

ANAMORPHIC ART

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What is Anamorphic Art?

Anamorphosis is a form of perspective. It obeys all the laws of perspective, usually more strictly than any other form. The word “anamorphic” is from the Greek “ana” (again) and “morphe” (form) referring to realistic art so monstrously distorted by a projective transformation. The distortion can be "formed again" by viewing it as a reflection in a polished cylinder mirror or from a particular direction. Anamorphic images do not make sense unless you know how or where to place your eye. They are hidden until you look from the correct place. The appearance of the undistorted mirror reflection is so magical and surprising that people seeing it for the first time fail to exclaim in wonder.

Types of projection.

There are two main types of anamorphosis: Perspective and Mirror. Examples of perspective anamorphosis date to the early Renaissance (15th Century), whereas examples of mirror anamorphosis occurred at the time of the baroque (17th century). In a mirror anamorphosis, a conical or cylindrical mirror is placed on the drawing or painting to transform a flat distorted image into a three dimensional picture that can be viewed from many angles. The deformed image is painted on a plane surface surrounding the mirror. By looking uniquely into the mirror, the image appears undeformed.

"Anamorphic" effects in the work of contemporary artists.

The Swedish artist Hans Hamngren produced and exhibited a great deal of examples of the mirror anamorphosis in the 60s and 70s. Shigeo Fukuda, a Japanese artist, designed both types of anamorphosis in the 70s and 80s. Also Patrick Hughes, Fujio Watanabe, William Kentridge, István Orosz, Felice Varini, Matthew Ngui, Kelly Houle, Nigel Williams, and Judy Grace are fine artists creating anamorphic images.

Another example is the sidewalk chalk paintings of Kurt Wenner and Julian Beaver where the chalk painting, the pavement and the architectural surroundings all become part of an illusion. Art of this style can be produced by taking a photograph of an object or setting at a sharp angle, then putting a grid over the photo, another, elongated grid on the footpath based on a specific perspective, and reproducing exactly the contents of one into the other, one square at a time.

About Street Painting. The Art of the "Madonnari".

Street painting, also commonly known as pavement art, chalk art, sidewalk art, is the performance art of rendering artistic designs on pavement such as streets, sidewalks, and town squares with impermanent and semi-permanent materials. Using a projection called anamorphosis to create the illusion of three dimensions when viewed from the correct angle, artists create 3D pavement illusions. Anamorphism is usually considered a form of Illusion, but is actually a logical continuation of mathematics in perspective that tricks the eye and fools the mind into believing an object is 3d.

Origin.

Street painting has been recorded throughout Europe since the 16th century. Street Painters are historically called Madonnari in Italy (singular form: madonnaro or madonnara) because they recreated images of the Madonna. In England they are called Screevers and in

Germany Strassenmaler. The Italian Madonnari were itinerant artists, many of whom had been brought into the cities to work on the huge cathedrals. When the work was done, they needed to find another way to make a living, and thus would often recreate the paintings from the church into the pavement. Aware of festival and holydays in each province and town, they traveled to join in the festivities to make a living from observers who would throw coins if they approved of the artists work. Until recently, madonnari were true folk artists, reproducing simple images with crude materials. Tragically, the Second World War brought hardship and suffering to many, greatly reducing the number of these artists. In 1972, a street painting was being promoted again by the formation of a festival in Grazie di Curtatone, Italy and today the performance art-form is recognized all over the world. In 1982, Kurt Wenner, who is recognized as the innovator of 3-D street painting and others followed developing new styles based on the work of artists such as Andrea Mantegna, M. C. Escher, Michelangelo, Hans Holbein and others. Today this work is called 3d Street Painting, 3D Pavement Art, 3D Chalk Art, 3D Sidewalk Art, 3D Illusion, anamorphic or 3D, although in the past it was called one-point perspective.

Painters.

The first known street painter was Sidewalk Sam, who began painting in the streets of Boston in 1973. In 1982 Kurt Wenner, an American, began street painting in Rome. By 1983 he took the already-existing anamorphic art form to the street by drawing, then brushing, his home-made pastels into a painting. In 1984 he was documented by National Geographic in their film Masterpieces In Chalk. That same year he won the title of "Maestro Madonnaro" at the Grazie festival. Later in the early 1990s Michael Kirby began to work in Europe as a street painter creating more original work based on contemporary issues and not on classical ideas and designs. He would go on to become a master street painter in all the major festivals across Europe including Germany, Italy, and Holland. He would later bring the art form to other countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ireland, Canada, and various parts of the United States. His work was featured at the Smithsonian Institution in DC, National Geographic, David Letterman Show, North Carolina Museum of Art, Rai Television, and others.

Techniques.

The Madonnari use chalks and pastels, but only pastels without oil. Pastel is pure pigment, which lends to the bright colors typical of these paintings in the streets. Sometimes the 3D artworks can take hours to days to produce. The process is engaging and it is fun to pose in the artworks when they are finished and the images live on spreading your message well after the work has been washed away.

The Motivations and purposes.

The motivations and objectives that drive street artists are as varied as the artists themselves. There is a strong current of activism and subversion in urban art. Street art can be a powerful platform for reaching the public, and frequent themes include adjusting, subvertising and other culture jamming, the abolishment of private property and reclaiming the streets. Other street artists simply see urban space as an untapped format for personal artwork, while others may appreciate the challenges and risks that are associated with installing illicit artwork in public places. However the universal theme in most, if not all street art, is that adapting visual artwork into a format which utilizes public space, allows artists who may otherwise feel disenfranchised, to reach a much broader audience than traditional artwork and galleries normally allow.

Pavement art is now also used for marketing purposes and is a fantastic way to convey your message to your target audience. Pavement art can be used for street promotion in public spaces or for corporate events. The artist delivers the intended messages in the artwork for the public to view and in some cases strongly interact with e.g. have their photo taken in the

artwork. Pavement art is also frequently used for headlining at festivals or for signage as branding at events as it is a great crowd-stopper.

About 3D-effect.

How it works:

- ❖ Because there is a physical separation between the human eyes 3-D imaging becomes possible: each eye sees the world from a different angle.
- ❖ The brain then combines the two images which translates to an optical perception of depth for the viewer.
- ❖ The combination of the individual images seen by each eye creates a perception of depth and dimension in the brain called 'parallax' and it is the foundational knowledge on which 3-D imaging materializes.

Three-dimensional art more closely resembles the way people sense objects around their space and 3-D imaging applies the science of how humans see horizontal and vertical information with their two eyes to reproduce a sense of depth resulting from 'parallax' that creates a more believable image presence and the illusion becomes an optical reality in the brain.

Depth perception is the key in distinguishing real images in the real world and our brain knows the difference, 3-D chalk drawing sidewalk artists and creators of other anamorphic images in public places seem to fascinate pedestrians, enough for them to stop and entertain themselves with the illusion.