

# The multi-dimensions of art and milk

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The concept of art has been an ever changing forefront of movements, development, evolution and a pending example of how the human race has delved into different realms of expression and exploration into their surrounding environment. There are varying theories as to the worth of art, pop art in particular and its legacy to the human race; or, all art in general may be examined through critical eyes and have the same question presented in such scrutiny. The purpose of this paper will be to examine the worth of The Milkproject and how it aids in examining people and products in their everyday life.

There has been much debate as to the purpose of; in Oscar Wilde's famous quote he says, " All art is completely useless" and while this may be the case in fact, since art does not serve some rudimentary purpose in propelling the human race forward into any evolutionary or revolutionary states, art must be approached from a different angle. The theorist Dick Higgins states that, Pop Art? How could it play a part in the art of the future? It is bland. It is pure. It uses elements of common life without comment, and so, by accepting the misery of this life and its aridity so mutely, it condones them. Pop and op are both dead, however, because they confine themselves, through the media which they employ, to the older functions of art, of decorating and suggesting grandeur, whatever the detailed content of their artist's suggestions (Higgins 49).

Thus, with this definition of the death of art through the lack of evolution it is willing to play in progressing forward into a new age of media a viewer may rightly surmise that the endeavors of the Milkproject are far more revolutionary than any other artistic movement being designed in this <https://assignbuster.com/the-multi-dimensions-of-art-milk/>

century. It is with the inclusion of technology and the approach of applying the common life with something integral to the world such as milk and how and where it travels that this project will have a lasting impression in the art world.

It is through diversity of art and the inclusion of different medias into a conglomeration art project that the Milkproject is able to transcend the usual boundaries of art and to delve into something more important, more human. The project used photographs, sound recordings and live models and life to portray the transportation of milk from a farm into the houses of the general populace. The integration involved in this journey is what beckons Higgins to recollect the diversity of Duchamp in his theory and to state that it is only through this mixture and inclusion of media that art is able to evolve, and evolve it does with the Milkproject.

The true genius of the Milkproject is that it is interactive; with the audience as well as the participants. The beauty of the project is that it focuses on something common in everyone's lives so that everyone has a basis for an interest in the project. As this paper has previously quoted art seems useless: from the dowdy baroque pieces to the overly large pop art media pieces, there seems to be no real connection between the lay person and art.

With the Milkproject this foreignness is bypassed as milk is the main ingredient in the art, and the reactions of people to milk, its journey and process is all a part of the final project. In Kaprow's article "Happenings" in the New York Scene he describes how 'Happenings' is an interactive based art experience, "You come in as a spectator and maybe you discover you're

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caught in it after all as you push things around like so much furniture” (Kaprow 84). This same process of being involved in the Milkproject despite not being the artist of the muse, is what propels the fundamental interest of the viewer.

The idea behind the Milkproject as an artistic expression is only defined as such by the intermingled use of photography and voice. This is why the project is such an important piece; because in most art pieces, the movement is static, the flowers remain the same through time, but with the human voice and the interaction of the product with the audience, the viewer or participant is able to relate on a more humanistic level with the project and thus transform it from a Happening into a thing of real life consequence: from the farm and whatever happens with the farm (financially, weather-wise, etc) to the mouth of the consumer. Thus, the Milkproject transcends Kaprow’s Happening as he defines it,

Happenings are events that, put simply, happen. Though the best of them have a decided impact—that is, we feel, ‘ here is something important’—they appear to go nowhere and do not make any particular literary point. In contrast to the arts of the past, they have no structured beginning, middle or end. Their form is open-ended and fluid; nothing obvious is sought and therefore nothing is won, except the certainty of a number of occurrences to which we are more than normally attentive. They exist for a single performance, or only a few, and are gone forever as new ones take their place. (Kaprow 85).

Thus, the Milkproject is not so clearly defined as art that has no ‘ structured beginning, middle or end’ (Kaprow 85) but rather to the extent of the milk’s

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journey from teet to mouth of the consumer is found these three parts; excepting in the idea that the project itself is a continuation of the milk's journey transform by the project into art.

It is now clear that the Milkproject is a transformable art. Thus, the art behind the project is not limited to the process of the milk traveling but extends to the reactions of the farmers and the consumer as is proven with the voice recorded tapes. The audience in turn at the exhibition becomes part of this process as well, which makes the integrated media of the Milkproject evolutionary in its concept. This concept of mixed media and the extension of art into the audience is portrayed in Aarseth's theory on literature,

Where this new adaptation might prove to be a radical departure is in the way we shall use it to define textually independent of its traditional associates, the reader/receiver/audience and writer/sender/author. This move, which might be seen as self-defense...A text is not what we may read out of it, nor is it identical with what someone once wrote into it. It is something more, a potential that can be realized only partially and only through its script (Aarseth 59).

One must merely substitute the word literature and text with art and this passage clearly defines the purpose and impact of the Milkproject.

Another interesting dynamic to the Milkproject is its use of the narrative. As was mentioned with Higgins, art does not transcend itself often; that is to say that art does not cross from a painting into a sculpture, and that is why media is such an important tool for this new era of art. Most art does not

speak for itself, does not lend the viewer with a cemented impression or underlying theory to its own existence as was illustrated in Kabrow's Happenings. With the inclusion of a running narrative in the Milkproject, a new dimension of art is being presented and very well incorporated into the integrity of the project.

The inclusion of a narrative is not the only aspect of the genius of the Milkproject but the way in which it is included is what makes the narrative a work of art. The narrative is typically thought of as a story telling device through literature. In the dynamic of the Milkproject the narrative becomes a palpable part of the exhibition in that it is presented not through written words but electronic devices and thus remaking the project a part of a long lasting tradition of oral story telling, something the native Americans of other cultures pass on stories from generation to generation (de Certeau 95). It is with this oral tradition being included in the project that a sense of human identity and connectedness from the Netherlands to America and further can be appreciated, as Landow expresses of the narrative and technology,

Electronic textuality brings with it many changes, but not all concern loss, as so many critics of culture seem to believe. Lyotard, for instance, claims that the new information technologies produce effects much like the journalist's rewriting...but the evidence of hypertext works thus far created, both instructional and literary, suggests that on the contrary electronic linking graphs idiosyncrasy and personal association in particularly liberating ways.

He grounds his charge on the doubtful claim which hypertext linking would seem to contradict, that the " new technologies ...submit to exact calculation every inscription on whatever support: visual and sound images, speech,

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musical lines, and finally writing itself,” and he argues that “ the noteworthy result of this is not, as Baudrillard thinks, the constitution of an immense network of simulacra” but rather the great “ importance assumed by the concept of the bit, the unit of information” (Landow 32).

The importance then of the inclusion of the narrative through a technological device then is proven to be a necessary part in the Milkproject not only in a traditional art sense but in a cultural sense as it propels the human story forward by the means of the human ingenuity: through the bit, through oral tradition by way of a story that is significant to the human race, and its progeny: a farmer’s milk into the mouths of the consumer, is something that will always be of importance because of its nutrition as well as this project’s ability to show that the world, the economy, cultures, are working in a globalizing fashion to sustain human life in all parts of the earth, thus art imitates nature (Guattari & Deleuze 2).

The Milkproject extends the visual world and enters the verbal world so that the audience may better understand the significance of the work. The emphasis of the verbal, or oral storytelling in this project is what makes the project all that much more human. The implementation of the digital voice recordings along side the still motion shots taken from video footage is what humanizes the project and for the audience its what makes the project real, and strikes a cord of commonality, thus, not only is the audience member intrigued because of the element of milk, a product used by a large portion of the world’s population but also the voiced concerns of the farmers and consumers are juxtaposed with the audience reactions as de Certeau states ,

We could moreover extend this problematic to the relations between the act of writing and the written text, and even transpose it to the relationships between the 'hand' and the finished painting. AT first isolated in the area of verbal communication, the speech act turns out to find only one of its applications there, and its linguistic modality is merely the first determination of a much more general distinction between the forms used in a system and the ways of using this system, that is, between two 'different worlds,' since the 'same things' are considered from two opposite formal viewpoints (de Certeau 98).

Thus, the use of the narrative becomes a part of the exhibition in an intrinsic fashion.

The focus of this paper has been on the inclusion of several styles of art in one artistic piece, the Milkproject. Through the use of verbal narrative, mixed media, photographs, technology, and video the 'artists' of this project have been able to create a Happening which goes beyond the open-ended suggestion of Kabrow and into a story which develops through the journey of milk from udder to consumer across continents.

The use of GPS in this project was also a major player in extending the static components of art being non-transcendental (i. e. paintings can't be sculptures and vice versa) and allows the project to be multi-dimensional and thus long lasting. However, the stroke of genius in the Milkproject is the inclusion of various media in order to engage the audience in the reality of the milk's journey.



It is with this final statement of the project that the purpose of the project becomes apparent: the audience's interaction, and reaction to the project is a part of the project if not the main purpose. Thus, the journey of the milk does not end with the consumer but carries on into the audience and this is what allows the Milkproject to not be a stagnant art form but an interactive exhibition whose genius rests with the reality that the journey's participation hinges upon the viewer. Thus, the journey of milk is found in its end with the art viewer.

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