

distinctions between sculpture, art performance and theater. Certainly, as Gaggi argues, there are convergences of the three (as well as other disciplines such as dance and music). To what purpose then, do we put this information?

If we use this information to make the 'expansionist' artist aware that his/her work has precedents outside of a chosen discipline, we are furthering the purposes of creative research. If we use it to produce a greater understanding of expansionist work for the viewer we are furthering creative education. However, if we use these distinctions in a reactionary way we stifle the creative process.

All too often the myopic tendency to categorize expansionist work of the kind to which Gaggi refers serves no purpose but to calcify definitions that are ill-fitting at best. It becomes an academic exercise designed to plug artists into outmoded categories for the purposes of funding, presentation and historicification. It becomes an all-too-convenient excuse to ignore some of the most important work being done today. The historian, critic or funder who chooses to ignore—or worse, damn—work because it doesn't fit the arbitrary definition of his/her area of 'expertise' is an enemy of the creative process.

When *High Performance* magazine was founded in 1978 it was devoted to performance art, but as the expansionist tendencies of artists increased we found no value in limiting our viewpoint and now look at what we refer to as 'live art', encompassing the overlapping worlds of visual art, theater, music, dance, and even film and video. We have found that the artists seldom concern themselves with definitions and neither should we.

If creativity is to have any value in our culture it must be evaluated on the basis of its contributions to our culture, not by its degree of applicability to a genre. I would encourage readers to view Gaggi's essay as an attempt to expand our awareness and not limit it. Otherwise we must assume that a Beckett play would not smell as sweet by any other definition of genre, and that's ridiculous.

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**REPLY TO STEVEN DURLAND**

Steven Durland's comment is well taken. It is not the artist's responsibility to

cooperate with the historian or critic by worrying about which chapter of a textbook his or her work will fit into. Nor should the artist's work be evaluated on the basis of its conformity to established classes. The classification of a work has nothing to do with its aesthetic value and, difficult though classification may sometimes be, evaluation is something subtler and more complex. The historian or critic, however, must work with groupings of works—genres, styles, movements—and so, to some extent at least, must engage in a language game, testing existing classes against the works he or she deals with, modifying those classes at times, proposing new ones when necessary, and, sometimes, simply encountering frustration when artworks refuse to fall conveniently together. No doubt no small amount of such frustration was evident in my article. The problem becomes pragmatic when funding agencies are involved. Historians and critics can acknowledge the limitations of language and can openly grapple with the problems that inevitably result from the urge to organize and articulate. Granting agencies are bureaucracies and, even when it is acknowledged that departmental divisions are bureaucratic conveniences, proposals must be directed toward certain offices. When the appropriate office for a proposal is unclear, there is a serious danger it will fall between the cracks, regardless of its value. I don't have the answer to that one.

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**COMMENTS ON "GENERATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY: A SYSTEMATIC CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH"**

The article by Gottfried Jaeger (*Leonardo* 19, 19–26, 1986) is dense, and it contains several fundamental ideas, on two of which I should like to comment.

(a) *Reproduction versus production:* This ancient distinction between 'mimesis' and 'poiesis' is, as Jaeger's work shows, no longer valid. When photography was invented, people believed that it would permit an even more faithful reproduction of the objective world than the most 'realistic' of paintings because apparently the objects impress themselves upon the sensitive surface of the film, like they do in fingerprints or footprints. Thus photos seem to be not 'symbols' of objects

(conventional signs which mean them), but 'symptoms' of objects (signs caused by the objects themselves). As one began to consider photography more closely, however, it became obvious that a very complex codifying process goes on between object and photo: the rays reflected by objects are submitted to complex processes before they become an image. The non-objective, symbolical character of the photos became ever more conscious. Thus it became obvious that in photos, even more evidently than in painting, a codifying, 'sense-giving' intention intervenes between image and object—that there is no such thing as a purely reproducing, mimetic image, and that there is a producing, poetic quality to every image. Jaeger takes advantage of this theoretical insight, and he attempts to accentuate the poetic parametre of image-making.

(b) *Apparatus versus man:* Apparatus seem to be complex machines, which again seem to be complex tools, so that there seems to be no essential difference between using a brush and using a computer. Both are tools at the service of those who use them. This is not so. The relation between man and tool is different from the one between man and machine, and the one between man and apparatus. With tools, man is the constant, and the tool is the variable: man is surrounded by tools and may exchange one tool for another. With machines, the machine is the constant and man is the variable: the machine is surrounded by men which may be substituted one for another. With apparatus there is an intricate co-relation of functions: the apparatus does what man wants it to do, but man can only want the apparatus to do what it can do. In fact: apparatus and man form a single functional unit. Jaeger is one of those who understands this. He concentrates his attention at least as much on apparatus function as on his own intention. He knows that the problem is not so much of man 'governing' apparatus, or apparatus 'governing' man, but of a creative man–apparatus interaction. In this he contributes to the avoidance of the danger of automatic apparatus taking over and relegating men to mere apparatus functions.

Jaeger's work and his theoretical considerations are important steps toward the emerging culture of images generated by apparatus.

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