subconscious and relate it to what they experience in everyday life. With new tools and channels of distribution this can now be possible.

To understand this idea better, it is helpful to consider the definition of spectacle:

- a visually striking performance or display;
- an event or scene regarded in terms of its visual impact.

The relation of spectacle to mass media partially defines massurrealism, but the relation is also intrinsically linked to the spectacle society; that is, spectacle not only as synonymous with media events or images, but also as a type of relationship mediated by representations. Massurrealist artists exploit already existing images, objects and ideas to create new constructions and meanings. Massurrealism is significant in art because it consists in a *détournement* of concepts and tools that are simultaneously old and new, i.e. as a renewal of past currents. It therefore doesn't necessarily suggest an outside view to the spectacle-commodity economy, but rather gives it the structure to configure a new representational paradigm. Underlining this new paradigm is a combination of movements, forming the hub of an expressive phenomenology that reflects the continual transformation of massurrealism itself. Looking at these artworks, we see riveting examples of the amalgam of critical influences in modern visual culture as photographic montages, the component of abstract painting, and the

aesthetic derived from Internet and computer software. This combination of influences is not just symbolic of massurrealism, but rather serves to highlight the possibility of early 21st century art developing a vision which embraces outer and inner spaces. In other respects, the artists, far from confining themselves to formal explorations related to their respective medias, bear witness to social or political preoccupations by taking a critical look at the digital age of consumerism, condensed time, and globalism.

This approach to art could thus be seen as composed of a twofold nature: a creative process in the aesthetic and anthropological sense; as the organization of this process into a system where production and diffusion of new artworks coexists with the creation of new cultural images and practices.

Massurrealism is significant to our current age because it reveals a logic of both formal or conceptual deconstruction. This has left a profound mark on the history of art itself over the last few decades. It has widened its field of reconfiguring the identity of the discipline, even breaking it down altogether as in the studies of visual culture. This deconstructive process is made particularly interesting by its possibility within the international aspect of the movement. This is embodied in massurrealism by artworks directly related to our environment and compel us to comment upon the relationship with the entertainment industry. Fertile uncertainties arise from the friction between historical and physical material, the manual and the digital, science and technology, capitalism and the post communist world, and the ethics surrounding artificial intelligence and our relationships to objects.

Finally, massurrealism expresses a generation's fatigue of the endless epistemology discussions on modern philosophy, paralyzed by the circular reasoning of post-structuralism. Massurrealist artists demonstrate themselves as alternatives, having revived the debate and extent of our thinking on these issues. The movement should therefore be understood not as a single philosophy, but rather as a label for a broad range of divergent ideas, as well as an extension of the limits of our relationship with the art itself. ●

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