

Exploring Creative Expression in Neo-Pop Art through SCAMPER Techniques

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Abstract

This paper examines neo-pop art through the SCAMPER technique, a creative thinking method, to analyze how pop art influenced the expression of creativity and exploring the potential applications of this approach. Creativity is defined as the ability to produce something new, original, and valuable by analyzing from diverse perspectives and experimenting with novel ideas. Neo-pop art builds upon the foundations of traditional pop art while merging elements of popular culture and commerce to convey social messages, thus crafting a new visual language suited for the digital age. This study analyzes how the seven elements of the SCAMPER technique are employed in neo-pop art through the works of various artists. These elements were used to reinterpret popular imagery and express social and cultural themes in innovative ways. Neo-pop art has demonstrated how creative thinking and the SCAMPER technique can transcend conventional norms, eventually in original and impactful artistic expressions. The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of the SCAMPER technique in fostering creative thinking and suggest its broader applicability within contemporary art practices.

Keyword : creativity, creative thinking methods, scamper, Neo Pop Art

1. Introduction

Advancements in technology have significantly improved human comfort; however, traditional values face potential erosion, and human agency in various domains is increasingly threatened by digitalization. Among these advancements, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a force that replicates and often surpasses human capabilities, progressing so rapidly that it challenges traditional paradigms [1].

Creativity, defined as the capacity to produce novel and valuable outcomes without relying on fixed patterns or pre-existing information, remains an essential and uniquely human capability. This ability holds growing importance across many fields, particularly in the arts, where creative thought represents a core competency. Artistic works frequently showcase originality and innovation, necessitating an examination of the sources of these ideas and the cognitive processes that develop and express them [2].

This study applies the SCAMPER framework to neo-pop art to examine its potential for enhancing

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creativity and broadening artistic expression. By analyzing neo-pop art within the SCAMPER framework, the study explores how this method contributes to the evolution of a genre shaped by consumer culture and a sophisticated artistic approach. The findings emphasize the value of SCAMPER techniques in expanding creative possibilities and call for further research in this area.

2. Conceptual Foundations

2.1 Defining Creativity and the SCAMPER Framework

Creativity is characteristic of the human mind, which means the basic will of humans to make from the ‘nothing’ to the ‘being’, from the ‘invisible’, from the ‘uncertain’ to the ‘obvious’, and the ability to create new symbols and ideas, the ability to express phenomena that can become commonplace, the ability to rearrange solid or virtual organizations into new organizations, and the ability to ideally integrate multiple new ideas [3]. Looking at the characteristics of the concept of creativity, it is characterized by breaking existing stereotypes and creating something useful by discovering, connecting, and combining new ideas or concepts.

[Table 1] SCAMPER Checklist

Elements		Questions
S	Substitute	What could you substitute? What might you do instead? What would do as well or better?
C	Combine	What could you combine? What might work well together? What could be brought together?
A	Adapt	What could be adjusted to suit a purpose or condition? How could you make it fit?
M	Modify Magnify Minify	What would happen if you changed form or quality? Could you make it larger, greater, or stronger? Could you make it smaller, lighter, or slower?
P	Put to other uses	How could you use it for a different purpose? What are some new ways to apply it? What does it suggest?
E	Eliminate	What would you subtract or take away? What could you do without?
R	Reverse	What would you have if you reversed it? Could you change the parts, order, layout, or sequence?

Creative thinking serves as a critical tool not only for addressing everyday challenges but also for advancing specialized fields such as science, technology, art, and design. Creativity encompasses both the generation of ideas and their practical application [4]. Techniques designed to foster creativity fall into categories based on principles of idea generation, ideation types, and processes [5].

The SCAMPER technique, developed from Alex F. Osborn's brainstorming framework and refined by Bob Eberle, consists of seven actionable prompts: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, and Reverse. These prompts guide creative problem-solving and inspire the exploration of innovative possibilities. As shown in [Table 1], it provides a summary of the SCAMPER checklist, which serves as a practical tool for structured ideation. This study applies the SCAMPER framework to neo-pop art to demonstrate its usefulness in advancing creativity and uncovering new artistic possibilities.

2.2 Neo Pop Art: Origins, Characteristics, and Cultural Significance

Neo-pop art emerged in the late 1980s as an evolution of pop art, incorporating contemporary cultural and technological influences. The genre builds on the foundations of 1960s pop art, which blended social critique with artistic innovation. The term 'neo-pop' combines neo (new or recent) with pop. It reflects the movement's relationship to both innovation and popular culture [6].

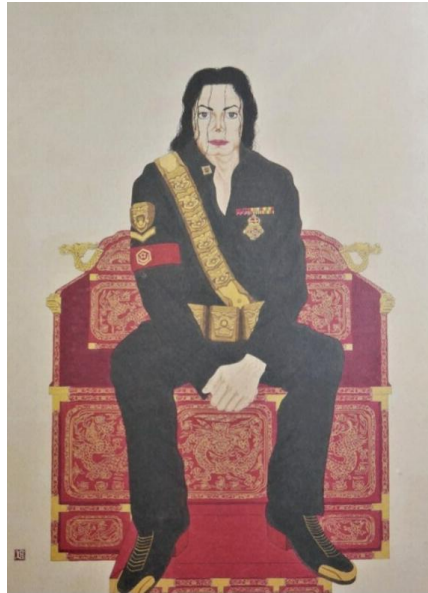
Although often associated with pop art, neo-pop represents a distinct genre shaped by postmodernism. It appropriates imagery from popular culture, including cartoons, celebrities, trademarks, and symbols, and reinterprets these elements within sophisticated artistic frameworks [7]. Neo-pop art transforms cultural icons and symbols into tangible forms through paintings and sculptures. While retaining the irony, humor, and critique of its predecessor, neo-pop art emphasizes bold colors, unique expressions, and the integration of commercial elements. This combination allows neo-pop art to connect with the public and establish itself as a prominent artistic movement with significant commercial success.

3. Applying SCAMPER Techniques in Neo-Pop Art

3.1 Substitution in Neo-Pop Art

Son Donghyun, who created a Western character through oriental painting, is drawing attention in the art world, where the crisis of oriental painting is discussed. Contrary to popular speculation that oriental painting will deal with the noble mental world while sticking to the traditional production method, contemporary pop culture icons are 'substituted' in his work. As shown in [Fig. 1], it depicts a portrait

of Michael Jackson, who dominated the popular culture of pop, sitting in the king's chair in the likely field of a portrait of a king or a masterpiece of the Joseon Dynasty [8]. This approach juxtaposes historical and contemporary elements while offering fresh and engaging perspectives. It transcends time and space and is strange, but fresh and interesting. Not only Michael Jackson, but also heroes loved by the public, such as Batman, Superman, and Shrek, expressed in the same way.



[Fig. 1] Portrait of the king

3.2 Creative Fusion

As shown in [Fig. 2], the work of Lee Dong-gi of Korea, who reinterprets various image information and critically, reveals the sentiment and culture of the times through it [9]. One of his masterpieces, Atomaus, a representative Japanese cartoon character, and Disney's Mickey Mouse, a symbol of American comics, are exquisitely 'combined'. He created this character after being inspired by cartoon images he repeatedly encountered on TV and print media during the artist's childhood. Atomaus reflects a period when Korean culture was heavily influenced by Japan and the United States, and this character of unknown nationality is an image born naturally in the artist's life, and it also has the meaning of satirizing the situation in Korea by revealing a sharp punch to society. This fusion reflects the influence of Japanese and American pop culture on Korean society while offering a satirical commentary on cultural identity.



[Fig. 2] Lee dongi's Atomaus-Glitter

3.3 Adaptation in Art

Kenny Scharf is known for establishing the heyday of pop art as a legend of pop art and a pioneer of street art. He worked with Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring in East Village in the 1980s. Scharf's works often create 'super-pop', which combines sci-fi cartoons, characters, and messages from consumer society, presenting magical art that transforms everyday life from a huge visual culture into a world of fantasy. He created unique alien creatures by borrowing from the contents of the Flinston and Jetson families, which were representative science fiction cartoons in the United States, and their melting-like forms, combined with their colorful colors and unique humor, have become dynamic symbols that show new problems in reality.



[Fig. 3] Kenny Scharf's Dragon serpents adore Korea!

He laid the foundation for street art by leaving graffiti on the streets of famous cities around the world, including New York, and is still active regardless of genres such as painting, sculpture, performance, and graffiti. He created the names 'pop surrealism' and 'super-pop'. Kenny Scharf adapts sci-fi and cartoon motifs to create surreal, fantastical landscapes. By incorporating alien creatures into traditional Taegeuk patterns, Scharf bridges cultural and temporal divides, exploring modern themes through artistic adaptation as shown in [Fig. 3] [10].

3.4 Modification as a tool

Romero Britto is a world-renowned artist from Brazil who conveys messages of love and hope with everyday and popular themes, and is the founder of neo-pop Cubism, which has built an original style under the influence of Picasso's Cubism and Matisse's intense colors. With the motif of familiar objects around us, such as family, cats, fish, and heart shapes, Brito looks at the object from multiple perspectives rather than from a single viewpoint, and puts the three-dimensional real world into a two-dimensional world and 'modifies' it in his own style. As in [Fig. 4], the screen is divided using dark thick lines, vivid colors are added to each area, and a cheerful and energetic feeling is conveyed by using straight lines, curves, figures, and letters [11].



[Fig. 4] Romero Britto's Hyde Park Pyramid

3.5 Repurposing Imagery

Illustrators who draw characters, starting with Yoshitomo Nara, have appeared in the contemporary art world. Starting with Nara's work, it received a great response from enthusiasts who believed in animation

and cartoons, and accepted the character as a painting fresh. Japanese pop culture is full of cute and lovely items in the character industry, and popular culture such as cartoons and animations is attracting attention, and 'Kawaii code culture' has become a keyword symbolizing popular culture. [Fig. 5] transitions from the emotion of the fixed image by expressing a villainous girl character with an evil and eerie atmosphere by 'Put to other use' instead of the existing smiling and lovely girl image, creating a strange and confusing shock [12]. Yoshitomo Nara repurposes kawaii aesthetics by presenting characters with unsettling expressions in order to subvert traditional perceptions of innocence and creating emotional depth in his work.



[Fig. 5] Yoshitomo Nara's Dead Flower

3.6 Elimination

Julian Opie, from London, England, expresses the daily lives of modern people who are familiar to their contemporary times, and as if reflecting modern society, he portrays modern urban people walking, running, alone, or dancing with a missing face reflecting anonymity in a cheerful and flat color motif. The characters in the work of [Fig. 6] catch the eye in a dynamic shape, but they have no facial expressions or simple facial expressions by 'eliminating' the features that can be called a portrait of collectivity as a general urban person [13]. There seems to be no intention to convey a special message using ordinary and ordinary materials, but it contains quite a lot of information. Julian's work seems simple, but he goes through a quite complex process of selecting characters from thousands of photos, meticulously calculating, combining, and injecting movement elements. Based on the simplification of facial and body details, he is expanding the world of his work to paintings, LED installations, and sculptures.

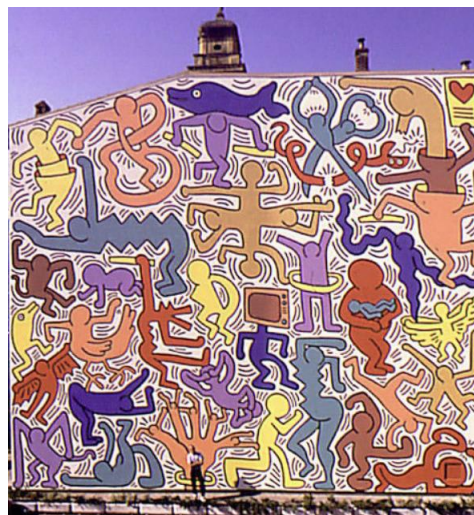
Julian Opie employs elimination to emphasize anonymity and minimalism in his depictions of modern urban life. By omitting facial details, his works invite viewers to project their imagination while reflecting collective experiences.



[Fig. 6] Julian Opie's Crowds

3.7 Reversal and Rearrangement

Inspired by the style of graffiti on New York's street walls and subway platforms, Keith Haring, a leading pop artist in New York, established his own unique style by drawing cartoonish figures using thick black outlines and lines circulating around individuals on a simple background.



[Fig. 7] Keith Haring's Pisa Mural

In particular, the characters in the painting contain a strong social message that goes beyond simple graffiti, and the short lines and simplified black outlines that make it look like it is moving, served as a means to effectively convey the narrative. As shown in [Fig. 7], the work is a mural of the Church of Antonio in Pisa, Italy, which illustrates Haring's characteristics well [14]. It is expressed in a fun and enjoyable way, with the heavy atmosphere of the church and 'reversed'. Dolphins, TV-shaped people or characters that often appear in the painting are 'rearranged' and depicted as if dancing in a dynamic form full of the wall. This technique of reversal and rearrangement brings the painting to life, and revealed Haring's narrative more effectively.

4. Discussion

This paper examines the creative expression and imagination of neo-pop artworks through the application of Bob Eberle's SCAMPER technique, a method designed to generate creative ideas. By analyzing neo-pop artworks using the seven questions of the SCAMPER technique, the study highlights the evolving nature of creativity within neo-pop art.

Neo-pop art has shifted its focus toward the individuality and creative ideas of the artist and prioritized the generation of innovative concepts through creative thinking rather than the mere ability to translate mental images into tangible forms during the visualization process [15]. Reflecting the culture and technology of the digital age, neo-pop art conveys social messages through original modes of expression. It establishes a new visual language that resonates with the public in a contemporary way, fostering communication and expanding into a significant cultural industry. As a result, neo-pop art has emerged as an influential artistic trend, broadening the boundaries of artistic expression by encouraging artists to transcend conventional thinking and approach their work from fresh perspectives.

The study demonstrates that the SCAMPER technique serves as a valuable tool for enhancing creativity and exploring new artistic possibilities. Its application in neo-pop artworks has clarified the sources of creative thinking and provided a systematic framework for diffused, innovative thought processes in contemporary art. Furthermore, the SCAMPER technique's methods of expression have been shown to play a critical role in fostering the development of creative thinking and artistic expression. This study reaffirms the potential of the SCAMPER technique as a key resource in the artistic process, contributing to the growth and innovation of contemporary art practices.

While the SCAMPER technique is a powerful tool for fostering creativity, it is not without its

limitations [16]. In certain cases, the structured nature of the framework may inadvertently constrain creativity rather than inspire it. For example, artists who rely heavily on intuitive or organic processes might feel restricted by the predefined questions of the SCAMPER method, potentially leading to a rigid or formulaic approach to creative exploration. Additionally, the technique's emphasis on systematic thinking may not resonate with all artists, particularly those who thrive in unstructured or experimental environments. As such, while SCAMPER offers valuable guidance, it is essential to approach its application flexibly, ensuring that it complements rather than overrides an artist's natural creative instincts.

5. Conclusion

With the advancement of advanced technology and AI technology in the digital age, humanity is leading a more comfortable life, but the abilities and areas that humans can do can be threatened by digitalization [17]. The recent emergence of artificial intelligence's visualization ability has developed to a considerable level, and artists who use it as their works are also actively active. In this context, it is questionable whether the production subject is replaced by artificial intelligence, but in the case of creativity, artificial intelligence, which is expressed only when ideas are introduced and combined or produced based on algorithms, cannot change the paradigm and is still a common opinion among experts that there are limitations. Therefore, it is worth exploring how the SCAMPER technique might intersect with emerging technologies in art creation. AI tools are increasingly being integrated into creative processes while offering new ways to generate, manipulate, and visualize artistic concepts. The structured approach of SCAMPER could provide a framework for guiding AI-driven creativity, helping artists and developers harness AI's potential while maintaining a focus on intentionality and originality [18]. For instance, SCAMPER could inform the design of AI algorithms that simulate creative thinking, enabling more dynamic collaboration between human artists and machines. This intersection not only expands the applicability of SCAMPER but also highlights its relevance in shaping the future of art in a technology-driven era.

In a modern society where the understanding of art is expanding and complex concepts are increasingly demanded, the SCAMPER technique holds significant potential for application across various artistic fields. Its use is anticipated to further advance creative expression and foster greater imagination, and eventually it will open new pathways for artistic innovation and development.

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