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Role of narration in visual arts from history to contemporary

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Abstract

Works of art often tell stories. Artists can present narrative in many ways- by using a series of images representing moments in a story, or by selecting a central moment to stand for the whole story. Sometimes, however, Artists invent their own stories, leaving the viewer to imagine the narrative. Narrative illustrations are based on a story, and use visual clues to tell that story. The narrative is usually represented with characters or some sort of action within the art work. Fine art is an umbrella term for almost any kind of art form ranging from abstract to sculpture to hyper realistic portraiture- the common denominator is that it typically stems from a personal place within the artist. My concern here is to highlight the role of narration which tells a story. It often depicts images from religion, mythology, history, literature, or everyday life. The works might be small canvases or large wall sized images. They might have precise brush strokes or large swirls of paint. Narrative art isn't about a painting style, but rather the content behind it. Whatever the subject, narrative paintings contain elements of realism, with things recognized as structures or figures in the natural world. Prior to advent of literacy, most narrative art was done to educate the masses. Once literacy developed in different parts of the world, pictures began to be organized along registered lines that helped time to define the direction of the narrative. This method of linking seems together led to other ways of telling stories in 20th century- the newspaper, comic strips and comic books.

Keywords: Narration, visual, history, contemporary, literacy

Introduction

Abstract Visual story-telling is a phenomenon that every society is acquainted with. The term extensively used to refer to visual story-telling in recent times is 'Visual Narrative'. The label 'Visual Narrative' is applied in a generic sense to denote anything from an illustrated story-book to motion pictures. Far from being a trivial term, 'Visual Narrative' is in reality an all encompassing idiom, it is a sub-genre of Visual Studies itself. With the advancement of scholarly inquiry in the area of visual and narrative studies, there is a pressing need to establish Visual Narratives (VN) as a distinctive area of study so as to open up sub genres to critical examination. It is our endeavour to present a definition of Visual Narrative and in particular to lobby for the establishment of 'Static Visual Narrative (SVN)', 'Dynamic Visual Narrative (DVN)' and 'Interactive Visual Narrative (IVN) as sub genres of Visual Narratives. Introduction Visual Narrative (henceforth-'VN') is a term taken for granted to mean (quite rightly) -- a combination of the two words 'Visual' and 'Narrative'. If one tries looking up the definition of the term 'Visual Narrative', chances are that one may not find it and yet VN is a topic under the definition of 'Visual Narrative' is not explicitly spelled out; Julia Murray mentions a working definition of 'narrative illustration' as: the pictorial representation of or reference to one or more "events" that occur in a sequence of time and that bring about a change in the condition of at least one character. As we accept the term 'narrative illustration' as a synonym of 'Static Visual Narrative' we employ the point mentioned by Murray as one of the characteristics of which intensive research has been happening over the past decades. One may not have heard of a specialized field or department called VN but one most certainly must be acquainted with terms such as -- Narrative Art, Visual storytelling, Films, Pictorial stories, Illustrated stories, Comics, Sequential art, History Painting, Animation etc. What binds the above mentioned areas is the fact that they are all essentially explorations into visuals that tell stories.

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It is our aim in this paper to demonstrate that individual research areas (such as the ones mentioned above) that conduct independent research are in fact various forms of VNs. We thus propose the establishment of VN as a distinct category of Visual and Narrative Studies. Furthermore, we discuss three types of VNs -- 'Static Visual Narrative', 'Dynamic Visual Narrative', and 'Interactive Visual Narrative (henceforth—SVN, DVN and IVN) as sub genres of VNs. As part of this paper we also undertake to define VN and its sub categories discussing each with the help of examples. It is our belief that doing this would not only unify the various areas under a single domain but also encourage sharing of knowledge between the sub fields. Moreover, a categorization of this type would open up new areas of research to students and professionals dealing with VNs. Search for a word that signifies a visual that tells a story Let us begin by looking at the meanings of some of the terms used by researchers that imply VNs that are established fields of study² — Films: also referred to as movie³ or motion pictures. Shortened form of moving picture (1896) (Harper, Online Etymology Dictionary). Movies are made up of a series of still photographs, each of which shows a slight change in motion, when projected; they give the illusion of a moving image (Pincus, 1972). Narrative Painting: has an element of literacy. In a narrative picture, the viewer is seeing a moment in a story that allows the viewer to understand what happened prior to and after the moment caught by the artist. History Painting: is a term used to describe paintings that focus on a serious narrative or include exemplary actions. In this sense the word history relates to the Italian *istoria* (narrative or story). History painting is not necessarily an accurate or documentary description of actual events. Such works are often large in scale. Their subjects derive from the Bible, mythology, secular literature, or historical events. They can also be allegorical (from the website: National Gallery of Art, Washington DC). Animation: Animation (from the Latin word, *animare*, to breathe life into) is the visual art of making a motion picture from a series of still drawings (Encyclopaedia of Irish and World Art). Pictorial Narratives: This term is made up of two words – Pictorial (from the word 'Picture') and Narrative. Pictorial Etymologically the word comes 1646, from the Latin word *pictorius* "of a painter," from Latin *pictor* "painter," from pp. stem of *pingere* "to make pictures". The noun meaning "journal in which pictures are the main feature" is first recorded 1844 ("pictorial" Online Etymology Dictionary). This means to engage in the act of narration. Sequential Art: A train of images deployed in sequence. That deals with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea'. Eishner uses the term 'sequential art' as an art form that has its expression in the form of comic books. Comics: from the word 'Comic' originating from the Greek *κωμικός*, *kōmikos* "of or pertaining to comedy". The term derives from the mostly humorous early work in the medium, and came to apply to that form of the medium including those far from comic. In 1996, Will Eisner published *Graphic Storytelling and Visual Narrative*, in which he defined comic (books) as "the printed arrangement of art and balloons in sequence". Narrative Illustration: the pictorial representation of or reference to one or more "events" that occur in a sequence of time and that bring about a change in the condition of at least one character. We do not suggest that these terms are wrong, but

if examined in detail, it will be found that these terms refer to the VN in a limited way. In fact they can be grouped on the basis of particular aspects of the VN, namely: 1) Compositional nature of the VN: Sequential Art: The word sequential alludes specifically to the aspect of arrangement. 2) With reference to the theme of the VN: History Painting: The terms 'History' refers to the subject matter of the VN; while 'Painting' refers to the type of representation technique. 3) Certain characteristic of the VN: Comics have over the years developed a distinct identity of its own with its characteristic sequential nature of the pictures, and the predominance of pictures over words. This feature distinguishes comics from picture books and other illustrated visuals. 4) Representational technique of the VN: a) Narrative Painting, Narrative Illustration: This term can be divided into two. The first word 'narrative' is used to highlight the narrative quality of the visual much like an adjective. Narrative is used as qualifier and is added as a prefix to refer to any visual that has a narrative aspect. While the second word informs us about the graphic or material state of the visual ie. it could be a painting, an illustration or scroll or panels etc. b) Painting, Illustration: Many a times visuals are referred to the representation style employed to execute the story. Painting for example is used with reference to the fact that some form of paint has been used to depict the story. Illustration is used to suggest the visual is figurative or graphic in nature. c) Pictorial Art, Graphic storytelling, Pictorial storytelling: These terms again stress the pictorial and graphic quality of the visual; while the narrative aspect is suggested to in the second part of the word. d) Animation: "action of imparting life," from Latin *animationem* (nom. *Animatio*), noun of action from *animatus*, pp. of *animare*. Meaning "vitality" is from 1610s. Cinematographic sense is from 1912 (From Online Etymology Dictionary, Harper, 2010). Film: This kind of VN gets its name from the equipment used to create the VN. The 'film' a rolled strip or sheet coated with light sensitive material used for taking photographs or making a motion picture (film: The Oxford Paperback Dictionary, 1989). As can be clearly seen all of the above terms are varied aspects of (what we call) the VN. While all of the above terms are apt to refer to visuals that tell stories, none of them capture the essence of the phenomenon in question. Thus while they are all according to our definition essentially VNs they (each one of them) are a certain type of VN. The problem with this kind of categorization is that it is very limited in nature and restricts the study of the VN. Moreover, there are problems with each term as they are so narrowly defined. For example, a VN can have a religious theme (subject), could be painted (representation technique) on a wooden panel (medium), using the comics style and be executed in the form of an animation film. Thus we can have a combination of aspects in a single VN. This proves that the categories presently in use are not watertight. A single VN can be classified under multiple terms depending on the presence of a particular aspect. But this does not guarantee that the other aspects are absent. It is as a remedy to this shortcoming that we propose the following 1) Use of the term VN as a category at the first level to indicate any kind of visual that has narrative content. 2) Based on the functionality of the VN they can be categorised into A) SVNs, B) DVNs, C) IVNs; at the second level. 3) At the third level, one can be very precise and refer to a certain feature of the VN eg. film, history painting, picture book,

etc. With this aim in mind we set about defining VN and its sub genres in this paper. At this point we would like to mention the reason we feel it necessary to define the VN and its sub types. The Visual Narrative (VN) The distinctive feature of the VN is the presence of a story. In order to form a conclusive definition & establish the term 'Visual Narratives' as a distinct genre of visual studies; we need to support our claim by specifying the manner in which we use the terms Visual, Narrative and Story. Visual: As to what comprises a 'Visual' is quite clear and agreed upon i.e. A Visual is something that can be seen using the human eye. We accept the dictionary meaning of Visual as related to the sense of sight. Narrative / Story are terms that seem to have been used interchangeably as synonyms of each other. Our first task therefore is to relook at the terms Narrative and Story. Narrative: Hayden White pointed out in his book *The Content of the Form* that the word "narrative" goes back to the ancient Sanskrit "gna", a root term that means "know" and that comes down to us through Latin words for both "knowing" ("gnarus") and "telling" ("narrow"). There have been debates as to what constitutes a narrative without a concrete conclusion being reached. We shall therefore here enumerate only those meanings of the word 'Narrative' in the sense we feel is appropriate in the given context. Simply put, narrative is the representation of an event or a series of events. Murray in her paper mentions that most scholars agree 'that a fundamental marker of narrative is action, which produces change. Another fundamental element of narrative is time. Accordingly we will primarily use the word 'Narrative' - meaning -- to tell a story. Story: According to the dictionary meaning a story is - a description, either true or imagined, of a connected series of events and often, the characters involved in them. Difference between a story and a narrative: A distinction is made by Hawthorn who defines a story as a sequence of events. Narrative according to him, focuses our attention on to a story, through the direct mediation of a 'telling' which we both stare at and through, which is at once central and peripheral to the experience of the story, both absent and present in the consciousness of those being told the story (Hawthorn, 1985). Scholes, Phelan and Kellogg suggest two distinguishing characteristics for a literary work to be termed as narrative: the presence of a story and a storyteller. 'The difference between story and narrative discourse is, a difference between two kinds of time and two kinds of order'. Seymour Chatman makes the difference between Narrative and Story to be that of 'time' and 'order' - what he calls the "chrono-logic". 'Narrative entails movement through time not only "externally" (the duration of the presentation of a novel, film play) but also "internally" (the duration of the sequence of events that constitutes a plot). The first operates in the dimension of narrative called Discourse..., the second in that called Story. Brian Richardson marks the difference in the order of occurrence and order of presentation, which can be read as the distinction between story and narration. In conclusion we can say a 'Narrative' is the representation of a story while a 'Story' is a sequence of events.

Plausible early beginnings of VNs.

Where and how did visual story telling emerge has been lost in the looms of time. The desire to commemorate significant events and the idea of pictorial depiction of a story existed by the end of the prehistoric period. We can speculatively

envisage a scenario of a cave man returning from a hunt, narrating the way he brought down his prey to a group of his clans people round a fire. He takes a bit of coal and makes some markings on the cave wall to illustrate his point and help his audience imagine the way he went about it. Thus primarily the visual narrative works as an aid to the viewer to visualize the way the event happened. Plausible reasons for the VNs to come into existence could be: To explain the manner in which an event took place To give an idea of what the characters looked like i.e. size, shape, and scale. To express in visual form, as a historic record of the event. To serve as a social visual message to the masses as a medium to reach people who were illiterate (those not familiar with the alphabet). The VN due to its visual quality makes a strong impact and has been used extensively over the years. Undisputedly a powerful medium of expression, they have their pros and cons. Some of the points in its favour is the capability to mimic the event, conditions, characters in great detail and as close to the truth (real or imagined) as possible. Being visual it has a high reach-out rate as people who are illiterate or do not know to read a particular script can still make some sense of the visual. On the other hand VNs like other types of narratives are deeply rooted in the cultural and social practises. Due to this reason it cannot be a completely universally understood language. Designers employ culture specific artistic codes developed to represent the story in a visual form. These codes need to be decoded by the viewer to read into the VN. One requires an understanding of the norms, beliefs and functioning of the culture to which the VN belongs in order to make sense of it. Another drawback of the VN lies in the very fact that it is visual. Since purely visual signs can have multiple readings, one needs to know the story represented in the visual to interpret the VN correctly. VNs have existed and continue to exist around the world. These are being explored from diverse perspectives within the domain of visual studies. There have been pioneering investigations in the area of VNs but as separate and isolated subjects. By defining VN as a domain we can streamline these bodies of work and integrate them into a broader framework. Prominent topics studied as VN are comics, narrative sculptures, story-book illustrations, graphic novels, animation and live action films. All of the above mentioned topics share a commonality of being visually communicated stories. VNs as one can see forms a large area, there is a dire need to categorize them so as to open up more areas of investigation. There exists a distinction between 'arts of time' and 'arts of space'; a view to which many scholars subscribe. The 'arts of space' produce static or fixed images that are two dimensional (painting) or three dimensional (sculpture); they thus lie outside the time category. They are in essence structurally distinct from music and poetry, which develop within a physically prolonged time. This difference is also echoed in Indian thought 'The evolution of the world means a course of constant change and modification due to this change. They are of two kinds: temporal and spatial. The former indicates the state of continuity (sādhya) and the latter the state of stagnation (sidha). Pictorial art or a material image (mūrti) belong to the order of spatial modification because it is static and limited in extent, whereas language (and poetry) belongs to the order of temporal modification'. The argument of the nature of temporality between the arts of time and space was first brought up by Lessing in the context of poetry and painting. Both music and graphic

novels handle time, but in a radically distinct manner. It is with reference to this nature of time that discussions began in earnest. We concur to the distinction made on the basis of the nature of temporarily and the difference in the manner of viewing VNs. Accordingly, we assign the term 'Dynamic Visual Narrative (DVN)' to the former and 'Static Visual Narrative (SVN)' to the latter. The limits that have been indicated are physical; it is with respect to this facet that we use the word 'dynamic' and 'static' to emphasize the distinction. Additionally we assign the term 'Interactive Visual Narrative (IVN)' to the third type of VN, on the basis of extensive viewer interaction with the VN. Having transiently mentioned the rationale on the basis of which we categorize VNs into A) SVN, B) DVN and C) IVN.

It is interesting to hear what different people with different tastes in art think about the role of narrative in fine arts. In contemporary art, artists are inventing the stories and making their audience work to figure them out, like puzzles. Furthermore, narrative painters are making work that reaffirms our humanity and sense of purpose. Narrative paintings seek to understand the human condition. It seeks to understand beauty, truth, tragedy, love and death. It is honest in its exploration of what it means to be human. The 1870's marks the beginning of the post-modern era which lasted until 1970's. Modern art was born when painters like Monet first began radically breaking up the picture plane into fragments of colour. Cezanne started playing with perspective. Picasso asked himself what an object would look like if you could add the fourth dimension of time. Artists started picturing art into abstract forms also a part of narrative visuals. The stories in narrative paintings can come from history too, as evidenced by Gericault's famous painting "The Raft of The Medusa". IN the 1816, the French naval ship "The Medusa" was wrecked off the west coast of Africa due to the incompetence of an inexperienced captain. The Medusa held 400 passengers and crew, thus this tragedy was put up in the form of narration. A narrative painting could also illustrate a single scene, like a film still of an important moment from a movie for example, Sandro Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" portrays a moment from the story of her birth taken from the Greek mythology. Basically, a narrative painting is a painting that tells a story. It could be a story made up of various scenes all contained within one painting. For example, the Sistine Chapel ceiling in Rome has nine scenes within one fresco painted by Michelangelo, all of which illustrate the book of Genesis. The most iconic scene is 'The Creation of Adam,' where Adam lazily extends his finger so that God may transfer the gift of life to him.

History of narrative painting

Humans have created art of millennia. For the most of that time, the images have been narrative in nature. Only in the 20th century do we get work that are abstract, which means they don't contain anything that resembles figures or objects from the real world. Early 20th century artists rebelled against realism and narrative. Moments like Cubism, which broke forms into geometric shards; and Abstract Expressionism, which explored feelings and emotions through colour and brushstroke, moved away from narrative. Many types of Modern art were not narrative. But people are geared to telling stories are preserving tales of battles, love and epic adventures. Narrative painting never completely disappeared. Today, artists work in many styles,

including abstract and narrative Art. Narrative Art has a very long history, long before film or even the written word. Some of the earliest cave paintings are painted stories about the hunt. Paintings and sculptures only get more technically proficient and the stories more complicated as we move along history and art begins to illustrate Greek myths or stories from Bible. Narrative art encompasses traditional mediums like film, animation, comic strips, and photography. I am going to look at narrative painting specifically. To understand what happens next in the history of narrative painting, we have to look at the cultural milieu of Europe in the first half of the 19th century. Victorian morality had taken hold. Religion, sexual restraint, strict codes of conduct, zero tolerance for crime were the order of the day. Erudite artists like John Ruskin held important positions at royal academies and acted as gatekeepers to the art world. It is also important to know that narrative art was not only limited to history painting. The emergence of Reformist church and the reinforcement of genre-painting that followed were major contributors to the diversified plethora of narrative as we know it today. Telling the anecdotes of ordinary people, whether politically charged or not, became one of the main subjects of European art in the past few centuries. Most of the visual narratives depend on the time of their creation and cultural context- different civilisations pursued different manners of "speech". In ancient Rome, there was a particular architectural format intended to be read as a book- a triumphal column. It is a cylindrical form, known for an engraved story that literally revolves around the column, starting from the bottom and continuing towards the top like a spiral tracing its circumference and height. One of the main reasons why this method was important is the number of illiterate people, which was much greater in the past than it is now. But apart from that, it is also the unique power of images to instantly translate a message. Therefore, it was very common to have a painter work for the king or a religious patron and illustrate particular subjects, simultaneously ignoring some of their aspects that might be in the favour of ruler or the church. Up until the late 19th century, possibly every art work was, more or less, inspired by a certain narrative or in service of one. With the advent of modern age, art was no longer controlled by patrons, and its independence was declared several times and on different occasions. The way that art transmits a message became increasingly complex, and dramatically different than before. Dominant art was the one that was liberated from the need to serve a purpose. The narrative as being indicative and representative of an indulgent and decorative approach to fine art that is somehow not "intelligent" enough and not in keeping with the complex visual language that contemporary artists seem to be obsessed with. What has in the past been seen as a remnant of the Victorian era, has however experienced a slow revival over the last few decades as artists once again begin to explore the role of the narrative, and as collectors and investors of the past. The modern era is also attached with many narratives. Narratives was through the art of historical aspects, which pursued a sort of critical "non art" or "readymade art". However, since our history has been the evidence of narration, so it is hard to say that modern art does not have a story of its own. Even if it is not a representational or metaphorical art, it is almost impossible to escape the interpretation of the viewer. In modern art, formalist ideas have resulted in narrative in all aspects.

However, coded references to political or social issues, or to events in the artists life are still common placed. Such works are effectively modern allegories and generally require information from the artist to be fully understood. The most famous example of this is Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*.

Narration in contemporary art: All of this does not mean that there is absolutely no contemporary art that functions as a story teller. One of contemporary art's favourite narrative mediums is video, as it serves an ideal agent of the present day aesthetics, being conspicuously practical at the same time. None the less, the classical mediums still prove to be just as operative. Interestingly, the cause of story telling has not inherently changed either. Abstraction was taken further with abstract expressionists like Jackson Pollock in the 1950's, and minimalists like Carl Andre in the 1960's. They sort a pure art, one that was free from historical restraints. They wanted to create a universal visual language which all people could understand and could connect with. They looked within themselves for inspiration and aimed to express consciousness on a 2-D plane. Accordingly, today we assign the term Dynamic Visual Narration and Interactive Visual Narration.

▪ **Dynamic visual narration (DVN)**

Explorations to add movement to frozen images had been the pursuit of many people. The real breakthrough came in 1890 with the invention of a motor-powered camera that could photograph motion pictures - called a Kinetograph by W.K.L. Dickson (Tim Dirks). In early January 1894, The Edison Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze (aka Fred Ott's Sneeze) was one of the first series of short films made by Dickson for the Kinetoscope viewer (ibid). Thus, was born the Dynamic Visual Narrative. By assigning the term Dynamic to this category of VNs, we refer to the ability of constantly changing images that is characteristic of this type. A movie (animation or live action) typically consists of a number of still images that is run at high speed giving the impression of temporal movement. The story is constructed before the eyes of the spectator. Actors, scenes, duration of the event, actually physically move in time; albeit in a linear fashion.

Characteristic of a DVN are

1. The visual is constantly being replaced by new visuals on a stationary screen, moving the story ahead. Thus, the story unfolds over time.
2. A DVN is composed of many still images that move at a high speed in a set sequence once they are given the command to move. The visual does not remain fixed to the screen unless paused intentionally. Thus the visual is in a state of constant motion.
3. In the case of the DVN, the story unfolds over time and the viewer need not know the story beforehand to make sense of the visual. The viewer (through the progression of the narrative) is introduced to the characters and is briefed about the background and circumstances of the story. The plot is revealed as time progresses and a narrative is woven sometimes using devices like flash-forwards and flashbacks, as in the case of the movie 'Momento'.
4. The DVN moves in time while the viewer watches from a more or less fixed location. In other words the viewer views the film from a fixed position i.e. in front of the screen.

5. Which event should unfold in how much time is pre decided in a DVN. Progression of the narrative is due to an automated process that moves the film further in time. The viewer has limited control over the time one can spend viewing each event of the narrative in a DVN. The control is only limited to rewind or forward. In other words the viewer has no control over the pace of the film; it is fixed, constant, precisely measured and determined by the creator. Although experiments involving 'interactive cinema'⁴⁶ have been tried where the audience take an active role in the unfolding of the plot, but it has been limited to determining the direction in which the story moves.
6. The spectator has no say in the order the events of the film unfold. The sequence in which the events unfold is set. The viewer has no choice but to wait and watch how the story progresses. Sometimes the whole narrative goes back to the start point and begins to unfold again from a different point of view like in the movie 'Run Lola Run'. The flashbacks, flashforward's etc, happen only in 'narrative time' as far as real time is concerned it has progressed in a linear fashion.
7. The time of contemplation exits but is cut short as the visuals in a DVN change frequently. This just about gives the viewer the chance to update oneself on the progression of the plot. Being preoccupied with this though; the contemplation time is something that a viewer snatches whenever possible while the DVN is in progress.
8. Perception of movement results from the physical change of visuals over time. An important characteristic that distinguishes the DVN and makes it stand apart from the SVN is its ability to incorporate sound. Having looked at the DVN let us now turn our attention to the IVN.

▪ **Interactive visual narrative (IVN)**

Rapid technological advances in the 20th century led to the evolution of yet another type of VN. As with the SVN and DVN, Interactive Visual Narratives (IVNs) are those, which fulfil three conditions –

- That it is essentially visual in nature.
- Has a narrative aspect to it.
- Involves interaction from the viewer.

Thus, IVNs are a distinct category from interactive stories that could be only text based or oral narrative based. The IVN began with the invention of the virtual space and navigation systems to access it. Beginning with the humble 2D animation of events as the viewer clicks a button to move ahead, IVN has now moved into the world of augmented reality where the viewer becomes part of the story. Here, we find a combination of characteristic of the DVN and the SVN. While in the DVN the visual is present to move at a given speed in a predefined manner; in the SVN the visual lacks mobile capacity. In the IVN, one can experience the SVN which has dormant dynamic capability that can be activated on the intervention of the viewer. Thus, the IVN can behave like the SVN or the DVN or can be composed with features of both SVN and DVN as designed by the creator. Additionally, like the DVN the IVN has the ability to incorporate sound and movement in virtual story space. Let us take a look at the characteristic features of the IVN.

1. Although the IVN essentially unfolds across time as it is to be viewed through the medium of a screen, it has the possibility of being designed as a SVN and thus unfolding in space as well. For example, the IVN can be paused by the viewer in order to view the visual that can be designed as a SVN.
2. The visual in an IVN can be designed to behave like an SVN at sometimes and the DVN at others. For example, one event of the story may be rendered as an SVN and another as a DVN.
3. In an IVN the viewer in some cases may need to know the story beforehand. It is also possible for the viewer not to have an understanding of the story as the viewer explores the plot as she moves on.
4. The IVN has the mixed possibility of
 - Being frozen in time while the viewer moves,
 - Moving in time while the viewer watches from a more or less fixed location and also
 - Moving with the viewer (as the case when the viewer plays the role of a character). The distinguishing feature of the IVN is the possibility of the viewer to interact with the visual. There is a whole range of IVN's that exist today that has various levels of viewer interaction. On one end of the spectrum is the IVN where the viewer interaction is limited to moving from one event to another and on the other end is the total story experience where the viewer enters into the story world as a character and navigates through the plot.
5. As the progression of the narrative is due to viewer intervention, the viewer makes a choice with regards to the pace of the unfolding of the story.
6. With regards to the order of unfolding of the story there are three possibilities that can occur –
 - If the IVN appears like an SVN, then the viewer is free to make a choice in arranging the sequence of events
 - If the IVN is presented in the DVN form then the viewer has no say in the order of appearance of the event and
 - The IVN can also allow the viewer to make a choice of the order in which the events of the story unfold.
7. The time of contemplation varies in the IVN. Sometimes the viewer can mull over a part of the visual for as long as one desires, at other times the viewer may have to act fast.
8. The perception of movement in an IVN can be caused by the participation of the viewer (if the IVN is designed as an SVN) or the changing of visuals (if the IVN is designed as a DVN). Additionally, the perception of movement can be actual if the viewer is part of the story. The launch of the application for the Apple iPad – an interactive book called 'Alice in Wonderland for the iPad' earlier this year is a pointer towards the direction in which the future of VN is shaping. Atomic Antelope embellished the pages with interactive, Monty Pythonesque animations that move when you touch or tilt the iPad (Dahliquist). The USP of the application of the laws of physics and gravity to the characters of the story opens new avenues of thought. Another feature to take note of is the possibility of experiencing the story differently every time one goes through it. With the advancement in technology IVN can transform the whole visual narrative experience. In conclusion we present a table

marking the distinguishing characters of the SVN, DVN and IVN.

Conclusion

As human beings we have found a novel way of telling stories by illustrating those using visuals. We do this with a motive of communicating to an audience; explaining what, how, where, and in what manner the event took place. We employ the help of VNs to do this. The technique of illustrating stories has existed and continues to exist today. There is a large body of work that primarily deals with research on visual stories. These have been carried out and investigated in isolation by scholars under various headings such as comics, narrative art, animation, films etc. As we have proved through this paper that the fields mentioned above fundamentally have a common characteristic; in that they all narrate stories using visuals. We have thus established the need to acknowledge this feature and recognize the VN as a distinct category. It is therefore essential to segregate, distinguish and define 'Visual Narratives (VN)' as a sub category within the vast domain of Visual Studies. We propose VN be established as a distinguished field of study under the domain of Visual Studies. Furthermore, VNs can be expressed using moving images or a fixed image and in recent times with an advancement of technology a combination of both the moving and fixed types. To these we assign the terms Static Visual Narratives (SVN), Dynamic Visual Narratives (DVN) and Interactive Visual Narratives (IVN) respectively based on the obvious difference with respect to the temporal aspect and viewer interaction. Comics, animation, history paintings are types of VNs. A visual that tells a story on a static medium (wood, metal, canvas, books, walls, objects etc) is a SVN. As the film or animation expounds the story employing rapidly changing images; the film is a DVN. Interactive storytelling sites, and interactive games with a narrative aspect are examples of the IVN. These sub types operate as further categories under the umbrella of VNs. Defining VN and its sub types and providing a systematic categorization of VNs marks it as a specialized area of work. Doing so establishes the VN as a distinct entity and provides scope for structural analysis. This in turn helps students of VNs identify where their research area fits; and shows them similar areas of studies where they can interact and share their findings, furthering the interest of the domain. The system proposed in this paper aims at bringing together isolated areas of work that can help understand the varied aspects of VNs. In addition, it opens up new areas of research for the student of VN.

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