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Outline of the Doctoral Thesis

1. Introduction

My doctoral thesis examines the challenges and opportunities of contemporary painting in the age of mass culture and information. My aim is to present the works of modern art theorists and cultural critics (e.g., the Frankfurt School, Situationism, Visual Culture Studies, contemporary image theories) and reflect on these issues through my own painting practice. My main assertion is that painting is undergoing a new paradigm shift, driven primarily by technological advancements. In my research, I aim to explore how digital culture and technological innovation influence painting techniques and artistic processes, and how these changes affect the interpretation and reception of art. Accordingly, the thesis is divided into two main parts: a theoretical and a practical section. The first section discusses the possible art historical and aesthetic dimensions of my thesis, while the second part analyzes the topic through relevant examples from my own painting practice.

2. Theoretical Part

2.1. The Frankfurt School and the Situationists

The Frankfurt School (Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin) and Guy Debord's Situationist movement critique the visual culture of modernity. Benjamin wrote about the "aura," which signifies the unique presence of a work of art and is threatened by technological reproduction. According to Benjamin, the loss of the aura of artworks results from mass reproduction, leading to the democratization of art and a reduction in the significance of original works. Adorno argued that the culture industry produces stereotypical, mass-produced content that undermines the originality and uniqueness of art. The culture industry, which he criticized, aims to homogenize consumers and suppress critical thinking. Debord wrote about the "society of the spectacle," where the overproduction of images and the dominance of visual consumption conceal social inequalities and exploitation. According to Debord, the society of the spectacle replaces direct experiences of reality, and social relationships increasingly occur through the mediation of images.

2.2. W. J. T. Mitchell on the Politics of Images and Nicholas Mirzoeff on Postmodern Visual Culture

W. J. T. Mitchell, an American literature and art historian, is a key figure in critical art history and visual culture studies. Mitchell examines the politics of images and explores how images influence social and political processes. Images become instruments of power that shape public opinion and social norms. Mitchell argues that images are not merely passive objects but active agents that can influence social discourse and individual perceptions. The politics of images encompasses

the dynamics of the production, distribution, and reception of images, as well as how images can create and sustain power structures.

Nicholas Mirzoeff, a researcher of postmodern visual culture, is a prominent figure in the field of "visual culture studies." According to Mirzoeff, visual culture is an integral part of everyday life, and images continually shape our identities and worldviews. A characteristic of postmodern visual culture is that the meanings of images constantly change and are reinterpreted in new contexts. Mirzoeff emphasizes that visual culture includes not only high art images but also everyday images, such as advertisements, films, and digital media. Studying visual culture helps us understand how images impact individual and collective identity formation and how they shape social and political reality.

2.3. The Impact of Post-Digital Culture and Technical Images on Contemporary Painting

Post-digital culture examines the pervasive presence of digital technology and its impact on contemporary painting. The integration of digital images and technologies opens up new possibilities for artistic expression while also posing challenges to traditional painting techniques. Digital technology allows for the manipulation of images, their placement in new contexts, and the creation of new meanings. Post-digital culture involves not only the use of digital technologies but also the examination of their social and cultural impacts. The spread of digital images and technologies raises new questions about artistic authenticity, originality, and creative processes. In post-digital painting, artists often use digital tools and techniques, such as 3D printing, digital painting programs, and algorithms, to create new artistic forms and modes of expression.

2.4. International Perspective: The MUMOK Painting 2.0 Exhibition in Vienna

The MUMOK Painting 2.0 exhibition examines the historical reckoning of modernism and the decentralization of the narrative of medium specificity. The exhibition demonstrates how painting has integrated conceptual thinking and generated new vitality based on heterogeneity. The "rematerialization" and globalization of painting show that the genre remains relevant and capable of adapting to technological and social changes. The exhibition highlights that painting is not just a traditional art form but a dynamically evolving medium capable of reflecting contemporary social and cultural issues. The Painting 2.0 exhibition includes works by artists who integrate various mediums and techniques to create a new visual language. This approach allows painting to create new forms and meanings and connect with viewers in new ways.

3. Practical Part

3.1. The Relationship to Technology and Mass Culture in My Own Painting Practice

In my painting practice, I employ methods of "remix," "remake," "sampling," and artistic appropriation. These techniques enable the reinterpretation and recontextualization of various visual elements. The impacts of technological innovations and mass culture bring significant changes to creative processes and the perception of art. I believe these changes will define what we consider art in the future. Through the techniques I use, new dimensions of painting unfold, allowing the boundaries between traditional and new media to blur. With remix and remake techniques, I place past artistic works in new contexts and imbue them with new meanings. Using sampling, I combine various visual elements to create new compositions, while artistic appropriation involves the reinterpretation and repurposing of original works to create new artistic content.

3.2. On the Painting Machine

The painting machine is a technical device that provides opportunities to develop responses to the technical and media transformations of painting. The use of the painting machine allows for the automation of painting techniques and the exploration of new creative possibilities. I see the painting machine as a response to contemporary technological-media challenges, opening up new perspectives for painting. The application of the painting machine reveals new technological and aesthetic dimensions of painting and offers the potential to create a new balance between automation and manual labor. The use of the painting machine enables artists to experiment with new techniques and methods and to reinterpret the boundaries of painting. The painting machine is not merely a tool but a new artistic medium that offers opportunities to explore new forms of creative expression.

3.3. The Anaglyph and Anthropomorphic Series

My anaglyph series focuses on techniques for creating spatial images, while my anthropomorphic series experiments with the combination of human forms and machine shapes. These series operate at the intersections of technology and art, offering new visual experiences for viewers. The anaglyph series provides the experience of three-dimensional visuals, while the anthropomorphic series explores the relationships between machine and human forms. The anaglyph technique allows images to gain spatial dimensions, enabling viewers to enjoy painting in a new way. Through the anthropomorphic series, artistic creations explore the boundaries between human and machine forms, raising new questions about the relationship between technology and the human body. These series offer new opportunities for painting to explore connections between technology and human experience and to create a new visual language.

3.4. Conclusion and Thesis Results

My doctoral thesis concludes that contemporary painting is currently experiencing a significant paradigm shift, a transformation deeply intertwined with the rapid advancements in technology and the pervasive influence of mass culture. This shift is not merely superficial but indicative of profound changes in how painting is conceived, executed, and perceived within the broader context of art and society.

One of the central assertions of my research is that painting, long considered a traditional and somewhat static art form, has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to evolve. This evolution is largely driven by the incorporation of digital tools, new media, and technological innovations, which have introduced novel techniques and possibilities that were unimaginable in earlier eras. The advent of digital technology has not only expanded the technical toolkit available to painters but also redefined the very nature of what it means to create a painting. In this new paradigm, painting is no longer limited to the application of pigments on a flat surface; it now encompasses a wide array of practices that integrate digital manipulation, algorithmic processes, and even robotic automation.

This technological integration challenges the historical notions of artistic authenticity and originality. Traditionally, a painting's value was often tied to its uniqueness, the "aura" described by Walter Benjamin – a quality that was inherently tied to the original work's singular existence in time and space. However, in the digital age, where images can be infinitely reproduced and altered, the concept of aura is being redefined. My research suggests that rather than diminishing the value of painting, this shift towards reproducibility and digital manipulation opens up new avenues for creativity and expression. It allows artists to engage in practices like "remix," "remake," and "sampling," where existing visual elements are reinterpreted and given new life within different contexts. These practices highlight the fluidity of meaning in contemporary art and reflect a broader cultural shift towards intertextuality and hybridity.

The influence of mass culture on contemporary painting is another critical aspect of this paradigm shift. Mass culture, characterized by the proliferation of images through media such as television, film, and, more recently, the internet and social media, has fundamentally altered the visual landscape in which we live. This constant bombardment of images has led to a culture where the visual is dominant, and painting, as a visual art form, must navigate this crowded field.

My thesis argues that contemporary painting responds to the challenges posed by mass culture in several ways. On one hand, it can critique and subvert the norms and stereotypes propagated by mass media, as seen in the works of artists who use irony, pastiche, and appropriation to comment on consumerism, identity, and power structures. On the other hand, painting can also embrace the aesthetics of mass culture, incorporating elements such as vibrant colors, bold graphics, and pop

culture references to connect with a broader audience. This dual approach allows painting to remain relevant in a society where attention is increasingly fragmented, and the value of images is often determined by their immediate impact rather than their depth or originality.

In conclusion, the future of painting is bright, full of potential for new forms of expression and communication. As artists continue to experiment with new techniques and technologies, they will push the boundaries of what painting can be, creating works that resonate with the complexities of the modern world. My thesis is a reflection of this ongoing process of change and adaptation, and I hope it will inspire others to explore the possibilities of contemporary painting in the digital age.

4. References

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