
The Van Gogh Experience

Transgressions of Concept, Design, and Writing

ABSTRACT This experimental writing both embodies and interrogates how creative work that is re-mixed and re-presented also creates multivalent “experiences.” A menagerie of quotations performs both a narrative-of-thinking and open-ended discursive potential. The work asks: Can this manuscript both analyze and perform a subversion, problematizing notions of authenticity, authorship, ownership, production, distribution, reception, and meaning? Can immersion in fragmented, derivative writing produce an affective experience in line with a contemporary post-pandemic and technologically- and social-media-immersive “structure of feeling”? The excerpts include discussions of Vincent Van Gogh’s work recently presented as popular “immersive experiences”; discourse on the commodification, reproduction, and authenticity of art; views on artistic presentation in a pandemic- and technology-infused era; and quotations concerning (and drawn from work in) deconstruction, authorship, and avant-garde fiction, further extending interpretative potential. Where does it start, where does it take you, and where do you feel it? **KEYWORDS** Visual arts; Deconstruction; Immersive experience; Authenticity; Affect; Covid-19

“What is false creates taste, and reinforces itself by knowingly eliminating any possible reference to the authentic. And what is genuine is reconstructed as quickly as possible, to resemble the false.” (Debord, 1990, p. 50)

“As far as we can remember, there has never been a phenomenon like the immersive Van Gogh craze currently sweeping America. Maybe it’s the enduring popularity of the Dutch artist. Maybe it’s the hunger for in-the-world experiences after a year of quarantine. . . . The hunger to venture into a giant animated projection of a Van Gogh painting is real, and it’s everywhere.” (Artnet News, 2021, n.p.)

“People have become confused by multiple van Gogh exhibits with similar names. Immersive Van Gogh has had to compete with Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience. News affiliates in Boston and New York City tried to make sense of . . . Van Gogh: The Immersive Exhibition and Van Gogh:

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The Immersive Experience, reporting that one was a projected installation, while the other used virtual reality headsets.” (Waltz, 2021, n.p.)

“In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.” (Debord, 1983, p. 5)

“Artnet News’s own critic, Ben Davis, who’s been assigned to cover the immersive Van Gogh phenomenon, was among the confused. ‘I am one of the people who bought a ticket to “Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience” not knowing that there were two different experiences,’ he says. ‘It didn’t even occur to me. I feel ridiculous.’” (Boucher, 2021, n.p.)

“Having bristled at the commercialism and competitiveness in Parisian art circles, he aimed, by personal example, to transcend those onerous cultural imperatives by translating art into a new secular religion. . . . It results in an enduring, resonating wholeness that he thought to be the truth within the universe and the very purpose of art.” (Keane, 2018, n.p.)

“Some progressives, like some traditionalists, have taken up the banner of ‘accessibility’ in works of art, in opposition to modernist complexity or ‘difficulty.’” (Neiss, 2021, n.p.)

“If the price to visit the traveling exhibit is too steep, people can always visit van Gogh’s real artwork for free at the Cleveland Art Museum.” (Webb, 2021, n.p.)

“More than experts in legitimation, the organic, specific, critical, amateur, dissident intellectual has been obliged to fight for the study of culture with an unprecedented degree of passion, with a commitment premised on what Deleuze, citing Foucault, has famously dubbed the indignity of speaking for others.” (M. Smith, 2008, p. 73)

“Most people from our generation know many famous pieces of art solely through commodities. . . . While this exposure to fine art is undeniably valuable to the public, it is imperative that we understand the artists’ intentions and appreciate the original paintings themselves.” (Carley et al., 2012, n.p.)

“If Vincent Van Gogh were alive today, this might just be how he’d want his artworks to be displayed: moving, flowing, floating, overwhelming.” (Hewitt, 2021, n.p.)

“Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6)

“There’s a satisfying feeling of recognition when the women’s faces from ‘The Potato Eaters’ are suddenly obvious, or when you see a ‘Starry Night’ motif that’s unmistakably van Gogh. The animations bring these works to life—smoke snakes over fires, irises blossom like fireworks, stars flicker and

suns radiate. The overall thematic structure is a journey from dark to light, then back to a more illuminated darkness.” (Bravo, 2021, n.p.)

“People see what they want to see and what people want to see never has anything to do with the truth.” (Bolaño, 2008, p. 219)

“Loving Vincent, a feature film about the artist . . . has been made by animating oil paintings that ape his style. . . . The makers . . . commissioned 62,450 oil paintings by 115 professional painters to use as frames in the film, which will include 94 of Van Gogh’s own paintings ‘integrated’ into the animated flow of images.” (Jones, 2017, n.p.)

“Shit on your whole mortifying, imaginary, and symbolic theater.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 334)

“Suggesting that artworks that don’t move are *far too boring these days*, the museum promises an experience that will go ‘beyond the static nature of traditional art exhibitions.’ Venable has even scattered the institution’s contemporary art offerings throughout the museum to make way for this new permanent installation.” (Boucher, 2020, n.p., italics in original)

“One of the foremost tasks of art has always been the creation of a demand which could be fully satisfied only later. The history of every art form shows critical epochs in which a certain art form aspires to effects which could be fully obtained only with a changed technical standard, that is to say, in a new art form.” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 16)

“The world has been through so much economic, physical, and emotional hardship in the past couple of years, even as the fortunes of the wealthiest have increased. We live in a time when the border between parody and reality feels agonizingly thin.” (Sepinwall, 2021, n.p.)

“Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle.” (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 25)

“The fragmented quotes and trippy olive trees blowing in the digital breeze bring out all sorts of reactions, according to the exhibit producers. Some cry, some meditate, some, like me, smile when a rogue red clock mysteriously floats by, void of the rest of ‘The Night Café’ to which it belongs. Some even propose, as the Minneapolis venue saw on opening weekend.” (Ottoson, 2021, n.p.)

“The impasse is a stretch of time in which one moves around with a sense that the world is at once intensely present and enigmatic, such that the activity of living demands both a wandering absorptive awareness and a hyper-vigilance that collects material that might help to clarify things, maintain one’s sea legs, and coordinate the standard melodramatic crises with those processes that have not yet found their genre of event.” (Berlant, 2011, p. 4)

“In a letter to Theo from September 1880 . . . van Gogh’s orientation as a novice artist is made plain not only in his paean to the ‘haystacks,’ ‘brown farmland,’ ‘coffee-coloured soil’ and moss-covered thatched roofs of farm-houses and sheds of the region; not only in his prioritisation of the ‘picturesque figures’ of diggers, woodcutters and farm-hands; not only in his expressed desire to ‘one day’ draw workmen and tradesmen so that they may be ‘brought to notice’; and not only in his desire to depict that which is ‘touching and heart-rending’ in ‘poor and obscure workers’; but also in his heartfelt valorisation of those masters who can put ‘something of the human soul,’ or ‘sentiment,’ into their artworks, whether it be a certain melancholy or ‘a power to love.’” (Atkinson, 2020, pp. 133–134)

“This book tries to slow the quick jump to representative thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us. My effort here is not to finally ‘know’ them—to collect them into a good enough story of what’s going on—but to fashion some form of address that is adequate to their form; to find something to say about ordinary affects by performing some of the intensity and texture that makes them habitable and animate.” (Stewart, 2007, p. 4)

“Each morning we would wake up, and each of us would ask himself what plateau he was going to tackle, writing five lines here, ten there. We had hallucinatory experiences, we watched lines leave one plateau and proceed to another like columns of tiny ants. We made circles of convergence. Each plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be related to any other plateau.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 2)

“Metaphors are our way of losing ourselves in semblances or treading water in a sea of seeming.” (Bolaño, 2008, p. 254)

“Which brings us to a modest proposal. Art museums have been hit hard during the pandemic. There’s a real, genuine, framed-and-on-the-wall Van Gogh in gallery 355 of mia . . . featured in the ‘Immersive Van Gogh’ film. You can see it for free during the museum’s open hours . . . and make a donation.” (Espeland, 2021, n.p.)

“A correct instinct will see to it that the need for entertainment is satisfied. The interior design of movie theaters serves one sole purpose: to rivet the viewers’ attention to the peripheral, so that they will not sink into the abyss. The stimulations of the senses succeed one another with such rapidity that there is no room left between them for even the slightest contemplation.” (Kracauer, 1995, pp. 325–326)

“The idea is to step inside several of Vincent Van Gogh’s post-impressionist masterpieces and gain insight into what was going through his mind as he created his most famous paintings.” (Morona, 2021, n.p.)

“Newer media follow, amplify, and remediate that tradition of storytelling. They permit meaning-making of situations unknown to us by evoking affective reactions . . . we are prompted to interpret situations by *feeling* like those directly experiencing them, even though, in most cases, we are not able to *think* like them.” (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 4, italics in original)

“Long before Covid-19, Hans Luijten was in the habit of likening Vincent van Gogh to a virus. ‘If that virus comes into your life, it never goes away,’ he said . . . in April 2020, and added with a note of warning in his voice: ‘There’s no vaccine for it.’” (Shorto, 2021, n.p.)

“My method is to read patterns of adjustment in specific aesthetic and social contexts to derive what’s collective about specific modes of sensual activity toward and beyond survival.” (Berlant, 2011, p. 9)

“We just passed 3.2 million tickets sold, which, as I understand it, makes it the most successful attraction in the world on Ticketmaster,’ says Corey Ross, president of Toronto-based Lighthouse Immersive and one of the producers behind ‘Immersive Van Gogh.’” (Capps, 2021, n.p.)

“One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.” (Benjamin, 1969, p. 4)

“Semiotic equivalence became more real than reality. As ‘communication’ replaced production, workers were being ‘alienated’ not at work, but at home in their daily lives. Class struggle no longer applied. It was the beginning of the assembly-life, social life colonized by the commodity.” (Lotringer, 2007, pp. 13–14)

“The only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within. We can never stand outside it.” (D. Smith, 2004, p. 28)

“There are no confirmed photographs of the artist as an adult. . . . He began photographing the lookalikes in his studio and then cherry picking the features of each that most closely resembled the famed Dutch artist as he appeared on canvas. ‘Sometimes I pasted pieces of skin, cheeks, nose, and eyes over the self-portraits to model a face that had exactly the same proportions as in the painting,’ Van Empel said.” (Cascone, 2021, n.p.)

“Now that Benjamin’s book on the arcades is out in English translation, you hear people saying: ‘Oh, it is so fragmentary! It is just a *mélange* of quotations and commentary, without any coherent order.’” (Buck-Morss, 2001, p. 327)

“Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which the Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic.” (Foucault, 1983, p. iii)

“Americans got a glimpse inside Immersive Van Gogh when the exhibit was featured in the Netflix hit *Emily in Paris* as Emily Cooper, (Lily Collins), visited the exhibit. That exhibit in the City of Lights was seen by over two million people.” (Brunner, 2021, n.p.)

“All of these companies are working from the same source material—the same *Starry Night*, the same *Sunflowers*—that is, Van Gogh’s instantly recognizable, incredibly valuable and, above all, freely available intellectual property. His work falls in the public domain.” (Capps, 2021, n.p.)

“The triumph of advertising in the culture industry is that consumers feel compelled to buy and use its products even though they see through them.” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 136)

“Hyperreality can eventually be understood as the pathway leading from a condition where the sign bears some semblance to reality to one where the sign becomes self-referential.” (Proto, 2019, p. 84)

“If we want to remain attentive to the plural of a text (however limited it may be), we must renounce structuring this text in large masses, as was done by classical rhetoric and by secondary-school explication: no construction of the text: everything signifies ceaselessly and several times, but without being delegated to a great final ensemble, to an ultimate structure.” (Barthes, 1974, pp. 11–12)

“But some also note it was the pandemic itself that prompted the Van Gogh boom. . . . [It] became impossible to offer traditional events, be they

concerts or spectacles like the circus or ice-skating shows. . . . At the same time, many people were nevertheless eager to get out. The Van Gogh shows, which easily allow for generous spacing because of the size of the venues, emerged as an alternative for producers to offer.” (Passy, 2021, n.p.)

“The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true.” (Baudrillard, 1989, p. 166)

“Visiting Amsterdam during the first week of March, I didn’t imagine that the more than 140 museums in the capital of the Netherlands would shudder within days.” (Gural, 2021, n.p.)

“That head of his has been occupied with contemporary society’s insoluble problems for so long, and he is still battling on with his good-heartedness and boundless energy. His efforts have not been in vain, but he will probably not live to see them come to fruition, for by the time people understand what he is saying in his paintings it will be too late.” (van Gogh in Brooks, 2022, n.p.)

“A subjective experience captured in stillness on canvas was instead in constant movement, undermining van Gogh’s lively line work that carries enough suggestive power in itself. The movement does what your own imagination is meant to, and the loud soundtrack replaces the reflective silence one experiences in a gallery.” (Foulidis, 2020, n.p.)

“He is one of the most advanced painters and it is difficult to understand him, even for me who knows him so intimately. His ideas cover so much ground, examining what is humane and how one should look at the world, that one must first free oneself from anything remotely linked to convention to understand what he was trying to say, but I am sure he will be understood later on. It is just hard to say when.” (van Gogh in Brooks, 2022, n.p.)

“The world’s most elite collectors are expected to bid between €5 million and €8 million . . . for a depiction of the Moulin de la Galette in Montmartre, painted while Vincent van Gogh lived with his brother, Theo, in Paris, when it goes on the block at Sotheby’s . . . on March 25.” (Gural, 2021, n.p.)

“Vincent, who once sought a career as a minister and lived among peasants to humble himself, had desperately wanted to make art that reached beyond the cognoscenti and directly into the hearts of common people. ‘No result of my work would be more agreeable to me,’ he wrote to Theo, quoting another artist, ‘than that ordinary working men should hang such prints in their room or workplace.’” (Shorto, 2021, n.p.)

“Since 2015, Fever have been democratizing access to culture and delighting global audiences through their experiences. In this time they have

revolutionised the experience economy ensuring experiences like *Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience* continue to delight culture seekers. Fever strive to continually offer affordable tickets, allowing for competitive prices and also special prices for seniors, veterans and students.” (Weeks, 2021, n.p.)

“Collage is a demonstration of the many becoming the one, with the one never fully resolved because of the many that continue to impinge upon it.” (Kuspit in Shields, 2010, p. 112)

“What a few entrepreneurial exhibitionists figured out is that many of us are less attached to van Gogh’s paintings than to the mythology that surrounds them. And *that* you can exhibit for cheap.” (Farago, 2021, n.p., italics in original)

“What art now has in its hands is mutable stuff which need not arrive at the point of being finalized with respect to either time or space. The notion that work is an irreversible process ending in a static icon-object no longer has much relevance. . . . What is revealed is that art itself is an activity of change, of disorientation and shift, of violent discontinuity and mutability, of the willingness for confusion even in the service of discovering new perceptual modes.” (Morris, 1969, p. 53)

“The show finished with a projection of van Gogh’s handwritten name. The perfect ending to an inauthentic experience: the artist’s signature, forged to consent to the corruption of his own work.” (Foulidis, 2020, n.p.)

“The technical antithesis between few production centers and widely dispersed reception necessitates organization and planning by those in control. The standardized forms, it is claimed, were originally derived from the needs of the consumers: that is why they are accepted with so little resistance. In reality, a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need is unifying the system ever more tightly.” (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 95)

“Aesthetic expression aims to communicate notions, subtleties, complexities, which have not yet been formulated, and, therefore, as soon as an aesthetic order comes to be generally perceived as a code (as a way of expressing notions which have already been formulated), then works of art tend to move beyond this code while exploring its possible mutations and extensions. . . . Much of the interest of works of art lies in the ways in which they explore and modify the codes which they seem to be using.” (Culler in Hebdige 1979, p. 129)

“These tortured artists are often undervalued during their lifetime and celebrated after their deaths. Perhaps that is why so many misunderstood

creatives find themselves drawn to these artists: by relating to them we feel less alone in our struggles.” (Moore, 2020, n.p.)

“Everyone will have noticed how much easier it is to get hold of a painting, more particularly a sculpture, and especially architecture, in a photograph than in reality. . . . The understanding of great works was transformed at about the same time the techniques of reproduction were being developed. Such works can no longer be regarded as the products of individuals; they have become a collective creation, a corpus so vast it can be assimilated only through miniaturisation. In the final analysis, mechanical reproduction is a technique of diminution that helps people to achieve control over works of art—a control without whose aid they could no longer be used.” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 523)

“The marketing team of ‘Immersive Van Gogh’ asks visitors to take pics and post on social media, thus creating free advertising for the show. Giant mirrors make this even easier.” (Eler, 2021, n.p.)

“I was watching carefully the other visitors in the show and I sensed they had the same feeling. Then I realized that anyone’s life nowadays can be part of an artwork, willingly or unwillingly.” (Quaranta, 2011, n.p.)

“All sorts of things in this world behave like mirrors.” (Lacan, 1991, p. 49)

“Even if people are only going to the immersive experiences for an Instagram post and even if they don’t learn anything new, Ingram still thinks they are important. . . . I think a lot of people go to museums thinking: I am going to go to a museum to learn about art. I think you should go to experience art to learn about yourself.” (Kauma, 2021, n.p.)

“In a profound sense, Berlin audiences act truthfully when they increasingly shun these art events (which, for good reason, remain caught in mere pretense), preferring instead the surface glamor of the stars, films, revues, and spectacular shows. Here, in pure externality, the audience encounters itself; its own reality is revealed in the fragmented sequence of splendid sense impressions. Were this reality to remain hidden from the viewers, they could neither attack nor change it; its disclosure in distraction is therefore of *moral significance*.” (Kracauer, 1995, p. 326, italics in original)

“This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, all in disorder—naked, in a frightful, obscene nakedness.” (Sartre, 1938, p. 351)

“The disconnect between Minneapolis politicians and the public was stark as Frey gave a Van Gogh-themed talk about his ‘love’ for Minneapolis. He made a Wikipedia-like remark about how Van Gogh was talented but struggled, gave a spiel about affordable housing he hasn’t provided. . . . I wondered

if Frey would've displaced an impoverished Van Gogh, or how MPD would've reacted to Van Gogh having a mental health crisis." (Bland, 2022, n.p.)

"The new Immersive Van Gogh show at 15th and Central on the border of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District has stirred some controversy. The arguments seem to be focused on whether it is trite. And will it continue to gentrify the neighborhood with all these Van Gogh enthusiasts coming to see this show?" (Blanc, 2022, n.p.)

"It's why the jazz metaphor is useful, I think, whether in Public Achievement or more broadly in co-creative, public work politics. It's an iterative, open process. There are skills, capacities, talents. There's a craft and art to it. But it's an open process and you can't predict that outcome." (Boyte, 2019, n.p.)

"The political and the everyday cannot be separated: from attempting to document and overcome prevalent racist and sexist societal attitudes, to the political sub-themes within popular culture contexts, our lives are politicized in many ways. Similarly, we actively and inadvertently, socially and privately, present our experiences on social media, and in other personal contexts. Our motivations for using social media vary, as do our interpretations of the content that we see online." (Highfield, 2016, pp. 153–154)

"Excised from context and in such a large number, the quotes start to feel as flimsy as a free calendar. 'It's very #LiveLaughLove for someone who cut off his own ear,' Margo commented." (Davis, 2021, n.p.)

"Importantly, play thus paves the transition from private to public. It becomes a strategy for connecting personalized takes or frames to conversations collectively assembled through the organizational logic of the tag. The act of referencing the tag renders the personal political, civic, and social in that it allows it to leave the private sphere and enter into the public realm, through a path that typically involves play." (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 106)

"Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination." (Barthes, 1977, p. 148)

"Since the meaning of a sign is a matter of what a sign is *not*, its meaning is always in some sense absent from it too. Meaning, if you like, is scattered or

dispersed along the whole chain of signifiers; it cannot be easily nailed down, it is never fully present in any one sign alone, but is rather a kind of constant flickering of presence and absence together.” (Eagleton, 2008, p. 111, italics in original)

“The Google Art Project . . . will allow web surfers to move through 17 of the most prominent art galleries in the world, with the option to look more closely at individual art works, including some that will be digitized so exhaustively that individual paint strokes and hairline cracks in the surface will be visible.” (Kennicott, 2011, n.p.)

“Together, object and meaning constitute a sign, and, within any one culture, such signs are assembled, repeatedly, into characteristic forms of discourse. However, when the bricoleur re-locates the significant object in a different position within that discourse, using the same overall repertoire of signs, or when that object is placed within a different total ensemble, a new discourse is constituted, a different message conveyed.” (Clarke in Hebdige, 1979, p. 104)

“You feel some compassion toward museums, but people do want to be wowed and . . . not . . . preached at. They don’t want to feel like they’re in trouble when they go into an art museum . . . where you are told not to touch. You’re told not to take pictures. You’re told not to take pictures with flash. You sort of feel like you have to be on your best behavior. There’s just a different barrier of entry.” (Crow in Linebaugh, 2021, n.p.)

“As social groups and classes live, if not in their productive then in their ‘social’ relations, increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible (a) for providing the basis on which groups and classes construct an image of the lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes; (b) for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces can be coherently grasped.” (Hall in Hebdige, 1979, p. 85)

“I’m thinking that the next step would be interactivity. They are walking, they’re twirling, and you can see there’s this appetite to almost touch it. That’s also part of the fantasy of the museum, I have this very, very strong urge that, of course, I will never do, but I would love to touch a van Gogh. . . . Having some choice that the audience can make that will change the course of the show, or what they want, or the angle, I’m thinking that that would be the next step, because I can see this urge of wanting to be in it even more.” (Curtat in Gallivan, 2021, n.p.)

“People always ask me, “Why go to DC? They’ve got all these free museums,” says Exhibition Hub’s CEO Mario Iacampo. ‘And I always say, we’re not replacing museums. We bring in a different type of experience. If you lived in DC 50 years, you’ve seen the museums. Maybe it’s time to see something different.” (Tate, 2021, n.p.)

“A successful object, in the sense that it exists its own reality, is an object that creates a dualistic relation, a relation that can emerge through diversion, contradiction, and destabilisation, but which effectively brings the so-called reality of a world and its radical illusion face-to-face.” (Baudrillard in Proto, 2003, p. 25)

“Artists, both brilliant and hackneyed, create out of the same basic desire to communicate. But it’s we art lovers who invest our attention, our time, in their creations. Why should we invest in a work of art that was created without conflict, or struggle, or pain? Where is the challenge?” (Zara, 2012, n.p.)

“What is it about this intermedial mixing that is so fascinating? I suppose it is partly a matter of a kind of stubborn realism built into my conviction that the human world itself is constructed out of the interweaving of signs and symbols, and it is the heterogeneity of these mediations that makes this a *living* world rather than a static system or stable picture.” (Mitchell in M. Smith, 2008, p. 42, italics in original)

“Imagine Van Gogh’ is a journey, it is the path of the painter, from Provence to the edge of Paris known as Auvers-sur-Oise,’ Mauger wrote. ‘It is in parallel with the path of each visitor, who finds their apotheosis in this exhibition.” (Whitfill, 2022, n.p.)

“Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs, arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier. Writing unfolds like a game that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. In writing the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears.” (Foucault, 1998, p. 206)

“Maybe he wanted his 2.5 x 3 foot paintings to stay that size, maybe he’d be into infusing his emotive paintings with world class animation. But, despite our efforts, we’ll never see the world through Van Gogh’s eyes, or know what he would think of all this. . . . It’s unlikely that he could even afford the ticket.” (Ottoson, 2021, n.p.)

“Art is permitted to survive only if it renounces the right to be different, and integrates itself into the omnipotent realm of the profane.” (Adorno, 1983, p. 132)

“And so art is everywhere, since artifice is at the very heart of reality. And so art is dead, not only because its critical transcendence is gone, but because reality itself, entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its own structure, has been confused with its own image. Reality no longer has the time to take on the appearance of reality. It no longer even surpasses fiction: it captures every dream even before it takes on the appearance of a dream.” (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 152)

“Immersive Van Gogh was forced to close in late December as Ontario’s health and safety measures tightened, and to pull off their 2020 premiere, they invented a drive-in format which required visitors to ‘Gogh by car.’” (Collins, 2021, n.p.)

“The main thing is to know how to set about it, to be able to concentrate your attention on a single detail, to forget yourself sufficiently to bring about the desired hallucination and so substitute the vision of a reality for the reality itself.” (Huysmans, 2004, p. 22)

“These presentations link art and theater, virtual reality and reality. ‘I think people want to experience art and live new experiences,’ the Italian creative director and film producer said via email. ‘Wandering in a huge space as “part” of the works of art is a great pleasure for all our senses. At the same time, watching others taking part in the work is very engaging.’” (MacMillan, 2021, n.p.)

“Although he is comfortable crediting the survival of works of art to the wisdom of the contemporary public, to the workings of godlike technology and to those who make or keep these works available to the public, he is disinclined to acknowledge the role of criticism. Critics, after all, are those who presume to make aesthetic distinctions regardless of popularity, or even in defiance of it.” (Neiss, 2021, n.p.)

“From a content perspective, they definitely took liberties with the artwork, cut pasting and overlaying elements and animating brush strokes to the point it isn’t really just van Gogh’s work anymore,’ shared one mostly content customer. ‘But the installation was technically flawless—not one seam between projections, no overlaps on the wall or bleed to other surfaces.’” (Galbraith, 2021, n.p.)

“When I used to do shoe drawings for the magazines I would get a certain amount for each shoe, so then I would count up my shoes to figure out how

much I was going to get. I lived by the number of shoe drawings—when I counted them I knew how much money I had.” (Warhol, 1977, n.p.)

“This moment was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse—provided we can agree on this word—that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification *ad infinitum*.” (Derrida, 1978, p. 287, italics in original)

“Insofar as I was interested in the arts, I was interested in the disconnect between my experience of actual artworks and the claims made on their behalf; the closest I’d come to having a profound experience of art was probably the experience of this distance, a profound experience of the absence of profundity.” (Lerner, 2011, p. 9)

“The dilemma is that museums—even those offering free admission—are struggling to rebuild their audiences amid the pandemic, so it irks that multisensory art events are selling out shows even when tickets rival rock concerts, topping \$100. ‘These multisensory experiences are not art—they’re a form of entertainment,’ said Max Hollein, director of New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, where attendance currently hovers around half the museum’s pre-pandemic levels.” (Crow, 2021, n.p.)

“I’m not surprised nobody doubted the jar with flies was a work of mine, as it resonates with my feeling that all objects in galleries and museum are what remains of the work, they are not the work itself.” (Quaranta, 2011, n.p.) ■

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