

Evolution of western ideas

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



Sturken and Cartwright observed that “ over the course of the last two centuries Western culture has come to be dominated by visual rather than oral or textual media” (Sturken, Cartwright 1). However, visual culture has rarely been scientifically analyzed, although it played and continues to play a major role in virtually every sphere of life: from education to politics and from entertainment to healthcare. It’s hard to disagree with Sturken and Cartwright when they assert that “ viewers make meaning” (Sturken, Cartwright 45).

Visual culture in the XX century is not merely an image, it is a relation between visual object and spectator. The most famous images of the century (like “ I want you for the US army”, see figure 1) are simple and even primitive . The situation hardly changed in our times. The function of an image is to give a message to the viewer, not to please his aesthetic tastes. Realism gave place to graphics and perspective has been replaced by the idea of three dimensional images.

Branches of art like graffiti do not have a perspective at all (at least in the classical understanding). They are 3d objects. And even in the sphere where aesthetic tastes have to be pleased - art - modern visual artistic images never reached the artistic level of classical visual art. They were never aimed to achieve it. They present a code that has to be encoded by the spectator and an image is estimated as successful in case the majority of the spectators encodes it in the desired manner.

Scientific study of visual art started in the age of visual mass media and consumer culture when it was no longer possible to omit this kind of art as a

field of study. Visual symbols flew from local to global, so that anyone in the world can now encode Coca-Cola brand or “ recycling” icon. At the same time, postmodernist culture is reluctant about inventing own visual symbols. Perhaps this means that visual art is dead. It is not an art now, it is an industry. Read about Evolution of Job Design

References:

1. Sturken M. , Cartwright L. (2001) Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture. Oxford University Press, USA; 1st edition