

Role and function of art

[Media](#), [Social Media](#)



In 21st century, art is keeping pace with the technological evolution while taking advantage of it. Role and function of art has evolved, adapted and gained diversity in terms of interest, production, specialization and idea. Examination of personal, social and physical functions of art are going to be discussed with examples. While discussing assigned roles of today's art and design, the subject will be clarified with author's personal opinion.

The core aim of this paper is to answer the question of " What is the role and function of art in the 21st century? " 21st century art is a growing field of practice, research and publication, with a lot of diversity in terms of conceptualization. This makes it a lot more interesting to study field of art today. In the early part of the 20th century, what we now call " Modern Art" became main stream and at a point it all started to look same old. Museums and exhibition environments use to be perceived as high class society by public which puts up a distance between art and the viewer.

Other topics that were much-discussed in the late 20th century remain vital for the 21st century art and visualculture. Art of the 21st century is affected byglobalization. The world in which we live and work has become increasingly economically, politically, and culturally interconnected. Aided by internet and mass media, people can reach out to local art and artists via a device which has WI-FI or 3G. It is easier to follow development of art by monthly e-mail updates from different services.

This incredible growth of interconnectivity emerges with a modern way ofcritical thinkingand scholarly debate, and creates a whole new perspectives and ideas to their consumers. The increased movement of artists across borders and oceans has added to the intermixing of influences.

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Artist today are regularly and freely mix media and forms, making the choices that best serve their concepts and purposes. Some basic personal functions of art such as self-expression, gratification, communication or aesthetic experimentation are still remains today, yet there are many of them and they vary from person to person.

A lot of different topic, idea, taboo, cliché and stereotype have been resonating in the world of artists. Some artists are interested in the freedom to solve the special problems of style or technique which fascinate them. Others seek the freedom to use style and technique to express their views about society and political processes. Sometimes a piece doesn't have to mean anything. The meaning comes with the perceived value of the piece by the audience. For example, John Cage wrote a symphony which continues for four minutes and thirty three seconds of complete silence and called it "4:33" or "Four Thirty Three".

Even though the piece does not include any kind of musical note, it is one of the most well-known classical music pieces of our century. Conservative communities of classical music do not consider this as a good art as it is not representing its root, while some art critics raising voice against the existence of term "good" or "high" art. Any argument and/or objection can change the fact that John Cage's piece offers a complete new experience and perspective to its audience. The audience is the key to examine social functions of art.

In a sense, every piece of art has a social function unless it is not created for an audience. Art has always influenced human and human behavior. Art can influence the attitudes of people in groups, affecting the way they think or

feel and, ultimately, the way they act. Today's social media is playing a key role to bring society together. Facebook, Twitter, Myspace and like social web sites has millions of users. Museums, theaters and other traditional exhibition environments have become screens in our bedroom. "Going-green" and like social activism reaches out to its audience by a piece of art or design. Artists attracted by the immediacy and connectivity of globally networked media often create online projects that invite social interaction. Relational aesthetics has developed (and been contested) as a critical theory for analyzing and evaluating such undertakings. Paintings and buildings can be symbols, but only buildings serve a physical function. The art of "physical function" refers to objects that are made to be used as tools or containers.

Architecture, the crafts and industrial design are some areas where physical functionality is inevitable. Today we have industrial designers; they create anything- from earthmovers to cigarette lighters to houses to storefronts. Art shares responsibility for the built environment: how it looks and how it works. And here, art means more than embellishing or beautifying surfaces. We love our dishwashers, air conditioners, automatic ovens, tile bathrooms, and built in stereo sets more than the qualities of light and space that art and design can bring to a home.

The great aim for this era is to combine aesthetic and physical functionalities in an art piece. The arts can play a pivotal role in moderating the complexities of our lives. The art can open an argument among diverse groups by creating safe spaces for engagement, thus allowing new relationships to take root. It can help us understand and connect cultural distinctions. It contributes to economic opportunities and community vitality.

It enhances our quality of life. Through its multiple means of expression, the art can raise a voice where once there was only silence.

As a young designer/artist, I feel lucky to live in this century. Today, transnational flow of information makes it easier to conceptualize and exhibit my work. Thus, economical complications are too influential on artists and especially for designers. Art and design related costumers, producers, sponsors etc. who providesmoneymight try to manipulate/dictate on the final piece, or the concept, even the idea. If we, as artists and designers of the new era can take advantage of new social interactivity, it is very easy to reach out society while not being dependent to providers.

It is still early in 21st century. Development of art never stopped, and never will be. In the future, we might look back and see this era as experimentation in combiningtechnology, functionality and art. It might feel like everything has been experimented, done or thought yet we continue to create, spread and consume. Art must play a role in the improvement of our collective existence. Art must participate through visualeducationand persuasion in the development of popular attitudes which can lead eventually to a better society.