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MONOGRAPH

**“CONTEMPORARY ART OF THE 21ST CENTURY, PROBLEMS AND ITS
INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY”**

STUDENT

MELISSA LÓPEZ DUARTE

ADVISERS

LCDA. CAROLA VILLAFUERTE

LCDA. PATRICIA SÁNCHEZ

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Gratitude

I thank God for everything, especially for allowing me to study in a good school and receive knowledge and teachings that will help me to achieve my future goals, also to my family and friends which supported me gratefully and encouraged me in good and bad moments and finally to my monograph adviser Carola Villafuerte who without her advices could not have successfully completed my monograph.

Summary

This monograph explains the influence of contemporary art in the society of the 21st century, during the 3 chapters contained in this study, it can be analyzed how art is constantly changing from the previous century to the present, beginning with the artistic avant-garde that caused great artistic changes, knowing concepts such as modern, postmodern and some more relevant previous artistic manifestations such as Pop art, minimalism and conceptual art, which influenced the emergence of new ones in the 21st century, focusing and deepening street and digital art that they are mainly characterized by how these influence the thinking and daily acts of today's society, using examples of great artists such as Banksy, Kaws and It's a Living, showing their most outstanding works, in addition, the public's criticisms of the art of nowadays they can be very good or very bad and if so, they open up debates among themselves is considered art or vandalism at the same time that artists can suffer damage to their works of art but from which they can defend themselves thanks to copyright, it is also shown that it is possible to live from art since it can become to a business, it is finally concluded that art is important in our lives, that it will always be present and in constant changes as the world progresses.

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Introduction

Contemporary art of the 21st century, problems and its influence on society has a great importance because since the beginning of the history of mankind, art has been present in our lives and together with the world that is constantly advancing, it is like a universal language, everyone has the ability to understand it and at first glance we can observe its great importance because it helps us to our education, inspiration, innovation, ideas, expression, it becomes a necessity and helps us to be better people.

The purpose is to know that contemporary art of the 21st century is what we live in and it contains diverse artistic manifestations that influence society, despite being very criticized for its styles and forms of expression very different from the previous ones, it is characterized by the great freedom of creation and themes that help positive changes, artists also have more job opportunities and are more recognized.

The works of art are exhibited by various means and spaces not very common from digital platforms to public walls where everyone can see share, give their opinion, feel, live an experience in which everyone can be part of a healthy way, since this It generates different points of view with which we will not always agree but must be respected.

Some books and studies have been used for research on the subject such as *“The postmodern condition”*, *“What are you looking at? 150 years of modern art in the blink of an eye”*, *“Street art”*, *“Art of the twentieth century”*, *“After the end of art”*, *“Contemporary art. Between business and language”*, *“Shit and Catastrophe. Cultural syndromes of*

contemporary art”, “*All City Canvas*” and more, that provide us with a lot of information for the elaboration of a good research base.

The monograph consists of 3 chapters, the first entitled History of contemporary art, contains its beginnings, transition, first movements and artists, the second, Contemporary art of the 21st century, tells about the latest news, new movements and artists known worldwide, the third and last chapter entitled Problems and criticisms, the problems of muralism, art as a business and copyright are exposed, at the end of the monograph there are their respective conclusion and some recommendations for a better understanding of the subject.

Chapter I

History of contemporary art

1.1 Beginnings of contemporary art

Contemporary art begins with the influence of modern art at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in Europe, where the First World War caused a social, economic and political instability that provoked ideological changes affecting art in such a way that the vanguards that contain different artistic movements called 'isms' that sought to renew and innovate completely, opposing previous artistic movements as they fought against traditions and promoted the total freedom of creation, in order to reinvent art, a principle that was not to the public's liking general.

The first vanguards or historical vanguards such as Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Neoplasticism, Constructivism and Surrealism are presented until World War II and after the end of the war in 1945, there are cultural and social changes that favor the emergence of a new artistic panorama that is transmitted from Europe to America, place that becomes the center of the new vanguards, the experience of the first vanguards helped to assimilate the second vanguards that contains informalism, abstract expressionism, arte povera, pop art, minimal art, hyperrealism, conceptual art, land art, happenings and more, the artists were understood and attracted attention to the public with new and attractive works of art.

The artistic vanguard managed to cross the limit of art, expand to new techniques and benefit the expressivity of artists.

1.1.1 From modern art to postmodern art.

Although contemporary art contains thoughts and influences of modern art, it is considered to be within postmodernity, a socio-cultural movement that is still in force and that surpassed modernity.

Postmodern art opposes modern art and is identified in 1970 although the term postmodernity is popularized by the philosopher and sociologist Lyotard (1979) in his book *The postmodern condition* that states: “Postmodern knowledge is not only the instrument of the powers” (p. 4).

Postmodern art is a movement of the late twentieth and early twenty-first that opposes modern art as it sought to contradict aspects of modernism as its formal purity, art for art, the possibility of authenticity in art, universal truth in art, and the importance of a vanguard that sought to express the inner and outer world of the human being, being its main objective to transmit emotions, feelings and ideas unlike postmodern art that reforms ideas deeply rooted in the vanguards such as originality, experimentation artistic, having more freedom in creating artworks that reflect themes of importance and social impact, its main objective being to generate reaction to the public “with the arrival of postmodernism, where anything can be art” (Danto, 2005, p. 41), a redefinition of art that can be considered a big change and advance as it goes beyond the limits that art was suffering.

Postmodern art represents a break with modern art because it contains other artistic expressions, although some historians do not agree to determine a break between the two artistic periods but observe a relationship between them, “postmodernity should be considered more a moment of modernity than its opponent or opposite” (Bozal, 2000, p. 263).

1.2 First movements and artists

Before the beginnings of contemporary art in postmodernity, there were certain movements that influenced and helped the creation of art as we know it today, characterized by its great

variety of styles and techniques that commonly mix with advertising images or classic images such as comics, graffiti and other more since the artist is free to take any idea and image of other times.

Therefore the movements before postmodernism are those that achieved an evolution in art for their desire for innovation and experimentation that favored the expressiveness of the artist but specifically the second vanguards developed in a consumer society and capitalism are those that marked a new idea of what art can be, which some historians and groups of people do not agree with.

Gompertz (2013) in his book *What are you looking at? 150 years of modern art in the blink of an eye* that states: “They can not get used to the idea that something that a child could have made is a masterpiece” (p. 12).

But despite criticism whether or not it is right to consider art, artists include paintings and sculptures to communicate their idea as other artists before the vanguards, only using a wide variety of means to express themselves.

1.2.1 Pop Art.

It is an artistic movement born in the United Kingdom in 1950 and expanded to other countries such as the United States where there was even more activity of this art, also being a movement of modern art is one of the most influential precursors of contemporary art of postmodernity for its new, unique and original features since it is located in a consumer society and technological advances.

Its stylistic and technical characteristics were created from themes and massive symbols of popular culture and everyday life such as comics, magazines, movies, television and more than humor, irony and parody represented the reality of the moment, a good example of this gives us the great artist Andy Warhol, one of the most important artists in the birth and development of pop art thanks to his work of art “Campbell's Soup Cans” consisting of thirty

two canvases of 50,80 cm high by 40 , 60 cm wide where they were made with synthetic polymer paint by means of screen printing on each canvas a different presentation of the Campbell soup can that the company had at that time, which spoke of the positive opinion of the artist against consumerism and mass production of any object. His work of art caused much controversy for its object, technique and easy process that other artists thought that a work of art should take more time and meaning but “the most banal and even vulgar elements of modern civilization can, when transported to the canvas, become art” (Warhol, 1962). And not only Andy Warhol but every pop artist like Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein, Charles Bell, Jasper Johns, Takashi Murakami, John Brack and many others, went through the same criticism, the public could point their works of art as easy and silly without To observe or analyze that the artist tried to convey his ideas or criticisms of society and situations of that time but still pop art became very famous and managed to develop with the vision that the art of tomorrow would be popular to be understood by the public, specifically the young, facing difficulties that will give short-term solutions which will make it look ingenious, impressive, beautiful, will be highly produced and will become a big business (Hamilton, 1957).

1.2.2 Minimal art.

In 1960, originated by the movement of pop art, Minimalism emerged in New York, United States, a movement very different from others that was characterized by using elements and basic resources, simple colors, rectilinear geometry and easy language so in their style and it was important the simplicity, clarity and means that artists like Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Sol Lewitt, Tony Smith, Larry Bell and many others created their works of art where we can see that they generate an idea as maximum with the minimum of objects and colors also in some cases it is usual for the artist to refer its manufacture for the use of industrial products as in the work “Magnesium Copper Plain” a sculpture of 181.9 cm

long by 181.9 cm wide with a volume of 0.5 cm composed of 36 pieces or plates of magnesium and copper placed horizontally, the artist Andre (1968) on his work *Magnesium Copper Plain* states:

My work he is atheist, materialist and communist: atheist because he lacks transcendent form, spiritual or intellectual quality; Materialist because it is made of its own materials without claiming to have different ones; communist because its shape is equally accessible to everyone. (p. 3)

But in addition to sculptures that is a technique most used in this movement, minimal art also contains other disciplines such as painting and music that have attracted attention and made it popular being taken as a reference by current artists.

1.2.3 Conceptual Art.

In the United States, the United Kingdom and with time to other countries, art reached a point in the 60s in which it sought to overcome the characteristic of art only as an object then several artists who were part of a group called Art & Language as Carl Andre, Joseph Kosuth, Douglas Huebler, Robert Barry, Lawrence Weiner and more published their first magazine in 1968 entitled “The Conceptual Art Magazine” and started a new movement that focuses only on the concept of the work of art so “conceptual art is good only if the idea is good (Lewitt, 1969)” as the work of art “One and Three Chairs” by Joseph Kosuth in 1965 which consists of a wooden chair, a photograph of the chair and a photographic enlargement that presents the definition of the word chair, the concept or idea of this work of art is that through the use of three different media that is the objectual, visual and verbal each person can change their opinion or comment on the object depending on the medium in which you are observing the representation of the chair for what is shown by not paying attention to the object but to the concept, the art is equivalent to an idea.

Chapter II

Contemporary art of the 21st century

2.1 The art of today

Contemporary art is any work of art produced at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, it is also called as “the art of today” being a term to identify every artistic movement of the present in which shows an extraordinary increase of artwork, this means that “we are immersed in a boom of contemporary art of portions never seen before” (Gompertz, 2013, p. 296).

Nowadays artists use a wide variety of media and materials, creating many ways to express art causing difficulty in defining a single style or method, this was caused by the idea of

progress and innovation that originate changes and improvements within society affecting for the good of art, therefore from paintings, sculptures, illustrations, graffiti to the animation of cartoons today can be enlightened as works of art, eliminating limits and getting more freedom by expressing ideas or feelings through their concepts and themes.

Currently we can appreciate art anywhere, from a museum, a gallery, parks or different platforms and social networks, they are used as decoration in different places but now it is very common to see them animating the landscape of the city and being accessible to all.

2.1.1 Street art and artists.

When talking about contemporary art, we talk about street art since it has become an inevitable integral element. Bou (2010) in his book *Street art* states:

Street art turns the streets of big cities into outdoor art exhibitions, producing a socio-cultural impact that allows for more universal communication, because people who have never set a foot in a museum are absorbed by this artistic macro-production. (p. 11)

Street art originates from the purpose of artists to form an antithesis of the current social context, first with the graffiti boom in the 70s and 80s, when in the world the digital community was not conceivable, artists needed their art to be seen for what the only way was in an urban context and for that they often used the artist's tagging or signature to make themselves known.

Graffiti became the precursor of urban art because street art is also known as Post-graffiti although this technique is still widely used in this movement along with expressions of visual art such as painting and sculpture.

Unlike the graffiti boom, street art is an artistic movement that contains social activism, provokes new cultural dialogues and transforms the reality of contemporary art.

Artists use various techniques such as posters, stencils, stickers, murals and more for their different styles in their street art.

2.1.1.1 Banksy.

One of the most famous street artist during the graffiti boom in 1980 is Banksy, whose identity remains unknown but under his pen name and visible works of art in several cities, especially in London, he is known worldwide, so well known that he was director of the opening sequence and gag of the Simpsons sofa in the episode "MoneyBART" of season 22, also has some published books of photographs of his works and exhibitions and a documentary "Exit Through The Gift Shop" of 2010.

Most of his works of art are about politics, pop culture, morality and ethnicities that are represented with their own style in the use of stencils combining writing with graffiti, an example of this is presented in his most outstanding work of art "Girl with a Balloon", the mural shows a girl letting go of a red heart-shaped balloon and next to it is a phrase that says "There is always hope".

Graffiti beats the appropriate art because it becomes part of the city, it can even be used as a location tool being more useful than a painting (Banksy, 2001).

2.1.1.2 KAWS.

Another great street artist is Brian Donnelly known professionally as KAWS, he began his graffiti career when he was living in Jersey City but became known when he moved to New York in 1990 where he began to modify advertising images, that later became popular and began to produce limited editions of toys made of vinyl collaborating with toy brands, also managing to collaborate with various clothing brands such as Nike, Vans, Adidas, Supreme, DC, etc.

His works of art are acrylic paintings and sculptures that show familiar images and popular icons such as The Simpsons, SpongeBob, Michelin Man, Mickey Mouse and many more, exhibited in large museums, galleries and outdoor exhibitions, breaking down barriers between streets and museums becoming the face of contemporary art.

2.1.1.3 It's a Living.

Ricardo González is a Mexican contemporary artist known as It's a Living, as other artists, he began with graffiti that later combined with his studies in graphic design, it can be seen that his style in all his works of art is the design of letters or lettering that he performs with different colors and concepts that their letters can convey and that can mean something different for each person.

It began to have popularity in 2010 and he settled in New York where it has managed to collaborate with the brands known as Nike, Apple, Samsung, Coca-Cola and others.

His pen name It's a Living represents his way of life, day by day doing what he like, painting and traveling to many places exposing his art in Japan, China, Mexico, France, etc.

2.1.2 Digital art.

In addition to street art, another movement of contemporary art is digital art, this art does not use materials such as pencil or paint but uses digital technology, this includes computer-made images, virtual 3D sculptures and animations.

You can see a fusion between art and technology which allows new ways of making art and thanks to the internet we can see it on several platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Behance, etc.

Nowadays digital art has great acceptance and growth although it has also had many criticisms of people who see it more as a technical skill than as an artistic manifestation but according to digital artists, there is no difference between a brush and a graphic palette.

2.2 Influence on society

Contemporary art is important in today's society because it influences positively, thanks to its characteristics, especially its aesthetic value is very important, this refers to the ability to cause a pleasant sensation to the viewer but what is considered pleasant can change

depending of the viewer generating different thoughts or opinions, in the same way the works of art are capable of transmitting relaxation and inspiration, observing a work of art and experiencing what is in front helps reduce the symptoms of stress and anxiety, on the other hand its objective of representing and commenting on the world manages to inspire people to be better and influence changes.

Personal expression in the creation of art is valuable for society because of the perspectives that show the minds of artists and that allow to give a cultural, social, political, economic and more points of view, for this reason, for people who enjoy art is entertaining and for many it is a form of education and growth because it does not only generates thoughts but also shocking emotions for the mentality of the public.

Chapter III

Problems and criticisms

3.1 Art as a business

Art has become a business for every artist, it is no longer as before, that a minority group could access a work of art because now the evolution of technology and society favors the artist getting to appreciate works of art in several and different places, improving our thoughts and behaviors as an important part of our daily life and it has become a necessity from which an economic force can be drawn.

Professional artists are like entrepreneurs, they have an idea or a product to sell and like any job or business, it is not easy, “living art is difficult, but it is much more complicated to do it without it” (Cachaldora, 2016, wp).

To obtain income in the artistic market it is important to promote the works of art, for that they are exhibited in galleries, art exhibitions, online galleries and websites to be able to make known potential clients and make sales.

It is also very common that they can be hired by publicists, businesses, companies, companies, magazines or organizations to carry out various projects.

Other artists can also work giving classes or workshops and many others work as restaurateurs in museums or galleries.

Critics of the subject point out that artists as entrepreneurs fall into the philosophy of coexistence because sometimes they will sign contracts with the devil in which they will not be able to avoid hypocrisy, for example, create a work of art with anti-capitalist meanings while their financier is your best collector and customer will be impossible, just as if they wanted to criticize an establishment to which they belong exclusively, they will not be able to, as in many situations (Gompertz, 2013).

Despite criticism and certain consequences, many artists work that way, although some others prefer to stay out of the market as it is in the case of street artists.

3.2 Art or vandalism?

Street art is a form of artistic expression and a form of communication but many people still consider it vandalism since artists intervene in public walls and expose their different ideas or feelings on a subject which cause controversy in society.

Since its inception, street art has been questioned, since not everyone thinks that they contribute some benefit to society and its contents can cause discussions that society prefers to avoid or ignore, while others will think they are important for a change in thinking and behavior. of people in their day to day, they also help beautify parts of the city.

In spite of the debate, whether or not it is vandalism, they have already ceased to be considered crimes or acts of destruction to private properties since it is now more usual that the artist, depending on the site, usually asks permission from the owner before making a work of art, to avoid any inconvenience.

In addition, street art contains principles of contemporary art, which nowadays has become a worldwide phenomenon, gaining popularity and importance.

Gompertz (2013) in his book *What are you looking at? 150 years of modern art in the blink of an eye* states that:

Today, a street work the size of a postcard made in Nairobi can become a worldwide phenomenon just an hour after it was completed: it was precisely that potential that turned street art into the form of expression chosen. (p. 317)

3.3 Copyrights

There are problems when a street artist performs a work of art, being public, unfortunately not all people respect or tolerate the free expression of the artist embodied in the wall so that damage to the work of art may occur or there may be social problems or discussions

To better understand this issue we can observe what happened in Ecuador, specifically in Bellavista, to the north in the city of Quito, a mural called El Amor No Genre by the artist Juan Sebastián Aguirre, artistically known as Apitacán. He woke up vandalized, without even having finished it, on Thursday, July 4, 2019.

In favor of the approval of equal marriage, the message about the diversity of love at a glance can be understood, the work is composed of three kissing couples, the first couple of women, the second of a man and a woman and the third of men, of which only homosexual couples were marked with the purpose of censoring them, the fact was carried out by strangers after Ecuadorian society showed their intolerance by presenting complaints against the work.

However, after these events, the artist managed to completely carry out his work thanks to the support of organizations that combat social injustice and the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito, it is also necessary to take into account that as a professional artist and recognized as such, the law He was responsible for protecting his artistic work by exercising his right as author and creator.

Copyright based on our constitution guarantees a boost to creativity, those rights protect the original works in tangible means of expression from the moment of creation.

This also applies to mural artists making them the sole owners of their creations, but if their work of art is done on a wall located on some other person's property, the site owner will be entitled to that work, which allows him to sell, to lend or separate the wall that is your property, but you will not be able to make profits or advertising since that would lead you to make copies of the work, which is considered illegal.

Similarly, no person without permission can photograph the mural and then sell their image, as it would be considered an illegal copy, such as the problem of the clothing brand H&M, a company that advertised with a mural without the permission of the artist of graffiti Jason “Revok” Williams.

As soon as the artist noticed the ads, he defended his work with the artistic community by sending a letter of cessation and withdrawal to the company, after this, the company sued the artist, finally after so many claims for copyright infringement, the company Withdrew the demand and the ads.

This is a case where copyright guaranteed due protection, but agreements can also be reached where artists can waive, transfer or share their rights.

Conclusions

At the end of the monographic work it is concluded that:

- The characteristics of art today exist thanks to the idea of avant-garde and its great artists that began to emerge at the beginning of the 20th century but still with great

changes, art has always been and always will be a necessary means of expression for the human being.

- Contemporary art has passed the limits of creation, artists exploit their ability and imagination more using any resource and style they want to express themes in which they seek awareness, reflection or public opinion.
- Now everyone is much closer to art, simply walking through the streets of the city you can find a work of art, and if you do not leave your house it is also possible, since there are now digital platforms that are widely used to appreciate works of art more easily.
- Artists are more recognized and have greater job opportunities although they are strongly criticized for contradictory reasons, however, it is now a considerable work that an art professional can live on.
- Public works of art as murals can contain messages that change the way people think and act, so art is a positive means of communication, it can also be a health benefit by being able to appreciate art quietly on a walk in the street, or a way to learn something new or just cheer up a place that was off
- The debate about art or vandalism is no longer a problem since muralism has gained importance and rights in society, in addition, it is no longer considered illegal since permits are usually requested before performing the artwork on public or private walls.
- Today social networks and other digital platforms are used as a tool of great importance for the artist to become known and have an audience because you can upload artworks and get thousands of people to see it.

Recommendations

- The artist is recommended to create his street art works under the necessary permits so as not to cause inconvenience to private properties, if it is not possible to use public spaces, other means can be used to exhibit as digital platforms.
- The purpose of art is to convey a message and this can lead to dialogues, debates, actions, changes in which each person can have a different opinion or point of view, so it is advisable for the public to socialize in a peaceful, tolerant, especially

respectable way. Do not aggressively impose an idea that can lead to serious problems.

- Before your work is available online to the public, the first thing you should do is make a declaration of authorship for each work, since this way you will not have problems if there is a dispute about the originality or ownership of the pieces.
- It is necessary to have a minimum of context about the problems, basic notions of geopolitics, to be up to date with the news, for be able to create artworks with meaning and related to the world.
- In addition to understanding the works, it is advisable to explore much more to enjoy, be amazed, discuss, get excited, imagine other scenarios, get in doubt, the point is that the relationships we establish with works of art go beyond understanding them, there are multiple possibilities that are worth exploring.

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