

Week 9 play and abstraction

Jingyi Zhang (s3861481)

Folio Object: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxowUBApfm0&ab_channel=VidaZhang

Context:

In this week's theme, I want to use an entertaining experimentation to confirm the definition I mentioned in my presentation that "abstract is by removing the different properties of objects and leaving the commonality." I think my experimental process itself is already can be called abstraction. Before this week's study, I always thought that the abstract was "I don't understand this object/work/sentence, no matter what the surface is, I don't understand its deep meaning". But after doing a lot of research on what abstraction is, I found that "abstraction" itself happens to some of my senses. This brings me to the definition of "Synesthesia". I think a lot of people have had a similar experience to me: when you hear a sound, smell something, or see a number or letter, a shape, a color, or an idea of a smell will come out from your mind.

I found a definition of synesthesia online.

Synesthesia is a fancy name for when you experience one of your senses through another. For example, you might hear the name "Alex" and see green. Or you might read the word "street" and taste citrus fruit.

It's really interesting, I'm always sensitive to smells, tastes and sounds. I once heard a piece of music, the shape of celery immediately came to my mind. But when I describe it to the people around me, I find it doesn't seem like everyone has this feeling. When I describe my feelings, it is difficult for the listener to understand the relationship between my description and the object. I guess it's pretty abstract. I also mentioned in my related works: when people with synesthesia facing to the same object, the content of their connection is also different. I want to explore whether, with or without synesthesia, when we are faced with the same abstract choices, do we really have nothing in common with this object.

Method:

I draw a picture with a lot of geometry. My friend and I will taste/smell the same food/drink. We need to choose the most suitable geometric shape and color in the picture, and if there is nothing matches on the picture, we need to draw the content that comes to mind. And at the end, compare the content to see if there is anything in common.

Response:

It was the first time that my friend and I used this way to describe the taste in the video we shot. We had a lot of fun during the process, and we had a taste evaluation for every item we tasted. We also discuss why such a shape or color was chosen. Like bayberry, we all chose yellow, and we chose angular geometric shapes. The result of our discussion is that bayberry is very sour, so choose the yellow color, and the mouthfeel is very crisp and dense, so the

sharp geometric shape is selected. In addition, like lychees, we all chose pink, and the shapes are all large and small on the bottom. My feeling is that the first taste of sweetness is pink, but we can't give a very accurate description of the shape. The blueberries are all blue, and the sparkling water is light blue. The only difference is the description of the cheese. I thought the cheese tasted thick and thick, like it was covering the tongue, so I painted what I felt thick and also chose a darker green that was more in line with the taste. But my friend thought the cheese tasted more like meat, so chose the meat color. From the results, I found that we actually have several options that are similar, which is beyond our expectations.

Reflection:

I think this experiment in one way confirms the idea I want to discuss that we might have the same synesthesia for some things. But because the choice is a fixed direction (visual), it may not be rigorous enough to explain anything. But I think how we feel about the taste, the whole selection process, and our descriptions are very abstract. We were all very surprised when we first chose to get the same color. I think this work can be improved into a game with more options. Like it's not just visual, there are more taste sensations or object sensations, it's going to be very interesting.

Related works:

Do all people with synaesthesia sense/feel in the same way? For instance, have all music tones same color for each one?:

<https://www.quora.com/Do-all-people-with-synaesthesia-sense-feel-in-the-same-way-For-instance-have-all-music-tones-same-color-for-each-one>

The Synesthesia Project:

<https://www.bu.edu/synesthesia/faq/>