



ROCK ART IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND AESTHETICS

EL ARTE RUPESTRE EN EL CONTEXTO DEL ARTE Y DE LA ESTÉTICA CONTEMPORÁNEA

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An approach to rock art based in aesthetics is argued for. Objections to such an approach, stemming from archaeologists and anthropologists, are addressed and described in terms of their epistemological, methodological and ethical dimensions. Key objections are explained and answered by noting that they tend to be based on an outdated conception of art that precedes 20th century developments. It is argued that, once the art historical viewpoint is adjusted so that it incorporates the development of 20th and 21st century art and aesthetic theory, an approach to rock art from the perspective of aesthetics can be recognised as a valuable resource for understanding the lifeworld of its creators and the human condition that we share with them.

Key words: aesthetics, art history, rock art, art

Se propone una aproximación al arte rupestre basada en la estética. Se tratan y describen objeciones a este enfoque por parte de arqueólogos y antropólogos, en sus dimensiones epistemológicas, metodológicas y éticas. Se explican las objeciones principales y se responden, señalando que suelen estar basadas en una concepción anticuada del arte, anterior al desarrollo del siglo xx. Se sostiene que, una vez que se modifica el punto de vista de la historia del arte, incorporando el arte y la teoría estética de los siglos xx y xxi, una aproximación al arte rupestre desde una perspectiva estética puede ser reconocida como un recurso valioso para la comprensión del mundo de sus creadores y de la condición humana que compartimos con ellos.

Palabras clave: estética, historia del arte, arte rupestre, arte

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I begin by discussing some of the alleged distortions that arise when art historical accounts take an aesthetic perspective in their interpretation of rock art,¹ and follow this up with a more general review of problems that supposedly arise when humanly made marks on rocks are considered as art. I continue by pointing out that, from a post-20th century art historical perspective, a number of objections to the consideration of these marks on rocks from the aesthetic perspective can be addressed. I conclude that, despite some legitimate concerns about the application of the term 'art', there are excellent reasons for viewing these expressions from an aesthetic perspective.²

HISTORY OF ART AND ROCK ART

Art history textbooks tend to incorporate painted and engraved images from the Palaeolithic era in their accounts of the origins of world art. This approach may sometimes have led to the problematic conclusion that contemporary European peoples could bask in the greatness of such an extraordinary beginning to their artistic traditions (see Moro Abadía & González-Morales 2008: 536).

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Based on the apparent kinship of techniques exhibited by artworks made in modern times and images from the Franco-Cantabrian region, some scholars have supposed that the latter may have been created from a perspective similar to that of contemporary art. For example, Tomášková (1997: 270) claims that such a view is expressed by art history professor Sheldon Nodelman in an article entitled “The Legacy of the Caves,” published in the visual art magazine *Portfolio* (Nodelman 1979-1980: 48-55). According to Tomášková, Nodelman draws some problematic analogies between 20th century approaches to art and those expressed in prehistoric images at sites such as Altamira (Nodelman speaks of abandoning frames and pedestals, and attending to natural processes.)

In a similar vein, White (2003) refers to a standard world art history textbook (Janson 2007), arguing that the aesthetic viewpoint leads the author to mistaken conclusions about the content of the images, based on an assumed continuity between pictures from the Pleistocene and art history as it has developed from Ancient Greek times onward. As a case in point, White refers to Jansen’s interpretation of an Altamira bison image as a representation of an animal “dying in agony,” affirming that prehistorians would have quite a different understanding. Indeed, based on bison ethology and other considerations, they argue that the animal is not in agony, but rather “rolling on the ground with legs flexed, a movement common in bison behavior” (White 2003: 22).

Certainly it must be stated from the outset that art historians cannot be expected to be as well-informed as archaeologists or anthropologists when it comes to the empirical context of marks made on rocks by prehistoric or ethnically remote human groups. Furthermore, one should not expect to be able to directly apply contemporary art historical modes of interpretation to such marks, or to argue that the similarity between these images and those produced in the late 20th century give us conclusive information about their logic of production, or even hope to find evidence of a continuum between such marks on rocks and the art history of modern European peoples.

It should be noted, however, that art historians are not as careless as Tomášková’s and White’s examples imply. In fact, in his article, art historian Nodelman gives a rather respectable account of how Franco-Cantabrian art was understood by prehistorians in the late 1970s, while his reference to 20th century art practices, only introduced in the very last paragraph of his article, is proposed in an exploratory mode. As such, his work apparently is not a crass assimilation of cultural expressions

over a 14,000-year time span, but rather an appeal to readers to recognize the differences characteristics of prehistoric images, which often are non-naturalistic, non-frontal, unframed, and palimpsest-like. Moreover, newer art histories (such as Honour & Fleming 2005, among others) are attentive enough to recent research to avoid misinterpretations of the sort pointed out by White. Nonetheless, investigations of the aesthetic dimension of rock art have faced a number of other, potentially more substantial, objections, which I shall summarize below.

Key objections to rock art aesthetics

Soffer and Conkey (1997: 2) suggest that the term “art” is both misleading and limiting” with regard to prehistoric images, because of two troublesome assumptions: a) that art is a cultural phenomenon that is assumed to function in a *separate aesthetic sphere*, and b) that art is considered ‘transcendent’. Tomášková (1997: 266) similarly claims that “the term ‘art’ is inappropriate from an epistemological standpoint, but is also a hindrance to archaeological research due to the conceptual attachments that it has in fields such as art history or aesthetics.”

Specifically, Tomášková (1997: 269) complains that situating prehistoric representations in an art history context directs us to consider “motive, message, a moment in the artist’s talent, or the (timeless) response that any piece may evoke in its viewers”. In her view, for representations and other image-bearing artifacts to be “elevated to the status of art they have to be cleansed of their social and cultural context, judged only by the response that they are capable of evoking” (Tomášková 1997: 270). She concludes from these kinds of considerations that we may be misled into the reproduction of our own cultural preconceptions, reflected and transported into the prehistoric past, leading to the inappropriate division of research objects into *artworks* versus “useful products of prehistoric craft, such as stone tools” (Tomášková 1997: 269).

White (2003: 12) adds to these concerns by suggesting that “to think in terms of broad categories such as ‘rock art’ and ‘prehistoric art’ suppresses clear recognition of the remarkable cultural, historical, geographical, and environmental diversity that characterizes representation-rich human societies of the late Pleistocene.” He thinks that these representations should, rather, generally be considered in terms of the *adaptive advantage* that they may have provided, and specifically in terms of the particular “seminal ideas and practices reflected in the material record of representation” (White 2003: 12). In his estimation, viewing such representations as *art* leads us in the wrong direction, since “there is

little room in an evolutionary view for art as a divinely inspired struggle to create beautiful or novel forms” (White 2003: 13).

Even while White admits that “material representations” may help us grasp “the *technical virtuosity* involved in their creation” and the way that “adherence to shared *aesthetics and formal values* contributes to their power to link people together,” he continues by claiming that the “modern Western notion of art impedes an understanding of the emergence and adaptive value of the earliest representations in any given region” (italics added, White 2003: 17). He concludes by noting that, on the assumption that “art” is somehow a universal quality of the human psyche, “anything labeled as such seems to (misleadingly) authorize us to understand it “on the same terms (ours) wherever it is seen to exist” (White 2003: 21).³

In their comprehensive review article on Palaeolithic studies in the 21st century, Moro Abadía and González-Morales come to similar conclusions as the above authors. They devote an entire section to what they call the ‘paradigmatic’ application of “the term ‘art’ to define all images produced by *Homo sapiens* during the Palaeolithic” (Moro Abadía & González-Morales 2008: 532) and to the critiques that this has provoked. They suggest that, on the basis of “the universality of aesthetic taste or sensibility,” 19th century writers and philosophers concluded that art is “a product of a universal human faculty” (Moro Abadía & González-Morales 2008: 534), then compare this view to that of Oskar Kristeller, who argued in the 1950s that the European system of the arts really is a recent invention that was only completed in the preceding two centuries (Moro Abadía & González-Morales 2008: 535).

From Kristeller’s account and from Tatarkiewicz’ (2005 [1962-1967]) discussion of the development of the notion of art since antiquity, Moro Abadía and González-Morales (2008: 535, italics added) conclude that “the concept of art is a *historically contingent category* which emerged in the course of modernity”. The authors close their discussion with a list of concerns about the application of the concept ‘art’ to Palaeolithic images that can be summarized as follows (Moro Abadía & González-Morales 2008: 535-536):

- the non-existence of the category ‘art’ in many non-Western cultures;
- the inapplicability, in small-scale societies, of grouping artifacts according to “their non-utility and giving them special status for disinterested appreciation”;
- the anachronism of applying the concept of art to material representations, as it is “doubtful that their creators would have recognized any such idea”;

- the reductionism of “condensing all the diversity of media and imagery into a single category that is, furthermore, one of ‘our’ categories” (citing Conkey 1987: 413);
- the aestheticism inherent in the notion of art, insofar as the term “is related to an aesthetic discourse which establishes that ‘art’ is valued for the skill needed to make the object, its beauty, and its non-utility”; and,
- the ethnocentrism embedded in the belief that “it is only the Westerner’s perspective that elevates an object from [non-Western] societies to the status of ‘art.’”

To these issues we may add those arising from White’s discussion of the implications of applying the concept of art in prehistoric contexts (White 2003: 23):

- the assumption of “a discrete sphere of action called ‘art’”;
- the belief that “art is a uniquely human activity that fulfills an innate need in people to comprehend themselves and the universe”;
- the supposition that “making art requires special qualities, such as imagination and creativity, and that ‘true’ works of art are the product of individual ‘genius’”;
- that art is distinct from craft in that it embodies a unique concept;
- that art requires art-knowledgeable audiences;
- that “art may also be appreciated for its purely visual elements”; and
- that the effects of art “on the viewer are thought to be virtually universal.”

The concerns raised by these different commentators can be thought of in terms of three dimensions: 1) the *epistemological*, 2) the *methodological*, and 3) the *moral/quasi-political*. The *epistemological* objection comes down to the claim that the concept ‘art,’ as conceived, simply is inapplicable across the gulf of time and space that separates modern European cultures (often called ‘Western’) from those of other times and/or places. The *methodological* concern is that if researchers start with an inapplicable concept, this will lead to inappropriate methods and ultimately to results of doubtful value. The *moral/quasi-political* complaint is that the cross-cultural application of a concept such as ‘art,’ which has its origins in the European context and is constructed in such a way as to imply the superiority of European cultures, turns out to be a kind of ethnocentrism and ultimately constitutes cultural appropriation (see figs. 1 and 2, from Valcamonica, Italy, as examples of images for which these kinds of concerns could apply.)

All of these complaints reflect potentially reasonable concerns, though they crucially depend on *how we*



Figure 1. Warriors image, Valcamonica, Italy.
Figura 1. Imagen de guerreros, Valcamonica, Italia.



Figure 2. Grain storage image, Valcamonica, Italy.
Figura 2. Imagen de almacenamiento de granos, Valcamonica, Italia.

conceive of art and its relation to aesthetics. Curiously, it is *precisely* assumptions about art and aesthetics like those noted here that have been thrown into question by 20th century art practice, art criticism and philosophical aesthetics. As a result, at least by the 1980s, it would have been hard to find recognized artists, art critics or philosophical aestheticists in the Western world willing to subscribe to such assumptions about the concept of ‘art’ such as those mentioned above. The next section briefly considers relevant perspectives on art developed in the 20th century.

Rock art and 20th century art and art theory

To begin with, the supposition that sensorily-appreciable qualities of artworks, such as their ‘visual elements,’ produced by *superior talent*, are constitutive of art was already thrown into question at the beginning of the 20th century by interventions such as Marcel Duchamp’s. This artist offered to the artworld ‘readymades’, such as coat hangers, snow shovels, wine racks, and, most famously, a urinal that he rotated 90°, signed as R. Mutt, and baptized as *Fountain* (1917). The claim that art has *no necessary* connection with qualities perceived by the senses was later supported by well-received arguments from art philosophers (for example, Binkley 1977).

In the meantime, Duchamp’s introduction of ‘readymades’ into the artworld caused significant soul searching among theoreticians, to the point that the *essence of art* was thoroughly questioned, with some (for example, Weitz 1956) arguing that art really is *undefinable*, while others such as Danto (1964) argued that artworks cannot be identified by perceptual means but require theory. Ultimately, the notion of art that held the ground most successfully (one might say by default) was George Dickie’s Institutional Theory, which, borrowing from sociology, declared that artworks simply are those artifacts that legitimate members of the artworld designate as such (Dickie 1971).

In such a context, suppositions regarding *transcendence* and transcendent values in art necessarily vanish, as *even* a lowly piece of driftwood, duck footprints, or an industrially produced urinal might qualify as art—if only a person legitimized by the artworld, such as an artist, a curator or an art critic, undertook to ‘christen’ them as such! This new context does seem to leave the *separateness* of art intact, but *art practice*, beginning with the historical avant-garde movements that emerged before the World War I, had already undermined *this* supposition (see for example, Bürger 1984). In the wake of their demand that *art and life be integrated*, not only snow shovels, wine racks, and urinals had been moved

into the artworld, but also ambient sound (as in John Cage’s piece for performance titled *4’ 33”*, 1952), any ordinary human or even non-human activity (as demonstrated by performance art pieces, such as Vito Acconci’s *Following Piece*, 1969), human-modified environments (installations, environmental art, gardens), and even everyday speech (as in dada and surrealist poetry).

In the early 20th century the social and cultural context stopped being a mere background to the production of *bourgeois* art and moved into the foreground, as dada, Futurism and Russian Constructivism addressed the war ethos, pre-industrial nostalgia and the construction of an ideal, post-capitalist society, respectively. Art, henceforth, had to be seen as a product and a reaction to society at certain points in historical time, becoming ever more ‘contaminated’ by broader socio-cultural concerns. As such, contrary to Tómaskóva’s confident assumption, the production and appreciation of art has nothing to do with the “cleansing” of social and cultural context but, rather, with *the opposite*. Seen in terms of *‘longue durée’* history, art’s increasing responsiveness to real life conditions in human society may be seen as *adaptive*, contradicting White’s assumption that a focus on art leads us away from such considerations.

In the early 1970s, the supposition that *genius* or *talent* is required to make (great) art was subjected to scathing critique by feminist scholars such as Nochlin (1971), among others. Any one could be an artist, moreover, and anyone could appreciate art, as Joseph Beuys declared and proceeded to demonstrate through his social sculpture and social art projects of the 1960s and 1970s. From another angle, before World War II, Benjamin (1936) already had argued that the special ‘aura’ of art, presumably a referent for the “human psyche” addressed by art, had been blown apart by the mechanical reproducibility of art. According to Benjamin, art henceforth had become a tool of political action.

As the century proceeded, art increasingly became ‘conceptual,’ and ‘aesthetic taste or sensibility’ became increasingly unimportant since sensorily available qualities played less and less of a role in their appreciation. As a consequence, ordinary people would increasingly ask ‘why is this art?’, and leave art shows muttering that their children could have created the works on display. It can be added that art had already stopped being about the creation of *beauty*, at least since the dadaists had entered the fray with their collage pictures, nonsense poetry and noise machines; Kokoschka did his caricaturesque anti-Nazi paintings; and absurdist theatre left audiences wondering what the point was. One could say that the 20th century re-constructed art in such a thoroughgoing way that it ended up divorced

not only from most aesthetic values but also from aesthetic pleasure. In short, by the end of the 20th century it should have been obvious that calling the creation of images from earlier times 'art' could *not* mean what it had meant in the 19th century, when Franco-Cantabrian cave art was discovered.

Granted, the concept of art retained some resonances of its meanings in earlier periods, despite the new 20th century take on art, which rent asunder all earlier notions, leaving artworks without recognizable features; the artworld without universally recognized institutions; the category of art without a 'discrete sphere'; and the production of art disseminated to any individual or community in any culture, as long as it fit certain extremely loose 'family resemblances.' For many laypeople, the concept had not been completely purified of the sedimented meaning accumulated up to that point in time. As art historians tell us, the European art tradition has its roots in practices going back at least to the Ancient Greeks. These kinds of practices, however, are *not* unique to European peoples, since *the creation of perceptually attractive items*, be they stories, paintings, sculpture, music, or architectural constructions, *is a commonplace* that can be found in *all* societies around the world stretching back indefinitely in time, as Dissayanake (1982) has argued and others have amply documented (for example, Coote & Shelton 1992).

It is true enough that with the invention of perspective during the Renaissance in Europe, Italian painters and sculptors decided that their activity ought *not* to be counted among the *crafts* any longer. This represented a shift in the self-perception of producers of visual images, who became convinced that their creations were now akin to those categorized as poetry. These self-proclaimed visual artists reasoned that, insofar as their perspective-enhanced craft contributed to knowledge (that is, to no less than *knowledge of the structure of space!*), their activity ought to be in the same category as those listed under the '*Artes Liberales*' (*Trivium* and *Quadrivium*). As Kristeller (1979) and others pointed out, this self re-definition of Italian painters and sculptors had implications for the social status of painters and sculptors and the future value of their products, eventually leading to the celebration of the visual arts as high points of Western Culture (see also Hegel 1975 [1820]).

This change in the status of visual arts notwithstanding, most works produced by painters and sculptors in the European context during and after the Renaissance *continued* to be for utterly *practical* (utility-oriented) purposes, such as representing religious stories and producing saintly, iconic images, celebrating wartime victories, and glorifying those who could afford it with

personal portraits. Only much later in the history of European visual arts do we encounter art production that really may have been created and experienced in the mode of 'art for art's sake.' The impressionist experiments with visual perception, Fauve explorations in colour, and the works of Van Gogh, Gauguin, Kandinsky and Nolde would fall into this category. As mentioned above, by the early 20th century, in any case, the exploitation of media in the mode of 'art for art's sake'—if there ever was such a thing—quickly came into tension with the challenge of avant-garde movements and the technical reproducibility of art, which together consistently *pushed art back into life*.⁴

Re-drawing our understanding of rock 'art'

Where does all of this leave us with regard to the role of 'art' in relation to what is commonly called 'rock art'? Undoubtedly, this re-drawing of the map of art, begun in the early 20th century and continuing throughout, leaves little room for the sort of *epistemological* complaints described above. Even if 19th century conceptions of art linger on among the general public, those ways of thinking about art have become *anachronistic*.

Despite the difficulty of defining art, there seems to be a certain consensus that art, in any case, is an activity of *creation* in which we may distinguish several levels of accomplishment *of objects for appreciation*, directed at particular qualities and faculties.⁵ As such, the claim that something is art has *no* implications regarding its separateness from life, its 'transcendence,' or its lack of functionality; it assumes *no* claims of divine origin or the necessity of genius; there is *no* supposition of any universality in the approach to art or in the effect that it may have on audiences; there is *no* assumption as to the existence of discrete art 'spheres' in society or the expectation of art-knowledgeable audiences; and it adduces *no* necessary privileging of visual or other perceptual elements. In short, since the middle of the 20th century, claiming something as art no longer implies what it might have in the late 19th century, when art was made out to be a hallmark of European high and *bourgeois* society.

It follows that art activities can be understood to be, *in principle*, ubiquitous and probably have been present since the time when human beings were first able to create appreciable objects (Heyd 1999). Consequently, there is *no* problem, in principle, with claiming that humanly made marks on rocks from other times and from within other cultural frameworks may be art, even if, given our limited information, we may not be able to confirm our hypotheses with great confidence.

Similarly, the *methodological* concern that thinking of such marks on rocks as 'art' may limit one's approach seems unfounded if art does not suppose either a separate aesthetic sphere or 'transcendence.' True, we do not know if the human groups that left those manifestations on rocks had a term, or relevant concept, for what we call art, but this does not in itself mean that it is misleading or limiting to attribute the creation of artworks to them. Indeed, it is common in the social sciences, when describing human institutions and/or activities, to use concepts that may have no equivalent among those studied. For example, people from matrilineal or patrilineal societies generally do not self-identify themselves as such, but this is no reason to avoid either the term or the concept in the respective descriptions of such societies.

As noted, we should grant that we cannot confidently ascribe the status of art to marks on rocks that were produced by people from cultures other than our own when we lack sufficient information about their cultural frameworks. However, this does not mean that those manifestations cannot be profitably appreciated as art. In fact, it often may be methodologically advisable to think of humanly made marks on rocks in terms of 'art,' since doing so leads us to seriously consider the creative activity of their makers.

Finally, the *moral/quasi-political* complaint—that integrating products from other societies into our conceptual schemes as artworks may be a form of ethnocentrism and thus cultural appropriation—should be taken seriously if the concept of art a) were truly dependent on a regional (i. e. European) cultural origin, and b) implied the superiority of the people from the culture of origin (i. e. Europeans). Since the post-20th century notion of art does not imply, however, that art is a marker of European cultural prowess (as it was in the 19th century), its application to the products of other cultures will not necessarily be an act of ethnocentrism and cultural appropriation.

Nonetheless, the aesthetic gaze may be appropriate in a variety of ways (Heyd 2003, 2007), for example, if it pays no heed to the meanings of cultural phenomena as understood in the societies of origin, or if it takes images for its own (re-)use without the consent and acknowledgement of its producers or owners. While ownership needs to be acknowledged throughout, the particular etiquette appropriate for a given rock art site needs to be determined case by case (Heyd 2007). It should be noted, in any case, that the aesthetic approach is likely not any more intrusive than that of other (anthropological or sociological) research methodologies. Furthermore, it *is* rather unreasonable and ethnocentric



Figure 3. Gion Gion picture, Kimberleys, Australia.
Figura 3. Dibujo Gion Gion, Kimberleys, Australia.

to suppose that people of European origin are the *only* ones capable of making art (see, for example, fig. 3, from the Kimberleys, Australia, which displays very evident artistic skill that could hardly be denied.)

CONCLUSION

I have considered the claim that calling humanly made marks on rocks by the term 'art' may be problematic from epistemological, methodological and moral/quasi-political perspectives, and have argued that this concern fundamentally depends on a notion of art that is presently outdated. Interestingly, even those who argue *against* the supposition that such marks on rocks should be thought of as *art* continue to refer to them in these terms (Soffer & Conkey 1997: 8, 11-13; Tomášková 1997: 274). Conkey (1993: 115), says that "we have to inquire into these images in other terms [than as art] and from other perspectives if we are not merely to replicate the present," but accepts, nonetheless, that "it is certainly justifiable for us to call these images art, in that they often strike a resonant chord with what we think art is all about."

Rock art represents an opportunity to consider aesthetics at its limits: most humanly made marks on rocks were made by people *at a great distance from us*, in terms of time, or cultural continuity with our own ways of life, or both. Thus, as liminal, rock art presents

a fundamental opportunity for re-examining common assumptions about the evolution of styles, cross-cultural thematic or technical continuities, the integration of art and life, and so on. The evidence of artistic traditions spanning 15,000 years from Chauvet Cave to Altamira, for example, should prompt us to reflect on what it means to speak of the beginnings of art (Davis 1993; Lamarque 2005).

We may view the issue from the perspective of human encounters across cultural and temporal distances. Even *the attempt* to do justice to the aesthetic and artistic values present in some object created or appreciated by other human beings, such as the images mentioned before from the Kimberleys, Chauvet or the Drakensberg, can be an enriching way to participate in the complex experiences that made up their lives. Our limited grasp of the aesthetic perspectives of other people does not necessarily lessen the importance of our attempts to participate in their life experiences. Rather, the attempt to see, and possibly to feel, hear, smell and taste, to imagine and think, alongside those who have taken significantly different paths of self-expression from our own is a genuine experiment in sharing lives and, as such, can generate deep awareness of both our profound cross-cultural differences and our common human condition (Heyd & Clegg 2005, 2008 and 2010).⁶

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NOTES

¹ For the sake of simplicity, we will follow the convention of calling these marks 'rock art,' even if it will be our business here to discuss whether all or any of them should be sorted as 'art.'

² As will be discussed further, below, since the middle of the 20th century many artworks have been made that are not intended to function in terms of sensorily perceptible differences (that is 'aesthetically', in a strict sense) but rather 'conceptually.' In philosophy of art this has led to a differentiation between the 'artistic' and the 'aesthetic' (Binkley 1977). Here, however, we will follow the standard approach which supposes that the discussion of art is part of the larger field called 'aesthetics.'

³ Also see Taylor (1994) on the problem with 'universalist' approaches to aesthetics.

⁴ We may go further and point out that the wholesale commercialisation of the artworld, from the 1960s forward, which incited large investors, including bank consortia and speculators to buy art, may be considered the ultimate *denial* that art is *for its own sake*. If anything, what is considered the artworld today mostly is absorbed by what is called 'entertainment', as the displacement of arts discussions into 'life' sections, even in national newspapers such as Canadian *The Globe and Mail*, shows. As contributors to 'entertainment', the utility of the arts can be measured quantitatively by the number of visitors to galleries, the dollar amounts earned by 'blockbuster shows,' and so on. In this context, arts funding, as today's artists know, sadly often only follows 'success' in the marketplace.

⁵ The appreciation for which art objects are made may be specifically directed at their visual and aural, possibly their tactual, olfactory and even gustatory and kinaesthetic qualities, but often only at their reality in the imagination (as in literature), or even exclusively in the understanding (as in 'conceptual' art).

⁶ This article is related to a longer, more expansive, version of this paper (2012).

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