

Understanding experiences in photography exhibitions for Interaction Designers

Kshitiz Anand

School of Informatics

Indiana University

kshanand@indiana.edu

+1 812 272 7555

ABSTRACT

As Interaction Designers, two of the most important things that one needs to consider are the experience and also the audience being designed for. The presentation of the cultural expression is dependent on the presentation style and a thorough understanding of the audience. This paper aims at giving a close phenomenological understanding of a highly successful photography exhibition by India's most renowned photographer, Raghu Rai. In the later part of the paper, from these points and an overall experience point of view, it is aimed to generate points for a framework for its application in Interaction Design.

Author Keywords

Phenomenology, experience, exhibition, photography, interpretation, culture

ACM Classification Keywords

H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

INTRODUCTION

Interaction Design as a discipline is evolving everyday. One is constantly seeking an answer to the question, "How do the things become meaningful to people?" While there have been multiple ways to get an answer to it, there are primarily two approaches that have been attempted widely in the context of HCI. They are the structuralism approach [1] that basically looks into the meaning of things in itself and the phenomenological approach [6], which looks into how the meaning is interpreted by the individual. The structuralism approach hence can be said to be a function of the signs, the signifiers and the general meaning, which is a result of a social construct. On the other hand the phenomenological approach, which is a function of the

individual and personal sense making and the individual's experience. The structuralism approach also calls for a high objective content and aims to find the meanings that are widely accepted by a larger group. Phenomenology on the other hand seeks out for the more subjective understandings and the individual's interpretations on the expression.

Interaction Design and HCI are constantly seeking for analogies from the established fields like the computer science, the cognitive sciences, and other disciplines like sociology, anthropology, critical theory and philosophy. There has also been considerable efforts in trying to get an understanding from film theory and looking at experiences in film.

Any cultural expression like the film, paintings, photography, which involves the study of visual elements, can be understood at different levels. In the field of Interaction Design of late, the focus has been on minimalistic designs that focus a lot on aesthetics and visual representation. This happens to be one of the key aspects of what is seen in the age of Web2.0. It therefore becomes important to get an analysis of the information visually as well. All these above said mediums involve the working of the eye and the brain in a way that is not present in other mediums like literature. From an ontological perspective, these things are the same to all unless a meaning is made individually. The way the light enters the eye when making the impression of the artifact might be the same for most individuals, but the way it is interpreted in the brains of individuals differ. Hence the notion of the subjectivity comes in. Also, there is not only a denotative meanings (what one sees) but also connotative meanings [3] that are associated with the cultural expression. One can analyze the photographs using the semiotics of photography, identifying the signifiers, and what it means in the different cultural contexts. Film theory and film criticism has been doing this for years and has established itself. A key figure in that is the French semiotician, Christian Metz, who in his book "*Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*" outlines the semiotics of the film language in great detail [16]. Film critic like Kickasola in his book "*Films of Krzysztof Kieslowski*" has tried to give close readings of the works of noted filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski [13]. Interaction Design itself can seek out to

Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. To copy otherwise, or republish, to post on servers or to redistribute to lists, requires prior specific permission and/or a fee.

CHI 2008, April 5–10, 2008, Florence, Italy.

Copyright 2008 ACM 978-1-60558-011-1/08/04...\$5.00

learning a lot from these established visual disciplines. Visual Culture thus can be said to be a legitimate way of understanding Interaction Design.

Photography and the cinema are discoveries that satisfy, once and for all and in its very essence, our obsession with realism. However, there are some differences in analyzing photographs and in the way the film critic does for a film. The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. [4] The photographs are a representative of time and the events are not unfolding real time. The notion of the temporal framework and the sequence of events are absent. The challenge becomes even more because more often than not, one has to understand what has happened in an event that has occurred at some time in the past. Andre Bazin in his essay titled "*The Ontology of the Photographic Image*" [4] talks about how with the advent of the photographic art, the artist was now in a position to create the illusion of three-dimensional space within which things appeared to exist as our eyes in reality. But since this had only solved the problem of the form and not the movement, there was stillroom for the fourth dimension to be brought it. This was fulfilled with the advent of the film, which encountered for the dimension of time. However there happened to be a discussion going around the aesthetics and the psychological. In other way, this was between true realism (which was being captured by the early photographers), the need that is to give significant expression to the world both concretely and in its essence, and the pseudorealism (which the paintings had sought out to do as well at a later stage) of a deception aimed at fooling the eye (or for that matter the mind); a pseudorealism content in other words with illusory appearances. [4] Film allowed for this pseudorealism to play out to a large extent. This concept of looking at the psychological aspects of the expression becomes an important tool for the interaction designers too.

Photography exhibitions on the other hand are highly subjective. It is therefore more likely that any critical accounts of such exhibitions are phenomenological in nature. There is always the vision of a photographer that is being conveyed. And more often that not there is a mismatch between the intent of the photographer and the intent with which the viewer interprets it. There is also the element of time that comes into the picture when doing an analysis of the exhibition.

The exhibitions are a representative of the horizons [8] in which the photographer has lived and is living. The photographic objects i.e. the individual frames are a testimony to the life as experienced by the photographer. Baxandall in his essay "*Fifteenth Century Italy: a 'church-going business man with a taste for dancing'*" talks about the three concepts in which the horizons of individuals are likely to differ and hence their interpretations would differ

[2]. Firstly, it is the understanding of the convention. This is to know that the image (a photograph in this case) has been made with a purpose of representing something. Secondly, the individual must have certain personal interpretive skills, and thirdly that these skills are gathered over a period of time which is part of the repertoire of interpretations. This also holds true for anyone trying to understand photographs and its experience in an exhibition.

This paper aims to use these above phenomenological functions and the framework by Baxandall [2] to look at the general and the particular evidences. It is desired to present a close reading of a particularly highly successful photography exhibition and later analyze how it can be extended to Interaction Design. The evidences would be used to generate a phenomenological framework for Interaction Designers to use, which is a result of analyzing photography exhibitions. It is hoped that the framework will act as an easy reference to interaction designers who are looking for enhancing experiences in the artifacts that they are creating.

BACKGROUND

Raghu Rai is one of India's leading documentary photographers. He specializes in extensive coverage of his native country, India, the subject of most of his magazine reportages, books and exhibitions. Rai has won many national and international awards for his work, including the Padmashree - one of India's highest civilian awards ever given to a photographer - and Photographer of the Year in the United States for the story Human Management of Wildlife in India published in National Geographic. He has also been a member of the jury for World Press Photo. He has served on the team of Magnum Photographers (founded by H C Bresson and a few others, it is perhaps the best known organization for Photojournalism), on which Henri Cartier Bresson himself nominated him. In the last 18 years, Rai has specialized in extensive coverage of India. He has produced more than 18 books [18].

Raghu Rai is best known for his capturing of images of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy for which he also won the numerous Photo Awards, and the life of Indira Gandhi and Mother Teresa. These were in true photojournalism style and a great exemplar for realism in Indian Photography history. Starting November 2006, this India's best-known photographer exhibited the exhibition titled "*Just By the Way: Rocks, Clouds and Nudes*". I happened to visit the exhibition when it was on display in Bangalore, India. The exhibition has traveled across the country after that.

His previous exhibitions were not like this one. The previous ones captured the essence of the life as the common man sees it. This new exhibition displayed the more artistic side of the artist. What was special about this particular exhibition was the fact that Rai was showcasing something that he had shot almost twenty years ago. More importantly he was showcasing frames on artistic nudes. The point of analysis is that a photographer of his stature

had to wait for so long to exhibit the shots of nudes that he had taken. He was showcasing the shots, which was making a statement about his artistic side and a long way away from the kind of images he is known for.

THE CLAIMS

The huge success of this particular exhibition, gives an indication of the acceptance of nudity in art amongst the rather conservative society that it was exhibited in. It is also considered due to the expanse of the audience. There are many factors that are responsible for this change in the society. In this paper, the idea is to present a phenomenological understanding of the exhibition.

MOTIVATION

One would ask, why this is important. Being able to present works online and also in the physical space, to a larger audience is a skill that every Interaction Designer must have. I have always felt the need to present my works well and have often visited exhibitions on this premise. By getting a deep understanding of how photographers go about thinking and presenting their works in the form of an exhibition, I think I would be in a better position to present my designs. A well “designed” exhibition /presentation can go a long way in proper audience engagement and hence a better experience. As an artist/ designer who would be doing exhibitions in the future and also doing designs for other artists, it is extremely important to understand the audience who are going to be "interacting" with the exhibits and the success depends on that. These interactions with the artifacts can happen at the physical level within the space, or at the visual and cognitive level.

EVIDENCES AND PHENOMENOLOGY

When analyzing any cultural expression it is equally important to identify both the general and the particular evidences. The general allows one to get a better understanding of the artifact from a broader perspective. Issues like the placement of the cultural expression within the context of the life-worlds and the horizons is looked into. Understanding the general evidences also helps in establishing the cultural context of the expression in time. It also gives a better understanding from the artist/designer’s historical placement of the artifact in the larger ecology. The particular evidences allow for the proper detailed level understanding of the expression.

Phenomenology aims to uncover the relationship between the objects of consciousness – the objects of intentionality. There are different ways of doing a phenomenological understanding of things. Husserl’s ‘*Transcendental Phenomenology*’ [11] looked into it as a method for exploring the nature of the human experience and perception. Heidegger’s ‘*Hermeneutic Phenomenology*’ [9] rejected the mentalistic attitude as propagated by Husserl, which focused only on the cognitive and mental phenomena of experiences. His theory of phenomenology hence also into how one encountered and interpreted the world around

them. This aspect of phenomenology; has been used in HCI, by Winnograd and Flores. Alfred Schutz’s phenomenology [19] took Max Weber’s notion of sociology as the starting point and suggested that the interpretations were constructed not only individually, but also as from social interactions. With this, the issue of ‘*intersubjectivity*’, was brought within the framework of the phenomenological understandings that aimed at providing a commonly agreed upon interpretation of an expression. The origin of this intersubjectivity was said be the Husserl’s notion of the ‘*lebenswelt*’ (lifeworlds). Merleau-Ponty [15] looked into the questions of phenomenology and existentialism and the political implications of these positions. He thus dealt a lot with the “*phenomenology of perceptions*”. The above is also discussed in detail by Dourish in his book “*Where the action is*” [7].

For this analysis, it seems that the Heidegger’s notion of phenomenology is most suited. This is so because we are not only concerned with how the photographer experienced himself and his cognitive understanding, but also how the photographer experienced the world around him. Our analysis thus is not only limited to understanding the photographs and how the photographer thought about it. We are also interested in the embodied interactions [7] that the photographer had while taking the photographs, and the embodied interactions that I as a viewer had while visiting the exhibition.

THE GENERAL EVIDENCES

There are certain general evidences that one can analyze in relation to the state of the Indian Art and the artists. This would particular one can look into the acceptance of photography as a true art form in the present day context. It also allows to gives a better understanding of the socio-economic situations that existed in the country at the different times.

State of Indian Art

The emergence of contemporary Indian artists like Raghu Rai, M F Hussain, Tyeb Mehta, and Subodh Gupta, who have made their presence felt in the world stage, has exposed Indian Art to a wider audience. Their works are now exhibited in galleries across the world including Europe and the Americas. An example of this is the 1971 painting by M F Hussain titled “Ganga-Yamuna” was sold for a record \$1.6 million at an auction in New York City. This allows for the artists to be aware of the markets that they can target with their arts.

Globalization and Economic Status

Globalization and the thriving Indian economy has led to an emergent affluent middle class and the price people are willing to pay for art these days is gone higher. As a result the sale of art by Indian photographers / painters has proliferated over the years. Earlier, the response from the buyers to photography as an art in particular was lukewarm. Today, selling a photograph for Rs 500,000 (approx

10,000\$) inside India is perfectly fine and this was something, which was not heard of commonly in the past. This is a sign of the changing taste of the audience.

The Role of publicity

Media coverage has also played a big role in the success of artists. The coverage received by the photographers and their exhibitions are conducive and it motivates the artists further. When the photographs were first clicked, the publicity was limited to the newspapers and announcement on radio. The advent of newer mediums like the satellite television, multiple news and entertainment channels and the freedom of the press, has also been responsible for the promotion of art in the Indian society.

The Internet Revolution

The influence of the Internet revolution has had a huge impact in the creation of the audience for such exhibitions. This is so different than a few years back. This has exposed the public to more forms of art and as a consequence, accepting and acknowledging different forms of art. It is within a very short time that information is disseminated across boundaries today. The advent of features like RSS feeds, the blogging micro blogging sites, has made information more readily available to the audience. The expanse of the internet onto personal devices like the mobiles and other PDAs, have made information literally available at the fingertips in its truest sense. The success of online forums, the discussion groups has made interacting with another person not being limited to the presence in the physical sense.

Intersubjectivity

Interactions between people from different areas of the country and from diverse backgrounds, is happening like never before. As mentioned this is happening physically as well as virtually. Turkle mentions in an article that the internet today links millions of people in new spaces and is thus changing the way we look at communities [20]. With this notion of intersubjectivity in the case of audience for art appreciation in India is blossomed to an extent, which would have been unthinkable a few years ago. The IT industry has played a major role in bringing about this change. The influx of people into the Indian Silicon Valley located at Bangalore and other cities like Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Gurgaon has resulted in a wider, more knowledgeable, well read and richer audience. Exposure of Indian professionals to different parts of the world, on onsite work duties has led to the changes in the life-worlds and the inter-subjectivity of people amongst the audience. Travel has become cheaper and with more connectivity within the different areas of the country, the travel of art has also flourished.

Exposure to art and exhibitions

Exhibitions are all about the experiences. These experiences that are created by the different expressions tied in a temporal framework [21]. It deals with the issues like

intentionality, consciousness, qualia (What it is like to have an experience) [5,17] and first person perspective about the art. With the growing number of art galleries across the country, the audiences are being exposed to art from different parts of the country and world. This has led to exhibitions in fine art, nudes, and in various other forms.

These above mentioned points were not the case when the photographs were taken some twenty-five years. These give a better understanding of the socio economic conditions that exists in the society today.

THE PARTICULAR

The particular evidences give a more close reading of the artifact. Here they are taken from the exhibition as a whole and the individual frames too.

Title of the exhibition

The very first thing that is striking is the title of the exhibition. The exhibition is boldly titled "*Just By the Way: Rocks, Clouds and Nudes*", gives an impression of the philosophy that the ace photographer has followed. Not often one goes to see the word nude being used openly, by an Indian Photographer in the title of their exhibition. We are looking at his phenomenological understanding of his philosophy in photography and his understanding of art and life. As mentioned earlier, one generally associated his style of photography with realism and photojournalism. His photographs are an insightful journey into the mysteries of human life and nature.

The title also signifies the candid nature of the shots. The photographs were taken without any premeditation, in passing and communicate some of that dynamic nature in the total lack of self-consciousness of the subjects.

Timing of the exhibition

In order to understand the timing of the exhibit, it is necessary to understand the socio-economic conditions in India firstly at the time the pictures were clicked (discussed above), and secondly at the time when the pictures are exhibited. When the pictures were clicked (1970s and 1980s mostly, and some from the 1990s). India at this stage was not influenced by the globalization buzz. In the 1980s, the growth of the middle class was reflected in the increased consumption of consumer durables, such as televisions, refrigerators, motorcycles, and automobiles. Not a very large population had the need of urge to invest in art. In the early 1990s, domestic and foreign businesses hoped to take advantage of India's economic liberalization to increase the range of consumer products offered to this market. There was a constant surge to invest in life luxuries like a television and a motorcycle. During this time, a considerable progress was made owing to the loosening government regulations, especially in the area of foreign trade. Many restrictions on private companies were lifted, and new areas were opened to private capital. These factors could also be responsible for the increase in the outspread of Indian art.

The frames used in the exhibition

The exhibition comprises of a rare collection of Raghu Rai's works. A set of 40 plus photographs spanning across 20 years of his works are the proofs of his journey towards the ultimate experience called "darshan".

Since this exhibition was not only composed of nude arts, it makes the understanding more interesting. The selection of the photographs is done to give the viewer the content that is rich enough for self-discovery. The story that was told in this exhibition by the photographer and the story that was interpreted by the audience is an interesting point of discussion. An audience would come to the exhibition with a pre-conceived notion about the artist. By making the title of the exhibition very explicit, the photographer has allowed for the removal of *a priori* [12] information that the viewer might have for the photographer.

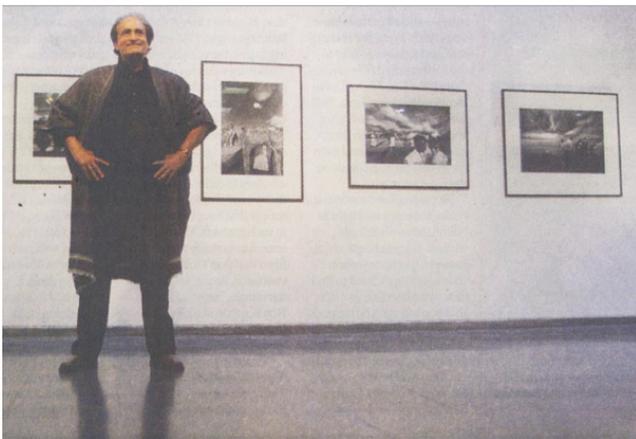


Figure 1. Raghu Rai, posing in front of his exhibition.

Needless to say, the shots selection is impressive. There is a good mix of landscapes (a man with his flute against the backdrop of the ocean.), of artistic nudes and also nature (the *sadhu* meditating against the rock and clouds formation). The shots are sensuous to its core, but at the same time bring about in itself a sense of mystery. With this set of images of the nude, Rai makes a statement that nudity celebrates shyness. What is striking is that in spite of having the wide choice of shots to select from, it is noteworthy to mention that many of these shots were taken close to twenty years ago and never been exhibited before. For Rai, nudity is sacred and not titillating.

The photographer has used the notion of 'Creative Tension' with finesse. A lot of people from the visitors who visited the exhibition were still not very comfortable with the viewing of nudity in art, in a public gallery. With the popularity of the photographer enough to gather crowds to the exhibition, the photographer could afford to take this risk of exhibiting something different.

Some shots (like the child clinging to the mother's breast, the lotus shaped formation of the female body on her dress) are also in the true essence of Raghu Rai. It is

photojournalistic, at the same time fine artist. Being able to pull of a stunning show with such finesse is something that only a person with the stature of Rai can do. So even though the theme of the exhibition is something different, Rai, has tried unconsciously bringing in the use of his realism for which he is so famous. Historically photography has always aimed to be an imitation as closely possible of the outside world. Moreover in his style, most of his previous shots have fallen this convention. However, with the use of artistic nudes in his gallery this time, the photographer is not only doing away with that notion of realism, but also putting forward a statement of strong purpose, which is that of a more acceptable place for the nudes in photography in the Indian art scene.

Understanding the Audience

The photographer has tried to get an understanding of the different kinds of audiences that would be coming to the exhibition. Thus there are some frames that would please the enthusiast viewer, the ones who are just eager to view the exhibition. Then there is the other group of viewer who is the professional. This category would comprise of the photographers who are interested in the frames beyond what is represented. They would understand the representation techniques, the nuisances of photography and also the exhibition presentation styles. The last category is the consumer and likely the photographers and the buyers of photographic arts. This would also comprise of the different art critics and the collectors of art.

Audience engagement

The activities that the people performed in the exhibition ranged from staring at the cultural expression in awe and wonder to a feeling of being connected. The surprise that the viewer is presented in their initial engagement with the frames with took some time to set in with them. The choice of the subjects in the frames made the exhibition engaging to its core. Every frame in the exhibition had a story to tell. Thus the embodied interactions [7] that the visitors were having in that space based on their pre-conceived notions, and their knowledge about art would change accordingly. These embodied interactions are also dependent on the time spent and the actions that the viewer performs while at the exhibition.

The fact that the photographs are not direct and has some mystery associated with it; by not showing the subject's face compels the viewers to think phenomenologically about the subjects. This allowed for an active prolonged engagement of the viewer with the art being displayed [10]. At this stage the viewer is in a state of cognitive conflict. The viewer is forced to make the choice between viewing the work as erotic, a means of entertainment versus the fine art and a portrayal of an artistic vision developed over years, that has been fine-tuned over a wide gamut of subjects. The viewers are made to think and bring in their own interpretations of the photographer and of the photographs. And in most of the cases the viewers comes

out of the exhibition viewing the exhibition just the way the photographer had intended.

Shot Composition

Raghu Rai, says, "I never had the courage to show these photographs, which were clicked more than two decades ago." [r] He finally seemed to have the 'guts' to come out of the closer with some special photos. As mentioned the compositions of the photographs are not very obvious. Of the central point of talking about this exhibition, the display of the nudes, Rai says, "A female body is the most exciting, erotic and almost mystical thing that nature has created." [r] The subjects of the photographs happened to be very dear friends and those who understood creativity and valued it. This could also throw light upon the larger picture of the availability of models for such assignments in the time the pictures were clicked.

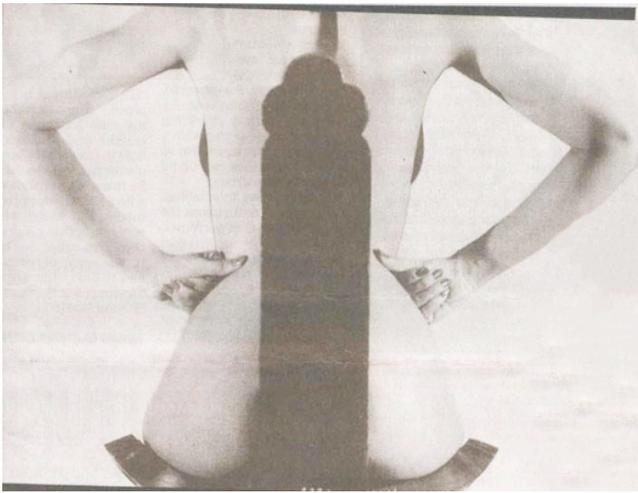


Figure 1. Woman on chair, part of the artistic nudes series

The placement of the elements, the props used to support the central character, the location of the window, makes every frame in the exhibition look perfect. The nudes were shot in an indoor setting, within a home, as opposed to a professional studio or outdoor setting with artificial lights of the contemporary artists. On nude photography, Rai goes on to say that they are definitely "not a normal, easy and relaxed thing, only those who value art can appreciate it." One viewer mentioned how he had to really think hard and look at the picture for a long time to connect with the title, which said a female nude.



In the land of the *Kamasutra* and the renowned *Ajanta*, *Ellora caves* and *Khajuraho* temples, which are full of sculpture from the *Kamasutra*, it is rather surprising to know that Rai had to wait for 20 long years have the guts to bring out his this collection. One would have expected that the society would be ready to accept the art the day it was created, but it was not so. Socio-cultural significances prohibited him from doing so. Sex and eroticism is something that is not discussed at all in the common terms and any one doing so, was considered a taboo. However with a highly reputed artist like Raghu Rai coming out of his shell and taking this bold step, it is a phenomenal, gigantic step towards the goal where these topics are discussed freely.

A cultural association

Intentionality is culturally situated. Rai has cleverly, used elements that are very obvious of the Indian culture. By doing so he has kept in mind the audience that he is presenting the exhibition to. So the usage of Indian fabric, the Hindu gods, the interiors of Indian homes, the signifiers to showcase Indian-ness, is interesting to observe. In his abstract about the exhibition he mentions how he is seeking to bring out the Indian women and not just any female form.

This stress is in particular is striking as it throws light upon many aspects of the Indian women like being shy, being opposed to a public display of affection, the staying indoors and a conservative nature. He has done this brilliantly with the form of the subjects and also the strikingly simple yet complex compositions. The viewer is bound to look beyond the denotative and look into the connotative meanings that the elements and the photograph overall convey. The absence of the face in the frames also showed the state of the Indian women at that time, wherein they were not too open about being in the limelight and most definitely not in any form that could be said to be controversial in the social setting.

Exhibit Size, Order and arrangement in space

The individual units of analysis for the experience here is the individual photographs. The size of the exhibits are huge and almost poster size. The extreme close-ups of the body, give a close to real life feel of the exhibit. One can understand that the photographer here wants the viewer to feel connected with the subjects in the exhibit at a personal level. Also being poster size, the target audience that the photographer is mainly viewing at is the consumer. Generally not many exhibits are sold off exhibitions in India, so the presence of the extreme large size prints adds to the value of the exhibition. The photographer, who currently is in his mid sixties, does not need to prove anybody of his stature. It is thus understood that he is aware that there would be visitors from this category who will be visiting.

“Just by the Way: Rocks Clouds and Nudes” is not just about the nudes but also about the other frames. In particular the phallic shaped rocks and cottony clouds hovering over the Buddhist *gompas* in Ladakh are of significance. There seems to be a certain amount of magic in them as well. While it is essential for any person exhibiting their art works to have the proper experiential qualities, in order to support the flow of the audience, Rai has used the different categories of photographs precisely to break this flow.

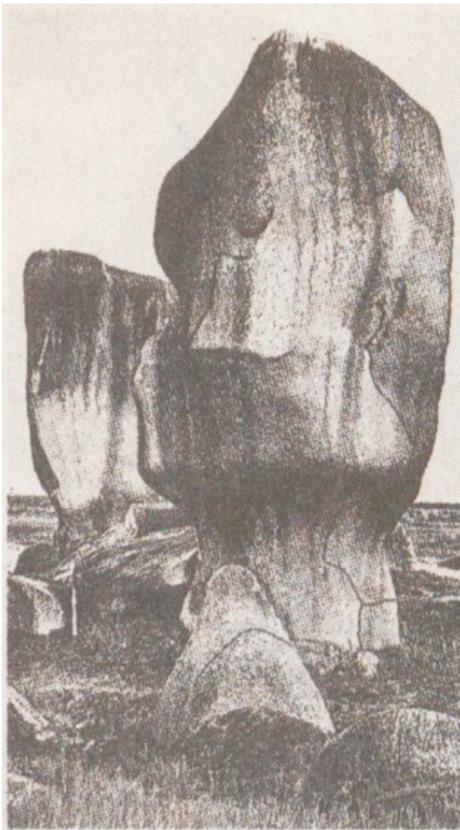


Figure 3. Photograph of Phallic Rock Formation in the exhibition.

This notion of breakdown [14] used in the placement of the photographic frames and the control of the visitor movement is done very creatively. The disturbances resulting in the break of the flow, by viewing an image of another category after the viewer has gone through viewing one category allows for the viewer to

At a higher level and viewer is compelled to attempt to make the connection between the three different categories of the exhibition. These different categories, the rocks, the nudes and the clouds at the essence level all come together at the form. In the end these categories all tie in together to some form and more precisely the organic forms in nature. The photographer wants the viewer to make this connection. Whether many are able to make this connection or not, is not clear, but I was able to relate it to.

Representation Style

The usage of black and white theme in the exhibition adds a more realistic touch to it, but at a finer level makes the viewer understand the essence of the subjects and the photographs overall. Adding the color could prove to be distracting to the viewer. Rai admits that his color photographs would sell for a higher amount than the black and whites. By using black and white medium the photographer is consciously making the effort to compel the viewer to look beyond the obvious.



Figure 1. A visitor making his way in the exhibition

The high contrasts in the frames (in particular the shots of the nudes) of the photograph are also a connotation to many things in relation to the socio-economic state of the society. On one level it is a signifier to the hypocrisy that prevails in the Indian community today. In the ancient past these things were easily accepted. Today people crave for such art for sure, and they do accept and relish upon when presented. But this does not happen openly. Quite a few times exhibitions like these in the past have been faced with fanaticism, from activists who see it as a dent to the Indian culture. This has often led to the premature closure of the exhibitions and a severe criticism in the media. On the other level, it is also a contrast or rather an opener to the

dual side of us as human beings. On one side we tend to see the obvious and what is the real. On the other side one is made to see what's beyond and not obvious.

The fact that the audience has not been exposed to many such exhibitions were obvious in the feedbacks that were seen in the guest books and by blogs and reports in the media.

POINTS OF ANALYSIS IN CONTEXT OF INTERACTION DESIGN

Since the understanding of an exhibition is not from a traditional interaction design point of view, what can Interaction designers look for when visiting any exhibitions? And what makes a photography exhibition different in particular. The questions that the above account has sought to answer are how a proper phenomenological understanding of the exhibition makes the interaction designer better equipped to handle such situations.

The other questions that one can discuss upon are like, what are the situations in which such a kind of methodology of critical analysis would be beneficial? How does the methodology used here to phenomenologically and critically analyze an exhibition play out in analyzing digital interactions in Interaction Design? One can look into whether we can do it and more basically should we do it?

Notion of Embodied Interactions

Here we have looked at looking at the inhabited interactions (inside the exhibition) on one hand and the disconnected observations and control on the other, it is hence at the center of the embodied interaction proposal. [7] Embodied Interaction is the creation, manipulation and sharing of meaning through engaged interactions with the artifacts. This notion has been used in HCI before as well and its usage in the account of this exhibition can give another application of it.

Knowing the ways of Knowing of Things

A thorough understanding between the Ontological and the Epistemological approach (example of the phenomenological approach used here) to the analyzing of the expression (the photographs and the exhibition) becomes important. The interaction designers need to understand these multiple variables, which are responsible for the proper and thorough understanding of the expression. Only then will the interaction designers be able to create design that have high experience quotient in them.

Aesthetical understanding

As discussed earlier as well, aesthetics these days play a huge role in the impact that the design makes on the consumers. This notion can be studied well from photography (as discussed here) and other visual domains. This would also contain the representation style that the interaction designer needs to follow when considering

presenting their designs to a group that could comprise of various kinds of individuals.

Understanding Social Standings

Understanding social settings not only gives a better understanding for the existing users, but also how the design will be understood in the larger context of the society. This becomes extremely important in understanding the different stakeholders in the project.

Intentionality

This notion of intentionality by the designer to decide what they intend to design, and what they want the users to interact becomes essential. This was seen here in the way the intention of the photographer was tried to match the intention of the visitor.

Audience Engagement

With the proper selection of the individual expressions (like the photographs) the interaction designers can look towards the creation of a better wholesome experience. Also trying to analyze the different kinds of audience becomes important. It would be negligence on the part of the designer to not look into the flow that the audience is undergoing through.

While the physical aspect of audience engagement would be application only for interaction designers, within this the framework of digital interaction its about the engagement within the screen real estate. The flexibility of audience engagement would not be, as much here as compare to a physical exhibition, and hence it becomes more of a challenging task.

Notion of Taking Risk

Just like the photographer had the guts to take the risk, in introducing something completely different in his exhibition, an Interaction Designer should also understand how and when that could be done. A higher reputation of the interaction designer could allow them to take the risk and get away with it, but a novice designer starting out in their career, needs to think twice before attempting it.

CONCLUSION

Feelings and sensibility cannot be rationally expressed in words. It can only be experienced.

Any exhibition of this kind, not only expanded the horizons for what can be exhibited in the Indian market today, but also helped in understanding what goes on in a photographer's mind and his intentionality. Hence the movement to shift the authority of the experience from the museum, to the visitor is important.

The experience of an exhibition is primarily phenomenological and my understanding of it would be totally different as compared to someone else. The analysis of a photography exhibition as opposed to a film gives the extra dimension of time to analyze a frame, as the events

are not unfolding real-time. This results in a more phenomenological understanding of the various aspects that I have touched upon.

As mentioned earlier, to a large extent, the levels of interaction that are evident are more on a visual and cognitive level unlike an interaction with a website where there is more digital interactivity and of a physical product where there is physical interactions. Any artistic or designerly creation in general left in a space is open for interpretation. These interpretations are to be reinforced by the feedback from the viewers and what they have to say about it, their interpretations and how closely they are able to relate to what the photographer intended to in the first place. This implies that a thorough close understanding of any design, art can be highly beneficial.

With this I hope to have my interpretation of the exhibition and how as an artist visiting another artist's exhibition re-inforce the things that are in my lifeworlds and the way I think about it. It is hoped that Interaction Designers can learn a lot by the analysis of experiences of photography exhibitions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Jeffery Bardzell, for the truly enlightening semester and the other students enrolled in the class. The discussions on the blogs and in the class were of a real high value and the proved critical in the proper understanding of the concepts and theories.

REFERENCES

1. Andersen , P Bøgh; What Semiotics can and cannot do for HCI, University of Aalborg , Denmark, 2001
2. Barnard, M; Interpretation and the Individual, in Approaches to understanding Visual Culture, 2001, Page 43, Palgrave, 2001
3. Barnard, M; Denotation and Connotation, in Approaches to understanding Visual Culture, 2001, Page 149, Palgrave, 2001
4. Bazin A;Gray H; The Ontology of the Photographic Image, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4. (Summer, 1960), pp. 4-9.
5. Block, N; QUALIA: What it is like to have an experience, New York University
6. Critchfield M; Towards a phenomenology of human-computer interaction, University of Pittsburgh , 1984
7. Dourish P, "Being in the world: embodied Interactions in "Where the Action Is", Pages 100-101, MIT Press, 2004
8. Gadamer, Hans-Georg in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/gadamer/>
9. Heidegger M, A short Biography, <http://mythosandlogos.com/heidegger.html>
- 10.Humphrey T, Introduction: The introduction to Active Prolonged Engagement, (APE), Pages 1-3
- 11.Husserl Edmund in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/>
- 12.Kant, I; Kant's Critique of Metaphysics, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-metaphysics/>
- 13.Kickasola J, Films of Krzysztof Kieslowski, Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 2004
- 14.Koschmann Timothy; Kuutti Kari; Hickman Larry, The Concept of Breakdown in Heidegger, Leont'ev, and Dewey and Its Implications for Education
- 15.Merleau-Ponty Maurice in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/merleau-ponty/>
- 16.Metz, C; Taylor M; Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema, University of Chicago Press, 1991
- 17.Qualia, in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qualia/>
- 18.Rai Raghu, Biography at Magnum Photos, http://www.magnumphotos.com/Archive/C.aspx?VP=XSspecific_MAG.Biography_VPage&AID=2K7O3R13300E1
- 19.Schutz, Alfred, in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schutz/>
- 20.Turkle, S; "Who Am We", Life on the Screen, Simon & Schuster, 1995
- 21.Turner VW, Bruner EM; The Anthropology of Experience- University of Illinois Press, 1986