Walter Benjamin

By Forrest Rucker
Time and space  Ritual  Meets beholder halfway  Exhibition
Authenticity  Individual experience  Editions  Simultaneous
Idealistic  Reactionary attitude  Materialistic  Progressive attitude

Traditional Art

Mechanical Reproduction
Traditional art is defined by Benjamin as having “aura”; “its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.”
When something becomes reproducible, it loses its aura in exchange for accessibility.
Early use of script is ritualistic.
Printed word had a time and a place.
The printing press allows secular and non-secular reading to the masses.
The camera behaves like an external set of eyes that captures a reproducible viewpoint in time and space that breaks the aura.
Film makes the impossible possible
“The audience’s identification with the actor is really an identification with the camera.”
“The film responds to the shriveling of aura with an artificial build-up of the ‘personality’ outside the studio.”
“It is inherent that in the technique of film... that everybody who witnesses its accomplishments is somewhat of an expert”