

Научная статья

УДК 811.161

DOI: 10.36871/hon.202304117

## **ЗРИТЕЛЬСКОЕ ВОСПРИЯТИЕ ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОГО ОБРАЗА: ОТ СОЗНАТЕЛЬНОГО К БЕССОЗНАТЕЛЬНОМУ И ОБРАТНО**

*Игорь Александрович Перемыслов*

Университет Аргоси — Школа Бизнеса и Управления  
2233 Западный Данлап Авеню, г. Финикс, Аризона, 85021, США

ipromislove@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-9869-069X

Статья посвящена рассмотрению психологических и философских концепций, лежащих в основе понимания и интерпретации изобразительного искусства, разработанных такими известными авторитетами, как Дуи Тран Хоанг Ле, Пол Шрейдер, Джули К. Гарлен и Дженнифер А. Сэндлин. Исходя из этих представлений, любое произведение изобразительного искусства, будь то картина, мультфильм или стилизованный рисунок, является волшебным зеркалом, позволяющим зрителю взглянуть на предмет с двух разных позиций, внутренней и внешней, и одновременно посмотреть внутрь себя. Согласно этим психологическим теориям, произведение изобразительного искусства во многом подобно такому зеркалу — окну во внутренний мир человека. В этом контексте анимация является самым прозрачным окном, позволяющим увидеть максимально ясное изображение. Автор дает представление об исторической подоплеке анимации — этого уникального и яркого вида изобразительного искусства, которое на протяжении многих лет сочетается с кинематографом. Особое внимание в статье уделяется как известным, так и начинающим художникам-аниматорам, которые своим искусством способны вызвать глубокую рефлексию, позволяющую человеку заглянуть внутрь себя. Мастера анимации используют этот прием и для передачи эмоционального фона, присущего предмету искусства, который во многом определяет восприятие произведения зрителем.

*Ключевые слова:* невидимая реальность, символизм в искусстве, Мэтью Бейтс, эмоциональный фон в иллюстрации, окно в искусство, психология искусства

**Для цитирования:** Перемыслов И. А. Зрительское восприятие художественного образа: от сознательного к бессознательному и обратно // Художественное образование и наука. 2023. № 4 (37). С. 117–124. <https://doi.org/10.36871/hon.202304117>

Original article

## **VIEWER IMPRESSIONS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: ART FROM THE CONSCIOUS TO THE UNCONSCIOUS AND VICE VERSA**

*Igor A. Peremislov*

© Перемыслов И. А., 2023

Argosy University — School of Business and Management  
2233 West Dunlap Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021, United States of America  
ipromislove@yahoo.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-9869-069X

The author relies on psychological and philosophical concepts underlying the understanding and interpretation of fine art. This article is dedicated to a multifaceted analysis based on the psychological studies of the visual arts developed by renowned authorities such as Dui Tran Hoang Le, Paul Schrader, Julie C. Garlen, and Jennifer A. Sandlin. Based on these concepts, any work of fine art, be it a painting, a cartoon, or a stylized drawing, is considered a magic mirror that allows the viewer to look at the object from two different positions — internal and external, while also looking into himself. According to these psychological theories, a work of fine art is, in many ways, like such a mirror — a window into the inner world. Animation is the sharpest window, giving the most prominent and clear image, and the author gives insight into the historical background of such a unique and brilliant visual art form that has combined art with cinema for many generations. There is also emphasis placed on animation artists and aspiring animation-style artists whose practices are well-aligned with this skill that allows an art piece to enable deep reflection that allows an individual to look inward and then outward, and vice versa. These practitioners also utilize such a skill to convey the emotional background inherent in an art subject, which largely determines the perception of the creation by the viewer.

*Keywords:* unseen reality, symbolism in art, Matthew Bates, emotional background in illustration, fine art window, mental science of art

**For citation:** Peremislov I. A. Viewer Impressions of Artistic Expression: Art from the Conscious to the Unconscious and Vice Versa. *Khudozhestvennoe obrazovanie i nauka* [Arts Education and Science]. 2023, no. 4 (37). P. 117–124. <https://doi.org/10.36871/hon.202304117> (In English)

I will begin by proposing the following questions: What connection does a fine artist create with the audience? How does a fine artist create this connection with the audience? What are the products of such a connection and what is their significance? To approach answering these questions, I will be using Edvard Munch's "The Scream" as my chief example and point of reference. Before I proceed to answer the three posed questions, it is crucial to comprehend and study the psychological phenomenon that takes place during the creation of fine art. What was Munch's creative cognitive process? Dr. Duy Tran Hoang Le, an esteemed researcher of psychology in art, reports that there exist two key neurological elements that become active during the making of fine art — the unconscious and the conscious. In his journal article titled "Art in Relationship with Human Conscious and the Unconscious," Dr. Le discusses these elements in extensive detail: "Nowadays, we cannot deny that psychoanalytical viewpoint about art has introduced great possibilities for exploring the individual's mind through their artwork. As Rubin (2010) pointed out, from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, along with the emergence of psychoanalysts, people began to explore the way

to interpret the thoughts relating to (unconscious, irrational) "primary processes." They were happy to be able to decipher the meaning of the images in "madman's" dreams, illusions or artwork. The connection between art and the unconscious occurs first of all by the symbolism of art. Moschini (2005) claimed that dreams and art are two places to contain symbols. She also quoted Kast (1989) as an explanation of how art can reveal the unconscious: "Our symbols reveal our intellect far less than what they say about our universal viewpoint, and about our relationship to the unseen reality beyond us" (as cited in Moschini, 2005). Art reveals unconscious content and contributes to the resolving of individual's inner conflicts" [2, 28]. In essence, Dr. Le articulates that the unconscious contains an individual's digestion, internalization, and registration of both external environmental stimuli. The results of these processes are broadly and sufficiently abstract, so our minds encrypt them into the form of symbols. This is especially prominent in the production of fine art. Let us think of a painting or any other piece of fine art media as a shell that houses the unconscious content within an artist's mind. Now, for the sake of precision, it would be wise to note that it is actually quite difficult for our mental and cogni-

tive functions to allow every minute and deeply embedded detail of unconscious content to surface. Consciously, we could never really know all that takes place in our unconscious, but we can interpret and fathom its general ideas and overall, broad essence. Basically, unconscious content must be condensed into more naturally comprehensible, accurately-translated material, which we will designate as conscious matter, due to its residence within the conscious area of our minds. Now, in the fine art world, the concretization of such an abstract manifestation would be a painting and the symbols that could be discovered in it. When a beholder views a painting and its symbolism for the first time, what actually ends up occurring is a replay of this described fine art-centered neurological and psychological process. To properly discuss this point, I will now reference Edvard Munch's symbolist piece "The Scream". Folks are introduced to Munch through "The Scream". Immediately, our eye is drawn to the ghastly figure that is centered on the bottom of the canvas. It appears to be clasping its hands on either side of its face, gazing open-mouthed towards what seems to be the art piece's left-bottom side. Its entire setting is lopsided and recklessly swirling, and it finds itself in a captivating palette consisting of saturated and curving chaotic strokes of orange, red, yellow, black, and blue. American screenwriter and cinematic arts expert Paul Schrader, in his study on color and its impact on any type of audience, brings to his readers' attention a widely accepted psychological theory about the unconscious and color. It states that our unconscious color codes signals of our environment, specifically emotional signals [3, 53–54]. For instance, it attaches blue to sadness, red to anger, and yellow to joy. Symbolist paintings such as "The Scream" capitalize on this neurological phenomenon, revealing the emotions their makers have been undergoing during their creative processes. Each of the dramatic, flaming, and flaring colors of "The Scream" help us, its audience, discover the conscious matter the famous symbolist work is shelling, which, I reiterate, is also a simplified reflection of a painter's unconscious matter, that which, and I reiterate again, is fueled by external environmental stimuli. From this information and explication, it can be properly inferred that a fine artist, with his or her specific project, triggers within the audience's mind the very inversion of the creative psychological mechanism responsible for the composition of that project. This is how you connect with fine artists. Their

creations are very much like a clear window they themselves gaze towards from the inside. On the other side of this window, you stand and see, with strong clarity, the person inside, but you peer at them from the outside-in. This is the true mental science of fine art and all its movements, forms, and genres.

Speaking of forms, there is no form of art more capable of straightforwardly capturing the fine art-related transcription of unconscious matter into conscious matter. Cartoons are defined as simplifications of specific subject matter, whether that subject matter be realistic, surreal, abstract, concrete, fantasy, etc. They often appear comical, amusing, exaggerated, and satirical. No matter what they may consist of, cartoons or "toons" can be perceived as the embodiments of the raw, mechanical condensation of unconscious content into more conscious ideas and impressions. Julie C. Garlen and Jennifer A. Sandlin, two animation historians, explain that a cartoon is a sort of literalization or concretization of the entire unconscious-to-conscious matter translation [1, 15–17]. Let us think of a cartoon as a concept that mocks what occurs in the mind of a fine artist while working on a project. When a cartoon is created, the cartoonist keeps in mind the expressive and physical features of the subject matter he or she wishes to caricature. The same happens to, for the sake of specificity, typical painters when they desire to furnish a piece and external stimuli lands in their unconscious. Once the cartoonist's mind has digested all the complex details of the subject matter he or she is focused on exaggeratedly and dramatically portraying, what surfaces in his or her mind is a vivid image of said subject matter's simplified parts (e.g., its eyes, nose, mouth, etc.), which he or she then proceeds to put on paper or canvas and makes an entertaining image of. Similarly, in the example of the classist painter or a general painter, the unconscious matter becomes more mentally comprehensible in the shape of conscious matter, which, as has been stated before, is only the main, overarching idea of what brewed in the unconscious. Cartoons emulate this complicated phenomenon, if not mimic it. They imitate it by encapsulating the spirit of a very real, very complex subject. As a cartoonist, you would be experiencing the benefit of crisply conveying your opinions, ideas, stances, views, preferences, admirations, etc. Because of their simplified nature, these incredibly stylized images are easy to read, making them a powerful mode of communication in fine art. As a matter of fact and according to the

aforementioned researchers within the field of art history, primitivism, the formal and official name for the category cartoons fall into, is the best possible device for the clear and sharp expression of conscious matter.

Some of the earliest forms of animation included flipbooks and praxinoscopes, which were both developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Taking advantage of the revolutionary animation-related possibilities brought about by these two groundbreaking animation devices, Winsor McCay, an innovative cartoonist of the early 1900<sup>s</sup>, created a famous animation short known as “Gertie the Dinosaur” (1914), which featured a large sauropod-like dinosaur titularly named “Gertie,” who, interestingly enough and in the fashion of a trained animal, performs various actions according to the commands of her creator. “Gertie the Dinosaur” was an early milestone of American animation, and its success played a role in the dawning of the Golden Age of Animation, which sprung from the earliest formation of Walt Disney Animation Studios. Before this era, Disney started making an impact on American audiences with the “birth” of the iconic Mickey Mouse character and his most well-known “old school” short “Steamboat Willie.” During this era and long after it, the Walt Disney Animation Company made it their objective to quickly take advantage of developing technology and advance it forward, thus eventually incorporating Technicolor into their cartoons, which was primarily used to give films’ colors mood and tone. With the help of Technicolor, a short known as “Flowers and Trees” awed its audiences. After experimenting with the technology of his younger years and debuting his talent in an array of dazzling short films, Walt Disney locked his focus on the original idea of creating a full-length animated feature film, and he was adamant about seeing its production through to the end. “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” (1937) was the material for this project, which was a mammoth feat at the time and believed to be preposterous. The fate of the studio rested in the success of the memorable fairytale’s animated adaptation, and there was no disappointment in the end. With the tremendous praise and acknowledgment that “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” earned, Walt Disney was able to grow his studio and went on to make more classics like “Pinocchio” (1940), “Fantasia” (1940), “Dumbo” (1941), “Bambi” (1942), “Cinderella” (1950), “Alice in Wonderland” (1951), “Peter Pan” (1953), “Lady and the Tramp” (1955),

“Sleeping Beauty” (1959), “One Hundred and One Dalmatians” (1961), and “The Jungle Book” (1967). Some time after “The Jungle Book” and the releases that followed it, Walt Disney’s original animators were retiring one by one, and new artists had to take their place for the sake of the world-renowned company’s survival. It was indeed a tumultuous time for the studio as Walt Disney passed away and new generations of animators had to succeed him and his very first team. The studio’s newcomers were hard at work on the goal of reaching Disney standards and were helping the panic-stricken company find its balance once again. Among those newcomers was a passionate animation artist known as Don Bluth. His works defined much of America’s 1980<sup>s</sup> animation media, as he formed his own studio with some of his equally talented colleagues. His debuting work was “The Secret of NIMH” (1982), a dark and whimsical tale about a female field mouse who sets out on a journey to heal her ill young son and move her family to another location before a farmer activates some devastating technology that could potentially be fatal for her and her offspring. The overwhelmingly positive reaction to this movie piqued the interest of prominent American producer Steven Spielberg, who offered his support in the making of “An American Tail” (1986) and “The Land Before Time” (1988), two of Bluth’s signature works of animation cinema following “The Secret of NIMH”. The most underrated and uniquely fresh film produced by Don Bluth is “All Dogs Go to Heaven” (1989), a richly dark animated comedy following the life-and-death adventures of a life-loving, fancy-free dog named Charlie. This film stands out from the rest of his films because it is a significant departure from the usual, run-of-the-mill hero-type character that animation cinema was always quite used to presenting audiences with. Instead of giving his lead canine heroine perfect and innocent hero personality characteristics, Bluth made the energetic dog realistically imperfect with traits that prompt him to prioritize self-gratification above all else there could be in life. He is unlikable at first, but audiences grow to like him as he grows more likable and changes progressively for the better. From the gorgeous animation to the powerful themes, “All Dogs Go to Heaven” is quite possibly one of the most original and refreshing pieces of American animation ever created. It debuted in theaters alongside Walt Disney’s “The Little Mermaid” (1989), the film that brought about what is known as the “Disney Renaissance.” It

was a time in the history of American animation when Disney's newest team of artists and animators got a handle on what was expected of them and what they had to live up to, unleashing skills and gifts that were waiting to be discovered. They have proven themselves worthy of being called the Walt Disney Studios art and animation staff. Among them were Tom and Tony Bancroft, two creative twin brothers who have strong Disney portfolios that include widely praised Renaissance films such as "The Lion King" (1994) and "Mulan" (1998). Tom Bancroft enjoys the character of Mushu, Mulan's courageous dragon sidekick who, after being brought to life by Tom during the production of "Mulan", has often been the subject of Tom's illustrations. Tony Bancroft has a similar connection to Pumbaa, the kind-hearted and hilarious wild pig comic relief character from "The Lion King". The sheer popularity and unforgettable elements of these characters can be attributed to the talents of Tom and Tony Bancroft, two undoubtedly influential American animators.

Going back to the emphasis placed on "All Dogs Go to Heaven" (1989), it is worth pointing out that the movie would not have truly been in the right shape without one of its most important and well-remembered scenes — a dance and song number between lead character Charlie and a pink female canine angel who reassures him that his beyond-the-grave fate is secure in Heaven. This seemingly sweet performance was just a device used by Charlie in his attempt to distract the angel, wind up his heavenly watch of life once again, and get back to Earth, where he could continue to live his carefree, self-centered life. Charlie is so devil-may-care and attached to his life of hedonistic pleasure that he could not care less about how the angel character feels and the fact that she could easily change his fate in the afterlife as a response to being conned. Keeping this information in mind, it can be properly inferred that this movie would have lost its touch without its musical ballad act because the ethereal scene drives the plot forward and echoes the aforementioned claim that the movie's narrative is original and quite keen on steadily chipping away at its main character's flaws. The smooth and fluid animation, rendering, draftsmanship, and brilliant artistic emulation of rather romantic choreography that was incorporated into the crafting of Charlie and the angel's musical duet can be attributed to Tom and Tony Bancroft's good friend and fellow animator Matthew Bates. In addition to his recogniz-

able work at Don Bluth's company, Matthew Bates has a myriad of accomplishments, having worked on Disney's "Oliver & Company" (1988), "Tom and Jerry: The Movie" (1992), "Cats Don't Dance" (1997), and "Muppet Babies" (1985), which have his character designs that earned him the prestigious Emmy Award. As a matter of fun fact, Bates is a George Washington descendant, and he takes pride powerfully in his heritage and home country of the United States of America. In addition to being a prolific and gifted visual artist as well as a proud American, he is also known for his kindness and desire to help others, so, for many years already, he has been taking a more personal yet professional route in his career. He is very generously taking the aspiring young illustrators of today's time under his wing and actively wishes to create an open, edifying space for our generation's growing artists in hopes that they will blossom and flourish in their niches and practices. I will be discussing one of his close friends and mentees. According to Mr. Bates, she is unique and has potential in fine art. Her name is Janice Hill<sup>1</sup>. She was born on October 26, 1999 and lived her whole life in Los Angeles, California, USA. Janice Hill is of Eastern European descent. Thirty years ago, her parents immigrated from what was, during their time, the Soviet Union. Restarting their lives in the United States, Janice's parents became exposed to America's mainstream visual and fine art media such as Walt Disney Studios and their collection of unforgettable classics, technologically revolutionary Pixar films, culturally significant Dreamworks features, and a good number of silly Looney Tunes shorts. As expected, it would soon come to pass that Janice would also be introduced to these listed artistic staples of American popular culture. As a matter of fact, Janice, in an interview for this article, has revealed that she started learning the fundamentals of more cartoon-type, heavily stylized illustration from the well-praised animated drawings she observed in properties like "The Lady and the Tramp", "The Land Before Time", "All Dogs Go to Heaven", "The Lion King", "Chip 'n Dale", and "Merrie Melodies". "As I would watch those films, I would often find myself growing more and more expressive in my various doodles of miscellaneous animals. I would take a closer look at the animator's placement of particular facial features

<sup>1</sup> <https://janicehill847.wixsite.com/website>

such as the mouth or eyes and try to emulate it in each scribble I doodled up. Soon, I would come to understand basic drawing elements such as overlap, shape, spatial arrangement, and so on and so forth. Eventually, day by day, cartoon after cartoon, my drawings would become more and more cohesive and coherent". In a rather spiritual way, Mr. Bates has been Janice's teacher since the very beginning of her days as a fiercely passionate fine artist, for he has worked on solid animated material such as "The Land Before Time" and "All Dogs Go to Heaven", both of which have already been highlighted as examples of Janice's most influential early sources of artistic study. Now, as a young adult, Janice says that Matthew "Matt" Bates has, in the mentioned spiritual way, returned to her life to "continue aiding" her "in acquiring the proper knowledge of drawing principles that would ensure" her illustrations showcasing her intense love for animals will, in the most sincere and honest way imaginable, deliver their intended messages about everything she "adores in a specific creature". Looking through her portfolio, I have picked out six of Miss Hill's pieces that I believe represent her ability the strongest.

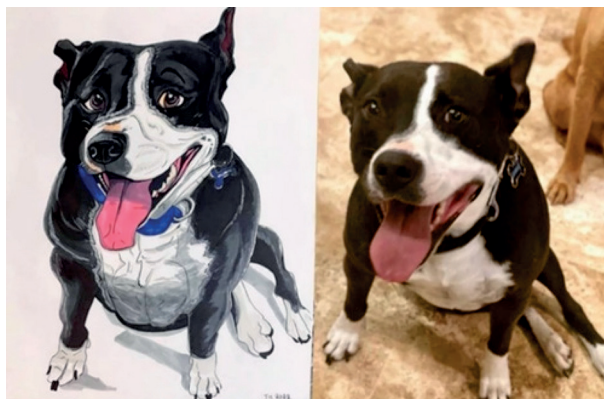
The moment you look at her drawings, you will find yourself seriously engaged by her every individual piece's impressive emotiveness, fluid and lucid strokes of marker ink, vibrant and bold application of color, realism-defying style, and unshakable devotion to either one of two themes — lightheartedness and darkness. It is indubitable that every creature Ms. Hill creates visually overflows with personality and soul. There is breath and life in every illustrated animal's position, movement, face, color palette, proportions, features, detailed yet simple appearance, distribution and distinctiveness of lines, and interaction with its liminal plane and space. It seems to me that when Janice draws, her unconscious is always heightened to a powerful degree. Her stimuli must be the following: an intense adoration of animals and a strong understanding of an animal's unique character. From what I have studied and what she has told me during our interview, Ms. Hill, whenever she sits down to draw and illustrate, always searches her mind for every aspect of an animal that excites her. She often focuses on form, distinguishable shape, trademark colors, physiology, anatomy, and of course, disposition, demeanor, and temperament. What happens next is rather interesting. All of these aspects that Janice takes into account and explores

mentally possess realism that is preserved despite being intertwined with Janice's deeper emotional feelings pertaining to each of them. Essentially, this indicates that Janice does not wish to lose any of the more realistic elements of said aspects when she crafts her own unique artistic vision of them. She intends to and succeeds in keeping, for example, a pitbull dog's legs stout and muscular, a leopard's spots even and abundant, a domestic house cat's nose and paws sweet and distinctive, and specific dog breeds' facial features recognizable. Adding in her immense appreciation of her canvas's subject matter and you behold a profound image of a passionate artist's emotionally charged impression of an animal. Her drawings and illustrations respect an animal's realistic anatomical structure while simultaneously defying the rigidity of reality and bringing out the true and accurate essence of an animal's character. Each drawing is a personality and has a soul. Emotional liveliness and kinetic facial expression are most certainly pervasive in her artistry.

We have explored the light-hearted theme of Miss Hill's artwork, and now, it would be fitting to say a few words about the more intense and rather foreboding side of her creative endeavors. Occasionally, during my viewing of her portfolio, I ran into illustrations of potentially frightening fantasy creatures. "I have two specific favorites out of my more "bestly beings", she told me. She is talking about a ferocious monster personage she named "Mackenzie" and three macabre entities she calls "hellhounds." From what I learned about these illustrations, I can deduce that "Mackenzie" and "the hellhounds" are an embodiment of everything Ms. Hill wishes she could have been in her unpleasant encounters with life's difficulties. "Mackenzie makes me feel taller and larger than I actually am, and her design, which I am so proud of, makes me feel like I truly dominate over life during its toughest moments. As for the hellhounds, well, in spite of their obviously wicked nature, they still bring me some kind of peace in knowing that justice is not dead".

Janice Hill is a strong, self-confident young woman with an original vision in the fine arts area of illustration. She employs her gift of drawing properly as she utilizes it to project her mental and cognitive uniqueness onto the world and people surrounding her. Above all, she is not afraid to do so. Her creativity empowers and encourages her, inspiring those who view her art, including me. Illustration is seeing the potential rise of a brilliant creator.

## WORKS OF JANICE HILL



Pet Portrait of Bubule the Pitbull.  
January 9, 2023. Markers on Sketch Paper



Pet Portrait of Bubule and Her Housemates  
Remi and Thor on a Walk.  
December 26, 2022. Markers on Sketch Paper



Pet Portrait of a Playful Persian Cat Named Freida.  
December 27, 2022. Markers on Sketch Paper



Pet Portrait of Bubule and Her Brother Remi.  
January 9, 2023. Markers on Sketch Paper



Pet Portrait of Fifi the Laughing Cat.  
January 7, 2023.  
Markers on Sketch Paper



Memorial Pet Portrait of Beloved Cats Gucci and Chase.  
January 25, 2022. Markers on Sketch Paper

## REFERENCES

1. Garlen J. C., Sandlin J. A. Chapter One: Introduction: Popular Culture and Disney Pedagogies. Bern, 2016. 24 p. (In English)
2. Le D. T. H. Art in Relationships with Human Consciousness and Unconsciousness. Ho Chi Minh City, 2015. P. 24–30. (In English)
3. Schrader P. Color. New York, 2015. P. 52–56. (In English)

*Информация об авторе:*

**Перемыслов И. А.** — доктор наук, почетный зарубежный член Российской академии художеств, адъюнкт-профессор Университета Аргоси (США), почетный профессор Российской государственной специализированной академии искусств (Соединенные Штаты Америки).

*Information about the author:*

**Peremislov I. A.** — Dr. Sci. (Ph.D.-DBA), Honorary Foreign Member of the Russian Academy of Arts, Associate Professor, Argosy University (USA), Honorary Professor of the Russian State Specialized Academy of Arts (United States of America).

Статья поступила в редакцию 03 октября 2023 года; одобрена после рецензирования 13 ноября 2023 года; принята к публикации 17 ноября 2023 года.

The article was submitted October 03, 2023; approved after reviewing November 13, 2023; accepted for publication November 17, 2023.

