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VT 1013 Study Skills

Assessment One

Descriptive Visual Analysis Of A Visual Image

Submitted Image

“Do You Want To See One Million”

by Roger Molloy

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Submitted Image "Do You Want To See One Million" by Roger Molloy

Do You Want To See One Million can almost be three images in one, when the viewer is first confronted with this piece of art a large grey rectangle is what is first perceived, then moving in closer to around two meters the large grey rectangle appears to play tricks on the eyes and a number of patterns, shapes and colours have sometimes been reported to come out from the image. Moving in even closer to just a few centimetres the eye can now focus on the tiny dollar symbols which make up this large grey rectangle. Do You Want To See One Million has been made up of one million black dollar symbols, photographed by the artist, reduced in size and laid down on the canvas to produce the final image.

From first viewing point of standing a few metres back you are faced with a large grey rectangle of mid tone greys; the rectangle is approximately 80" x 60" in size. You can notice from this distance that the grey is not a solid grey, but you are not able to focus close enough to identify what the grey has been made of. Its denoted meaning from this distance is quite simply a grey rectangle. This rectangle has a very specific ontology, the ontology of this rectangle is one million dollar symbols, take away or add just one more dollar symbol and this piece of art would have lost its ontology, hence the connoted meaning of one million would have changed.

Because the viewer identifies that this grey is not a solid grey the curiosity to move closer to focus on it is instinctive. At about one meter from this piece of art it starts to play tricks on the eye and brain, it becomes very difficult to focus on just one point and the brain will start to make random patterns changing rapidly, diagonal, zigzags to diamond shapes almost jumping out with 3D effect from the canvas. A number of viewers have reported from viewing the art at this distance that the colour yellow sometimes appears to be visible within the patterns for a few seconds before fading away and then reappearing. The natural tendency to move to just a few centimetres then becomes overwhelming and the viewer tends to go nose close to the print normally to the right-hand side to view closely at the edge of the image.

Viewed from just a few centimetres the viewer can now if with reasonable eyesight, focus on the tiny black dollar symbols which are around size 5 font. The title of the work, Do You Want To See One Million then becomes very apparent and the recoil action of moving back to your first position to take in the overwhelming totality of the dollars which have made up this rectangle will then bring the viewer to their own conclusion and connoted meaning of the image.

Do You Want To See One Million can have multiple connoted meanings hence it is polysemic; the proverbial one million dollars can lead the viewer to reflections upon their own wealth, desires and ambitions. Others may view the work within the current economic climate as it is a reminder of the fragile capitalist society the Western world lives in that has

led to a worldwide recession. It would be interesting to know the connoted meaning of this image if for example it was displayed to a Bangladeshi rice farmer, or to a single mum in the slums of South Africa. One million dollars is generic to everybody around the world and the opportunity to visually understand the size of an almost impossible sum of money for 99% of the world's population is a unique opportunity.

Do You Want To See One Million is also unique within visual arts because of the fact that you can only view this image in its entirety. This image could never be shown in a book, magazine or on a website. The artwork cannot be reproduced any smaller. If a photographer was to try to take a photograph of this image for publication in an art journal, he would have to reduce the size of the image for the chosen medium, the reproduction would just be a slightly darker grey rectangle, its dollar symbols would have been lost, the artist's invitation to view and understand one million would have been forfeited, this is a unique quality among visual arts and I cannot think of any other image that cannot be reproduced in a different medium for viewers to successfully analyse. The medium of the image is a digital C type print using light-sensitive photographic paper that was exposed to light by a process similar to ink jet printing; instead of ink being jetted out of the cartridges of the printer tiny beams of light are used instead to expose the image in total darkness. The exposed paper would have then been developed with chemistry using traditional method/methods.

Technology has made the creation of this image possible, before the existence of such large digital C type printers the creation of this image would have been almost impossible. A hand

drawn version of this image in theory is possible but even if an artist worked eight hours every day non-stop for seven days a week on average drawing one dollar symbol per second it would take nearly two months to produce the final result.

Ultimately this image is a symbol of prosperity; I anticipate that if persons were given the opportunity to own one million dollars, even if they already own vast sums of money that almost everybody would accept this invitation. The invitation to see one million is also very appealing to multiple backgrounds of civilisations, even throughout the course of our own history ancient Romans and Greeks would have had very similar connoted meanings of this image mirroring New York Wall Street hedge fund investors today.

The anchorage of this image is to be desire, When the image is first viewed it's a grey rectangle, once the viewer has gone through the different viewing distances and understands what they are witnessing, probably for the first and maybe the only time in their life, the instinctive desire to better ones life within the trappings of society concludes the viewer to their own anchorage of desire and aspiration.

The image is complex for the viewer. Unlike most images what you first see is not what you get. The title of the work Do You Want To See One Million is an invitation/question, and the viewers own curiosity of being presented by such a question that will take them beyond a large grey rectangle. Beyond the large grey rectangle is a random number of personal patterns, beyond the random number of personal patterns, shapes and colours is the

unique opportunity to visually understand a number. One million is not just a number; it is a statement, a philosophy, a power, a desire and for many people a dream.

Most people viewing this artwork would not own one million dollars, viewing this artwork can make the viewer a protagonists trying to achieve their goal of this symbolic amount of money, the antagonists could be perceived as the 9 to 5, five days a week, two weeks a year holiday lifestyle that most of us live, denying us the creative and freedoms in art and business that many people desire.

If this image was a film I believe that he has neither closure nor aperture the first time that you view it. But like a lot of good films many people watch them more than once. Coming back to view this image for a second time, with the personal connoted meanings embedded into the viewer, with reflection upon their own antagonists stopping them from being creative in art and business I feel this image has a aperture.

Do You Want To See One Million is a powerful image, this image has the necessary components to almost become an icon. The large grey rectangle could be instantly identifiable around the world, people who have never had the opportunity to view this image in person but who may have heard or read about it would instantly identify it as "that million picture".

(WORD COUNT 1377)