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Interactive Matter and the Expanded Informal

A post - digital Perception, Split Authority and the Temporary Autonomie Zone in Transmedia Art

by Nikunja, April 2018, Basel

Abstract

The French art critic's Michel Tapié's coined expression of *Informal Art* – *Informalism* stays in all a description being fairly vague, rather spongy, for principally created from an understanding as (European) opposition to (American) *Abstract Art* and *Abstract Expressionism* and as opposition to “representational form” or “form as meaning”. Thus many forms of art are understood as falling into this category of *The Informal*. But in reality, *The Informal* has to be understood in a much deeper way, as just opposing form and of much more profound artistic, philosophical and even societal consequence.

The contemporary artistic creation outside of market orientations and “art/artist product branding” does not need to try to distinguish itself by extraordinary “never afore seen patterns of form” (since any trace is new in itself), but by the importance of its content; the form is born from content and not content from form. And of course: a new content might naturally show its face in a new and unprecedented way.

But what makes art ART, has always been the existential urge and foremost intention of (wo)men to create the tangible physical link to the spiritual, the invisible forces, which greatly determine our existential physical reality, individually and socially. Art always challenged Death. Art always confirmed the evolution of humanity, spiritually and materially...

The historical *Informal* was born from the disastrous madness of WW 2 and the explosions of the atom bombs - in a way like DADA was born from the savageness of WW1 -, at first a way to overcome the trauma “of total control, total destruction, total war, total ideology” and then the illusion of a civilization and its moral and ethical values, dominated by the greed of first the Aristocracy, then the Bourgeoisie of the Great Capital.

In 2018 world society again faces the disasters of a fascist totalitarianism through the politically and democratically uncontrolled world - capitalism. In the 20th Century, the International Great Capital already made possible the historic fascism in Italy and Germany and these structures of monetary force and power have never been put to trail after WW2. Capitalism was seen and promoted as an attribute to the “Free World” opposing the totalitarianism of the “communist Eastern Block”, which in reality never has been socialist. Since 1989 capitalism and the International Great Capital are greatly controlling and influencing the geo-political power and the geo-economical situation and undermine the functioning of the democratic systems, where they exist, by the very nature of their de-liberalizing system and functioning.

Abstract Art historically and politically was used and designed as synonymous to “Free Expression, The Free World, the West” and thus consequently forbidden in the Communist countries of the “East”. Naturally it represented control, absolutism, power – like a flag.

Opposing to that, *The Informal* naturally was subversive, uncontrolled, organic, bringing order and chaos together, opening to other cultures, anti-colonialism, ecologism. In contrary to an artificial elitism capitalism needs, the *Informal* and its vast ways of formulations claim and open to the All, the Other, the Foreign.

By the power of the capitalist system and its product – orientated selection process, *informal* artworks and works of *Arte Povera* lost visibility, thus art theoretical importance, since all efforts are lined up, to satisfy the art market domination and the monetary art value creation by the multinational bank and gallery systems. Now, running towards the wall, a shallow elitarian “art-world”, where only the narrow spirits of oligarchs, billionaires, etc find representation in “artworks” and entertainment gags, more dangerously, producing the “pure *Kitsch*, being the carpet, under which the fascist capitalist power hides the crimes and victims of its deadly criminal system”. Thus the roaring deer of the 19th Century painting hanging on Hitler’s wall has become the squares of the one’s in control of capital, democracy and institution. It represents in essence the same: Fascism and Death.

In this paper I would like to design a new and much vaster understanding of *The Informal – The Expanded Informal* and put this in the context of my artistic, philosophical and natural scientific concept of *Interactive Matter*, transcending limits between art and science. The *Informal* here is not to be seen “as contrary to form” but as “the matter expanding in between forms”, the potential, gravity developing in between form as position, state, fact, statement, ideology, etc. This *Interactive Matter* itself can be creatively formulated but excludes “the form in between forms”, thus is informal. Informal is potential, informal is gravity.

The *Formal* is Earth, the Calculation, the measurement, the Known, the abstraction; the *Informal* is the Universe, the Potential, the immeasurable, the Unknown, the synthetical.

The informal art practice states, that “The form in between forms negates the original forms of departure and thus has to be avoided”; the “neti, neti” of the Zen- meditation.

Already towards the end of the fifties, artists in Europe and Japan understood the vastness of possible understanding of the *Informal*, meaning also leaving the cage of separating art disciplines, methods, authorities of artist and spectator. But first of all it meant, leaving the binding conventions of the old corrupt system of cultural regulations and conventions that had to be broken. It was really the societal liberation which brought about, later on in the 60ties, the Hippie-, antiwar - , anti-colonial-movements. Thus the radical formulations, born from the ashes of the atom bomb, Butoh, Gutai, paved the way to today’s freedom of formulation, really necessary to develop what lies in between form, to transcend perception, and thus absolutely basic to allow *Interactive Matter*.

The artistic conception of *The Expanded Informal* creates the multileveled awareness, that unites into a zen – spirit – like informal perception, the phenomenology of the multilayered reality in the Here and Now, in the way of “Nature’s Intelligence”. This large ana – logic, ana - digital intelligence, which gave birth to the creative and self-reflective intelligence of the human being and allows evolution of humanity far beyond simple technological progress. A pure art – as is the *Informal* – allows to connect to that intelligence.

The *Expanded Informal* develops a future language “of codes of potential, Wandel, transcendence” replacing the current language “of codes of states, positions”. This is not meant in a poetic way, but literally: the shift of perception, the shift of awareness, a shift of the power of authority.

Calculation is replaced by immersive associative intuition, as such much more precise and accurate than the analytical mind, a sort of supermind. The digital age, which started 400 years ago with Leibniz, comes to an end and opens into the Post – Digital Age.

How do we understand the post – digital awareness, the post – capitalist society? The *Expanded Informal*, with its aspects of *Split Authority*, *Temporary Autonomie Zone* (after pirate philosopher Hakim Bey), *Transmedia Reality*, may be an artistic tool to convey an evolution of perception, which is being developed and fostered on an individual level to then grow into the social and societal body of humanity in a natural way. No system of calculation is capable of bringing this evolution about, far beyond the illusion of the absolute control of human power and its desire of domination and security for an elite of the selected few.