

Anthropology: artist's statement



Artist's ment Media outlets not only disseminate information, but are also a powerful source in shaping public opinion. I chose to focus on the opinion-shaping power of newspaper media, especially that of art critics, in a film based on Patrick Susskind's *Depth Wish*. A young female painter is widely liked and admired until a famous art critique says her work lacks depth. Public opinion instantly turns against her and her art, with newspaper critics falling over one another to negatively review the artist's work. In the end, the artist kills herself. While the readership of newspapers has fallen, the power of the newspaper critic may be on the increase, with the convergence of different media outlets. With services such as Google unbundling content, the opinion of the famous art critic is no longer limited to the readers of the newspaper. It can appear in multiple blogs, websites, and will appear, on its own, in internet searches. Other, less famous, reviewers will often view their review in the context of this wider conversation and skew their reviews to reflect concurrence with an established, respected opinion. I chose to focus on the way the medium changes and amplifies the message and how mass opinion can affect the individual. Readers and viewers can have their thoughts and opinions shaped by the opinions expressed in popular media, including the outlet of newspapers. The speed of information delivery in the modern digital age means that the opinions of art viewers in one part of the world can be shaped by opinions expressed by a critic on the other side of the world. Along with the benefits of the global conversation among news and opinion shapers in the mass media come the negative aspects of being subject to that conversation. In my film, the artist cannot get away from the public opinion that has shifted dramatically against her and her work. She cannot work in isolation, and, eventually, cannot work at all. In thinking

about the film, I was drawn to the effect of reviews and entertainment on the individual in the face of a hegemony of negative opinion in the mass media. Power and media forces are easy to conceptualize, but I wanted, in my film, to demonstrate their effects on the artist. I enjoyed the process, but wish I had allocated my time better because I had to rush in the end to get it finished on time. I do give myself credit, however, for making a film I am fairly proud of, considering it is my first and I had no experience to fall back on. I believe my project successfully portrays the problems and forces I wanted to focus upon.