



Symbols, representation and contemporary art

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The paper initially analyses the meaning of terms “Symbols”, “Representation” and “Contemporary Art”.

A focus on Symbols in human life – in connection with Contemporary Cultural Representation will be addressed in this paper. It is through the mediation of symbols that we think, act, imagine, feel, dream and remember. The paper explores how a person’s experience is transformed through symbols and addresses the question of how culture and mind are related through symbols.

Visual representations are interpreted by the viewer to comprehend the referent, usually within the cultural context of the viewer. It is impossible to differentiate “Representations” from culture and the society that produces them. The accuracy of the representations can by no means be guaranteed, as they operate in a system of signs that can never work in isolation from other signs or cultural factors. For instance, the interpretation and reading of representations functions in the context of a body of rules for interpreting. Within a society, many of these codes or conventions are informally agreed upon and have been established over a period of time. Such understandings however, are not set as a legal rule and may alter between times, places, people and contexts.

How then does this understanding of representation occur? How is this understanding further altered in relation to contemporary art? Who defines contemporary art? Artists, critics, curators, gallerists, auctioneers, collectors, or the public?

This paper works on bringing together the position of **Symbols and their Representation** in the Contemporary Art in the context of culture and society. It also looks at how the representational features of symbols and representations, as a contemporary artist embodies it, contributes to produce meanings in a global context.