

**More work positioning from comments on some
Sol Lewitt's "Conceptual Art" statements.
Jean-Pierre Hébert, February 2003.**

Sol Lewitt statements

Conceptual art doesn't really have much to do with mathematics, philosophy, or any other mental discipline. The mathematics used by most artists is simple arithmetic or simple number systems. The philosophy of the work is implicit in the work and it is not an illustration of any system of philosophy.

It doesn't really matter if the viewer understands the concepts of the artist by seeing the art. Once it is out of his hand the artist has no control over the way a viewer will perceive the work. Different people will understand the same thing in a different way.

If the artist carries through his idea and makes it into visible form, then all the steps in the process are of importance. The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product. All intervening steps –scribbles, sketches, drawings, failed works, models, studies, thoughts, conversations– are of interest. Those that show the thought process of the artist are sometimes more interesting than the final product.

The conventions of art are altered by works of art.

If the artist changes his mind midway through the execution of the piece he compromises the result and repeats past results. / The artist's will is secondary to the process he initiates from idea to completion.

Ideas can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical.

For each work of art that becomes physical there are many variations that do not.

The concept of a work of art may involve the matter of the piece or the process in which it is made. / The process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.

Perception is subjective. / The artist may not necessarily understand his own art. His perception is neither better nor worse than that of others.

One usually understands the art of the past by applying the convention of the present, thus misunderstanding the art of the past.

Work positioning comments

I am not a mathematician, but I have been able to use simple maths intuitively as a language convenient to represent the logic and geometry of lines, and able to instantiate drawings both virtually and physically as proofs of the correctness of their concepts.

This takes us to Umberto Eco's "The Open Work". I only title my pieces to launch a certain process of seeing, thinking and meditating. I only shows the proofs (who would want to see the code!), and they are really nothing but the shadows of the code on the walls of the cavern.

I quite agree on this. As a matter of fact, I have not kept many early sketches of projects. But I have kept the text files for the code that *is* my work and *can* produce my proofs. The body of proofs in fact documents the body of code, and that is the body of the work. So the chronology of the proofs, and the recording of the code are of complementary interest as they show how the work evolved and branched over the years.

Although computers have helped create art since the seventies, they barely enter today's conventions of art.

Once my concept and ideas have been coded as software, executing the latter will complete a physical proof without further intervention or decision on my part. This is the integrity of the process, faithful to the vivion.

Ideas can be left as they occur, or researched and developed. They can be set in writing, sketches, pseudo-code, code

There are many concepts and ideas that are never instantiated. Some are well documented, some not at all.

I have remain attached o produce proofs in a familiar matter, using traditional, familiar media such as ink or graphite on paper, but experimenting also with calligraphy, sand, wood, etc...

Although what I do imply many rational and conscious activities, I would not comments on the poetics of my own work. Sublime? Spiritual? Your take, not mine.

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