The Art and Science of Depiction

What is a Picture?

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Photoshop assignment

- Perspective
  - Converging perspective is OK in the 3D real world
  - It is not in 2D
- Distracting elements
  - Are usually not distracting in "reality"
  - But are harder to "filter out" in the picture
  - The image does not "read" as well

Reading

- Photo-surrealism
  - Unable to detect discrepancy
  - Non realistic physics helps tell story
- Jet Lighter
  - New approach to making images
  - Photos are the new building block to make photos
  - Very different from traditional montage
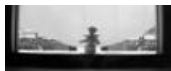 - The same may happen to cinema (Lucas)

Discussion

- Visions of Light

Visions of Light

- Intuition, realize afterwards
- Craft, not art
- Dominance of the actor
  - Must be beautiful
  - No shadow on faces
  - Dietrich more luminous, pops out
- Film noir
- Color in The Last Emperor
- Communication Director Photo-director

Visions of Light

- Formal rules / breaking rules
  - The rules are broken, not eliminated
  - Only when necessary
  - The counter-example does prove the rule
- Difficulty with new language
  - Silent to talky, Black and white to color, wide format
- Invention
  - Technological
  - Pictorial, new language
- Importance of fresh eyes
- To be "realistic", do not use formal rules

Relativism of realism

Questions

- What makes a picture a picture
- Would a 100% faithful hologram be a picture?
- Could it be artistic
  - Would it be better than a "normal" picture
  - Would it be inferior?
- Example of cinema
  - Static to dynamic
  - Silent to talkie
  - Black and white to color
  - 3D

What is art

- Craft (Painting, Cinema)
- Religion
- Beauty
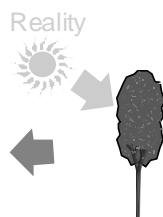- Self expression
- Emotion
- Enhanced experience

Plan

- The chain of representation of reality
- Duality of images 2D/3D

Reality

- Objective, physical
- May be imagination
  - But always references to reality

Reality

The Artist
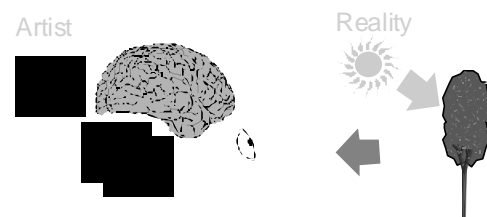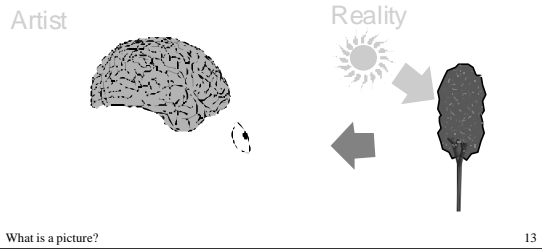
- Visual system
  - Not straightforward!
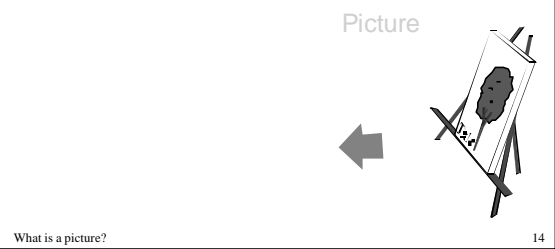
Artist   Reality

The Artist
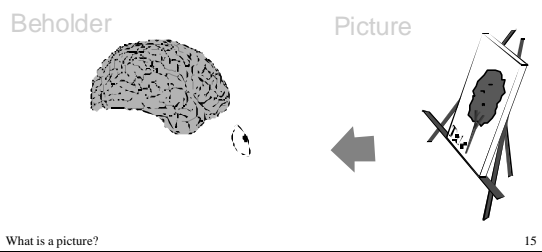
- Visual system
- Intention
- Context

Artist

Reality

The Picture

- Flat, limitations
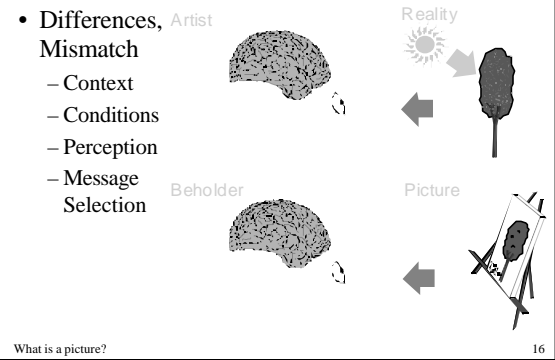- Seen in a given environment, conditions

Picture

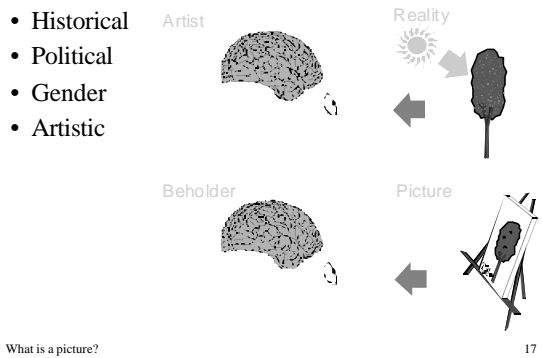## The Beholder

- Visual system
- Interpretation
- Context

Beholder

Picture

The Chain of Depiction

- Differences, Mismatch
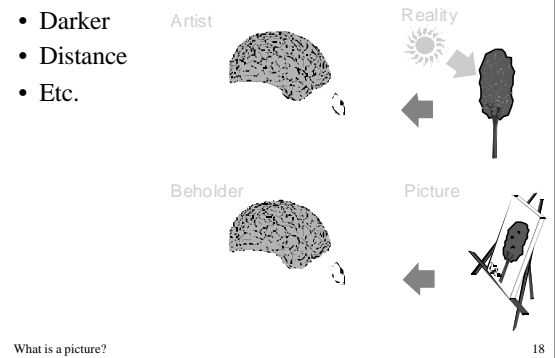 - Context
  - Conditions
  - Perception
  - Message Selection

Artist

Reality

Beholder

Picture

Context

- Historical
- Political
- Gender
- Artistic

Artist

Reality

Beholder

Picture

Conditions

- Darker
- Distance
- Etc.

Artist

Reality

Beholder

Picture

Perception

- Is the perception of pictures different from the perception of reality?

Artist   Reality

Beholder   Picture
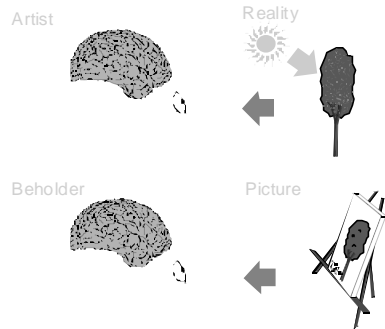
Perception picture/reality

- Photos usually do not look distorted
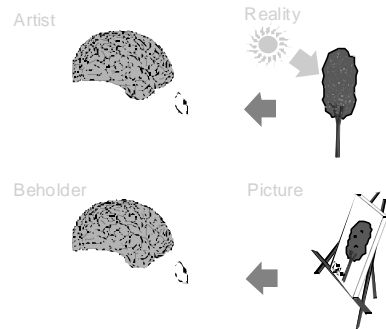- Why is the photo of the photo distorted?

Picture vs. Reality

- We see reality the way we see pictures
- Not the other way around

- Make up
- Stage lighting
- Statues as 2D views
- Architecture un-distortion

Message, selection

- How can the artist transmit a message and select what the viewer perceives

Artist   Reality

Beholder   Picture

Selection

- Viewpoint selection, framing

Selection

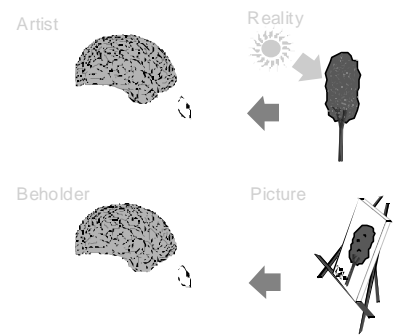- Depth of field

Selection

- Edge burning
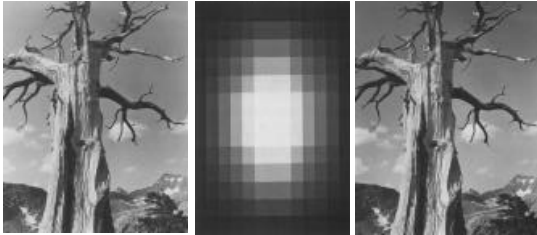
Selection

- Lighting

Selection

Message, selection

- How can the artist transmit a message and select what the viewer perceives
- Caption

Artist

Reality

Beholder

Picture

Caption

Caption, context

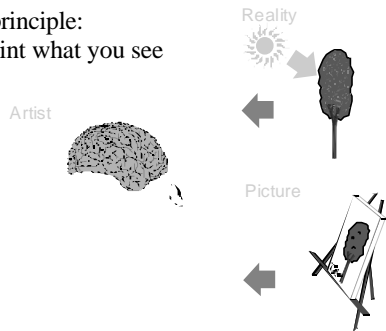- Christina's world, Wyeth

Making pictures

- Simple in principle:
  Draw or paint what you see
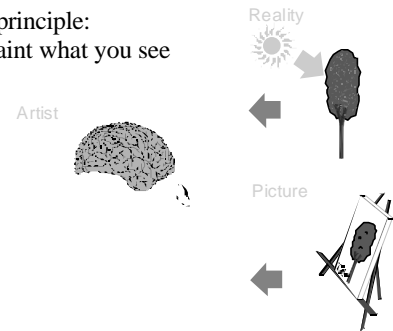
Artist

Picture

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Making pictures

- Simple in principle:
  Draw or paint what you see
- Problem:
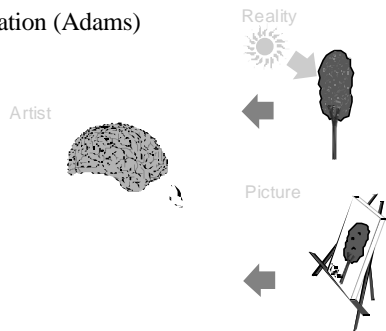 what we
  see is not
  so simple

Reality

Artist

Picture

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Making pictures

- Previsualization (Adams)

Reality

Artist

Picture

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Making vs. analyzing pictures

- Practice
- Feedback

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Making vs. analyzing pictures

- Practice
- Feedback
- Clouds,
  Constellations
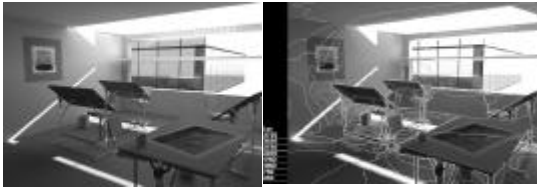- Rorschach

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Goals of pictures

- Optical vs. Haptical
- What we see vs. What we know

- What we feel/mean
- Other "channels"
  – Sound, data, etc.

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Do we always need photo-realism?

Plan

- The chain of representation of reality
- Duality of images 2D/3D

Duality of pictures

- Pictures are both
  - Flat 2D objects
  - Depictions of 3D scenes
- The dialectic between these two essences is crucial

Duality of pictures

- Magritte
- Anecdote Matisse

Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

Duality of pictures

- Magritte
- Anecdote Matisse

2D/3D

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Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

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Is it 2D, is it 3D?

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Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

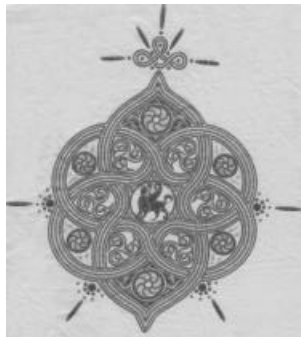## Is it 2D, is it 3D?

Is it 2D, is it 3D?

What makes it 2D

- The surface of the picture is visible
- The marks are visible (brush strokes, grain, scratching film…)
- Absence of one visual channel (color, texture…)
- Letters
- Accidental viewpoint
- Absence of shading
- "non-realism"

Interaction 2D/3D

- Celtic knots
- Islamic arabesques

Interaction 2D/3D

Interaction 2D/3D

- The image is 3D
- The message is in the 2D

Do we always need photographs?

- Focusing on the 2D aspect emphasize the "potential" side

Perspective correction

- 3D verticality must be translated as 2D verticality

Perspective distortion

- The 3D symmetric sphere is projected as a 2D asymmetric ellipse

The School of Athens, Raphael
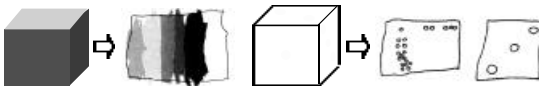
- Sphere should project to an ellipse

3D and 2D attributes

- Show a dice to children (~6-7)
- They usually draw a rectangle
- The rectangle can stand for one face
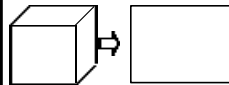
3D and 2D attributes
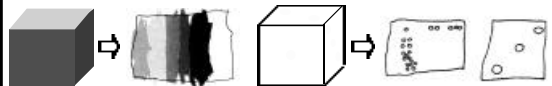
- Show colored or numbered dice to children (6-7)
- The still draw a rectangle
- But different colors or many points

3D and 2D attributes

- Show colored or numbered dice to children (6-7)
- The still draw a rectangle
- But different colors or many points
- The rectangle stands for the whole dice
- The notion of 3D object with corners is translated as a 2D object with corners

Discussion

- Why is black and white photography considered "more artistic"

Assignments

- Feedback
- Image
- Reading
- Piranesi

Reading

- Do not forget Gombrich
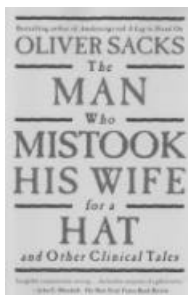
Assignment

- Piranesi tutorial
  - Demo version on the class web page
  - Non-photorealistic rendering
  - Tutorial 1 to 3
  - Skip 2.4

Talk

- Vague decision next week

The End

Degree of realism

- Non-figurative
- Remote
- Realistic
- Recording
- Photojournalism (objective, "neutral")
- Holography

Misc.

- Different techniques for the same goal
- Knots for 2D/3D, posters, trompe-l'œil