



Surreal Virtual Spaces Created in Cinema with Metaverse. Avatar: The Way of Water

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Abstract

The metaverse was first expressed in Neal Stephenson's science fantasy novel "Snowcrash" as the idea of a three-dimensional virtual world, in which both visual and social content are designed by the inhabitants themselves. Metaverse, which means the other universe, is presented as a three-dimensional graphic virtual world in the computer environment in Stephenson's novel. Cinema has started to use this technology in the design of spaces by quickly integrating with the metaverse technology. In this context, the surreal understanding of art, which manifests itself in the art of painting, has also taken its place in the space designs in the cinema with the technological developments in the film industry. In this study, the definition of intersemiotics is used to express the transactions such as space and theme between paintings and films in the art universe. The concept of intertextuality, which indicates the exchange between at least two literary texts, expresses the transactions of an art discipline with other art disciplines in the recent period, with the adaptation of the concept of intertextuality to other art branches. When the concept is adapted to cinema, the comparative processes of cinema with other art disciplines are evaluated in the context of intersemiotics. In this context, the re-creation of the fictional space of the thought created by virtual reality together with the surreal movement in the cinema is evaluated through the film "Avatar: The Way of Water".

Keywords

Metaverse; Surreal Art; Cinema; Virtual Film; Virtual Space; Fiction; Avatar The Way of Water; Inter-semiotics; Painting



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Сюрреалистичные виртуальные пространства, созданные в кино с помощью Метавселенных. Аватар: Путь воды

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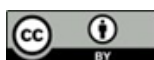
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Аннотация

Метавселенная впервые была выражена в научно-фантастическом романе Нила Стивенсона «Снегопад» как идея трехмерного виртуального мира, в котором как визуальное, так и социальное содержание создается самими обитателями. Метавселенная, что означает «другая вселенная», представлена в романе Стивенсона как трехмерный графический виртуальный мир в компьютерной среде. Кинотеатр начал использовать эту технологию в дизайне пространств, быстро интегрируясь с технологией метавселенной. В этом контексте сюрреалистическое понимание искусства, которое проявляется в искусстве живописи, также заняло свое место в пространственных проектах в кино с технологическими разработками в киноиндустрии. В этом исследовании определение интерсемиотики используется для выражения транзакций, таких как пространство и тема, между картинами и фильмами во вселенной искусства. Понятие интертекстуальности, которое используется для обозначения обмена по крайней мере между двумя литературными текстами, используется для выражения транзакций художественной дисциплины с другими художественными дисциплинами в недавний период с адаптацией понятия интертекстуальности к другим художественным отраслям. Когда концепция адаптирована к кинематографу, процессы сравнения кино с другими художественными дисциплинами оцениваются в контексте интерсемиотики. В этом контексте воссоздание вымышленного пространства мысли, созданного виртуальной реальностью, вместе с сюрреалистическим движением в кино оценивается через фильм «Аватар: путь воды».

Ключевые слова

метавселенная; сюрреалистическое искусство; кино; виртуальное кино; виртуальное пространство; художественная литература; Аватар: Путь Воды; интерсемиотика; живопись



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Introduction

In the 1990s, the internet became part of people's lives along with computers. In the 2000s, it facilitated interpersonal communication, and with the increasing use of mobile devices in the 2010s, it enhanced both mobility and interaction (Lee, 2021, p. 72). New technologies and the digitalized world also shape the way they experience life (Çakın, 2022, p. 118). As a result of the development of technology, the metaverse universe has also emerged and its applications have become increasingly diverse. The stages the metaverse universe will reach, the possibilities or drawbacks it will provide or create, are still a mystery within itself. However, successful studies have been conducted in the field of spatial construction in cinema, particularly utilizing visual elements created in the metaverse universe to support surreal narratives in film.

The metaverse, besides offering new realms of reality, meaning, and collaboration opportunities, also provides infrastructure and interaction possibilities for cultural, intellectual, and economic production. In this context, the metaverse presents a cybersocial dimension where different advanced technologies are used simultaneously and integrated. Cinema, which quickly integrates technological advancements, utilizes metaverse technologies to construct its own visual narratives. Particularly in films with a fantastical narrative, metaverse spaces are created.

Metaverse places draw inspiration from surreal art movements when creating virtual spaces in films. One of the influential factors in the emergence of surrealism as an art movement is Sigmund Freud's research and methods that explain subconscious issues and dreams. According to Freud's psychoanalytic method, a person's hidden desires and thoughts that cannot reach the conscious level are concealed in the subconscious. This hidden realm can only be accessed through dreams, hypnosis, or semi-dream states (Freud, 2008). Dreams, which provide surrealists with an infinite source and a realm of freedom, have guided artists. In cinema, these dreams have been used as a foundation for creating their own fantastical narratives.

The article focuses on the concepts of metaverse and surreal art and explores the relationship between the spaces in surreal art movement and the virtual spaces created through the metaverse. In this context, the film "Avatar: The Way of Water", which was released in 2022 and achieved high viewership, is selected as an example, and examined for its visuals designed as surreal spaces in the metaverse universe. The analysis is attempted within the framework of the concept of intervisuality, which is a reinterpretation of intertextuality specifically tailored for visual arts, for the visual examination of painting and cinema.

Metaverse in Conceptual Framework

The term "Metaverse" was first used by science fiction writer Neal Stephenson in his dystopian novel "Snow Crash" published in 1992. In the novel, Metaverse describes the characters' escape from reality (Bendifallah & Djerrari, 2022, p. 11).



However, in a different context, Ernest Cline redefined it as “Oasis” in his later novel “Ready Player One”, which was also adapted into a film by Steven Spielberg (Webrazzi, 2021). The term “Metaverse” is derived from the combination of “meta” (beyond) and “universe”, and it represents a concept that goes beyond commerce and entertainment, allowing the creation of virtual communities. It refers to a new generation of the Internet, encompassing a three-dimensional virtual space where users can interact through their avatars. It has been described as the “digital big bang” in cyberspace (Kuş, 2021, p. 247).

The Metaverse is built on blockchain technology, providing a structure where all owned or created items have unique, non-replicable, and non-fungible characteristics. Similar to artworks, blockchain technology ensures distinctiveness for each product. Digital products created in the Metaverse environment possess the uniqueness of being one of a kind. Metaverse utilizing cryptocurrencies offers an environment where everything is bought and sold using different cryptocurrencies (Laeq, 2022). The Metaverse is an expanding universe with assets, services, and content created by professionals and users every day. Many industries, including technology, entertainment, fashion, and education, are investing in the Metaverse, attracting globally renowned brands. Meta stands as one of the largest investors in the Metaverse (Bostancı & Uncu, 2022, p. 63).

The Metaverse also provides a space for interacting with virtual objects in the real world. This space, representing the beyond through virtual boundlessness, enables real-time interaction between virtual and physical environments (Reedsmith, 2021, p. 5). Although it is a digital realm that seemingly controls people, the concept of the Metaverse is ultimately created by human hands and is also recognized as a three-dimensional virtual world (Ayiter, 2012, p. 1). The realism of the Metaverse world is achieved through the user’s psychological and emotional interaction with the environment. The user’s ability to influence the environment and the nature of their actions towards their avatar are significant factors in the believability of that environment (Srushti, 2019, p. 5). Particularly in cinema, enhancing the believability of user-created spaces also increases the viewer’s psychological or emotional perception in the created surreal settings.

Surrealistic Art Approach

The concept of surrealism has its roots in metaphysics. Metaphysics is derived from the Greek words “meta”, meaning “beyond” or “transcendent”, and “physical”, which refers to nature and essence. The term “metaphysics” has been used for many years to describe the non-natural quality and has been associated with various meanings at different times, including Philosophy, Theology, Ontology (the study of being), and Epistemology (the study of knowledge) (Hançerlioğlu, 1993, pp. 258-259).

The twentieth century was a period of significant scientific and technological advancements, as well as social and political revolutions that upended lives. It was



a time when individualistic and collectivist ideologies emerged, bringing both hope and despair simultaneously. These contrasting emotions influenced art, blurring its boundaries, and giving rise to sociological and ontological debates. The movements of Dada and Surrealism, which emerged during this period, reflect the atmosphere of this troubled era (Yilmaz, 2005, p. 132). Surrealist artists, drawing on Freud's concept of the unconscious, incorporated the notion of the unconscious into their works from a broad perspective. In doing so, they turned their focus away from the apparent reality and towards their own subjective realities (Altuğ, 2008, p. 188-189).

Due to its aim to reflect what lies in the artist's unconscious, the surrealist art movement has led each surrealist artist to create their own style in a unique way. Therefore, surrealism does not have a single style (Vangölü, 2016, p. 873). Surrealist art displays a distinct structure compared to other art movements, allowing the expression of visible reality in a fantastical form. As a result, surrealist thinking resides in the boundaries between the realm of the psyche and reality, existing between the real and the unreal. Ultimately, this metaphor presents the reality of the external world alongside the spirituality of the inner world in an aesthetic manner.

Symbolism, which is a reflection of surrealism, is based on the idea of existing within the realm of perception of reality. Symbolism represents a new understanding that emerges from the interpretation of the external world through the artist's imagination, detached from the appearance of material reality but still connected to its essence. Surrealism, on the other hand, is defined as the convergence of two seemingly opposing states, namely, imagination and reality, in a future state of "absolute reality" or "super-reality" (Breton, 1997, p. 14). Surrealist artists embraced methods that relied on complete randomnesses, such as assemblage of found objects, frottage (rubbing technique), automatic drawing, and decalcomania, which expressed the new artistic pursuits of the 1920s without distorting form (Antmen, 2008, p. 136).

Surrealism is an approach that has its own important principles and emphasizes individualism and freedom. The surrealists' approach to the individual, in their own words, can be summarized as follows: "Everything I love, everything I think and feel, convinces me of a special philosophy of existence. Here, surrealism is directly in reality itself. It is neither above nor outside it. It includes the individual, and at the same time, it can be included by that thing, so the reverse can also be true" (Passeron, 1982, p. 36).

Surrealist art movements are evaluated as alternative tendencies in cinema, taking shape within the framework of impressionism, cubism, futurism, abstract art, expressionism, and surrealism. Initially reflected in the canvases of painters, this art movement has later been observed in various fields such as photography, architecture, and literature, making a strong impact in cinema as well.



Surreal Narrative in Cinema

The surrealist approaches that draw inspiration from the art of painting can be traced back to the early days of cinema. Although the term “Surrealism” was first coined by the French poet Guillaume Apollinaire towards the end of the Dadaist movement, it was André Breton who solidified the surrealist movement by publishing the “First Surrealist Manifesto” in 1924 (Antmen, 2014, p. 135). In the realm of cinema, the first example of the surrealist movement, which quickly found its place, is considered to be the film “La Coquille et le Clergyman” (1928).

Breton, in his book, believed that the seemingly contrasting positions of dreams and reality would merge on an absolute reality plane called surrealism (1969, p. 14). While surrealist cinema impacts emotions through reason, the emotional connection between images is also established through the mind. The fragmentation of space and time, uncanny settings, a narrative detached from unity and linearity, and an atmosphere reminiscent of dreams that reflect the subconscious are characteristic of surrealist cinema, which reflects ideological and social realities (Doğan, 2018, p. 21). In the design of a surrealist space used in film narratives, fluidity, variability, uncanniness, and spatial transitions are employed to create surprise and shock effects.

Surreal Space Approach

Breton (2009) defines Surrealism as “the process of seeking new rules to either affirm or invalidate existing values”. According to Passeron, the revolution brought about by Surrealism offers a playground for the discussion of both the visible and invisible worlds, presenting significant issues that need to be deciphered (1982, p. 25-37). Therefore, the spatial designs that stand out in Surrealism go beyond known boundaries and challenge people’s imagination. They push the limits of human imagination and creativity.

Architectures are seen as “psychological spaces” by surrealists. Therefore, the house is not an objective space; it has transitioned into a space that accommodates internal, spiritual, and individual desires. This situation makes it both personal and variable in terms of its spatial form (Foster, 2002, p. 134-172).

Each individual settles into the space where they recognize or lose themselves, and consequently, benefit from or transform it (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 64). The production of space is seen as a significant auxiliary function for the revitalization of the human spirit. In the texts of surrealist artists, there is a longing for architecture that reveals the individual’s desires and the unconscious, while perceiving modern architecture as a totalitarian practice (Gönül, 2014, p. 94). In this context, it is argued that the spaces designed by surrealists should have fluid and rounded forms rather than rigid and didactic ones (Bachelard, 2014, p. 38).



Space in the Surreal Narrative of Cinema

The process of selecting the art object and interpreting it according to the artist's intention gives rise to a perception and perceptual difference between the natural object and the art object. Due to the straightforward perception of natural objects based on their formation and existence, there are sharp differences between them and art objects. The selection, variety of perception, and existence of the art object are entirely dependent on the artist. This different understanding of reality, thus created, is seen as a reflection of the subconscious. The images seen in dreams or sometimes dreams themselves are the places where this reality is captured and brought to light (Neret, 1997, p. 44). Artists imbue seemingly ordinary and insignificant objects with new meanings, thereby creating artworks. In this process, the production aimed at seeking new meanings reflects a world different from real life. Particularly, the surrealist art movement, which began with painting and continued with photography, allows conceptual artists to employ boundless imagination when it comes to space, aided by the emergence of cinema.

With their belief in the freedom of unlimited thinking and imagination, surrealists have also had to confront the great divide between these teachings (Lynton, 2004, p. 173). Space serves as an important supporter for the medium of cinema. Surrealism can be incorporated into a film based on its subject and narrative. A film that revolves around a utopian or dystopian story would likewise take place in surreal spaces. These spaces are places that cannot be experienced in real life but can be experienced by the audience within the context of a film.

In cinema, spaces are as much a part of the game as characters and serve a function in the process of visualizing the screenplay. In some film scripts, spaces play a more prominent role than characters in conveying the story to the audience. Especially in the realm of fantasy storytelling, fictional spaces that push the boundaries of imagination are needed more than characters. Fictional spaces that cannot exist in reality create a magical atmosphere for the audience. These spaces enable the audience to approach reality from a different perspective and question their existing knowledge of space (Güleç and Çağlar, 2014). Films that imbue meaning into spaces are successful to the extent that they enable the audience to perceive and comprehend them.

The idealized views of a better world depicted in films can present different ideologies. When these views are critically deciphered, they can shed light on the ideological issues and struggles of their time (Kellner, 2011, p. 35). In the early years of cinema, directors transported surreal spaces into their films. The first example of surrealism in science fiction cinema is the 1902 film "Le Voyage Dans La Lune" by Georges Melies. The film was inspired by works such as Jules Verne's "From the Earth to the Moon", "Around the Moon", and H.G. Wells' "The First Men in the Moon". George Méliès holds a special place in the surrealist understanding of cinema due to his ability to express art visually (Çanğa, 2016, p. 55).



Since the 1970s, science fiction narratives, where surrealism has found a significant place, have emerged as a visually dominant genre in cinema. The 1977 film “Star Wars”, considered the beginning of science fiction films, has endured until today with the quality brought by advancing technology to the film industry. Ridley Scott’s “Blade Runner” stands out with its surrealistic spatial characteristics. Towards the end of the 20th century, the film industry began to explore the theme of cyberspace in science fiction cinema. The film “The Matrix” is a prominent example in this regard. The concept of the Metaverse was first introduced in science fiction films and series. Among the productions that started with the film “The Matrix” and are frequently mentioned are “Black Mirror” and “Ready Player One”. The 2022 film “Avatar: The Way of Water” is also being examined within the scope of this study due to its production in both surrealism and the Metaverse environment.

Methodology

Intersemiotics, which has its origins in Ferdinand de Saussure’s concept of the sign in his *Course in General Linguistics* and is inspired by Roman Jakobson’s concept of intersemiotics translation, aims to adapt the method of examining mutual exchanges to different art forms. In this context, the article under consideration aims to examine the exchange of spatial usage between different art forms such as cinema and picture within the framework of the intersemiotics approach.

Starting from Saussure’s definition of “language as a system of signs”, the exchange processes between different art forms such as cinema and painting are questioned under the heading of intersemiotics (Atkulum, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, in the process of examination that begins with an intertextual narrative and moves towards intersemiotics, the presentation involves blending the old with the new through intertextual methods such as imitation, quotation, and reflection.

The relationships between cinema and painting in the context of intersemiotics refer to the exchange processes between the non-verbal (painting) and audio-visual (cinema) elements. When elements from cinema or painting are present in the other discipline, the intersemiotics process begins. It is known that cinematic data is used in the field of painting (or vice versa) and that these two disciplines frequently quote each other. In the scope of this article, the film “Avatar: The Way of Water” and the surreal spaces created in the Metaverse universe within this film are being examined.

“Avatar: The Way of Water” was chosen as a purposeful sample because it attracts attention with its fantastic sci-fi and metaverse locations and has a high audience.

Avatar: The Way of Water Movie Analysis

“Avatar: The Way of Water” movie was released on December 16, 2022, and its duration is 3h 12min. Film is in the genre of science fiction, adventure, fantasy, and action.

Director: James Cameron

Scenario: James Cameron, Rick Jaffa

Film actors: Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver (Beyazperde, 2023).

The first *Avatar* film, released in 2009, is a science fiction movie that became the highest-grossing film of all time with a revenue of \$2.97 billion (BBC News Türkçe, 29.12.2022). The film featured predominantly computer-generated environments and characters and was shot in 3D using fusion camera technology. The film successfully created a sense of realism in its spatial aspects, allowing the audience to immerse themselves in a different universe. The sequel, “Avatar: The Way of Water”, draws attention with its surreal locations created within the metaverse. The main characters of the film, Jake Sully and Neytiri, have formed a family and are struggling to live together. However, the return of a previous threat disrupts the balance, forcing them to abandon their home. Jake Sully and Neytiri leave their familiar world and embark on a journey to explore different regions of Pandora. As a result, the audience gets the opportunity to experience various locations within the meta-universe created by the director.



Figure 1. Metamorphosis of Narcissus, 1937 – Salvador Dali



Among the main representatives of the Surrealism movement, notable artists include Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Frida Kahlo, Marc Chagall, Paul Eluard, Pierre Reverdy, Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, Rene Char, Benjamin Peret, and Robert Desnos. These famous artists are known for creating two-dimensional surreal spaces in their paintings, which share similar characteristics with the film environments created in the metaverse.

The work titled *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* by Spanish artist Salvador Dali was performed during the period when the artist was paranoid critical. The artist studied the myth of Narcissus from Greek mythology in his work. This myth, included in the works of many artists, was carried to a very different dimension in the hands of Salvador Dali, one of the pioneers of surrealism¹.



Figure 2. The film Avatar: The Way of Water features a created fantastical and utopian space.

Cinema, being an art form based on visual elements, has a strong interaction with the visual art of painting. Surrealist filmmakers were the ones who initially explored the subconscious spatial narratives in cinema. As technological advancements in the film industry progressed, the surreal art began to occupy more space

¹ See: <https://www.tesadernegi.org/salvador-dali-narcissusun-metamorfozu.html>

in the spatial narratives of films. Sci-Fi settings are designed by crafting scenarios where dystopian cities are created, formless and shapeless creatures invade cities, absurd objects find their place in the environments, and even acquire human-like qualities. In Dali's paintings, wide spaces resembling deserts are used to eliminate the sense of belonging, and in Image 2, there is a predominant use of open spatial composition similar to Dali's works, where an environment is designed where the film's characters do not belong.



Figure 3. Salvador Dali- Swans Reflecting Elephants 1938¹

1 See: <https://www.oggusto.com/sanat/eser-ve-muze-incelemeleri/salvador-dalinin-en-unlu-5-tablosu>



Figure 4. Avatar: The Way of Water

Salvador Dali's painting in Image 3, which is an example of double realism, carries different meanings as it was created during the period when the artist experienced paranoia. The spatial and utopian characteristics, as well as the altered features of the living beings within the space, display similar attributes in terms of visual storytelling in Image 4. In Dali's painting, metamorphic creatures with reflections in the water are seen, and similarly in the film "Avatar: The Way of Water", these creatures are visible both outside and inside the water.



Figure 5. Leonora Carrington – The Temptation of St. Anthony – 1947



Figure 6. Avatar The Way of Water, 2022- Sacred and magical tree

In 1937, the painter Max Ernst and Leonora Carrington traveled to a village in Cornwall to witness a ritual performance. There, they were greatly influenced by a



creature named Owlman, which was a hybrid of human and animal. As seen in Image 5, both artists' works later often featured legendary and fantastical creatures, dream-like narratives, and occult elements.

In Image 6, which is a visual from the film “Avatar: The Way of Water” and showcases a tree with significant functionality in the film, it evokes the works of surrealist painters with its legendary and fantastical creature form.



Figure 7. Dorothea Tanning, Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, 1943¹



Figure 8. Entertainment of the Youth in Avatar: The Way of Water

¹ See: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/tanning-eine-kleine-nachtmusik-t07346>



The painter Tanning stated that the large sunflower depicted in Image 7 symbolizes all the challenges that youth must face and overcome. These beautiful sunflowers are drawn to reference unknown forces that existed even before the birth of civilization.

The image in Image 8, taken from the movie “Avatar: The Way of Water”, shows the areas where young people in Pandora have fun and complete their development.



Figure 9. Wolfgang Paalen, La Balance – 1937¹



Figure 10. The underwater Metaverse environment in Avatar: The Way of Water film

¹ See: <https://wolfgangpaalenorg.wordpress.com/art-2/wolfgang-paalen-la-balance-1937-3/>



As seen in Image 9, after his abstract period (1930), the painter Paalen joined the Surrealist movement and designed surrealist spaces in his paintings.

In Image 10, there are abundant surreal spaces and underwater Metaverse environment designs in “Avatar: The Way of Water” film.



Figure 11. The Elephant Celebes, 1921, Max Ernst¹



Figure 12. The metal vehicle was designed as a setting in Avatar: The Way of Water film.

¹ See: <https://www.max-ernst.com/the-elephant-celebes.jsp>



The painter Ernst was deeply influenced by tanks during World War I. In Image 11, a metal hose with a bull's head and mechanical eyes, along with floating fish in the dark sky, is depicted as a disturbing dream-like scene.

In Image 12, in the visual from “Avatar: The Way of Water” film, a metal vehicle is designed as a setting, and dangerous and aggressive avatars emerge from this vehicle. Technology and metal bring danger and death, destroying nature and life.



Figure 13. Paul Delvaux – Le Vicinal – 1959¹



Figure 14. The advanced animals and utopian spaces used as vehicles by Avatar players in Avatar: The Way of Water film

1 See: <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/Le-vicinal/FFFDC5CE6760BAD2>



As seen in Image 13, Delvaux always incorporates a vehicle, especially a train, into his paintings. The creation of spaces is constructed in surrealistic paintings, similar to the levels of human existence and consciousness.

In Image 14, the characters in “Avatar: The Way of Water” film use advanced animals found in utopian spaces as means of transportation.



Figure 15. Remedios Varo, Armonia 1956¹



Figure 16. Harmony in Avatar: The Way of Water film.

1 See: https://arhive.com/es/remediosvaro/works/616279~Armona_Autorretrato_Sugerente

As seen in Image 15, Varus's works possess the ability to seize powers like no other artist can. Enchanting atmospheres and supernatural spells unleash astonishing energy charges that enter the realm of mortals.

In Image 16, as depicted in Varo's painting in "Avatar: The Way of Water" film, harmony is effectively utilized in the atmospheres of forests, underwater, and cities.



Figure 17. Max Ernst. Europe After Rain II, 1940-42: An apocalyptic landscape¹



Figure 18: The burning of Pandora in Avatar: The Way of Water film

¹ See: https://villeist.wordpress.com/2012/04/02/max-ernst-121-yasinda/yagmurdan_sonra_avrupa/



Max Ernst believes that Surrealism requires an approach where one unravels their own consciousness to guide artistic creativity (Kayapınar, 2021, p. 132). In the 17th image, Ernst creates a decaying space that burns and decays alongside humans. Metal forms in space melt and disappear. The structures rising from the ground, resembling a pile of decaying metal, contrast with the blue background, representing the surreal space created in the metaverse, along with the theme of destruction and disappearance.

In Image 18, in “Avatar: The Way of Water” film, the universe they inhabit, Pandora, is burning. In Pandora, as in the real world, war reveals extinction. This extinction is given with a Surrealist approach, as in Image 17.

Conclusion

Computer-based technological advancements have paved the way for a transformation in the field of art. New technologies provide opportunities for experiencing art and imagery in three dimensions. In this context, the enchanting atmosphere created with the metaverse offers an escape for individuals who feel confined within crowded spaces and lack a second physical environment. The metaverse has emerged as an interactive and experimental platform, expanding the boundaries of art. It also provides viewers with the chance to experience and interact with artworks in different ways. By enabling the three-dimensional experience of art and imagery, the metaverse plays a significant role in the evolution of art.

Meta universes have become a sanctuary and a new recreational space for individuals who are willing to relinquish their physical bodies but not their comfort zones. The concept of creating one's own avatar and immersing oneself in infinite virtual spaces has been pioneered by cinema. Since the early days of film production, spaces where dreams and reality coexist, have been instrumental in creating cinema's enchanting atmosphere. Cinema, with its uniqueness and appeal, often serves as a benchmark for other mediums. One such example is the film “Avatar”, which was released in 2009. The use of computer-generated environments and characters in the film, captured in three dimensions, provided a sense of realism in the spatial aspect, earning it the highest box-office revenue to date. Director James Cameron filmed the sequel to “Avatar” in 2022, titled “Avatar: The Way of Water”.

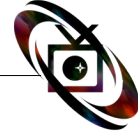
The surreal spaces created in the metaverse through computer-generated imagery in the film “Avatar: The Way of Water” are meticulously detailed, resembling paintings by renowned artists of the early 20th century who were known for their surreal works, such as Salvador Dali, Leonora Carrington, Dorothea Tanning, Wolfgang Paalen, Max Ernst, Paul Delvaux, and Remedios Varo. Similarities were identified between the two-dimensional surreal spaces in the paintings created by these artists and the film's metaverse environments. This indicates how surrealist art movements have become visible through the designs of both painters and filmmakers. With the use of technology, films like “Avatar: The Way of Water” which



feature a metaverse environment design, showcase the direction in which the film industry is heading in the future. In this context, it can be said that surreal art has always influenced cinema but has particularly stood out in the creation of spaces and characters, especially with the advancements in technology.

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