

Digital Art and Meaning



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In a world increasingly dominated by the digital, the critical response to digital art generally ranges from hype to counterhype. Popular writing about specific artworks seldom goes beyond promoting a given piece and explaining how it operates, while scholars and critics remain unsure about how to interpret and evaluate them. This is where Roberto Simanowski intervenes, demonstrating how such critical work can be done.

Digital Art and Meaning offers close readings of varied examples from genres of digital art such as kinetic concrete poetry, computer-generated text, interactive installation, mapping art, and information sculpture. For instance, Simanowski deciphers the complex meaning of words that not only form an image on a screen but also react to the viewer's behavior; images that are progressively destroyed by the human gaze; text machines generating nonsense sentences out of a Kafka story; and a light show above Mexico City's historic square, created by Internet users all over the world.

Simanowski combines these illuminating explanations with a theoretical discussion that employs art philosophy and history to achieve a deeper understanding of each particular example of digital art and, ultimately, of the genre as a whole.

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Roberto Simanowski is professor of media studies at the University of Basel.

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