

Comparison of Folk and Print Art Forms

Folk / Oral Art Form

Print / Literate Art Form

Conception of the Value and Evaluation of Art

Deeper meaning of art held by cultural groups or community. Interpretive device: one needs to belong and/or understand cultural or folk nuances.

Deeper meaning of art held as the sole property of the artist. Interpretive device: the artist proclaims 'it is for me to know and for you to find, or art is what you mean it to be.'

Recognises general level of excellence, hence emphasis on group competence in the aesthetic judgment of art.

Recognises exceptions, hence emphasis on individual achievement and individual responsibility.

Master artist concept - gifted but normal, and so conforms to the group.

Master artist concept - gifted but eccentric and essentially nonconformist.

Art as occasion for collective engagement.

Art as occasion for 'escape' from normal routine.

Emphasis on contextual relevance.

Emphasis on conceptual interpretation.

Art defined in terms of context.

Art defined in terms of aesthetic.

Performatory Presentation

Held in fluid boundaries, churchyards, fields, marketplaces - operating in a 360° dimension

Boxed-in theatres and elevated to a stage - operating in a 180° dimension

A scene flows into another. Cyclical progression linked thematically.

Each scene must follow another scene in linear progression.

Performatory Effect

Expects viewer participation, therefore arouses activity and prepares for and allows participation.

Discourages viewer participation. Puts an end to activity. Inhibits participation.

Multiple episodes that have their own centres.

Singular episode extended through detail.

Cognitive Characteristics

Man defined as 'unchangeable' alone. Change emanates from the community.

Man defined as 'man', changeable and, by virtue of his person, capable of effecting change and progress.

Individual interlinked with total social fabric. Concept of human rather than concept of 'man' as such.

Individual perceived primarily as separated from general social fabric.

Strong tradition of suggestion in the cultural symbol and in the use of linguistic formulae.

Strong tradition of detail and minute (graphic) description.

Time assumed to be a subjective phenomenon, i.e. it is the outcome of conceptualising and experiencing movement.

Time assumed to be an 'objective' phenomenon, dominant and ubiquitous.

Wisdom is a state of intellectual maturity gained by experience. Cumulative process of knowledge, derived from the past. Characterised by slowness to judgment.

Wisdom is characterised by high degree of specialisation in a particular field or discipline. Characterised by quickness of judgment based on a vast accumulation of data and information.

Earth is not a hostile world; e.g. the cult of the ancestors is an attempt at unification with the past, present and future.

Earth is a hostile world and has to be subdued. Paradise is in the future or elsewhere.