

“PYGMALION EFFECT”: MODERN ARTISTS IN THE AGE OF INSTAGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Instagram is an image-based social media that provides online photo or video sharing services. In the art world, Instagram occupies the top position for modern artists to publish their work. However, there is very little information about the features of the art that are most in demand, and what role is present in the interaction between artists and followers in the works of art that are most favored. Starting from a Greek myth, the Pygmalion effect was finally developed in the real world by Robert Rosenthal who later gave birth to the theory: Self-fulfilling Prophecy. This study extends research on social media interactions in the art world which is important for research on the interactive psychology of artwork and digital marketing communications in social media. This article uses qualitative and artistic research methods to analyze the interaction between artists and followers on Instagram and the most preferred features of the artwork using the Pygmalion effect as a theoretical basis. Is there feedback between the artist and his followers? How big is the impact of the Pygmalion effect on the artist's interest in work or productivity?

Keywords: *Instagram, Social Media, Interaction, Pygmalion effect, artistic creation*

ABSTRAK

Instagram adalah media sosial berbasis gambar yang menyediakan layanan berbagi foto atau video online. Di dunia seni, Instagram menempati posisi teratas bagi seniman modern untuk mempublikasikan karya mereka. Namun, hanya ada sedikit informasi tentang fitur-fitur seni yang paling diminati, dan peran apa yang hadir dalam interaksi antara seniman dan pengikut dalam karya seni yang paling disukai. Berawal dari mitos Yunani, efek Pygmalion akhirnya dikembangkan di dunia nyata oleh Robert Rosenthal yang kemudian melahirkan teori: Self-fulfilling Prophecy. Penelitian ini memperluas penelitian tentang interaksi media sosial di dunia seni yang penting untuk penelitian tentang psikologi interaktif karya seni dan komunikasi pemasaran digital di media sosial. Artikel ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dan artistik untuk menganalisis interaksi antara seniman dan pengikut di Instagram dan fitur yang paling disukai dari karya seni menggunakan efek Pygmalion sebagai dasar teoritis. Apakah ada umpan balik antara artis dan pengikutnya? Seberapa besar dampak efek Pygmalion terhadap minat seniman dalam pekerjaan atau produktivitas?

Kata kunci: Instagram, Media Sosial, Interaksi, Efek Pygmalion, kreasi artistik

A. Introduction

With the advent of the online art trade, understanding what types of artwork encourage participants to participate is critical. However, very little research has focused on the relationship between artwork and interactions on social media. So what does the popularity of a work of art depend on? We are at a crossroads where traditional physical art experiences are starting to migrate to more web-based environments. To solve this problem, the author uses the Pygmalion effect as the main foundation in this research study.

Pygmalion is the name of a sculptor in Greek mythology. This sculptor made a statue of a very beautiful woman and was named Galatea. Pygmalion then prayed to Aphrodite to make this statue human. Aphrodite granted it, Galatea became human and married Pygmalion.

So, what is the relationship between this mythology and the popularity of the artwork on social media? In Pygmalion's story, he had the expectation of his statue becoming a human, so that expectation happened. In general, the Pygmalion Effect is a condition in which people will become in accordance with what is expected of them. are beliefs or expectations that individuals have about future events that are realized because individuals hold them (Good Therapy, 2015). Pygmalion effect can be interpersonal and intrapersonal. The intrapersonal Pygmalion effect can be seen in the context of artists and audiences where external encouragement in the form of positive beliefs or expectations can lead to increased performance for several things related to these expectations.

Media ecologists believe that media is an extension of the human senses of every age, and the main reason for social change is communication technology (Hakanen, E.A 2007). Digital participation deepens and democratizes artistic exchange with audiences. it has changed the role of the audience, and blurred the boundaries of concepts such as "professional" and "public".



Figure 1. Pygmalion effect

Before the Internet era, art critics determined the value of art. Today, Instagram is a new way to discover, promote and critique art.

Interactivity is a distinctive feature of the Internet. Tom Valcanis believes that if technology is a medium for cultural development, the interaction and orientation of technology users has resulted in a participatory "mashup" culture. Ways of generating and accessing content are deconstructed by online platforms, computers and smartphones, and online content is uploaded, mixed, combined, and reconstructed (Valcanis, T. 2011:68, 33-45), forming a "participatory culture".

A participatory culture is one with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and community involvement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some kind of informal tutoring in which the most experienced people pass on what they know to beginners. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe that their contribution is important, and feel some degree of social connection to one another. Likes and comments are the most broad and basic level of participation. Interaction on social media happens very quickly, which can be understood as a novelty or moment effect.

B. Discussion

Interaction plays an important role in social media, although form and content are very important for the creation of art,

consideration can also be given to the method of communication between the artwork and a person. The relationship between the museum and the masses is changing towards a more interactive and collaborative form. Changes in the function of museums and the role of curators affect the role of art in society. Digital technology has played an important role in expanding the boundaries of art, social media seems to be redefining the art world, influencing not only marketing but also the creation and curation of art. When this transition phenomenon is observed with the Pygmalion effect theory, it can be concluded that the general purpose of this paper is organized into four research questions (RQ) with 3 main variables; volunteer/research participant, Participant's artwork uploaded on the Instagram page, consisting of intrapersonal works, and interpersonal works, and respondents or Instagram followers. The participants in this study were Sipos Eszter (20), and Hogi Tetra Putra (32).

1. Research Participants
SIPOS ESZTER



Figure 2. Sipos Eszter’s instagram profile screenshot

Sipos Eszter is a 20 years old student who is studying at Eszterhazy Karoly Catholicus Egyetem majoring in nature art. She discovered her love of art in elementary school and this interest was later pursued in high school. Having a passion and enthusiasm for art at such a young age, she has now developed a deep appreciation for

the arts of nature; site-specific sculptures. In her Artist's Statement she said “In my art I like to experiment with new materials and trying to connect different media to each other making a contrast in the meaning or in the texture. Most of the time I reuse objects following the arte povera mindset. I'm inspired by the nature, I create in the nature also with natural materials. It is important for me to show the viewer how we can connect with our environment without hurting it.”

HOGI TETRA PUTRA



Figure 3. Hogi Tetra’s Instagram profile screenshot

Hogi Tetra Putra is an alumnus of Interior Design ISI Yogyakarta, graduated in 2019. He works as an interior designer in a design collective called PI. In his spare time, he often creates works of art, especially digital art. Starting from his curiosity to make something from an architectural and design software called sketchup, which is widely known for making architectural/interior design models, he started experimenting with using the software to create digital art. In his Artist's Statement he said, “With the times, art has become limitless. All media including technology can be used to create a work of art, it all depends on how the artist processes and packages it. What distinguishes design and artwork is the greater tolerance for “taste” than “number/size”.

1.2. Research Questions

- **RQ1:** Which artworks have the most likes and comments?

A common feature of the most liked and commented on artwork is in-depth exchange and interaction with followers by asking questions or displaying their art and personal life. Viewers feel that they are friends with the artist and participate in the artist's life and creation. Participation in social media, as Jenkins put it, is a culture in which members believe that their contribution is important and express their value through communicating with artists to grow together with artists. Traditional art experiences are interpreted by experts or organizations, which are passive and didactic. Social media has shaped new online art experiences, and real-time communication between artists and audiences allows all types of artwork to be customized at any time in a highly interactive process. The audiences unconsciously participate in the selection of artworks with likes and comments. Humans are intuitive thinkers, and a common feature of the popular posts mentioned above reflects Abraham Maslow's view that the driving force of human personality is self-actualization (Maslow, A.H 1975). He achieved five levels of motivation: physiological, security, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, A.H 1975). Users achieve what Abraham Maslow calls self-actualization by intuitively engaging in social media interactions.

Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman wrote that "intuition is nothing more and nothing less than recognition", is the ability to automatically generate solutions without logical arguments length or evidence (Kahneman, D 2017) Intuitiveness is the ability to acquire knowledge without relying on conscious reasoning (merriam-webster). Introspection can reduce the quality of preferences and decisions. Wilson and Schooler's study shows that analyzing reasons reduces people's satisfaction with their choices, and it may not always be a good idea to analyze the reasons for our preferences too carefully (Wilson, T.D 1991: 60, 181)

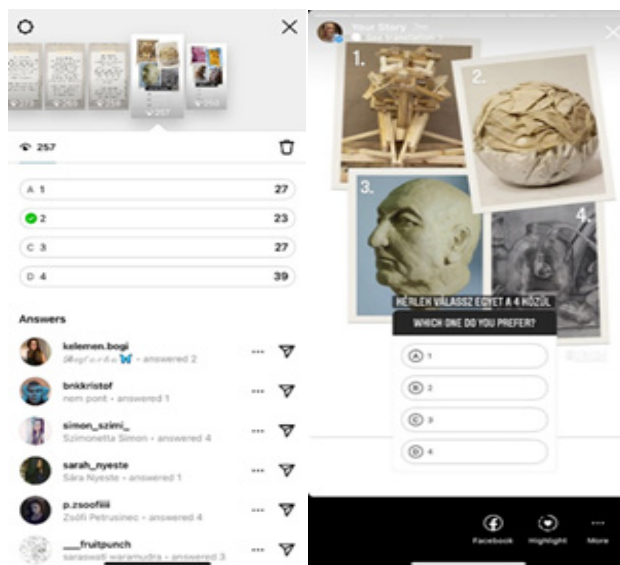


Figure 4. Intrapersonal Survey Data by Sipos Eszter

Work 1: Double sized portrait, wood media, 2021

Work 2: Balls and Cubes using, gypsum and textile, 2021

Work 3: Portrait, clay, 2021

Work 4: Transparent Still Life, graphite on paper, 2022. The four works above are Eszter's campus assignments, in which there are external factors in the form of external expectations from the lecturers who gave the assignment. Of the four artworks that have been selected by Eszter Sipos, 39 out of 257 people who saw the upload above chose work no.4 as the work that was most liked.

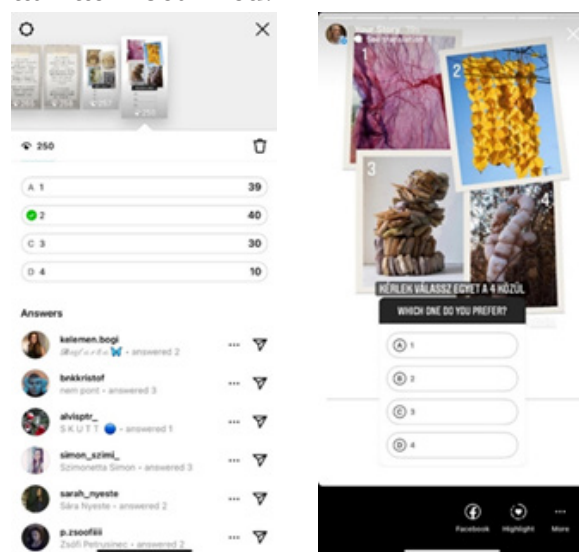


Figure 5. Interpersonal Survey Data by Sipos Eszter

Work 1. Plastic vs Melting, plastic bags, 2020

Work 2: Land Art Inspired by Andy Goldsworthy, 2021

Work 3: Teabag Tower, 2021

Work 4: Connection, cotton, cotton, and stockings, 2021

Of the four works that have been selected by Eszter Sipos, 40 out of 250 people who saw the upload above chose work no.2 as the work that was most liked.

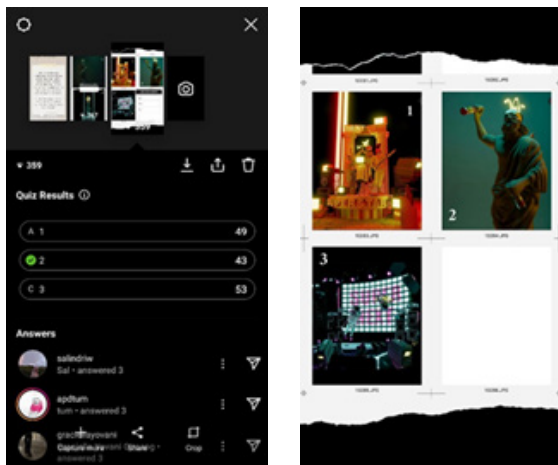


Figure 6. Intrapersonal Survey Data by Hogi Tetra

Work 1. Next Superstar (Djarum Super Next Design Competition, 2020)

Work 2. Lord Abidin (Parents Design Competition, 2021)

Work 3. Elevation, Gravity, Levitation (Djarum Super Next Design Competition, 2022)

Of the three works that have been selected by Hogi Tetra, 53 out of 359 people who saw the upload above chose work no.1 as the work that was most liked.

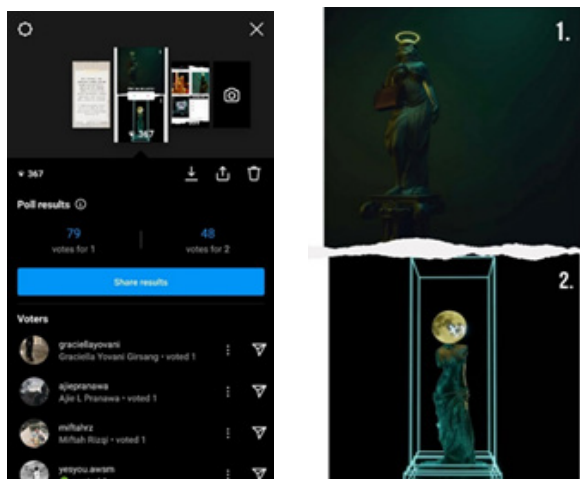


Figure 7. Interpersonal Survey Data by Hogi Tetra

1. Ledis (2022)

Ledis, a digital work, depicts the utopian ideal of women in which the role of women is placed on sublime idols, but not functional beings. The Gucci bag in her hands symbolizes the constant desire for financial stability. The face of the female figure is covered with a storm trooper helmet, which refers to personal concealment, identity, we do not need, we know what the ideal woman looks like, only a functional symbol. The presence of the halo refers to the relationship with the upper sphere, according to which this woman is represented connected to a higher transcendent power, which also justifies her exaltation. The figure stands in the traditional counterpost posture at the head of a composite column. Another reference to the exaltation of the female figure is that it was depicted in ancient Greek statues, thereby highlighting the divine figure. However, this female figure only wants to resemble God, but it is not God, that is, she has her flaws, because her body is not completely covered, like a goddess. Depictions of ancient Greek goddesses do not show intimate body parts.

The figure showed the respect of a simple woman, simple because her breasts were not covered and even touched. There is only one light source in the image, which is not clear whether this light is coming from the halo or from a higher sphere, but we definitely get this life-giving light from above, further emphasizing the magic of the mystical power of the female character. (Siklodi Fruszina, 2022).

2. Monolaugh (2021)

Monolaugh is a conceptual digital creation that feeds on the power of ancient women. The application of the mother motif creates the main atmosphere of the work. The title refers to the fact that, like a personal monologue, the figure laughs at himself, himself and his situation through personal self-irony. The female figure is locked, we can see this with the advent of

the mesh system, this closed situation refers to the current state of women. That is, he laughs at his incompetence, which raises irony, since such a powerful being can do nothing about his condition, he can only laugh at the situation. The representation of Venus is another reference to the power and exaltation of the female figure. The face is covered by a light moon, which is another symbol of the presence of the universe, and it gets another ironic character by the spray tag. Everything indicates that a powerful life-giving force is confined and therefore powerless. It also refers to a state of helplessness in life, when we have all the strength and power to act, but we are unable to act due to some external factor. (Siklodi Fruszina, 2022).

Of the two works that have been selected by Hogi Tetra, 79 out of 367 people who saw the upload above chose work no.1 as the work that was most liked.

- **RQ2:** What makes people hit the “like” button and comment on the artwork they choose?

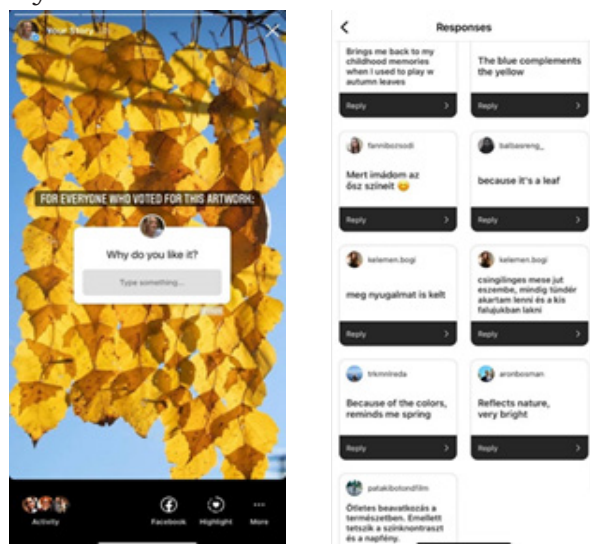


Figure 8. Intrapersonal works and Interpersonal works with the most likes

On interpersonal work; Transparent Still Life, the author initiates Eszter Sipos to give follow-up questions to followers regarding why they press the “like” button. The why question has been divided into four multiple choice questions. Then on the intrapersonal work; Land Art Inspired by

Andy Goldsworthy, Author and Eszter free followers to comment without being limited by choice.

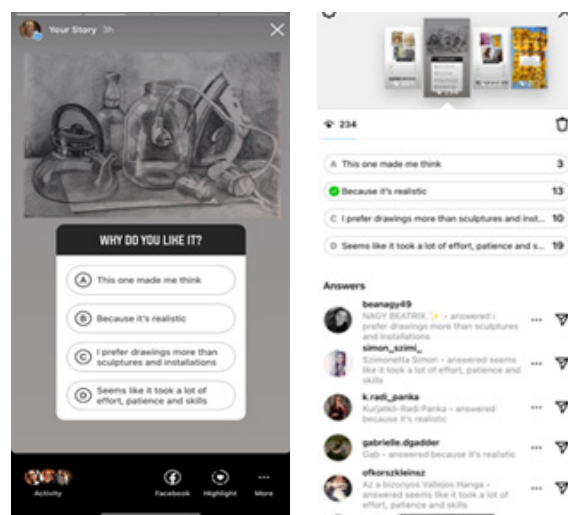


Figure 9. Eszter Sipos followers' responses

As shown above, the majority of followers chose the work "Transparent Still Life" because the work is in the realist genre. In the digital era, does realistic art still have a relevant place in the art world? This question and the like are often asked by critics to artists who still paint classical portraits, but in reality ordinary people are more interested in realism. The audience seems to want to suspend disbelief, but the artist must help them by creating the world/mood/tone and then executing the idea.

It is undeniable that Realism is a form of truth claim. One should not underestimate the need for truth to bind us together as social beings. The concept of truth enables trust and understanding, it is an important component of communication. Even in the virtual era, there will still be anchor points to the 'real' world that offer similar truth claims.

Then on the work of Land Art Inspired by Andy Goldsworthy, the comments given by followers are very diverse. But it can be summarized as in the comments column the reason behind the attraction is that the artwork resonates with them in one way or another on a personal level.

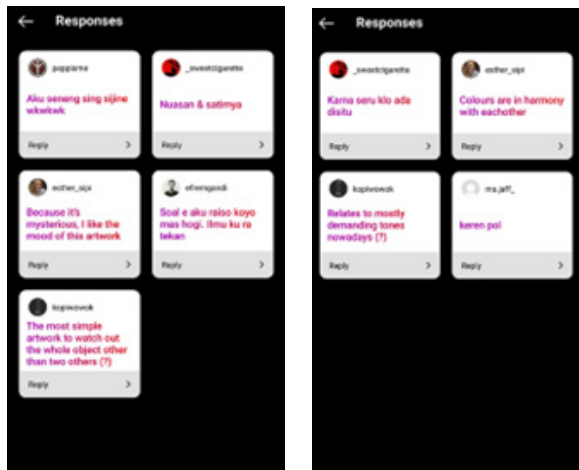


Figure 10. Hogi Tetra followers’ responses

A common feature of the most liked and commented on artwork is the in-depth exchange and interaction with followers by asking questions or displaying their art and personal life. Viewers feel that they are friends with the artist and participate in the artist's life and creation. Social media has shaped new online art experiences, and real-time communication between artists and audiences allows all types of artwork to be customized at any time in a highly interactive process. Viewers subconsciously participate in the selection of artworks with likes and comments.

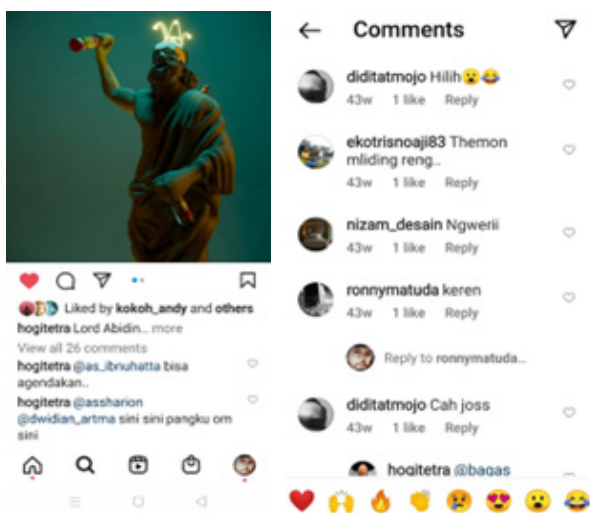


Figure 11. Screenshot of the comment section from Lord Abidin

The author analyzes three values and important points which are divided into the following categories:

• **Curiosity**

Curiosity is closely related to all aspects of human development, stemming from the learning process and the desire to acquire knowledge and skills (Zuss, M 2011). Curiosity, as a behavior and emotion associated for thousands of years as the driving force behind human development (Russell, J.A 1974). Kidd says our brains instinctively search for the "right" thing for new things (Kidd, C 2012). The brain's "moderate arousal" results in maximum motivation and highest success. Optimal arousal theory attempts to explain this aspect of curiosity by suggesting that a person can be motivated to maintain a pleasurable sense of arousal through this exploratory behavior (Russell, J.A 1974). When one's curiosity is aroused, it is considered a gift and inner pleasure. Optimal arousal theory explains the desire of social media users to engage in exploratory behavior in uncertain or ambiguous situations. This theory also allows us to understand the desires of social media users in uncertain or ambiguous situations, through “moderate arousal”, such as “What is this?” to stimulate people's curiosity and generate more “likes”.

• **Interests**

Interest is similar to the attraction of curiosity (Cupchik, G.C 1990:8,1–14). Emotions tend to inform first impressions of the attractiveness and aesthetic appeal of works of art (Cupchik, G.C 1990:8,1–14). Arousal potential for emotion is defined as a state of feeling activation that varies from drowsiness to panicked excitement (Russell, J.A 2011). Emotions and art are closely related (Wilson, T.D 1991: 60, 181). interest will enhance the experience of art connoisseurs.

• **Empathy**

Psychologist Martin Hoffman believes that everyone is born with the ability to feel empathy (Roth-Hanania 2011, 34, 447–458). Social media gives artists building rapport with followers through sharing their art and personal experiences or adventures, this insight into the artist's life

will give followers a sense of connection with the artist. Personal life is like a real-time billboard for an excited and alert eyeball.

- **RQ3:** Is the most-liked artworks also the best work of art that the artist considers?

ESZTER SIPOS

“I was really surprised by the results from the survey. Because I didn’t expect these feedbacks from my followers. I can say that the most liked artwork is not my favorite artwork. My favorite artwork of mine from this research is the “Connection” and “Teabag tower”. I liked the progress of making those, because it was all experimenting and working with new materials. I’m about to make a bigger tea tower, all of my friends are collecting teabags for me. That work contains a lot of effort and time because of the material. The “Connection” artwork mainly contains time than effort. I was playing with the materials, finding out what will happen if I sew here and there. I would like to earn that when people see these artworks they start to think about questions. I would like to make them think and ask from themselves.”

HOGI TETRA

“The work with the most “likes” is not the best work in my opinion. My favorite works are “Lord Abidin” and “Ledis”, why? Because in doing this work I feel quite satisfied and the final result is in line with my expectations, both from a technical point of view and from an idea.”

C. Conclusion

This research analyzed the interaction between artists and followers through data collections on Instagram to determine the features of the most liked artworks and whether the role of Pygmalion's effect on interactions with followers affects the artist's creations. The results showed that the works that were most liked were more interactive. Self-actualization is the biggest

driving force for social media interactions. These findings reveal an explanation of the nature of Instagram users' "likes" and interactions with art, indicating what types of posts become "popular".

It is undeniable that the motivation of followers and the enthusiasm or support of followers affect the motivation of the artist and his/her performance in creating a work. As Csikszentmihalyi comments on the influence of teacher motivation, “If a teacher does not believe in his work, does not enjoy the learning he is trying to convey, students will feel this and come to the entirely rational conclusion that a particular subject is not worth mastering for its own sake. If all of their teachers were exposed to extrinsic motivation, students might conclude that learning in general is worthless inside and out.” (Csikszentmihalyi 1997:7)

However, positive expectations and motivations do not necessarily lead to high performance of modern artists. The motivation, enthusiasm and achievements of the artist are influenced by several factors other than followers' expectations or the demands of the digital mainstream market.

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