In The Making
Creative Options for Contemporary Art
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Preface:
Why am I an artist?
Who is my audience?
How can I communicate with this audience?
What is art’s function is society?

10. Tracing cultural circumstances to today’s artist. Evolutionary development entails a disruption of the status quo.
11. Boundless artistic possibility is a modern phenomenon, but its inception can be traced to the progressive decline of a powerful, historic, international institution – the dissolution of the medieval guild system.
12. PRODUCTION _ Entry into the art profession is no longer dependent upon the judgment of experts.
CONSUMPTION _ The emergence of the bourgeoisie class added a new sector to the art market since the middle class, too, desired an artistically adorned mode of life.
THE ARTIST _ The artists was force to participate in an open market, creating works of art that were not commissioned prior to their production. They speculated on their own fortunes by creating work knowing neither who would become the owner, nor the physical setting in which their work would be installed….price….or even if it would be sold.
13 THE MARKET _ Commerce became integral to art production. As a commodity, marketability was added to aesthetic merit, technique, and thematic relevance as components of art.

Scoping an Audience
16. Introduction_
Production and consumption comprise complementary aspects of art’s cultural course.

Production – artists transform the private zones of their imaginations, insights, knowledge, emotions and intuitions into forms that are transmittable to others.
Consumption – works of art remain in a state of pure potential without the critical linkage between the creator and recipient _ the audience.

Most art viewers take turns being knowing recipients or baffled outsiders. Artwork provokes contradictory responses. Topics may simultaneously seem suitable or offensive depending on the audience.

“Topics may seem suitable or offensive. Imagery may be exciting or banal. Manners of expression may be familiar or exotic. Such audience heterogeneity is not unique to art. Indeed, it is an abiding characteristic of contemporary culture where the technological sophistication of cable networking, satellite transmissions, and the internet has made it possible to multiply and divide audiences. “Consumers” of art are being treated to the same abundance of choices available to consumers of coffee, aspirin, and sneakers – contemporary artworks can be plan and fancy, cheap and expensive, conventional and unusual.

17. Responses to art is not an “on/ off” bilateral opposition, but rather it is more like a cockpit control panel.
Decisions regarding whom to affect, how, and where can occur at any juncture within the creative process. Some artists consciously design both the artwork and the means by which it interacts with an audience.
“But no matter how the process of linking an artwork and an audience is conducted, exhibiting successfully usually means that the artwork and the audience are tuned and synchronized.”

-- Choosing a constituency

24. One-for-some: Isaac Julien _ Fine art Film

Julien’s circumstance has led him to direct his work to a specific audience – those who have been guilty of imposing false stereotypes upon him.

He challenges existing values to dislodge them. His art is confrontational. He creates fictional narratives that expose the vagaries of his real life experience. His work is displayed in an unlikely context in which people are likely to pay attention to material they would normally avoid.

Julien entices viewers to undertake rigorous analysis of their habitual judgments…

Reform.

26. Julien’s films appeal to the brains of the tutored few, not the hearts of the majority, reversing Thomas Kinkade’s formula. Julien is not a disinterested intellectual committed to quotations, foonotess, and analyses. He is an artist whose films augment the contributions among this impressive roster of people. He explains, “by destabilizing signs of race, gender, and sexuality, these artists draw critical attention to the cultural constructed ness, the artifice, of the sexual roles and identities we inhabit.”

27. “Social definitions of what it is to be a man, about what constitutes manliness, are not natural but are historically constructed and this construction is culturally variable.”

His sophisticated approach to film suits cultured viewers. The typical member of his audience is white, educated museum-goer with a taste for contemporary art. His relationship to this audience is bellicose.

31. Camp aesthetic_ is a style identified as a humorous parody of popular taste. Camp exaggeration strips pornographic depictions of their perversity.

Admirers of Julien’s films must enjoy being put to the test.

32. Film as a medium because of the mind controlling and trendsetting powers of cinema. The camera has validated certain values, and systematically excluded others. Julien actively seeks ways to record those that were excluded.

-- Communicating with the audience

45. Implicit Meanings – Metaphor and Symbol: Michal Rovner
Born in Tel Aviv, Israel, lives and works in NYC

She utilizes metaphors and symbols to accomplish the task of communicating complex, interwoven perspectives. Rovner offers her audience opportunities to go beyond first impressions and undertake an active search for meaning.

If language were a machine, then the prefix “re” would be the lever that drives a concept backward in time or makes an action happen again.

…the subject of a work of art may be different than the subject of the representation.
This essay deals with its impact on art observers. It explores how audiences discern meanings that are obscured by metaphors and camouflaged as symbols. This imposes a responsibility upon viewers. They must recognize this difference, deduce its relationship with the subject, and interpret the manner in which it enriches the work’s significance.

47.
Rovner refers to her films as “icons” and “metaphors for emotions.”

The emotional maelstrom is further intensified because Rovner carefully orchestrates the timing of the projections so that the films, shown simultaneously on three walls, slide discordantly in and out of synch. She describes the effect upon the viewer: “the birds swirl around you until you are dizzy. I use four microphones. You become obliterated.”

Processing the image

Rovner states that processing proceeds until she discovers “resemblances among mutual parts, what things have in common that make their identity ambiguous.”

Through these means Rovner explores three functions of representation, offering her audience different opportunities to relate to the work. By crossing the boundaries of visual truth she first gains entry into a visceral emotional repository. Because response at this stage is automatic, it is not demanding upon the audience. But subsequent stages that lead into an extended territory of metaphor and that open into an expansive domain of symbol both depend upon the willful investment of time, effort, analysis, and reflection.

Things are unstable...they go from good to bad to good. Things are in flux. The film is a comment on her feelings.

Anxiety inducing aesthetic ingredients.

The birds externalize the internal state of someone possessed by a demented force or suffering from hysteria.

48.
In each instance responses originate in the emotional gut of the observer, bypassing analysis and contemplation.

The artwork is the active agent emitting an emotional charge. The viewer is he respondent to these charges.

Metaphor is the second way in which Mutual Interest disassociates birds from literal meanings and enables them to serve an expanded function as the work’s expressive agents.

For humans as for birds, survival depends on claiming territories and defending turf.

A single image may generate multiple metaphoric possibilities, contributing an ensemble of interpretations that enrich the work with denotations and connotations and reward viewers who engage in prolonged contemplation.

52. Explicit meanings- Instructional maps, Notes, and Diagrams: Matthew Ritchie

He wants everything.

Narrative is at the core of his endeavor. Each character personifies one of the seven quantum forces that have driven the narrative of the universe’s evolution since the birth of time.
He devises a very complex art scheme and the means for viewers to comprehend it. His works are presented like games. People are taught the rules and invited to play along. 55. He is less interested in displaying his mental virtuosity than in affecting the mental processes of his viewers. A baffled audience means a failed endeavor.

"people resent art that displays a closed language."

"Becoming an expert on anything is incredibly rewarding"

Ritchie provides the means to break the code he constructs, taking advantage of the proficiency of contemporary audiences to decipher chars, diagrams, models, maps and other compressed capsules of information, devices that facilitate the task of conveying great quantities of information.

"one issue of the New York Times contains more information than people in medieval times received in a lifetime. Yet we get it in a flash. We are expert information managers."

He believes that viewers naturally seek instructive premises and that curiosity provides a frequently neglected opportunity for art to engender a lasting influence.

56. When Ritchie amasses diverse systems of knowledge, he is mirroring his life experience. The exponential proliferation of information is a distinguishing characteristic of today’s environment. Managing this glut of information is a recent addition to the challenge of human survival. Ritchie describes the anxiety and bewilderment that result from the relentless bombardment with information as “the future unknown, the past as labyrinth of contradictions, our powers of description have failed us.” His artistic endeavor seems designed to rescue a populace in distress.

Ritchie offers five opportunities for engaging his works within “working model” because he acknowledges that there exist multiple ways to interact with art. Each of these opportunities conspicuously avoid what he calls “dreadful didactics.”

Five Plateau’s of engagement for audience:

1. Visual pleasure is the work’s initial allure. (The aesthetic and execution of the work.)

57.

2. The second plateau of engagement is initiated once viewers move beyond visual captivation and become aware that these colors, shapes, and lines are not merely attractive patterns and designs. He lures them by exploiting the same human predilection that infuses mythologies, creation narratives, religious parables, and sacred texts the world over _ Ritchie tells stories. He is forthright about his intentions to lure the audience with tall-tale telling, announcing after one particularly extravagant.

59. To assure that his audience will not merely be beguiled by the narrative of Lucky and Asta and the other colorful characters, Ritchie provides and explicit reminder that these images are metaphors for actual events of epic proportions.

He is forthright about his intentions to lure the audience with tall tale telling, announcing after one particularly extravagant passage about the Big Bang, “if you believe that, you’ll believe anything. But that’s how it always gets started. Somebody tells us a story we’d like to believe, that we’d like just as much to hear is only a story, and we’re hooked, breathless for more, the next version.”

60.

3. Viewers enter the third plateau of experience when they realize that the sci-fi narrative addresses complex scientific truths and concurrent cultural transactions.

He first tantalizes them with sensual pleasures. Then they are enticed by a story. It is presented in the form of a game. Clues are provided. The riddles are identifiable. Gradually the unfamiliar language releases its meanings. Viewers are enticed to engage because they discern the possibility of figuring things out. They yield to Ritchies’ provocations because they anticipate that their efforts will be rewarded with comprehension. Ritchie’s art also promises pure fun.

61.
4. Following the progression from sensuality, to curiosity, to witness, Ritchie focuses on consciousness itself at the fourth plateau of involvement. The fourth plateau is identified as “ecstasy.” It marks the transition from the role of witness to that of participant.

5. The fifth is attained when viewers leave the gallery with the realization that they resemble the protagonists in Ritchie’s epic drama. Like the watchers, they too stumble without destinations, are subject to arbitrary events, veer on collision courses, and act on the basis of inadequate information.

Like Chaos Theory, these conditions are fluid and interchangeable, there are too many variables to make patterns discernible.

As viewers gain an understanding of the narrative, they also come to recognize the many ways that exist to absorb life’s complexity, and how intricately connected are disparate bodies of belief, and how metaphors can make grand premises less intimidating.

For these reasons, Ritchie is fond of saying, “information is a sublime experience,” because information has become both more all-encompassing and less controllable than nature.”

-Relating to the audience
86. Instilling Confidence and inspiring Laughter: Will Schade

Will Schade spins visual and verbal yarns about the sacred texts and noble themes. …his narratives are supposed to lead to morals, not punch lines. But Schade discovers humor in these uplifting subjects by sinking low. He is a bottom feeder.

Schade is very Dyslexic. His mistakes are boldly presented as handwritten narratives on the drawings they accompany.

89.
“Chuckling in the presence of Schade’s works grants viewers an enjoyable surge of superiority. He museum context allows them the special pleasure of feeling even more enlightened than an artist who, in this instance, is not a super-human genius.”

Schade’s works are ego builders, morale boosters, and status elevators.

By publicly disclosing his strengths and his weaknesses, he frees the audience to indulge in guilt free laughter and enjoy the rush of self-confidence that laughter generates.

91.
His favorite themes involve biblical inconsistencies and bodily processes that are normally performed in private.

Baboons peeing
Anatomical chickens.

92.
Viewers enjoy guilt-free amusement kindled by Schade’s faults and talents. Old and young, church goers and atheists, academicians and students are given reason to feel good about themselves.

110. Eliciting Secrets: Gillian Wearing
Lives and works in London_ photo/ video
Gillian Wearing amplifies viewers’ responses by ridging the divide that separates them from real-life human subjects of her photographs and videos.

Her subjects confess. The contend to these disclosures is sometimes shocking. Confessions and staring complete the communication chain – from artwork to viewer and from viewer to artwork.

It is becoming common in many households to have an appliance that enables family members to document their private lives and broadcast them on the internet.

Web cams

This trend is evident in the major television networks as well…

Her photography and video projects introduce this trend into the arena of fine art.

“… we see our bodies as vessels, and what goes on inside is often much more complex and complicated, that disparity between the look of a person and the things going on inside is what I wanted to bring out.”

In the first instance, she must gain her subjects’ trust. In the second, she strives to elicit sympathetic acceptance.

“signs that say what you want them to say and not signs that say what someone else wants you to say”

By inserting self – revelatory signs within the photographs instead of allocating these texts to labels, Wearing capitalized on the communicating power of signs.

Mainstream culture imposes a silencing mechanism on both deviants and normals, which is why they are the focus of her artistic concerns.

Ethics lies at the core of Wearing’s activities. Her intent to soothe the conscience of her subjects is paired with an attempt to awaken the conscience of her audience.

The goofy artificiality of the camouflages used in confess contrasts with the bleak authenticity of the confessions. But these camouflages also function to transform the individual’s confessions into generalized utterances that pertain, in some form, to the dark side within us all.

Repetition of the film loop.

Drunk exposes the privileged segment of the population that frequents are exhibitions to an unflinching view of the plight of drunks.

No seats, no lights, no horizon. Denied these stabilizing elements, viewers begin to fool woozy, dizzy and tipsy. For these few moments, the privileged share a state of being with the outcasts, suspending conditioned responses of avoidance, condemnation, or repulsion.
As an artist, Wearing adopts the demeanor of a social scientist. She constructs a catalogue of true identities, thereby exposing the distortions inherent in most projections and assumptions. Her work attempts to mitigate the psychological damage most people both cause and suffer.

“we all control each other’s patterns and we all have ideas of ethics and morals and PC. But then that gets exploited, and everyone exploits each other, an that creates limitations to what we feel we can do”

Wearing subverts those limitations by opening a space where the silenced speak and the disinterested listen.

**Sourcing Inspiration**

122. Introduction

“Inspire” is associated with the originating breath that infuses an organism with the energy that is so distinct from mundane experience, it is described by Ovid as “the deity within us who breathes that divine fire by which we are animated,” Inspiration marks a significant beginning, particularly one laden with risks and exhilaration. Artists pursue this initiating spark. Art historians contemplate its effects. Still, inspiration remains a mysterious component of the artistic process.

Although some works remain viable for long periods of time, most fade away.

The essays in this chapter function like ultrasounds, expanding the biographical narratives about selected works of art by exploring their infusing inspirations along with identifiable influences.

123.
Passion can be allocated equally between artists who plug in to influences from without and those who channel inclinations from within. … It can be a tiny spark or a blast of revelation.

124. Nothing as opposed to something, also serves as a compelling source of inspiration. Neglected considerations, missing data, gaps in the record, and rejected opportunities can rouse artists to undertake creative interventions. Some of these fill-in-the-blank artists are motivated to supply experiences that are lacking in their personal lives.

-Internal Sources of Inspiration

142. Imagination – inspiring inspiration: **Julian LaVerdiere**
Lives and works in New York City_ Fine art and sculpture

Julian LaVerdiere experiences inspiration as a steady phenomenon. Instead of erupting as a flashing insight or exploding like a bolt of energy, it flows continuously…

LaVerdiere strives to establish the inspired state of mind as a mental norm. He seeks to accomplish this by creating art that cultivates mystery, produces curiosity, and ultimately stimulates creative action.

Instead of interpreting the legend as a warning against runaway ambitions, LaVerdiere has adopted Faust’s determination to maximize human potential, and even to surpass it. LaVerdiere is equally impressed by the power of this legend to energize generations of artists.

It is from the past that he discovers inspirational models of creative genius. LaVerdiere diligently capitalizes on the examples set by the original inventors, investors, visionaries, and designers who laid the foundation for our current technologies, luxuries and comforts.
He is inspired by the missing chapters in recorded history. He is intrigued by the gaps in the official chronicles, the unsavory facts expunged from idealized narratives, all the stuff that has either been suppressed, forgotten or rejected.

LaVerdiere’s challenge is to distract us from the perpetual renewal of available and glittering enticements so we can develop our own creative potential.

First Attempted Trans-Atlantic Telegraph Cable Crossing_ 1999

Cots and pillows with electrodes in them to simulate rem sleep.

Safe cura 1919 freefalling_still frame 2000

You cannot inspire hope without inspiring confidence. It is indicative of empowerment, success, progress, freedom, and sense of satisfaction. I control the mind of the sleeper and cultivate somnambulism. This is a way of conquering the unknown territory of the unconscious.

Although LaVerdiere believes “there are more opportunities for mad science and invention in the art world than in rocket science or nuclear physics,” practical considerations are also factored into the design of his exalted mental flight training kit.

Twin towers massive beams of white light. LaVerdiere describes the work as “a profound symbol of strength, hope and resiliency, reclamation of New York City’s skyline and identity, a tribute to rescue workers…

-External Sources of inspiration

166. The Kaleidoscope of Black Experience: Chris Ofili
Lives and works in London_Fine art

Chris Ofili’s paintings dazzle the eye. But each painting ultimately gains credence as a repository for the manifold influences that affect his life and the lives of most black people living in predominantly white cultures today.

His canvases represent four giant springheads of inspiration: Africa, Europe, popular culture, and the fine arts.

They demonstrate that misinterpretations abound when divergent cultures attempt to co-exist. At the same time he proves that the outcome of such cultural mixing can be rich and rewarding.

The beauty of Africa’s land and its wildlife affected him as deeply as the disturbing remnants of European colonialism. In frustration, he threw a lump of elephant dung at this canvas and discovered in that impulsive act the visual impact and thematic complexity he had been seeking all along. Thus began his practice of incorporating dung into his artwork.

…s description of Ofili’s The Holy Virgin Mary could also describe Cimabue’s Enthroned Madonna and Child. In both paintings the central figure of the Virgin is shaped like a large blue triangle that is circumscribed by undulating lines.

By refusing to indulge in the indignation that has become expected of artists of African descent, Ofili provides equal opportunities for both the black and the white members of his audience to be offended.

The primary influence that Ofili claims to borrow from hip-hop, however, is the permission to march across cultural borders with impunity.

Looking at things with no hierarchy.
173. If there is a function of the work, it is to allow people to see it’s a magnet, a magnet for thoughts, ideas, and arguments, and hopefully, it will allow them to think one thing and then to think another thing completely openly. And not to be so intent on right and wrong.

Crafting an Artistic “Self”

194. Introduction

New prospects for identity construction now clutter the cultural horizon. The current marketplace abounds with body-transforming hormones, plastic surgeries, and cross-gender reassignment operations.

Artists stick to the facts of their biographies but can not avoid engaging in option selection. This is because even accurate projections involve selecting definitive traits from the infinite array of possibilities and then crafting these traits into functional identities.

Because style, time, process and medium are all affected by the artists “self,” the importance of identity in art’s creation is obvious. But knowledge of the artist’s “self,” is also vital to experience art, especially now that artists have gained the freedom to craft their own identity instead of upholding traditional roles.

Biography is key to unraveling artistic meaning.

195. An altruistic ego, for example, sacrifices personal comfort, health, and security to perform public service. “Wego” is a term invented to indicate a plural version of ego. It is activated when and artist’s individuality is replaced with some collective identity such as African American eco-feminist…. For artists, “self” knowledge is sometimes discovered through the process of creating art. For other artists, establishing ”self” is a prerequisite for creation.

198. Disclosing Biography – Unabridged and Uncensored: Nan Goldin

Goldin’s camera has been her enduring partner throughout these trials. Its lens has seized the passing moments of these turbulent years. Photography is an extension of both Goldin’s eye and her spirit, releasing her grief, quelling her psychic turmoil, bonding her with those she loves. “The camera is as much a part of my everyday life as talking or eating or sex,” she explains. “The instant of photographing, instead of creating distance, is a moment of clarity and emotional connection for me”.

201. The searing intensity of the photographic portraits of Goldin produces recaptures the heartbreaking event of her own childhood in which her older sister committed suicide by lying across railroad tracks. She ran away because of this. “I started taking pictures because of my sister’s suicide.”

A desire for intimacy, respect for honesty, and a need to push limits define her artistic credo.

The unmediated human exposure of the resulting photographs contrasts with the mindless drone of camcorders and the fulsome sensationalism of journalism. The former is too devoid of emotional involvement, the latter too intent on fabricating melodrama. Instead, Goldin works in the tenuous zone of the snapshot, a form of photography that is usually associated with personal amateur efforts, not formal artistic accomplishment.

202. The slides proceed in succession. Goldin’s friends appear and reappear at sporadic intervals and in unpredictable circumstances that mirror the incoherence of their lives.
AIDS
203. Whereas a single photograph presents a snippet of a person’s life, presenting multiple events and circumstances creates a narrative spectrum. Tracking through years of friend’s lives.

It’s all about making a record of people’s real lives. Goldin’s commitment to producing an unflinching view of harsh realities was not only directed to her friends. She also applied it to herself and her own emotional crises. Her works from the 1970’s and 80’s documented her precarious life, trumped, doped, and teetering on calamity.

…her image of “self” continues to include those who survived past sexual, emotional, and chemical excesses.

205.
“we all tell stories which are versions of history – memorized, encapsulated, respectable, and safe. Real memory, which these pictures trigger, is an invocation of the color, smell, sound, and physical presence, the density and flavor of life. Memory allows the endless flow of connections.”

224. Epitomizing Biography – Single White Female: Vanessa Beecroft

Vanessa Beecroft, instead of discovering her “self” within herself, constructs her image of “self” according to criteria valued by contemporary society.

Her work enlists the old-boy’s club of attitudes in which the appreciation of women obsesses on appearance, but ignores intelligence and accomplishment. Likewise, it seems to align itself with two traditions that perpetuate male chauvinism: the exalted legacy of depictions of female nudes in art and the stringent criteria for female beauty promoted in the popular media.

For two-and-a-half hours, under the glare of a helium balloon spotlight, they displayed the unachievable, media-constructed standards by which legions of impressionable women regularly measure their self-esteem.

226.
…she exposed her obsessive attempts to achieve the model’s standards of beauty by exhibiting the personal diary that she kept from 1985-1993. In it she recorded obsessively detailed accounts of the food she ate and the time of its consumption, interspersed with expressions of guilt and reports about her visits to her psychiatrist…

227.
Fixations with one’s body image frequently impede self-acceptance, providing clear access for insecurities, doubts, and inadequacies to invade the psyche. In Beecroft’s work this confusion is staged, polished, and dazzling to behold.

It reveals that Beecroft is not merely a victim of the obsessive efforts to fulfill near impossible expectations of beauty. She is also aware of the psychological penalties they impose. At the same time, she seems to espouse the self-help advice printed in such popular magazines as Cosmopolitan “insane ways to get to size 0”…

228.
Three cultural sources fuse to become Beecroft’s artistic self: The first is the alluring and illusory “look” of beauty that is promoted by corporate, fashion, and entertainment industries, determining the body type of the models in Show. The second is the museum setting… The third is the corporate model of creativity. Instead of conforming to the modern image of the artist as an inspired and isolated genius, she hired a team of experts who constructed a highly controlled product that became the spectacle credited as her work of art.
229.
Beecroft describes herself as a “postfeminist” who depersonalizes the female body by emphasizing its image quality.

“It is a delicate separation between what is an image just to be representational and what is a real person standing there”

Beauty is virtual, not real.

“I like freedom to do actions that embarrass society.”

Expressing an Artistic Attitude

234. Introduction
Artistic attitudes contribute enriching adjectives and exclamation points to the expressiveness of art. Will the artists revere it, degrade it, ennobie it, ridicule it, nurture it, condemn it, pity it, idealize it, or aggrandize it? This entire range of attitudes can be attached to every conceivable subject…

In addition, the word “attitude” refers to an aircraft’s manner of approaching its destination. A good attitude facilitates a safe landing. A bad attitude banks against the prevailing winds and jeopardizes the landing.

In art, attitudes refer to a variety of angles of positioning. They have elicited a vast and ever-expanding repertoire of devices summoned by artists to reveal their attitudinal positions in relation to their subjects.

...radiant hues or gloomy tones; selecting precious or cheap materials; or deciding between accuracy, distortion, and idealization.

235.
In sum, art collects human attitudes with as much fervor as it dispenses them, and its solidifies familiar attitudes with as much insight as it generates new ones.

236. Obeying Ants: Yukinori Yanagi

Yanagi explores the attitude of humans toward other living creatures.

The artist assumed control when he laid out four five-and-a-half-foot steel beams coated with grease to prevent the ant from escaping. They mark the limits of the resulting drawing.

Interpreting the work’s meaning is entirely dependent upon the artist’s attitude toward the ant.

In both cases, they are decked out in the guise of metaphors designed to help humans better understand themselves. Contemporary media offers such a menagerie. Cars are associated with mustangs, thunderbirds, cougars, and impalas.

238.
But even prior to lifting the crayon and making the first mark, Yanagi reveals the seriousness of his intent. He spends several days in the room designated for the creation of this work.

Yanagi calls his ants “friends.” This friendship began when he was a child.

239. Yanagi’s friend, the ant, introduced him to a model of consummate social organization. Ant society is perfectly organized. …
At the same time, Yanagi seems to have harbored doubts about the mindless obedience required to erect such a perfectly functioning society.
240.
…it is that he wants to escape in order to go back home, to resume the task he has been programmed to perform, not to acquire freedom."

Yanagi addresses the erosion of these separatist cultural forces by asking, “do the ghettos of nations, ethnic groups, and religions truly determine personal identities?”

243.
Attitude constructs the lenses through which each artist views his or her world. Awareness of an artist’s attitude permits viewers to perceive an artwork as its creator sees it.

Yanagi explains, “like my ant, people live confined inside a frame which is their social system. But people need freedom… people share illusions.”

…the shared illusions he refers to replace personal visions.

254. Nurturing Data Bodies: **Marcia Lyons**
Lyon’s attitude is expressed when she describes machines as “gooey and malleable” and discusses the blurring of relationships from a “machine/sex orientations.” Offers her audience cybernated, virtualized infants or pets for home adoption.

Lyons has constructed several divergent personas that she assumes and discards with ease. Each persona harvests specific domains of information. Each has its own social networks, technological interaces, and psychic channels.

Lyons strives to anticipate impending events, imminent concepts, and looming technologies. She says she watches thirty movies per weekend while listening to selections from her stockpile of compact discs. She is in a frenzy to keep apace of all that is new. Her life and her art demonstrate her belief that anyone who is not actively constructing newness is irrelevant.

No single persona and no single location can contain her appetite to include an infinity of experiences in the finite dimensions of her life.

255.
It is as if five distinct Marcia’s inhabit the earth, each of them contrived to be remarkable. She likens her lifestyle to “living a movie life which is better than real life.

Her offspring come into being as a result of an ecstatic event – a version of conception that occurs in the absence of flesh and tactile stimulation. Foreplay occurs when Lyons feeds a visual representation of a piece of her body into an electronic imaging device that transforms it into the coded language of pure data.

257. Lyons is not content to limit her creations to the physical signs of life. The gestation process continues until each data body is capable of participating in the fulsome love relationship that spawned it. Her virtual babies are thus granted virtual intelligence and virtual personalities. One program makes them responsive to external stimuli. Another makes them develop in infinite variations and capable of unpredictable behavior.

258.
It also affects its parents’ bodies. They see it, hear it, and feel it. Lyons says that acquiring one is an “experience-tainment exchange,” not a business transaction. Owners can choose to use the projections a background enhancements for their lives or they can actually merge their existence with the data body’s life… B-movie.
A list of tracks rotates and changes the data body’s actions from random, to idiosyncratic, to habitual. It can approach you, comfort you, humor you. “they feel what you feel.”
I work really hard because we deserve to do what we want in life. I want others to be able to go wherever technology takes them. My art utilizes a form that allows anyone to be any form they want to be.

259.
Her futuristic involvement with love transports her beyond her present body, which she thinks of as her little prison.

“The technology is still in its infancy. It will reach elementary school in 2002 and high school in 2008. When it becomes an adolescent, then we will first see what real problems there are.”

270. Being Gently Subversive: Marco Maggi

Despite this impressive record, the word “humble” best describes his artistic attitude. It even prevails in his means of production. Maggi’s creative process depends on minimal requirements, materials that can be acquired at any hardware or grocery store: an exacto blade manual dexterity, one table and one chair to sit on. Modest methods of production.

He made the following decisions:
First, he decided that he had an adverse relationship to many aspects of the current environment, that he describes as “semiotic turmoil.” The world he objects to is exemplified by the extravagant plan announced by the Lawrence Livermore National Lab to build a massive…. Second, Maggi decided to address these aversions in his artwork, but not through criticism, rectification, or suppression. In determining his attitude of communicating his objections, he chose to discard the tantrum, the tirade, and the sermon. He thereby arrived at his third decision, to address the distasteful components of the contemporary environment by ignoring them.

“I don’t work like a big man to change the world. I have no big ideas or ideology or big truth. I am a little man working with normal things. I am comfortable with my materials and my scale and my lack of a didactic message…”

Maggi creates antidotes to contemporary hype, believing that, “people are tired of shock, big impact, didactic messages, and stage-effects like the movies.

273.
Certain physical postures correlate with shock while others are associated with humility. Maggi’s mode of work brings his shoulders forward and his gaze downward. Likewise, the act of looking at his diminutive creations requires his audience to assume a position of reverence.

274.
Maggi has never struggled for success. In face, his struggle has been with success. He began selling art at a very young age.

Maggi perpetually postpones completion. Because he conceives of beginning devoid of endings, his works propel toward infinite generation. This model applies to his career and also to individual pieces. They usually originate with a random mark. This mark suggests another, and another. They proliferate, expanding exponentially into the surrounding spaces. Those lines that do not produce further patterns often continue as dots or dashes to imply further growth.

277.
Other patterns expand to an edge, implying extension beyond the physical limits of the work of art. But dynamic expansion is not merely implied by these marks.

Maggi actually produces works of art like generations of offspring from single sources.
Maggi’s gently subversive drawings calmly release an abundance of references. Stripped of identifiable content, scale and context, his imagery accommodates dynamic principles and complex patterns, resembling diagrams of plate tectonic, microscopic images of DNA, and maps of city streets.

278.
He emphasizes their multifarious nature by describing them as “insignificant signs, unclear circuits, vague mutations, illegible cycles, cloudy viruses, incomprehensible dolmens and inaccessible codes.

Each is a fragment of a whole, a distinct entity, and a raw material for portioning into future orchestrations.

“our time is so preoccupied with the spectacle of macro drama that delicacy is subversive. It is like a scandal. We need to build a slow scandal.

**Choosing a Mission**

282. Introduction
Establishing a mission is not only an individual affair, it seems to be an unavoidable component of artists’ creative responsibilities.

Today’s artists heal, sell, teach, build, cook, dance, document…etc. What distinguishes its mission as art?

Imagination, fantasy, metaphor, and symbol are suppressed in many places of employment, but they are welcome in art. Instead of accuracy, artists have the privilege of exaggerating, distorting, ignoring and embellishing.

Weintraub suggests that artistic missions are first acquired, next pursued, and ultimately possessed, and that some artists report that their missions find them. Victoria Vesna’s most urgent “want” is a product of the accelerated pace and complexity of contemporary lifestyles. She feels that everyone wants more time.

284. Creating Time for Busy People: **Victoria Vesna**

Vesna attempts to create time.

She sees through the fog of data and identifies two of communication technology’s broken promises: that communicating via the Web will save time and that it will renew a sense of community.

Mission: “The project n0time is conceived to raise questions about our perception of time and identity as we extend our personal networks through technology. It is designed to address problems most specific to the Western human condition that seems to be entering a crisis because of its particular stress on productivity and efficiency in structuring time.”

Mission: “in an age in which we are increasingly aware of ourselves as databases identified by social security numbers and genetic structures, it is imperative that artists actively participate in how data is shaped, organized and disseminated… In this context, artists become information architects, helping to usher in this new way or working, thinking, anticipating, and helping to visualize new structures.” (Pg 284).

Cellular and molecular architecture.

She recognizes a distinction between corporeal bodies and energetic, information n0time bodies, and aims to reorganize the artists civic role and duty.
Mission: “we must rise to our civic role and duty and respond to the need for intelligent thought and expression of knowledge production and dissemination.”

314. Envisioning Nirvana: Mariko Mori
Mori is the designer, stylist, director, and star of all her photographs and videos, yet she never appears as herself.

The good news is that the noble path of enlightenment that she discovered is not dependent on such demanding protocols as yogic discipline, the cultivation of right understanding, or a heightened state of mindfulness. Mori’s envisioned world is simply an extravagant extension of current technologies and styles that offers the means to satisfy the three conditions upon which fulfillment rests:

1. salvation from banality and drudgery to attain an ideal life on earth. Technologies offer life-enhancing, leisure producing, work-saving attributes that permit the pursuit of one’s deepest yearnings, nobles dreams, and highest aspirations.

2. Condition two is the creating of an image of nirvana that is attuned to contemporary sensibilities. …technologies are reformulating and intensifying human perceptions. Mori envisions the future in terms of today’s virtual and enhanced environments. It is lush, and ethereal, characterized by brilliant light, expansive spaces, multidimensional movement, and saturated colors. She explains, “in virtual reality their is only illusion and image collected in your memory as experience…..”

317.
“..my hope for technology, cyberspace for example, is that it will bring up questions of the space that actually exists, space that exists conceptually, and also inner world space, mind space.”

3. Communication of this vision with the public.

She appears in her work as part human and part fabrication.

318.
Early in her career, Mori posed for her pieces in subway stations, amusement arcades, corporate office buildings, love hotels, airports, and the Biosphere. Although these sites seem far removed from spiritual concerns, they anticipated her latter work by recording evidence of the materialism and moral decline that is said to precede the arrival of the future Buddha.

321.
Mori strives to ameliorate concerns regarding the impermanence of the body and the permanence of the soul.

342. Creating a Life: Alix Lambert
She has dedicated her art practice to experiencing life transforming situations that she regretted were missing from her life. In pursuit of this mission, her daily life and her art life collide.

First she identifies a fictional situation that is missing from her life. Then, she undertakes a real-life action that includes it. In this way she gathers authentic data to replace the impressions left by watching artificial events projected on television and movie screens.

Lambert designs activities and undertakes relationships to fill the voids in her life, to compensate for disappointment, to enliven daily routines, or to develop traits observed in others.

345.
Lambert’s exposure to boxing was real—blows from her opponent hurt, she sweat, her muscles ached, she felt fear. Each day, improvements in her strength, stamina and skill were calculated against the bruises, exhaustion and aches. These effects were true, even if the hostility that provoked them was conducted according to the rules of a game.
Choosing husbands was an informal process.

“…and no matter how much I wanted to turn it into paperwork, it was a tangible, emotional reality.” At the same time, he reports, “I had a weird pocked of pride in the back of my mind – I was married after all, and at least something had happened in my life.”

Her specific mission was to film evidence of the longstanding tradition of criminals marking other criminals with signs that indicate their particular offenses and personalities.

“something that magnifies whatever relationship is already there,” she explains, “in prison, all aspects of being human are magnified.”

Becoming a rock star enabled her to amplify the task of constructing an identity, a task that applies to everyone. Real life provides few guides for conducting the crucial search for self-definition. “in truth.” Lambert comments, “we all create ourselves and then become our reality.” Or others create us.

Lambert’s mission does not involve offering answers. Instead, she hopes the viewers will also consider exploring life options that include direct, Lived experience with real consequence instead of relying on culturally inscribed programming to determine their lives.

Measuring Success

The word “success” indicates fortunate outcomes, but it does not indicate the nature of the outcomes. Artists are free to choose among countless goals, systems of measurement, and criteria of accomplishment. For some, success is measured according to rulers that have developed a patina from long and frequent use. Others declare independence from the standard system and construct their own professional destinations.

Success does not guarantee happiness. Receiving too little success is a familiar refrain in the field of art, but artists can also have excess success. Too much success produces conflict, angst, boredom, isolation.

Pious Success- Eliminating Meaning: Xu Bing

“Human thought has limited potential.” Thus, in order to expand human potential, Bing’s artworks direct viewers to forms of awareness that are not dependent on such products of conscious mind as reason, belief, opinion, ideas, and even the imagination. Sometimes they create confusion. Sometimes they erode dependence on written words.

Success, for Bing, depends upon undermining humans’ attachment to thoughts, ideas, concepts theories, and text.

Bing’s response to the question of success epitomizes a classical instruction by cha’an Buddhist masters.

Throughout his career, Bing has applied this mind-expanding goal to the mind-restricting influences of culture. “you can go far, but humans can’t be totally free,” he says. “We are all bound by a cultural chain.” In an effort to manifest the weight, the length and the girth of this “chain,” he has undertaken a dedicated artistic inquiry into four components of culture: authenticity, sustainability, transferability, and favorability.

He wondered if his culture could be transplanted to foreign soil and thrive there.

The fourth influence identified by Bing is “favorability,” a condition that determines if a cultural tradition still yields positive effects.
373. Throughout the Tsan Series, Bing often placed the silkworms upon newspapers and books, where egg-hatching, larvae roaming, and silk spinning obliterated these published units of human intelligence. As in the work with pigs, Bing measures his success in terms of the destruction of words and meaning and language.

He explains that the written words control people’s thoughts. For this reason Bing sought a different source of guidance and wisdom. The simple worm was elevated to the role of mentor. “People need to have their routine thinking attacked… While undergoing this process of strange and yet familiar transformation, one can enter a realm never experienced before.”

Bing explains a successful outcome of his works of art by stating, “the audience won’t get any direct information, but they may think and understand something about the condition of their existence.” They may come to a fuller realization of the futility of relying on language to communicate accurately and to gain wisdom.

374. Political Success – Diffusing Concentrations of Power: Daniel Joseph Martinez

Daniel Joseph Martinez objects to being identified as an artist. In order to demonstrate that he does not conform to this art convention, Martinez has invented his own job title. He prefers to be known as a Tactical Media Strategist.

He defies rules, and he disrupts conventions. These methods are designed to expose insidious concentrations of social, political, and economic power.

**He succeeds when his methods stimulate dialogue among those who are in control and those who are controlled.**

375. An artist who chooses to play the roles of guerrilla fighter, truth-sayer, façade basher, and disrupter of complacency calculates professional achievement in terms of the disruption of the status quo.

377. …the entire community became his collaborator; even people who were never aware that the roles they were playing were written into the artist’s script. The media also participated…

378. If survival was the goal of Martinez’s childhood strategies, public impact is the goal of his adult activities. The skills he originally developed for self-preservation he subsequently directed to self-endangerment. His work intentionally courts censure, abuse, and ostracism. “…the angrier people get, the more successful I feel.”

381. Since the late 1990’s Martinez has been producing horrifying photographs of himself with his gut, neck, or top of his head slashed, ripped open, or stitched shut. His collaborators in these images are …award winning makeup artists who create the virtual wounds, scars, stitches, and organs that cover and sometimes tumble from his body.

Viewers are left to ponder if police atrocities, gang hostilities, and movie gore are the sane responses to an insane world that Martinez has in mind.

382. Martinez perpetuates a long tradition of distinguished crusaders, but he conducts his activities in a manner all his own.