

Skill, Technique and Belief

In 2010 a South Korean figure skater Kim Yuna (김연아) performed her famous “007 Routine” at the Vancouver Winter Olympics and took home a gold medal. The elegance and simplicity of the routine clearly demonstrated her skill executed with technical perfection, leaving it unforgettable. Her performance was the most breathtaking art on ice. But, in general terms, how does an artist successfully apply her *technique* to her *skill*, and where does ‘emotion’ reside?

Let’s individually look into skill, technique, and emotion. Skill, whether the artist was naturally born with it (i.e. natural talent) or acquired through practice, is something that one possesses or gets to possess. In short, *skill is an artist’s possession*. When the artist begins to critically approach her skill, wonderful thing emerges – the artist starts to develop her technique and begins to have control over her skill (i.e. the artist finds her own ways to direct her skill). *In short, technique is an artist’s methodology*. And it is when the artist re-cognizes her medium as her *belief*, she can finally begin to apply her technique to her skill. To believe is to rely on truth only, but no one can tell one how to believe and what believing is. Belief does not operate by reason or logic; when an artist questions her medium and/or herself, the artist is in disbelief; belief is conviction without a cause; belief is the absolute and the original motivation – it is the single motivation for all motivations of any action.

What about emotion in art? *Emotion is a reaction*. When we experience true art (or better said, art that is truthful; art that is made by a believer) we are fully concentrated in it, and the emotion comes after as a reaction (but emotion does not have to come). Emotional manifestation is very prevalent in temporal art such as film and theatre in which a work of art has a beginning and an end. It is because filmmakers and theatre-makers so often rely on dramaturgy (or most often times drama is all they are conscious of) in order to “keep it going”. Drama is introduced to temporal arts in order to “serve the audience,” to entertain the audience with *conflict* and how it is dealt. But when the artist “serves the audience,” her art becomes a lie since “serving the audience” means that the artist is not fully manifesting her vision. In such case, the artist has a lot of questions regarding her artistic medium and herself because she has to “devise an emotional plan” to give the audience what they want – an emotional stirring (or as Chinese would say, 感动). When I was watching Kim Yuna’s performance live on TV with my family, we were silent in complete concentration, and it was after she had perfectly executed her skills using her technique through her belief that my family members, including myself, was moved to tears. *Emotion is a reaction while during the experience of truth, all is concentration*¹.

A truthful art is that made by an artist who believes in her medium, in turn flawlessly executing her skill and technique. A truthful art is made from a *state of mind* that puts the audience in a *state of mind*. Note that it is a *state of mind* and not “mind” (*state of mind* is not psychological, and not emotional. Rather it is that very state that contains our “minds”) that we experience in truth and ultimately drives us to action. *State of mind* is only visited by believing – loving unconditionally.

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¹ There are genius artists such as Lars von Trier who would purposely make their art emotional in order to meticulously promote, and humor, their own technique.