

Data and Art

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When the Art World Becomes Data

When the Art World Becomes Data by AQV-EIKKKM questions the value of art. Generally speaking, the value of art is puzzling. We may doubt our ears when we hear about expensive works of art. Sometimes we don't understand why we are so fascinated with art in the first place. AQV-EIKKKM takes a data-driven approach. Can the value of art be quantified from big data? Can quantified data change the art world? Can algorithms that compute data be linked to the next art form? Where do we arrive at by decoding When the Art World Becomes Data?

The Office

The first thing you will notice upon entering this space is the desk. There are three monitors on the desk. It looks like a stock trader's office. It seems that this is the office of AQV-EIKKKM (the odd imbalance between the single desk and the size of the space is not consistent with the "pursuit of profit"). They are divided into white areas with numbers and color-coded areas. If you look closely at the monitor on the desk, you will see an image similar to this painting on its right screen. The color-coded areas are described by what they mean. It also indicates that the redder the color, the higher the value. Taken together, each painting is a visualization of one artist's data. The images projected by the projection seem to show some kind of correlation. Turning to the mess right next to it, we see that it contains something. What does this space mean?

Democracy

Referring to the monitor's screen, we can see that 2 to 5 indicate social networking numbers. Of these, 2 and 3 are the number of followers. The redder they are, the more followers they have, and the bluer they are, the fewer. The projected image is a network that shows the following on the SNS. The closer to the center, the higher the influence. This is a reflection of democracy. Needless to say, the democratic world is built on majority rule. Whoever wins more votes controls the political system. Restaurants that do not attract customers close their doors. This kind of democracy can also be important in the art world. Artists with more followers are considered great, and those with fewer are considered unreliable. However, AQV-EIKKKM is not emphasizing these values themselves here. It is portrayed merely as a color-coding. Democracy in art is primarily a post-French Revolution concept. In 2019, however, the V-Dem survey revealed that non-democracies are in the majority more than democracies. With the crisis of democracy being discussed, will art update democracy? Or will it follow a different path?

Capitalism

Paintings 6 through 8 relate to auctions. In particular, 8 shows the percentage over the expected bidding price at auctions over the past three years. In other words, the redder the color, the more the price has exceeded the expected price, which means that the next auction is expected to be more expensive. The bluer the color, the less likely it is. This is a reflection of capitalism. A profit-seeking corporation must have a sales growth rate of at least 100% over the previous year. This kind of capitalism can also be important in the art world. Artists with high prices are considered great, and those with low prices are considered unreliable. This reputation is also reflected in paintings and networks. Again, AQV-EIKKKM only color-codes the data and does not question the values themselves. Like democracy, capitalism is in crisis. Can humanity update

capitalism before the situation becomes irreversible? This network is structured according to current value indicators, but how will this metamorphosis take place in the future?

Contingency

Some may find it disconcerting that there is a Gacha (Japanese capsule toys) here, despite the artist's emphasis on data. This is because Gacha is unpredictable as to what will come out. However, unpredictability accounts for some portion of the art world. For example, the following sometimes happens. A banker and a curator meet by chance at an opening party and later establish a gallery. A researcher and an artist meet by chance at an art event and later create an art website. It is thought that the Gacha is placed as an element representing such a contingency. However, when quantitatively evaluated art is included in a Gacha "in advance," can we say that it is art by contingency? Encountering art by contingency should be established outside of the art world. How can contingency-based art be established outside of the predetermined world?

Art World

Considering the above, this installation is not only the office of Aqv-EIKKKM but also an art world that can be seen through data. The network on the desk shows the situation of the art world. It seems to be a different world from the familiar art world we usually experience like in galleries and museums. In particular, this painting may be difficult to tune in to, as it takes some time to get used to the grammar of the painting. Or it is not a human language, but the language of data. Data, needless to say, is one of the most important things today ("Data is the new oil," said Clive Hamby in 2006). At the same time, it is one of the most puzzling ("data is not defined" is not limited to coding errors). Will data change the art world? What data will change the art world? What kind of art world will be changed? How will the data change the art world?

Algorithm

An algorithm is a way to solve a problem. Amazon's algorithm, for example, calculates complex situations and informs the delivery person of the optimal delivery procedure. There is no human intervention to come up with that optimal solution. In 2015, Yuval Noah Harari stated in *Homo Deus*. "It is iffy that the artistic imagination is immune to the inroads of algorithms." "Data supremacists are skeptical of human knowledge and wisdom and prefer to place their trust in big data and computer algorithms." "When the automobile replaced the horse-drawn carriage, we didn't update the horse; we retired it." In 2022, Yusuke Narita subtitled his book *Democracy in the 22nd Century: "Elections Become Algorithms, Politicians Become Cats."* Citing Lamarck and Dawkins, Narita develops an argument for the following thesis in his *Transcending the Future*. "I. Everything becomes an algorithm. II. Algorithms are 'laws'. III. Invisible Law" (Bungakukai, January 2022)." Humans create data, the data move humans, and then the data are created again. And when "it becomes infinitely difficult to draw clear boundaries between the beginning and the end, between the inside and the outside," "algorithmic non-existence theory as law" will emerge (Narita, 2022). To transcend the future, he presents "Restoration of the Great Buddha Interface" (Narita, 2023). Can art construct the Daibutsu interface ("mediating intergenerational communication that jumps the intermediate time gap of a few hundred to a thousand years, straddling debauchery and emptiness") in the future? Can Aqv-EIKKKM quantify its value? What is its value to whom (or what)? The possibility of a non-zero body blow in an unpredictable future may be a contingency out of the gutter.