Media Arts Glossary

Analogue: Formats, materials, and media that are continuous (as opposed to digital ones, which are discrete), also considered traditional materials, such as film, paint or clay.

Animation: Photographic and illustration technique of sequencing a series of images in quick succession in order to create the illusion of continuous action; combination of discrete frames to produce continuity.

Appropriation: The use of found and otherwise pre-existing source material in the formation of new contexts and works, which seek to reveal new meanings and relationships regarding source (particular relevance as a form of cultural criticism, production, and participation, especially in respect to the "sharing economy" of the information age. Also relevant in relation to copyright and intellectual property).

Aspect Ratio: The ratio of the width to height of an image or screen, especially in unit of pixels.

Assemblage: Multi-media process of creation in which materials, sources, and tools, both digital and analogue, 2D and 3D, are combined with attention to exchangeability, context shifts, and formal rhythms (related to collage, remix, and found material).

Attention: Principle of directing perception through sensory and conceptual impact.

Balance: Principle of the equitable and/or dynamic distribution of items in a media arts composition or structure for aesthetic meaning, as in a visual frame, or within game architecture.

Capture: To generate original source material (often from analogue to digital form) through use a device, such as a camera, scanner, or audio recorder.

Code: Programming language that is legible and executable by a computer.

Collaboration: Working, producing, acting with others in the realization of artworks, in the interest of connecting the various instincts, skillsets, and experiments of others.

Color Space: Digital notational framework for the organization and reproducibility of color representations (i.e., RGB—red, green blue; CMYK—cyan, magenta, yellow, black).

Collage: A composition of (typically 2D) elements from various existing sources that are juxtaposed and combined to create new meanings and contexts.

Components: The discrete portions and aspects of media artworks, including: elements, principles, processes, parts, assemblies, etc., such as: light, sound, space, time, shot, clip, scene, sequence, movie, narrative, lighting, cinematography, interactivity, etc., etc.

Composition: Principle of arrangement and balancing of components of a work for meaning and message.

Compression: Encoding digital information with fewer bits than its original representation (particular relevance in relation to digital file extensions, ie: jpeg files are smaller, *compressed* versions of larger—meaning more bits of information—file types, such as layered Photoshop files (psd) or high resolution tiff files, which are *lossless*).

Constraints: Limitations on what is possible, both real and perceived.

Content: Information, elements, representations, and messages that are carried by a medium (particularly relevant as separate and decipherable from materials, tools, and media).

Contrast: Principle of using the difference between items, such as elements, qualities and components, to mutually complement them.

Continuity: The maintenance of uninterrupted flow, continuous action or self-consistent detail. across the various scenes or components of a media artwork (i.e., game components, branding, movie timeline, series, etc.). Also, in regards to material, analogue media is *continuous*, as opposed to digital media, which is *discrete*.

Context: The situation surrounding the creation or experience of media artworks that influences the work, artist or audience. This can include how, where, and when media experiences take place, as well as additional internal and external factors (personal, societal, cultural, historical, physical, virtual, economic, systemic, etc.).

Convention: An established, common, or predictable rule, method, or practice within media arts production, such as the notion of a 'hero' in storytelling.

Copyright: The exclusive right to make copies, license, and otherwise exploit a produced work.

Digital identity: How one is presented, perceived and recorded online, including personal and collective information and sites, e-communications, commercial tracking, etc.

Discrete: Individual, separate, or distinct intervals or parts (i.e,: digital media is *discrete*, as opposed to analogue media, which is *continuous*).

Divergent thinking: Unique, original, uncommon, idiosyncratic ideas; thinking "outside of the box." Expanding out from a given prompt or question into diverse and various potentials, versus *converging* onto a single answer.

Design thinking: A cognitive methodology that promotes innovative problem solving through the prototyping and testing process commonly used in design.

Duration: Amount of elapsed time between two discrete events (i.e., beginning and ending).

Emphasis: Principle of giving greater compositional strength to a particular element or component in a media artwork.

Ephemeral: Lasting for a very short time (particularly relevant in relation to performance, installation, sculpture, and material choices in general).

Ethics: Moral guidelines and philosophical principles for determining appropriate behavior within media arts environments.

Exaggeration: Principle of pushing a media arts element or component into an extreme for provocation, attention, contrast, as seen in character, voice, mood, message, etc.

Experiential Design: Area of media arts wherein interactive, immersive spaces and activities are created for the user; associated with entertainment design. Also related to *mis-* or *alternative* use of materials, tools, and media, ie: experimentation as interdisciplinary and mixed-media assemblage.

Fairness: Complying with appropriate, ethical and equitable rules and guidelines.

Fair use: Permits limited use of copyrighted material without acquiring permission from the rights holders, including commentary, search engines, criticism, etc.

File Extensions: A varied set of standard suffixes that follow the name of a digital file and describe its characteristics and potential applications (ie: jpg, psd, wav, mov, mp4, doc…[HM1])

Force: Principle of energy or amplitude within an element, such as the speed and impact of a character's motion.

Found Material: As opposed to *captured*; source material that has been repurposed, recontextualized, or manipulated that has existed in a prior context.

Generative methods: Various inventive techniques for creating new ideas and models, such as brainstorming, play, open exploration, experimentation, inverting assumptions, rule- bending, etc.

Hybridization: Principle of combining two existing media forms to create new and original forms, such as merging theatre and multimedia.

Installation: An artwork or works, often ephemeral, in which various elements and/or media are combined in the realization of a finished piece within a physical space (also known as multi-channel or multi-media, and closely related to *site-specificity*).

Interactivity: A diverse range of articulating capabilities between media arts components, such as user, audience, sensory elements, etc, that allow for inputs and outputs of responsive connectivity via sensors, triggers, interfaces, etc., and may be used to obtain data, commands, or information and may relay immediate feedback, or other communications; contains unique sets of aesthetic principles.

Interdisciplinary: A creative method or practice in which various disparate disciplines, applications, platforms and skill-sets are employed in the realization of a work of art.

Juxtaposition: Placing greatly contrasting items together for effect.
A compositional method of comparison in which elements, and their contexts and effects, are meant to be considered as relational versus independent.

Legal: The legislated parameters and protocols of media arts systems, including user agreements, publicity releases, copyright, etc.

Media: Distinct in its way from the "media industry", media (and its singular, *medium*) should be understood as the various material and distributional choices available to an artist. (related to *Media Literacy*) in that media choices, combinations, and implications should be decipherable and legible).

Manage audience experience: The act of designing and forming user sensory episodes through multi-sensory captivation, such as using sequences of moving image and sound to maintain and carry the viewer's attention, or constructing thematic spaces in virtual or experiential design.

Markets: The various commercial and informational channels and forums for media artworks, such as television, radio, internet, fine arts, non-profit, communications, etc.

Media arts contexts: The diverse locations and circumstances of media arts, including its markets, networks, technologies and vocations.

Media environments: Spaces, contexts and situations where media artworks are produced and experienced, such as in theaters, production studios and online.

Media literacy: A series of communication competencies, including the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in a variety of forms, including print and non-print messages – National Association for Media Literacy Education.

Media messages: The various artistic, emotional, expressive, prosaic, commercial, utilitarian and informational communications of media artworks.

Meaning: The formulation of significance and purposefulness in media artworks.
Also related to analytical skills of Media Literacy in that material choice and the deciphering of expression mode leads to identification (or extrapolation) of artistic *intention*.

Modeling or concept modeling: Creating a digital or physical representation or sketch of an idea, usually for testing; prototyping.

Movement: Principle of motion of diverse items within media artworks.

Multimodal perception: The coordinated and synchronized integration of multiple sensory systems (vision, touch, auditory, etc.) in media artworks.

Multimedia theatre: The combination of live theatre elements and digital media (sound, projections, video, etc.) into a unified production for a live audience.

Narrative structure: The framework for a story, usually consisting of an arc of beginning, conflict and resolution.

Pace: The experience of compositional elements and principles over a finite period of time (particularly relevant in relation to sensitive construction of durational, or time-based, works).

Personal aesthetic: An individually formed, idiosyncratic style or manner of expressing oneself; an artist's "voice."

Perspective: Principle pertaining to the method of three-dimensional rendering, point-of-view, and angle of composition.

Pixel: Smallest element of digital information in the formulation of a digital image or display screen (amount of pixels, therefore, dictates image quality, visual complexity, and file size).

Pixel Space or Environment: The digital field within which pixels are organized, adjusted, manipulated or generated in the makeup of a digital image, photograph, design, or Website.

Point of view: The position from which something or someone is observed; the position of the narrator in relation to the story, as indicated by the narrator's outlook from which the events are depicted and by the attitude toward the characters.

Positioning: The principle of placement or arrangement.

Production processes: The diverse processes, procedures, or steps used to carry out the construction of a media artwork, such as prototyping, playtesting, and architecture construction in game design.

Program: A sequence of basic instructions executed in succession (particularly relevant in relation to computer coding, but also generally instructive in regards to issues of duration, ephemera, performance, composition, and orchestration).

Prototyping: Creating a testable version, sketch or model of a media artwork, such as a game, character, website, application, etc.

Relational: Considering the ways in which two or more objects, materials, spaces, contexts, or products are *in dialogue* with each other, as opposed to emphasizing their potential independent, authoritative, or separate meanings.

Representation: That which stands for something that is not present (particularly relevant in relation to image and journalistic ethics, identity politics, and media literacy in general).

Resisting closure: Delaying completion of an idea, process or production, or persistently extending the process of refinement, towards greater creative solutions or technical perfection.

Responsive use of failure: Incorporating errors towards persistent improvement of an idea, technique, process or product.

Rules: The laws, or guidelines for appropriate behavior; protocols.

Safety: Maintaining proper behavior for the welfare of self and others in handling equipment and interacting with media arts environments and groups.

Scale: A graduated range of values; both an element's perceived mass and weight in relation to others or to its environment; and, the scope of a product in relation to its audience (ie: physical presence versus conceptual impact, and/or physical location versus virtual, such as web-based, reach).

Sequence: The progressive order of events, actions, or elements in a time-based work.

Site-specificity: An artwork or works (often installation) in which its situation is an integral and irremovable element of its being; a piece in which location is intrinsic to its reception, meaning, and dialogical intention.

Soft skills: Diverse organizational and management skills, useful to employment, such as collaboration, planning, adaptability, communication, etc.

Sound: A vibration that produces auditory information.

Stylistic convention: A common, familiar, or even "formulaic" presentation form, style, technique or construct, such as the use of tension building techniques in a suspense film, for example.

Synchronous & Asynchronous Sound: In the context of sound design, sound that is specific, descriptive, and connected to visual action (*synchronous*), as opposed to *asynchronous* sound, which is ambient, environmental, or disembodied.

Systemic Communications: Socially or technologically organized and higher-order media arts communications such as networked multimedia, television formats and broadcasts, "viral" videos, social multimedia (e.g., "vine" videos), remixes, transmedia, etc.

System(s): The complex and diverse technological structures and contexts for media arts production, funding, distribution, viewing, and archiving.

Technological: The mechanical aspects and contexts of media arts production, including hardware, software, networks, code, etc.

Tone: Principle of "color", "texture" or "feel" of a media arts element or component, as for sound, lighting, mood, sequence, etc.

Transcode: To convert information from one form of coded representation to another (particularly relevant in relation to data bending, glitch art, and other forms of computer programming, design and interdisciplinary experimentation).

Transdisciplinary production: Accessing multiple disciplines during the conception and production processes of media creation, and using new connections or ideas that emerge to inform the work.

Transmedia production: Communicating a narrative and/or theme over multiple media platforms, while adapting the style and structure of each story component to the unique qualities of the platforms.

Virtual channels: Network based presentation platforms such as: Youtube, Vimeo, Deviantart, etc.

Virtual worlds: Online, digital, or synthetic environments (e.g. Minecraft, Second Life).

Vocational: The workforce aspects and contexts of media arts.

(Credit to resources in the writing of glossary: OED, Wikipedia, Malcolm Gladwell's 'Outliers' (context for "Divergence" definition, a text of cultural criticism on education and psychology), and Raymond Williams's 'Keywords' (context for "Representation" definition, a work of philosophy in which commonly used terms from culture and philosophy are given elaborated definitions and historical contexts).