Conceptual Artwork: in terms of new media and technology

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Abstract

This paper presents a discussion of conceptual art in terms of new media and technology. The author aims to highlight the interplay of technology and new media with conceptual art. In conceptual art, the idea or concept behind the work is as important as the work itself. In these ways, new media is a blend of various media juxtaposed with enticing thoughts and ideas. Taking an essential step in that direction, technology has been a significant player in the global impact of 21st-century artists from India. Interestingly, artists used electronic technology to broadened their ways and expressed their ideas conceptually based. Technological development giving rise as well as generate creative visual forms. "In conceptual art, the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work...the idea becomes a machine that makes the art". In this way, both conceptual Art and Technology are much more closely related. The author further exemplifies the contemporary artists work in India at the intersection of conceptual Art, Technology, and new media art. Therefore, using secondary data and descriptive research methodology, this paper re-examines conceptual Art, new media, and Technology to promote dialogue and creative expression and address social change. By interpreting conceptual art in terms of media and technology, the author concludes that these tendencies share significant similarities, and that is a beneficial and innovative sight in the contemporary art scene in India. Technology is shown to have a significant influence on conceptual art but often based on historical, social and cybernetic narratives.

Keywords: Conceptual Art, Technology, New Media Art, Idea and Concept

Introduction; the emergence of Conceptual Artwork

Conceptual art relies primarily upon the ideas, where it is the state of transforming an idea and making it tangible, conceptual art has emerged in the United States and Western Europe since the end of the 1950s and had spread widely in many capitals of the world. Conceptual art has been influenced by the Dadaism that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, which expresses rebellion and freedom from restrictions and traditions. For the first time, conceptual art was displayed in the exhibition "Concept" (1969) at the Leverkusen Museum in Germany, followed by the cologne exhibition in 1974 and then in Belgium in 1980. The conceptual art was created by several factors, notably: the psychological reaction of the first and second world wars, scientific and technological development, and the influence of modern art movements such as Surrealism, abstract expressionism, where Marcel Duchamp's had attempted in the second decade of the last century. (Basset & Kaddy, 2017). Conceptual art is based on idea and concept. The idea or concept behind the work is as important as the work itself. The pioneer of conceptual art was the French artist Marcel Duchamp. In 1913 he began exhibiting his ready-mades, industrially manufactured objects that he had to decide were works of Art (Dixon, 2008). Marcel Duchamp exhibited the first example of conceptual art before world war I, but it got recognition as a behind distinct art form in the 1960s by the American anti-art activist Henry Flynt to describe his performance art. The term was extended to "conceptual art" by the American artist Sol Lewitt in his 1967 article

"Paragraphs on conceptual art", for Art forum magazine. This article recognized that a generation of the artist was creating a new form of art revolutionized the way we appreciate art, to conceptual artists, a work of art was primarily for intellectual-not aesthetic-stimulation and was no longer and beautiful, handcrafted object. The artwork now was not confined to the traditional form of paintings or sculpture but might be a photograph, a film, or an installation. It could be made from found objects. (Newall & Pooke, 2012). Although a gradual and progressive 'dematerialization of the art object', as the critic Lucy Lippard called the anti formalist movement, had been gathering force for some time, it became a dominant issue only in 1970, when the Museum of Modern Art in New York mounted as an exhibition called simply 'Information'. But already in 1969 the artist Joseph Kosuth, a curator of 'Information', could declare, with resonating conviction, that "all art …is conceptual in nature because art only exists conceptually", (Wheeler, 1988, p.562).

The very term Conceptual Art, although originally coined by the Californian artist Edward Kienholz in the early 1960s, actually its first theoretical exegesis from Sol Lewitt, whose Minimalist white cube structures were, by his own definition conceptualist. Lewitt was a significant influence on both European and American artists interested in working beyond the object and in his 1967 Artforum article, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art', he stated: In conceptual art, the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work…all planning and decisions are made beforehand, and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art (Stangos, 1994).

Review of Literature

(Ilfeld, 2012) aims to highlight the interplay of technology and cybernetics with conceptual art. Just as Lucy Lippard has illustrated the influence of information theory within 1960s conceptual art, this paper traces the technological discourses within conceptual art through to contemporary digital art- specifically, establishing a correlation between Katherine Hayles's mapping of first, second and third wave cybernetic narratives and, respectively, 1960s-1970s video art and new media art. Technology is shown to have a significant influence on conceptual art but often based on historical, social and cybernetic narratives.

(Cray, 2014) discuss the Conceptual Art, Ideas and Ontology. Conceptual art has no physical medium: the medium of conceptual art is ideas, and any physical presence is merely how the artist lets us gain access to his ideas, or with concepts, as the medium, and not with shapes, colours or materials. This, we think, is what makes out conceptual art as radically different from traditional art. But what is an Idea, and in the case of works such as Duchamp's Fountain, how does the idea relate to the urinal? In answering these questions, it becomes apparent that the Idea Idea should be rejected. After showing this, the author offers a new ontology of conceptual art, according to which such artworks are not ideas but artefacts imbued with ideas. After defending this view from objections, the author briefly discusses some implications it has for the ontology of art in general.

(Ward, 1997) In this paper, conceptual art might be considered as work that emphasized the underlying conditions of aesthetic experience: Language was seen as foremost among these conditions. Performance art, on the other hand, seems relatively straightforward to define, "as a form of art that happens at a particular time in a specific place where the artist engages in some sort of activity, usually before an audience. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was

considerable overlap between these categories. In this account, Conceptual and Performance Art are engaged in a continuing dialogue, sometimes a conversation, sometimes an argument.

(Paul, 2002) identifies the current qualifier of choice, "new media," by explaining how this term is used to describe digital art in various forms. Establishing a historical context, the author highlights the pioneer exhibitions and artists who began working with new Technology and digital Art as early as the late 1960s and early 1970s. The article proceeds to articulate the shapes and forms of digital art, recognizing its broad range of artistic practice: music, interactive installation, installation with network components, software art, and purely Internet-based art. The author examines the themes and narratives specific to her selection of artwork, specifically interactive digital installations and net art. By addressing these forms, the author illustrates the hybrid nature of this medium and the future of this art practice.

Data and Methodology

In this paper, the author used secondary data. Various sources of data, e.g. books, journals, research papers, have been used. The author uses descriptive research methodology to bring into consideration conceptual Artwork in terms of new media and technology.

The objective of the study

1. This study aims to explore and identify the features of Conceptual Art as an essential part of new media and technology.
2. This paper examines the relationship between Conceptual Art, Technology and New media art.
3. The author further exemplifies the contemporary artists work in India at the intersection of Conceptual Art in terms of New Media and Technology.
4. By interpreting Conceptual Art in terms of New Media and Technology, the author concludes that these both tendencies share important similarities, and that is a beneficial and innovative sight in the contemporary art scene in India.

New Media Art

The term has a literal, and then a potentially confusing-because metaphorical sense. On the face of it, New Media refers straight forwardly to the introduction into contemporary art of recently developed forms and techniques of production. Such production includes, for instance, the system of video, DVD, and Computer-generated imaging, along with the methods and with the conventions used in their application as expressive devices. These productive means are readily accepted as New Media (though the video was available as long as ago as the late 1960s). Together these material and conventional resources constitute innovative technologies: novel ways of doing, but also novel ways of thinking about visual representation and the meaning they create (Harris, 2006, pp. 215-216). "New media art" suggests the use of the newest technologies in the creation and exhibition of the art (Lin, 2005). In this way, new media is a new rage and a great many artists are experimenting with this medium. The new media art gets recognition in the western world with the invention of videos and computers. The genres often deal with society as well as culture and associated events and objects, standing out from traditional media of art such as painting, sculpture, printmaking etc. New media is a blend of various media combined with

enticing concepts. With the onset of globalization, new media picked up pace in India as computers, the internet and digital aids infiltrated the country, spreading its wings to art schools and institutions providing artists with more creative freedom and malleability (Suri, Lochan, & Rohra, 2010, pp.12-13).

Technology and Art

The interrelationship among Art and Technology are established in history and can be examined only in their variability, both in their genetically and prognostically. The earliest traces of human existence in India, so far discovered, go back to the period between 400,000 and 200,00 B.C. this is proposed by the vast number of primitive stone tools found in the soan valley and south India. Around 2500 BCE, the central urban areas of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, which boosted straight, wide roads and water supply system, show an extremely extraordinary development for such an early age (Mitter, 2001). During this time, stone carving and bronze casting (cire-perdue, or lost-wax process) used (Asher, 2003). Sharp and pointed tools also used. The beginning of plant cultivation also appeared. Agriculture formed the main occupation of Indus valley people. The discovery of this structure fortifies the view that in the Bronze Age. Many shells copper and bone objects, as well as steatite seal and toys, were found (Tomory, 1982). So, technology had already made an appearance on the Indian art and culture. Technology had played a significant influence in their lives.

The concept of technology relates technical skills or abilities to knowledge or theory informing or directing it. Emergent in early modern society, the term technology is generally used to refer to post-1800 mechanical industrial and electronic devices, system and process for instance, in phrases such as combustion engine technology, flight technology, medical technology. However, the term could be utilized profitably to describe the drawing, painting, and sculpture practices in the west, which name from Leonardo da Vinci's 16th-century drawings of flying machines and anatomical studies. For a long time, however drawing and painting and even photography, an early 19th century invention have been seen as traditional, and maybe even remaining practice. Interestingly, phrases such as 'new visual arts technologies' are applied to electronic and digital systems of image generation and projection, including video, and DVD, computer-simulation, and 'live' internet technologies (Harris,2006, pp.318-319).

In sculpture and painting, similar intimate relationship between Technology and Art obtains. New theories of light and vision formed the basis for the take-offs that came to be known as Impressionism, Pointillism, and Op art. As newer technologies of optics and luminescence, machines, and Kinetics, magnetism and photography, printing and colour reproduction took hold; arts-technologists projected Kinetic Art, mobiles and stabiles, luminescent Art, self-destructive Happenings, Action painting with splash gums Avant-gardist excursions and excesses. Technological advances changed the circumstances in a general sense in innumerable directions (Purohit, 1988, p.58).

The" industrial revolution" gave birth to new entirely new technologies based upon photography, motion picture, radio, television etc. similarly, Indian freedom and socialist revolution are bound to create an immense number of new technologies and new arts-based upon them (Purohit,1988, pp.65-66). The technology form creates another complication. Art becomes pure technology; architecture becomes merely organization of masses, volumes and shapes; painting becomes a two dimensional code; and music, a total abstraction. Artists use technology to create art that is expressive of their life, of their sorrows and joys, of their frustration and triumphs, of their pains

and pleasures, and of their thoughts and emotions (Purohit,1988, p.61-62). Technology today is not only a source for products and wealth; it is also a fundamental source of philosophical understanding as well as a generator of creative visual forms. The contemporary movements in arts indeed have broadened the scope of the artist and provided him with a broader outlook (Mago, 2000).

The Interrelationship of Conceptual Artwork with New media and Technology

Beginning in the mid-sixties, an extended free for all started in the art which lasted for almost a decade. This free-for-all, a broad and incredibly diverse range of activities known as Conceptual, or idea, or Information Art –along with several related tendencies variously labelled Body Art, Performance art, and Narrative Art-was part of widespread abandonment of that unique, permanent yet portable (and thus infinitely saleable) luxury item, the traditional art object. In its place there arose an unprecedented emphasis on ideas: ideas in, around and about art and everything else, a vast and unruly range of information, subjects and concerns not easily contained with a single object, but more suitably conveyed by written proposals, photographs, documents, charts, maps, film and video, by the artists' use of their bodies, and above all, by language itself (Stangos, 1994, p.256).

From an art-historical perspective, new media art has strong connections to the often instruction based nature of previous movements such as Dada and Fluxus. It continues the "dematerialization" of the art object that lies at the core of Conceptual Art. The Conceptual Art of the 1960s and 70s placed an even stronger focus on idea and concept, considering them as more central to the work than its execution. As Sol LeWitt famously put it in his landmark article, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (Artforum, June 1967): "The idea becomes a machine that makes the art." (Paul, 2008) Lucy Lippard explained conceptual art as a work in which the idea is paramount, and the material form is secondary, lightweight, ephemeral, cheap, unpretentious and or "dematerialized". Sol Lewitt described conceptual art through his work in which the material forms were often conventional, although generated by a paramount idea. Conceptual artists, perhaps more concerned with intellectual distinctions in representations and relationships than those who rely on the object as vehicle/receptacle, have offered posterity a particularly tangled account regardless of these points of intersection, and the fact that conceptual art emerged during a moment of intensive artistic experimentation with technology and new media art (Lippard, 1997).

New media art, to a greater or lesser extent, is "about technology." No object or art form (painting, sculpture, or photography) can be separated from its own materiality, and one could argue that every painting also is "about" painting and comments on its own medium-although self-reflexivity substantially varies from one work to another. Technology is a medium, like paint or clay, for most new media artists having worked with it for a decade, if not several decades, they take it for granted. Because the medium often lags behind the concepts that artists try to communicate, they must often push the boundaries or develop technologies to express their ideas. New media art encompasses a range of works, among them Web-based projects, sound events, virtual reality installations, mobile cellular or PDA projects, and practices-conceptual art practices, network-based practices, software coding, or sampling (IMMA, 2018).

Contemporary Artists in India: In the context of their work with Technology, New Media & Conceptual art

Since long history of Indian Art have been exploring inner feelings, experiences and varieties of creative expressions. In India art, there have always been changes in art forms and technique time to time through the regions due to change in ideologies, culture and also due to external impacts. Now in the 21st century, the elements of art are being pushed to the limit and artists are achieving higher and newer heights which were previously incomprehensible and inconceivable. Art can no longer be compartmentalized into painting, sculpture, printmaking, etc. Art is now breaking all prior laid out barriers and has diversified into a multitude media such as installation art, video art, performance art, conceptual art, and the new buzz of media art (Suri, Lochan, & Rohra, 2010). By 1980, the focus of art had shifted to conveying cultural identity. The emerging artists during the 90s responded to access a more excellent range of variety of mediums with the use of new media and technology. Art is now breaking all previously laid out barriers and has diversified into a multitude of media such as installation art, conceptual art, performance, video and the new media of Art (Sinha, 2009). Simultaneously significant changes were taking place throughout the world due to the advent of the machine age and the new outlook created by modern science and Technology (Mago, 2000). Art has always played a social role within our world. Artists are the voices of some of the most marginalized groups within societies, and through their works, they mirror to the social, cultural and political realities of their time and propose new and alternate imaginings for the future. Art, culture, science and technology have to promote dialogue and creative expression and address social change (Naidu, 2015).

Joseph Kousuth and the group "ART AND LANGUAGE" believed that modern art's practices had reached an end by 1966. Kousuth, titled (Art as idea) universal (1967) all directly rejected modernism's orthodox media, conventions, and expressive devices. In that sense "conceptual art" has interpreted as indebted to the "readymades" fabricated by Marcel Duchamp in the early years of the 20th century, using and combining a variety of new representational technologies-such as photographs, documents, charts, maps, films and video (Harris, 2006). Through New Media and installation, there is a reworking of the subjective/political space occupied by the artist (Sinha, 2009,p.19). At this time, we are faced with a particular contradiction of technology and its effect contemporary India. One face of contemporary India presents the incomplete process of modernization and the complicated role of technology (Sinha, 2009, p.21). Social, cultural, technological and political changes during the 1960s resulted in considerable shifts in art practice. Conceptual artists emphasized the primacy of the idea over the material art object (Seid, 2007, p.6). Contemporary Art can be driven by both theory and ideas and is also characterized by a blurring of the distinction between art and other categories of cultural experiences, such as television, cinema, mass media, entertainment and digital technology. Advances in technology, particularly in film, video and digital technology, contributed to the development of new media art (Seid, 2007, p.6).

Technology has been a significant player in the global impact of 21st-century artists from India. Interestingly, artists used electronic technology to broadened their ways and expressed their ideas conceptually based. With the inception of video art in India around 1990s Nalini Malani and Vivan Sundaram, stand out of the painting frame and started to present their ideas through the medium of installations with all kind of materials including video, and photographs, and more (Seid, 2007). During this time, the Indian art scene was much exercised by the process of shifting from painting to New Media, Technology and Conceptual Art. Vivan Sundaram (b.1943), whose early practice had been dominated by Memorial, as powerful response through the communal

riots between Hindus and Muslims, as one of the first examples of installation art in India. Sundaram made that memorial in 1991, with used engine oil and charcoal (Sinha, 2009). In this context, the artists use technical materials and reflecting conceptual concerns. Vivan Sundaram has played a pivotal role in consolidating the art fraternity, and infrastructure development of the arts (Suri, Lochan, & Rohra, 2010).

We recognize here the new hierarchy of materials where found readymade objects, video and software technology, join marble and oil paint in the realm of installation (Sinha, 2009, p.260). Lewitt Sol, through his influential essay, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art" (1967), further exemplifies the complications and conflicts at the intersection of conceptual Art and Technology. He described that conceptual art is a quasi-mechanical process. In conceptual art, the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work as the idea becomes a machine that makes the Art (Lippard, 1997). In this way, both the conceptual Art, Technology and new media art are much more closely related. Conceptual artist Sudarshan Shetty (b.1961) also used technology and mass media, various materials and found objects in the production of Art (Sinha, 2009). Some examples of his work are 'Love' (2006), a dinosaur skeleton and a dog Skelton on a rocking table (Sinha, 2009). In this way, Sudarshan Shetty, as an avant-garde conceptual artist, is a master at changing the function of various materials and undermine immediate and easy comprehension. His work which is a collaborative effort with a variety of technicians and using readymades is located in the blurred boundaries that classify conceptual art. His readymades confound the pursuit of unitary meanings or ideas, altering our immediate identification of object with meaning and utility. (Sinha,2009, p.261) He also continually used readymade objects with technological advances that contributed to broader cultural and social changes (Suri, Lochan, & Rohra, 2010).

Subodh Gupta's (b.1964) use of cow dung is an act of exploiting the meaning we gave to things and ideas. In Gupta's installations (Pure 1999) he highlights the distinction between notions of purity and impurity through the material (Sinha, 2009). In Gupta's works concept is also supreme, and the "idea" is behind the artist work with the use of new media and technology. Technology also plays a significant role in Gupta's work because he uses videos and different types of advance technology, including painting, sculpture, photography, video, installation and performance art. Gupta has incorporated found objects and everyday materials, cow dung, milk pails, kitchen utensils, tiffin boxes, bicycles and scooters. With such objects, he demonstrated the extreme contrast between rural and urban culture in India today (Seid, 2007).

 Moreover, artists have applied the conceptual approach to exploring technological ideas with their works. Artists such as Shilpa Gupta (b.1976) have successfully captured, employed and incorporated new media into their work. Often centred on interactivity with the viewer and exists mostly in the movement. Through her work, she lends life to the beliefs, practices and experiences of people (Suri, Lochan, & Rohra, 2010). Mumbai based Shilpa Gupta created an interactive installation, "Your kidney Supermarket", where one could hypothetically buy the ideal kidney via the internet. Shilpa Gupta creates a fake world that simulates the culture of her environment, while simultaneously standing this culture on its head. In these works, she explores local issues that have global connections be they cyber coolies, illegal organ trade or clashes of communities (Seid, 2007). Though her work involves the extensive use of technology and new media, it is not to isolate or highlight the importance of technology but rather is a means to the end, shedding light on the "experience". Another vital message encoded her work is how technology has spread our lives and caused us to be even so dependent.

Another artist in the genre is Sheeba Chhachi (b.1958) who has been actively involved with media such as photography and installation. The experience that her work offers is a culmination of a

variety of media such as sound, light and video brought together in a space and visually centred around a sculpted object. Her more recent works are a visual treat that employs that use of still images on a lightbox that is mechanically moved, creating a cinematic effect. The core of her work addresses issues and personalized concerns about transmogrification with representation, gender the body violence and the visual culture (Sinha, 2009, p.216). In this context, it is no surprise that artists began to look at the possibilities of computing for making art". To start with, the relationship between art and technology was mostly conceptual. Artists might be keen to exploit the potential of ideas such as cybernetics for their artistic practice, but few used computers. (IMMA, 2018) With such works being put at the forefront and representing Indian contemporary art on a global platform it becomes evident that today artists in India are breaking new grounds by exploiting the fertile fusion of tradition, culture history, spirituality and foreign influences keenly mixed with personal experience to form a pleasant new Indian art (Suri, Lochan, & Rohra,2010).

Conclusion

From the foregoing description, it is depicted that art has many modes of expression. In India, it has always enjoyed an esteemed position. It is not just confined to drawing, sketches, brush and paints. One of the most expressive approaches of art is "installation art" and "installation performance", "sculptural installation" and video art. In post-modern art removed from the aesthetic-political debate of the time because of the time advance in technology and changing materiality in their works. In contemporary art artists have used frequently been issue-based, and developments such as installation art, video, digital photography, and readymade object have broadened in the contemporary art. Technology has been a significant play role to expand their views and ideas in contemporary art in India. Another concept came into the limelight that is conceptual art. So today, artists use a variety of new media, and they have shared in their work, through "readymade" objects. And make new comprehensive artwork can be formulated "installation art" and "installation performance" and "sculptural installation" with the notable exception of Vivan Sundaram, Nalini Malini, Subodh Gupta, Shilpa Gupta, and Sudarshan Shetty Sheeba Chhachi. These artists work is connected with new media and technology, and conceptual based. The concept of "conceptual art" gave a new vision to Indian artist to explore their feelings and ideas through concept and ideas with new media and technology. Conceptual artwork such as idea or concept, Technology and New Media remain highly influential within contemporary art practices in India. Artists are often capable of rapidly integrating ideas and conceptualizing ones. Perhaps these ideas first had to be incorporated into the technologies these artists used. New media studies often suggest a form of technological determinism. From an art-historical perspective, new media art has strong connections to the often instructions based nature of previous movements such as Dada and Fluxus. It continues the "dematerialization" of the art object that lies at the core of conceptual art. While conceptual art is an essential elements of new media that have profound effects on artistic practice, cultural production and reception, as well as the curatorial process, it cannot be separated from the material components of the digital medium. On the other hand, we have the contemporary art world, which is genuinely interested in what's going on but does not yet have the conceptual tools to understand it. In between the two, there are the artists, with their different approaches to the medium and to the ideas revolving around it. The conceptual art can potentially generate the energy that the powers the other art worlds, giving their respective' ideas and concepts" radical evolution in art. In my paper, I argue that the history of ideas and practices pertaining to conceptual and new media as a

technological and cultural field cannot be limited to contemporary art. On the other hand, among supporters of new media art, there is the idea that the new technologies have had a significant impact on artistic practice, and that art has the duty to explore this potential.

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