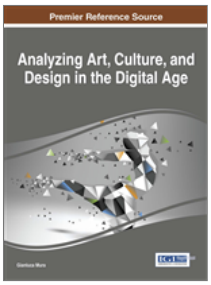

Subjectivity and Inadvertence in Computational Art: Muta-Morphosis

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Abstract

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Creativity is stochastic and assumptive in nature. The importance of randomness in the creative process must not be ignored, underestimated or intentionally disregarded in a condescending way. Notions of chance, randomness, or unpredictability are much important, especially when it comes to artistic creation. In addition to above notions, serendipity can be seen as the expected contribution for making expedient discoveries by coincidence, by chance. To put serendipity into work, there is need to accumulate a list of questions that need solving, acquaintance with already existing answers, and their use in daily life. Only when this knowledge is present, 'chance' can take its part in establishing the perfect milieu for the 'problem' and the 'solution' to find each other. If there is already a great deal of knowledge accrued in our minds about the problem and the requisites for the solution, chance adds the final piece to the puzzle. It is when we can start to talk about a traditional 'prescriptive, authoritarian and rather conventional' aesthetics vs. a new 'generative, irregular, unprescribed' aesthetics.

Chapter Preview

Serendipity And Spontaneity In The Context Of Discovery

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Serendipity plays an notable role in the history of revelation, within the fields of criminology and science in general. In other words, any insignificant environmental incident carries the potential of inspiring a solution which can unexpectedly surface from the unconscious mind. This frequently happens when one takes things easy. Imagine Archimedes in his bathtub, finding the principle that can be shortly defined as 'any object, wholly or partially immersed in a fluid, is buoyed up by a force equal to the weight of the fluid displaced by the object', or Newton under an apple tree, with a falling apple that initiated the universal theory of gravity. Serendipity, however, hits only the willing mind. Both Archimedes and Newton had been working on their corresponding challenges for some time and were consequently 'alerted' to their resolutions. Not everybody sitting in bathtubs or under apple trees will find inspiration for invention without spending the prerequisite effort.

Ward, Finke and Smith describes this alertedness through Archimedes' experience: "Archimedes was the greatest mathematical and scientific thinker of the third century B.C., and King Hiero of Syracuse, his relative, knew it. Archimedes had proved this to the King when he built a machine that, powered by one arm, could move a fully loaded ship out of a dock, whereas the entire Syracusan crew, without the machine, could barely budge the ship. King Hiero asked Archimedes to determine whether a gold crown he had commissioned had been surreptitiously alloyed with cheaper (and less dense) silver. Archimedes attempted first to determine the volume of the crown, so that he could compare it with the volume of an equal weight of pure gold. The crown was such a complex shape, however, that Archimedes was initially thwarted. When he neglected his personal habits in his absorption in the problem, his friends carried him by force to the public baths. While in the bath, he noticed the water displaced by his body, and he realized that the crown would also displace an equal and measurable amount of water. Screaming 'Eureka!,' he is said to have run straight home in his excitement, without pausing to dress himself." (Ward, Finke, Smith, 1995).

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