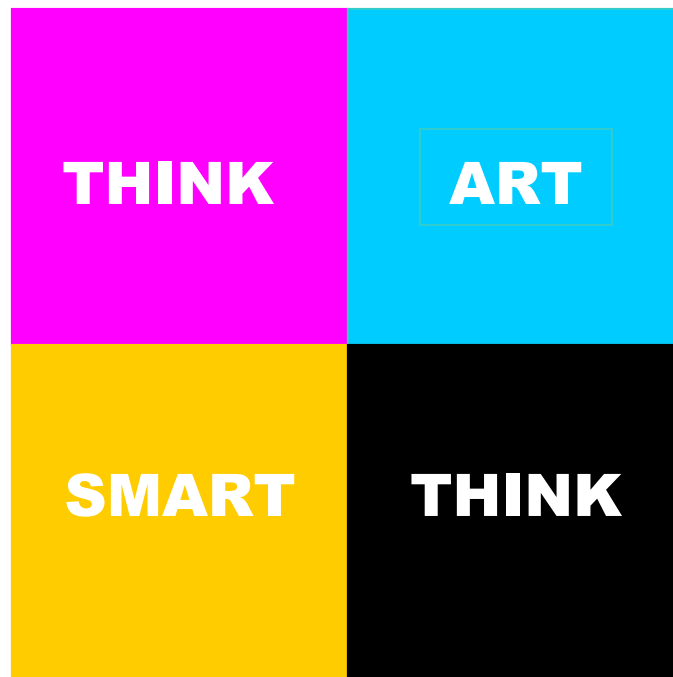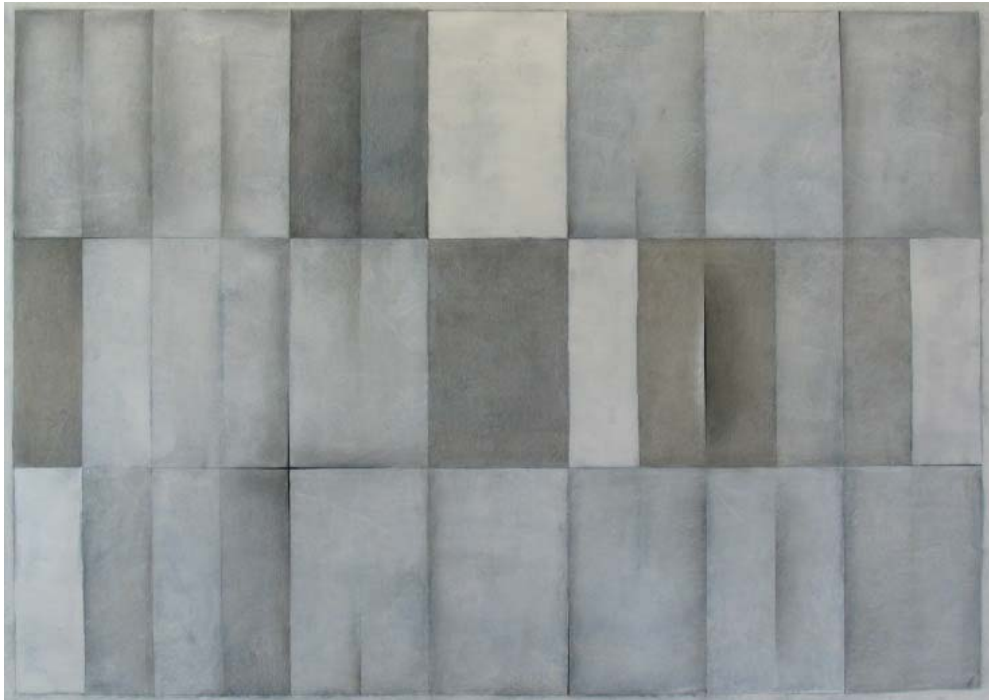**Think Art Think Smart**

A dialectical model to examine the relationship between art and critical thought.

by
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(Fig.1) "Cerulean's Map" by Gerrit Verstraete, 2009

"The artist has the power to discern the current environment created by the latest technology,"
Marshall McLuhan, 1968

"I have as the principal objective in my work, the spirit of research. The spirit of research (comprises) all the positive and conclusive elements in modern art." Picasso, 1923

"Art gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." Plato, 427-347 BC

Content:

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Taking an arts-centered approach within an investigative framework, my research will be conducted to establish whether there is a link between the ability to think better critically when subjects are exposed to art. Analysis of my research aims to suggest that exposure to positive information will affect the subject's ability to think critically when placed in context of

understanding and appreciation of fine art, and by expanding the subject's existing databank of aesthetic pleasure in the mind.

This analysis will also posit the challenge or argument that technology has produced a decline in critical thinking and analysis, and further recommends that the cognitive values of understanding and appreciating art, based on cognitive theory as a learning theory to explain human behavior by understanding the thought processes, can indeed restore a subject's capacity for critical thought.

By examining the art of Michelangelo, Mark Rothko and John Gould, specifically through their respective philosophies, poetry and journals, I intend to identify the aesthetic pleasures of their art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive processing dynamics. The more fluently viewers can process the effects of art as positive information, the more positive their response.

Essential to my research is the clear definition of and positioning of concepts used to investigate my approach such as words comprising art, critical thought, positive information, density, and cognitive fluency. Existing research demonstrates a speed advantage in the processing of positive information (Reber, Schwarz, Winkielman, 2004) caused by the higher density of positive information in memory (Unkelbach, 2008, density hypothesis). Taking the qualitative approach, I will embark on a positive construct of my narrative with people who are exposed to art, with results interpreted in the context of art theory and history. These results can help researchers and art educators better understand the social significance of the positive influence of art as a process of enabling quality decision making, with a further aim to initiate comprehensive discourse among scholars, artists, organizations and institutions.

Introduction

In the vernacular of communications technology, the topic of my study is links, specifically those links that aim to examine connections, or perhaps in a more abstract sense, the examination of networks, as I explore the links and gaps between art and critical thought.

The context of my research is an arts-centered qualitative approach to communications and technology research within an investigative framework. Research is conducted in a hybrid of social sciences and the humanities, not as an exploration of what art *is*, but what art *does*, and how art's *doing* is a contributing factor to an aggregate social phenomena called critical thought, or in the vernacular, the ability for the individual to make quality choices between what is right and what is not. That is not to suggest an exhaustive study of right and wrong, but instead, a gathering of scholarly literature, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and philosophical worldviews, to address the social and academic importance of my research in identifying key concepts and answering pertinent questions along the way. As a hybrid, this research paper comprises original postulations or positions as a result of communications and technology studies, personal professional experience, and the scholarly views and findings of others. It is both essential and imperative that my research embraces clear definitions and the positioning of concepts used to investigate my approach, such as art, critical thought, positive information, density, and cognitive fluency. In its complexity, this research is not final. It may at best open the door just a bit further to look beyond the obvious and conventional, and catch a glimpse of what entails profound social change, before the results of this and further research can be realized over time.

And it begins with a first step, a first issue.

This hybrid aims to address a primary issue before further research is examined.

That primary issue is an examination of the challenge or argument that technology has produced a decline in critical thinking and analysis, and that the cognitive values of understanding and appreciating art, based on cognitive theory as a learning theory to explain human behavior by understanding the thought processes, can indeed restore a subject's capacity for critical thought. This issue implies tough concepts with tough contemporary questions. Is critical thought on the decline because of rampant conspicuous consumption manifested in the dark side of technology, social media, new media etc? Has society lost its ability to think critically? Is art the redemptive means to bring about a rebirth of critical thought? These questions pose a difficult challenge because on the one hand, one cannot blame technology as the sole cause for the decline of critical thought, nor does art offer the sole means of redemption.

William Deresiewicz laments in *The End of Solitude*: "The soul is forced back into itself — hence the development of a more austere, more embattled form of self-validation. Solitude becomes, more than ever, the arena of heroic self-discovery, a voyage through interior realms," (Deresiewicz, 2009). I posit that in Deresiewicz's austere solitude, there is indeed an arena of self-discovery where art can play a major role, with the assumption that critical thought birthed in solitude, is a more rewarding quest than following mere public opinion, because the appreciation and understanding of art (and life) is a very private process. My professional years of communications practice, especially in marketing and advertising, were a profound experience of media's might. Dating back to the 1920's and the origins of mass media, and advertising's persuasive powers, media became the factory of desire, and technology its marketplace. And the marketplace has been and is public. Therefore it is not whether society has lost its ability to think

critically, but whether the individual, in the face of public has lost the ability to think critically. "When society is changing, we want to know whether the change is good or bad," (Shirky, 2008). But who decides? The individual, the group, the network? The factories of desire would prefer nothing better that a technology that addresses the innate desire of individuals to belong to the group that best advertises its perceived benefits, leaving the individual to experience the "negative effects of freedom," (Shirky, 2008).

As the door opens a bit further, the primary issue of decline in critical thought is expanded into a broader context of examination to include introductory concepts of what is critical thought. How has this ability to think critically declined, and what is art's value in determining whether the concepts examined can be applied to form meaningful conclusions? When this primary issue and its introductory concepts are critically examined, only then can a further examination of scholarly literature, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and philosophical worldviews, be meaningful in formulating the social and academic importance of my research. Independent research by Patricia Greenfield (University of California) and the ASME, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, founded in 1880, have contributed to the issue of critical thought by examining both theoretical and practical implications of the concept of decline in critical thought, a contribution that will affirm the arts-centered approach within my investigative framework, and to establish whether there is a link between the ability to think better critically when subjects are exposed to art.

ASME's core values include the nurture and treasure of the environment and natural and man-made resources, a core value that led to careful examination of what constitutes critical thought as an asset to employers, who consider well-cultivated critical thinkers essential to the

workplace. As simply stated in ASME's Professional Practice Curriculum (PPC), "critical thinking is how you approach problems, questions, issues, and figuring out the best way to get to the truth," (ASME, 2011). "Much of our natural thinking, when left unchecked," continues ASME, "is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed, or downright prejudiced. Yet the quality of our lives depends precisely on the quality of our thoughts," (ASME, 2011). Critical thinking has the potential of improving the quality of thought. "Effective critical thinking involves consideration of the full range of possibilities to a problem, including emotional, cognitive, intellectual and psychological factors," (ASME, 2011), an asset I posit as not exclusive to ASME's professional members, but inclusive of all people of all ages. Successful people are able to apply what they know to the challenges of life. And in the marketplace, says ASME, "today's employers are not looking for walking encyclopedias, but rather for independent decision-makers and problem-solvers," (ASME, 2011).

Critical thinking is essential to life, whether that life is professional, recreational, collective or personal. Even though critical thought clearly applies to professional environments of the workplace, it plays an important role in personal and civic lives as well. From the logic of useful behaviour and the illogic of abusive behaviour, from the processing of mass-media communications used by governments, corporations, organizations, and institutions, who propose perceived benefits as well as real benefits, and from inherent natural abilities such as positive parenting to the steep learning curves of life and relationships, "critical thinking must be clear, precise, accurate, relevant, consistent, and fair. In short, critical thinking must be self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking that entails effective communication and problem-solving abilities," (ASME, 2011). But, is the very essence of these *must-be's* on a decline? And is that decline the result of a lack of cultivation and practice?

"While thinking in general is a natural activity of human beings, excellence in thinking must be cultivated and practiced," (ASME, 2011). For that reason, this research paper is profoundly personal as well.

A need for critical thought, yes. But a decline?

In Patricia Greenfield's examination of the decline of critical thought, she proposes careful analysis of technology's role in such decline, especially since technology has become the preeminent architecture of thought processes. "As technology has played a bigger role in our lives, our skills in critical thinking and analysis have declined, while our visual skills have improved, according," (Greenfield, 2009). The process of learning and learners themselves "have changed as a result of their exposure to technology," (Greenfield, 2009). She analyzed more than 50 studies on learning and reading, and technology, including research on multi-tasking and the use of computers, the Internet and video games. "Reading for pleasure, which has declined among young people in recent decades, enhances thinking and engages the imagination in a way that visual media, such as video games and television do not," (Greenfield, 2009). Greenfield's recommendations include a greater use of visual media in order to process information better, but only such visual media that elicits reflection, analysis, and imagination. "By using more visual media, students will process information better. However, most visual media are real-time media that do not allow time for reflection, analysis or imagination — those do not get developed by real-time media such as television and video games," (Greenfield, 2009). Nevertheless, she does not bridge the gap with proposed solutions to address the impasse between the diversity of visual media and real-time media including art. Neither does ASMA bridge the gap between professional demands for critical thought in the decision-making process of the workplace, and

that of the individual whose needs are more personal and in need of discerning capabilities. Greenfield's argument for reading is incomplete in that reading may "develop imagination, induction, reflection and critical thinking, as well as vocabulary," (Greenfield, 2009) but if indeed *a picture is worth a thousand words,* then the experiences of art's visual stimuli are overlooked as a potentially greater source for imagination, induction, and reflection. Greenfield is careful, however, not to blame technology *et al,* for the decline in critical thought. Yet she positions multi-tasking as a deterrent when compared to the task that could have been performed better, if done one at a time. Classroom studies showed that students "who were given access to the Internet during class and were encouraged to use it during lectures did not process what the speaker said as well as students who did not have Internet access," (Greenfield, 2009). When students were tested after class, those who did not have Internet access performed better than those who did. "Wiring classrooms for Internet access does not enhance learning," (Greenfield, 2009). College students who watched *CNN Headline News* focusing on just the news anchor on screen, and not the *news crawl* across the bottom of the screen, remembered significantly more facts from the news broadcast than those who watched, while distracted by a form of multi-tasking, trying to watch the crawling text with additional stock market and weather information on the screen. "Multi-tasking prevents people from getting a deeper understanding of information," (Greenfield, 2009). Greenfield believes much of this change in the use of critical thought is related to an increased use of technology, as well as an increased societal complexity. Technology has amplified the various conventional and unconventional styles of learning, identified by ASME as styles essential to the basic life skill of problem-solving. "Some people learn primarily visually, others aurally, some learn step-by-step, others employ an all-or-nothing

process; some cogitate on a problem introspectively, while others find they work problems best when they can discuss them," (ASME, 2011).

I have opened the door a bit further, by examining the primary issue of decline in critical thought, and expanded the issue into a broader context of examination to include introductory concepts of what is critical thought (ASME), and how this ability to think critically has declined (Greenfield). Beyond the first issue of declining critical thought, I continue my research with a second step.

What is art's value in determining whether the concepts examined can be applied to form meaningful conclusions? By critically examining art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics, the aesthetic of pleasure, and the value of art, only then can the examination of scholarly literature, methodologies, theoretical frameworks, and philosophical worldviews, be meaningful in formulating the social and academic importance of my research. Throughout my discourse I will discuss key concepts of my research paper including:

1. Art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics including the dialectical model as a predictive framework for observation.

2. The aesthetic of pleasure including art as method talk.

3. A positive construct to demonstrate the value of art as capital.

Within this broad scope I ask the following research questions with the intent of answering them in context of the key concepts of my research:

1. Is there a link between the ability to think better critically when subjects are exposed to art over a long period of time and education?

2. How does the speed with which a person processes positive information, such as the positive information of art, affect his or her ability to make quality judgments?

3. How does the processing of positive information contribute to a density of positive cognition (density hypothesis) in the mind of a person that affects his or her ability to make quality judgments, that is, engage in critical thought?

4. How does an arts-centered qualitative approach to communication and technology research within an investigative framework of theoretical constructs, research design and methodology, contribute sufficiently to the social significance of the positive influence (or positive construct) of art as a process of enabling quality decision making, and initiate comprehensive discourse among scholars, artists, organizations and institutions?

Objectives of study

These research questions have resulted in the following objectives of this project, that is, objectives that lead to constructive strategies with which to further examine key concepts.

1. To examine the fluency by which viewers can process the effects of the stimuli of art as positive information to create a more positive aesthetic response, using qualitative

grounded research into questions and methodologies within a body of social science and humanities literature.

2. To demonstrate a speed advantage in the processing of positive information caused by a higher density of positive information in memory (Unkelbach, 2008), evident in social phenomena and scientific observation.

3. To implement strategies that examine available data in light of a research design that encompasses observation, textual analysis, and interviews as well as examining the social significance of research results.

4. To create a community of intellectual discourse by cultivating a community of practice, embracing topics of mutual interest in cognitive processes and the influence of art, with fresh insights and thoughtful criticism as to how these insights and criticisms can be effectively communicated through the use of new media technology, (iACT, *International Association of Critical Thought*, 2010, see Appendix 1).

1. Art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics including the dialectical model as a predictive framework for observation.

"Humans are visual creatures who can process an image and interpret it much more quickly than reading text. Indeed, people will more quickly perceive and process a photograph of

a red rubber ball sitting in a field of green grass than they will the sentence: 'There is a red rubber ball sitting in a field of green grass'." (Allen, 2002).

To understand a perceiver's cognitive dynamics, I must begin with the simplest of motives. An artist is (should be) someone who has *something* to say. Art in all its forms and styles is the cognitive vehicle, the medium, by which that *something* is communicated to others. If my motives are to impress the world and gain the benefits of fame and fortune, then my motives are wrong. I will be tempted to communicate *something* that is simply decorative, entertaining, controversial, crowd-pleasing and vogue. But, if my motives are to benefit but one individual, and encourage him or her to grow, and be all he or she is created to be without priorities of personal fame or financial gain, then my motives are pure.

That *something* begins with cognitive dynamic roots in my personal life and the extent of my human experience of life, my spiritual experience, the influence of others whose human and spiritual experiences have spoken to me on my journey, my never-ending thirst for truth and knowledge, and the never-ending quest for discipline and excellence. Without such dynamics, an artist who hides behind a public image of counterfeit behaviour, has not settled in his or her heart the *something* he or she wants to say. Therefore the artist is at best an apprentice, and must learn the art of silence and service before attempting to affect the perceiver's cognitive process.

1.1. Hypothesis

That exposure to positive information in art will affect the subject's ability to think critically when placed in context of intrinsic and extrinsic understanding and appreciation of fine art, such as classical traditions of drawing form, gesture, light and shadow, narrative, and

experience, to expand the subject's databank of aesthetic pleasure in the mind and as a result affect the subject's ability to make informed and quality decisions that apply to the need of such decisions in everyday life.

That viewers can process the effects of the stimulus of art as positive information to create a more positive aesthetic response, by examining the fluency with which such positive information is processed, demonstrated by a speed advantage in the processing of positive information caused by a higher density of such information in memory, as evident in social phenomena and scientific observations, that lead to establishing a greater link between art appreciation and the ability to think critically.

1.2. Literature review

My research would not be complete if the context of cognitive dynamics, the aesthetics of pleasure and its inherent beauty, and a positive construct of art's capital values, were not qualified by a detailed examination of the actual process of art appreciation, embedded in the dynamics of the perceiver's cognitive abilities, a process which leads to my conclusions about *Think Art Think Smart*, as the link between art and critical thought. This process includes my literature review of pertinent papers that support the objectives of this research project, that is to examine the fluency by which viewers can process the effects of the stimulus of art as positive information to create a more positive aesthetic response, and to demonstrate a speed advantage in the processing of positive information caused by a higher density of positive information in memory.

In addition to my analysis of Michelangelo's poetry, Rothko's philosophy, and Gould's writings, the extended literature review comprises the core of my art-centered approach and the investigative framework of this project, showing the theoretical base of the study, through textual analysis, to form an aggregate of scholarly views in patterns of critical thought.

Textual analysis will aim to examine concepts of positive information that affect the subject's ability to think critically through understanding and appreciation of art, and by expanding the subject's existing databank of aesthetic pleasure in the mind.

Even though data-mining and patterns embedded in art criticism may assist in the visualization of information gathered, and new methods such as simulations, games, map-making, semantic and semiotic tools, may be considered, they will remain secondary to the primary investigative process of quality research design of an advocacy participatory framework, (Creswell, 2009, p.17)

Of particular emphasis are the contributions of scholarly literature by Reber, Schwarz, Winkielman, Unkelbach, Bayer, Danner, and Fiedler, *et al,* as well as the writings of Marshall McLuhan.

As such these literature reviews will comprise the remainder of my research.

1.3. A process of information and knowledge fluency.

"We propose that aesthetic pleasure is a function of the perceiver's processing dynamics: the more fluently perceivers can process an object (such as art), the more positive their aesthetic response," (Reber, Schwarz, Winkielman, 2004, bracket added). Their position states that in addition to the aesthetic of pleasure, being the emotional element in a response to works of art

and natural beauty, and distinct from direct experience to sensual or intellectual pleasure, it is an actual process. This is beyond the Kantian aesthetic theorists' definition of such process as merely a phenomenon of "disinterest and non-conceptual engagement with an object," or Sheppard's conclusion that "aesthetic pleasure is manifested in a desire to continue or repeat the experience," (Bunnin, Yu, 2004). Research in the aesthetics of pleasure examines how a person, the perceiver, experiences beauty in a dynamic cognitive process.

During March of 2011, in my research to directly link art (specifically the appreciation and knowledge of fine art) to the individual's capacity for critical thought, I asked the above authors to respond personally to my question.

"How do emerging thoughts in the study of fine art by means of reflection, interpretation, and appreciation, develop an individual's capacity for critical thought?"

Christian Unkelbach replied: "fluency research is well connected to aesthetic pleasure. How density hypothesis and fine art go together will need further research. Would be interesting how you relate stimulus density and art. Rolf Reber at the University of Bergen, Norway, is an expert in that respect and he has published many papers on the subject." As a result I asked the same question of Rolf Reber. He replied: "Critical thinking could be educated through art, and fluency may play a role here. My own recent research and theorizing was about beauty and truth in mathematical intuition and about the Aha-experience. I have examined such topics as what psychology could tell about artistic value, which is not directly relevant to your topic, but may be close to your profession as an artist, and whether fluency is justified to base judgments of truth on fluency. Our conclusion was that yes, if more than 50% of all statements we encounter are true, it is justified to base one's judgments of truth on processing fluency."

Processing fluency is the ease with which information is processed in the mind. The ease with which perceptual stimuli (such as fine art) are processes is perceptual fluency. The ease with which information can be retrieved from memory is retrieval fluency. During my years in the advertising and marketing industry, a popular term circulated in the acronym TOMA, Top-Of-Mind-Awareness as a marketing objective to achieve both perceptual fluency and retrieval fluency. The acronym was rooted in the prevailing mass media theories of the seventies exemplified by McLuhan's tetrad of media laws of enhance, reverse, obsolesce, and retrieve, laws that would affect the perceiver's judgment. "Research in psychology has shown that processing fluency influences different kinds of judgments. For instance, perceptual fluency contributes to the experience of familiarity. A stimulus that has been repeatedly presented before will be processed more fluently," (Whittlesea, 1993). The processing fluency theory of aesthetic pleasure, that is, "the notion that processing fluency is inherently positive led to the processing fluency theory of aesthetic pleasure," (Reber, *et al*, 2004) Other studies have shown that when people are presented with a factual statement that include techniques or manipulations to make the statement easier to mentally process, even such non-substantive changes like writing it in a cleaner font or making it rhyme or simply repeating it, or combine it with an image, "can alter judgment of the truth of the statement, along with evaluation of the intelligence of the statement's author," (Bennett, 2010). People are more likely to judge easy-to-read statements as true. This means that perceived beauty as an aesthetic of pleasure, and judged truth have a common foundational experience, namely processing fluency. "Indeed, experiments showed that beauty is used as an indication for the correctness of mathematical solutions. This supports the idea that beauty is intuitively seen as truth," (Reber, Brun, Mitterndorfer, 2008). Topolinski and Strack posit that in fact, "processing fluency may be one of the foundations of intuition," (Topolonski,

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Strack, 2009). Such foundations of intuition in the process of conceiving art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive fluency, urges me to posit that if the interaction of a person with the environment is effective, such as the interaction within an environment of art, be it at home, at school, online, in books, or in a gallery, that person will process information intuitively as positive and hence be enabled to employ sufficient analytical thinking to arrive at a sound judgment about any situation in which the person finds him/herself.

1.4. Beauty and aesthetic judgment

As such, Reber's (*et al*) propositions are persuasive as he pursues the relation between beauty and various aesthetic judgments, such as judgments of aesthetic value, both positive and intrinsic. "In our analysis we follow a philosophical tradition and define beauty as a pleasurable subjective experience that is directed towards and object (such as art) and not mediated by intervening reasoning," (Reber, *et al*, 2004, p.365, bracket added). Their analysis agrees with the positive and intrinsic value of beauty in beauty's provision of pleasure, without any reasoning about an expected utility. In other words, the positive value of an aesthetic of pleasure cannot be answered by simply asking, what does it do, or what is it good for? Instead of judging beauty in an objectified and grand manner of art's contribution to the process of cognitive dynamics, often the result of an immediate reaction to personal taste, beauty is to be judged subjectively in context of more simple judgments that lie beneath the surface of the perceiver's experience such as figural goodness, pleasantness, skill, technique, and compositional and colour values. Getting *to know* a work of art engages an analytical process of cognitive dynamics that rises above the obvious. I have experienced a reversal of people's adverse reactions to my abstractions when

informed about a greater dynamic below the surface of the work itself. That is not to say such reversals are the result of cataclysmic encounters between the object perceived and the perceiver. In fact, Reber (*et al*) refers to such encounters as "mild aesthetic experiences," (Reber, *et al,* 2004, p.365). The core of their proposal is straightforward. The more fluently the perceiver can process and object, the more positive will be his or her aesthetic response.

These responses are based on four specific assumptions (Reber, *et al*, 2004, p.365, 366).

1. The assumption that objects differ in the fluency with which they can be processed. Needless to say, such is evident in the degree of response for example to a perceiver's reaction to a major public work of art or installation, as compared to the viewing of a small etching.

2. The assumption that processing fluency is essentially hedonic in its subjective interpretation of pleasure. One need but compare the experiences of viewing figurative work, especially the nude, and the proverbial landscape.

3. This processing of fluency enhances aesthetic appreciation to turn the subjective experience into an evaluative judgment. This is the domain of all who choose to expose their intellect and emotions to works of art. It is not just the domain of curators and "thumbs-up-or-down" critics.

4. The impact of fluency as a function of cognitive dynamics is subject to expectations and attribution. Notorious is the perceiver's reaction to the fabled *Mona Lisa*, as they step into

the Louvre's inner sanctum to realize how small Da Vinci's painting actually is, contrary to media-driven expectations.

These assumptions are supported by "evidence from research in social and cognitive psychology as well as empirical aesthetics," (Reber, *et al,* 2004, p.366). However, framing the development of their perceptual fluency theory lies outside the scope and objectives of this research project. Suffice it to say that their conclusion is expedient. "People draw on fluency to make a variety of non-aesthetic judgments," affected for example by such judgments of "loudness, duration, familiarity, and even truth," (Reber, *et al,* 2004, p.366). Reber continues his discourse by addressing a number of variables that influence aesthetic judgments, variables such as stimulus repetition or recognition speed, that is the *ease* with which an object is perceived, symmetry that prefers patterns be they realistically attractive or abstract, prototypicality in what is considered to be an average of a perceiver's cognitive dynamics, priming through repeated exposure, cultural influences of taste, and preferential relationships between beauty and truth, (Reber, *et al*, 2004, Pp.369-371).

Unkelbach affirms the same position. "The fluency of cognitive processes influences many judgments. Fluently processed statements (as in artistic statements), are judged to be true. Fluently processed instances are judged to be frequent, and fluently processed names (such as Michelangelo, Rothko, Gould, and Verstraete) are judged to be famous," (Unkelbach, 2006, p.339, brackets added). He proposes a model that conceptualizes cognitive fluency as a cue whose impact on judgments depends on its ecological validity, a validity interpreted through paradigms used in experiments that comprise "three phases: a learning phase, a training phase, and a recognition phase," (Unkelbach, 2006, p.340). The experiments demonstrated the effect of

feedback from all three phases on cognitive fluency, but only within the domain of recognition to affect judgments. Therefore, Unkelbach proposes the worthwhile pursuit of further application in research regarding processing experiences.

Yet, despite the positive construct within which these proposals, positions, and assumptions are tabled, they nevertheless address challenges to the theoretical basis for their respective concepts. These can best be summarized as a series of inherent questions about their research.

Why do people sometimes prefer complex rather than simple stimuli?

How does the perceiver elicit experiences that find beauty is understood as uniformity in variety as opposed to simple stimuli, and simplicity is found in complexity?

How are perceptions outmaneuvered by implicit or explicit meaning of the work of art?

How does one measure art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics when the perceiver it either an expert or a novice?

Even though these questions point to a need for more research, the central thesis of Reber's proposal stands affirmed in their position "that processing fluency is experienced as positive and that this experience, in turn, results in more favourable judgments," (Reber, *et al,* 2004. p.374)

1.5. Exposure to truth enables critical judgment

Reber and Unkelbach take their propositions so far as to posit processing fluency within epistemological theory to justify belief. Things or beliefs affirmed come by repetition. "The thing affirmed comes by repetition to fix itself in the mind in such a way that it is accepted in the end as a demonstrated truth," Gustave Le Bon, 1895-1960, (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.563). They examine two routes by which repeated exposure to truth enables critical judgment. Two routes, which proposed in context of art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics, further elaborate the extent to which art and art appreciation may be included.

One route is a "convergent validity," (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.564) which assumes in my research context of *Think Art Think Smart* ™,(CAD, 2010) that when exposure to the images of art is interrupted for any length of time, recall of a specific work of art or artist, converges with whatever timeframe of the interruption and a favourable recognition factor about the images, to render the truth of the cognitive dynamic as valid.

The other route is a "non-referential or repetition-truth link," (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.564) that assumes in the absence of any interruption or delay, or without any recognition factor, the repeated statements, that is, exposure to art and artists, is nevertheless valid. However, Reber and Unkelbach do not qualify their statement of truth as being either negative or positive, and as such it would appear their discussion diverges from the cognitive theoretical assumptions of this research, such as the positive construct and the inherently positive capital values of an aesthetic of pleasure and beauty. The ability of critical thought to discern the difference between what is good and what is not, between styles and techniques, between representational and non-representational, between positive and negative, increases the perceiver's ability to make positive judgments, making discernment an integral component of critical thought. If as Reber and

Unkelbach say, that the ease of processing results in increased belief in a statement such as about the art or artist, then they further posit that the reason is because processing fluency is hedonically marked (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.567), pertaining to the pursuit of self-pleasure as the only moral standard for life and therefore always positive.

But is it?

The pursuit of self-pleasure as a moral standard needs affirmation in context of a positive construct, if indeed such self-pleasure is to be of value. Therein lies the weakness of Reber and Unkelbach's argument. Is truth positive, or can it be negative as well? In other words, is the density of positive information a greater truth than an absence of density or density of negative information? If art is a function of perceiver's cognitive dynamics, must the truth of art only be positive or can it be negative as well? If, as Le Bon presumed Napoleon to have said, "the thing affirmed comes by repetition," is it repetition of positive or negative? Is affirmation the only cue for truth? There remains therefore a need to extrapolate positive truth or negative from the epistemologically justified concepts of truth.

Even though Reber and Unkelbach "combine findings from cognitive psychology on the role of processing fluency in truth judgments with epistemological theory on justification of belief," (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.563), they do not address their findings to differentiate between positive and negative truth. Repeated exposure to a statement may increase the subjective ease, with which that statement is processed, and this may increase processing fluency, but any increase in the probability that the statement is judged to be true, remains questionable.

In context of their experiments in processing fluency, "as measured by decisions of pronunciation and context of words used, demonstrated better results for regular words than for

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non-words and higher for regular non-words then for a regular non-words". (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.567), I propose to extrapolate from their findings that the ease of processing fluency as measured by decisions of what is good art and what is not, is higher for representational realism than it is for non-representational abstract, or which as some viewers would argue to be decisions about art or non-art.

Reber and Unkelbach examine three determinants of processing fluency that are well-established in cognitive literature: repetition, structure, and perceptual features (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.565).

Repetition affects conscious retrieval from memory.

Structure is the mechanism behind repetition, including the repetition of phenomena such as the stimuli of viewing and understanding art. Stimuli therefore are processed with higher fluency. However, they question "whether it is difficult to determine whether structural similarity indeed is connected to truth. Even if the statements one has encountered originally have been true, it is easily conceivable that a structurally similar statement does not correspond with reality," (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.566).

The third determinant of processing fluency is perceptual features. "In the perceptual world, there are many features that increase perceptual fluency, which is the subjective case with which the stimulus can be perceived," (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.566). Such features include the attributes of art mentioned earlier such as form, skill, craftsmanship, representational, non-representational, color, line, form, gesture, etc.

But, if one accepts these determinants as a universal mechanism to suggest that people interpret processing fluency in terms of the truth value of a statement, there remains the possibility of a "sleeper effect," or *dumbing down* (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.577). As fluency

is positively correlated to the truth of a statement, a fluently processed statement is more likely to be interpreted as being true, even in the absence of evidence that supports its truth. This is often the result of persuasion, product marketing, political campaigns, news media biases, hidden agendas, conceived to dumb down the consumer. As such a sleeper effect finds it way into the cognitive dynamics of art appreciation when people are exposed to very few artists, or simply persuaded to extol only the virtues of for example Canada's Group of Seven, which over a long period of time through repetition, structure, and perceptual features leave people dumbed down enough to think or conclude it is the only Canadian art around. It has been shown that "people are not always able to jointly represent the content of the statement and the credibility of the source and therefore commit the error to judge a familiar statement from an untrustworthy source is being true," (Reber, Unkelbach, 2010, p.579).

From this can be drawn the conclusion that a processing fluency account might then be able to explain how people justify their beliefs and doctrines without clear external criteria. People may assign truth to such facts comprising beliefs and doctrines, simply because they have been part of a given cultural tradition, or given denomination or given arts heritage, where perceived truths are extremely easier to process, while possible alternatives are new and difficult.

1.6. The processing of positive information

I have examined existing research to demonstrate a speed advantage in the processing of positive information (Reber, Schwarz, Winkielman, 2004) as an extension of a cognitive process, which I will examine later in context of a positive construct. I now turn to position the effect of such a speed advantage of processing positive information as being the cause of a higher density

of positive information in memory, known as the density hypothesis, (Unkelbach, *et al*, 2008). The function of art with cognitive dynamic roots in the perceiver, results in a aggregate of positive information. When exposed or retrieved through an aesthetical experience of pleasure and beauty, this aggregate will affect the subject's ability to think critically when placed in context of intrinsic and extrinsic understanding and appreciation of fine art. These are, for example: classical traditions of drawing form, gesture, light and shadow, narrative, and experience. In turn, these expand the subject's databank of aesthetic pleasure in the mind, and as a result continue to affect the subject's ability to make informed and quality decisions that apply to the need of such decisions in everyday life. Investigating this concept I asked the question, could the concept of a density of positive information fit into the predictive framework of a model?

For more than a decade, Marshall McLuhan, in collaboration with his son, Eric, sought the desired predictive framework, consisting of a set of guides or methods that could be tested against any, and all human artifacts. What they discovered became known as the laws of media, articulated as four questions. "The tetrad was found by asking, 'what general verifiable (that is, testable) statements can be made about all media'?" (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988, p.7). This tetrad and its four questions were integral to the development of McLuhan's communications theories. "Simply knowing in advance which transformations to expect, knowing where and how to look, lets you predict the effects of any new device or technique before they actually appear in time and experience," (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988, p.7,8). Their questions include attributes to be discussed in this paper:

1. What does the work of art extend, enhance, accelerate, intensify or enable?

2. When pushed beyond the limit of its potential, will art reverse into its original characteristics?

3. What does art displace or obsolesce, that is, render relatively obsolete without dominant power or influence?

4. What does art retrieve from the past that had been formerly obsolesced?

McLuhan arranged these four questions, or probes, in appositional form as a tetrad of four quadrants. The tetrad structure is meant to suggest that these four aspects occur simultaneously, and are inherent properties of the artifact under consideration. In addition, specific arrangements of enhance, reverse, obsolesce, and retrieve, can be "read' in the tetrad as a clockwise motion or the relationships illustrated by pairing the four quadrants. "These four questions, which we call a tetrad, can be asked (and the answers checked) by anyone, anywhere, at any time, about any human artifact," (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988, p.7).

To unpack the tetrad and discover its application are the first steps in recognizing McLuhan's position on artifacts.

I will extrapolate McLuhan's position to include art as artifact. "All of man's artifacts, whether language, or laws, or ideas and hypotheses, (or art) or tools (inventions such as the printing press and moveable type), or clothing, or computers, are extensions of the physical human body or the mind." (McLuhan, Zingrone.1995, p.374, brackets added). McLuhan's laws of media explore these extensions by using the tetrad as a template to observe the operation and

effects of human artifacts on man and society. It does so by examining to what extent the effects are enhanced, accelerated, intensified or enabled by the transformation of time and space from a pre-print era to the print revolution. Researchers use McLuhan's tetrad to deconstruct the medium as a message, independent of content, to measure the change of scale, pace and patterns, that the medium introduced into human affairs and subsequent human actions by imposing a new environment and new sensibilities upon its users. In terms of art and the density hypothesis, the template fits, that is, to deconstruct art as a message (positive construct – capital value) independent of content (meaning, allegory, metaphor, abstraction, etc.), to measure the change of scale, pace and patterns, that art has introduced into human affairs and subsequent human actions by imposing a new or changed environment and new or changed sensibilities upon its users.

In social terms, the artist can be regarded as a navigator who gives adequate compass bearings in spite of magnetic deflection of the needle by the changing play of forces. So understood, the artist is not a peddler of ideals or lofty experiences. He is rather the indispensable aid to action and reflection alike, (McLuhan, Parker, 1968, p.238). The function of the artist in correcting the unconscious bias of perception in any given culture can be betrayed if it merely repeats the bias of the culture instead of readjusting it. In fact, stated McLuhan, "it can be said that any culture which relies merely on its direct antecedents is dying. In this sense the role of art is to create the means of perception by creating counter environments that open the door of perception to people otherwise numb in non-perceivable situations," (McLuhan, M., Parker, H. 1968. p.241). But, the possibility exists that in my research I am trying too hard to press my concepts into McLuhan's predictive framework. McLuhan had his critics, but McLuhan was never tempted by the academic virtue of carefully qualifying his statements. In fact, "when accused of purveying half truths, he often defended himself with the remark, worthy of Lenin,

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that half a brick can break a window quite as well as a whole brick," (Munday, 2003). Yet, as Munday points out ,"overstating causes or effects, logical leaps, non sequiturs, endless repetition and *reductio ad absurdum* arguments do not engender academic confidence," (Munday, 2003). However academics are often guilty of the same excesses in their enthusiasm to make sport out of McLuhan's scholarly inadequacies, yet it is they themselves who further the sport of excesses by a determinism to turn abstract processes and concepts into a science.

But these are not grounds on which we can easily dismiss McLuhan's insights, as history has proven. The processing of positive information no doubt found its earliest roots in the printing press, but the technology affected society profoundly right into the electronic digital age. McLuhan has therefore performed a most valuable service. But, says Munday (Munday, 2003), as he quotes Elizabeth Eisenstein: "he (McLuhan) has also glossed over multiple interactions that occurred under widely varying circumstances in a way that may discourage further study. It follows that we need to think less metaphorically and abstractly, more historically and concretely about the sort of effects that were entailed," (Eisenstein 1979, 129). However, the value for media studies related to McLuhan's *the medium is the message*, cannot be separated from the contested value of McLuhan's thesis on media. But while the intellectual challenge of taking him seriously is "similar to panning for gold in a river of silt, there is nevertheless gold to be found there," (Munday, 2003). It is unfortunate that McLuhan's ideas are still met with hostility in some intellectual circles. Because McLuhan's work elevates the importance of media as the prime shaper of human destiny, he insisted that the study of media is imperative for our cultures very survival.

1.7. The dialectical model

McLuhan's predictive framework became the basis of my dialectical model, with further development through the integration of Zimmer's model, (McLuhan, Verstraete, Zimmer, 2010).

Zimmer's dialectical model (Zimmer, 2005, p.4) of 5 quadrants compares to McLuhan's model of 4 quadrants. In both, each part of the tetrad can be applied without having to read the tetrad sequentially, clockwise or counter-clockwise (Appendix 5). The model is dialectical because it examines statements logically, as by question and answer to establish validity. The proposition is that scientific research, as applied to media, can also be applied to art's process of positive information, including the intuitive and methodological processes of the creation of art. Zimmer's media ecology theories (Zimmer, 2005), support the idea that the tetrad can be a dialectical model for examining art to determine the validity of such theoretical support. Media ecology studies examine biases with an aim to understand how communications media, including forms of art, design and new media, help create the environment in which people and society interact, and how the arts in general play a major role is such interaction. The relationship between art and a density of positive information can be examined by creating an effective model for scientific observation to manage critical thought and the effects of such a model on society. Zimmer integrates three theories in his model.

In brief, he explains that Embodied Theory is integral to media ecology studies and argues that "many technologies are designed as a reflection of the biases of their inventors " (Zimmer, 2005, p.2). The antithesis of Embodied Theory, namely Exogenous Theory states "that outside forces significantly shape how technology is designed, deployed, and used," (Zimmer,

2005, pp.2,3). The artist faces a recurring challenge to determine how much of his or her art is artist-driven (embodied) or market-driven (exogenous).

Interactional Theory (Zimmer, 2005, p.3) is a theory of biases based on use, utility, and interaction, intuition and methodology. It is here, at the crossroads of media laws and media ecology, where the artist interacts with embodied and exogenous theories of biases, and the laws of media. It is here in the relationship between art and critical thought, in context of a new *pneumaist* and positive worldview, where the model serves its dialectical purposes. Therefore, Zimmer's three media ecology theories support the idea that the tetrad can be a dialectical model for examining art in the context of my research as applied to the density of positive information and the processing of such information. The hybrid tetrad (Appendix 6) demonstrates the model's ability to present a clear image of interaction between the perceiver and a density of positive information comprising art, as the portal through which cognition and the aesthetic are experienced. The art of Michelangelo, Rothko and Gould becomes a dialectical model of media laws and applied media ecology theory for understanding art and critical thought, posited as a higher density of positive information in memory, known as the density hypothesis. This density is cultivated by reflection, interpretation, and appreciation, to develop an individual's capacity for critical thought.

As a Dialectical Model (Appendix 6), I have expanded the classic McLuhan tetrad to adopt Michael Zimmer's model for media ecology studies (Zimmer, 2005). On one occasion in his narrative, Canadian drawing master John Gould's fellow student Paul McDonald, at the Ontario College of Art, addressed the indulgence of an instructor. "Come on, what the hell are you giving us? Just say it in plain English, buddy." (Gould, 1996,p.17). This was in reply to the particular instructor, who indulged in too much philosophic speculation, by extolling the artist's

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profound depth of feeling, and to provide a political background for the artist's work. "But John Gould and his fellow students did not want political or philosophical speculations. They wanted hard facts," (Gould, 1996, p.17). But how to continue the examination of philosophical speculations and hard facts, and with a model?

Even my humble attempt at examining the true measure of Michelangelo's poetic virtuosity, the depth of Rothko's philosophy, and the pragmatism of Gould, within the framework of a McLuhan tetrad, left me satisfied in positioning the four quadrants of enhance, reverse, obsolesce, and retrieve, as a model of a "complex retrieval system," (McLuhan, 1970) of archetypes, which I spoke of earlier. But, in this paper I have chosen to limit my examination of Michelangelo's contributions in each *tetradian* quadrant, to the actual text of individual sonnets, and let the reader retrieve his or her own archetypes by listening to the voice of Michelangelo's art.

Zimmer's theories support the idea that the tetrad can be a dialectical model for examining art, including Rothko's philosophy of art. Each of McLuhan's fours laws: enhance, reverse, obsolesce, and retrieve are prefaced by a pertinent question to help understand the properties of each medium. Applying the questions to Gould and Rothko, as well as Michelangelo's writings, will position the tetrad as a suitable dialectical model to expand my research of art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive processing dynamics.

1.7.1. Enhance: what does the model enhance? What does the work of art enhance or intensify or make possible or accelerate? What does art enhance?

"Nature made every virtue

in a woman or a girl

only as training, up until this one

who today, in one moment, burns and freezes my heart." (Sonnet 19, Saslow, 1991)

(Additional quotes from Michelangelo's poetry are indicated by Sonnet No.)

Rothko posits the laws of vision as an enhancement of a "common enveloping atmosphere, with the shared common objective of Renaissance artists to give credence to the world of appearances," (Rothko, 2004, p.32). Disciplines such as linear and aerial perspective, chiaroscuro (the manipulation of light, and colour), accelerated the development of the new 20th century method of representing the essence of representationalism through the abstraction of line, form, shape and senses. As such, old and new, traditional and contemporary techniques and technologies, can extend in reach and frequency the increase of top-of-mind awareness of art's role in cultural identity and critical thought. By stepping beyond classical traditions, however, the tetradian enhancement went from an investigation of sensation by external means of touch, seeing, hearing, and smelling, to include an analysis of the very organs themselves that caused the sensations. Rothko's art intensified and accelerated creativity, innovation, and ideation. His prototypical work including exploration, invention outside the box, expressionist theory, and new art theories would eventually extend his reach and frequency of body and mind through the voice of his art. Whether by a McLuhan extension of a car from one's feet, to a microscope as an extension of the eye, an engine as an extension of our feet and arms, a library as an extension of (the language of) the mind, Rothko's drawing or painting can be seen as extensions of the language of the artist's mind. A related enhancement or enhancement is the distinction Rothko makes repeatedly between his technical skill and his ability to communicate something profound.

"He draws a clear line between illustration, or design, or decoration, and the production of fine art," (Rothko, 2004, p.xix) However, only one, fine art, stepped beyond the generalization of plastic decadence of the others, to intensify the aesthetic of pleasure.

Despite a deficiency in colour perception, Gould said: "My deficiency served me well over the next few years. It forced me to focus on the glory and richness of the grey scale, to look for subtle gradations of tone, to appreciate print, photography and film. It forced me to pay attention to drawing," (Gould, 1996, p.15). His deficiency accelerated or enhanced his perceptions of the fine art of drawing.

Enhancement also introduced Gould to new media. While working on a series of films by the National Film Board of Canada, he created a series of drawings that were used like photographs as a means of reference. The photographs were taken by a fellow artist, a photographer who worked on the project with Gould. "Posture, action, costume, even composition were often totally reconstructed from them." (Gould, 1996, p.40). New media also helped Gould to experience performance art, especially in local gatherings of artists at their favorite pub. He observed the growth of new media with musicians playing live on the bandstand, while simultaneously appearing on a tv screen, with dancers, surrounded by the effects of light pulsation into the crowd. "Great shades of Marshall McLuhan - the media age is upon us," (Gould, 1996, p.67).

In this new McLuhan media age, I discovered a reason for abstraction as an enhancement of my conventional disciplines. "I feel like Michelangelo, who finally felt released into a greater abstraction of his work, when he was in his mid to late seventies. Only then did he feel confident he had mastered enough of creativity's language to venture into abstraction. His abstractions were essentially elongated limbs and deliberately unfinished portions of his marble sculptures,"

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(Verstraete, 1997, p.85). Inside Rothko's common enveloping atmosphere, and Gould's deficiency that accelerated and enhanced his perceptions of the fine art of drawing, I found my own answers to enhancement.

After decades of drawing, designing, and creating, I believe I have earned the right to venture into abstraction. My portfolios of Academy (representational) drawings and Renaissance drawings are a witness that I am a master of the craft of fine art drawing, and that I am thoroughly steeped in the quality disciplines of classical drawing. Therefore, I know the language with which I have created art for all these years, a language ready for abstraction.

Abstract art is a unique discipline because it trains the mind to reduce expression to the simplest of terms. The discipline of reduction (deconstructivism, minimalism) is an integral part of the artist's creative roots. This discipline allows the artist to enhance his or her abstractions quickly and efficiently, without compromising traditional roots.

Abstract painting is similar to faith, sharing a common sentiment, namely that of seeing things not as they are. It is a knowing of things *unseen*, yet still very much present, a cognitive process that becomes part of the abstract expression. The abstractions allow me to take each part of a composition, paint (or draw) each part in the language of art I know (shape, colour, texture, etc.), and then rearrange the parts any way I desire, based on a beauty of composition and design that contributes to the overall voice of the work.

1.7.2. Reverse: what does the model reverse into when pushed to the extremes? What does art produce or become when pressed to an extreme? What does art reverse into when pushed to extremes?

"We seem to live in an age of armchair critics, and natural outgrowth of the now burgeoning contemporary art market. Artists were left with little choice but to reign mute with angst, undergoing some inner struggle with the creative demon while they appeared in openings of their artwork. Yes, there were professional reasons for withdrawal (reversal when pushed to extremes), because every opening saw verbose apologists running off in all directions in the metaphor derby," (Gould, 1996, p.7, bracket added). John Gould wanted his students to forgo muteness for the natural articulation of the artist. That is why his sessions or studio critiques, produced stirring afternoons in his workshops. That was when John Gould was happiest as a teacher of drawing.

John Gould like many predecessors, believed that the answer lay not in style or superficial gesture, but in a sense memory of his pupils of their cognitive fluency, a path that he visualized in the study of drawing for himself and his students. Superficiality was a form of hyper realism with results looking like slick renderings. "Rendered right into the ground. Dead," (Gould, 1996, p.71). He studied the body to reassert its humanity and to join a long line of qualitative research into human form, from the Renaissance forward. Some students were there primarily for drawing. "Drawing was a way to get back into the contest," (Gould, 1996, p.71). Gould never believed therapy was a misguided motivation in the arts, and he had seen good things happen to people who decided to study drawing.

"The soul tries a thousand remedies in vain;

since I was captured, it's been struggling

in vain to get back on its earlier road.

The sea, and the mountain, and the fire with the sword:

I live in the midst of all these together.

The one who's deprived me of my mind, and taken

away my reason, won't let me up the mountain." (Sonnet 88)

Rothko speaks of an appearance of perfection that is a synthetic act, a reversal of the Platonic ideal of human form. The ideal became synthetic because the perfection of a form was based on the exact image of the object drawn or painted by direct comparison to the actual form, yet, the perfection relied on artistic license to push reality beyond the real. Renaissance portraits were not literal perfections of the subject, but an idealized form in which the subject wished to be perceived. In whatever manner the artist decided to represent the subject, he had to "affirm the reality of appearances by distorting peculiarities," (Rothko, 2004, p.69) perhaps akin to the modern illusions of digitally enhanced photographs. Hence he reversed "the painting of an apple into an 'apple-*ness*',"(Rothko, 2004, p.69) - a like into a like-*ness.* This reversal or exogenous theory, posits a reversal into the biases of market-driven art, including market demands, individual tastes, public, corporate, and private collections, criticism, notoriety, and price. In fact, because of such demands, every innovation in art has within itself the seeds of its reversal. From McLuhan's over-extended automobile culture that is stressed by traffic jams and smog, longing for a pedestrian lifestyle, to an over-extended popularity in the entertainment culture of modern art, or what Rothko called "the cult of materialism," (Rothko, 2004, p.102) there grows a longing for a revival of traditional, classical art, as is evidenced by an increase in the number of realism academies that began in the last twenty years, from Toronto to Seattle, from Stockholm to Florence, just to name few.

Michelangelo may have failed to get "up the mountain" (Sonnet 88), but Gould hoped his "drawing was a way to get back into the contest," (Gould, 1996, p.71). Rothko lamented "an appearance of perfection that is a synthetic act, a reversal of the Platonic ideal of human form," (Rothko, 2004, p.69). In turn, I experienced, that when pushed to extremes, the model reverses into rejection. My personal *Salon Des Refusés* began in 1996, when I began to chronicle the number of grant applications for which I had been refused. By the year 2000, the amount of grant applications refused totaled $160,000. That's when I ended the count. Too extreme. Too depressing. My submissions included a plea to honour the fine art of classical drawing, claimed by many prominent artists to be the backbone of all visual arts. Yet, there was comfort among my peers in context of these reversals. One of Canada's drawing masters. John Newman, explained in a letter to me (November,1999), that the reason for drawing's rejection was a cognitive deficiency among government agencies, curators and collectors, who did not know the language of drawing. I concluded that because they did not understand that language of drawing, they could not understand the art form. For that reason they could not offer substantial commentary on drawing, nor judge its contribution to art, and therefore drawing's entitlement to support. If they are to judge drawings as worthy of grants, recognition and support, they must know the language of drawing.

1.7.3. Obsolesce: what does the model make obsolete? After enhancement and reversal, what is pushed aside, displaced, or rendered obsolete by the new technology of contemporary art-making? What does art make obsolete?

"Everything must come to death.

Once our eyes were fully whole,

with a light within each cavern;

now they're empty, black and frightful:

that's what time brings in its wake." (Sonnet 21)

"While it saddens and pains me, I hold dear in part

each thought that brings back to my memory

times gone by, and asks for an accounting

of the days whose loss cannot be remedied." (Sonnet 294)

Rothko renders obsolete the concept of myth as a loss of the artist's notion of reality, be it plastic or real (Rothko, 2004, p.95). "The whole artistic process since the Renaissance, and exemplified by neo-classical revivals of David, Poussin, and Ingres, can be described as a nostalgic yearning for a myth and a search for new symbols that will enable art to symbolize again the utmost fullness of reality," (Rothko, 2004, p.96). But the paradox became obvious when those yearnings of flesh and spirit "found no new symbolic representations of human action that could duplicate the nobility and infiniteness of those represented in the plastic unity of classicism," (Rothko, 2004, p.96). With the advent of modern art, artist and perceiver were left with a basic duality that called for a choice between the representation of objectivity, that is, conceptual abstractions, and the representation of subjective reality, that is, realism and impressionism. However, such a choice, when driven by technology and new media can make further obsolete such art disciplines as art theory, classicism, traditional methods and media, original art, archivalism (the need to preserve), artist-driven styles and *isms*. The new media

subsumes the older forms of media. New technologies keep expanding the limited number of senses and motor skills. The content of the old technology becomes incorporated into a new and further reaching technology.

Writing made speech obsolete, just as printing made writing obsolete, and *Photoshop* has all but made drawing obsolete. The old technology is not eliminated, but loses its initial reputation and effectiveness. Drawing with a mechanical stylus on a tablet, or using a finger to manipulate touch-screen applications, subsumes drawing on paper with a pencil. On an aggregate scale, the progressive obsolescence continues: entertainment subsumes critical thought, quantity subsumes quality, décor subsumes art, mark-making subsumes craft and virtuosity, deconstructivism subsumes classicism, copies subsume original art, market-driven subsumes artist-driven, novelties and fads subsume traditions, and theory subsumes practice.

It was also the age when art became "an endless parade of vinyl bags, and vacuum-formed assemblies or installations, not always seen as valid. Some of these works of art constituted a brutal documentary record of the 1960's, with less aesthetic value than visual records of time and space that served other ages." (Gould, 1996, p.69). Painting and sculpture became a wasteland where many artists opted out and suffered from a pathetic rigidity of spirit. However in contemporary new media there appeared some fresh new voices. Artists like John Gould, turned the weary impotence of much contemporary gallery art into a revival of fine art drawing. "In order to survive in the so-called media age, art will have to escape the death grip of international style. Its artists will have to stop listening to writers, and start looking into themselves again," (Gould, 1996, p.69) and not be the fool of mere public sentiment.

But is Rothko content to leave the fool obsolete, an icon of the past? Therein lies a weakness in his case. He leaves the perceiver and researcher with no further clue as to whether the fool is today's artist as well, especially when, "instead of one voice, we have dozens issuing demands, with no longer one truth, no single authority, and instead a score of would-be (contemporary) masters who would usurp their place, all full of histories, statistics, proofs, demonstrations, facts and quotations," (Rothko, 2004, p.4). Michelangelo's lament is Rothko's lament because obsolescence reveals a poignant truth about Rothko. "Here is an artist who tried to capture his notion of reality, his idea of the truth, in every painting, but he can't get anyone to notice," resulting in his negative opinions of those artists "who were producing derivative and soulless art to capture the public's attention," (Rothko, 2004, p.xviii). Perhaps obsolescence was in Rothko's eyes the rendering of himself as obsolete, when according to Christopher Rothko, the elder Rothko, "sat upon his proverbial dung heap, cursing the fates that kept him there," (Rothko, 2004. p.xviii). There appeared to be no room anymore for the older traditions of formality, as abstract expressionism subsumed classicism. Rothko's argument is this: "Art provides us with a biological immortality, which involves the process of procreation, the extension of oneself into the world of the perceptible environment, very much as Shakespeare expresses his sonnets. This relates the artistic process to every other essential process: one that is biological and inevitable," (Valerio, 2010).

However, could obsolescence become a positive model of influence in contrast to Rothko's rendering obsolete the concept of myth as a loss of the artist's notion of reality? If what is pushed aside, displaced, or rendered obsolete, is an art movement, entrenched in popular sentiment, is not Gould's concept of disentanglement an innovation instead of obsolescence? In his twenties, John Gould spent his time disentangling from schools and family to receive

wisdom. The Ontario College of Art began the process by giving him a path to follow. "He would be an artist regardless of whether or not drawing was next to impossible, because everybody exhibited paintings of orange leaves, and the Group of Seven dominated the galleries. One had to paint northern woods or dark brown sheep on hillsides," (Gould, 1996, p.30). John Gould didn't even paint. He drew people. "But then Mexico took him by the throat, filling sketchbook after sketchbook," (Gould, 1996, p.39). Mexico became the transition from obsolescence to innovation. The aesthetic of pleasure and positive capital became exotic locations like Mexico and Vera Cruz, a visual orgy with bodies bursting with life and movement counterpoint against complex Hispanic architecture," (Gould, 1996, p.39). What took him by the throat in Mexico would play itself out again in many other locations. He would sit in a square or marketplace to draw people. A new generation was painting vibrant abstractions, manipulating the figure in novel ways, responded to New York rather than Algonquin Park, and he did it all in Toronto. "As I drew and watched, I could see a lifetime of work unfolding right on the street. I was in love with all of it: what I was doing on paper, the people, the food, the climate," (Gould, 1996, p.40). I had personally experienced such an obsolescence turned innovation, when the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto took me "by the throat," during my four years (1964-1968) at the Ontario College of Art. Each year, we were given a week to wander through the expanse of the winter fair in Toronto. It was a taste of John Gould's Mexican environment. Like Gould, each daily field trip to the winter fair strengthened my conviction that I could draw, especially when drawing in public was never easy. I had to learn special strategies, to be retrieved later. As an artist I had to learn how to make myself a familiar part of the scene before drawing its people. In 1996, that strategy became standard procedure for my live coffee shop people sketching for over 15 years - and still counting.

Drawing demands intimate knowledge o*f sfumato, chiaroscuro, perspective, gesture, contour,* just to name a few. Drawing also demands personal intimacy towards the art form, a characteristic of art appreciation that forces curator, collector, and the curious to be transparent and vulnerable. One simply cannot reverse the tenets of drawing and judge it objectively. Drawing demands a personal view. Rejecting or reversing the classical artist and fine art drawing, threatens the cognitive and creative legacy of art, and reverses the intimacy of art's language into the sensationalism of the novel, notorious and *avant garde*.

1.7.4. Retrieve: what does the model retrieve that has been obsolesced earlier? What recurrence or retrieval of earlier actions and services is brought into play simultaneously by the new form of art? What does art retrieve that has been obsolesced earlier?

> *"But fire is not bound by such an image;*
> *for while it sears the sap out of green wood,*
> *it warms the chilled old man, then nourishes him."* (Sonnet 25)

> *"By now the springs and streams would certainly*
> *have had to dry up from my sighing so much,*
> *if I did not replenish them with my weeping."* (Sonnet 45)

> *"I keep on thinking about my former life,*
> *about what it was like before I loved you:*
> *no one ever had any regard for me,*

as I wasted my time every day from morning to night;

was I likely then to think of singing in verse,

or of making myself stand out from the rest of the crowd?

But now my name's made known, for good or ill,

and at least people are aware that I exist." (Sonnet 54)

But all was not lost. Rothko perceived modern art not as a denial but as an affirmation of the positive of art (Rothko, 2004, p.61). His new art forms such as the large canvasses of profound colour which he produced in his later years, retrieved "a process of more comprehensive synthesis" from his earlier process of disintegration or analysis of wanton destruction, only to "reassemble them and revivify" that body of work of the artist with the artists own breath of life, (Rothko, 2004, p.61). A successful new medium will retrieve and enhance a sense of appreciation for traditional skills that current media does not stimulate. Perhaps a sense of grandeur and awe. An older, perhaps outdated medium, when retrieved, has the possibility of addressing this sense or skill. Herein lie the roots of Zimmer's embodied theory, which examines the biases of the artist such as Rothko, and his longing to go back to artistic roots and basics, scholasticism, the Academy, revivalism, and "the power of art to explode on an unsuspecting world," (Schama, 2007), if not to simply gain the recognition he so long sought after. A successful work of art, such as Rothko's later monumental and enigmatic paintings, will retrieve and enhance a sense or skill that current new media does not stimulate. An older perhaps outdated medium, when retrieved, has the possibility of addressing both the senses and the artist's skill. This retrieval is perhaps most evident in fine art. Sensual overload, sense deprivation, sense cauterization, dumbing down, and mass amateurization, all have the

potential of creating a new demand for retrieval of traditional art forms to stimulate critical and original thought, and help the viewer discern between reality and perceptions of reality.

This interchangeable ebb and flow of McLuhan's laws across the tetrad model, furthered by the Zimmer's concepts of exogenous (reverse) and embodied (retrieve) theory, is the place where cognitive processing dynamics embrace interactional theory. At the centre of this model is the third of Zimmer's theories, an Interactional Theory of biases, based on use, utility, interaction, intuition and methodology. It is here, at the crossroads of media laws and media ecology, at the crossroads pain and pleasure, the classical and contemporary, decadence and sensuality, where artists such as Rothko and Gould interact with embodied and exogenous theories of biases, and the laws of media. It is here in the relationship between art, design, and new media, where the artist finds his or her place in a contemporary worldview of society and culture and the effects of art, only to realize, the *artist is the new media,* the navigator, the prophet, whether he lived centuries ago, or is the latest *wunderkind* in a postmodern world of contemporary art. "In social terms, the artist can be rewarded as a navigator who gives adequate compass bearings," and "the artist has the power to discern the current environment created by the latest technology," (McLuhan, Parker, 1968).

In light of Rothko and Michelangelo's monumental contributions to art and writing, Gould's drawings may appear to be conventional rather than innovate, or even a less-celebrated, new technology, but they were a retrieval nevertheless of earlier actions brought into play simultaneously by Gould's new form of drawing. John Gould had great ambitions as a draftsman. He adopted the position of resemblance as a byproduct of understood form. It was form captured in the gesture that made Masters great. "If you get the shape of the skull rendered in convincing lights and darks, the character caught in a gesture, then it will look like your sister.

Setting out just to copy the resemblance, the superficial markings produces a deadly form of art,"
(Gould, 1996, p.50). In a personal interview I was privileged to have with Gould in the summer
of 1998, he coined the phrase: "dead wildlife art and confectionery landscapes, as a scientific
collection of data without residence." He concluded: "My drawings were all I had to
say,"(Gould, 1996, p.53). And that made him contemporary, innovative, and prominent in the
expression of aesthetic pleasure with a process of positive information in his drawings. Standing
back to retrieve and get a good look, he rediscovered in ancient pictorial truth, the truth of great
Masters. "The figure could be a concept in his head but then he would see it projected into a
splotch of paint. In this manner the combination of his drawings with exciting shapes and
patterns were much like the abstract expressionists," (Gould, 1996, p.54). John Gould looked
back to the past to the shift of faces, places and ideas belonging to the Canadian past, from which
he harvested (retrieved) drawings with texture and vitality. His drawings are an anthology of his
knowledge, or to paraphrase McLuhan, Gould's drawings are an extension of himself.

2. The aesthetic of pleasure including art as method talk.

I continue with an analysis of the aesthetics of pleasure in the creative world of
Michelangelo, Rothko, and Gould, with the following observations.

Rothko affirmed the positive of art (Rothko, 2004, p.61), while Gould harvested drawings
that stood back to retrieve ancient pictorial truth, the truth of great Masters," (Gould, 1996, p.54),
and Michelangelo was comforted that his name was finally made known, for good or ill, and at
least people were aware that he existed (Sonnet 54). They leave a hope that the dialectical model

of the relationship between art and critical thought can retrieve that which had been obsolesced earlier. This retrieval has become evident in the revival of the Academy.

"Why is it so necessary to revive the traditions of the Academy? Because without these traditions, fine art flounders and will eventually amount to very little creativity with substance. Even though contemporary art throughout Postmodernism has rebelled against artistic tradition, it was a mistake to throw all convention out just because the air had become too heavy to breathe," (Verstraete, 1997, p.76) After every war there must be peace. After every storm there is calm. Retrieval is an opportunity to retreat and to reconnect. Whether the storms are family, teenagers, community or the torments of needing to expand creative horizons, in each case I long for a retreat, a moment to withdraw, regroup and remain assured I can still do it. After a series of abstractions, I need to take a deep breath and create a beautiful Academy drawing. It is a form of isolation to withdraw into the meticulous and painstaking discipline of composition, tone, chiaroscuro and hatching. It brings me back to my roots in classical drawing and the traditions of the Academy. Without roots art falls. Academy art gives one a sense of belonging to the rich traditions of our creative past. As a result I stand on firm ground, able to weather every popular *ism* in the arts, as well as remain confident by not giving in to every whim of marketers, gallery owners, or critics. Therefore I remain free to create my art of the spirit.

Contemporary society in the throes of modernism and postmodernism has fought long and hard to be free from laws concerning academy traditions of the 1860's, and has relished the new freedoms for some one hundred and fifty years. The joys of impressionist and expressionist abstraction have given the artist a whole new world of creative potential. Yet these freedoms have given birth to abuse where anything and everything goes *for the sake of art.* Nothing is truly sacred anymore. We advocate the abolition of all artistic censorship, but fail to see that even

though all things may be permissible, all things are not wise. Not all creativity constitutes wise choices. Only wisdom will endure throughout the ages to come. Anything else will be recorded as political, notorious, or mere publicity, and such art will leave the world cold and unaffected. Only art that chooses to employ wisdom in its socio-cultural bridge building, will extend the social discount rate beyond just for the moment, to leave those who follow in the footsteps of masters a legacy of hope in a hopeless world. Hope is a legacy for those who think critically and who choose art as a definitive process of cognitive fluency, emboldened by a positive construct and an aesthetic of pleasure.

The examination of Michelangelo's poetry, Rothko's philosophy, and Gould's writings, is in itself an aesthetic and sensual experience. But it also points to the need to address my research objectives by further demonstrating that this aesthetic and sensual experience, when posited in light of processing fluency, does indeed establish a link between the ability to think better critically when subjects are exposed to art over a long period of time and education.

> *"To people of good judgment, every beauty*
>
> *seen here resembles, more than anything else does,*
>
> *that merciful fountain from which we all derive."* (Sonnet 83)

The aesthetics of pleasure is the emotional element in a response to works of art and that *holiness* of natural beauty, distinct from direct experience to sensual or intellectual pleasure, an Kantian aesthetic theorists have accepted as a "disinterested and non-conceptual engagement with an object," to which Sheppard adds, "aesthetic pleasure is manifested in a desire to continue

or repeat the experience," (Bunnin, Yu, 2004). Research in the aesthetics of pleasure examines how people experience beauty, a concept later explored in this project as an essential component of the writings of Rolf Reber, who explored the idea of processing such aesthetic pleasures, and as a result proposed that aesthetic pleasure is a function of the perceiver's processing dynamics. The more fluently perceivers can process an object, such as an object of art, the more positive their aesthetic response. This in turn addresses, also later in this paper (art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics), the link to critical thought as a prerequisite of valued judgments.

Having selected a qualitative method study to conduct my inquiry, and in addition to my observations of artists in the dialectical model, I will further explore the contributions of artists Michelangelo, Mark Rothko, and John Gould, in context of aesthetic pleasure, that is, to instill in the viewer or the subject, a desire to continue or repeat the experience of artistic beauty. The aesthetic of pleasure is the aesthetic of beauty. The cases of Michelangelo, Rothko, and Gould, are bound by time and activity, and exist in research collected as detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. Over time, the procedure involved submitting their creative contributions to an intensive methodological examination using observation and textual analysis as the means of understanding their contributions when viewed in light of a dialectical model. My examination of the aesthetic pleasure of response to the art of Michelangelo, Rothko, and Gould, does not pretend to be an exhaustive commentary on art theory or art criticism. Nor does it presume to add to the discourse further analysis of their art. Instead, my research focuses on what the artists had to say *about* their work through their respective philosophies, poetry, and journals, and to which I have added my own commentary from decades of writings.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), composed more that three hundred sonnets, madrigals, and other poems throughout his lengthy creative journey. When the artist was seventy-two years old, he reached the pinnacle of literary recognition, as noted by the Florentine humanist scholar, Benedetto Varchi, who gave two public lectures on art theory, using Michelangelo's poetry as examples. As early as 1518, Michelangelo's sonnet 12, was set to music and published by the Veronese composer Bartolommeo Tromboncino, acknowledging Michelangelo's writings as among the earliest literary creations by any major visual artist. Fertile ground for examination by psychologists, psychoanalysts, and art historians, the bibliography of Michelangelo scholarship is vast, comprising both the discursive reflection of critical theory and the experiential dialogue of phenomenological theory. His poetry encompasses religious and Platonic ideology, consciousness-raising of the rituals of love, resistance to a mortal self, and the emancipation of the human spirit. "Michelangelo's poetic language is ambitious, employing a great variety of figures of speech and grammatical structures in an attempt to create a style that is formally complex, intellectually sophisticated, and aphoristically condensed in to 'high style'," (Saslow, 1991, p.41).

Mark Rothko (1903-1970) was one of the most important artists of the twentieth century, who created a new and impassioned form of abstract painting. From 1940 to 1941, he worked on a book manuscript to include a number of his essays and critical reviews with a thoughtful, intelligent, and opinionated voice, adding to the discourse of art theory in a contemporary art world. The manuscript was never published, until Rothko's son and daughter, Christopher and Kate, discovered the missing manuscript. Christopher Rothko undertook an exhaustive analysis of his father's writings, which in 2004, would result in a scholarly paper to form the introduction to the book, *The Artist's Reality, philosophies of art,* by Mark Rothko, (Rothko, 2004). To

understand Mark Rothko's philosophies in light of identifying the aesthetic pleasure of art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive processing dynamics, which is the essence of my research, the contributions of Christopher Rothko are integral to understanding Mark Rothko the artist, and are therefore considered of joint value with the original writings of 1940. My research design, using a methodological aspect of observation aims, to examine the writings of Mark Rothko as a construct of communications theory to further explore his contribution to the examination of the relationship between art and critical thought.

John Gould (1929-2010) was born in Toronto. During high school years in the 40's, he was a cartoonist for *Canadian High News* and played jazz clarinet with *The Three G's*, an Owen Sound group. In 1948, he enrolled at the Ontario College of Art and graduated in 1952. Throughout the 50's John Gould traveled extensively through Europe, stopping at galleries and museums en route. From free abstract shapes and fragments of figures in his "Ancestor Series" of the mid-sixties, on location drawings in Mexico and the Andes, a venture into a second career as film maker, to a long impressive list of exhibitions, John Gould continued to create "major works that go far beyond drawing as we commonly understand it", said Alan Jarvis of Canadian Art in 1961, (Gouod,1996). In 1966, he began exhibiting at the Roberts Gallery in Toronto. Beginning in the seventies John Gould's work included detailed cross-hatching with a dramatic shift to a pictorial style filled with autobiographical fragments, film sources and literary references, including total abstraction through a fusion of design and finished drawing.

I was first introduced to John Gould in 1990, when I found a copy of *The Drawn Image* (Kritzwiser,1979), at a book fair somewhere north of Toronto. The drawings in the book covered John Gould's work from 1959 to 1979.That's when I discovered the fine art of silverpoint drawing, a discipline John Gould had mastered, and one that I would pursue from 1990 on. I

began correspondence with John. In 1998, I was privileged to meet John Gould and his wife in person. We spent some quality time together poring over his work and my drawings, and watching old National Film Board 16mm films of John at work. But, it was in his journals where I got a closer look at this unique Canadian drawing master and his interpretations of the aesthetic of pleasure.

"I was a draftsman. What I couldn't seem to solve was how to bring drawing into sync with some of the exciting innovations in the world of painting, especially with the action painters of New York. By the late 1940s, De Kooning, Motherwell, Newman, Rothko, Pollock and Kline, were painting heroic pictures in a scale and ambition of gestural, nonfigurative style. I tried to make sense of the impenetrable prose which surrounded the movement," (Gould, 1996, p.23). It seemed to John Gould that the movement was mostly an invention of writers in an attempt to corral the untamable, built around the theme of Expressionism.

Yet, there remains something untamable in the aesthetic of pleasure as a pursuit of beauty. There is an inner beauty to created things and beings and there is an outer beauty to created things and beings. Inner beauty is a reflection of *character*. Outer beauty is a reflection of *beautiful works*. In the Greek language there are many words that describe such beauty. Outer beauty includes: the beauty of nature, shape, elegance and proportion. To this discourse of aesthetics and pleasure, framed in a positive continuum of beauty in art appreciation, I propose to add the following:

1. The beauty of classical disciplines. These include mass, composition, gesture, line, contour, light and dark, chiaroscuro, balance, rhythm, anatomy, draftsmanship, movement, planes, perspective, colour and media.

2. The beauty of freedom: when the outer beauty of nature, shape, elegance, and proportion is combined with beauty of classical disciplines to express inner beauty. The resulting artistic freedom will make those things often not considered beautiful truly beautiful. I recall the examples of my art student years, when drawing old buildings, ruins, elderly people, peculiar people, run-down alleys, and rusting objects, became a new canon of pleasure and beauty.

3. Abstract beauty through analysis of principles of design, harmony, rhythm, and colour to articulate an aesthetic of pleasure, including an academic interpretation of beauty related to nature or natural line and form, yet able to be expressed in art.

4. Living beauty by associating the tacit experiential knowledge of creating art *hands-on*, with music, dance, poetry and other performing arts.

5. Art of the spirit: beyond beauty of the human form, depth of the human spirit, and complexity of the human soul, expressed in canons of symbols, abstractions, colour theory, design structure, and other fine art techniques, yet resigned to a mechanical process to explain theory and a technique that glorifies the process above the person. (Verstraete, 1997, Pp.16-19)

But will the philosophy of Rothko, the poetry of Michelangelo, and the journals of John Gould, suffice in this research project to position my creative contributions in the same light of aesthetic pleasure as theirs? The answer is yes, and affirmed in a pleasure of artistic beauty I have posited as *Pneumaism.*

2.1. Pneumaism

In 1979, I first put to paper a concept titled: Pneumaism, or art of the spirit as the neo-symbolism of the third millennium. In style, pneumaism is a post-modern synthesis of impressionism, expressionism, symbolism and classicism. As for my motive, I aim to express in pneumaism the human spirit's inspiration by the Spirit of the Creator. For inspiration, pneumaism turns to whatever inspires me to draw. But pneumaism's inspiration is not simply illustration or allegory but *spiritual* using creative expression to touch the human soul. Interpretation of pneumaist art is by that same human spirit, (Verstraete, 1997, p.52). The concept took on theoretical form in an attempt to define an aesthetic of pleasure. Pneumaism became my ultimate form of art to connect to the Creator. I hope that from Post Modernism's ashes of destruction will rise a hope for mankind and an artistic revival in a *nouveau-moderne* expression called pneumaism. The articulations of an actual human figure and visions of natural created beauty, have always moved me to paint or draw, even when I was a child. My drawings and paintings resonate with Michelangelo, Rothko and Gould to present a voice that speaks of the holiness of beauty and the beauty of holiness. Art of the spirit, that is pneumaism, is not an attempt to research the many opinions and views of art over the centuries. Nor is it an attempt to define art in such a manner as art has never been defined before. Art of the spirit is not meant to be an exhaustive study of art, its philosophies, techniques and media. Instead, Art of the spirit is a personal commentary on my very private journey through the visual arts. The world of visual arts abounds with a myriad of excellent books, offering both artist and connaisseur a rich *pallette* of colourful examples of artistic expression, its movements throughout history, and effect on culture both past and present. To mention its great authors would at best seem like an attempt to sound

vain by means of association with such great authors, and that is not the intent of this research project. Art of the spirit is my personal and private journey, first and foremost as an artist.

Pneumaism (art of the spirit) is beyond art's impressions, representations, subjective or objective, images and portraits, which can fuel an infatuation with subject, media or style. "Pneumaism is deeper truth. It is an intimacy to lose oneself in the beauty of drawing and thus find a reasonable escape, an escape in beauty. My time is therefore most inspirational when I venture beyond the immediate drawing (for example) of the human form. Regardless of its outer beauty there is an inner beauty I yearn to express by *drawing into the drawing* and to soar in my imagination," (Verstraete, 1997, p.9).

"The drama of the interior world may ultimately be more real than the exterior world " - Diane Michals, a photographer. (Michals, 1967).

In this private journey I have chosen to fit a very public plan to obtain a Master's degree in communication and technology, a plan that culminated in a research project with the distinct focus and methodology of examining the contributions of three master artists in context of scholarly literature, to identify the aesthetic pleasures of their art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive processing dynamics. As a result, I have posited my findings as a composite of their aesthetic pleasures to set the stage for later examination of how the speed of processing these aesthetic pleasures in a positive construct can create an environment that affects a person's ability to make quality judgments – the essence of the capital value of critical thought. It is inevitable that as an artist, I view the creative contributions of Michelangelo, Rothko, and Gould, through my pneumaist glasses, as their art of the spirit aims towards an aesthetic of pleasure, "manifested in (not just my) desire to continue or repeat the experience, (but in the desire of all

who seek to experience the value of art," (Bunnin, 2004, brackets added). I subjected my pneumaist view to a clear research strategy of examination within the parameters of a set number of concepts applied to all, including, as previously stated, respective theory ancestries, the positive in art, art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics, a general position within capital values, the aesthetic of pleasure, and a suitable application of my interpretation of McLuhan's tetrad, as a dialectical model to examine the relationship between art and critical thought.

2.2. Michelangelo, Rothko, Gould

As an aesthetic of pleasure and a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics, "Michelangelo's poetry serves two functions in his art, one purely aesthetic, the other a means of expressing his view of the underlying structure of reality," (Saslow, 1991, p.41). Despite formal structures in his poetry, he displays a genuineness and openness in his writings seeking a common ground among the artist as writer, painter, and sculptor, and the fragile substance of beauty and pain. Whether aesthetically or structured reality, Michelangelo extended the concept of pleasure, beauty, to embrace love as functions of the divine, and to become a rich deposit of spiritual capital. It was he who first inspired me to explore the rare beauty of silverpoint drawing, an ancient art discipline that served as an appropriate metaphor in my research, because the process of metal point drawing comprises the investigative, tacit, experiential, explicit, and analytical, of qualitative research. Engaging the silverpoint metaphor in my research, where mastery and craftsmanship are integral to the sphere of theoretical constructs, communication theory, technological new media discourse, and the tetrad, the poetry of Michelangelo is

presented as symbolic postscripts to the dialectical model of interactional theory exemplified by the philosophy of Mark Rothko and the journals of John Gould.

"Rothko's work communicates on a level that is explicitly preverbal," (Rothko, 2004, p.xi) and places Rothko's art and philosophical writings in context of my theoretical ancestry construct (Appendix 3), as a practical communications theory. The writings are a metadiscourse of phenomenological and rhetorical construction in a sociopsychological tradition to enhance the viewer's (listener's) cognitive environment.

The phenomenological experience is a sensation of reality, whether perceived or actual, real or imaginary, and gives pleasure as the perceiver's dynamics of cognitive processing is enhanced as positive information. Whereas Mark Rothko was a master of the post-war 20th century, it was in his late thirties when he worked on his book manuscript.

John Gould, however, packages the aesthetic of pleasure in a more real-time narrative vocabulary void of excessive theoretical discussions. "I've kept a journals for years, sometimes simply as a way to recall a tone of voice. We live by logos in the twentieth century. There is a line running through my life and I have traced it with varying degrees of success and misadventure since 1948, the year I entered the Ontario College of Art and was told I could draw. Now we're living in a technocracy where message is God and our world is technique happy, besotted with nuts and bolts, in love with the stuff. But the stuff is only as good as the artists who use it." (Gould, 1996)

The major period of Michelangelo's literary creativity was during the years 1531-1548, from age 56 and on, when he wrote the bulk of his poems, some two hundred in fifteen years. As such, the poetry cited, although explicit and implicit on "the nature and value of art, and on Michelangelo's theory of artistic form, and his views on the creative process," (Saslow, 1991,

p.2), the poetry is not intended to be part of an extant study of the creative mind in relation to my research. Instead, his poetry is positioned within an arts-centered approach of my investigative framework to further substantiate a link between the ability to think better critically. Poetry in context of language, written or spoken, "is a technology which extends all of the human senses simultaneously. All the other artifacts are, by comparison, specialist extensions of our physical and mental faculties. Written language at once specializes speech by limiting words to one of the senses. Written speech (such as poetry) is an example of such specialism, but the spoken word resonates (performance poetry), involves all the senses," (McLuhan, 1970. p.20, brackets added). Poetry elicits the retrieval of artifacts as cognitive fluency is processed and becomes a "complex retrieval system," (McLuhan, 1970) of archetypes. Reading Michelangelo's poetry reveals a cohesion of archetypes including artist, lover, philosopher, and God-fearing citizen, to which residues of other archetypes such as politician and negotiator, adhere. Like Michelangelo, "when we consciously set out to retrieve one archetype, we unconsciously retrieve others; and this retrieval occurs in infinite regress," (McLuhan, 1970. p.21). As such, this retrieval of artifacts contributes to the deposit of capital as a positive construct from which critical thought draws its quality judgments.

> *"Since hour after hour I'm still beguiled*
>
> *by the memory of your eyes and by hope,*
>
> *through which I am not merely alive, but blissful,*
>
> *I seem compelled by power and by reason,*
>
> *by love, and nature, and my own old habits*
>
> *to gaze at you for all the time I'm granted."* (From sonnet 28, Saslow, 1991)

(Additional quotes from Michelangelo's poetry are indicated by Sonnet No.)

Michelangelo's theoretical roots are found in aesthetics and formal structuralism. "He projected himself into everything he did, and the poetry not only acknowledges but celebrates the subjectivity of his response to external experience. His theoretical statements leave no doubt that all of Michelangelo's art, whether written or visual, is in some sense a self-portrait," (Saslow, 1991, p.5). Accessibility to Michelangelo's interior life through formalist criticism has turned into a structuralist and poststructuralist criticism to balance the appreciation of Michelangelo's poetry "with claims for both autonomy and deep personal significance," (Saslow, 1991, p.6). He was not a philosopher, and many of his writings on such subjects as love and spirituality, thought genuine and from the heart, were quite conventional among the educated of his time. Inspired by deeply personal experience, his poetry is not a theoretical transcription of mere symbolist experience left to be reviewed and analyzed *ad infinitum* with textual commentary (Saslow, 1991, p.6). Instead, the writings are to be treated as art, and be experienced by the reader in a form of aesthetic pleasure that functions to enhance the perceiver's cognitive dynamics.

Despite Rothko's negative attitude towards the decorative arts, as well a negative perception of his work by critics, "who brandish their skill but are found wanting in substance, self-knowledge, and true artistic motives," (Rothko, 2004, p.xx), he determined to position art as a form of action. Art is a positive form of social action, and a "type of communication, which when it enters the environment, it produces its (positive) effects just as any other form of action," (Rothko, 2004, p.10, bracket added), not to be confused with "positive material ends that reduces art to a function for the direct good of the state," which he called "decadence," (Rothko, 2004, p.12). Referring back to one of the research questions: can an arts-centered qualitative approach

to communication and technology research contribute sufficiently to the social significance of the positive influence of art as a process of enabling quality decision making, the answer precludes a yes, especially when my research continues to examine Rothko's perceptions of art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive dynamics, the positive as capital, and the aesthetics of pleasure, and pleasure as action.

Compared to Rothko's action plan and Michelangelo's weaponry, John Gould presented a more pragmatic view of the positive of art. "It's finally just me and the paper. To pull a line across the page is to feel a quickening of brain and muscle. To draw is to join real time," (Gould, 1996)

The positive in Michelangelo's creativity served as an essential weapon or action strategy in Michelangelo's universal vision of the conflict between life and death, and love and death, beyond "the simple reproduction of natural appearances to a metaphysical function," (Salsow, 1991, p.33). Even though his art first and foremost celebrated the beauty of love, he "freezes the appearance of the loved one while he or she inevitably changes and decays," (Saslow, 1991, p.33). Hence the perceived value of his positivist art plays and important role in dealing with, and perhaps even defeating, the destructive powers of time and the inevitability of death of all things.

> *"He who made everything, first made each part*
> *and then from all chose the most beautiful*
> *to demonstrate here his sublime creations,*
> *as he has now done with his divine art."* (Sonnet 9)

"Love hurts me more the grace I receive.

While I ponder and experience

evil, my good increases in an instant." (Sonnet 31)

"There's an art of beauty, which, if everyone

brings it with him from heaven, conquers nature,

even though nature imprints itself everywhere." (Sonnet 97)

John Gould advocated attention to simple pencil drawing. He praised dramatic simplicity and would often "roast any signs of pretentiousness." (Gould, 1996, p.99). Needless to say, when he created work in his studio, his large compositions would involve collage, drawing and painting, yet in their seeming complexity, each drawing remained the synthesis of simplicity and the virtuosity of the great draughtsman, truly set free. In this freedom Gould often looked back to conclude that, "in the retrospective setting, an artist comes face-to-face with the fragments of his life, displayed in several rooms - youth, middle age, the present - in a merciless sequence. It's an opportunity that few men have, that perhaps few men would want, an exercise in auto-archaeology. Surveying it, I was sure of only one thing: I wanted to keep drawing forever," (Gould, 1996, p.100-102).

There remains therefore a cognitive dynamic in the perceiver's internalizing of Michelangelo's poetry, Rothko's philosophy, and Gould's journals, as a function of processing his positive information to encompass both knowledge and sense. However, when this dynamic is translated into capital, especially spiritual capital, the central themes of Michelangelo's poetry are love, both earthly and divine, and the bodily and spiritual attributes that inspired him. These

attributes are time and death, as the enemies of worldly fulfillment. "Art can counteract the transience of physical beauty, and God holds out the hope for the spirit's salvation from the sinful tragedy of earthly life." (Saslow, 1991, p.23). Gould expanded this transient view into the world of dreams. "Dreams are the final paradox, the haunting questions which jolt us from our sleep a yank us up in bed, asking, 'what did that mean?' Only in dreams we confront the final unity, the satisfied transformation that art can confirm on experience," (Gould, 1996, p.80). By the early 1970's, John Gould was ready to take on a monumental theme. He began the ideas for the *Ancestors,* a series of sustained drawings focusing on what he learned in film. Ideas centered around rough sketches, repeated in slightly different angles across a panel, large classical format, completeness and authoritative, the full range of tones and black spotting. Sources were dreams, literary reference and stills from feature films. Techniques were frozen tableaux of the mind without philosophic emphasis, without narrative line, and without a specific setting. It was what a dreamer would see. "Raw data, seedling drawings, and dreams, as fortuitous gifts from the soul, the tension of intellectual upheaval, that would take him considerable time to decompress," (Gould, 1996, p.83,90).

> *"If the hope that you give to me is real,*
>
> *if the great desire I've been granted is real,*
>
> *let the wall raised between them be broken down,*
>
> *for troubles left concealed have double strength."* (Sonnet 60)

> *"What satisfies the senses is not always*
>
> *so valued and dear to all*

that there's not one who feels

that, though it seems sweet, it is evil and bitter.

Good taste is so uncommon

that it appears to yield

to the misguided crowd, while delighting within itself." (Sonnet 109)

"Most societies of the past, have insisted that their own particular evaluations of truth be depicted by the artist. But authority formulated rules, and the artist complied. The artist had to submit to these rules, or simulate the appearance of submission, if he were to be permitted to practice his art." (Rothko, 2004, p.3). However, if compliance and clever ways to circumnavigate the rules were the only avenues of expression for an artist, they would contribute little to the cognitive dynamics of those who choose to experience the aesthetic pleasure of art. Nevertheless there were those "daring periodically to revitalized art, saving it from its narcissistic mimicry of itself. The history of art is the history of men who, for the most part, have preferred hunger to compliance, and considered the choice worthwhile," (Rothko, 2004, p.3). Cognitive dynamics, therefore, including the choice between compliance and circumnavigation, also includes the demands made upon artist and perceiver to recognize the definite and unmistakable functions of art and its ability to affect the judgment of critical thought of individuals. For that qualifies art as majestic.

What pleasure may the reader and viewer receive when he or she engages in the majesty of Michelangelo's art, a pleasure both aesthetic and sensual, when examined in light of the artist-heart, through the poetic voice of his human spirit.

"Like heat from fire, one cannot separate

eternal beauty from my regard, which exalts

whoever most resembles Him from whom it came." (Sonnet 34)

"If my crude hammer shapes the hard stones

into one human appearance or another,

deriving its motion from the master who guides it,

watches and holds it, it moves at another pace.

But that divine one, which lodges and dwells in heaven,

beautifies self and others by its own action;

and if no hammer can be made without a hammer,

by that living one every other one is made." (Sonnet 46)

Ascribing any sense of perceiver's cognitive dynamics to the work of Mark Rothko, and research into the concepts he posited, means understanding that it was the art of the great masters of the past, rather than the art of the 20th century, that most captivated Rothko's senses. His writings therefore reflect the older traditions of art and philosophy, possibly even in a more formal sense despite his later conceptual abstracts. "The history of many artists is more often a defiance of the prescriptions and proscriptions of the environment then it is a resignation to them," (Rothko, 2004, p.16).

But that does not mean all art is positive because it is abstract or contemporary, nor does it mean that all art is negative because it is traditional and representational. These definitions of positive and negative do not comprise the cognitive abilities of the perceiver. They are simply a

matter of personal taste. The dynamics of a real art embraces the concept that each new original work is a newly invented species. Rothko "asserts repeatedly that all philosophy, all art, must address the human element," (Rothko, 2004, p.xxviii), not as human capital but a spiritual capital. For then art aspires to a loftier goal, a universal emotionalism, that willingly embraces tragic emotionality and victorious emotionality. Gould ascribed Rothko's human element from the view point of the artist as a draftsman, but with the same sense of cognitive dynamics.

"I was a draftsman. What I couldn't seem to solve was how to bring drawing into sync with some of the exciting innovations in the world of painting, especially with the action painters of New York." (Gould, 1996, p.23)

These theoretical concepts create the idea of positive as capital, to be the continuum for Rothko's contributions as examined earlier. Art's positive as capital has the power to create a plastic atmosphere through correct aesthetic judgments and appreciation adding to a social capital deposit of growth existing as a focal point for communication. In addition, social capital as a Rothko model, opens the process of positive information through artistic endeavours to add to the continuative progressive timeline of past, present, and future, and presents positive capital as the continuum. Intellectual capital accumulates in the study of Rothko's essays about "what the artists does, what are his or her relationship to ideas, and how does he or she go about expressing those ideas," (Rothko, 2004, p.xii). In fact, *The Artist's Reality*, becomes a "treasure trove for scholars," (Rothko, 2004, p.xiii), and not only for scholars, but for anyone who wishes to expand his or her cognitive processing dynamics through the experience of aesthetic pleasure, even if that expansion were motivated by Rothko's "fascination with mythic realms and the contents of the collective unconscious," (Rothko, 2004, p.xvii).

Beauty as positive therefore is a certain type of emotional exultation which is a result of stimulation by certain qualities common to all great works of art. These stimuli are for invoking feelings of pleasure, a pleasure "closely connected with our infantile desire for security," (Rothko, 2004, p.63), because for many pleasure is security. If therefore the aesthetic of pleasure is a positive of art, or the positive information of art, then sensuality, or the holiness of beauty, is a form of social capital that can be traded in the appreciation and understanding of art. Rothko posits, that to the discerning observer this perception of beauty in art will indeed enable him or her to divorce cognitive senses of irrelevant associations, and create a state of equilibrium between pain and pleasure, that is, "the pleasure of the sensual communications resulting in the sense of exhilaration which we find in art," (Rothko, 2004, p.71), especially art of the antique era such as the Renaissance. In many ways this common reference of the aesthetic of pleasure or sensuality, as it did in antiquity, also became a common prototype of perfection in the abstract of contemporary art, even when such prototypes faced Gould's criticism. "So much bad history, bad literary thinking was poured into visual art. Art history was a sort of enemy to me, "(Gould, 1996. P.18).

2.3. Art as method talk integrated into the social fabric of life.

To elaborate on the hypothesis that exposure to positive information in art will affect the subject's ability to think critically when placed in context of intrinsic and extrinsic understanding and appreciation of fine art, I intend to take my examination from a function of the perceiver's dynamics into a concept of method talk, integrated into the social fabric of life as a process of information constructed as knowledge factories.

Method talk is a working vocabulary that will inevitable lead beyond Gubrium and Holstein's restricted "empirical realm of researchers to address a real world of facts and figures," (Gubrium, Holstein, 1997, p.3), and include a method talk that becomes integrated into the social fabric of life as *everyone's* talk born in knowledge factories of cognitive dynamics.

Such knowledge factories comprise the sum total of humanly produced knowledge, new technologies, media laws, and tacit knowledge, gleaned from the experiences of hands-on learning. It is not just the factory "metaphor of colleges and universities as production sites," (Gubrium, Holstein, 1997, p.3). The metaphor is extended to art in the home, art in the workplace, and art galleries.

"This is not a saunter through the gallery on a drowsy Sunday afternoon, a grand tour of beauty through the ages. Instead, it is a descent into the volcano of the creative imagination, into the fires where some of the greatest things humans have ever wrought were fashioned." (Schama, 2007, BBC). Positive investigation is needed to understand art and technology's inter-dependent role in establishing an intellectual foundation or knowledge factory, in addition to the conventional foundation of aesthetics. Yet, the two foundations remain inter-dependent, a fact demonstrated throughout the history of inspiration, ideation, invention and prototypical conceptualization. Such intellectual foundations of art and technology are not a natural artistic endowment but an acquired skill through education. Fine art for the general public, specifically through exposure to and interaction with the fine art of drawing, in collaboration with technology, can through a clearly defined process of cognitive fluency in observation and contemplation, reach a distinct understanding of the aesthetic of pleasure or beauty that is art. As a result, an appreciative public, who are the recipients of method talk integrated into social life, will develop skills of critical thought that lead to discernment, decision and application, to form

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an intellectual foundation for their own lives and positively affect their ability to make quality choices for life. The aesthetic position of art and technology includes the interpretation and the appreciation of works of art in traditional and new media expressions to build a greater intellectual foundation and as a result provide a nurturing environment (knowledge factories) for critical thought. This can be accomplished with a new collaborative perspective in the form of strategic partnerships between art, technology and cultural organizations. The discussion continues to centre on the perceivers as people "in richly layered skills, assumptions, and practices to which persons construct the very realities of their everyday lives, and as social settings accomplish a sense of social order," (Gubrium, Holstein, 1997, p.5) and to signal a primary interest in the knowledge producing dimensions of functions of cognitive fluency. As such the aim is a language of art as a way of life, a language whose method is everyday shoptalk.

Gubrium and Holstein posit four approaches that have made their mark on contemporary qualitative research: Naturalism, Ethnomethodology, Emotionalism, and Postmodernism, (Gubrium, Hostein, 1997, p.6).

Of these, most pertinent to my research are Emotionalism and Postmodernism. Emotionalism strikes at the core of the appreciation of art, as emotionalism is the first point of contact with a perceiver who engages art in a cognitive process.

Postmodernism is a threat to critical thought as it proposes a free-floating environment of thought with no absolutes. It is an environment that threatens the preservation and conservation of knowledge and knowledge management by assuming traditions and canons of art creation are no longer relative or valuable. Emotionalism digs deep inside the personal experience of cognitive dynamics whether figuratively or literally. It is the tacit knowledge of lived experience at the core of feeling and perception. It probes into the human soul. The goal is to capture the

artist's experience and to internalize that experience in full emotional colour, whether the aesthetic of pleasure or beauty is grounded in humanistic, existential, or spiritual concepts. "Postmodernism is about self-consciousness, the relationship between method talk and the nature of social reality," (Gubrium, Hostein, 1997, p.9). However, the relationship becomes problematic as analysis begins to scrutinize the way method talk actually attempts to write culture by deconstructing representation of social reality in such a manner as to invite skepticism. The result is an "uneasiness with the wisdom" (Gubrium, Hostein, 1997, p.11) that could further result in debunking the aesthetic of pleasure and beauty, that is, the very core competencies of art itself. Yet, I posit that there remains a need for a working skepticism of discernment for example between secular humanist implications versus spiritual implications, integral to the continuum of a positive construct of capital values and the cognitive process that leads to effective judgment. These implications suggest a new perspective in critical thought.

2.4. Call for a new perspective in critical thought.

The new perspective is the embodiment of art and technology as an intellectual foundation of cognitive fluency to position the aesthetic as preeminent in the history of culture as well as apply the intellectual foundation, as a meaningful strategy of informed leadership, "to affect culture in recovering and restoring the creative dream," (Verstraete, 2011, COMM 598, *Restoring the Creative Dream*). The aesthetic position of art and technology includes the interpretation and the appreciation of works of art in traditional and new media expressions to build a greater intellectual foundation, and as a result provide a nurturing environment for critical thought. This can be accomplished with a new collaborative perspective of method talk in the form of strategic

partnerships between art, technology and cultural organizations. These strategic partnerships will "address the ethical and value biases of media and information technologies," (Zimmer, 2005, p.1) biases that have formed the foundation of media ecology theory whose goal is "to uncover and understand how the form and inherent biases of communications theory help create the environment in which people symbolically construct the world (the social fabric of life) they come to know and understand, as well as its social, economic, political, (artistic) and cultural consequences," (Zimmer 2005, p.2, brackets added). As such, the call for a new perspective in critical thought refers back to the research questions I asked at the beginning of by project. Answers to which reflect the present reality of a social fabric that must accept the new perspective. According to the 2008, ArtmediaX International Symposium in Paris, there is a distinct move towards a post-digital generative art that will affect critical thought from interactivity to democracy. The symposium examined three considerations (Leonardo, 2008, p.95).

1. Artistic production is entering a post-digital phase. In particular, software art has now advanced beyond the initial experimental phase and entered the distribution phase, reflected both in its proliferation in artistic production and growing integration with design.

2. Neo-technological art is not merely constituted by homogeneous artistic practices but appears rather as a complex field polarized by different factors (the art system, scientific and industrial research, and media activism). It will be argued that this applies both to new media art as a whole and, more particularly, to software art.

3. The evolution of the technological image (from photography to generative art) follows a precise line: the static image becomes a process, and as such is exposed to the action of external

events, and thus to the participation of the public in advanced forms. It will be concluded that in the case of generative and software art this latter represents one of the most interesting possibilities of development.

Yet, amidst the possibilities of development of thought in a post-digital generative age, there remains the foundation of critical thought as a real-time response to the tacit and real possibilities of hands-on method talk that continues to be integrated into the social fabric of life as "real people in real time," (Gould, 1996). What better way than to illustrate my position with a detailed critique of one of my original drawings, *The Long Distance Voyager,* created in real time with real art supplies to demonstrate the new perspective in critical thought, namely *Think Art Think Smart.*

"But that is the wonder of art, different viewers see different things... and all of them may be different from the view of the artist!" And "there is in your drawing a white 'barbed wire of protection' around his shoulders rendered spontaneous ala Jackson Pollock coating a beautiful dimension of form and fabric. Strongly hinting at contrast - freehand, yet precise control of form and fine line beneath," (Moore, Kramarsky, 2009, Critique of *The Long Distance Voyager*, detailed critique and image, Appendix 4).

3. A positive construct to demonstrate the value of art as capital

I stated earlier in my introduction, it is both essential and imperative that my research begins with clear definitions and the positioning of concepts used to investigate my approach, such as art, critical thought, positive information, density, and cognitive fluency. It is to art I now turn, to create a positive construct with which to further examine the links between art and

critical thought. The creation of a positive construct serves as the foundation of the entire research project upon which pertinent literature and personal observations stand.

The momentum of my research continues by embracing a key concept in addition to having established a sufficient reason to accept the issue of decline in critical thought. That concept is the value of art in relation to its role in turning the decline of critical thought into an incline in the employment of critical thought, a role greatly enhanced because of technology's ability to create greater awareness of the arts. However, in defining art, this research does not include theories of art, art history and the creation of art forms. These constitute a view of art criticism which is outside the scope of my research. Instead, this research project examines not what art *is*, but what art has and *does*. Instead of examining the creation of art, the project addresses the understanding and appreciation of art with the specific purpose of engaging cognitive processes that lead to establishing art as having intrinsic value based on art's inherent density of positive information or influences. It is with this key concept of a positive construct and the issue of decline in critical thought, that my research aims to establish whether indeed there is a link between the ability to think better critically, when subjects are exposed to art. Having demonstrated sufficient reason to examine the credibility of such a link, only then can my research proceed to review pertinent literature of Reber, Unkelbach, Winkielman, *et al*, and their concepts of processing positive information, cognitive fluency, and a density hypothesis, to arrive at reasonable conclusions. My research proposes that in support of my argument, art has positive value as intellectual capital, positive value as human capital, positive value as spiritual capital, and positive value as social capital.

Having said that this primary issue of the decline of critical thought and art's providential and positive cure requires an examination of accurate and comprehensive positioning of key research terms used, I now turn to the specifics of the essential meaning of positive.

To determine a comprehensive positioning of positive, I will employ an autoethnographic form of personal narrative, that explores my experiences of life, alongside the artistic contributions of Italian master Michelangelo Buonarroti, American painter Mark Rothko, and Canadian drawing master John Gould, with the objective of determining my positive construct in light of art as positive information, the value of such positive information, and that this value can be translated into capital. Autoethnography allows me to focus on my subjective experiences of Michelangelo, Rothko, and Gould, reflected not in their art, but in their collective poetry, philosophy, journals and commentary.

Constructs of a contemporary art theory have been my work in progress for over 45 professional years, comprising a series of notebooks to articulate both theoretical and experiential views of my art. Needless to say, whatever my construct of a contemporary art theory, its hallmark is the positive of art. My construct began with the adoption of the concept of *"de divina proportione,"* (the divine proportion) by Italian artist and mathematician, Luca Pacioli (1445 -1514) and translated into English with a personal application as *"divinus in arte ordo,"* (divine order in art), by Dr. Beert Verstraete, Acadia University. Divine order in art became a structural focus of my theoretical constructs, especially in light of the prospect of using silverpoint as a metaphor for my graduate studies at the University of Alberta, a focus and metaphor akin to *Cerulean's Map* (Fig.1, p.3). Cerulean's Map is a metalpoint drawing that reinforces the research journey as one in need of a strategic map. Even though my notebooks turned into a kaleidoscope of inspiration, conceptualization, experience, and expression, there

appeared an implicit order to things. From ancient Golden Section proportions to mathematics, from attempts at emotive eloquence to simple mark-making, an order of critical process did seem possible.

From classical figurative drawing, letter forms and typographic design, to topological vector spaces and pure abstraction, I knew that in due time I would discover something bigger than myself, a model to serve my research initiatives, and at least begin to articulate the relationship between art and critical thought through the lens of communication and technology. As a divine proportion began to unfold, so did that part of the map calling attention to a higher order beyond scholarly research and analysis, a higher order of aesthetics and pleasure, and the divine that fuels creativity.

Art is "our happy way; the higher order accorded to the spiritual, and to it all works of art aspire; deeper than appearance; interior landscape; it will reveal to us our own potential for depth, for emotional intensity, amused amazement, but not awe; to achieve enough emotional distance to speak about art with intelligence and insight." (Beckett, 2006). Art historian, Sister Wendy Beckett's potential for depth accorded to the spiritual, can be interpreted to mean that *Cerulean's Map* is not just a means to get somewhere, but a challenge as well to determine what to build upon arrival. Together these necessitate first of all the design of the building and second, the careful laying of a cornerstone, with the objective of conducting qualitative research one layer at a time, the essence of order.

The first orderly layer of my research poses a profound question, especially when I propose that exposure to positive information will affect the subject's ability to think critically. When placed in context of understanding and appreciation of fine art, that question is, what *is* positive information, or what *is* positive?

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By further examination of the concept of expanding the subject's existing databank of aesthetic pleasure in the mind, and to identify such aesthetic pleasures and the result of exposure to art as a function of the perceiver's cognitive processing dynamics, an accurate and plausible definition is needed to describe positive as the cornerstone of the proposed building, a cornerstone towards a structure that aims to educate others about the proposed values of a positive construct. "The arts must therefore contribute forcefully to the education of the public; the arts are the imitation of nature in her most beautiful and perfect (positive) form," Jacques-Louis David, (1748-1825). (Goldwater, Treves, 1945, bracket added). Such an educational contribution can be taken to the point of possibly establishing a new dynamic in the interpretation of positive. "The important task of all art is to destroy the static equilibrium by establishing a dynamic one." Piet Mondrian, (1872-1944). (Goldwater, Treves, 1945, p. 428). Such a dynamic equilibrium extends beyond the critical examination of literature and their appropriate reviews to include personal narrative, a narrative that explores my experiences of life, alongside the artistic contributions of Michelangelo, Rothko, and Gould, with the objective of determining a focus based on my subjective experiences of their collective poetry, philosophy, journals and commentary. In essence, it means this project intends to add my voice to theirs in the construction of a positive core from which further examination vectors towards positive conclusions.

Therefore to begin a positive construct, I propose the examination of positive in light of its inherent value as intellectual, human, spiritual, and social capital. The reason for such examination is to position the concept of positive beyond just mere feeling and pleasure, or the proverbial *thumbs-up* of the entertainment-motivated critic, yet not to the exclusion of any of

them, because they all add to the inherent value of art. Capital is measured in value. Art has immense value. Art is capital. Art is an asset.

In his book *Civilization*, Kenneth Clark quotes the French intellectual recluse Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) as having said, "No pleasure hath any savour unless I can communicate it," adding that "in order to do so, he (Montaigne) invented the essay, which was to remain the accepted form of humanist communication for three centuries, from Bacon to Hazlitt." (Clark, 1969, p.163). Even thought this research project is concerned with the visual arts, citing the art form known as essay writing to illustrate the inherent capital value of art, reflects back to an earlier examination by Clark, when he posits the "extravagantly great eruption of ecclesiastical splendour," (Clark, 1969, p.35) of the Romanesque period, as a result of the ideation of what we accept as western civilization, being a creation of the Church in the 12th century.

"And she was powerful for positive reasons," (Clark, 1969, p.35). The greatest positive reason Clark presents is art as a source for the "expansion of the human spirit," (Clark, 1969, p.35) through art and architecture. The invention of extravagant artistic spendour, "boiled over into sculpture and painting that were self-delighting," (Clark, 1969, p.37). Art's positive value was attributed to the human spirit and not to mere fashion of technique. Clark's commentary concludes with an apt metaphor for the irrepressible and irresponsible energy of the 1100's. "The Romanesque carvers were like a school of dolphins," (Clark, 1969, p.37), a metaphor of exuberance to underline the value of the arts, whether writing, music, drawing, painting and sculpture, as substantial contributors to art's positive capital values, be they intellectual, human, spiritual, or social.

3.1. Positive as intellectual capital.

The boundaries of this research project can only pay peripheral tribute to the vast body of work that comprises art history and art criticism, and their positive value beyond measure, to the rich deposits of intellectual capital over centuries of time. Contemporary communications theory and technological developments have begun to shed light on this intellectual capital as museums and public galleries worldwide, such as the Virtual Museum of Canada, (Virtual Museum of Canada, 2011), adopt communication strategies to employ technology to inform the public, be they scholars, consumers, connoisseurs, collectors, or just the every day man and woman. The list of contributors is an endless line from ancient notables such as Pliny the Elder, Vasari, Winkelmann, Panofsky, Jung and Barthes, to such contemporaries as Clark, Greenberg, and Schama (Art history, Wikipedia). Novels may entertain, but art history enlightens. The concept of positive as intellectual capital will resume later in my research, when concepts of processing positive information including aesthetic pleasure, are examined in light of research by Reber, Schwarz and Winkielman.

3.2. Positive as human capital.

It is estimated that the total value of art and art markets, the sum-total of time and resources contributed by the artists themselves, and the unimaginable value of such institutions such as the Vatican Library, is in the multi-billions. But to ask the question, how much is the actual art market worth, domestically and internationally, the answer is indeterminate. "A surprising number of people search for answers to these and similar questions in attempts to quantify the art market. The art market, however, is not quantifiable, and the answers to these questions don't exist. To begin with, art is not a commodity that can be regulated. Anyone can

call him or herself an artist, anyone can call anything that they create 'art,' and anyone can be an art dealer. Anyone can sell art wherever, whenever, and under whatever circumstances they please, and price or sell whatever they call 'art' for whatever amounts of money they feel like selling it for, as long as that art is offered without fraud or misrepresentation. And they do." (Art Business, 2011). Yet, Stuart Plattner's quantitative research analyses the implications for economic anthropology in his examination of fine art as a commodity, when more that 2500 new museums were constructed in the United States between 1950 and 1980. "Fine art is a special sort of consumer good, whose existence is supposed to expand civilized consciousness, and whose possession is supposed to demonstrate the owner's high cultural standing. This is because art, as a non-utilitarian good, occupies a higher cultural position than merely useful things," (Plattner, 1998, p.482). To the extreme, "a museum accumulates a collection (of art) that it leverages the way a bank leverages capital," (Werner, 2005, p.4). Capital circulates in the form of the museum's resident collection and shows (collections on loan), and as a result, these accumulate more capital value, which in turn is re-invested into the circulation of capital or leveraged for more. Museums like the Guggenheim Museum count its human capital as collections, for example, "the Blue Period Picassos of the Thannhauser Collection," (Werner, 2005, p.4). This concept of positive as human capital at a certain stage in social development, becomes "fluid capital" to "ensure civilization's three essential ingredients: leisure, movement, and independence," (Clark, 1969, p.197).

3.3. Positive as spiritual capital.

Spiritual capital as an individual (and network collective) asset requires examination from sources perhaps not acquainted with social research, yet sources integral to the discussion of positive. When Eric Gill (1882-1940), posited the idea of "the priesthood of craftsmanship,"

(Goldwater, Treves, 1945, p.457), he stepped outside the convention of art as a rhetorical activity, to embrace the idea that a work of art is "a word made flesh, a word which emanates from the mind, the immeasurable translated into terms of the measurable," (Goldwater, Treves, 1945, p.457), leading artist and viewer heavenwards from the rhetorical to high art. Positive as a norm for both secular and spiritual, is a good investment. The positive as spiritual capital, however, cultivated we may be in artistic circles, is no longer a rhetorical medium for concept and storytelling but an aesthetic, or an appreciation of beauty Gill calls holy. Gill echoes the words of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), as Kandinsky searched for a spiritual reality and true value in art. "I value only those artists who really are artists, that is, who consciously or unconsciously, in an entirely original form, embody the expression of their inner life; who work only for this end and cannot work otherwise," (Sadler, 1977, vii). As the ancients taught in Scriptures, if indeed a spiritual atmosphere is the birthplace of faith, hope, and love, then Paul's words to the early church at Philippi, are a measure of positive as spiritual capital. "That you may extend to your fullest development in knowledge and all keen insight, that is, that you may display yourself in greater depth of acquaintance and more comprehensive discernment, so that you may surely learn to sense what is vital, and approve and prize what is excellent and of real value, recognizing the highest and the best, and distinguishing the moral differences," (Zondervan, 1965, Philippians 1:9,10). To which Kandisky adds, "the work of art is born of the artist and it exists and has power to create spiritual atmosphere," (Sadler, 1977, p.53). Within a Kantian framework, "philosophers adhering to the position of positive aesthetics claim that only positive aesthetic evaluations are appropriate for a 'virgin' nature, and negative judgments are, for the most part, inappropriate and even incoherent," (Parker, 2010, Pp.1,6). Kant was interested

in "*correct* aesthetic judgments and appreciation," often resulting in "a tension between Kant's aesthetics and aspects of scientific cognitivist approaches,"(Parker, 2010, Pp.1,6).

Art of the spirit is a journey through visual arts that aims to discover the creative bond between the artist and the Creator. *Art of the spirit* and *In the Footsteps of Masters*, are my record of a spiritual journey to make sense of life in its simplicity and complexity. Therefore art is spiritual. Therefore spiritual art is an honourable pursuit beyond just the imitation of nature. "Art that simply exalts technique or the mere copy of surroundings is not enough to satisfy the true artist's spiritual journey into the unknown realms of words that take on form - words that become flesh,"(Verstraete, 1997, p.9).

3.4. Positive as social capital.

Based on social capital and network research by Milward and Provan, I posit that by narrowcasting the application to a more specific network, such as an arts network, their research holds true, (Milward, Provan, 2001). As is the case with social media networks, the aim of an arts network is social capital growth as well, visible in the open place of a market community and among multiple stakeholders, be they individual artists, the viewing public, museums, public galleries, arts organizations, or educational institutions. Visible social capital growth exists as the focal point for communication, where social capital assets are equal to the organization's financial and human capital assets. During the seventeenth century, the Golden Age of Dutch art, the tolerant social spirit of Holland produced renowned painters such as Frans Hals, Rembrandt, Berckheyde, and Peter de Hooch, who embodied the concept of art as social capital. Featured citizens, captured on endless canvasses of celebrity group portraits, such as Rembrandt's *Nightwatch*, and *Staalmeesters,* represented "individuals who were prepared to join in a

corporate effort for the public good," (Clark, 1969, p.195), serving as a historical precursor to what Milward and Provan would articulate some three hundred and fifty years later, as the effect of social capital on network effectiveness. In speaking about drawing as language, Stephen Farthing, a Rootstein Hopkins professor of drawing at the University of the Arts in London, said, "drawing is the only language where unfinishedness is so deeply ingrained and accepted, not just as a part but as a positive attribute of language," (Farthing, 2005. p.27). And to his idea of the positive construct as a language of unfinishedness, he further proposes "the enhancement of the language of drawing as art's power in the form of social capital deposit, materializing in a welcome space for creativity. The upside of accommodating this quality is that it enhances the power of the language by adding to it an ability to provide a welcoming space for dreaming, self-expression, informality, wrestling with the unknown, and acknowledging quite openly, and without breaking continuity, gaps in the maker's knowledge." (Farthing, 2005. p.27). Art's power, albeit positive in its *unfinishedness*, precludes an effectiveness of communication at many levels.

This positive and *unfinished* effectiveness of art is "consistent with a multiple-stakeholder perspective. Evaluation of network effectiveness can be viewed at three levels of analysis," that is, three levels of examining network effectiveness (Milward, Provan, 2001), applied to art at the community level, the network level, the organizational, participant level, and to which my research adds a fourth level of the individual.

First: Effectiveness at the community level calculates the cost to the community as it supports the art organization's programs and services. Problem solving, public relations, and

client/user-satisfaction, are key to effectively communicating a public position of art's positive well-being in the community.

Second: Effectiveness at the art network level is a measurable growth in membership and range of services provided. The organization and its management have a mission/mandate to strengthen network relationships through effective cost management of art network maintenance, clear communications strategies, and the nurturing-member commitment to network goals.

Third: Effectiveness at the organizational/participant level ensures the art organization's survival and enhances its legitimacy. By minimizing conflict, participation in the network is strengthened and resource acquisition in the form of art as social capital, will continue to grow. "Forward-thinking organizations that move toward broad deployment of social technologies are now in the process of building-out strategies," (Koplowitz, 2010).

Fourth: Effectiveness at the individual level ensures the artist's free-flow of ideation, transformation, inspiration, and invention. They are a continuity in the process of technological performance, artistic and scientific competence, from ideation to production, based on the revised model Winston Model (Winston, 1998. Appendix 2). This model opens the process of positive information through artistic endeavours to the continuative progressive timeline of past, present, and future.

It's worth noting contributions of Dr. Gene Cohen in his research on creativity and aging, especially the positive impact of the arts on health and illness.

"For scientists, the idea that a negative change caused by a problem rather than by normal aging, creates an opportunity to modify the problem," towards accepting a positive as a concept

of "successful aging." (Cohen, 2006, p.7). "New research on psychological growth and development in the second half of life has led to a new understanding of the capacity for positive change and creative expression in the second half of life, substantiated by long history of case reports and observational studies on the impact of art and art therapy on alleviating illness," (Cohen, 2006, p.8). Cohen illustrates the impact of art and creative expression on Alzheimer's disease, as it affected the artist Willem de Kooning, who despite being affected with the disease "preserved and reserved his skill in the form of art which allowed him to continue to paint for many years after his diagnosis, nearly up to the time he died," (Cohen, 2006, p.13).

Clay Shirky also adds a noteworthy definition of social capital when he said, in context of his concept of cooperative "communities of practice," (Shirky, 2008, p.101) that "in economic terms, capital is a store of wealth and assets; social capital is that store of behaviors and norms in any large group that lets its members support one another," (Shirky, 2008, p.222) to which he adds a further delineation in the social capital concept, by positing bonding and bridging capital as further ways to "increase the depth of connections and trust within a homogeneous group," and well as "increase (the number of) connections" among those groups (Shirky, 2008, p.222, bracket added).

As exhaustive and incomplete this effectiveness of art's power may appear to be, albeit positive in its *unfinishedness,* and precluding an effectiveness of communication at many levels, it nevertheless culminates in a convincing and conclusive position that indeed art has a positive value in the form of capital. As a result, this positive construct can claim the attainable objective of affecting the subject's ability to think critically, and even with inherent gaps as yet to be discovered in applicable research, begin to resolve the issue of a decline in critical thinking.

To summarize, the positive construct is:

1. An implicit order to things.

2. A higher order of aesthetics and pleasure and the divine, that fuels creativity accorded to the spiritual.

3. An expansion of the subject's existing databank of aesthetic pleasure in the mind, and to identify such aesthetic pleasures as the result of exposure to art.

4. An educational contribution that can be taken to the point of possibly establishing a new dynamic in the interpretation of positive.

5. Positive in light of its inherent value as intellectual, human, social, and spiritual capital.

6. Capital measured in value. Art has immense value. Art is capital. Art is an asset.

7. Art as a source for the "expansion of the human spirit."

8. Self-delighting as a substantial contributor to capital values.

9. Intellectual capital when art history enlightens.

10. Human capital when fine art is a consumer good, whose existence is supposed to expand civilized consciousness.

11. Human capital when a museum accumulates a collection (of art) that it leverages the way a bank leverages capital.

12. Spiritual capital, when faith, hope, and love, are a measure of positive.

13. Spiritual capital when the power to create spiritual atmosphere is measured through correct aesthetic judgments and appreciation.

14. Social capital when visible social capital growth exists as the focal point for communication.

15. Social capital as four levels of examining network effectiveness, including calculating the cost, measuring growth, ensuring survival as well as enhancing legitimacy, and ensuring the artist's free-flow of ideation, transformation, inspiration, and invention.

16. Social capital as a model, opens the process of positive information through artistic endeavours to add to the continuative progressive timeline of past, present, and future, and presents positive as capital as the continuum.

17. Social Capital as the positive impact of art and art therapy on alleviating illness.

3.5. Positive as the continuum

Positive as capital, is the continuum that extends into the methodology of my literature reviews, theoretical concepts, textual analysis including scholarly literature, papers, publications, and commentary, contextualized in the poetry of Michelangelo, the philosophy of Mark Rothko, and the journals of John Gould, with supplementary comments drawn from my own writings. In this continuum of positive as capital, my research will also examine the primary scholarly contributions of Reber, Unkelback *et al*, and McLuhan. Up close, it means the examination of processing positive and negative cognition fluency, and the density factor of such capital contributions. The continuum concludes a position that indeed art and critical thought are linked, a position intricately linked to the aesthetic of pleasure. Collectively, the artwork of my personal journey adds to this positive continuum by aiming to present a voice that speaks of "the holiness of beauty and the beauty of holiness," (Goldwater, 1945, p.455). *Beauty* being not just the created image (realism or abstract) but also beauty of form, line, texture and composition, as part of traditional classical drawing disciplines and the beauty of honouring those classical traditions. *Holiness* is that positive quality that separates beauty from the wanton destruction and decay of this world. Man's holiness is achieved when he or she separates himself or herself from the world's contamination, yet remains intimately involved as a voice for justice and love. *Holiness of beauty and beauty of holiness* are the creative expressions of beauty in a form that celebrates the abundance of life to promote unconditional love and sacrifice, separate from a selfishness of life that promotes greed, lust and selfish ambition. As such, this voice that celebrates holiness as integral to the positive continuum, becomes an advocate for the continuity found in the aesthetic of pleasure.

Conclusion

From the construct of Zimmer's tetrad and my hybrid tetrad as a dialectical model to understand art and critical thought, my research concludes with the contributions of Christian Unkelbach *et al*, and his concept of the density hypothesis. The hypothesis he offers is a simple one. When positive information is processed faster, the result is a density of positive information in the perceiver's memory. The authors "postulate and show a speed advantage in the processing of positive information and hypothesize that this advantage is caused by the higher density of positive information in memory," (Unkelbach, Fiedler, Bayer, Stegmüller, Danner, 2008. p.36). Having discussed earlier my examination of the process of information and knowledge fluency, and the observation by Whittlesea that, "research in psychology has shown that processing fluency influences different kinds of judgments. For instance, perceptual fluency contributes to the experience of familiarity. A stimulus that has been repeatedly presented before will be processed more fluently," (Whittlesea, 1993). That stimulus, when processed fluently, increases the positive effect, the essence of research by Unkelbach, as well as Reber. "Later research observed that high perceptual fluency increases the experience of positive affect," (Reber, Winkielman, Schwarz, 1998) Research with psycho-physiological methods corroborated this positive effect on experience, "when easy-to-perceive stimuli were not only judged more positively but increased activation in for example the zygomaticus major muscle, the so-called 'smiling muscle'," (Winkielman, Cacioppo, 2001). My research began with demonstrating a speed advantage of positive information and its application to art as positive information, inherent in its positive-as-capital construct. Unkelbach *et al*, confirmed experimentally that "positive stimuli elicit faster responses than negative stimuli," (Unkelbach *et al,* 2008, p.46). As a result, he further hypothesized that "this advantage is caused by the higher density of

information in memory," (Unkelbach *et al,* 2008, p.46). Their findings showed that in fact positive information was more densely clustered, thus demonstrating the viability and usefulness of the density hypothesis, when applied to "the evaluative priming paradigm," (Unkelbach *et al,* 2008, p.46). Evaluative priming, as an associated judgment of the aesthetic of pleasure and critical thought, entailed an implicit assumption about the interplay of cognition and environment. If the environment is one of *Think Art Think Smart*, cognition is shaped accordingly. If the environment is interpreted within such cognitive structures as exposure to art through personal and social initiatives, and formal or informal education, the representations of that environment will be positive. Over time, an aggregate of positive information forms in the perceiver's memory as a deposit. It is precisely this density deposit that becomes the foundation for evaluative effects, as a "systematic explanation for processing speed as observable across many areas of social cognition research," (Unkelbach *et al,* 2008, p.47). However, Unkelbach's research falls short of addressing the actual links between the density hypothesis and art, leaving the exploration of such links to my extended research and scholarly assumptions. Even though, "the density hypothesis can shed new light on old and puzzling results, it has the potential to generate novel predictions, for the case of evaluative conditioning," (Unkelbach *et al,* 2008, p.47).

My research into the actual density expressed in fine art yielded limited results in the forms of scholarly papers. However, the University of California, Berkeley, posted an interesting number of images of paintings alongside brief notations of the psychological dimensions of density in art, (Berkeley, 2011). In cubist paintings by Fieninger (1916), expressionist work by Crali (1939), Steinhardt (1913), Devambez (1902), and Pimenov (1937), the density expressed in art is presented as dimensions of a perceiver's proximity to a density of volume and light, as well

as other proximities such as a curiosity about such concepts as city life and the destruction of self, the individual proximity of social groups, proximity to phobias, and confrontations with power. Void of detailed analysis, these psychological dimensions are nevertheless indicators there is more research to be done about the "increased dimensionality" (Unkelbach *et al,* 2008, p.42) of the implications of a density hypothesis as integral to the processing of positive information.

"The arts are all around us, within every moment of our lives. They are the vivid colours of nature and within the sounds and silence of our daily lives. They are held in the expression of the written and spoken word and the movement of our bodies and the world," Plato. *"Music (art) gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything."* From: *Awaken the Senses – Stir the Heart:* a speech by Joan Carr, Superintendent, Edmonton Catholic Schools. 22nd Annual Celebration of the Arts, Jubilee Auditorium, Edmonton. May 4, 2011. (Plato, 427-347 BC).

Recommendations

1. To create *i*ACT as a community of intellectual discourse by cultivating a community of practice, encouraging its contributors to embrace topics of mutual interest in cognitive processes and the influence of art, with fresh insights and thoughtful criticism as to how these insights and criticisms can be effectively communicated through the use of new media technology.

2. To further examine and research examine the fluency by which viewers can process the effects of the stimulus of art as positive information to create a more positive aesthetic

response, using qualitative grounded research into questions and methodologies within a body of social science and humanities literature.

3. To demonstrate a speed advantage in the processing of positive information caused by a higher density of positive information in memory through specific experiments in social phenomena and scientific observation of art as positive information.

4. To implement strategies that examine available data in light of a research that encompasses observation, textual analysis, and interviews, to demonstrate the significance of human, intellectual, social and spiritual capital of art and art appreciation, and their effect on judgment, based on research results.

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Fig.1. "Cerulean's Map," an original drawing by Gerrit Verstraete, Cat. No. 1122, 2009, 30 X 22 inches (76.4 X 56.7 cm), metal point, mixed-media and ground on Stonehenge paper, 245 GSM.

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Appendix:

1. *i*ACT, International Association of Critical Thought

*i*ACT

International Association for Critical Thought
Founded September 4, 2010

www.associationforcriticalthought.com

*i*ACT is a "community of scholars who constitute a disciplinary matrix when they share a set of paradigmatic assumptions about the study of certain phenomena. This does not mean that there is a consensus on every issue, but rather that scholars see objects of study in similar ways, and use the same language game in describing these phenomena. Although various and competing theories may emerge to explain a particular dimension of human behavior, they usually develop out of a common set of epistemological (human knowledge, cognition), ontological (reality), and methodological (orderly thought and systematic analysis) assumptions.

At the same time, such theories are granted legitimacy by a tribunal of anonymous peers who adhere to strict, community imposed standards about what counts as a contribution to that community's body of knowledge." Art, communication and technology scholars "actually possess a strong sense of community and identity."

*i*ACT may be relatively small, but it will have developed the characteristics of an invisible college, building networks of ideas and citations, creating genealogies of our field, developing constructs and jargon that are an integral part of our academic discourse, publishing, influencing other disciplines, and establishing and attending (online or site-specific) conferences that affirm our identity and cement our relationship.

*i*ACT's identity, however, does not grow out of a set of explicit propositions or a fixed canon of (critical thought) theories with which every scholar is intimately familiar, but rather emerges from a rather loose set of central problematics that all scholars implicitly or explicitly address into finding their particular area of research. These problematics are identifiable precisely because researchers in our discipline will adopt an integrative communication orientation, that distinguishes what we do from scholars in related fields. The means by which (critical thought scholars) establish knowledge claims may be fundamentally different, but for social scientists, (artists, educators) and interpretivists alike, there remains a strong rhetorical influence reflecting a concern for the (use of art) as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in (fellow) beings who by nature respond to symbols. This constitutes our disciplinary foundation. (Adapted from Mumby, D., Stohl, C. 1996. brackets added)

Mumby, DE., Stohl, C, (1996) Disciplining Organizational Communications Studies. *Management Communication Quarterly* (10)50, pp.52,53

2. The Winston Model

THE WINSTON MODEL
(revised model by Gerrit Verstraete, Sept. 2, 2010)

PERFORMANCE / TECHNOLOGY
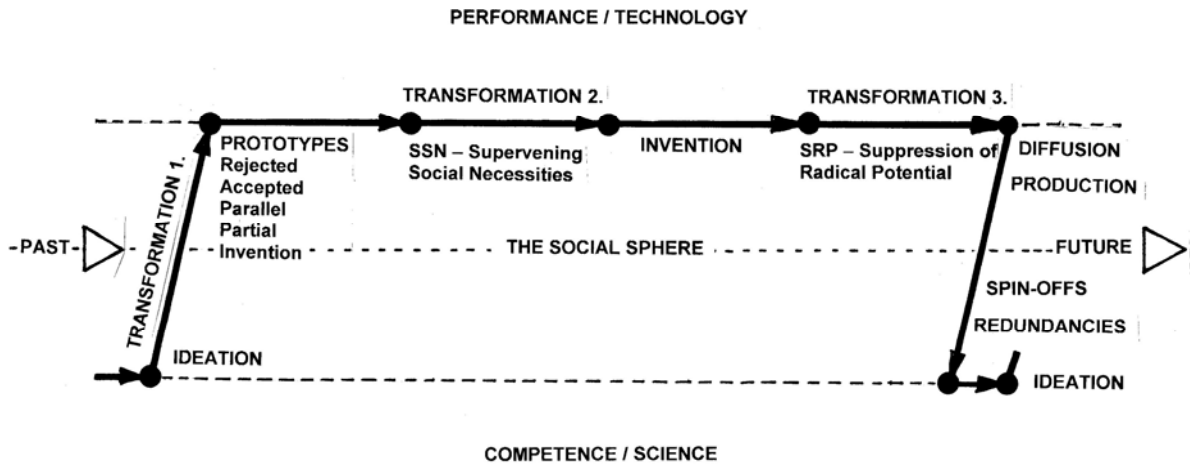
The original model restricted itself by drawing an oval to literally represent a social "sphere," thus reducing any sense of continuity in the process of technological performance and scientific competence, from ideation to production. The revised model opens the process to the continuative progressive timeline of past, present and future, *ad infinitum*

3. Theoretical Ancestry Construct

By Gerrit Verstraete / MACT 2011, 2011 Culminating Research Project
"Think art, think smart"

Practical Theory
> **Communications Theory**
>> Exploration
>> Application
>> **Creation**
>>> Metadiscourse
>>> **Relevance**
>>>> Intellectual
>>>> **Practical**
>>>>> **Construction**
>>>>>> Rhetorical
>>>>>> Phenomenological
>>>>>> Cybernetics
>>>>>> Sociocultural
>>>>>> New Traditions
>>>>>> **Semiotics**
>>>>>>> Signs
>>>>>>> Thinking
>>>>>>> Symbols
>>>>>> **Sociopsychological**
>>>>>>> Behaviour
>>>>>>> Cognitive
>>>>>>> Environment
>>>>>>> **Social Cognitive Theory**
>>>>>>>> **Cognitive Fluency**
>>>>>>>>> **Processing Fluency**
>>>>>>> **Media Ecology Theory**
>>>>>>>> **Interactional Theory**
>>>>>>>>> **Exogenous Theory**
>>>>>>>>> **Embodied Theory**
>>>>>>>>> **Density Theory**
>>>>>>>>> **The Tetrad**
>>>>>>>>>> **A Dialectical Model**

4. The Long Distance Voyager (details of critique)

"The Long Distance Voyager," by Gerrit Verstraete. Cat.No.1140, 24 X 32 inches (61.8 X 81.5 cm), 2009, Wolff's carbon pencil and Pitt oil pencil on mixed media on mounted Stonehenge 245 GSM paper .

Critique by Dan Moore, May 4, 2009 (at age 77), Washington, DC. USA.
A very powerful and engaging portrait drawing of a man whose expression is one of a tortured spirit. I think these souls are in us all, and we need to release them into the wind. I have done several similar works and there is a certain powerful purpose in freeing them from our personas. Allow this bird to fly away. My friends do admire the strength of these personalities. They usually have large jaws and sometimes fierce expressions. I paint or draw them in bold strokes - they are not your reluctant violet people of life. They appear to be a paradox - violence yet wrapped in security blankets to avoid the darts and barbs of mankind's hubris and jealous fits.

And there is in your drawing a white 'barbed wire of protection' around his shoulders rendered spontaneous ala Jackson Pollock coating a beautiful dimension of form and fabric. Strongly hinting at contrast - freehand, yet precise control of form and fine line beneath.

This expressionistic delineation speaks to me. This man is saying from his citadel of cloth and the fortress of his face, *'Look at me, see the sour sediments suspended in my existence, no longer in the subconscious of my head. The jealous have hit me again and again, they take pleasure in my pain, they are on schedule, it will not end - those who are assigned to this watch and they will relentlessly perform their interminable duty like clockwork. Hit me again or don't. I do not care. I am damaged beyond damaged. I did not hurt the world. Leave me alone, I am tough. I have been tortured. I fight back with nonviolence, with no revenge, without bitterness, without action or plan, but with defiant folded arms'.* This is my seeing of some inner man. I may be right, I may be wrong, but it is what I detect. Yet it is not your self-portrait. I see you as a kind man, a talented genius, a world class citizen, a help to art and artists and those who appreciate and collect art. A genuine cultural spirit, motivated and successful.

(**Dan Moore,** 1932 – Washington, DC. He received a B.A. from Washington and Lee *University in Virginia*. His professor studied with the Mexican fresco painter, Diego Rivera. Dan studied with Abraham Rattner at *Michigan State University* and then at the *Art Students League* in New York City. His teachers were Robert Beverly Hale, the famous anatomist, Ivan Olinski, Robert Phillip, and George Grozs, formerly of the *Bauhaus*, Germany. Later he studied fresco and taught fresco painting at the *Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture* in New England (Maine). He followed that by living in Paris and studying and teaching at the *Academie Furstenburg (Le Centre Des Arts Sacres)* and where he finished a large commission of Jacob Jordaens "Four Evangelists" in the Salle Van Dyke of the *Louvre.*

Additional comments:
Dr.Beert Verstraete (*Acadia University*, Nova Scotia)
What a magnificent piece of work—Dan Moore's critique is absolutely right. There is something marvellously Dantean about your drawing—after Dante Alighieri, the early 14th century Italian author, as you know, of the epic- poetic masterpiece, The Divine Comedy, an account of his mythical journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. Your drawing could be the emblem for the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* parts.

Wynn Kramarsky (founder, curator, *The New York Collection*, NY)
The critic certainly knows his drawings. His technical analysis is exactly on point. I would differ with the psychological evaluation of the subject. To me the model is more willing to take what else may be in store and somewhat less sorry for his past. But that is the wonder of art, different viewers see different things...and all of them may be different from the view of the artist!

5. The Tetrad: a dialectical model of media ecology theory and art, design and new media.
(McLuhan, Verstraete, Zimmer, 2010)

The Tetrad: a dialectical model of media ecology theory
and art, design, and new media
(McLuhan, Verstraete, Zimmer)

ENHANCE

What does ADN enhance?

creativity, innovation, ideation, prototypical, exploration, outside the box, voice extension, in reach and frequency, top-of-mind awareness, identity, critical thought

REVERSE

What does ADN reverse into when pushed to extremes?

Exogenous Theory

biases of market-driven art, market demands, individual tastes, criticism, isms, notoriety, price

THE ARTIST IS NEW MEDIA

Interactional Theory

ADN, use, utility, interaction, intuition, methodology

RETRIEVE

Embodied Theory

biases of the artist, methods and traditions, scholasticism, revivalism, the Academy,

What does ADN retrieve that has been obsolesced earlier?

OBSOLESCE

art theory, classicism, traditional methods, original art, archive, artist-driven styles, subsuming of older media,

What does ADN make obsolete?

103

6. The Hybrid Tetrad Dialectical Model

The Hybrid Tetrad: a dialectical model of media ecology theory interactional theory, art, design and new media
(McLuhan, Verstraete, Zimmer, 2011)

ENHANCE
Michelangelo Buonarroti
(poetry)

What does the model enhance?

creativity, innovation, ideation, prototypical exploration, outside the box, voice extension in reach and frequency, top-of-mind awareness, identity, critical thought.

RETRIEVE
John Gould
(journals)

What does the model retrieve that has been obsolesced earlier?

Embodied Theory

biases of the artist, methods and traditions, scholasticism, revivalism, the Academy

Interactional theory

the model's application, use, utility, interaction, intuition, methodology

REVERSE
Mark Rothko
(philosophy)

What does the model reverse into when pushed to extremes?

Exogenous Theory

biases of market-driven art, market demands, individual taste, criticism, isms, notoriety, price

OBSOLESCE
Gerrit Verstraete
(essays)

What does the model make obsolete?

art theory, classicism, traditional methods original art, archive, artist-driven styles, subsuming of older medium

February 7, 2012, (25,160 words, 104 pages).