

Creative Identity of Artists and Society that Supports

Sieun Ko, Yonsei University, South Korea

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Abstract

An individual does art to fulfill one's desire to actualize oneself because this act is what makes them feel glad to be alive, which is the creative identity essential to artists. However, if one begins to feel inferior comparing oneself with others due to the stress that society gives to oneself and the culture that emphasizes collective identity prior to individual identity, one might suffer identity crisis as an artist, and produce work that's not authentic to oneself, thus, unhelpful to society. Creative identity, gained from one's strong connection to oneself, the society and the world through the work they do, and the satisfactory feeling of oneself of doing art that follows it, is where creativity and authenticity naturally flow that produces bona fide art that makes a healthy society. Therefore, realm of art in society should not be too strict on artists who feel joyful and meaningful producing their artworks since doing art is formation and expression of their true selves, which can heal and inspire others who have access to these artworks; Also, there should be many art institutions that support all artists to have access to a wide audience, not only some famous artists who target a limited audience. In this paper, I will explain how artist's identity, characteristics, and creativity is tightly intertwined, discuss what could be the healthy way to evaluate artists' artworks and depict the imagined society where true artists can flourish.

Keywords: Creative Identity, Artist, Artistic Society

Introduction

Purpose of the study is to identify the creative identity of the artists that makes them who they are. With the advent of the digital era that values efficiency and development, some artists struggle to find their ground in this fast-paced society that does not take account seriously the beings of artists. However, in this contemporary society, it is essential to emphasize and be aware of the creative identity of artists to value them truthfully and realize them in a genuine way. If only their products are considered and evaluated, the endeavor to acknowledge beings of artists can be easily ignored, therefore resulting in bringing about the confusion within artists' self-awareness about their identity. Thus, by understanding better about artists' creativity, we can better appreciate artists and their production of artworks, and realize why they are so important to the well-being of our society as art has a power to expand our sphere of understanding ourselves, society and the world in a more harmonious way. It will stimulate us to cultivate the workings of the mind, but also, more importantly, workings of the heart such as emotion and intuitions, to live like who we are, that is living freely and more fully in this world. This acknowledgment will encourage us to create an artistic society where artists and people of artists' minds prevail, where they share their ideas openly about their authentic interests, thus, creating a positive atmosphere where the essence of creativity flourishes that benefits artists, people, society and the world.

The Creative Identity of Artists

It is important to understand creativity within artists that makes them who they are in order to better appreciate their beings. Artists actively respond to the phenomenons happening around them and express their thoughts and emotions through the work they produce. In the process of creating artworks, they endeavor to transform disorder into order, to make sense of themselves and their lives in a way that is understandable. They are the ones who make artworks out of their living, therefore are very authentic and honest individuals.

During the process of creating an artwork, they experience 'flow' - complete immersion of act that they are engaged in, that gives a sense of joy and achievement, which serves as an inner motivation to continue pursuing their work. This process of active engagement in the art activities also sparks them to develop and nurture a sense of creative self that experience complex mind working procedure which of some includes reflection, organization, and critique of their own emotions and thoughts. Theorist Graham Wallas, in his work *Art of Thought*, published in 1926, presented a model of a creative process which is consisted of 5 successive stages- preparation, incubation, intimation, illumination, and verification. Preparation is the first stage in which individuals focus on the problem and its dimensions. Next stage is an incubation where the problem is internalized in their unconscious minds. The intimation is the third stage in which individuals feel that a solution is on its way. The fourth stage is an illumination where a creative idea emerges to their conscious awareness. And the final stage is verification where their idea is consciously verified, explained and applied. In addition, James Kaufman and Beghetto introduced the "Four C" model, which is composed of mini-c, little-c, Pro-C, and Big-C. Mini-c and little-c are about the personal aspect of creativity such as interpreting meaningfully of one's experiences and actions and solving everyday problems. Pro-C and Big-C are about creativity expressed in public domains such as professionally and in a given field.

During the process of creating artworks, it establishes gradually in artists, a sense of self, a solid identity, which is the cause and the byproduct of the engaging in activities of art, which

stimulates them to either unconsciously or consciously acknowledge their lives and themselves in more meaningful ways. This can serve as a therapy and a cure to an unenergetic, fragmented and chaotic mental state of individuals, as this process protects and nurtures one's wholesome existence by encouraging them to construct a continuous story, narrative, or a consistent feeling that helps them better to cope with their life. So, when we encounter artworks, we are encouraged to see ourselves and the world we live in different perspectives, rediscovering and renewing ourselves that gives us positive energy to living more creatively and happily.

When artists create something out of themselves who have diverse thoughts and emotions as a source for making their artworks, they completely become one with the act of creating art, that is they are completely immersed in their creative act. They do not think much about themselves, rather are deeply engaged in a highly logical and imaginative process of art creation, that is planning, exhibiting, reflecting every detail of their creative activities that give them struggles, but also make them feel more harmonious. They strive to create unity and consistency that help them to deal with and overcome complicated and painful thoughts and feelings during this creative process. Also, a vision in their imaginative mind serves as a guideline to constantly renew their existence to be better human beings, since doing art engages the whole of themselves- they put their soul, mind, and heart into the work. It is a genuine conversation taking place in themselves that create meaningful and authentic artworks.

However, we should keep in mind that producing art should not be considered as a mystical experience, that only “the chosen one” can become a “true” artist. Instead, we should acknowledge that art is an open experience for everyone, and should be encouraged to pursue more. As many artists acknowledged, living is also an art, and mini-c and little-c are as important or more important than Pro-C and Big-C since living is also of engaging the whole of our existence as it requires creativity in all forms of our life.

Doing art should not be a stressful task, but a chance and opportunity to rejuvenate oneself. When artists engage in art or live, their goal is not to be too focused on reflecting on their ego, but on cultivating and nurturing their free self who is not oppressed, which makes them possible to create naturally authentic artwork from their lives, that results in freeing not only artist themselves but also others who appreciate their works. When artists put too much emphasis on their own ego, they can have a tendency to think that it is they who create artwork, thus, selfishness and boastfulness can easily arise from such thinking, which is a hindrance to becoming an authentic artist. When creating an artwork, artists' aim is always to engage their free self who is full of creativity, richness, colorfulness, the light of their beings rather than satiate the desire of their ego.

When people engage in art activities, either by creating artworks or appreciating them, they find an essential creative quality within their mind and spirit, which is experiencing full joy and happiness, because they gain a tool to see themselves and their lives in a more meaningful way such as in a form of a higher understanding and a feeling that widen their scope of understanding themselves and their life more positively. Also, engaging in creative activities allows humans to learn how to deal with or overcome in a healthy way their negative feelings or thoughts such as complaints, jealousy, ignorance, and rage that cause one to stumble when one is too preoccupied with it since they cannot easily separate these feelings from themselves. They learn how to distance negative emotions from themselves when they engage in creative activities as these emotions are changed into positive energy

that fulfills them.

In addition, when people engage in art activities, it cures their soul, mind, and heart as they involve every part of themselves into creating their artworks. This endeavor itself is so full of life. They can redirect their road of living upon love. They can reflect on their living, cultivate new emotions and thoughts that are dear to them. This wholesome experience gives them a sense of unity and harmony within themselves that has a deep connection to the society and the world they live in. Everything in and around them becomes clear, harmonious, positive, full of life that makes their artworks a direct reflection of their true selves. That's why when we encounter artworks, we feel we have never seen this before, and are filled with awe, inspiration, healing, and become a totally different and new being that have a higher sense of appreciating ourselves and the world we live in.

There are some common traits that artists have. Artists are curious and very observant about happenings that occur around them. They are also very persistent and self-disciplined in what they want to be good at and are eager to educate themselves about a field they are deeply interested in. They also keep a healthy tension between logic/ reason and intuition/ feeling. The former function to judge, explain, make an idea understandable, and the latter creates a mental room for cultivating freedom, flexibility, inspiration. They enjoy the process rather than the result. It is of believing 100% of themselves, believing that they can create something worthy if they put all of their minds that connect to their true selves when creating artworks. They can keep engaging in creative processes as they discern, that is discriminating what is going well and not, rather than evaluate, that is judging success in a flash and fixating it. They develop a philosophical perspective on their own judgment of what is good and bad. They are focused on now like in meditation that makes them comfortable in the creative process. They make sense of figure and background, meaning they decide the priority and create a blank space that allows room for flexibility, productive laziness and a temporary stop. They integrate well, which means that they combine work and rest into their lifestyle in a balanced way that many experiences build up together that become an important meaning in their life. They put importance on rest and restoration, that is they create a space that is protected by background. It is a space where they explore a certain idea or plan, which is of a peculiar feature. They manage energy and time well, able to look at an idea in different perspectives that allows attracting a different form of energy that results in generating more energy overall and make possible a lot more achievement. They possess a growth mindset rather than a fixed mindset, putting more importance on endeavor rather than a result that emphasizes innate intellect and abilities. And there are many other traits such as concentrating deeply, taking risks, welcoming failure which makes them creative beings.

How To Evaluate Artists' Artworks

It is also significant to consider how we should evaluate artworks to better appreciate artists. Endeavor to analyze their artworks in diverse perspectives are important such as philosophically, aesthetically, socially and economically. However, more important is the endeavor to recognize artists' beings. Artists can feel a sense of alienation towards their work and themselves when they feel like their mind full of creativity and individuality is not well recognized and appreciated, as too much focus from art institutions or public is on dissecting and analyzing artists' artworks. Art institutions should always try to value artists first, and then, appreciate their artwork since this stimulates to create an open atmosphere where artists feel free and comfortable to share their thoughts and emotions with others.

Also, in this fast-paced society that is speedy, cannot discern differences, prioritizes conveniences and effectiveness, and has no room to cultivate and encourage multiplicity, collective identity is considered more valuable than individual identity. The collective identity reflects the quality of uniformity and sameness while individual identity is made up of colorfulness and differences. In this kind of atmosphere where uniformity is emphasized, competitiveness easily arises; one starts to compare oneself with others, and tries to be like others when one feels inferior. They can feel depressed or impotent because they cannot find their true self as they continue to compare themselves with others, which give them unnecessary stress. This can cause isolation as they will not try to communicate with others which is a source for building a connection with the outer world that is so essential for their healthy growth.

Thus, an equal and democratic setting where everyone recognizes other's existence should be established in an artistic society. When an entity, either person or institution sets themselves apart from others, they are inclined to make sense of artists' artworks from only their point of view, which is a form of tyranny, because it can only interpret artworks in a preexistent and narrow view they already have, and put artworks full of potential in a box that result in limiting their possibilities to be interpreted in various ways. And not appreciating artworks and artists properly will lead to artists feeling a sense of betrayal and alienation. Thus, it is an important task for art institutions to establish a concrete method that appreciates an artist's existence, not only concentrating on developing tools to analyze artists' artworks. Also, one of the emotions to be cultivated in members of art institution should be sympathy, that is having the mindset and emotion of "I understand You- your creativity, individuality, personality" rather than "I understand your Work." This kind of appreciation is especially important in the contemporary society that values capital and information which has a quality of acquiring and hoarding, while common emotions and feelings which have a quality of sharing and communicating essential to a healthy society, are easily neglected and wasteful since they seem to not "contribute" to the development of the society.

Furthermore, many art institutions choose to exhibit only the works of famous artists for their publicity and popularity which puts young artists in a vulnerable position since they can easily become undervalued and unrecognized though their artworks possess much potential to be discussed and enlarge the discourses around art. The famous artists have become famous because many discourses have already been made that value their artworks in a certain way by prevalent preexistent thinking, which makes hard for new artists to be recognized in the fixated society. But it is these new artists who reflect the current state of the man living in the society most honestly, as they can represent the general public for their authentic portrayal of their thoughts and emotions that arise from reacting authentically to happenings around them. Their artworks will provide insights on how society should evolve.

History of humankind shows that society has always hated creative artists and annihilated them because they were considered too revolutionary and deviant who was a great threat to the status quo and maintenance of the powerful. The powerful, in this case, the art institution is oppressing powerless, the new artists, in a way that is disguised, but completely manipulative, by evaluating new artists' artworks from its own narrow thinking, ideology or bias that hinder it from welcoming and prospering new creative artists. Thus, for young artists to emerge and flourish, it is always important to dissect and deconstruct the rigid thinking pattern that lies beneath any powerful force.

Art institutions that only exhibit artworks that are understandable to them and neglect those

that are unfathomable to them reflect their inability to take risks to make original artworks understandable to the public. They must willingly do a lot of more research on how to evaluate creative artworks, which will generate an open society where people become inspired by new ways of viewing the world and expand contents of communication around art, society, and the world that becomes shared and valued.

Society Where True Artists Flourish

In contemporary society, artwork as a form of “project” is created from the collective minds of artists. Unlike Renaissance era when artists had to meet the needs of the rich noble to sustain their living, and Romantic era when individual artist mostly in isolation created artworks from one's imagination and inspiration, the contemporary society has triggered new types of artists to appear. Individual artists who share a similar vision in their artistic endeavor form a collective group to pursue projects. They do this because they have a desire to show “their” work to the public, not developing their ideas that are based upon what others tell them to do. They are free, passionate, active individual beings who search for an institution that will accept their work. They are active agents who seek to make their voices heard and be appreciated in society. In addition, to sustain a living, and because of the synergy each different forms of art increase the creativity in artists, they engage in multiple artistic fields such as writing, painting, designing and working in the publishing industry. They also acknowledge that the myths of artists instilled in the public minds such as “artworks are too difficult to understand” or “artists are poor” are hindering them to be rightly valued and prosper. From this general phenomenon, we can infer how we should view the contemporary artists -all the opposites, such as having the thoughts of “they are just like us”, “artists are motivated to earn money”, and “artworks are not hard to understand if we genuinely try to understand their artworks”.

Big and prominent art institutions have a tendency to favor famous artists in order to attract the mass public because it allows them to earn as many capitals as possible. Also, some art institutions welcome only VIP audiences which inhibit them to create a democratic artistic community where people from all walks of life can get an opportunity to encounter diverse artworks. New and private institutions are constantly appearing, but they should not follow the footsteps of these big art institutions. Rather, they should endeavor to discover potential young artists, find means to support them financially well, and care deeply about their well-being.

A healthy and democratic society is where diversity is encouraged and valued, which will result in expanding discourses, and enlightening public in a positive way by encouraging them to look at their situation and themselves in a fresh way. This is a society of vibrant and energetic culture constructed upon love and understanding. It is equal and fair because everybody is eager to communicate with one another about a creative idea on the same plain, where diverse voices are shared and each individual beings are acknowledged. In this open atmosphere, people support each other genuinely of their well-being.

Future society should be a positive place where it offers a tool and a chance for diverse people to think differently and act differently. The success of something new occurs when society stimulates a series of possibilities, not when there is automatical dissemination of one revolutionary work or message. Therefore, art institutions should strive to create diverse discourses gradually that make room for myriad voices to enter and develop in multiple ways. True revolution happens when creative activities involve not only the one who informs

revolutions, but also the people who accept and understand the creative idea. So an idea or a thought should be suggested and appeared in a way that can be responded to the public as this has more chance to survive and spark motivation to interpret it from various perspectives. This dynamic artistic society will improve in a healthy direction as people appreciate innovative thoughts and ideas of artworks, and gain confidence and insight to make something new as this process continues further.

Whether the creativity of artists is actualized depends on its acceptance from culture. A culture that emphasizes rules and obedience of customs is a difficult place for exceptional, deviant and revolutionary artists to flourish. Art institutions should build a strength to deliver something unusual to other people, and gather the seemingly contradictory topics and suggest them in an understandable way to the public. Also, they should have a deep interest in valuing creativity identity of artists. More researches on how the inner creative minds of artists work should be done, and more emphasis on “How” rather than “Why” should be implemented as we can gain a tool and understanding to cultivate creative skills that are essential to our growth. Generally, we should strive to understand more about how creativity functions as this will enlighten and educate us in a healthy way. It is hard not to emphasize the positive process and outcome of cultivating creativity. When we are creative, we feel a sense of gratification and freedom that better our wholesome being. We understand ourselves better, rediscover and renew ourselves in a positive way. And finally, we live more abundantly and fulfilling in this only life we are given.

Conclusion

Artists form creative self during their engagement in artistic activities. The creativity that works inside the creative mind help artists to form a sense of self that brings harmonious and joyful feeling toward themselves, and motivate others who appreciate their artworks to think differently and innovatively. Art institutions should strive to cultivate means to appreciate artists' beings in authentic ways rather than focussing on analyzing their artworks since too much emphasis on the latter can lead to artists feeling alienation. Future artistic society should be a democratic and open place where artists and the people who see artworks engage in an equal manner that helps construct a creative atmosphere where innovation and invention occur.

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