Social and Technological Aspects of Art : Challenges of the ‘New Normal’

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Challenges of the 'New Normal'

Edited by
Iris Vidmar Jovanović
Valentina Marianna Stupnik

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Notes on the contributors

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Matilde Carrasco Barranco has a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Granada. She has been teaching aesthetics and theory of arts at the University of Murcia since 2004, where she became senior lecturer in 2008. She has been a member of the Executive Committee of the European Society for Aesthetics (2012 – 2018) and is currently a member of the board of the Spanish Society of Aesthetics and Theory of Art. Her main research interests include the relationship between aesthetic value and other values of art, art criticism, art and politics and the contemporary revival of beauty.

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Karen Simecek is associate professor in philosophy at the University of Warwick. She has published articles in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, *Estetika: the European Journal of Aesthetics*, *Philosophy and Literature* and *Philosophy Compass*. Her forthcoming monograph *Philosophy of Lyric Voice* will be published by Bloomsbury Academic.

Valentina Marianna Stupnik got her MA in philosophy and German language and literature. She is currently a PhD student in the doctoral program at the University of Rijeka, completing her thesis on political philosophy and public justification. In addition, she is concerned with the social status of art and artistic practices and with questions regarding the intersection of art, politics and ethics.

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Iris Vidmar Jovanović is an assistant professor and the chair in aesthetics in the Department of Philosophy, University of Rijeka. Her research is focused on literature, poetry, film, television and Kant's aesthetics. She edited a collection *Narrative Art, Knowledge and Ethics* dedicated to aesthetic cognitivism, and is the author of *The Art of Genius: Kant and Contemporary Philosophy of Poetry* (in Croatian). She is secretary of the European Society for Aesthetics.

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I am very grateful to people from the Rijeka art scene, Nika Rukavina, Osman Eyublu, Ernie Gigante Dešković, and to the media representatives, Kim Cuculić and Davor Mandić, who participated at the round-table *Artistic Aspects of The 'New Normal'* organized in collaboration with the Kulturni front and Ivan Cerovac. Colleagues from the Academy of Applied Arts from Rijeka supported this project, primarily Ingeborg Fülepp, head of the Center for innovative media. Matea Jakovljević was helpful in promoting student-oriented activities: our contest for the best literary expression and for a visual on the topic of the COVID crisis. Thanks to all the students who sent their works and congratulations to all whose works were rewarded! I am very grateful to Ana Cerovac and Davor Grgurić for helping us select the best literary achieve-

ments, and to Milica Czerny Urban and Marin Nižić for their evaluations of the visuals.

Finally, a warm thanks to all the contributors to this book, whose papers remain a lasting testimony on the power of arts, philosophy and humanities to fight against the pandemic.

Iris Vidmar Jovanović,
Rijeka, December 2021

Iris Vidmar Jovanović and Valentina Marianna Stupnik

Foreword
Art, Aesthetics and the Everyday in the Wake of COVID-19 Crisis: Aesthetic Agency and the 'New Normal'

The collection of essays presented here sprang from a research grant awarded by the University of Rijeka, number UNIRI grant no. umjpo-20-2. The research project, entitled *Social and Technological Aspects of Art: Challenges of the 'New Normal'* was motivated by the rapid progression of the COVID-19 pandemic and its immense, devastating, and perhaps even irreversible impact on life as we knew it. Our main concern was to analyze the immediate ramifications of the lockdown and social isolation on different forms of our artistic practices. Underlying this concern were developments within three research domains currently dominating aesthetic discussions: (i) the theoretical exploration of human aesthetic agency, with particular emphasis on what we understand as its most radical expression, namely the creation of art;[1] (ii) the paradigm of everyday aesthetics, which provides us with a means of extending our aesthetic and creative endeavors into our everyday activities

1 See Lopes (2018); Zangwill (2007).

such as cooking, clothing and traveling;[2] (iii) the diminishing divide of art and technology, brought about by the recognition of the aesthetic appeal, i.e. the functional beauty, of certain technological products.[3]

With respect to all three of these domains, the impact of the corona crisis and the social, political, educational, etc. means implemented to fight it – primarily the world-wide lockdown and severe restrictions of movement – was immense. Within a short period of time everything came to a standstill and one of the most prominent and most fundamental aspect of our lives, social contact with others, was suddenly considered dangerous. A sense of security and belonging was quickly replaced with a sense of anxiety and fear. Against such circumstances, we wanted to explore how our artistic practices responded to these harsh new conditions of living, conditions which drastically modified ways in which art could be created, experienced and appreciated.

From a theoretical point of view, we were curious to observe how our conceptions and understandings of (certain forms of) art were changing – and may change forever – given the very limited opportunities for engagement with the arts and artists. Taking as our starting point the claim that our artistic engagements, as both creators and recipients, presuppose a public, social context within which we can display, perform, experience and appreciate art, and that this context was drastically impacted by the corona crisis, we set out to explore how the inaccessibility of public spaces for performances and displays will modify the activities involved in the creation and reception of art and artistic engagements. In other words, what were the challenges that 'the new normal', characterized by the lack of social contact, distrust of others and utter uncertainty, brought upon the arts?

Our primary concern in this respect was the group of arts that traditionally presuppose a more immediate and direct contact with

2 See Saito (2007); Irvin (2009); Mandoki (2007); Melchionne (2013); Irvin (2009).

3 See Forsey (2013).

the audience, such as theatrical performances, visual and other forms of arts available in museums and other spaces of exhibition, in concerts, public gatherings and the like. These are the artforms most strongly affected by the disappearance of the audience, with some estimation showing that nearly 13% of museums worldwide shut down and may never reopen.[4] It was our interest to explore how museums and theaters managed to reach out to their audiences and to provide alternative means of exhibiting their works. A dominant strategy adopted by these institutions all over the world was to set up online viewing rooms, online galleries or exhibitions and performances available via zoom and other online platforms. While such a shift, from in situ to online, was in many cases the only means available for the artists to display their works and for the audience to experience art, the process of switching to online platforms changes considerably our understanding of visual art and performances and it raises many philosophical questions regarding the ontology of particular art forms, individual artworks and modes of appreciation, as well as ethical and political issues. Elisa Caldarola's contribution points to some of these questions.

Rather than directly accessing the works and attending to them as they reveal themselves to us visually and audibly, online space is more suited for various kinds of educational experiences about the works exhibited. Thus, a first-hand reflective and active engagement with art – the sort of experience that is central to the acquaintance principle in aesthetics[5] – is substituted with

4 https://hyperallergic.com/565254/covid-19-unesco-icom-study/; https://en.thevalue.com/articles/paris-louvre-visitors-significant-drop-2020-coronavirus; https://www.voanews.com/a/covid-19-pandemic_studies-13-museums-worldwide-may-not-reopen-after-covid-19-crisis/6189515.html (accessed October 10th 2021).

5 Richard Wollheim is credited with defining the acquaintance principle, claiming that "Judgments of aesthetic value, unlike judgments of moral knowledge, must be based on first-hand experience of their objects and are not, except within very narrow limits, transmissible from one person to another" (Wollheim 1980, 233). Such a view on the importance of firsthand experience is grounded in §34 of Kant's third *Critique*, in which he explicit-

second-hand testimonies about the social, historical and artistic context of art creation. From the point of view of the audience, this means that their primary means of encountering art will be via more or less detailed descriptions of and theoretical knowledge about it, rather than by direct experience. There are valuable, educational benefits to it, but certain issues arise that philosophers will have to tackle in years ahead. For example, if an artwork can be present not primarily via visual contact but via theoretical information about it, what are the limits of the artwork itself? How are we to conceptualize it, if its expressive, representational and formal properties are never given to us directly? What is the impact of knowledge of a work's art-historical context of creation on spectators' appreciation of it? Most importantly, can information about its context ever substitute for standing in front of a work and experiencing it firsthand? From the point of view of art-creators, finding new ways in which to reach an audience often includes reaching out and addressing spectators more directly and on a personal basis. Eva Frapiccini's essay describes one such way, drawing on her own artistic project.

Switching to an online mode is not always possible, for various reasons. Some works, and some artistic programs, cannot be translated into online space or adjusted so as to be suitable for such presentations. Such an untranslatability of art into the online domain is worth pointing out, particularly with respect to Rijeka, the city which was awarded the status of European capital of culture in 2020. With the outbreak of the corona virus, numerous programs, which took months preparing, were cancelled, or were presented in alternative modes, often in front of a limited spectatorship. Many considered this a great loss for the culture, and, I do not hesitate to add, for the arts and humanities more generally. While at this

ly denies that aesthetic judgment is a matter of the application of rules and norms coming from sources external to the subject's own experience. Nowadays, a lot of criticism is being directed at acquaintance principle (see Budd (2003), Sauchelli (2016)), criticism which points to the fact that experts' testimony on an artwork can contribute to one's understanding and appreciation of a work.

point we still lack an appropriate distance from these events which would allow us to take into consideration all the factors that went into the migration of art to online spaces, there is little doubt that future developments in artistic practices will be related to what was happening during the corona crisis and in the period referred to as 'the new normal'.

By emphasizing the social aspects of art, we wanted to point to the capacities of art to bring people together and hold them united. Following a philosophical dismissal of 'disinterested attention' as the (only) proper way of engaging with the arts, our intention here was to explore the way in which art serves as an incentive for people to participate in the same experiences and possibly share the same (or similar) emotions and other cognitive states – realization, wonder, amazement, surprise, delight, disgust, anger, revolt – in reaction to it.[6] Underlying this claim was Rita Felski's account of the "enduring ties" (Felski 2020, 1) that artworks create – among people, among people and social institutions, among other works, etc., and her claim that "the artworks *does*" (6, our emphasis) something within society and for individual agents, by forging attachments and values, by making us see things differently, by inviting us to care, and by showing us alternatives not thought of before. This power of art is explored by Karen Simecek, whose essay is grounded in Collingwood's account of the social aspects of art. As her contribution makes evident, not only is art a product of a community but it has a powerful capacity to solidify existing communities and build new ones. In some cases, as Marta Maliszewska demonstrates in her essay, art can be understood not as a constellation of material objects (of some sort) but as a social process intended to address forms of social and political crises, occasionally even with the aim of bringing about social changes.

Our interest in the social aspects of art led us further into the exploration of public art. Defined less by a medium and more by its location, this form of art has also suffered at the hands of

6 See Wolterstorff (2015).

COVID-19; nevertheless, as Connell Vaughan explores in his contribution, public art served as a response to tragedy and anxiety. As so many times before in human history, art provided a capacity for creative action, which served as an antidote to the standstill, fear and passivity brought about by the corona virus. Art gave us resources to deal with difficulties, to persist, to stay united and, in some cases, to overcome fear and feel consoled and united.[7] Moreover, artists took inspiration from the new conditions of living, finding artistic means to respond to these conditions, and ways to commemorate those who fell victim to the disease, and to honor those who were fighting it.

Notwithstanding the centrality of art in our research, our assumption was that other dimensions of our aesthetic agency were affected by the living conditions brought about by the corona crisis. Influenced by the rapidly expanding field of everyday aesthetics, which focuses on highlighting the fact that not only art but our everyday lives and our daily routines are imbued with aesthetic aspects and offer ample opportunities for aesthetic experiences,[8]

7 Consider, for example, the case of Italian saxophone player Fabrizio Marzialli who played music from his balcony, brining joy to numerous people in his neighborhood (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/news/covid-19-amid-lockdown-saxophone-player-fabio-marziali-keeps-spirit-high-of-italians/videoshow/74725698.cms). His is not a lone case, as musicians all over the world started performing in ways which enabled their music to be heard by numerous people, even if they were not searching for it. For many, those kinds of street performances were the only artistic experiences during the lockdown of theaters, galleries and museums. Interesting stories of how this shift was done are available at https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/music/ct-ent-chicago-music-coronavirus-street-musicians-0403-20200401-mbgsmpj24fgjnlahfutrwtbsae-story.html (accessed December 1st 2021).

8 Here is Saito's account of the aesthetics of the everyday: "… contrary to popular perception that 'the aesthetic' deals with something either highly specialized and isolated from our daily concerns, namely art, or else something trivial and frivolous, not essential to our lives, such as beautification and decoration, those neglected dimensions of our aesthetic life do have serious practical ramifications. They often affect and sometimes determine our worldview, actions, the character of a society, the physical environment, and quite literally the course of history. By liberating the aesthetic discourse from

we were sensitive to the way in which the corona crisis impacted our day-to-day aesthetic behaviors, aesthetic responses and aesthetic preferences. Our assumption here was based on theoretical views from Plato and Kant, who thought beauty central to our sense of well-being, our sense of belonging and prospering.[9] We were however slightly less concerned with beauty per se, focusing our interest on other aesthetic categories and other forms of aesthetic experiences. Primarily, we were interested in those actions and everyday activities in which our aesthetic choices and actions take central stage. Following Yuriko Saito's intuition that "while appearing innocuous and inconsequential, aesthetic judgments and preferences we make on a daily basis do have surprisingly serious implications" (Saito 2007, 5), we wanted to explore how 'the new normal' changed our aesthetic behavior. For most of the time, primarily in those first months of social isolation and lockdown, limited exposure to the gaze of others, and almost non-existent opportunities for public outings and traveling diminished our aesthetic experiences, as well as our opportunities to engage in aesthetic choices and enjoyments, such as dressing up for work or social events, or wining and dining in pubs and restaurants. Given the overall anxiety that the corona crisis brought to people, not to mention its immediate threat to our health, financial security, employment, and even our survival, it may seem an exaggeration to suggest that the lack of opportunities for these kinds of aesthetic action was damaging to us – after all, dressing for oneself can be just as valuable an exercise of one's aesthetic agency as dressing for the public, and many people developed an interest in cooking or gardening during the lock-down or in self-isolation. However, if

the confines of a specific kind of object or experience and illuminating how deeply entrenched and prevalent aesthetic considerations are in our mundane everyday existence, I hope to restore aesthetics to its proper place in our everyday life and to reclaim its status in shaping us and the world." (Saito 2007, 12).

9 See Hyland (2008) for Plato's account of beauty. Wicks (2007) explores the role of beauty, and aesthetic experience more generally, within Kant's philosophy.

we think of how profound the human desire for beautifying and self-decoration is, and how central our aesthetic preferences are to our sense of identity, it is plausible to suggest that the lockdown further diminished and disabled our capacity to act aesthetically and take pleasure in such acting.[10] As evident in papers by Adam Andrzejewski and Francisca Pérez Carreño, aesthetics matters significantly in our everyday lives, even if we don't always recognize or appreciate it.

One aspect that influenced our thinking about the aesthetics of the everyday that we could not ignore was a series of earthquakes which hit Croatia in March 2020. Though our research took off a year after its occurrence, its consequences were widely visible in our capital, as well as in several places close to Zagreb that also suffered from this disaster. As the dust cleared, a new set of issues came to our view: the relevance of the environment and experiences of a landscape for one's wellbeing. During the first wave of COVID-19, following the world-wide lockdown, reports from numerous parts of the world came in, suggesting that nature was thriving, as the environment was seeming to be recovering from the unbearable effects of our human footprint. However, we hardly had the possibility to enjoy these newly discovered natural beauties, since most of them were out of reach. Isolated in our apartments, terrified of the disease and anxious over the future, little did we care about those aesthetic experiences we tend to cherish for the joy they bring into our lives, such as the experience of beauty, harmony and picturesqueness. It is our assumption in this research that the prolonged lack of such experiences contributed significantly to the overall sense of despair and pessimism. Such concerns are addressed in the essay by Mateusz Salwa, who unites aesthetic concerns about the environment with a theoretical un-

10 Consider in this context Stephen Davies' claim that humans are obsessed with self-decoration, or Maria Jose Alcaraz Leon's claim that "there is a connection between aesthetic judgment and being a particular person, between our taste and our personality" (Alcaraz Leon 2019,130). Both essays are available in Huemer and Vendrell Ferran eds. (2019)

derstanding of what makes the space we occupy valuable for our sense of well-being and belonging.

Our research was also dedicated to exploring how the arts, as cultural practice, and aesthetics, as a theoretical discipline, engage with the climate change issues and the environmental crisis. Our assumption in that respect was that numerous technological disciplines dedicated to combating these threats were also sensitive to the final shape and visual properties of their solutions. Thus, technology, widely understood, was becoming more and more entangled with aesthetic concerns, the consequence of which was a need to explore how art and technology come together. This trend was accelerated by the measures introduced to fight the spread of the corona virus: from facial masks which became a 'must have' item of clothing to disinfectant dispensers which had to be incorporated into the interior and occasionally exterior design of all public buildings (and often private homes), designers in all walks of life had to find aesthetically appealing solutions to such demands. Monika Favara-Kurkowski's essay illuminates some key concerns of the ethically, environmentally and ecologically sensitive aesthetics of design, while a more theoretical approach is adopted by David Collins, who defends the autonomy of art and a clear line dividing art from technology. On a slightly different note, Matilde Carrasco Barranco explores the impact of artificial intelligence on art creation and on the manners in which AI art challenges our understanding of beauty and artistic value.

Unfortunately, as we are finalizing our research, the world is facing new mutations of the virus, and the end of the pandemic is nowhere in sight. As the hope remains that this will change soon, an awareness of the unknown and uncertain that lie ahead still pervades our everyday experience. So many of our scientific, educational and artistic practices have changed significantly, and it remains to be seen how these will reorganize themselves once the pandemic is over. Certainly, all these processes of negotiating the role, function and value of art, science and education will give rise to numerous philosophical challenges. It was our aim here to reveal

some of these challenges as directed at the arts, and to show how the arts have been dealing with them. Our interest however was limited; we did not explore the rise, during the lockdown, of certain activities that are imbued with an aesthetic dimension, such as cooking or gardening, and we did not address the impact that the lockdown, and the inaccessibility of public displays of art, had on artforms available in the privacy of one's home, primarily TV and other forms of screening. It is only in the contribution by Kalle Puolakka that we offer some positive consequences of the corona crisis for our artistic engagements, though only with respect to literature and reading. We also did not engage with public policies or political decisions regarding the issues of funding various arts, and we did not explore the impact of vaccination, i.e. the divide of citizens between vaccinated and non-vaccinated on spectatorship. The limited, sometimes even non-existent opportunities for engaging with art will impact the artistic education of the youngest generation, but we did not tackle this problem here, hoping that alternative forms of artistic engagement will provide at least some ways of experiencing art and developing an interest in cultural and artistic production. Regardless of these limits, we hope this book offers some valuable insights into acknowledging, addressing and understanding how our aesthetic and artistic practices were influenced by the COVID-19 crisis, and how they responded to it in the period referred to as the 'new normal'.

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ART, SOCIETY AND TECHNOLOGY

Karen Simecek

Community of/in/through Poetry

1. Community *of* Poetry

In *The Principles of Art*, Collingwood writes: "[the artist] undertakes his artistic labour not as a personal effort on his own private behalf, but as a public labour on behalf of the community to which he belongs" (Collingwood 1958, 315). For Collingwood, art (or more precisely, the practice of art) is necessarily tied to the idea of the community. By 'community', Collingwood does not intend to refer to the linguistic community or even something as grand as the community of human beings (or moral community) but simply those who are connected to his art, which includes other artists whom he shares work with, artists work that inspires his own and the audiences that he makes his art for. The crucial thing for Collingwood is that art is not undertaken by an individual with no concern for others: art is made with others and for others. In other words, art is social.

Collingwood goes on to add: "[the aesthetic experience] is a labour in which he invites the community to participate; for their function as audience is not passively to accept his work, but to do it over again for themselves. If he invites them to do this, it is because he has reason to think they will accept his invitation, that is, because he thinks he is inviting them to do what they already want

to do" (Collingwood 1958, 315). What I want to draw attention to here is the idea of art as participatory.

Although Collingwood's theory has been criticized for its emphasis on expression of emotion,[11] such criticism doesn't seem to hold when considering poetry. If we apply these thoughts to poetry, what we have is not an understanding of poetry as a vehicle for self-expression of the poet (where the reader/audience merely overhears such expression – as a passive receptor) but of poetic expression as an invitation to share *with* the poet, or rather, to participate in the aesthetic experience (which does not involve full understanding but only felt appreciation). The audience and artist engage in an exchange of sorts (as opposed transmission of emotion); they share in joint attention and forge a connection with one another not in virtue of their identity but in virtue of the aesthetic experience itself. The poet and reader/audience are connected through their participation in the aesthetic experience.

Although Collingwood sought a theory that would account for many different artforms including painting, music and poetry, I only wish to focus on poetry. Poetry is a space for connection. In writing, reading, and listening to poetry we come into contact with others through our use of common language, that is, a language we draw on and borrow every day to commune with others. Bennett Helm argues: "We humans are social animals … a central feature of our lives that is characteristically human is our use of language—to relay information, to teach, to play, to gossip, to coordinate, and ultimately to reinforce our social connections with others. It would be absurd to deny the obvious and fundamentally social nature of humans, even as we acknowledge that individual humans can live, and can live quite well, in isolation from others." (Helm 2017, 1)

Our use of and need for language demonstrates our basic need and desire for sociation. In poetry, it is not just an ordinary use of language but language that has been crafted and nurtured to ex-

11 See Nick Wiltsher (2018) for a helpful discussion of Collingwood's theory.

press not something too personal or private but something relatable and self-consciously aware of its social function.

As poet, David Constantine writes:

> Poetry is common. The stuff of it is common, even commonplace. Poetry comes from what we as human beings have in common. It puts us in living touch with our shared realities. And it can extend and increase the things we share ... Much of what poetry tells us we know already, but not well enough, not keenly enough, not so that it matters. Poetry helps us realize common things better. (Constantine 2006, 226)

Poetry in its use of language is common. Common in the sense that it borrows everyday means of communication in its use of words – it borrows their meanings, their associations, and connotations. Constantine follows this line of thought of poetry moving beyond the individual experience to something which has the potential to move us to an intersubjective mode: "Poetry then, made of words, engenders a condition in which the single personality dissolves and we enter into other lives, other possibilities of being human" (Constantine 2006, 227).

Collingwood offers one way of characterizing the relationship between community and poetry, namely, 'community *of* poetry,' i.e. the connections between poets and poems. Poetry, on this understanding, is inherently social. Anna Christina Ribeiro argues that in writing poetry, a poet must produce work with a sense of its relation to the poetry community: "A poet's work must be intentionally connected to preceding poems in order for it to be a poem as well" (Ribeiro 2007, 190). So even in cases where poets do not directly invoke the voices of others, there is still a relationship to the poetry community (even if only expressed in a limited way as wanting to produce 'something like that').

However, that is not the limit of the relationship between community and poetry. My project for this chapter is to identify two further relationships between poetry and community that help to show poetry not as merely a product of, or embedded in, community (and therefore as a social artefact) but how poetry actively contributes to community either through solidifying existing communities or by building new ones. My discussion therefore

falls in to two parts: 1. Community (with)in poetry: the writing of poetry that seeks to reflect a particular community, perhaps through writing a multivocal poem. And 2. Community through poetry: the building of new communities in the performance and reception of poetry. The attempt to bring people together through joint attention and affect in the performance space.

2. Community *(with)in* Poetry

In writing poetry, poets often draw on other voices. These may be directly from other poems (e.g. Ashbery's Canto *to a Waterfowl* that is constructed out of lines taken from Shakespeare, Hopkins, Eliot, Yeats, Browning and Tennyson), from research archives (e.g. Charles Reznikoff's long poem *Testimony: The United States (1885-1915): Recitative*, which takes over 500 court cases as source material) or even indirectly in the form of words, phrases, stories of others that make their way into the poet's notebook. What's clear is that poetry is rarely written in isolation from others.

As poet John Kinsella writes:

> Poets operate in communities, and their ecologies are crosshatched. They connect and divide communities that aren't even aware of their existence. A poem is a part of an ecology – it uses and maybe gives. I've always found collaboration a way of challenging the security of self-affirmation. Of recognizing the crosshatched nature of an ecology. Of creating a field of failings and inadequacies and announcing common purposes in trying to repair and redeem. Collaborative writing can be redemptive. (Kinsella 2012, 37)

The idea of poetic ecology connects Collingwood's notion of art as social, but where Collingwood sees the artist's community in terms of a set of defined influences and audiences, the notion of ecology situates poetry in a broader space, one that goes beyond an individual poem or poet to consider the poem's place in a network of interaction with others – other poems, other poets, other audiences – and how the work will continually shift in the ecological evolution. Kinsella talks of the interaction between poetic communities and how such interaction/intersection may change relationships within and between communities: dividing existing

communities to create new ones. Rather than seeing such a dynamic as divisive, it instead helps to shift the individual towards an openness to others and to see oneself as interconnected with multiple communities. Kinsella's concern is with ecopoetics, which necessarily involves reflection on how human communities relate to the natural world, as part of broader (meta)ecological communities. To truly reflect ecological concerns, however, it is important to grasp the relationship in terms of intersection and not dominance. Part of the ecopoetic project is an attempt to reframe human life in terms of its embeddedness and relationship to other communities (of plant and animal life) in contrast to prioritization of the human over the natural world.

In an attempt to shift the poet's perspective from one of dominance to a more democratic, open and compassionate position, Kinsella points to the value of collaboration in writing poetry. But who should the poet collaborate with? Kinsella's own collaborations have taken the form of joint authorship of poetry with other professional poets where both are responsible for crafting the final poem. Collaboration between poets is a negotiation and a development of a shared vision for the work. The value of such an approach is in creating a perspective that is not reducible to either individual but is a genuinely *shared* perspective. Forging a shared perspective involves seeking overlap between perspectives; we can come to see what in one's own perspective is shared or shareable with another/others and in trying to engage with another's perspective, we can focus on those aspects that we share, leaving those that we do not share in the background. We can allow our own perspectives to be exposed to those of others and attempt to forge perspectives together, forging some sense of commonality.

For Bennett Helm, "sharing an evaluative perspective, at least within a certain domain, where this shared evaluative perspective enables each to have the sort of dynamic, rational influence on the other's life that [the relationship] demands" (Helm 2012, 34). On Helm's view, this sharing of evaluative perspective is a shared pattern of emotions and desires that reflect a commitment to the im-

port of certain things as tied to an inter-subjective understanding of self that is established by that relationship. Helm's notion of a shared perspective involves joint attention, reciprocity and co-regulation, which together underpins the sharing of an emotion. Collaboration in writing a poem will therefore be a matter of finding shared patterns of emotion and desires, values and of language (patterns of words, images, rhythms).

But what of other kinds of collaborations, for instance, where a poet takes on the task of drawing multiple voices together? Take for example, Kwame Alexander's poem *Social Distance*[12] published in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is constructed from lines, phrases, and words from poems written by listeners of NPR in response to two paintings depicting a woman looking out of a window. By asking contributors to respond to the same points of focus, i.e., the two paintings, helped generate some commonality in the responses. The idea, then, was to bring together different reflections on the same objects of joint attention to produce a community poem that expresses a sense of hope through the coming together of voices.

Here's an extract from Alexander's poem:

Summer bears down on the city
like granny's old quilt
…
You see, smart women bend
like stems grabbing at the light
muscles coat limbs
as eyelids stalk the horizon
to calculate what comes next
drought or a wall of water
high cheekbones not afraid to climb out
or crawl up.

Although drawn from contributions that had the same point

12 https://www.npr.org/2020/04/01/823853480/social-distance-a-community-style-poem-to-help-you-feel-less-isolated?t=1634117035830 (accessed October 7th 2021).

of focus, the different elements of the poem (e.g. the lines, images) don't seem to come together in a unified way, instead remaining fragmentary but arranged together in the manner of constructing a collage. Throughout the poem, there are small units of connection but the whole lacks a sense of mutual resonance that calls back and forth throughout the poem. The poem itself was produced through social distance; the 'community' of contributors did not meet with one another or with Alexander and therefore, the opportunity to allow shared patterns of emotion, desires, values, and language to emerge was limited. Through joint response to the two paintings, the hope that something shared, something common is found in the words of the contributors drives the poem. However, rather than expressing a community of voices, the poem seems to chart a journey through individual voices. But does this merely reveal a limitation of the community poem? Does the poet merely craft a collage of other voices? Do the poems submitted by the listeners merely provide the poet with a resource (in the manner of found poems or cut outs)? Or should we understand the poetic achievement (and success) of the community poem in other terms as something that emerges from the exchange of voices (mediated or directed by the poet's own voice) and transfigured from the individual to community? Simply put, to what extent do traces of other voices remain in the final poem?

To investigate these questions, I have been working alongside poetry producers, Poet in the City,[13] to reflect on works of poetry they have commissioned in the spirit of community building. The poems commissioned by Poet in the City over the last five years seek to reflect the identity of particular communities (in other words, to capture something about them at that moment in time) and ultimately help to build and strengthen community through poetry. To achieve this, the poets are tasked with engaging with the target community (such as those living and working within a particular borough of London) interviewing individuals to hear their stories and then write poems that are inspired by and incor-

13 https://www.poetinthecity.co.uk/ (accessed July 21st 2021).

porate the words and voices of those in the community. For instance, for their project 'Between the Storeys' (2018), three poets performed original poems written in response to their experience of interviewing residents of the Smithfield area of London, learning about the history and values of the community. The videos of their performances incorporate images of people living in Smithfield that are reflected in the poems and in the case of the film featuring Imtiaz Dharker, her poem is presented in juxtaposition to actual voices from the community, in some cases reading the words of the poem in their own voice. In both 'Hillview poetic archive' (2019) and 'Connected through the unknown: A Houslow Covid Archive' (2020), the commissioned poets drew directly on the words of those interviewed, including their names and stories, thereby allowing individuals within the community to identify themselves and be identified within the poem.

More recently, for their project 'Poetry from a vaccination centre' (2021), twelve poets were commissioned to write poems inspired by the words of those visiting the Francis Crick Institute during the vaccination programme some of which wrote anonymous reflections on postcards and some were interviewed by the poets. In his artist statement, poet Will Harris writes "I decided to keep to the language of the responses, only altering personal pronouns and syntax where appropriate. I wanted the multiple voices to come together of their own accord, expressing the simultaneous anger, grief and hope of this moment."[14] This project marks a step change in their work in that it also incorporated anonymous writing from individuals. The poet, in this case, is only ever presented with a trace of voice and must create community amongst unknown and disconnected voices. For this project, the notion of community captures something much broader than a geographic community – it captured feelings that brought many of us together in terms of shared experience and shared response despite our separation during national lockdown in response to the COVID-19

14 https://www.poetinthecity.co.uk/the-crick-will-harris (accessed July 21st 2021).

pandemic. However, rather than asking contributors to respond to the same stimuli (as with Alexander's poem, *Social Distance*), Harris looked for connection between the disconnected voices he drew upon for the poem.

Poetry can never be a mere collage of other voices, the poet must weave these voices together and in the process re-shape and re-voice the words from the community (and as in the case of the Francis Crick project, do this without being aware of the context of the words that form the central resource for the poem). Instead, poetry can be understood as a common, i.e., a (democratic?) place where voices meet and interact. The poet's role is to bring those voices into meaningful relationship. Voice, whether that of the poet or other language uses, is never pure but reflects the traces of other voices that shape one's way of speaking from where they place stresses to syntax to lexicon. One's way of speaking and using language evolves through our connections with others. For instance, I might start using a particular phrase because someone I admire uses that phrase or together, me and a friend through multiple conversations begin to develop a pattern of language that is ours (think about teenagers who sometimes speak so quickly to one another that their parents are left bemused!). Given the social shaping of voice together with the craft of the poet and their attention to language, there is an opportunity for the poet to allow their own voice to be influenced by those of the community. Although they have control over poetic craft, they allow themselves to be responsive to those other voices they bring together. The role of the poet can then be seen as the one who brings together, connects, and binds voices dynamically (in the sense that the connections are brought into relationship and shape one another through the poetic work) to reflect the multivocal in the work. It is not simply placing and juxtaposition, as with mere collage.

3. Community *through* Poetry

So far, we have addressed the possibility of community *of* poetry and community *(with)in* poetry through the idea of bringing

together voices in the community poem. In this section, I want to propose a further relationship between community and poetry, namely, community *through* poetry. In arguing for this, I will suggest ways in which the performance of poetry can create (albeit fragile and momentary) communities in the live performance space between poet and audience. Poetry helps to bring us together through relationships of common experience (of language and meaning) whilst simultaneously acknowledging difference; through a simple speaking of an I and/to you, the poet and audience are brought into relationship that reflects the separation of individuals as connected in some way. In the performance space, awareness of relationships to others is heightened through affect, that is, awareness of the felt presence of others in connection (engaged in joint attention). As Crystal Leigh Endsley writes: "Spoken word poetry solicits an embodied literacy and method of reading: bodies and voices instead of letters and text" (Endsley 2016, xix). In performance, that is not just the poet-performer's body and voice but the bodies and voices that make up the audience; the physical presence of bodies responding to the poet-performer.

In his analysis of the performance poem, poet and literary scholar Jack McGowan writes: "The structure of a spoken word poem is written, designed, and performed in order to generate a sequence of affective responses. These affects travel between audience members through the physiological process of affect entrainment, gathering intensity as they pass between the bodies of the audience" (McGowan 2021, 113). The performance poem is therefore written with the aim of creating a social space through affective resonance amongst the audience. For instance, take Toby Campion's *Notes From The Sexual Health Clinic Waiting Room*.[15] He invites the audience to 'awkwardly cough' between poems that form the sequence. This acts as an important contrast to the laughter provoked by the poems themselves. The audience not only experience the feeling of laughing together (at the same thing)

15 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAoxCh5LW_4 (accessed October 7th 2021).

but through their participation (the cough) there is a reminder amongst the room of a shared awkwardness and embarrassment related to the subject of the sequence of poems. The experience of laughing together helps the audience to feel connected to others in the room but it is through the participation of the cough that such a connection is grounded in joint attention and references shared experiences outside of the live performance space. That's not to say that the poem will be successful in creating a sense of community within the room for all individuals. Anyone who lacks experience of attending a sexual health clinic will feel excluded but importantly, those who have had the experience will be left with a sense of 'being with' or belonging with others who signalled through laughing and coughing that they share a type of experience. Jean Luc-Nancy argues that 'being with' or the feeling of connection to others is grounded in the physical: "It is always a proximity, not only a brushing against but a reciprocal action, an exchange, a relation of more or less mutual exposure. It is not pure concomitance" (Nancy 2010, 104). Touch shows how we can connect yet remain separate. Touch is also importantly reciprocal – I cannot touch you without you touching me and the force with which I press with my fingers, for instance, is met with an equal pressure or resistance pushing back. Consequently, we become known to one another as well as the limits of ourselves through the act of touching, that is, through awareness of 'being with'. For Nancy, *being-with* captures our ontological condition as social beings; he argues that for 'I' to properly have meaning and make sense in picking out an individual, there must be a 'you' or 'they' to distinguish the 'I' from. Given Nancy's understanding of the first person, 'I' can only be understood as relational in the same way that 'you' and 'they' are necessarily relational. In participating in the performance of the poem, we experience the touching of voices as the audience cough produces a choral effect (made up of individual voices). We hear our own voice as distinct from other voices, yet simultaneously as voices together.

Attempting to forge a shared perspective with the voice of the

performer will involve a particular kind of cognitive and affective engagement; not just an intellectual connection but also a felt connection – a feeling together as human beings with joint attention and sense of shared significance and responsibility to respond in accordance with that shared set of concerns that shapes the focus of our emotional response. That art might facilitate joint attention is not a new idea. This is something Gregory Currie discusses in his book *Narratives and Narrators*, in which he introduces the idea of "guided attention", which he argues is part of an emotional response that is influenced by another's attention to an object which guides their attention to the same object. He writes:

> let us think of joint attention as a refined form of a more general phenomenon wherein one experiences the influence of another's attention to some object on one's own attention to it ... cases of guided attending ... have a distinctly emotional component. They involve, and may be designed to involve, valued experiences of shared emotion, directed at a scene or object. I emphasize the role of emotion here because adopting a framework for a narrative means being *tuned* to the narrative's content; being apt to respond to it in selective and focused ways that show some stability over the length of one's engagement with the characters and events. (Currie 2010, 98)

In responding emotionally to a performed poem there are two stages: the *initial response*, which takes into account mood and expression of the performer, and *guided response* (to borrow from Currie), which arises out of concern for the performer as established during the initial response and draws our attention to the object of their perceived emotional state (it is a performance after all, so it may well be that they express something they do not feel at that specific time). At this point where we have reached such guided response, we no longer have the performer as the focus of our attention but something which we are jointly attending to together with the performer (and the expectation is that this also includes other audience members). It is important to point out that I'm not claiming this happens in all cases of performed poetry; I'm trying to highlight the potential for this artform and map out what distinctive contribution it might make to self-understanding (including, reflection on our own moral commitments).

This idea of 'attending to' helps to make the connection between the idea of shared emotion and what demands there are on us as audience members. Attending to someone has a normative dimension; there are levels appropriate to such attention in that attending to someone requires an expectation of certain features and commitment to tracking certain aspects of experience. The normative aspect of 'attending to' facilitates the emergence of a relationship between performer and audience, which thereby places certain demands on the audience if they are properly attending to the performance. In the case of the poet-performer, we ought to respond to, appreciate and understand what that performer is trying to express; we must respond to *that* delivery of *those* words as it unfolds in the performance (much like, when reading a poem on the page, we must attend to those words in that form). "Active participation may be as simple as paying attention to the feeling in the room, to our own bodies, and to how we are communicating. In this way we begin to recognize the impact of our individual and collective presence; how we are contributing to the shared affect of the space through the overt display of emotion as well as the preconscious transmission of affective intensities" (McGowan 2021, 119).

In virtue of being a member of the audience with certain demands placed on them in terms of how they behave towards the performance (in order to enable appreciation of the work) they can expect other members of the audience to behave in such a way as to meet the demands of an audience member as well and attend to the performer in this way. And so, if an audience member began to laugh aloud in response to the way the performer looked without responding appropriately to the words and their delivery, or failed to notice a shift in tone, we would consider this an inappropriate response (since it fails to take into account the work as a whole – we cannot divorce the poem from the performance).

We begin to judge one another in terms of whether others are meeting the demands of an audience member at the point of the initial response. At another level, this may come to the fore

through the noticeable difference in response between audience members and a sense of what's expected in virtue of a shared perspective established through the 'guided response' – since this is the mechanism by which we are made aware of potential overlap of concern. This leads to a sense of being exposed to humanness (what we are potentially able to share with unknown performers and unknown fellow audience members), through a focusing on what we have in common, and holding one another to account (as a member of an audience) in terms of appropriateness of responses to the performance but then in relation to this sense of joint concern and shared/shareable perspective.

There is a physicality of such attending to, which involves a sense of appropriate behavioural and emotional responses. The physicality of such response enables emotional co-regulation through an emerging conformity in response amongst the audience. Where an audience member feels their response goes against the grain, this serves as a flag for checking (through reflection) whether their response was appropriate in relation to the performance (and where they judge it was, they may well judge the rest of the audience to have responded inattentively and inappropriately). Here I'm extending the idea of coherence between the evaluative judgement and felt evaluation of the individual that Helm talks about; in taking up the shared human perspective, we seek coherence not only between our own evaluative judgements and felt evaluations but with the responses of others focused on the same object/target.

How is this supported in the case of performance poetry? Joel Krueger argues

> our emotion-specific environmental transactions often consist of more focused and sustained engagements – ongoing manipulations of environmental features that, as we engage with them, loop back onto us in complex ways and shape what we feel and how we feel it. These engagements are (or at least can be) cases of 'emotional off-loading': instances where we allow features of the environment to do some of the emotional work on our behalf, and in so doing, grant access to kinds of experiences we couldn't otherwise have without their regulatory input. (Krueger 2015, 266)

Krueger applies this point about 'emotional off-loading' to music, arguing that listening to music can create an atmosphere and therefore is able to modulate our emotions (heightening/lessening). This is also true of a poetry performance but with the performer and the responses of other audience members providing such modulation. In responding appropriately to the performance, we are necessarily allowing environmental features to 'loop back onto us in complex ways and shape what we feel and how we feel it,' which enables us to feel together with awareness of that feeling together.

If we take up this notion of appropriate response, we can see powerful support for the idea of emotional contagion – by being part of a group, we end up with a stronger sense of what is appropriate not just in virtue of what the performance itself demands but of those who make up the audience through a feeling of others having responded appropriately or inappropriately. Take as a good example, Terisa Siagatonu and Rudy Francisco's 'Sons' (performed at the 2013 Boston Poetry Slam). The dual voice is something that cannot be produced on the page but by having these two voices, sometimes speaking together sometimes speaking alternately allows us to hear these voices speaking for a community (we simultaneously hear the perspective of a father and mother), not just a personal expression of a character as in a theatre performance.

Both: When it comes to motherhood (fatherhood)
I do not hesitate to say that I would want to raise all boys.
I would want to be a mother (father) to all sons.
Rudy: If I've learned anything about being a man,
It is that being a father is designed to be a contact sport
and far too many of us retire before we even see what the
field looks like.
Terisa: If I've learned anything about being a woman,
it's that no matter how empowering I seem
My existence was designed to never stand a chance.
Both: When the state of Ohio found two sixteen year old boys
guilty of raping a sixteen year old girl,
Terisa: Both boys cried their eyes out moments after the verdict

Rudy: Every major media news outlet coddled them instead of the girl they raped.[16]

In the live performance, we are likely to respond much more to the embodied delivery, for instance the frustration, anger and despair expressed by the two performers in this case, which means that we are responding at a deeply affective level. Therefore, the aesthetic features of the work, the rhythm, assonance, consonance, and the like will shape our experience and expectations of meaning to a greater degree than when encountering the words as laid out on the page. The juxtaposition of the male and female voice, which overlaps and comes apart is embedded in the structure of the piece with the alternating *soli* and *tutti* sections. We can see a shared perspective emerge between the two performers, both wishing 'to raise all boys' and focusing on the same events with the same sense of import and sense of responsibility. We are invited to share with this. We might begin by identifying or responding to one or the other performer in the initial response, responding to their individual expressions of anger, despair, frustration and fear but by hearing their voices come together, the performance enables the shift in attention from the performers to what is shared between them. This guides our attention to the subject of the poem.

The poem draws our attention to something for which we have collective responsibility. Their expression of despair, anger and fear facilitating the way in which we think of sexual attitudes in society, guiding us, as audience members, to see our individual and collective responsibility towards others in our community; we are exposed to the configuration of import embedded in the performance. The moral value of such experience of shared emotion as facilitated by the live performance is awareness of being part of a moral community or a community of concern – a community who are united through a shared perspective, that is, an overlapping set of beliefs, commitments, and desires. What happens when we feel together (even if we are not feeling the same thing but eval-

16 https://youtu.be/JNPaoszr11U (accessed October 7th 2021).

uating others' responses through what we take as shared) is we are acknowledging what standards bring us together, what standards we can individually and collectively be measured against, the standards which capture what unites us in being human.

4. Coda

The COVID-19 pandemic showed just how (physically) connected and interconnected we all are as the virus spread rapidly across the globe. Mapping of the virus revealed a world that operates within global and local communities. As the pandemic worsened, loss of life, fear and grief, and the struggle of healthcare workers formed a common ground in experience for communities worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic also brought into sharp focus the value of community, of *being-with* others through experiencing the lack of such connection and isolation as the result of the necessary restrictions imposed on movement and social interaction to reduce transmission. The response of isolation was to find new ways to connect with others, largely by shifting to online communities. This had two significant consequences for the sorts of community discussed here: 1. Engaging with an unknown community – one no longer writing with a specific community in mind 2. Lack of physical connection – lack of affective feedback that connects the poet to the audience.

Engaging with poetry online can give the impression that one is accessing the whole work, particularly as one is able to even watch performances by poets that one might not be able to see otherwise. As Jack McGowan argues, what is missing is a whole layer to the meaning-making experience of the performance given through affect:

> while we can and do experience affective intensities through viewing spoken word performances online, something is lost in the transition from an experience of live performance to digital consumption. Affect is the body and the mind's engagement with the world, and while watching a digital recording of a performance enables us to discretely generate affective responses to stimuli, the element of live performance: of the body being present in the performance space, is absent. (McGowan 2021, 112)

Watching a video online means that the audience is not connected to the performance. They are not seen by the performer or the audience. That sense of shared response and sense of appropriateness discussed above cannot be recreated online. The video breaks the possibility of a feedback loop and consequently render the poem's power to build community impotent.

In this chapter, I have presented three ways in which poetry is connected to community: community of poetry, community (with)in poetry and community through poetry. Taking all three together, we can see poetry as inherently relational and social. Poetry depends not only on the writing and publication/performance but on there being a community to read it, hear it, enjoy it and respond to it. In the aftermath of social distancing, closure of performance spaces (both temporary and permanent), we must find our way to reconnecting with one another in our more local environments, in order to feel ourselves as grounded in communities of others. As I have argued, this is not just a matter of recognizing how our understanding of ourselves is dependent on our relationships to others, it is through the experience of connection with others that we can cultivate morally significant feelings of care and concern for others. Poetry would be an excellent way to do this.

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Everyday Design as a Practice of World-Making

1. Introduction

A broad spectrum of questions that originated in the philosophy of art, technology, and science now converge in the philosophy of design, which is, as Per Galle rightly points out, "a child of mature parents" (Galle 2007). The methodological and argumentative heterogeneity of the contributions collected in *Advancements in the Philosophy of Design* (Vermaas & Vial 2018) testifies to the abundance of stances on design. Despite its interdisciplinary nature, we can distinguish two macro groupings that regulate the philosophical investigation on design: one group focuses on establishing the creative parameters and the *sui generis* skills of the professional practice; the other addresses the reception of artifacts and their influence in forming the socio-cultural world. This double partition reflects design theorist Alain Findeli's proposal that "design as a topic for philosophy could be considered both as a *process* (conception) and an e*xperience* (reception)" (Vermaas & Vial 2018, 5). Philosophical aesthetics is mainly concerned with outlining the traits that characterize users' reactions to design products, their judgments, and experiences, rather than outlining the 'ar-

tistic' characteristics of the practice, a task that the philosophy of (applied) art would better perform. We can therefore say, without hesitation, that aesthetics is part of the second research group.

The recent subfield of aesthetic theory called everyday aesthetics is of particular interest for understanding the aesthetic response to design objects. By taking distance from an art-centered and elitist interpretation of aesthetics, everyday aesthetics[17] establishes design's particular sphere of action in everyday life, sanctioning its ubiquitous presence and influence on the mundane, habitual, and ordinary life. This meager summary definition does not capture all the nuances of the debate in everyday aesthetics. However, it allows me to introduce a series of statements by everyday aesthetics scholars, specifically those of Jane Forsey and Yuriko Saito. These two philosophers are significantly involved in analyzing the aesthetic relationships we daily develop with material artifacts, and, therefore, their line of reasoning is of chiefly importance to a philosophy of design.

2. Everyday Aesthetics and Design

It is almost mandatory to start with Jane Forsey and her book entitled *The Aesthetics of Design* (2013), where the philosopher questions how design objects should be aesthetically appreciated. Having eliminated the plausibility of experiencing design objects as works of art and craft,[18] Forsey explicitly declares design as a bulwark of everyday aesthetics. In her theory, design objects are "functional, immanent, mass-produced, and mute" (Forsey 2013,

17 According to the everyday aesthetics scholar Jane Forsey, treating design objects as works of art is a categorical mistake, just as much as considering the museum the proper place for such functional objects. Phenomena like the "cult of the designer" (Forsey 2013, 68) result from this categorical mistake.

18 Forsey also shows the difference between the aesthetic experience of design and that of nature to exclude all three main categories of objects with which philosophical aesthetics has traditionally been concerned. However, I will not deal with the category of nature in this text. The main concern is human-made artifacts as part of the lived world and their role in world-making.

68), characteristics that deviate from the exceptionality we attribute to works of art. As Forsey intends it, the qualification 'design' refers to all functional artifacts, rather than being an honorific factor individuating special ones, as other theories contend (e.g., Vitta 2014, Vial 2015).[19] The common denominator of all functional objects is their aesthetic function: they afford to evaluate their use aesthetically —the user's activity with the object.

At the first reading of Forsey's treatise it is difficult to identify a direct engagement with the questions raised by the philosophy of design, considering that the debate on everyday aesthetics absorbs most of the arguments. The main one defends a line of continuity between traditional aesthetics and the aesthetics of everyday life (continuistic account of everyday aesthetics). According to the advocates of this account, methodological approaches to the everyday that lack claim to a universal assent risk trivializing the aesthetic *tout court*; therefore, in establishing the aesthetic in the everyday, they subscribe to its intersubjective and normative conditions. Forsey accomplishes this through a meticulous reworking of the structure of the Kantian judgment of dependent beauty, showing how the criteria of traditional aesthetics apply well to the appreciation of everyday functional objects, that is, design objects.

One of these criteria requires a prescriptive stance on the use of the object we are judging. Accordingly, a correct aesthetic encounter with the object requires that we know what it is for, and only then can we assess a correct judgment of beauty. In other words, we have to know the object's *proper* function, that is "the […] intended function of the thing *as designed* to be the thing it is" (Forsey 2013, 32). She writes: "[the design object's] beauty comes to light only through everyday use, and only when it succeeds in performing *its function* to a degree that merits our approbation" (Forsey 2013, 242, italics mine).

Forsey emphasizes that the correctness of an evaluation de-

19 Stéphane Vial argues that "the philosophy of design must question […] the conditions under which an artifact becomes a designed artifact" (Vial 2015, 4.1).

pends on our acquaintance with the object: we know the object's function, and we use it precisely for this function. This claim implies that if we use, for example, a tire as a swing, and we claim that it is a beautiful swing, we are making a wrong aesthetic judgment. Forsey writes: "while a tire may function as—or be used as—a swing, its function is not to *be* a swing, and if we define it by its function, we call it a tire, not a swing" (2013, 30).

However, I would suggest that we might also appreciate swinging on a tire. In that case, the object is not wrongly individuated, because the focus of appreciation is on what *we do with* the object, rather than on the object itself. I will elaborate on this aspect below, for now, it is enough to say that, especially in everyday life, we do not interact with objects solely and exclusively according to what their proper function prescribes. Therefore, disregarding the appreciation (or contempt) of the improper use of functional objects would be tantamount to ignoring the full spectrum of everyday aesthetic phenomena.

However, even if Forsey's proposal inhibits everyday life's creative possibilities, it is crucial to design aesthetic theory because it shows how the functional and the aesthetic must not necessarily be antithetical.[20] Consequently, we must credit this proposal for taking distance from the purely disinterested and detached attitude that typifies Kantian aesthetics, whence draws heavily on it, and for hinting towards an attitude of active involvement in the appreciative process.

A line of thought projected in this direction is that of Yuriko Saito (2017), who replaces the Kantian position with a full-fledged attitude of engagement and participation in everyday aesthetic processes. Rather than an *a priori* space of spectatorship, Saito's proposal favors a contextualizing account of the dynamic relationships between users and their environment (Saito 2017, 51), start-

20 Another theory that defends the same position was presented by Glenn Parsons and Allen Carlson (2008): functional beauty. More recently, Daniel Martin Feige (2018) defends the position that the notion of function, in design practice, also becomes aesthetic.

ing to explore a genuine aesthetic dimension of daily *actions* and their bearings on the ways we perceive the world. Saito develops a theory which favors the beauty of ordinary activities, highlighting the pleasure of small gestures, such as putting on clothes, washing the face, straightening out the house, and going grocery shopping, which "affect us in an aesthetically relevant way" (Saito 2017, 26).

Two aspects of Saito's analysis of everyday life are central to this discussion: (1) the aesthetic freedom it offers and (2) the incisive power of its aesthetic dimension for (a better) world-making.

With respect to aesthetic freedom Saito writes that, in the everyday, we can exercise "our imagination and creativity as we see fit […] in contrast to the prescribed mode of experiencing paradigmatic art" (Saito 2007, 19–20). Rather than following conventional or institutional agreement as we do when we appreciate art, in the everyday "we are free to rely on our own imagination, judgment, and aesthetic taste as the guide" (Saito 2007, 19). Consequently, Saito's idea of aesthetic engagement opens up the possibility of playing with the everyday, and of expanding the world's spectrum of possible aesthetic configurations. In the context of human-artifact relations, this implies that users are not bound to approach artifacts for their proper functions but can also play with them, and focus their appreciation on what *they do with* the object. We can recall the example of swinging on a tire, where, one may say, user assumes the role of a co-designer in creating new forms of use.[21]

Secondly, in Saito's reading, valuing the aesthetic potential of everyday life can be a powerful device for guiding the ameliorative

21 Within design research, a model of "interaction aesthetics" has already been developed, and applied to information technology. Scholars Melanie Baljko and Nell Tenhaaf write: "The aesthetics of interaction has a focus on enjoyment of experience", as opposed to usability or the ease of use, and argued that the goal should be to strive "for making the unlocking of the functionality [i.e., the use of a product by someone] contribute to the overall experience," an experience that may be "challenging, seductive, playful, surprising, memorable, or rewarding," all of which "[result] in enjoyment of experience." All of these facets play a role in usability, which is more than mere ease of use [Djajadiningrat et al. 2000, 132]. (Baljko & Tenhaaf 2008, 11:7)

project of world-making. This extended quote from *Aesthetics of the Familiar* testifies to the ethical and inclusive cut Saito intends to give to the project of everyday aesthetics:

> Since my discussion concerns mostly the aesthetic lives of people who are not professional world-makers like artists, designers, architects, and other creators, it may sound counterintuitive, as well as a bit grandiose, to refer to everyday aesthetics 'contribution to the world-making project. Despite my claim that everyday aesthetics should attend to the daily activities we undertake, such as laundering and cooking, we generally regard ourselves as recipients, dwellers, and consumers of the world fashioned by professionals. However, […] there are many other ways in which our seemingly trivial and inconsequential aesthetic preference and taste have unexpected serious implications that determine the state of the world and the quality of life. (Saito 2017, 141)

We see how crucial Saito's reflection is in the attempt to reconcile aesthetics and ethics, paying particular attention to respectful actions towards the environment, others, and oneself. To further understand the ethical role of this aesthetic theory, Saito suggests paying attention to "wasteful practice motivated primarily by aesthetic considerations" (Saito 2017, 143), like maintaining a perfect lawn that requires a high amount of water and pesticides, throwing away clothes or artefacts just because they are no longer in fashion, buying only ideally shaped vegetables producing a considerable amount of food waste, and so on and so forth. Saito dedicates the sixth chapter of *The Aesthetic of the Familiar*, listing the consequences of everyday aesthetics, even the catastrophic and inhumane ones, such as the terrible working conditions in garment factories in Bangladesh and China.

In the next section, I will draw a parallel between this aesthetic theory and design research and practice. For now, we can recap by saying that in approaching design artifacts from the point of view of everyday aesthetics, the experience of use becomes fundamental in establishing their aesthetic dimension. We have also seen how, to capture the everyday in its entirety, we must consider a certain degree of freedom that its aesthetic dimension implies. Moreover, the aesthetic qualities that emerge from the quotidian activities become repositories of ameliorative attitudes, in the

sense that the aesthetics of the actions might become a stimulus for more ethical or attentive behaviors towards the material artifacts that make up our world; a type of care that, for example, can make us desist from consumerism or, as Saito says, that functions as a defense strategy against the existing "aesthetic ought" of the capitalist market (Saito 2017, 198) and consumer aesthetics (Saito 2017, 146). Finally, everyday aesthetics validates the aesthetic freedom's responsibility in the project of world-making. Saito writes:

> What this means is that this moral-aesthetic demand is not only directed to the designers and makers of the world. We as users and dwellers of this world are not exempt from such a responsibility. Everyone's engagement in this on-going project of literal world-making, I believe, is as important as every citizen's political participation in a democratic society. (Saito 2007, 241)

3. Design Research and Designing with the User

As discussed above, we are, as consumers, engaged in many wasteful practices. However, many of them are designed *a priori* in products developed to leverage aesthetic desire, rather than actual needs. This fact has not gone unnoticed by design researchers who are questioning the rationale employed in design practice so far. The abundant literature on the subject testifies to this crisis. I will mention only two recent publications, which may also be of interest to philosophers: *Designing in Dark Times* (Tassinari *et al.* 2021), which deploys an Arendtian lexicon as a starting point for reflection and develops a new language to encourage a politically engaged and responsible design *praxis*; and *Dewey and Design* (Dixon, 2020), which intends to provide philosophical foundations to the pressing matters of sustainability and ecology in design, drawing from John Dewey's 'ecological' conception of experience.

Arguably, Sylvia and Victor Margolin (2002) were the first design scholars to issue an urgent invitation to talk about these problems. They proposed a new model of social practice as an alternative to the traditional 'market model' of product design. The endorsement of this model has led to the present moment in which

"social innovation [is becoming the] driver of change toward sustainability" (Manzini 2015, 26) gradually replacing technological-industrial innovation.

The awareness of the anthropocentric perspective on the production and distribution of design, and the recklessness in the use of planetary resources that have significantly contributed to the current ecological crisis, are just some of the issues that engage contemporary designers and researchers. To address these issues, as Fabrizio Ceschin and İdil Gaziulusoy report, a remarkable range of approaches to sustainability in design research have arisen: "green design, product eco-design, emotionally durable design, design for sustainable behavior, cradle-to-cradle design, biomimicry design, sustainable product–service systems, design for the base of the pyramid, design for social innovation, systemic design and design for sustainability transitions" (Ceschin & Gaziulusoy 2020, i).

Some of these design models foresee, among other things, the inclusion of users in the design process, promoting new methods of design practice such as co-design and participatory design. The cooperation methods used in these practices go beyond classical techniques such as market research, usability laboratories, or focus groups. Users become co-designers, and since they have a concrete sense of what is needed, much waste is avoided, both in terms of time and unwanted objects, according to the motto 'waste not, want not'. In fact, one of the purposes of collaborating with end-users is to fully understand the implications of their actions and to understand how the world is appreciated independently from pre-defined templates that designers themselves impose. As a result, the line between the designer and the end-user blurs, changing and blending, but also expanding the traditional tasks that defined designers and users in the design process. While users become co-designers, designers extend their field of intervention by becoming observers and facilitators of new interactive situations. Furthermore, their skills expand to include the ability to provoke critical reflection in users.

These new ways of designing are, in the first instance, probed

with the hope of guaranteeing longevity to products and slowing down the runaway consumerism, revolving around the idea of broadening the field of applicability of design responsibility and participatory care to the objects that constitute the world. Although we cannot eliminate the objects on which we depend and which make up the world, design strategies can be improved in such a way as to furnish the world meaningfully. Consequently, such a design experience becomes beneficial not only for the users but also for the environment.

As we have seen, the new problems that designers face require entirely new approaches, which depend on the ability to interpret the world with a new sensitivity and formulate new research questions. However, one thing is sure: new designers are less concerned with the finished product and instead, they focus on the design process, on how it changes and how it can be improved. For its part, design research theorizes participatory approaches and shared design experience as exemplary moments of world-making.

4. Everyday Design: A New Category of Practices

In the two previous sections, I highlighted the common interests in Yuriko Saito's aesthetic project and some recent design methodologies, both of which can be summarized in one phrase: non-professional modes of designing a better world. On the one hand, everyday aesthetics highlights how our aesthetic decisions impact our project of world-making; on the other hand, design research recognizes the non-professional ways of designing our everyday as valuable moments of the design process. We could give this idea the name of 'everyday design', if this notion were not already present in the design research literature. For example, design researchers Ron Wakkary and Leah Maestri (2007) define everyday design as the phenomenon whereby non-professional designers – "non-designers"— modify or appropriate everyday objects to create new and more suitable ones. Appropriation thus defined can also be applied to spaces or situations. This idea is expressed un-

der: unselfconscious design (Alexander 1964), bricolage[22] (Louridas 1999), co-optation (Ingold 2002), everyday thoughtless acts or intuitive design (Suri 2005), and unexpected behaviors (Brandes & Erlholf 2006). All these notions, while hinting at different nuances of the phenomenon,[23] try to capture the non-professional everyday activity of adapting, co-opting, appropriating, and transforming functional artifacts to improve their fitness in our environments. While design is usually understood as an activity performed by professional designers, the notion of everyday design opens "the generic model of the design project to the user space" (Findeli 2010, 289), just as it is required by the new approaches we mentioned above.

For their part, the ways of everyday design are valued as a resource for the professional practice of design since they show implications of designs and provide directions for improvements. We can identify the importance of this phenomenon for design practice on two fronts: on the one hand, observations of user behavior in everyday design situations inform designers of potentially improper and dangerous uses of their products; on the other hand, it shows their potentially creative and functional misuses. In one way or another, the user is a crucial resource that informs the design process but is also a resource to anticipate unknown uses or needs. User-centered Design, for example, is one design approach that values user feedback. It is founded on the principle that monitoring the user's needs on several occasions during the product's life cycle makes it possible to satisfy these needs regularly. Participatory design is another approach that values user feedback. Its

22 Panagiotis Louridas draws on Levi-Strauss' seminal work *The Savage Mind;* however, the notion of 'bricolage' has been developed by several philosophers in varying frameworks. For an in-depth analysis of the notion of 'bricolage' in philosophy, see Semetsky (2011).

23 We see that some notions support the unconscious character of these activities, while others advocate for their improvisational nature (e.g., Ingold, 2002). Although I realize that these differences have a fundamental role in establishing the aesthetics of everyday design, I will not develop this issue in this article.

strategy is to actively engage users to contribute to the design process once accessible only to professional designers. However, an approach that acknowledges everyday design goes further than attending to users' feedback and is based on the idea that "the design act is incomplete if we do not address what happens to the project's output once it starts its life in the social world" (Findeli 2010, 289).

Everyday design certainly has a heuristic purpose: it can induce designers to grasp aspects of the daily routine that might go unnoticed, but it can also stimulate the design of artifacts that favor everyday design itself, incorrect appropriation, and the discovery of multi-functionality. As we have said earlier, Saito's idea of everyday aesthetic engagement opens up the possibility of playing with design objects. Once the playful relationship has been identified, it is possible to conceive it as a space for design intervention; for example, designers can develop artifacts whose virtue lies in their ability to promote relevant aesthetic qualities in the user's co-design activity. This line of thinking suggests that identifying aspects of the aesthetics of use can help the design process establish a more lasting relationship between user and object. In this sense, designing for creative misuse and accessible change (recycling, re-use, repurpose, etc.) might be a design strategy for sustainability. The design research team composed of Tom Djajadiningrat, Stephan Wensveen, Joep Frens, and Kees Overbeeke draw attention to the fact that "the prospect of beauty of interaction may not only tempt users to engage in interaction, but also tempt them to persevere in interacting" (Djajadiningrat *et al.* 2004, 296). This claim also highlights a tendency in design research to establish longer-lasting relationships between the user and the object as one of the strategies to cope with the increasingly pressing ecological problem that designers must address.

5. Concluding Remarks

I have introduced the phenomenon of everyday design as a subject of design research. This notion functions within a para-

digm that considers design as an open process that does not end once the object has been produced. As Audrey Desjardins and Ron Wakkary claim,

> once the artifacts leave the designer's drawing table, the design process does not stop: it can be pursued through customization, reuse, appropriation, do-it-yourself (DIY) projects and everyday design processes. (Desjardins & Wakkary 2013, 253)[24]

However, I consider it also a valid subject for everyday aesthetics' sphere of inquiry. First of all, as it has been characterized, the phenomenon of everyday design refers to a specific form of everyday creativity and, as such, it is a valuable addition to the broad list of quotidian activities that the scholars of everyday aesthetics have examined. Moreover, we have seen that everyday design can be a powerful practice of sustainable-world-making, and as such, it falls within the scope of the overall project of acknowledging a substantial impact of everyday activities on the state of the world, be it positive or, as we saw earlier, negative. As Saito rightly states:

> Although many of us are not professional world-makers like architects, designers, manufacturers, or policymakers, we all participate in humanity's collective and cumulative project of world-making, and one major determinant for its direction is our aesthetic preferences, tastes, and judgments which result in various actions, such as purchasing, interacting with others, and supporting a certain cause. (Saito 2017, 185)

We might add *everyday designing* to the list.[25]

That everyday actions, and not only objects, deserve attention in everyday aesthetics is not a new claim. However, it is essential to notice that positive appreciation of these actions may positively

24 Among the various projects whose primary goal is to co-produce and share resources to implement artifacts, it is worth mentioning, although it does not fully exemplify the idea of everyday design, the Open Source Hardware Association that now has its academic journal —HardwareX— published by Elsevier, which issues "articles that describe the design, construction and customization of scientific devices and equipment." The description is taken from the official webpage on Science Direct.

25 In the introduction, I recalled how design had been philosophically considered either a process or an experience; in the case of everyday design, we approach it simultaneously as a process (conception) and as an experience (reception).

influence people's relation with the objects that furnish their lives. I have argued that misuse of objects can be positively appreciated. For this reason, I concluded that the aesthetics of design is not reducible to the appreciation of objects based on their use according to their proper function, that is, the function intended by their designer. This fact is corroborated precisely by the existence of the phenomenon of everyday design, which describes the fact that we tend to repurpose objects.[26]

An example of aesthetics of design grounded in an intentionalist view of artifact's function is that of Jane Forsey. Such an approach takes away the possibility of discussing the aesthetic appreciation of accidental functions, but above all, the appreciation of our actions of misuse, like swinging on a tire. While Forsey put forward the proposal to consider design as the category of objects that best represents the demands of everyday aesthetics, I have suggested that the aesthetic dimension of design is revealed in everyday life *also,* in the appreciation of our creative misuses of objects.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that considering the *aesthetics of everyday design* means observing how people usually act in the world and considering those actions as a creative way to cope with an environment that does not always fit their needs. In these terms, enjoying everyday design becomes a way to improve our experiential life in aesthetic terms, a way of being free from 'aesthetic oughts'. For all these reasons, the phenomenon of everyday design should be particularly interesting for everyday aesthetics. At this point, we just have to indulge ourselves in finding novel uses for the objects that surround us and possibly enjoy them.

26 There would also be a second argument against the notion of proper/intended function: the designer fallacy, that is, "the notion that a designer can design into a technology, its purposes and uses" (Ihde 2008, 51). As Ihde argues, design objects are functionally multistable, suggesting that they are not reducible to the function or functions that their designer has intended since it is possible to imagine many different uses.

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David Collins

Two or Three Incompatibilities Between Art and Technology

> We can hold in our minds the enormous benefits of technological society, but we cannot so easily hold the ways it may have deprived us, because technique is ourselves.
>
> *George Grant, "A Platitude"*[27]

> We live in a machine-made age. In such an age, can art flourish?
>
> *R. G. Collingwood, "Art and the Machine"*[28]

1. Introduction

It has long been unremarkable to note that contemporary Western and, increasingly, global society is an essentially *technological* one. As the quote above from Canadian philosopher George Grant suggests, the degree to which our lives and actions—and even our thoughts, feelings, and conscious awareness—are increasingly bound up with the use of technological devices, and with technologically oriented ways of thinking more broadly, can render the extent of their effect on us invisible through familiarity and

27 Grant (1969, 137).
28 Collingwood (c.1926, 292).

normalization.[29] The tendency to think (or, perhaps, to assume unthinkingly) that the mediation of an activity or experience through technology is, *ceteris paribus*, an 'enhancement,' making it better than it would be without this mediation, and to think that the more technically advanced the mediating technology is, the better the activity or experience will be, can be seen as both an expression of this technological orientation and an effect of its seeming normalcy. For just one example of this kind of thinking, consider the now-commonplace assumption that teaching and learning are improved by incorporating 'technology' into classrooms, with *technical* advances in the devices used being conflated with pedagogical advances (as if the use of a bulb-powered slide projector rather than a high definition LCD projector to show a still image, or as if using a VCR to play a film rather than streaming a digital file, will result in students learning less from what they are shown).

It is doubly unremarkable for this tendency to feature in practices and discourses related to art, given the general prevalence of this tendency and the importance placed on novelty in the arts. Artists are driven by internal as well as external (e.g., commercial) considerations to do something new and different in their work, and for someone to use the latest 'cutting-edge' technology is generally seen as a—if not *the*—way for them not only to be up-to-date but to be 'ahead of the curve,' i.e., already part of an ever-impending, more advanced future. As such, it makes sense for artists—who have always looked for new mediums of creative expression and for new ways of working with existing media in their art-making practices, and who have both intrinsic and pragmatic motivation to innovate—to explore and incorporate recent technologies

29 An example of this normalization can be found in the increasingly popular phrase 'the new normal', which frames the conditions it is used to describe as not only 'normal'—i.e., as both common and acceptable, or normative—but as an unavoidable part of our reality that is already in place and which we can do nothing about but adjust to it. The phrase is potentially dangerous insofar as it risks leading to a kind of passivity and sense of alienation, or diminishment of agency, in those who use and hear it, at least when it is used to describe conditions that are not truly both acceptable and inevitable.

that already possess the aura of 'the new.' Art exhibiters and curators, as well as critics and academics whose professions involve writing on art, have similar motivation to present, promote, and discuss works that incorporate or make use of the latest technologies: examples include the use of 'virtual reality,' recent exhibits such as "Beyond Van Gogh," "Beyond Monet," etc., which have been staged in several North American cities,[30] and recent debates among philosophers of art concerning digital images or digital art,[31] or whether or not video games, for example, can be artworks.[32]

It is against this background, both within the artworld and in society at large, that I wish to consider some fundamental respects in which art and technology are incompatible. I do not, of course, mean that artists cannot use technological mechanisms or devices in their creative processes or that 'real' artworks cannot incorporate or contain such mechanisms or devices. Nearly all traditional artforms involve the skilled use of tools of some sort, whether instruments to produce music, brushes to apply paint to

30 In these Beyond exhibitions, famous paintings—or rather, digital images of them—are projected in large-scale onto the walls, ceilings, and floors of rooms through which spectators walk, with the projected images moving along these surfaces, shifting and swirling, and with parts of the images being animated or being superimposed and dissolving into each other. This visual display is accompanied by a soundtrack of background music, audio effects, and voice-overs reading the artist's words, e.g., from letters or journals. The promise of these exhibitions is to offer viewers an 'immersive experience' that 'puts them inside' the paintings and allows them to encounter the artist's work in a new—and, it is implied, more direct and immediate—way. What is overlooked is that what the 'visitor' encounters and experiences is anything but the artwork the artist created—i.e., the painting as he or she painted it—which was not moving nor animated, was not intended to be the size of an entire wall, was not two-dimensional but included the build-up of paint on canvasses with the subtle shadowing and depth this adds, etc. Hence, if we take the paintings qua artworks to be the things that the artists made and did, such exhibits have nothing to do with the art in these paintings but merely repurpose and reproduce many of their visual properties for the sake of spectacle, effectively reducing them to a kind of wallpaper.

31 For a recent comprehensive contribution to the discussion on the nature of the digital image, see Thomson-Jones 2021. On the topic of digital art in general, see Paul (2015).

32 See, e.g., Tavinor (2009).

canvasses—not to mention the paints and the canvasses themselves— hammers and chisels to carve stone, cameras and lighting equipment used in the shooting of films, etc. If the claim were that 'real' art can never involve technology in these ways it would be clearly false. Rather, the incompatibilities I am concerned with run deeper, and ultimately do not separate objects that are artworks on one hand from objects that are tools or products of technology on the other, but lie between art and technology as forms of making things and as ways of thinking or experiencing, and of conceiving of and relating to reality: i.e., what we might call our 'being in the world'.

The first of these, which I will call the 'conceptual' or 'ontological' incompatibility, is a matter of a fundamental difference between the way that works of art are made or brought into being and the way in which products of technical processes of making are made, with a related incompatibility between the aspects or properties in virtue of which something counts as art and those in virtue of which something counts as a product of technical making or a technological device, i.e., a tool. While this does not entail that an object cannot be both a work of art and a product or a piece of technology, it does entail that whatever makes it art will be distinct from, and conceptually incompatible with, whatever makes it technological.

The second incompatibility, which I will call 'attentional' or 'experiential,' involves a conflict between the kinds of engagement proper to encountering artworks, on the one hand, and to the use of technological devices or processes on the other. As well as arguing for a general conflict between these ways of engaging, I argue that the uses of certain recent technologies that are increasingly ubiquitous in their mediation of many people's experiences—specifically including, but not necessarily limited to, internet-connected screen-based technologies—encourage or require, and habituate their users to, ways of being conscious of and relating to things that are largely incompatible with, and so work against, the forms of consciousness and engagement that are most plausibly

involved in the proper apprehension and appreciation of artworks *qua* art. The final section brings together the preceding two lines of discussion to argue that the attentional or experiential incompatibility is grounded in the ontological incompatibility, with both being symptoms of an incompatibility between art and technology as ways of understanding and relating to the world.

My analysis draws largely on the work of R.G. Collingwood, especially his distinction between art and 'craft' in *The Principles of Art* (1938; hereafter *PA*) and its similarities to distinctions found in Henri Bergson's thought between organic creation and what he calls 'manufacture' or 'fabrication,' as well as appealing to Martin Heidegger's notion of technology as 'enframing.' Despite drawing on the latter two thinkers, my project is not one of 'continental' philosophy as typically understood, nor is my approach typical of current 'analytic' philosophy, despite also drawing on recent work by Bence Nanay. If labels are desired, my approach could be called 'synthetic philosophy' insofar as it involves considering the views of different thinkers, bringing together what is similar or compatible in them, and relating this to empirical observation in order to gain a more synoptic and perspicacious understanding of a phenomenon. Moreover, my aim is not merely to draw conceptual distinctions for their own sake but for my discussion to have potential practical application, with the incompatibilities I highlight helping to show how certain presuppositions and ways of thinking, which seem to be behind some of the ways that artists, curators, exhibiters, etc. have adopted certain technologies—especially digital and internet-related technologies— risk conceptual confusion to the potential detriment of what is valuable in the art they make and exhibit. I hope not to be construed as 'telling artists how to do their job,' but as pointing out these conceptual confusions and explaining how they might be detrimental if they go unrecognized, where recognizing them might usefully inform artistic practices in ways that artists, exhibitors, etc. are best positioned to determine.[33]

33 Cf. Collingwood (1931) for his argument that how we conceive of and think about art makes a difference for artistic practice, with confused thinking

2. The Conceptual or Ontological Incompatibility

The first incompatibility involves a difference between two kinds of making—viz., between processes of artistic creation on the one hand and processes of technical manufacturing on the other— with this difference grounding a further distinction between things that result from these processes: viz., artworks and products of technique. While these two sorts of making and the two sorts of thing that result from them are conceptually distinguishable, in practice they can and often do overlap: the process by which a work of visual art is created, for example, can involve the artist's skilful employment of techniques such as the mixing of pigments according to a known formula to achieve a certain colour on the canvass, the use of linear perspective or foreshortening to achieve a naturalistic-looking depiction of a scene or object, geometrically organizing the composition according to the golden ratio to achieve a balanced composition, etc. Likewise, some works of art, once made, can be used as tools and so will have technological functions: e.g., some works of ceramic art can be used as bowls or flower vases, some quilts can be both works of art and practical blankets, etc. However, while a work of art can also be a product of technical making and can itself be a tool or piece of technology, the respects in which it may be technological will always be distinct from the respect in which is it art: ontologically speaking, we might say that such a thing has two distinct aspects or parts to its being.

Moreover, whatever artistic value a thing might have will be grounded in its art-aspect, with any technical value it might have relating to its technical aspect but not to the former. For example,

being likely to lead to worse practice. This is in tension with a famous quote by the painter Barnett Newman to the effect that artists need aesthetics like birds need ornithology—which is to say, not at all. While witty, Newman's aphorism rests on a false analogy: it is artworks, not artists, which are analogous to birds. The proper analogy here would compare artists and bird-watchers, or perhaps avian veterinarians, for whom ornithology, or at least good understanding of what birds are and what they do, is clearly relevant.

the fact that a work functions well as a tool will not itself add to its value *qua* art, and the fact that its production involved a difficult technical accomplishment or the use of a technically advanced piece of equipment does not, on its own, make it any better *qua* art, nor do the facts that its production was technically simple or crude, or that it fails to function well as some kind of tool, make it any worse *qua* art.

This distinguishing between the respects in which a thing may be art from the respects in which it may be technological largely maps onto, but goes beyond, the distinction Collingwood draws between what he calls 'art proper' and 'craft' (*PA*, chs. II-V). This difference is at the core of his argument against what he refers to as the technical theory of art, which he takes to have dominated Western thinking about art since at least Ancient Greece, where dismissing the technical theory upfront clears the ground for him to lay out his own positive theory of just what art is, if it is not a form of craft.

Although Collingwood does not define craft in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, he does offer what we would now call a 'cluster account' of craft, according to which the possession of all or most of a number of features that are characteristic of craft can suffice for something to count as a work of craft, and where lacking all such features will discount a thing from being a work of craft.[34] These features are: (i) a distinction between means and end, where the means "are passed through or traversed in order to reach the end, and are left behind once the end is reached" (*PA*, 15); (ii) a distinction between planning and execution, where "the result to be obtained is preconceived or thought out before being arrived at," where this result is the end as distinct from the means that are used to realize it, and where precise foreknowledge of what is to be realized is "indispensable to craft" (*PA*, 15–16);[35] (iii) a reversal of

34 Cf. Gaut (2000) for a cluster account of art which works to illustrate the nature of cluster accounts in general.

35 Collingwood's point here is that "if a person sets out to make a table, but conceives the table only vaguely ... he is no craftsman" (PA, 16).

the relation between means and end in the planning and execution stages, such that envisaging the end is prior to determining the means to realize it in the planning stage, whereas when executing the plan the means are enacted before the end comes about; (iv) a distinction between raw material and finished product, where the process of crafting something transforms a pre-existing material into some other thing, e.g., transforming logs into a table; (v) a distinction between form and matter, where the matter remains the same in both the raw material and the finished product but the form this matter takes is changed via the process of crafting; and (vi) a hierarchical relationship between crafts, where the end or product of one craft serves as the means or the raw material for another, or where there is a hierarchical division of labour between, e.g., the making of an artifact's parts and their assembly (*PA*, 16–17).

Collingwood goes on to argue that even if some works of art share certain of these features, for any of these features, taken individually or in some combination, there will be examples of works of art that lack them, where this includes the possibility of works of art that have none of these six features. Artworks need not be means to anything but can be ends in themselves, and artists do not need to have definite plans in mind of what they are going to make before or while they are making it: moreover, there is a sense in which they *cannot* have too precise an idea of what a finished artwork will be, since, in cases where the final form of a work can be fully envisioned before it is externalized—as in the case of a poem for which all of the words and their exact order are composed 'in the poet's head', so to speak, without being written or spoken— the 'envisioning' or planning just is that work's creation. Not all artworks have anything like raw materials from which they are made, even if some, such as works of sculpture or architecture, do; and in many artworks there is no clear way of distinguishing between their 'form' and a 'matter' that could have been formed differently, where the works just are the matter-so-formed. Finally, artworks with multiple authors or makers do not exhibit the same

kinds of hierarchical relationship that, e.g., the manufacture of the parts of a car and their assembly do, with multiply-authored works being collaborations rather than assemblages. Thus, Collingwood concludes, none of these features, either separately or jointly, is proper to art: hence art is essentially distinct from craft, with the feature or features in virtue of which something is art being separate from the features in virtue of which it is a work of craft, i.e., an artifact.

This distinction between art and craft is not unique to Collingwood, and so accepting it does not entail an acceptance of his positive theory of what art is. It is also found in Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934; hereafter *AE*), where despite the fact that Dewey writes of the "raw material of experience" being "reworked" in the course of creative expression (*AE*, 77) it would be a mistake to read him as advocating what Collingwood calls a 'technical' theory of art. The difference here is largely terminological, with Dewey being comfortable using the metaphor of 'raw materials' to talk about experience and feeling where Collingwood does not: however, both would agree that experiences, feelings, etc. do not already exist as determinate 'objects' in their own right prior to their development via expression, and so are not 'raw materials' in the same way that lumps of ore or bars of iron are for a blacksmith or wooden planks and beams are for a carpenter.

That Dewey's is not a 'technical' theory of art that conflates art with craft can be seen from his insistence that "craftsmanship alone is not art" (*AE*, 148), and from the distinctions he draws between art and mere technique (*AE*, 49), between the artistic and the merely "artful" or artificial (*AE*, 65), and between artistic and merely mechanical processes (*AE*, 49-50, 52, 144, 200). Also, like Collingwood, he does not take the end result of a process of artistic creation—i.e., an artwork—to be something that can be pre-determined or precisely envisioned before its creation, writing that something someone makes "may be a display of technical virtuosity" but that "if the artist does not perfect a new vision in his process of doing," i.e., does not make something that was at least in

some ways unforeseen, "he acts mechanically and repeats some old model fixed like a blueprint in his mind" (*AE*, 52, cf. 144). Moreover, he takes artworks to be intrinsically meaningful rather than instrumentally purposive, at least *qua* art (*AE*, 94, 117, 119, 122), and, like Collingwood, does not take artistic creation or artworks to admit of essential distinctions between means and end (*AE*, 65) or form and matter (*AE*, 114).

The kind of making that Collingwood calls craft corresponds to what Bergson, in *Creative Evolution* (1907; hereafter *CE*), alternately calls 'manufacture' or 'fabrication,' and to which he opposes the kind of organic creation involved in the development and growth of living organisms, species, etc., which he calls 'organization.' Manufacture, Bergson writes, "consists in assembling parts of matter which we have cut out [i.e., abstracted from the whole material plenum] in such a manner that we can fit them together and obtain from them a common action," where "[t]he parts are arranged ... around the action as an ideal centre" (*CE*, 92), which is to say, the artifacts that manufacturing produces by putting parts together or otherwise shaping matter is done for the sake of some use this artifact will have for us, i.e., how it will contribute to our possibilities for acting on other parts of matter.[36] In other words, the products of manufacturing are, at least paradigmatically, tools, with these products' values and the processes by which they are made being instrumental.

One of the ways that manufacture differs from organization—i.e., organic creation—is that the manufacturer produces new forms by acting on these parts and materials 'from without,' so to speak, where both the manufacturer's actions and the parts or materials used are external to the form created: e.g., neither the iron, the fire, nor the smith's activity of hammering and quenching is the resulting horseshoe. Organization, however, is a kind of growth or development *from within*, occurring by dissocia-

36 Cf. CE, 182-83: "Fabrication consists in shaping matter, in making it supple and bending it, in converting it into an instrument in order to become master of it."

tion rather than association and producing more from less, so to speak, rather than bringing together multiple things to form one new thing. We can think of cellular division here, where one cell becomes two, or the development of a new organ such as the eye where its parts, e.g., the cornea, retina, lens, etc., did not pre-exist the eye and were not assembled in order to form the latter but rather came into existence through the development of the organ itself (*CE*, 86-89). Another way that manufacture and organic creation differ is that organic creation, while teleological, is not done for the sake of a pre-determined purpose or final cause in Aristotle's sense, with the form of an organism not being given in advance but emerging through the organism's growth and development: however, the purpose and form of a manufactured artifact is given in advance, at least in the manufacturer's plans and purposes if not in the material world. As Bergson puts it, "the manufacturer finds in his product exactly what he has put into it" (*CE*, 92), referring both to the material parts used, with the product being nothing over and above the sum of these parts, and to the form and function, which were conceived and intended before they were materially effected.

This distinction between the organic creation of living organisms and the manufacture of artifacts is relevant in this context because Bergson clearly takes artistic creation to parallel biological creation and artworks to parallel organisms, with artworks being organic unities, counting as what he calls 'organized' things as distinct from fabricated artifacts which, in his terms, exhibit a 'vital' or 'willed' order but are not, strictly speaking, 'organized' (see *CE*, 224). This is made clear by his many examples of artworks and artists' processes of creation, where he uses these examples to illustrate, by analogy, the differences between life and matter.[37] So, although Bergson does not explicitly contrast artworks with fab-

37 See CE, 6, 7, 44-45, 89-90, 177, 209, 239-40, 258, and 340-41 for some of these analogies. Cf. Bergson (1920) for a similar point about works of art not being foreseeable in advance of their creation, and hence being genuinely novel creations.

ricated artifacts in the way that Collingwood contrasts art with craft,[38] because he takes artworks to be analogous to living organisms with respect to their creation and because he explicitly contrasts organic creation with fabrication/manufacture, it follows that he takes works of art to differ from fabricated or crafted artifacts with respect to both the processes of their production and the kinds of entity they are: viz., self-contained organic unities vs. assemblages that are individuated by our possibilities for acting on them—i.e., for using them as instruments or tools— respectively.

These points from Bergson inform Collingwood's distinction by showing that the difference between works of art and works of craft is not only a difference between ways of making things but is also an ontological difference between their products: i.e., the kinds of things made. It is important to keep in mind that, as mentioned above, this difference in kind does not necessarily entail a difference between separate objects, since the same object, e.g., a ceramic vase or a Gothic cathedral, can be a work of art in one respect and a work of craft in another. The difference, rather, is one between what we might call 'aspects' of objects. Analogously, we can talk of the mental and physical aspects of a person, or the cultural and material aspects of a piece of currency, as aspects of the same 'thing' rather than as two different substances. The same person can be seen as an intentional or moral agent in one context, e.g., in a court of law, and as a physical body of muscle, bone, organs, etc. in another, e.g., on a surgeon's operating table—or where the same piece of paper can be seen as valuable in the context of a commercial transaction and as worthless to someone lost in the wilderness in need of food and shelter.

This entails that the kinds of decisions and choices that go into making an artwork and into making a artifact or tool, and the value-bearing or 'good-making' properties of each, will be different. For instance, the maker of an artifact will choose to make

38 The one explicit contrast he makes is between artisans (i.e., fabricators) and artists, where he notes that the latter, but not the former, accept the unforeseeability of what they are making prior to its realization (CE, 45).

it one way rather than another because of the difference this will make to the artifact's ability to perform the function for which it is being made, whereas the maker of an artwork will choose to make it a certain way rather than another in light of the difference this will make to its expressiveness, or beauty, or whatever else one holds to be a distinguishing characteristic of art *qua* art. Likewise, the craftsperson's design choices, and the product thereof, will be evaluated *qua* craft on the basis of how well the product performs its intended function and how well the maker's choices contribute to this. On the other hand, an artist's creative choices, and the artwork that emerges from them, will be evaluated *qua* art based on a different set of values, where these will be artistic or aesthetic values[39] rather than instrumental or practical ones.

All this is to say that something is, and has value as, a work of art in a wholly different way than that in which something is, and has value as, a work of craft or a manufactured artifact, even if the same object is both a work of art in one respect and a work of craft, e.g., a tool, in another. Importantly, this distinction applies not only to the kinds of craft that Collingwood refers to in his examples but to technology in general, including both technological devices or tools and technical, means-end processes for which there is no physical object that results from the shaping or assembling of material parts: an example would be following a method or formula for action when performing a certain activity. If anything is essential to technology in general, it is instrumentality, and so any form of technology will involve a relation between distinct means and ends, where products of manufacture are not only ends resulting from the utilization of means but are themselves means

39 Whatever one takes these distinctly artistic values to be will be tied to how one understands art. On a Collingwoodian account, for instance, this will a matter of a work's success in expressing, i.e., articulating and clarifying, the qualitative dimensions of experience. Because I do not want to tie my argument here to any particular theory of art, I leave these artistic values undefined. However, my points will work for any account of art that takes what makes something art to be separate from any practical or instrumental function it may have.

to achieve some further end, or ends, via their use. Moreover, the ends that are involved in technological processes, whether this is the design of a tool or the purpose which that tool is meant to realize through its use—e.g., the shape, material composition, and weight distribution of a hammer as the end to which means are employed in its making, or the end of driving nails into wood to which the finished hammer is a means; or, equally, a portable computer and its software as ends of processes of manufacturing and programming, respectively, or the ends for which the software is used—will necessarily be pre-determined: one must envisage the end to which a tool is meant as a means in order to know how to design and make that tool well, i.e., in order to find the right means to the end of its making.

Unlike technological devices or processes, works of art are not, *qua* art, means to achieve pre-determined ends, with what is artistic about a work—i.e., what the artist created and what bears artistic value—not resulting from a technical process of making where it is a pre-envisioned end to which means are found and employed to bring about. Moreover, whereas technological devices or processes are repeatable and are largely interchangeable with other devices or processes that achieve the same results, works of art are unique and non-fungible. This has implications not just for the nature of artworks but for their value, with the value of an artwork *qua* art being intrinsic and the value of a tool or technical process being extrinsic, deriving entirely from the value of the end or ends to which it is a means.

More will be said below about the further metaphysical implications of this distinction between the artistic and the technological, where, for example, the repeatability of technological devices and processes is tied to a view of reality as uniform and determinable—and so, predictable and controllable—whereas the uniqueness of artworks implies that reality contains at least some room for indeterminacy and difference, e.g., in the way that works of art will affect each audience member differently, or the same person differently on different occasions, in ways that are not determined

in advance. Before getting to these points, however, there is another incompatibility to discuss: one between the ways of apprehending and relating to things that are proper to artworks on one hand and tools and technological processes on the other.

3. The Attentional or Experiential Incompatibility

Since instrumentality, or the use of means to achieve ends, is essential to technology, relating to something *as* technological is a matter of using it for the sake of some purpose beyond that thing and beyond one's experience of and interactions with it. For instance, to relate to a pen as a piece of technology is to use it to write or draw something, where what is written or drawn is the end the production of which the pen is used as a means, where this end, *qua* the written word(s) or drawn shape(s), is distinct from the pen and one's action of writing with it. Likewise, perceiving or experiencing something as technology is a matter of seeing it *as* something-to-be-used: i.e., experiencing it in terms of its functionality, with the ends to which it can serve as a means being implicit in one's experience of it, in the way that, e.g., we experience a chair in a room as 'pointing to' the possibility of sitting, a cash register in a store as 'pointing to' the possibility of making a purchase, etc. It follows that relating to or experiencing something *as* technological positions oneself as essentially a *user* of that thing, if only potentially, just as it views the thing in question as essentially something to be used.

On the other hand, if works of art are not, *qua* art, instruments or means to ends, relating to something *as* art necessarily will not be a matter of using it as a means, and attending to or experiencing something as art will similarly not involve seeing or experiencing it in terms of any function it has or any end to which it points. Just what relating to and experiencing something *qua* art will properly involve, of course, will depend on the theory of art that one endorses or assumes. However, given that any plausible theory of art will understand it in non-instrumental terms—where

in the case of functional artworks, one will take what makes them count as art to be distinct from what makes them functional— this will always be some relation other than that between a user and a thing to be used.

Even with a particular theory of art in mind it will be difficult to specify just what relating to artworks properly *qua* art involves, partly because anything like a specifiable 'method' or 'technique' for how to attend to artworks is already technological and so foreign to art taken *qua* art, and partly because of the uniqueness of artworks, where each work will need to be apprehended, engaged with, and valued in a potentially different way from any other artwork, in order to be properly appreciated as the work it is. Still, from this we can infer that whatever apprehending or relating to something *qua* art will look like in any given case, it will involve being open to the work as a particular; to 'getting on its wavelength,' so to speak, apprehending it for what it is—what Collingwood calls "a certain thing"—rather than apprehending it in terms of a generalized category or type—or as what he calls "a thing of a certain kind" (*PA*, 114).

Engaging with something openly and attending to it in its particularity plausibly requires certain attitudes and dispositions, as well as certain ways of perceiving and experiencing. For example, it will plausibly involve being psychologically (mentally and emotionally) 'present' to the object of one's engagement in the way that people who practice meditation speak of being fully present and 'in the moment,' where this will preclude thinking ahead to a use to which the object could be put. It will also plausibly involve paying close, sustained attention to the object's qualities or features, and to how these relate to each other and to the object as a whole as an organic unity or *Gestalt* that is more than the sum of these 'parts.'[40] This kind of attention is in keeping with traditional talk in aesthetics of 'disinterestedness,' which, as Jerome Stolnitz explains,

40 Cf. AE, 24, for what Dewey refers to as 'really perceiving' something as a particular thing, as opposed to merely recognizing it as a member of a general kind, and Stolnitz (1960, 34), for what he calls "read[ing] the labels."

is a matter of attending to something "not ... out of concern for any ulterior purpose which it may serve," and so, without "trying to use [it]" (Stolnitz 1960, 35). Moreover, the idea of attending to an artwork as a unique particular or a 'certain thing' is in keeping with the second part of Stolnitz's definition of the 'aesthetic attitude' as disinterested *and sympathetic* attention, where by 'sympathetic' he means appreciating an object's "individual quality" and accepting the object "on its own terms" (Stolnitz 1960, 36).[41]

It is also in line with what Bence Nanay calls 'distributed attention,' which he takes to be the way of attending to things that is characteristic of many paradigm cases of aesthetic experience, including the experience of artworks. By this he does not mean a form of attention that is solely or entirely spread about among its intentional objects, but one wherein our attention is focused on a single perceptual object[42] while being distributed across a wide range of this object's properties (Nanay 2016, 12-13, 23). For instance, the viewer of a painting might focus on the whole painting as her perceptual object while simultaneously having her attention distributed among the variety of shapes and colours it contains and their arrangement and interrelations within the overall composition. According to Nanay, this is an inversion of the way people typically attend in 'ordinary' experience, which involves distributing our attention over several perceptual objects while focusing on a limited set of properties of these objects, especially properties that relate to our practical purposes or 'interests' (Nanay 2016, 23-24). For instance, someone engaged in cooking a meal might be distributing his attention across a number of objects—in-

41 Although Stolnitz is claiming this of what he calls aesthetic attention, or the attention characteristic of one who regards something with an 'aesthetic attitude,' and so does not mean this to be specific to or exhaustive of the ways we experience artworks, both disinterestedness and sympathy as he explains them are plausibly part of what it is to attend to and apprehend or experience a work of art qua art, vs., say, qua material object, qua commodity, qua tool, etc.

42 By 'perceptual object' Nanay means coherent sets of things as well as individual things, so that a whole landscape and one tree within it could both count as single perceptual objects. See Nanay (2016, 25).

gredients, utensils, kitchen appliances, etc.—but focusing only on the properties of these objects that relate to the act of cooking and the meal he is making.

Nanay backs up these claims by citing empirical studies tracking the eye movements of viewers looking at paintings and photographs, where the movements of experienced artists and art critics are compared with those of viewers without any special experience of engaging closely with visual art. Setting aside questions of just how eye movement patterns correlate with attention, these studies show a strong tendency for the eyes of 'expert' viewers to move over the whole of an image and to look back and forth between certain non-dominant graphic features of the image, other such non-dominant features, and the image's dominant features or central figure—e.g., a human face or form— and to spend less sustained time on the dominant features alone. This suggests that they are attending not just to these features sequentially but to their relations within and to the composition as a whole, with the composition being the perceptual object within which this distributed attention is focused (see Vogt and Magnussen 2007). On the other hand, 'layman' viewers show a tendency to look more at the dominant feature or central figure of an image and for their gaze to return to and linger on it, which suggests they are attending to these features in a focused way. (If my own personal experience of watching people in galleries is representative, this is likely to be combined with distributed attention spread over the multiple paintings in a given room in a gallery.)

These forms of what, following Nanay, we can call 'aesthetic' and 'ordinary' attention—where the former is not only characteristic of aesthetic experiences generally, e.g., of natural objects and scenes, urban landscapes, etc., but also of the way an informed viewer will typically attend to an artwork—are not the only ways we can attend to things. We can also distribute our attention across both a range of objects and a range of properties thereof, where we might call this 'unfocused' or 'distracted' attention; or, we can focus our attention on a single object and a limited set of

its properties, where we might characterize this as 'interested,' 'hyper-focused,' or perhaps 'single-minded' attention (see Nanay 2016, 24-25). Notably, this last form of attention is most plausibly characteristic of the way we attend to tools or technological processes when we are using them—e.g., methods with steps to follow in order to attain a result— or at least when using them non-habitually and non-automatically: i.e., paying focused attention both to the tool or device as an object and to a limited range of its properties, viz., those of its properties that count towards its function or instrumentality and so are relevant for achieving the end to which we are using it as a means.[43] The habitual and automatic use of technological devices and processes, on the other hand, where we do not need to actively attend to them in order to use them, plausibly might involve our mind wandering as we are going through the familiar motions of their use, with our attention being distributed among both objects and properties in the manner characterized as unfocused or distracted.

It follows that the characteristic form of attention paid to artworks in our engagements with them *qua* art is incompatible with the form of attention that is characteristically involved in our use of something as a tool, i.e., *qua* technology, insofar as attending in one way reverses the focus on objects and properties that comprises the other way of attending. There is, moreover, a further and more significant incompatibility here: not between art and technology in general but between the form of attention that is proper to engaging with artworks *qua* art, on the one hand, and habits of attention and awareness formed through the use of recent digital and internet-related technologies on the other. Insofar as the use of such technologies has become nearly ubiquitous over the last two decades, with these devices and software (or 'apps') coming to

43 The use of a tool or a technological process could also involve this type of doubly-focused or 'interested' attention paid to the end to which we are using it as a means, where our attention gets absorbed in the technical act itself to the point that we forget about the specific means we are employing in this act.

mediate more and more of our experiences, this could be called a practical and not just a conceptual incompatibility since it implies the real and present hampering of the capacities of users of these kinds of technologies—which is to say, the majority of us—to fully and properly attend to, and so apprehend, artworks *qua* art.

Some of the ways that internet-related technologies have been shown to affect their users' habits of attention and awareness are documented in Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (2011), which aims to make the results of empirical studies by neurologists, psychologists, and cognitive scientists accessible to a broader audience. A common idea that emerges from these studies is that internet use, partly in virtue of how the medium itself is designed, is rewiring the neural networks in users' brains to form new habits of attention, perception, and cognition (Carr 2011, 34), with these habits being of what Nanay would call unfocused attention: i.e., the distribution of our attention over both objects and properties.

Specifically, these studies show the attentional habits that are formed to consist in decreased concentration, absorption, and sustained attention and a tendency toward "staccato thinking" and "skimming" (Carr 2011, 7), combined with a practical or instrumental focus on efficiency, with readers tending to skim through the texts they read online—and, increasingly, off-line as well—and "shopping around" for the parts that happen to stand out as relevant to their interests while skipping over what does not appear at first glance to be important on this narrowly instrumental criteria of relevance (Carr 2011, 9, quoting Tapscott 2008). Moreover, given that a large part of the internet as a medium consists in the presence and functioning of links, this 'shopping around' is often done across multiple web pages and different sets of texts, akin to switching from one physical book to another and skimming each to see what catches one's attention. The possibility of hyperlinks and the inter-textual connections they lead us to make is an inherent factor of digitization, which allows for 'content' to be broken up and parcelled out in ways that are amendable to this linking, and

to keeping our attention distributed without encouraging or allowing it to focus on any one thing for any significant time. As a result, "our attachment to any one text"—and so, our ability to treat it as 'a certain thing'—"becomes more tenuous, more provisional" (Carr 2011, 91; cf. Mangen 2008).

Many of the studies Carr references focus on the effects of internet use on reading, including the effects of habitually reading from a screen on reading from the printed page. These include studies of the eye movements of users and readers similar to those that Nanay references in connection with looking at images, where these tests reinforce the claims of other studies that show tendencies towards skimming over material quickly and a drive to get to the next thing (webpage, etc.) over any tendencies to pay sustained attention either to any parts of a text or to any single text as a whole (Carr 2011, 134-38). As Ziming Liu, a library science researcher, puts it, a "'screen-based reading behaviour is emerging' ... which is characterized by 'browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, [and] non-linear reading,' [where] time 'spent on in-depth reading and concentrated reading' is ... falling steadily" (Carr 2011 138, quoting Liu 2005). If attentional and cognitive habits formed by frequent internet use and mediation by screens are shown to be affecting the ways we attend while reading, why would we not think that they are likely also affecting the ways we attend while viewing images or films, listening to music, watching live performances, etc.?[44]

All of this leads Carr to conclude that "[w]hat the Net seems to

44 See Carr (2011, 96), for a discussion of how internet and mobile phone use has altered the ways in which live performances are experienced. There are further implications for the effect this alteration of our attentional and cognitive habits have for the arts: "Jordan Grafman, head of the cognitive neuroscience unit at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, explains that the constant shifting of our attention when we're online may make our brains more nimble when it comes to multitasking, but improving our ability to multitask actually hampers our ability to think deeply and creatively" (Carr 2011, 140, my emphasis). Cf. Lotringer and Virilio (2005) concerning the effects of modern technology on our experience of time, and how this in turn affects and shapes how we experience art.

be doing is *chipping away [our] capacity for concentration and contemplation,*" and that the technology is in many cases deliberately designed to promote, by encouraging and rewarding, distraction and superficial consumption and to discourage, by not rewarding or by making difficult, sustained attention and committed engagement (Carr 2011, 6, 115-16, my emphasis). Since the capacities it is 'chipping away' or hampering are central to what I have argued is plausibly essential to our apprehension and appreciation of art, not only can we say that these forms of attending are incompatible but that the habitual and frequent use of these new technologies—or any amount that is sufficient to affect our perceptual and cognitive habits in the ways described above—is incompatible with maintaining and exercising our capacities to attend to, engage with, and experience artworks in the way that is plausibly proper to them *qua* art.

4. Technology, Enframing, and Art

The two incompatibilities discussed above are connected, with the ontological incompatibility grounding the attentional incompatibility. That is, the kinds of attention that are characteristically involved in engaging with artworks on the one hand, and in using tools or understanding artifacts as the products of technical processes on the other, are incompatible because what makes something a work of art is different from, and incompatible with, what makes it either a tool or a product of a technical process of making. While this can be put in terms of attending to and engaging with art *qua* art being non-instrumental and non-purposive—or 'disinterested'—and the use of technology being instrumental—or 'interested'— this way of putting it leaves out much that is important, as I hope the discussion above shows.

These ways in which art and technology are not only different but incompatible points to an even deeper incompatibility on which both are grounded, which is not just a matter of incompatible aspects of objects or forms of attention, but of art and tech-

nology as manifesting two fundamentally different ways of experiencing and interpreting or cognizing things, and so two distinct ways of being in, and relating to, the world. The idea of technology as not a collection of tools and devices but as something like an attitude or a 'spirit,' and a way of understanding and relating to 'Being' or reality, is found in Heidegger's essay "The Question Concerning Technology" (1954). Just as Heidegger argues that "the essence of technology is by no means anything technological," by which he means that what it is for something to be technological is distinct from any piece or instance of technology, just as, analogously, what it is to be a tree "is not itself a tree that can be encountered among all the other trees" (Heidegger 1954, 4), what we can call the 'essence' of art—i.e., that which makes something count as an artwork, and which makes certain activities or practices count as ways of engaging with such works *qua* art—is distinct from any particular artwork or artistic practice. To grasp the roots of the two aforementioned incompatibilities, then, we need to consider what is 'behind'—i.e., what runs throughout and pervades—the ways of making and attending discussed above, considering art and technology not as kinds of objects or practices but, more fundamentally, as modes of what Heidegger would call our 'comportment' towards reality.

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explicate and discuss this difficult essay of Heidegger's in any depth, in brief, one of his central points is that the 'essence' of technology, beyond any technological thing, is a mode of existence—a mode of 'being technological,' as it were—that shapes how our world and the things in it, including ourselves and other people, 'show up' for us in our experience. Heidegger calls this 'enframing,' where this is a way of conceiving of, or 'disclosing,' things as items in a determinate network of instrumental or means-end relations, in which every part of reality is experienced as something-to-be-used, even if only potentially, such as in cases where no immediate practical use is apparent. This treats every entity as a sort of inventory item in the warehouse of reality, as it were, "standing-reserve" and awaiting

our future use (Heidegger 1954, 14-17). Because 'enframing' positions everything as primarily existing in order to be used, it also positions us as essentially users, with using things being our primary way of relating to them insofar as we are thinking and living 'technologically' in this sense, where this also precludes us from experiencing and valuing things in their own right and for their own sake. Moreover, the network of instrumental relations and values that it takes reality or 'Being' to consist in is an essentially *closed* system, wherein the potential uses of things and the means that will realize certain ends operate deterministically, being given in advance, and with no room for genuine novelty or creation over and above the mere rearranging of what is already there.[45]

Art is not automatically an alternative to this mindset and way of being in the world, since many common ways of relating to artworks involves using them as means to ends: e.g., looking at or listening to a work for the sake of the entertainment or pleasure it can afford us. What this suggests is that an apprehension or an experience of artworks that is proper to them *qua* art will not involve 'consuming' them, i.e., seeking to using them for an instrumental purpose or interest, including an interest in recreation or enjoyment.[46] Relating to artworks in this way and treating them as consumables will, I suggest, get in the way of a proper experience and appreciation of them *qua* art and instead will involve treating them as tools or instruments. For instance, reading novels or watching films in order to take a break and unwind, or as a form of escapism,

45 The common assumption that computerized machines and programs necessarily will function as they are designed to as long as they are used as intended by those operating them—e.g., assuming that certain inputs will always lead to the same outputs—, even in the face of multiple experiences of the contrary, can be understood in light of the way that technology as a way of relating to the world posits that world as a closed, deterministic system.

46 This does not mean, of course, that 'real' artworks cannot be enjoyable or that our engagement with them cannot be a form of recreation in the sense of a refreshment and renewal of our energies (i.e., as a re-creation). Likewise, friends can be beneficial or practically useful, e.g., when they help us with something, but relating to people with the aim of using them for help or benefiting from them in some way is not to relate to them properly qua friend.

treats them as one might treat a drug such as a sleeping pill, where consuming works of art for the sensations and emotions they can arouse in us—i.e., as entertainment or amusement—treats them as one might other kinds of drugs. This is in keeping with what I have suggested above concerning the need to be open to an artwork as the unique particular it is and to 'get on its wavelength' or experience it on its own terms, so to speak, without doing so for the sake of anything that might be gained by this, and instead valuing the apprehension and experience of a particular work for its own sake.

Even though artworks do not automatically escape the 'enframing' of a technological mode of being, since they can be used in various ways and so reduced to the status of tools or mere artifacts, art does give a potential alternative to technical thinking and enframing in virtue of the ontological differences between artworks and mere artifacts, and the possibilities for a different kind of perception or experience, and a different way of relating to reality or 'Being,' that this affords us. This is due to a dimension of art that might also be called 'enframing,' albeit in a different and opposite sense to Heidegger's, where *artistic* 'enframing' is a matter of viewing artworks as things that are marked off from the world of practical artifacts and instrumental interests and singled out for 'disinterested' attention, as parts of reality that are *not* there to be used and which must be approached on their own terms, so to speak: i.e., in terms of their intrinsic nature and value.

This claim is not just metaphorical: we might think of the ways that many artworks have actual frames that mark them out as standing apart from practical reality, whether this is a literal frame in the case of a painting or a proscenium arch and curtain marking off the stage from the audience in a theatrical performance, or even the covers of a book that are not themselves part of the novel found within, or the brief moments of silence and focus before and after a musical performance at a live concert. And this is not only a matter of artworks being marked out for a certain kind of attention: the marking off of a particular artwork can be understood as part of what makes it an organic unity, or *Gestalt*, and so what makes

it a suitable recipient of the kind of attention that Nanay posits as characteristic of our engagement with art: viz., focused attention paid to it as a singular perceptual object and distributed attention paid simultaneously to its properties or 'parts' and their relations to each other and to the whole work they comprise. It is precisely on account of their being marked off from the practical world like this that artworks can serve as 'escape hatches,' so to speak, from the closed network of instrumental relations and means-end thinking that results from the *technological* enframing of the world, opening avenues for non-instrumental, 'disinterested' forms of attention that in turn open up our own possibilities for being in the world and relating to things since they free us from being positioned as essentially users within the aforementioned network of instrumental relations. Put more simply, artistic creations and works open up or expand our world whereas technological thinking limits and closes it or narrows it down: for example, in the way that it reduces things to their instrumental use and value.[47]

Notably, this calls into question—or at least qualifies—the commonly-held assumption that technology expands our possibilities and so widens, rather than narrows, our worlds. While it is obvious that certain pieces of technology will enhance our actions or allow us to do things that we could not have done without their mediation, the new possibilities for acting they offer us is necessarily finite. This can be seen by considering digital devices or software, where these can be used as tools only to perform a finite set of actions or functions. Even if this set of possible uses is very large, as is the case with modern computers, any use we can make of them is given in advance, with our being limited to performing one of the actions they are designed or programmed to perform. And, insofar as we are positioned essentially as users of things within the network of instrumental relations to which the

47 In Heidegger's terms, we could say that art is a way of 'disclosing' reality or Being different to the way in which it is disclosed by technology, with different aspects of things, and different values, being revealed or emerging from these different ways of disclosing.

technological or 'enframing' spirit reduces reality, our own being is limited, not only to being a user but to being a user of things for that finite set of purposes and no others. For example, a user of a computer, strictly *qua* its user, is essentially a potential writer, or calculator, or consumer of music, or viewer and editor of photos, etc., for each of the uses to which that computer can be put based on its software or applications. In effect, this gives us each of these things as possible ends of our actions, in virtue of having the means to them at our disposal: but the totality of what we can take as our ends, *qua* user, can never go beyond these and is given to us in advance, rather than being realized by us as the product of our own choices, actions, desires, wills, etc. When it comes to art, however, whether as creators or as spectators, listeners, readers, etc., the possibilities for how we can engage with artworks or an artistic medium, or how we can understand a work, or find it meaningful or valuable, are never closed off or given in advance but are, at least in principle, infinite and so open to the genuinely new.

5. Conclusion

I would argue that this last point gets at one of the reasons why art is an important a part of human life and culture that is essential for our well-being, and so shows why it is worthwhile to distinguish art and technology in terms of their incompatibilities: but this is a rather abstract note on which to end. The above discussion, and the distinctions that have resulted from it, also have more directly practical implications for our engagements with art.

For one thing, distinguishing between what makes something art and what makes it a product or a piece of technology gives us, as audience-members, a better idea of which aspects of a work to attend to when we're apprehending and evaluating it *qua* art. Since whatever makes a given work a work of *art* is not those aspects or properties of it or of its making that are technical or instrumental, its value *qua* art will be distinct from whatever technical value it might have. For example, the fact that the making of a work—e.g.,

a film—involved a difficult technical process—e.g., the complexly choreographed camera movements in a scene filmed in one unbroken take—that was successfully executed, and so counts as a technical achievement, will not make it more valuable *qua* art. Thus, this will be the wrong thing for us to focus on if we want to assess or understand its artistic value, where we would similarly be looking in the wrong place if we were to take a lack of technical achievement in making a work to count against its artistic value: we would, in effect, be valuing or denigrating it as the wrong kind of achievement. And, in letting us know which aspects of a given work are not relevant for apprehending it or evaluating it as art, this distinction puts us in a better place to grasp and appreciate what is relevant, and so, to properly experience and appreciate it as the work of art it is.

Similarly, distinguishing between the artistic and the technological in a work of art or in its making can help artists know what elements of their work or their medium to focus their own attention on, and what to consider when assessing a work-in-progress. For students of art, this can help them to avoid taking techniques or methods they are learning as formulas or algorithms for producing art, by making them aware that any techniques they are taught for using a particular medium will never be sufficient conditions for producing art, and that no single technique is ever necessary. For example, a student of photography who is able to distinguish what is artistic from what is technical in a photograph will not only not be overly focused on the technological specifications of camera equipment—e.g., how high a resolution the sensor of a new digital camera is capable of—except insofar as these technical details might be relevant for the artistic potential of the medium, but will not take techniques, which might seem at first glance to be artistic rather than technical, literally or at face value: for instance, not taking the 'rule of thirds' to be either necessary or sufficient for a well-composed image, but realizing that it is *a* way of composing an image. Likewise, understanding this distinction will allow exhibitors, curators, and those similarly positioned to influence how

artworks are presented to avoid modes of presentation that might interfere with the proper apprehension and appreciation of the art they are showing, or that might work against the kinds of values that can be realized by engaging with art *qua* art, and which, as exhibitors, they are likely concerned to help realize and promote.

If we agree that the creation, reception, and appreciation of art is an important part of human life and culture, being able to realize distinctly artistic forms of, say, cognitive or socio-political value, then we have reason to create, promote, teach, and engage with artworks in the ways that are proper to them *qua* art, and to avoid bringing a technical way of thinking or technological concerns to our artistic pursuits. If the points made above in Section 4 are right regarding a technological way of relating to things limiting our own existential possibilities, insofar as we occupy a relation to things as users of them as means to realize ends that are always given in advance and are partially determined by the things in question rather than by ourselves, then one of these values that art can realize when it is engaged with properly *qua* art is precisely the alternative to a technological way of being in the world that this allows. To return to the line from Collingwood quoted at the start of this chapter, in which he asks whether art can flourish in a technological age, we can answer: if it can, it is only insofar as that age is not wholly technological, which is to say, only if the people living in that age are able to conceive of and relate to reality in ways other than just through the kind of technical thinking that Heidegger calls 'enframing'. Sadly, if the frequent use of recent internet-based technologies is affecting our attentional, cognitive, and affective habits and capacities in the ways that the studies referenced in Section 3 suggest, the answer to the question whether art can flourish in a specifically *online* age would seem to be that the continued existence of art *qua* art, let alone its flourishing, is increasingly unlikely.

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Matilde Carrasco Barranco

Artistic Beauty in the Face of Artificial Intelligence Art

1. Introduction

The aim of this essay is to explore the implications that the production of art generated by Artificial Intelligence (hereafter AI art) has for the notion of artistic beauty. Since its appearance, AI art has been presented as a challenge to the very concept of art, understood essentially as a human production. Given that works of art created by artificial intelligence are a very recent phenomenon, there has not yet been much philosophical or aesthetic discussion on the matter and the scarce literature published so far focuses mainly on the question of artistic creativity. AI art's capability to produce beautiful works is often used to demonstrate the creativity of these intelligent machines and the artistic status of this sort of production.

Indeed, the notion of artistic beauty is dependent on the notion of art, although, according to some of the most influential accounts on the matter, this is not an incidental attribute, but one that is bound up with the aims and meanings of artworks, which refer to the artists' artistic intentions. Thus, it is worth asking whether artistic (meaningful) beauty can be assigned to works

made by machines which do not have intentions of any kind. Before addressing this question, which is the central concern of this essay, let me clarify what AI art is.

2. Definition and 'History' of AI

As Alice Barale (2021) notes, AI art tends to be confused with the more general category of digital art. However, AI art is not only "computer assisted", but also "computer generated", which means that artificial intelligence is able to produce art. Therefore, AI art becomes "not just a tool for artists, but also something different" (Barale 2021, 199). Her claim is that machines can create art quite autonomously and should therefore be considered artists.

Artificial intelligence, understood as the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, i.e. computer programs, is one of the most prominent areas of research nowadays. Its impact is huge, as it is incorporated into many aspects of our daily lives, from cars to laptops and phones. Numerous areas, such as transport, infrastructure, finances, medicine, and so on, are increasingly dependent on this technology. It is only logical that the development of artificial intelligence also applies to art.

As a matter of fact, from the beginning of AI more than 50 years ago, artists have been interested in developing computer programs to make art. One of the most famous is AARON, a drawing-program designed by Harold Cohen in 1973. At the time, Cohen was already a well-established painter interested in the perceptual and cognitive processes and emotional responses involved in the interpretation of abstraction. These concerns led him to research computer-generated canvasses (Boden 2004, 151). However, the autonomy of 'AARON, the painter' was rather limited since it followed a set of rules that Cohen had hard-coded. Cohen programmed AARON and directed it. As Cohen himself described it, he taught AARON how to draw (Cohen 1982). He continued to develop and refine AARON for the rest of his career and other well-known projects, such as Simon Colton's *The Painting Fool*, contin-

ued this line of work of trying to build an automated painter. In this case as well, the devices were programmed in order to assemble in new ways the data provided to them by the human artists or programmers who supervised the creation to a great extent. In the case of Colton's *The Painting Fool*, for instance, an artist could feed portraits into a generative AI algorithm (a step that Ahmed Elgammal calls "pre-curation") that then tries to imitate these inputs, producing a range of output images. This is the case of the *Amelie's Progress Gallery*. The gallery contains 222 portraits of the actress Audrey Tatou generated automatically by *The Painting Fool* from original images of her acting in the famous film *Amelie*, in which she portrays a range of emotions, "from very sad to very happy" with the "painting styles [that] fit this scheme". The idea was to show how *The Painting Fool*'s painting styles can heighten the emotional content of a portrait. However, the artist must sift through the output images and select those he or she wishes to use, a second step of "post-curation" (Elgammal 2019).

Nonetheless, the incredible development of AI has sparked a new wave of AI art that aims to increase the autonomy of the machines. Barale explains how AI art has advanced incredibly in the last decade thanks to the impulse given to "deep neural networks" (Barale 2021, 202). Inspired by biological neural networks in the human brain, deep neural networks are constituted by many layers of artificial neurons and each layer takes the data from the previous one and elaborates on that set in an increasingly complex way. Deep neural networks can actually learn by combining and considering the existing examples. For instance, Google researchers lead by Alex Mordvintsev developed the project "Deep Dream: The Art of Neural Networks", which modifies input images with astonishing results, such as the images of 'animals' or strange creatures made from dogs, cats and birds that show how the machine 'saw' the world or 'dreamt' it. Furthermore, most of the AI artworks that have emerged over the past few years have employed a class of algorithms called generative adversarial networks (GANs). They are called adversarial "because there are two sides to them: one gener-

ates random images; the other has been taught, via the input, how to judge these images and deem which best align with the input" (Elgammal 2019). Introduced by computer scientist Ian Goodfellow in 2014, GANs have been successful in many applications in the AI community, particularly by artists, though they have lost control over the unexpected and greatly surprising results. A prestigious photographer, Joan Fontcuberta, in collaboration with fellow artist Pilar Rosado, is currently working with GANS in some of his most recent series of photographs. His work, entitled *Prosopagnosia,* (namely, a pathology of memory that prevents the recognition of the faces of people that one knows) was awarded with Premio ARCO-BEEP de Arte Electrónico in ARCOmadrid 2020. The work comprises a series of photographs of faces automatically generated by algorithms based on the photographs of the faces of celebrities in the 1930ties, acquired from the archive of a local Spanish paper. The GANs algorithms automatically generate a collection of new faces, photo-realist images of people who do not exist, in order to reflect on "the mutations of photography" and the current "status of images" (La Vanguardia (Redacción) 2020). The encounter with these faces, in which 'we cannot adequately recognize others', leads to a sort of 'robot-portraits' that work as metaphors of the cognitive situation in a contemporary world presided by images.

Ahmed Elgammal, a director of the Art and Artificial Intelligence laboratory at Rutgers University, with his team created "a program that could be thought of as a nearly autonomous artist that has learned existing styles and aesthetics and can generate innovative images of its own" (Elgammal 2019). Thus, their lab created AICAN (artificial intelligence creative adversarial network), a type of GAN which is able to learn history of art and understand its evolution. Besides, AICAN can take account of each painting's context within the scope of art history and assign them their own degree of creativity. When it comes to its own production, AICAN can name the work it generates, having learnt the titles given by artists and art historians (Elgammal 2019).

Since it is tasked with creating something new, AICAN's cre-

ators think that it is the AI nearest to human creative process. With other AI producers, they defend the artistic status of AI art, arguing that these kinds of works have been successfully exhibited in galleries and art fairs, and have entered the art market attaining relatively high prices at auctions and grabbing the attention of the public, who seems to enjoy them and judges that they have strong artistic qualities. Quite often, the audience cannot tell the difference between AI art and human made art.

As a very recent phenomenon, AI art scarcely has a history. Nonetheless, the high degree of autonomy and unexpectedness attained by AI devices making art, pointed at in the brief overview of the landmarks in AI art development, encourage the claim that computers can indeed be creative. Thus, even when the human artist is present and even when his role is crucial at different levels, "there is", claims Barale, "at least one part of the artistic process that is left to the machine" (Barale 2021, 200). Furthermore, on her view, this demonstrates that AI art is the result of the interaction or interplay between human artist and the machine that is, she sustains, "another subjectivity that has to be listened to, other "eyes" to consider in order to understand what we see with our own eyes […] the "quasi-human" we have to listen to – this is the new message of AI art" (Barale 2021, 212, 220).

3. Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Creation

Barale and others have seen in this interaction between the human and the machine what can be called a 'Benjaminian move'. In his famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" at the beginning of the 20th century, the German philosopher Walter Benjamin diagnosed that photography, cinema and other mechanisms of reproduction would bring about the decline in the "aura" of the artwork, namely, the cult experience of art whose character is unique and unrepeatable, and so cannot be approached and transformed and, consequently, the decline of ideas such as "genius" or "mysterious creativity". As a matter of

fact however, with AI art, the change is more visible and radical, providing "the new perspective of the work of art in the age of mechanical creation" (Kurt 2018, 4).

The comparison with photography is indeed recurrent in the discussion on AI art. After all, in its beginnings, not only was photography not considered art, but, as an outcome of the machine, it was considered a danger to art. Nowadays however, it is well accepted as an artform. Barale points out that "AI art could even be considered the natural 'evolution' of the technically reproducible art" and reports that AI artist Mario Klingemann has invented the neologism "neurography" to indicate such continuity between photography and the "reproductions" of reality that neural networks can give (Barale 2021, 206). Joan Fontcuberta's interpretation of the evolution of photography goes along the same lines.

Similarly, from the beginning of the last century, Avant-gardists movements radically questioned the, by then prevalent, concept of artwork. Famously, Marcel Duchamp contributed to the des-auratization of the work of art and problematized traditional ideas in art definition such as "genius" and "beauty". In fact, I see a rather 'Duchampian move' in the presentation of *Le Comte de Belamy*, a work sold by the Christies', an auction house of great importance. This work was the first piece of AI art to reach the official art market and a price of 432. 500 dollars, nearly 45 times the initially estimated value. *Le Comte de Belamy* is a picture that resembles a classical portrait of a gentleman elegantly dressed in black (whose name is a reference to the surname of GAN's creator, Ian Goodfellow, in French "Belamy"), but it is more blurred, with poorly defined outlines. As a whole, it has a kind of mysterious aspect, a sort of painterly quality, "lying somewhere on the spectrum between the painterly and the digital", as Barale notices quoting Mario Klingemann (Barale 2021, 211). Much in the vein of Duchamp's famous Fountain, there is also a signature, in the lower part of the painting, which is the key-formula of the algorithm through which the work was generated.

Thus, from this perspective, the challenges set up by AI art are

not very far from recent other artistic revolutions which did not destroy the concept of art, but have instead provoked philosophical reflection on it. For example, procedural definitions of art, such as George Dickie's institutional theory (Dickie 1974, 1984) were formulated precisely to meet the challenge of artworks – such as, for instance, Duchamp's ready-mades – that did not look like artworks and had no aura at all. Rather than appealing to some kind of properties (aesthetic, formal, or expressive), procedural theories refer to a basic framework, a context in which artworks are produced and received. In Dickie's definition, that is the artistic institution. On Barale's view, since works such as *Le Comte de Belamy* are exhibited and sold in artistic institutions, AI art would have been accepted by the artworld, "baptized" by those who have the authority to confer an artistic status that therefore would be so confirmed (Barale 2021, 206).

However, following Dickie's institutional theory, in particular, its second and final version, the actual social act of conferring the status of candidate for appreciation by some person(s) acting on behalf of the artworld (Dickie 1974) gives center stage to the artist, whose role becomes crucial. Thereby, for Dickie, a work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an artworld public by an artist, that is, by a person who participates with understanding in the making of a work of art. This means that the artist intends to create an object in order to be exhibited in an artistic context, according to the social practices of art. The artwork is therefore an artifact that responds to the artistic intentionality. If AI art is created by no human artist with no human-like intentions, it lacks this sort of intentionality and its artistic status is compromised. Other accounts have similar requirements. Consider historical conceptions of art, which state that something clarifies as art insofar as it stands in a specific art-historical relation to some specified earlier artworks (and this could be the case of photography). For example, one of the best-known versions, Levinson's intentional-historical definition (Levinson 1990), establishes that an artwork is a thing that has been seriously intended for regard in any way in which

preexisting or prior artworks are or were correctly regarded.

Pointing to portraits generated from the GAN, Elgammal acknowledges that AI artworks contain some artistic values, such as novelty, surprise and eccentricity. However, he argues, what they are missing is the intent, unless we see such works as "a form of conceptual art…[where]…intent lies in the process, even if it doesn't appear in the final image" (Elgammal 2019). Works like Anna Ridler's *Fall of the House of Usher* might have surprised the artists, but, as Elgammal's argument continues, they do not come from nowhere but from an idea that is behind them. Much of the same could be said about Fontcuberta & Rosado's *Prosopagnosia*. As with the case of the conceptual art created since the 1960s, in artistic terms, the creative process is more important that the final outcome. From this perspective, it does not matter that people cannot tell the difference between an object made by human, machine, or ready-made.

Therefore, wondering to what extent AI art blurs the definition of 'artist', Elgammal concludes that despite all the autonomy achieved by GANs algorithms that generate images that surprise the artists and escape their control, for the time being, (human) artists still maintain a very active hand in both, pre- and post-curation sides of the process, within which they might also tweak the algorithm in order to generate the desired outputs. For Elgammal, even when AI artworks are created by a device as advanced as his AICAN (which, he claims, can produce art almost autonomously and name it by itself with some understanding of art history), they nevertheless exist "in an isolated creative space that lacks social context", without human curators who "ground them in our society and connect them to what's happening around us" (Elgammal 2019). Artificial intelligence provides new tools which artists may use; however, Elgammal predicts that AI art will go down the same path as photography and become an established fine art that is not meant to replace the artists.

4. The Meaning and Value of AI Art

To sum up the previous analysis, works generated by AI, insofar as they are artistic artifacts, cannot be fully detached from the artistic intentions of human beings who might nonetheless play with new, incredibly creative tools in many different ways. As Elgammal concludes, the meaning and value of AI art will ultimately depend on those (human) artists' intentions. The persons who, with artistic intentionality, program the computers in order to create works for their appreciation and sale should therefore be considered the actual artists.

A support for this account of AI art might come from the cases of fights over the copyright that have already occurred in relation to AI art. However, what is usually argued is not so much the disappearance of the human artist/curator/programmer; rather, it is said that the machines should be considered collaborative 'artists' precisely because they can, in some sense, be credited for the meaning and value of their own production, i.e. for the aesthetic value of the images generated by AI.

Recalling Barale's theses, she notes a significant difference between previous avant-gardist transgressions and AI art because the latter involves the interplay between two "subjectivities". This means, Barale argues, that in AI art, humans interact with a radical "other" that offers a way of seeing or experiencing the world different from ours, "but not so different so as to be meaningless to us" (Barale 2021, 207). So, she would insist on marking the differentiation between the artistic intentionality or the human ideas behind AI art, and the works' actual meanings, for which, given the high degree of autonomy and unexpectedness obtained in the resulting products, machines alone could be responsible for. But how can a machine bear such responsibility? Just like Barale, Kurt also claims that AI art is meaningful, and yet, "it is a product that is not encoded for any meaning by its maker. This is what makes an AI artwork a peculiar artifact", with the role of human audience being not to "decode" but to "encode" such meaning (Kurt 2018, 8). Thus, following these accounts, it is claimed that the artistic

meaning and value of art created by intelligent programs can actually be detached from the intentions of their programmers, leading to the possibility of treating AI programs as subjects-artists whose audience credits the works with meaning and value.

As already emphasized in reference to Elgammal, this is an important matter. In the end, we should agree with Kurt that "the real challenge for AI is to generate relatable outputs that can have artistic value" (Kurt 2018, 28). His allegation of seeing the audience as the one who grants such value without referring to the authors' aims could find support of other influential conceptions of art.

For instance, Nelson Goodman's functionalism does not appeal to the artist's intentions neither to define nor to determine artworks' meanings. Objects are, or rather function as, art when they symbolize exhibiting certain 'symptoms of the aesthetic'. Admittedly, Goodman did not pretend to offer a definition of art. In any case, his functionalism is somewhat insufficient, since one can think of many non-artistic objects that could exhibit precisely such symptoms. It was this insufficiency that, among other things, made other theorists take into account, as conditions for delimiting artistic status, artistic contexts and existing practices within which artists produce. Thus, Dickie defines the artist as someone who produces or presents an object with the intention of making art, but he nevertheless holds that the meaning and value of such object do not depend on the intentions of the author. Those who see AI programs as artists could follow this lead, albeit taking a further step by assessing artistic meaning and value as the random effect of the actions of the machines – subjects intelligent, yet non-intentional – definitely blurring the definition of 'artist' in the process.

Dickie's reasons against intentionalism respond to his seeing the theory incapable of dealing with the tasks of art criticism, namely, helping people understand art and distinguish good and bad art (Dickie 1997, 105). Non-intentionalists think that the public is able to interpret and evaluate artworks by the application of the shared conventions or conceptual frameworks. Thus, in their view,

the public does not need to know the intentions of the author – unknown anyway in most cases, and independent from what people end up interpreting (Pérez-Carreño 2001, 155). As for AI art, Kurt gives the example of *The Saxophone Player*, an AI-generated poem by Ray Kurzweil's AI poetry bot Cybernetic Poet. In a comparative survey with human-written poems, 53% of the viewers thought that *The Saxophone Player* was generated by a human poet. Looking at the results, the human audience could not easily distinguish an AI poem from a poem written by a human. Given such a case, it is possible to claim that AI poetry has a certain degree of ability to generate new and unfamiliar, yet relatable and comprehensible results by combining familiar concepts (Kurt 2018, 29).

Similar examples are found in prose. "In a future with mass unemployment, young people are forced to sell blood" is the opening line of a science-fiction short film, *Sunspring* [2016] written by an AI who named itself "Benjamin". Benjamin wrote the entire screenplay after being trained with hundreds of different science-fiction movie scripts in its neural network. The movie was thought to had been directed by Oscar Sharp. It was shown in Sci-Fi London Film Festival 2016, ranking in the top ten out of hundreds of competitors. Kurt points out that the plot refers to love and human relations and is presented in a comprehensible and enjoyable way.

In order to make *Sunspring* a proper case in defending the prose written by AI as meaningful, and to exclude any interference by the human direction of the film, perhaps the plot alone should have been evaluated. However, as in the case of the poem, what matters is what the audience makes of those words. Even when readers are oblivious to the artists' intentions, they still try to find the meaning, assuming it was intended by someone who wanted to communicate something in a more or less successful way (Pérez-Carreño 2001, 155-158). This explains the sense of deception on the part of the audience when it finds out that the work was made by artificial intelligence and not by a human being, as Kurt reports. For Kurt though, surprisingly, part of the public still

retains its feeling of emotions and the pleasure produced in their communication with the machine. Another example, this time by Barale, emphasizes such kind of communication: the recent work of Klingemann *Appropriate Response* (2020). Here, Klingemann used a type of neural network called GPT-2, which was created in order to allow machines to produce meaningful texts or phrases and has thus created an interplay between this new type of AI technology and the human viewer. The neural network was trained on 60,000 famous quotes that Klingemann found on the internet, choosing them for their "a beautiful sound" and a "connotation of waiting" (Barale 2021, 218). Never mind that both the materials AI feeds on and the fact that its creation model is human, Barale states that AI programs should nevertheless be seen as subjects-creators, "quasi-human voices" that force us "to leave behind every predetermined representation of the world and listen" to them (Barale 2018, 218).

Now, analogously to the case of artists, the "public" of art is also a notion that refers to an artworld as "a set of persons the members of which are prepared in some degree to understand an object which is presented to them" (Dickie 1984, 81). Of course, not everybody is acquainted with every artistic genre, but is with some at least, and to a certain degree. This makes people belong to the artworld. The definition of artist, public and artworld are then interdependent and shape a sort of 'circle' in which objects operate as art.

Inside the artistic practices, the audience can find elements to evaluate the diversity of works even when they exhibit a high level of novelty and transgression. This is because works can only be evaluated as exhibiting novelty and transgression in relation to the existing norms (Tilghman 2006). When a genre such as AI art is born, artistic practices can also help in classifying images of people who do not exist as artistic, as for example the *Prosopagnosia* series, or not, as those shown in the web https://thispersondoesnotexist.com, and to evaluate them accordingly, trying to re-build the idea behind the work.

Fontucuberta & Rosado are interested in AI's creative process and in how it offers patterns that question the conventions of human sight. This seems to imply that a work aims to bear certain cognitive value. For her part, Barale sustains that AI-generated 'portraits' present deformities, strange shapes and blurry contours that are the machine's own versions of our living world. Thus, they open a territory to explore perception. However, the cognitive value explored by works such as *Prosopagnosia* is offered in an artistic vein different from the web. This is how the public should understand and evaluate such works, but this is possible thanks to the work and understanding of art by the Spanish artists, not the GANs'. Against the background of certain practices, artworks are critically assessed in terms of the kinds of objects they are, the goals they pursuit and manners in which they do so. This brings us back to the artistic intentionality of the one making certain decisions whom we believe essential to understanding whatever is being done (Pérez-Carreño 2001, 165). Without pretending to fully predict people's reactions, an attempt to achieve critical interpretation of AI art's artistic intentionality offers the explanatory power that the mysterious and completely opaque functioning of the machine lacks. Without it, the interpretation of the meaning of AI works and their evaluation is radically open to the free opinion and taste of whoever observes them.

5. Artistic Beauty Generated by AI

Finally, while the idea of attributing the subjectivity to machines that allows us to see them as proper collaborative artists looks rather complicated, the aesthetic enjoyment of the public could nevertheless offer advances in support of such a claim. Barale suggests that "AI artworks are able to give, without any doubt, a strong aesthetic pleasure" (Barale 2021, 206). On his part, Kurt argues that the audience experiences aesthetic emotions and pleasure, and that it is a particular achievement of AI art to make "human perceivers" become "free to interpret the artwork by themselves", without a hierarchy that entitles the ideas of the maker as

a primal element (Kurt 2018, 76). Perhaps Monroe Beardsley's aesthetic functionalism could explain why this would be so.

Beardsley, the author who, with W. Wimsat (Wimsat 1954) grounded anti-intentionalism by introducing the notion of "intentional fallacy", defines an artwork as "either an arrangement of conditions intended to be capable of affording an experience with marked aesthetic character or (incidentally) an arrangement belonging to a class or type of arrangements that is typically intended to have this capacity" (Beardsley 1982, 299). Like Dickie, Beardsley believes that an artist is someone that makes the object with artistic intentionality even when artistic meaning and value of an object do not depend on the artist's intentions. What marks a huge difference between Dickie and Beardsley is that the latter sustains an aesthetic conception of art that makes aesthetic value essential to it. More recently, Nick Zangwill (2001) insisted on defending aesthetic value, identified with beauty, as the core artistic value.

As is the case with Goodman's account, aesthetic functionalism on its own will not make any precise distinction between artworks and other sorts of objects which are meant to provoke pleasurable aesthetic experiences. In particular, aesthetic definitions of art have been widely criticized for their essentialism, which makes them unable to cover influential modern works like Duchamp's ready-mades and conceptual works which appear to lack aesthetic properties or make aesthetic value irrelevant (Adajian 2018). Thus, beauty is certainly historically important, but is not necessarily an artistic value. And AI artworks are not always, and do not have to be, beautiful, although, according to some testimonies reported earlier in this essay, it is sometimes believed that were they trying to be beautiful, they would be properly artistic. In any case, aesthetic functionalism would then not be adequate to define AI art as art. Nonetheless, given that AI artworks are often described as beautiful, it is still to be explained in what sense their beauty is artistic.

Again, despite beauty not being a necessary value of art, some artworks can of course be valued for their beauty. Now, most re-

cent theories of art differentiate artistic beauty from other (for example, natural or human) kinds of beauty by relating it to what artworks are intended to do. Aesthetic functionalists, like Zangwill, are an example, as well as supporters of both procedural conceptions of art such as Arthur Danto and historical functionalists, like Levinson.

For the last two accounts, as for many others, beauty is not even equivalent to aesthetic value, since aesthetic experience is diverse and it does not always please in the way in which beauty does – as is the case of the sublime – typically in relation to form (Paris 2018). Unpleasant and even disturbing, yet valuable aesthetic experiences are also possible in spite of their paradoxical nature (Levinson 2014). Nevertheless, all those theories of art agree to sustain that artistic beauty is neither equivalent to mere beauty or "beauty as such" (Monseré & Vandenabeele 2012, 35) nor an incidental attribute, or beauty by chance.

The subjective nature of the feeling attached to beauty may make us assume just that it is all 'in the eye of the beholder', who freely enjoys the experience. However, to call something beautiful amounts to something different when one recognizes that it is an artwork that is beautiful and not, for example, a wallpaper (McFee 2005). This means that the category of art is in fact the guiding category in appreciating (something as) an artwork. When it comes to the evaluation of works of art, we should ask whether their beauty is relevant to them. Like cognitive, moral or any other sort of value, beauty is artistic when it is related to the aims or content, namely, to the meaning of the artworks (Stecker 2012). As I argued so far, this is something that cannot be established without appealing to some sort of human artistic intentionality.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, I think that if we wonder whether artistic (meaningful) beauty can be assigned to works made by AI programs, our answer should be yes, if somehow connected to the artistic inten-

tionality of human artists, and no, if we are to attribute it to purely random results. Thereby, beauty is not different from other artistic values that are derived from the different functions of art and contemporary theory would find no reasons to neglect the artistic status of AI art.

So far, algorithms act mostly by trying to imitate human artistic creation and produce a certain sort of forgeries. It is true that throughout the different phases of its creative process AI can be highly interesting and useful for showing aspects of perception that we could not appreciate otherwise. It also, no doubt, offers fascinating images. However creative though, I do not think that AI programs should be considered subjects, since subjects should be able to genuinely learn, understand and communicate – in a nutshell, to actually think autonomously. For the time being, that is a prerogative of human beings.

Social networks are full of comments generated by algorithms. They are meaningful and have an impact on people, but they do not express the algorithms' view of the world, only their programmers' agendas. At this point, I see the algorithms programmed by artists as not much different. The possibilities opened by the incredible developments of AI burden consumers with great responsibility, as much as they do producers of AI artifacts and images, artistic ones included. In the absence of a critical use, a wonderful tool can turn into a nightmare, much in the vein of the TV series *Black Mirror*. At least for now, I agree with Elgammal that what computers cannot do is behave like human artists, since they are not able "to be inspired by people, places, and politics…[in order to]…create art to tell stories and make sense of the world" (Elgammal 2019). But maybe one day they will be able to do all this. Then, AI will represent a colossal challenge for the theory of art and to the world as we know it.[48]

48 This work is possible thanks to my participation in the research projects "Beyond Beauty: Nature and Critical Relevance of Aesthetic Properties" 20934/PI/18 (Fundación SENECA, Plan Regional de Ciencia y Tecnología de la Región de Murcia), and "Normative Aspects of Aesthetic Appreciation"

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ART AND EVERYDAY AESTHETICS

Adam Andrzejewski

Remarks on Everyday Aesthetic Experience

Over the past two decades, philosophical aesthetics has taken an increasing interest in the research of aesthetic features and experiences of practical, domestic, and mundane aspects of human existence, such as eating, working, commuting or clothing. These phenomena have been studied widely by other academic disciplines (e.g. culture studies) for a long time, but their philosophical potential has remained unnoticed. A new subfield of philosophical aesthetics has thus emerged: *everyday aesthetics*. Its aim is to illuminate the aesthetic aspects of the everyday that have not received sufficient attention from traditional aesthetics and show their non-trivial consequences on moral, social and environmental matters.

In the ongoing debate in everyday aesthetics, two kinds of theoretical issues arise, consisting of partly mutually exclusive positions: (1) the methodology of everyday aesthetics and (2) the ontology of the everyday. The first group is composed of two standpoints: *restrictionism* and *expansionism* (Leddy 2012; Puolakka 2018). The former strives for safeguarding the everydayness of the everyday and the ordinariness of the ordinary, and their appropriate aesthetic appreciation, which is different from appreciating art

(Saito 2007; Melchionne 2011, 2014). The latter position sees a possibility to broaden and alter the scope of philosophy of art, in order to analyze the everyday and the mundane activities connected to it (Leddy 2015; Mateucci 2017).

The second group of issues concentrates on the nature of the everyday (Naukkarinen 2013; Ratiu 2013). That is, the aim is to determine the ontological features of the everyday and, both implicitly and explicitly, to define everyday aesthetics with the concept of the everyday. These positions can be labelled as the *object-oriented* account and the *relation-oriented* account. The first takes the everyday as something determined by objects we encounter and deal with in our daily lives, such as mobility, food, fashion, and other artefacts, excluding works of art (Melchionne 2013). The second account sees the everyday as a relational feature, which entails that any object or event can become ordinary and part of the everyday. This account treats the everyday as a relational concept that refers to the relation between the subject and her environment (Highmore 2011; Haapala 2018).

In this paper I shall remain neutral regarding the abovementioned issues. However, what I would like to do is to offer a definition of everyday aesthetic experience that is likely to be accepted by both, restrictionism and expansionism. In §1 I present and analyze the concept of everyday life that is used in the contemporary aesthetic debate. While I sympathize explicitly with the relation-oriented account, I also see a room for the object-oriented account. In §2 and §3 I develop — in turn — definitions of the basic properties of everyday aesthetic experience, namely contingency, repetition, and permeability, and I then suggest how these properties can be responsible for the individualization of the aesthetic experience of everyday life.

1. The Concept of the Everyday

I would like to begin my deliberation over everyday aesthetic experience by outlining the concept of the everyday.[49] It designates a range of objects and/or practices that exemplify aesthetic properties, evoke aesthetic experience and are subject to aesthetic appreciation. Kevin Melchionne (2013) suggests highlighting the following areas as primarily related to everyday life:

> There are five main areas of consideration: food, wardrobe, dwelling, conviviality, and going out. Nearly all of us eat, dress, dwell someplace, socialize, and go out into the world for work or errands on a nearly daily basis. We prepare meals and appreciate the meals made for us with respect to aesthetic features. We assemble wardrobes for aesthetic and expressive purposes, to enjoy and be enjoyed (or, for some other effect) by the people we encounter over the course of a day. We dwell in some place, cleaning, arranging, and rearranging it each day, resting and relaxing in it. Furthermore, we engage in social interaction, routine acts of conviviality, like greetings, humor or story-telling, which have aesthetic dimension as well. We go out into the world, to socialize, to work or to run errands. In doing so, we design a path and we do often so as to enjoy the path to our destination. When these activities have an aesthetic character, they are properly the subject of the aesthetics of everyday life. (Melchionne 2013, §3)

Indeed, all of the above-mentioned subjects and practices are undoubtedly related to the everyday. There is no doubt, however, that Melchionne's enumeration consists only in showing certain aspects of everyday life, and not in determining its nature. Therefore, it is necessary, even in a very general way, to provide some properties of the everyday, and not only to list the areas of its manifestation.[50] With respect to this point, I sympathize with the perspective of Ossi Naukkarinen, who defines "the everyday" in the following way:

49 This is not an obvious approach at all. For example, Sherri Irvin's encyclopedic entry (2009) on the aesthetics of everyday life does not address this issue at all.

50 One could of course say that the multiple and consistent enumerations of the areas in which 'the everyday' manifests itself also say something about it. Despite the fact that I agree with this approach, I argue that, wherever possible, we should not only search for the contexts or manifestations of the term being defined, but also for its general properties.

> My everyday consists of certain *objects, activities, and events*, as well as certain *attitudes and relations* to them. Everyday objects, activities, and events, for me and for others, are those with which we spend lots of time, regularly and repeatedly. Most often this means objects and events related to our *work, home, and hobbies*. (Naukkarinen 2013, §2)

The above quotation points to a very important point in the methodology of the research of the everyday, a point unacknowledged by Melchionne: the fact that everyone has their own everyday life. It is a truism to say that people differ in many respects, e.g. in their education, political views, degree of wealth, climate in which they live, etc. Such individual differences between people mean that the components of their everyday life may be radically different – consider for example a way of life of a Catholic nun in Kazakhstan compared to a feminist activist living in Berlin. Another truism is that the lives of people who have comparable cultural and social background and who are at similar stages in life are similar to each other. For example, the life of a student at the University of Warsaw most likely does not differ in many respects from that of a student at the University of Lodz.

In other words, the general structure of the everyday is determined not by its "components" (understood as specific objects, activities, events, etc.), but by a certain attitude towards the surrounding reality. Naukkarinen is right to say that our everyday life is usually a routine, predictable, and relatively safe. It is worth noting that such an understanding of everyday life is axiologically neutral; it may contain both positive and negative elements.

Arto Haapala (2005) aptly captured the issue of changing attitudes in the process of taming reality. He states that two phenomena are key to understanding everyday life, i.e. the sense of strangeness and the sense of familiarity. Haapala does not understand 'strangeness' as a synonym for 'otherness'. Strangeness is rather a feeling that accompanies, for example, arriving in a previously unknown city. The vast majority of metropolises function in a similar way, struggle with similar problems, etc. Despite this, for example, being in Helsinki for the first time, we can feel that the city 'works' in a specific way. To put it shortly, it is natural to feel

alienated when we are in a new environment. One of the consequences of this alienation is that it sharpens our attention. When the world around us appears alien, we tend to pay more attention to details and the connections between them. This also translates into an aesthetic dimension. Art, according to Haapala, is by definition something alien to man. Something we are used to pay attention to.

The feeling of alienation, however, cannot be a permanent state. We get used to it more and more through time and interaction with the new environment. It ceases to surprise us. We gradually stop paying attention to details. In other words, strangeness turns into acquaintance. It is a sense of security related to the place where we are allowed to be. (The 'place' here does not mean only a certain space-time location, but also a conglomeration of events, objects, and emerging connections with other people.) For example, after several weeks in Helsinki, one slowly starts to get familiar with this place. Naturally, I do not mean with the entire city, but, for example, with the district or housing estate where one lives. We often have our favorite cafe, sandwich bar or a particular route from the apartment to the university. A kind of emotional and personal attitude towards these places is thus built. The consequence of such familiarity with certain elements of reality is a development of a routine, a relatively low reflectiveness over our actions when executing them, and a certain level of automaticity. For example, having a favorite route from Metro Świętokrzyska to the University of Warsaw (pl. Dąbrowskiego - ul. Kredytowa - ul. Traugutta), I choose it almost automatically. Choosing a different route, e.g. via ul. Świętokrzyska, requires much more 'effort' and 'attention' on my part.[51] Such an understanding of everyday life translates into its aesthetic perception. According to Haapala, it lacks a certain kind of freshness and novelty characteristic of for-

51 There is also an inverse relationship, i.e. certain elements of our life may cease to be part of our everyday life. This happens, for example, when we lose a loved one, leave friends, change jobs, go on a diet, develop religious views, etc. See Naukkarinen (2013, §3).

eign objects and events. It is worth noting, however, that Haapala does not depreciate everyday life and states that the aesthetic properties of well-known objects and phenomena can create a valuable sense of safety and comfort.

Let us now return to the very concept of the everyday. Everyday life, not only in its aesthetic version, is also distinguished by the fact that it is experienced through many senses. Taste, touch, and smell are just as important as sight or hearing. Moreover, in some cases, most often as a result of illness, we deal with everyday life that is based on experiences related to the lack of one or more senses. For example, to a blind or deaf person, the 'landscape' of everyday life looks completely different than to a person with all 'functional' senses. However, it is still the everyday life par excellence. This is because it is that person's daily life.

The reflections on the concept of the everyday in everyday aesthetics are best summed up by Naukkarinen:

> The point of my approach is that should our aesthetic approach really be of an *everyday* type, we should evaluate and handle things rather routinely, easily and repeatedly, not experimentally, not in atypical and challenging ways, not aiming to broaden our possibilities. (Naukkarinen 2013, §6)

3. Features of Everyday Aesthetic Experience

There is no doubt that the framework introduced and defended by Yuriko Saito (e.g. in 2007, 2015, 2017) to describe everyday aesthetics is very valuable and accurately reflects the aesthetic dimension of everyday life. I am referring mainly to Saito's deliberations, as she pays the fullest attention to the role of aesthetic properties in everyday life and the way they function. However, I do not think that they are fully sufficient to capture all the aesthetic phenomena of everyday life. Saito's analyses are mainly limited to some properties that are recognized as aesthetic in everyday life, such as for example 'dirty'. They do not say much about the very *structure* of the experience. Therefore, a difficulty arises, signaled, among others, by Christopher Dowling (2013), in the actual dis-

tinction between aesthetic experiences and non-aesthetic experiences.

I propose to introduce a definition of certain properties which, in my opinion, adequately describe the experiences characteristic of the aesthetics of everyday life. They are: *contingency*, *repetition* and *permeability*.

3.1. Contingency

The first property of the aesthetic experience of everyday life is its contingency. It is a property that is assigned to certain individual experiences or sequences of experiences. Let us call these experiences (or their sequence) *x*. Let us also assume that x can only be contingent due to some external factors (other than *x*), i.e. *P*.

An experience *x* is contingent at a moment t_n for a person *O* due to *P* if at t_n exists such *P,* where *P* is a set {a, b, c..., n} of events characterized as follows:

(1) a, b, c, ..., n ∈ *P* are ascribed by *O* due to *x* at $t_{n;}$
(2) a, b, c, ..., n ∈ *P* favors the occurrence of *x* at $t_{n;}$
(3) *x* exists at $t_{n.}$

The time correlation between *x* and *P* is not, however, a correlation resulting from necessity, i.e. *P* is not a set of necessary and sufficient properties for *x* to occur (*P* therefore does not determine *x*). It would be extremely difficult to distinguish a set of events definitively determining the occurrence of a certain *x*. The above explanation of the notion of contingency indicates its 'horizontal' character in relation to *x*. It means that *P* occurs simultaneously with *x*.[52] For example, the experience of being satisfied with eating

52 The set P does not constitute the genesis of x, but only the factors favoring the formation of a stream of experiences into some x.

a good dinner, i.e. *x*, occurs simultaneously with a certain sequence of events or experiences, i.e. *P*, such as the type of dish, lighting in the dining room, season, music, etc.

3.2. Repetition

Another property of everyday aesthetic experience is its repeatability. If the experience is repetitive, it means that it is described and experienced within a certain framework, namely *Z*. In other words, *x* is a repetitive experience of an object *Y* for *O* within *Z* when:

(1) there exists a time interval $\{t_1, t_2\}$ in which an experience *w* existed of *Y* for *O* and *w* was accurately described within the framework *Q*;

(2) at t_n there has been a change in the description of Y's experience for *O* in such a way that there exists *x* such that $w \neq x$ and *x* is a Y's experience for *O*;

(3) *x* is described (by most subjects) under *Z*, not under *Q*;

(4) *Z* remains in the time frame $\{t_{n+1}, t_{n+2}, \ldots\}$.

The restriction that there used to be *Q* other than *Z* frames is necessary. The above formulation is concerned with the repetition of certain descriptions of experiences, and not their necessity. If there were only one way to describe the experience (and to perform the activities), we could not speak of pure repetition. It is a certain freedom in the possibility of experiencing repetitive activities that can give a certain aesthetic satisfaction. For example, most people have a favorite way of making their morning coffee, and it is precisely the daily activities that are performed in a predictable sequence that we enjoy. If, however, there were only one way to prepare coffee (without any 'variations'), the enjoyment of this ritual would be questionable.

It is worth emphasizing here that repetition in everyday aes-

thetic experience can take two forms: positive and negative. The positive form occurs in the case described above (e.g. in the daily brewing of coffee), when the (predictable) repetition of certain experiences (and activities) gives us a kind of aesthetic satisfaction. On the other hand, the negative form is when the repetition of the description of a given experience is disturbed by some external (usually unforeseen) event. We can then say that this unusual event occurred (or was experienced and described by us) against the 'background' of the repetition of other events. For example, during a routine, and therefore mechanical walk to work during which you are not focused on the details encountered along the way, one day you may notice a work of urban art on a walkway or on a wall of a building you used to pass by. The experience of this work will be intensified precisely by the fact that you passed it every day, but only at some point did you realize it.

3.3. Permeability

The last property of everyday aesthetic experience that I would like to highlight is its permeability. When a certain individual experience (or a sequence of such experiences) penetrates many levels of meaning, then we are talking about the permeability of this experience.

The permeability can be characterized as a conjunction of the following theses:

(1) Permeability is the relation between x (an experience) of the object Y by the person O and the set of meanings Z {a, b, c, ..., n} belonging to different conceptual grids.

(2) x penetrates the set of meanings of Z, when the experience x penetrates at least one of the meanings belonging to Z.

(3) x permeates the meaning of b belonging to Z, characteristic of the conceptual grid of F, when it is the case that the experience of x is a testimony to the fact that the meaning of b is true on the basis of F.

To put it simply, the permeability of everyday aesthetic expe-

rience consists in the fact that a given experience can be equally and simultaneously interpreted as belonging to many conceptual networks. For example, eating a meat sandwich from a fashionable international chain of cafes can be considered from many different perspectives: ecological (because the production of such food is always associated with a certain attitude towards the natural environment, e.g. using products only from natural crops); moral (because we accept killing the animals for their meat); religious (some religious groups are forbidden to eat meat in general or certain types of it, e.g. pork, beef); social (because we identify with the middle class, to whom the offer of the network is directed); and political (because by choosing food from the offer of a specific distributor, we support his activities, e.g. aimed at leveling out some social and class inequalities).

Let us emphasize the fact that the permeability of the aesthetic experience of everyday life is closely related to its subject. In other words, the primary function of a sandwich or shoes is not their aesthetic function, but — respectively — providing nutritional value or protecting the feet. Experiences related to, for example, works of art do not have such permeability, that is, equal and equal coexistence. The primary function of works of art is to communicate a certain meaning through appropriately selected formal means. Thus, the aesthetic experience related to contact with works of art is of primary importance and only through this experience do we problematize the subject and content of a work of art.

4. Individuation of Everyday Aesthetic Experience

Before I proceed to the description of the role played by the above-mentioned properties of everyday aesthetic experience, it is worth making two reservations. First, it is obvious that properties such as contingency or repetition can occur in the description not only of an aesthetic experience, but also of other experiences (not necessarily related to everyday life). It is important, however, that it is these properties that are *essential* for the aesthetic experience.

In other words, the structure of this experience, most likely due to its occurrence in daily life, necessarily implies the coexistence of these properties. Second, the subject may not always be aware of these properties when experiencing something aesthetically. Our contact with everyday life, and thus with aesthetic properties, is often automatic and slightly reflective. Let us note that an experience is often qualified *post factum* as aesthetic, but is not so defined during its duration.

In order to be an informative concept on the basis of a given aesthetic theory, everyday aesthetic experience must be characterized by a set of constitutive features. Only then (and not by multiplying the aesthetic properties themselves, such as 'clean' or 'ordered'), can we say something about its functioning and specificity, and only then can we determine what it is that enables the experience to have a strong aesthetic influence on our lives (despite its universality).

It seems that the conjunction of the properties I have indicated, i.e. contingency, repeatability, and permeability, can be treated as a set of conditions necessary for the aesthetic experience of everyday life to occur. However, this is not a set of sufficient properties, because they are not final and their respective weight (for the occurrence of an aesthetic experience) may somehow depend on external factors.[53] This may lead to the conclusion that aesthetic experience is not an experience of any particular kind (an aesthetic property) but some way of experiencing reality.[54] It is the indi-

53 For example, it is the external conditions that determine what color (positive / negative) the repeatability category will take. It should also be emphasized that the aesthetic experience of everyday life is often based on the experiences of the so-called lower senses, as indicated by Saito (2017) and Irvin (2008).

54 This is in some way consistent with Nick Zangwill's thesis that every aesthetic property is founded (or realized) on some set of unsightly properties (see Zangwill 2001; 2007). With regard to the aesthetic experience of everyday life, this may mean that certain properties (e.g., order) can be considered aesthetic if they occur in a certain type of experience (characterized by contingency, repeatability and permeability). This would mean that the aesthetic character of certain properties of everyday life is (at least in part) constituted by our experience.

vidual reading of the contexts, surrounding the individual and the particular object, which is the object of experience, which allows us to experience something in an aesthetic way. Thus, the 'what is aesthetic in the everyday' turns out to be a plane of intersection of many dimensions of social, cultural, biological life, etc. These 'cuts' arise as a result of a specific property of aesthetic experience, which is its permeability. Thanks to the existence of these 'intersections', we can derive serious moral judgments from simple aesthetic experiences.

The complex contextual nature of these 'intersections' means that some properties from everyday life can be interpreted as aesthetic, such as chaos or dirt. Moreover, the conjunction of these properties should be treated as an individualizing factor (at least partially) of aesthetic experience. In other words, these properties are the basis for an individual's isolation and classification of a certain set of experiences as an aesthetic experience. For it is individualized each time, not by external factors, but by the knowing subject. There are no external conditions necessary for the occurrence of experience to be distinguished here. Thus, a certain set of experiences E may be qualified (or experienced) in terms of C by a person O in time t_n as an aesthetic experience, and in other conditions or at some other time — not. At this point, a certain 'openness' of aesthetic experience is justified, assuming its subjective character.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I proposed definitions of the properties of everyday aesthetic experience, namely contingency, repetition, and permeability, which are responsible for the individualization of this experience. I would like to emphasize that these properties, which play a significant role in defining the overall structure of everyday aesthetic experience, remain essentially unchanged in relation to our version of everyday aesthetics. That is, regardless of which version of everyday aesthetics we decide to adopt — restrictionism or expansionism — it can undoubtedly be said that it makes a sig-

nificant breakthrough in philosophical reflection on everyday life. What I mean here is not only drawing attention to the aesthetic nature of everyday activities and their relationship with aesthetic or ethical properties, but also the rehabilitation of the lower senses, i.e. taste, smell, and touch. These senses are seen not only as a valuable source of experience, which is then transformed into an aesthetic and artistic experience (as is the case with some art forms, e.g. perfumes or flower arrangements). Essential also is their role in the experience of everyday life. They play an important role in the process of identifying objects, people or places. Moreover, they build a sense of security (e.g. when we smell a house or a loved one), danger (e.g. when we smell gas leaking), or novelty (e.g. when we experience a previously unknown taste). They often evoke strong, although unstable, reactions of a different nature. The strong smell of lilies can make us melancholic, the taste of anise can make us feel slightly nauseous, and the smell of a decaying body a strong disgust. All this contributes not only to expanding our aesthetic landscape, i.e. appreciating things that we are not used to paying attention to, but it also allows us to describe ourselves and the reality around us in a better and more valuable way.[55]

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Francisca Pérez Carreño

Theatricality and Everyday Aesthetics

1.

One of the central issues in everyday aesthetics is the aesthetic experience of everyday life *as everyday*, or the question: how is it possible to enjoy the everyday *qua* everyday? In particular, restrictivist accounts try to limit everyday life to what is unimportant, insignificant, or what passes without being noticed. But when everyday life is characterized as the ordinary, routine, familiar, or commonplace, it is defined precisely as the opposite to what modern aesthetics considers aesthetic, namely, what appears to be disautomatising, renewing or refreshing look on the world. Restrictivist accounts in everyday aesthetics aim to grasp what is everyday in the commonplace, routine, unexceptional, or ordinary. In this vein, Haapala (2005) holds that the everyday experience is marked by familiarity. In daily life, objects, activities, and environments repeat and become familiar to us. And familiarity is a quality of the aesthetic experience of everyday life. On the contrary, modern conceptions of art and the aesthetic oppose familiarity and habituation to the aesthetic, marked by strangeness and novelty.

My aim in this paper is not to contribute to the definition of everyday aesthetics, but rather to think about one feature of everyday life as taken into consideration by restrictivist approach-

es: the antitheatrical aspect of the experience of everyday life. In Pérez Carreño (2019), I addressed what may be called the paradox of everyday aesthetics, i.e. the issue of how to have an (aesthetic) experience of that which passes by almost unconsciously. Haapala underlines the idea that we almost have no experience of the familiar. The everyday is overlooked, it goes unnoticed. In a straight formula, Highmore asserts: "things become 'everyday' by becoming invisible" (Highmore 2002, 21). And explicitly, Saito says that the field of everyday aesthetics comprises those "aesthetic dimensions of our everyday life that do not result in 'an aesthetic experience'" (Saito 2007, 104). 'An aesthetic experience' is here understood as contemplative, distanced, reflexive or deliberative.

In "The aesthetic value of the unnoticed" (Pérez Carreño 2019) I discussed the paradox of everyday aesthetics, or the issue of how to enjoy aesthetically that which is unaesthetic by definition, that which precisely eludes experience. I proposed that art brings to consciousness what goes unnoticed in everyday life. On the one hand, I wanted to stress the old idea that art makes us notice what otherwise could remain unnoticed or overlooked (by familiarity or routine). And I tried to answer Haapala's challenge to that commonplace notion that "… in the context of art the everyday loses its everydayness: it becomes something extraordinary" (Haapala 2005, 51). On the contrary, I held that art might make us aware of everyday aesthetic value, allowing us to recover the half-conscious experience of the everyday. I took the idea from Haapala (2005) himself, who suggested that from time to time, we can stop the flux of the ordinary and may contemplate the beauty that lies in it; that is, we can become aware of what is usually automatically overlooked. And he underlined that this contemplative experience is nevertheless reliant on the almost unconscious experience of the everyday. Similarly, I held that the beauty, expressiveness or meaningfulness of the everyday that we recognize in art, is dependent on the beauty, expressiveness or meaningfulness present in everyday life. Art comes to retrieve something that was already there. I might agree that art makes something extraordinary out of the

ordinary, precisely by making it noticeable, but nothing else. The mark of familiarity remains in the experience of a work.

So, I believe that art makes us aware of the everyday aesthetic value and allows us to recover the half-conscious experience of everyday as meaningful and rewarding. The knot of meanings involved in everyday life is properly recognized in an experience linked to the particular, contextual and personal. This is what I think may be called 'aesthetic' in the aesthetic enjoyment of the everyday. My point is that art does not aestheticize everyday experience, but rather that if we recognize aesthetic beauty, expressiveness and meaningfulness in the artistic representation of ordinary life, it is so because these properties belong to the ordinary life.

In Pérez Carreño (2019) I focused on the unnoticed character of objects and environments we enjoy daily and on how these are retrieved through art. In what follows, I aim to investigate antitheatricality as another subjective aspect of everyday life experience. In daily life, we overlook and ignore objects and contexts; and beyond that, we behave routinely, automatically, and spontaneously. Antitheatricality goes together with the unnoticed character of the experience of everyday life. So, it is the object, but also the subject herself, that goes unnoticed.

2.

Again, art allows us to see what is necessarily unseen (and unfelt) in everyday experience, the self of the experience. Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* (1657-8) or Chardin's *The House of Cards* (1737) are but two well-known examples of the pictorial representation of everyday life in western art. In both paintings, a solitary figure is imbibed in a trivial and apparently insignificant activity. In the Vermeer, a woman in a modest domestic setting, probably a kitchen corner, is engaged in the automatic action of pouring milk from a jar. In the Chardin, a boy plays a solitary game of cards in a neutral domestic setting. The painting's moral symbolism points to a life as hazardous and fragile as a house of cards and to human beings

as children. Both solitary, woman and boy, are located in interiors, concentrated in the activity, and unaware of anything else around. To both figures, environment, objects and setting, and their proper activities seem unnoticed. To the beholder, the scenes seem quiet, serene, and meaningful in their everydayness. There is an irresoluble asymmetry between both. In everyday life, we are participants and not beholders of ourselves. But if we can't be beholders and participants simultaneously, we may still recognize an attitude that is not strange to ourselves in the figures. We observe and realize how it is to perform an everyday activity, how it is to be amidst the flux of existence.

That way of performing an ordinary action – being absorbed by it both physically and mentally, while oblivious to the gaze of others and of oneself – is what makes the attitude antitheatrical. The characters in both paintings are, first of all, and manifestly, antitheatrical. Their bodies and facial expressions show their confidence in being neither observed, nor seen. Art reveals the image of us when we are not observed, or when we act without awareness of being looked at or seen by others. To be theatrical in everyday life means to behave as if someone were looking at you. When we are conscious of being seen, we modulate our behavior so as to impact those who observe us. But then the everydayness of everyday evaporates.

Chardin's *The House of Cards* was analyzed from this point of view by Michael Fried (1980). Fried considered theatricality an undesirable property of painting, an art form based on the visual perception of its content. Fried addresses how, first the painting and later photography, can avoid the danger of theatricality, if both artistic media are created to be seen.[56] I adopt the terminology here and try to use this tension between being seen and acting as if not

56 The problem is how should a picture be to maintain its autonomy, clearly separating the space of the beholder and the space of representation. For Fried, autonomous, modern art avoids theatricality, and representing absorption is for modern painting from Diderot to Manet, and then again in contemporary photography, the main device to achieve it.

seen in relation to the explanation of everyday experience, since the structure of the problem in art seems similar to the situation in public life when being seen is the normal condition of adult human beings.

Very often (but by no means always) painting and photography reach antitheatricality by representing lone persons absorbed in an activity, as the examples I discussed. This situation seems to be characteristic of ordinary life and is considered paradigmatic by restrictivist accounts. Art may show something about everyday experience when we are engaged in everyday activities such as cooking or playing solitary cards games. As said before, we cannot be the spectators of ourselves, which seems to imply that an aesthetic experience of this situation is available only in artworks. It may also be the case when we look at others or the world with artistic/aesthetic eyes. That is what Wittgenstein intimates in the following lines. First, about art, he states:

> Nothing could be more remarkable than seeing someone who thinks himself unobserved engaged in some quite simple everyday activity. Let's imagine a theatre, the curtain goes up and we see someone alone in his room walking up and down, lighting a cigarette, seating himself etc. so that suddenly we are observing a human being from outside in a way that ordinarily we can never observe ourselves; as if we were watching a chapter from a biography with our own eyes —surely this would be at once uncanny and wonderful. … But only the artist can represent the individual thing [das Einzelne] so that it appears to us as a work of art (Wittgenstein in Fried 2008, 30)

And below:

> But now it seems to me too that besides the work of the artist there is another through which the world may be captured *sub specie æterni*. It is—as I believe—the way of thought which as it were flies above the world and leaves it the way it is, contemplating it from above in its flight. (Wittgenstein in Fried 2008, 30)

Wittgenstein seems to endorse the idea that an aesthetic vision of the world, and not just an artistic representation, can lead us to perceive and maybe enjoy everydayness. The condition is to contemplate it from the outside. Fried (2008) quoted Wittgenstein to explain his view of antitheatricality in contemporary photography. One of his examples is Jeff Wall's *Morning Cleaning, Mies van*

der Rohe Foundation, Barcelona, 1999. It exemplifies, through the representation of a man absorbed in cleaning a window of the famous building, how art may reveal everydayness through antitheatricality.[57] The morning sun illuminates the picture's foreground while the cleaner is in the shade in the back. He is leant over the bucket to change the mop at the end of the stick. The character is working alone, unobserved, focused on his action. Thus, he is not concerned about the image he could offer to others. Time stops, and the instant becomes eternal.

Fried conceives the beholders of the image as contemplators in the Wittgensteinian way. Indeed, they do not belong to the space of the representation, but are, magically, viewers from the outside. We may also imagine that a similar occasion occurs in real life, and that we are casual spectators of the scene. However, we are trying to grasp for everyday aesthetics the totally different experience of everyday activities considered from the inside. We aim to capture the experience of those intimate moments in which we seem to abandon the consciousness of being seen and the necessity of offering an image of ourselves. The examples often mentioned are those of preparing or drinking coffee, hanging clothes, walking on the streets of a familiar town, or the countryside, driving along a lonely road, writing on our computer preparing a lecture, and so on. The everyday enclosed in those activities seems to be action-directed, irreflexive and antitheatrical. More than in aesthetic contemplation or from outside, aesthetic satisfaction is in the doing or behaving in certain ways.

More than the kind of objects or even tasks we use or do daily, it is the way we do things that characterizes the everyday. Consequently, and contrary to a Wittgensteinian vision *sub specie aeternitatis,* everyday aesthetic experience should be considered more *poetic* than *aesthetic* or contemplative.

57 The artistic and critical point comes from the fact that the photograph (exhibited in a lightbox) is the result of a quite sophisticated process, and not a snapshot taken from real life. Actually, the man is posing, although he is the actual cleaner of the pavilion and therefore the activity, for him, is an everyday activity.

3.

Based on the insightful counterexample of the everyday life of the conductor Valerie A. Gergiev, Puolakka (2019a) argued against restrictivist accounts. Puolakka points to Gergiev's ordinary life as extraordinary (at least for most of us). Gergiev conducts a concert almost every day, which obliges him to travel and live most of his time out of and away from home, in unknown hotels and cities, in unfamiliar surroundings, probably with strange people. These are the kinds of experiences contrary to familiar. Besides, contrary to the life of a salesman or a directive executive, all this coming and going is at the service of conducting different orchestras in different concert halls, to perform great musical works. That is to say, the primary purpose of his life is to make art, most likely aiming to produce an aesthetic experience in a public ready to enjoy this extraordinary event.

Now, it seems to me that there is nothing against considering Gergiev's everyday life as everyday. It certainly lacks commonness, but that is the important thing about the everyday: precisely that it is personal. The uses and habits are of someone. Some people play in or conduct an orchestra; others study, clean the streets or work in factories or hospitals. The everyday life of people nowadays, spending time and communicating online, is quite different from the lives of our grandparents, maybe parents. But, further, what makes familiar and perhaps enjoyable everyday activities is not just their repetition, but the sense that we give to them, the meaning they have in our life. And this is different for each of us and in each moment of our lives. No matter how much skill, knowledge, wisdom, and sensitivity it takes, conducting an orchestra and making music is, for Gergiev, the everyday. It is the kind of attitude he adopts in conducting, rehearsing, studying, the sense he makes of all that, that makes it his everyday life. It is not easy or common, but distinctive and admirable.

Now, the experience of conducting an orchestra is action-directed, and up to a certain extent, the action is automatic, non-reflective and antitheatrical. Giving instructions to the players, fol-

lowing the sounds of music, moving the eyes, the arms, and the whole body expressively, or paying attention to an entrance or a finale, are some basic actions comprised in the entire activity. As Saito said, the aesthetic decisions Gergiev takes when conducting the orchestra are taken without deliberation or without having an aesthetic experience: "…you come, and you hear; then you react."[58] There are many pictures and documentaries of Gergiev available on the internet. In many of these, he appears so enthralled that to be conscious of himself, his appearance, gestures, or his hair is obviously out of question. In this sense, he is openly antitheatrical. Despite this, the first impression the photographs provoke are of an exaggerated expressiveness, which may be taken for theatrical.[59]

Chris Christodoulou's photo of Gergiev conducting might seem to represent the opposite of Wall's photo, *Morning Cleaning*. There are differences: first, about the genre, since while Christodoulou's is a genuine snapshot, the cleaner has posed hundreds of times for the Wall's photo, composed later in the artist's studio. The strangeness produced by Christodoulou's photograph comes partly from the fact that Gergiev's gestures seem to be addressed to the viewer, who stands in front of the picture. In addition, the passionate mode of conducting also shows a rare expressiveness. However, the photograph represents Gergiev in an antitheatrical way, despite the close-up and the gesture, or so I think. Gergiev's gaze set him at an unreachable distance from the spectator, entirely ignored by him. Wall's picture (which is staged) represents the cleaner as he could be seen by someone who has inadvertently entered the room. On the contrary, Christodoulou's photograph offers an image of someone who was actually in the presence of an

58 Gergiev in You Cannot Start Without Me - Valery Gergiev, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r71xgacQ3jI (accessed December 6th 2021).

59 See, for instance, Chris Christodoulou's http://www.wbjc.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Prom-52-92.jpg (accessed December 6th 2021) See also Hiroyuki Ito's photographs in https://www.gettyimages.es/fotos/valery-gergiev-hiroyuki-ito?family=editorial&assettype=image&phrase=Valery%20Gergiev%20hiroyuki%20ito&sort=mostpopular (accessed December 6th 2021).

entire audience, though abstracted from it.

It may also be noticed that while the cleaner is self-absorbed, he may, up to a certain point, have his mind occupied by something else, unrelated to mopping or cleaning. To be distracted from the conducting is not an option for Gergiev. The cleaner may be preoccupied with multiple thoughts, dividing his attention between the action and other objects. This distracted way of doing ordinary things is the experience that everyday aesthetic scholars may have in mind: drinking a cup of tea or walking in the park are the kinds of things that can be done without paying much attention to the actions. Thus, the cleaner can divide the attention between cleaning and humming a song in his head; Gergiev is totally engrossed in the performance of the music. It is a question of degree how much attention to pay for one activity or the other. But in relation to the theatricality involved, I would say that they are on a par. Absorbed in his thoughts while cleaning, the cleaner is antitheatrical, the same as Gergiev is when absorbed in conducting.

4.

Nevertheless, the difference between the cleaner and Gergiev in the photographs I want to mention now refers to the fact that, while the cleaner is alone, Gergiev is in the presence of the public. Gergiev knows he performs for an auditory, even if he does not pay attention to it. Indeed, the gestures we see in the photo are addressed to the orchestra and not toward the public or the picture viewer. So, he is not acting for the listeners in the concert hall; he is backwards and does not address them. He is not acting for them but performing in their presence. His gestures are expressive and communicative with the players of the orchestra.

Gergiev's performance involves the participation of the players and constant feedback, fast and automatized, between conductor and orchestra. It may seem that while Wall's cleaner is abstracted from the world, unaware of the gaze of others, Gergiev is communicating, playing a part, in relation at least to the orchestra. There-

fore, in a situation that fits perfectly to Goffman's definition of the social interaction as theatrical, in which the participants aim "to guide and control the responses made by others present" (Goffman 1956, 2). But rather than guiding and trying to control the players, he is making music with them, performing a work of music with them. They collaborate in the same activity, producing a musical work, a musical event. In his role as a conductor, Gergiev is the one who mainly guides and gives instructions to the musician in the orchestra, but the situation is one defined by the whole ensemble. The entire group is abstracted, engaged in the same shared activity.

Not all public life is theatrical in Goffman's sense. There are many social situations where we barely pay attention to others and act as if our presence goes unnoticed. Urban life seems to be full of such activities: walking on the streets or commuting, without looking at others or being looked at by them. This behavior probably needs to be learned, as our social nature makes us responsive to the presence of others. Anonymity can sometimes be experienced in a positive way, but it is often portrayed as having harmful and dehumanizing properties. However, sometimes abstraction and lack of communication are not symptoms of hostile conditions. In many of Manet's works (Fried 1996), the figures share space and situations but do not communicate. Figures in *The Balcony* or *In the Conservatory* are represented as distracted or self-involved, but do not show discomfort, quite the opposite. In domestic spaces, intimacy allows for carefree behavior and absorption in the company of others. Cassatt's *The Tea* represents such an occasion, in which two women – most likely friends – drink tea without talking to each other, but in an apparent atmosphere of intimacy and naturalness. Similarly, in Wall's *A View from an Apartment* two young women are engaged in different ordinary activities without paying attention to each other.

Moreover, absorption in collaborative performances is not uncommon. Some ordinary activities are necessarily public and require attentive but automatic collaboration with others: games, sports and dance are just some of them. In these cases, the inter-

action, for instance, playing a game, or performing music in an orchestra, is not theatrical.[60] We are aware of the presence of others, we influence them and are influenced by them, but these activities share with everyday activities an engagement of the self with others and with objects which is almost automatic. And they can have the mark of familiarity and the aesthetic.

It is also possible and ubiquitous in everyday life to be antitheatrical in the presence of others, with others. A beautiful example is the content of Mary Cassatt's *The Child's Bath* (1891), which depicts a moment of intimacy in which a woman with a child on her lap washes the child's foot in a porcelain basin fill with water. Both mother and child stare into the basin, automatically cooperating. They seem unaware of themselves and each other, but they are attuned in their movements and in carrying out their actions. Indeed, they are in comfortable control of their actions, their own body and movements, and are sensitive to the touch of the other's bodies and movements. Mother and child are unreflectively aware of that and of many other things, such as perhaps the temperature of the water and the room. It is a perfect example of a shared everyday life.

5.

Now, for everyday aesthetics, it is again paradoxical that solitary or shared moments of absorption in everyday life, which for spectators of art or in real life are scenes of aesthetic enjoyment, cannot be enjoyed by its participants. It is logically and practically impossible to enjoy the everyday antitheatricality without *ipso facto* becoming theatrical. For once you notice yourself as the person acting or performing, you stop being spontaneous or antitheatrical. Even if it is only you, the person you are acting for, the characteristic absorption vanishes. The paradox of the everyday aesthet-

60 Adam Andrzejewski (2017) has presented different kinds and forms of theatricalisation in everyday life and in relationship with aesthetics and anesthetization.

ics on obtaining an aesthetic experience of the unnoticed repeats in another form. Here the point is not about the attention or lack of attention towards the content of the experience, but towards the activity and the self herself. How is it possible for a subject to have experience of herself without becoming theatrical?

A possibility lies in considering self-consciousness in action, not in a reflective form of introspection whose object is the image of the self in action. It is the consciousness of doing something in which the self does not perceive herself but the action. Along with the activity itself, one perceives the resistance of materials, the form of objects, the touch of others, the ongoing outcome of the activity. When the action is rewarding, satisfying in itself, it may be considered aesthetic. Reading is an excellent example of that kind of experience, in which immersion does not prevent us from obtaining pleasure from the mere activity of reading. On the contrary, it is this feeling what we seek in reading.[61] And the same is true when we play with children, sing in a choir or take a walk in the park with someone.

Art is a privileged domain to show the everyday linked to antitheatricality, as we have seen in the examples throughout the article. These artworks represent antitheatricality and illustrate what it is like for an agent engaged in solitary or collective activity to act, expressing herself in a frank – authentic or antitheatrical – way. They are valuable for turning us into witnesses of scenes that would otherwise be unavailable to the participants. These works reveal to us the aesthetic value of domesticity, intimacy, and the everyday. On the one hand, art makes us sensitive to these values in real life. But, on the other hand, we recognize them in art because we know them from their silent but ubiquitous presence in real life.

The aesthetic experience of everyday life cannot arise from self-contemplation, which necessarily leads to theatricality, but

61 Painting and photography have often represented scenes with abstracted readers. See, for example, Mary Cassatt, Reading 'Le Figaro' (1878) and Richard Richter, Reader (1994). On the topic of reading and everyday life see Puolakka (2019b) and his essay in this volume.

from one's own carefully and spontaneously performed activity. It is the rewarding awareness of a performance whose value depends as much on the meaning embodied in the activity as on the genuine expression of the self in it. When conducting an orchestra, Gergiev shows the same kind of engagement present in the lonely milkmaid or in the domestic scene of the mother bathing her toddler, even if, luckily for the enjoyment of us all, his performance is public.[62]

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Mateusz Salwa

Everyday Landscapes. A Challenge for Aesthetics?

1. Introduction

There is a long-standing tradition of considering landscapes from an aesthetic point of view. It may be dated back at least to the 18th century, when, with the advent of the aesthetics of nature, the concept of landscape became culturally important as never before. Landscapes were sought not only in paintings or gardens, but also in one's surroundings, and seeking for them amounted to searching for certain aesthetic qualities such as the picturesque. As a result, the concept of landscape started to denote a view or a visible stretch of land, most likely having certain characteristic traits that could be noticed and either appreciated or analyzed and 'depicted' in a scientific description. Such an approach, widely adopted in the humanities and social sciences throughout the 20th century, was also largely promoted by philosophical aesthetics. This had a decisive influence on how the concept of landscape was used in the academia and outside of it, i.e. on the contexts in which it was used, on aesthetic and other qualities landscapes were thought to have, as well as on how the relationship between people and landscapes was defined.

The past three decades have witnessed an increasing interest in the concept of landscape (or, simply put, in landscapes). In fact, an interdisciplinary field of research has emerged: landscape studies (Howard et al. 2019). Consequently, the understanding of the concept of landscape has become more nuanced and varied, and today goes well beyond its origins. One of the great overall changes that occurred consists in acknowledging that landscapes do not have to be picturesque or otherwise spectacular, as it was implied by the traditional view. In other words, it has been submitted that the concept of landscape may refer to people's everyday surroundings or environments (which – as we shall see below – do not have to be experienced visually). This has important ramifications for academic theory, including aesthetics, since the approach of a traditional aesthetic was, to a great extent, based on the assumption that the concept of landscape has little to do with everyday life.

The aim of the following paragraphs will be, then, to shed some light on how the concept of landscape may be associated with that of everyday and the aesthetic. In other words, the aim will be to approach the concept of landscape from the standpoint of everyday aesthetics. In fact, what is needed is landscape everyday aesthetics, or – rather – everyday landscape aesthetics. These two labels are almost synonymous insofar as they denote the same issue: given the theory and practice of everyday aesthetics, analyzing landscapes from the perspective of everyday aesthetics amounts to offering aesthetic analyses of everyday landscapes. Yet, the semantic shift creates an important difference between the approaches behind these two labels, since it introduces the concept of everyday landscape, an idea that is extremely important in contemporary landscape studies and that does not really fit the traditional agenda of landscape aesthetics.

There are at least three reasons why everyday landscape aesthetics is worth considering as an alternative to the existing approaches and as a response to the recognition of the everyday character of landscapes. First, traditional landscape aesthetics conceives of the landscape as having little or nothing to do with the

everyday – in one way or another it treats a landscape as an object that is both aesthetic, i.e. has aesthetic qualities and has to be experienced (appreciated) accordingly, and uncommon or unusual, in the sense that someone willing to experience it has to assume a particular perspective, one that is far from everyday considerations and practices. Second, regardless of what the exponents of the new understanding of landscape claim, its aesthetic qualities are important. Everyday landscape aesthetics may thus appear as an attempt to reevaluate what has been either dismissed or totally ignored by the new approach, which aims at divorcing the concept of landscape from aesthetics and which shows that it is possible to think of landscapes as non-aesthetic objects. Finally, there are also practical motives. Acknowledging that landscapes may have an everyday character has deep consequences for landscape policies and social practices. Recognizing that everyday landscapes have aesthetic qualities may be helpful in coping with these issues.

In other words, considering that a new approach to landscapes has emerged, it seems useful to take this into account and ruminate on what aesthetics may add to it. And given that its novelty consists in discovering the everyday aspect of landscapes, everyday aesthetics seems to be the proper perspective to start with.

2. Scenic Landscape vs Everyday Landscape

The term 'landscape' is usually and not without reason associated with painting and landscape architecture. Dictionaries define it as "a large area of countryside, especially in relation to its appearance […]" (*Cambridge English Dictionary* 2021), or as "everything you can see when you look across an area of land" (*Collins English Dictionary* 2021), or as "the landforms of a region in the aggregate of rolling hills, […] a portion of territory that can be viewed at one time from one place" (Merriam-Webster 2021). All these entries include references to the genre of painting or the art of shaping the land in such a way as to make it more attractive. The fact that the term 'landscape' (and its counterparts in other European lan-

guages) is so closely associated with art is very often explained by means of its history and etymology – it became widely used in Early Modern Europe in relation to landscape paintings (Franceschi 1997; Olwig 2019).

Such an art-centered approach results in treating landscapes as visual 'entities' that may be seen only from a distance by a detached, contemplative observer who occupies a privileged point of view.[63] Thus, a landscape is created in the beholder's eye and as such is subject to his or her economic, political, or social power – in fact, landscapes are very often treated as means that either create relations of power or express them. The beholder is thought to stand against the landscape, whose qualities may be admired and meanings decoded. Such a position may be taken by a landlord, cartographer, painter, scientist, or tourist. In other words, a landscape is understood as a way of seeing (Cosgrove 1998) one's surroundings that may find its expression mainly in how one imagines them or how one represents them in visual arts, literary descriptions, maps, documents, etc. To put it shortly, such an approach treats landscapes as representations (Waterton 2019; Wylie 2007). In terms of aesthetics, landscapes are thus associated with scenic views of the countryside or wild nature that can be appreciated by those who have a landscape sensibility shaped by, among other things, their knowledge of landscape painting or landscape photography. In order to see one's surroundings as a landscape, one has to 'artify' them, i.e. treat them as if they were a painted image or a scenic photograph.[64]

The account described, i.e. the representational one, was criticized on the grounds of being overly reductive and exclusive, in virtue of misrepresenting the relationship between people and landscapes, and in virtue of erroneously identifying landscape

63 The body of literature is far too vast to be quoted even in a selective manner. For general accounts see: Atrop & Van Eetvelde (2017); Howard et al. (2019); Elkins & DeLue (2008); Kühne (2018).

64 See e.g. Bonsdorff (2012); Leddy (2012); Naukkarinen (2012); Saito (2012).

with visible scenery.[65] The proponents of the non-representational (performative, phenomenological) view claim that people are perforce always immersed in landscapes in multi-sensory ways. This means that landscapes should be conceived not as sceneries to be looked at from a distance, but rather as material environments in which people directly act. Furthermore, this view suggests, instead of tracing the artistic lineage of the concept, its earlier meaning should be retrieved – the German term *Landschaft* used to denote an area inhabited by a community defined by its customs and laws (Berr & Kühne 2020; Olwig 2019). The landscape is thus understood not as a backdrop of social practices, one that in fact may be analyzed as separate from them, but as a space where these practices take place. As such, a landscape is always shaped by these practices and at the same time it determines them. The term 'landscape' denotes then the *Lebenswelt*, the environment in which people live their daily lives, the world they inhabit. This means that a landscape is not something that can only be seen. It rather implies that landscapes should be conceived of in terms of physical presence and bodily engagement. This approach presents landscape as something that is accessible to everyone and on an everyday basis, since having a landscape experience does not require any particular cultural competences, or particular economic or social circumstances. It should be added that such a view, critical of the representational approach, aims at divorcing the concept of landscape from traditional aesthetics, at least to a certain degree. If aesthetics is taken into consideration, it is identified with people's aesthetic experiences or preferences, which may be analyzed as social facts.

A good example of the difference between the concept of 'scenic' landscape and that of everyday landscape is the contrast between the way in which landscapes are treated in UNESCO documents (1972, 1992) and the European Landscape Convention (2000). The former are aimed at safeguarding World Heritage and

65 Non-representational approaches are varied, but they seem to share common assumptions, see e.g.: Crouch (2013); Ingold (2000); Tilley & Cameron-Daum (2017); Wylie (2007, 139-186).

present cultural landscapes as 'objects' of outstanding values (aesthetic values included) that are defined 'from without' by a specialist who applies objective, universal criteria to evaluate them. The latter, instead, is supposed to offer guidelines for management, planning, and protections of all the landscapes, including everyday ones. Therefore, it approaches landscapes as environments in which people participate and which can be experienced only 'from within'. This in turn means that landscapes are firmly associated with those who dwell in them and – consequently –that it is not possible to define objective criteria valid for all landscapes.

3. Aesthetics, Landscapes and the Everyday

The traditional aesthetic approach to landscapes – the 'landscape model', as it was termed by Allen Carlson (2000, 2009) – may be found not only in 18th century writings, but also in essays written by philosophers such as Georg Simmel (2007), Joachim Ritter (1974), Rosario Assunto (2005), and Alain Roger (1997). Generally speaking, it consists of assuming an art-centered perspective, in the sense that the landscape is approached as if it were a paradigmatic visual art work, i.e. as a framed and stable picture that is aesthetically significant because of its formal qualities (colours, shapes, textures, etc.). In other words, the concept of landscape is thought to be an aesthetic concept *tout court* and to denote an 'artified' view of an environment that is appreciated for its scenic or picturesque look. Having a landscape aesthetic experience amounts, then, to contemplating it and experiencing it as a unified whole.

This approach was vehemently criticized by, among others, Allen Carlson, who claimed that it implied a reduction of dynamic, complex, material environments to their visual images. Carlson suggested to abandon the concept of landscape in favor of the concept of environment, and to replace the landscape model with the environmental model. His idea is that an environment should be aesthetically appreciated as a 'bit' of the world in all its complexi-

ty. An aesthetic experience of an environment would be an act of its appreciation based on the knowledge of its objective features, the knowledge of which was offered by various disciplines (natural sciences, in the case of natural environments, natural and social sciences, as well as the humanities, in the case of humanized environments).[66]

A path alternative to the two perspectives mentioned above was cleared by Arnold Bearlant (1997, 2005) who, inspired by John Dewey's aesthetics and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, created 'participatory aesthetics' or 'aesthetics of engagement'. He conceives of a landscape as of one's 'lived environment', i.e. an environment in which one participates physically, emotionally and intellectually. Consequently, a landscape cannot be divorced from the subject engaged in it and *vice versa* – the subject cannot be eradicated from his or her landscape. In this view, a landscape aesthetic experience is a sensation of unity with one's surroundings or an experience based on a heightened awareness of aesthetic qualities of the environment and of one's engagement with it.

Given the general character of these theories, it is understandable that none of them is focused on everyday landscapes as such. However, it may be noticed that the landscape model explicitly, and Carlson's model implicitly, approach landscapes (or environments) as aesthetic objects that are not ordinary: either they have to be scenic or they require a knowledge-based analytical view. As an aside, Carlson (2014) adopted his theory to everyday landscapes, but he did it by suggesting that knowledge need not be specialized, since what is needed is everyday wisdom. It seems, then, that only the phenomenological approach is a suitable candidate for everyday landscape aesthetics, although it needs further elaboration in this direction.

It would be erroneous to think that everyday landscapes have not been discussed within aesthetics. In fact, this is one of the major issues discussed in everyday aesthetics, at least for Yuriko Saito,

66 His theory stirred a very fruitful debate, see. e.g. Carlson & Berleant (2004).

who claims that traditional aesthetics tended to ignore everyday landscapes, because their 'look' was unscenic and it thus contradicted the very idea of a landscape. Thus, the aim of everyday aesthetics is to reflect on how to make "unscenic aspects of nature aesthetically attractive in our experience" (Saito 2007, 77). Putting this differently, one could state that the aim of everyday aesthetics is to reflect on whether it is possible to recognize aesthetic qualities in everyday landscapes (and in other everyday objects) and to consider what an everyday landscape aesthetic experience would be like.[67]

Saito's intentions are undoubtedly just and her version of everyday aesthetics is compelling, but one may notice that – insofar as landscapes are concerned – she indeed goes beyond the traditional approach, but not as far as it may seem. On the one hand, she got rid of the art-centered approach, claiming that unscenic landscapes have their distinct aesthetic qualities and hence may be aesthetically appreciated. But on the other hand, she still identifies landscapes with sceneries. Hence, the core of the concept of landscape remains untouched. The landscape is to a great extent an object that may be appreciated only 'from without', while abandoning the art-centeredness of the concept of landscape in fact amounts to showing that landscapes may have other aesthetic qualities than those we may find in picturesque landscapes images.

4. Everyday Landscapes Aesthetics

As we can see, the agenda of everyday aesthetics is defined by the understanding of the concept of landscape. This means that changing the latter may result in pushing the former further. Such an opportunity is offered by the abovementioned non-representational landscape theories, so crucial for the contemporary approach to everyday landscapes. The shift made by them is in fact double, as it is ontological – landscapes are no longer visual or

67 The body of literature on this topic is vast, see e.g.: Leddy (2012); Light and Smith (2005); Mandoki (2007); Saito (2017, 2021); Yuedi and Curtis (2014).

mental 'images' but environments of social practices – and qualitative, i.e. landscapes are ordinary and familiar, as they are associated with everyday actions. For aesthetics, this poses a number of problems.

The landscape model, as well as the environmental one, approaches the landscape 'externally', conceiving it as something that has objective aesthetic qualities, which may be appreciated by someone who is not directly engaged in it, regardless of whether a landscape is compared to a lovable picture or an interesting 'ecosystem'. The non-representational approach requires an 'internal' perspective instead: the everyday exists thanks and through someone's daily practices. Thus experiencing it inevitably requires assuming that person's point of view. As a consequence, one has to answer three questions: what is an aesthetic experience of an everyday landscape and how would it differ from other experiences of everyday landscapes? What aesthetic qualities may everyday landscapes have? Is the aesthetic experience of an everyday landscape important?[68]

The first question directly relates to the pivotal dilemma of everyday aesthetics: is it possible to aesthetically appreciate the ordinary as ordinary, or does it necessarily entail making the ordinary extraordinary? For a long time, this dilemma was absent from landscape aesthetics, since the concept of landscape implied extraordinariness. On the one hand, landscapes were identified with particularly attractive views, on the other – in order to experience them, one had to be able to assume a specific perspective, one that had nothing to do with everyday actions. In fact, observing a landscape involved an a-practical approach to the world one inhabited, an approach that could find expression in, among other things, an aesthetic contemplation of the 'spectacle' in front of the beholder. Yet, once the concept of everyday landscape is taken into consideration, one has to somehow resolve the possible tension between the ordinary or familiar and the extraordinary or unfamiliar.

68 Cfr. Nanay (2018).

When adapted to the concept of landscape, the theory stating that the only way to aesthetically experience the ordinary is to experience it as extraordinary, seems rather debatable. Approaching an everyday landscape as strange and unfamiliar creates a sort of a distance between us and the landscape, which is everyday in so far as we are engaged in it. This implies that we do not participate in it in the same everyday way. Thus, an everyday landscape becomes somehow external and alien to us, and as such it becomes an 'object', which we can analyze in a manner similar to those defined above, as in the landscape model and the environmental model. As a result, a landscape is experienced as something ontologically different from what it is: a locale, with which we form a unity, turns into an image or a scientific object. In other words, when we approach our everyday landscape as extraordinary or unfamiliar, the problem is not that we do not experience its everyday aesthetic qualities, but that we do not experience our everyday landscape at all. In a sense, we become tourists in our own world.

The option, advocated by, among others, Yuriko Saito, according to which experiencing aesthetically everyday landscapes as everyday, i.e. as ordinary and familiar, seems then more promising, especially if it is interpreted along the lines suggested by Arnold Berleant (1995). He identifies the aesthetic experience with heightened attentiveness to sensory qualities of environments, considering them not only for their physical features, but also as vehicles of cultural meanings. Thus understood, an aesthetic experience indeed requires a change in one's attitude toward the everyday landscape, but such a shift results not so much in abandoning daily practices or "sitting down and setting aside the needs and demands of the everyday, and enjoying the familiar scene" (Haapala 2005, 51; quotation modified), as in paying more attention to the environment itself and to the way one is engaged in it (von Bonsdorff 1998). One does not have to become disengaged from his or her everyday landscape, in order to grasp its everydayness, i.e. the way it is constituted by his or her ordinary practices and how it determines them, just as one does not have to stop, for example,

mowing a lawn in order to aesthetically enjoy mowing it and to realize how aesthetic qualities of a lawn are created during and owing to one mowing it.
An aesthetic experience of an everyday landscape is, then, similar to the experience described by Yuriko Saito:

> […] experiencing the ordinary as ordinary is possible and it offers the core of everyday aesthetic experience. My argument is this: paying attention and bringing background to the foreground is simply making something invisible visible and is necessary for any kind of aesthetic experience, whether of the extraordinary or of the ordinary. Bringing background to the foreground through paying attention contrasts with conducting everyday life on autopilot, which puts the ingredients of everyday life beyond capture by our conscious radar. But putting something on our conscious radar and making something visible does not necessarily render our experience extraordinary. […] (Saito 2017, 24)

An important point of the agenda of everyday aesthetics is offering a catalogue of aesthetic qualities of the everyday. Such an enterprise is usually justified by the belief that traditional aesthetics, focused on extraordinary qualities, erroneously overlooked these qualities by treating them as insignificant and hence as outside of the realm of aesthetics. The same is true for landscapes. What makes everyday landscapes everyday is the fact that their aesthetic qualities are rooted in their 'earthiness' (Mandoki 2012) and in other qualities that make them transparent, so to speak. These landscapes are so familiar to us that we do not notice them anymore, i.e. we do not notice what they are like, nor are we aware that they are what they are because they are co-created by our actions. It is a kind of paradox that an everyday landscape is usually absent from 'our conscious radar' in the sense that it passes as unnoticed, as a background that we take for granted while living 'on autopilot'. This is another feature that makes everyday landscapes so different from scenic ones. *Ex definitione*, the latter cannot be unnoticed: we are always aware of them, since we may experience them if and only if we consciously assume a particular point of view.

5. Conclusions

As a conclusion, I would like to turn to the third question: is everyday landscape aesthetics important? The answer is obvious. Yes, it is, and for the same reasons as everyday aesthetics in general is important. It enhances our 'aesthetic welfare' (Sepänmaa 1995), favours our 'good life' (Saito 2017), or – put simply – it allows us not only to reflect on aesthetic qualities of everyday landscapes, but also, and more importantly, to enjoy them.

Everyday landscape aesthetic literacy is useful not only as a means of enhancing one's psychic and physical wellbeing, but also as a tool indispensable for discovering how other people aesthetically experience their everyday landscapes. In this respect, Carlson's cognitive approach seems to be a good option. A capacity to imagine that the same environment may in fact 'contain' different everyday landscapes and hence have different everyday qualities, is crucial from an ethical point of view. Let us not forget that the term *ethos* originally meant the character of a place (Cortina 2011). Hence, an ethical behavior may be understood as a manner of acting that conforms with the ethos of a landscape. If the landscape at stake is someone's everyday surrounding, then in order to act ethically, one has to take into consideration its everyday character, i.e. the way it is experienced as everyday by this person. Moreover, in this respect, the difference between the UNESCO approach and the European Landscape Convention approach is significant. The latter underlines social participation in landscapes and promotes a view of landscapes according to which different landscapes are equal, since they are inevitably associated with alternative experiences.

Given that what is experienced is always and inevitably a common world, the only way to make various everyday landscapes coexist is to negotiate between them. Since everyday landscapes have aesthetic qualities, such negotiations inevitably have to cover these qualities.

The idea expressed in the European Landscape Convention

was pushed further in 2012, when UNESCO declared that people have 'a right to landscape'. This right also relates to aesthetic qualities, since "substantial rights to landscape should concern sensory – visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, taste – and emotional perception, which a population has of its environment" (Déjeant-Pons 2016, 55). In light of what has been said above, a right to landscape may also be said to be a right to aesthetics (Blanc and Jollivet 2008). In order to recognize this fact, one has to acknowledge that everyday landscapes are inherently aesthetic, which, in turn, requires recognizing that they have everyday aesthetic qualities, or that an everyday landscape aesthetics is needed.

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ART, PANDEMIC AND THE 'NEW NORMAL'

Eva Frapiccini

From Bodily to Digital Presence, New Ways of Gathering.

The Case Study of the Survey-Based Itinerant Project *Dreams' Time Capsule*

1. Introduction

My contribution is aimed at discussing the period of transition led by the COVID-19 in dictating the passage from physical to digital encounters in the cultural production. More specifically, it will take in consideration the disappearance of participatory art. I will use the outcomes of the ten-years-long survey-based participatory project *Dreams' Time Capsule*, which started with subjects present in person and continued through the technological filter of the email as planned since the beginning. The *Dreams' Time Capsule* project has engaged more than two-thousand two hundred people around the world, collecting their audio-recorded dream-encounters with the purpose of returning these to donors by email between 2021 and 2022. The delivering process is ongoing and it is aimed at testing people's reactions not only to their past expectations, but also to the shifting relationship, from the physical to the digital interactions. The project has involved a variety of people (of different age, gender, education level and nationalities)

between 2011 and 2021, and the case-study will provide people's reactions in Egypt, Italy, Colombia, United Arab Emirates, Sweden, Bahrain, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Within the boundaries of my analysis, I will describe different aspects of the so-called 'participatory' and 'archival art', considering the effects of social distancing caused by the COVID-19, and more specifically, the reshaped grade of participation from physical to digital forms. To give an ordered overview of these matters, I will address the following issues: are social interactions and physical gatherings potentially dangerous in the actual pandemic scenario; how is participation affected by the shifting modality from physical to digital?

2. Comparing Bodily and Virtual Participation

Claire Bishop stated that the relevance of viewers, in the dialogue with artworks, has started since 1960s, when "the explosion of new technologies and the breakdown of medium-specific art, provided myriad opportunities from physically engaging the viewer in a work of art" (Bishop 2006, 10).

In the 1990s, the proliferation of the projects with the public engagement created a new trajectory in the role of viewers, thus developing another step towards less predictable aesthetics, where the risk is part of the artwork. In fact, a series of unpredictable factors, such as the attendance, response and interaction of the viewers, has started to be included and accepted in the 'situations' constructed by the artists. The actions created by Rirkrit Tivaranija, Thomas Hirschorn, Jeremy Deller (to mention a few artists form that decade) assumed the presence of an audience as essential to the success of the event.

In so doing, the action has reversed the passivity of viewers into the participation of creating, empowering a non-hierarchical social model. In participatory projects, collaboration in the creation of an artwork establishes a more egalitarian and democratic aspect to the project. It is a gesture that cedes control over the

content of the work and entails a different relationship between the artist and visitors. As argued by Bishop, this choice "is understood both to emerge from, and to produce, a more positive and non-hierarchical social model" (Bishop 2006, 12). Thus, the physical presence of visitors has become an indivisible paradigm for the organization of participatory projects in the Arts.

Since the first lockdown in 2020, we have realized that people's habits would be deeply affected, even beyond the pandemic period. During the peak of the pandemic, the repression of physical gatherings reasons related to work or to leisure lead to an increase in the use of digital devices for two-dimensional interactions. In a recent essay on participatory art, Boris Groys defines true interactivity "as opening up to conditions, locations, and participation which contribute actively to the realization of a participatory work" (Groys 2008, 21). According to Groys, the tendency towards collaborative "questions and transforms the fundamental condition of how modern art functions – namely, the radical separation of artists and their public" (Groys 2008, 30). The economic valuation of artworks amplifies the distance between the artist and their audience, because the financial value is always mediated by professionals (galleries, art advisors, auctions). Thus, the binding value of art can be explored only in noncommercial practice. In addition, Groys compares bodily and virtual participation underlining that the "bodily experience, for which modern art has continually striven, is absent in virtual communication. As a computer user, one is engrossed in solitary communication with the medium; one falls into a state of self-oblivion, of unawareness of one's own body, that is analogous to the experience of reading a book" (Groys 2008, 46). In fact, even though net art participatory projects and collections made online imply the engagement of users, they require a good deal of knowledge in using the internet technology.

At the beginning, while dealing with the idea of collecting dreams testimonies, I discovered many websites that published people's dream memories sent by texts or emails. I realized that the digital devices make a differentiation on the base of techno-

logical knowledge. On the contrary, I was looking for a system of collection accessible "here and now beyond education, professionalization, and specialization" (Groys 2008, 46). The itinerant inflatable structure was conceived to overcome physical limits, and the action of collecting email contacts was aimed at challenging the forthcoming geographical and temporal distances experienced by the participants. Likewise, the situations created for the *Dreams' Time Capsule* project face the dictatorship of time and the unstoppable dynamic of events. Analyzing the results will be a lengthy process, calling for the reading of feedbacks and outcomes. However, although the study started in April 2021, some interesting considerations can already be made.

3. The Case-study *Dreams' Time Capsule* Project

The practice was conducted through surveys: people were invited to enter, inhabit, within an inflatable structure, and bear witness to their dreams. The events were hosted at the Swedish Museum of Architecture, in Stockholm, Sweden (2011), partial funder of the project; Botkyrka Konsthall in Fittja, Sweden during the Public Art Festival *Fittja Open* (2011); the Townhouse Gallery, in Cairo, Egypt (2012); the University Library at the Jorge Taleo University in Bogotà, Colombia (2013); *kim?* Contemporary Art Space in Riga, Latvia (2013); the Museum Castello di Rivoli, in Turin, Italy (2014); the Al Riwaq art space in Manama, Bahrain, during the Festival of Public Art *Alwan 338* (2014); the Al Majaz, invited by the Maraya Art Center in Sharjah; Sikka Art Fair in Dubai (2016), the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the United Kingdom (2016); the Carmine Monastery, in Bergamo, invited by Contemporary Locus (2016); the World Heritage Site in Potsdam, Berlin for the Localize Festival (2021).

The aim was to create a database and audio installation in which testimonies of dreams and memories from different continents and generations could be deposited. The work focuses on the relationship between the individual and the society, the private

and collective sphere, and addresses the increasing states of anxiety and fragmentation in the contemporary global community. During the events, facilitators, procured by the host institutions, invited participants to enter the inflatable structure, providing them with a directional microphone. The only instruction offered to the donors was to think about a dream that they did not understand, with a note that it will be returned to them after a certain amount of. Recordings had no time limit. While outside, participants were asked to give information about their birth date, nationality and email contact to which the registration would be returned to them in 2021-22, ten years after the beginning of the work. Additionally, they were invited to sign a consent form, yielding all rights, and intellectual property, for allowing the recording of their oneiric memory. Names and email contacts are covered by anonymity.

The structure, designed to be installed outdoor and indoor and to be transported in a suitcase, was installed in museums, university libraries, and public spaces. It is a linen and cotton cabin, hand-sewn and inflated by two fans. It was designed in collaboration with the designer Michele Tavano and produced in Piedmont, with the financial support of the Swedish Museum of Architecture in Stockholm. The transport took place via an aircraft hold suitcase. As Nicolas Bourriaud argues, "(artist) dwell(s) in the circumstances the present offers him/her, to turn the setting of his/her life (his/her links with the physical and conceptual world) in a lasting world (...). Its plan, which has just as much to do with working conditions in which cultural objects are produced, as with the changing forms of social life..." (Bourriaud 2002, 20–21). These sentences are particularly significant for projects where costs, time, shipping, and work conditions are not covered by the economic value of the artwork. Additionally, for this reason, the flexibility of the *Dreams' Time Capsule* project in using external areas of museums, filling gaps in their art programmes, and proposing a commonly interesting theme like dreams, and doing that at a low cost was appreciated by art institutions. Shipping costs for the in-

stallation was included in my flight. This strategy allowed me to tour the project through Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa, in multiple venues such as museums, art spaces, and university libraries. As with German-based conceptual artist Tino Sehgal's ephemeral performances, many artworks in relational art constitute "moments of sociability" or are "objects producing moments of sociability" (Bourriaud 2002, 15). Many artistic projects related to the relational aesthetics are born to set the development of growing urbanism on a world scale that has brought increased social exchanges and mobility. Thus, relational art reminds us that memory is always formed at specific times and in specific places, contrasting contemporary activities of digital memory. In this sense, relational and participatory art are potentially able to give a sense of community in the notion of Jean-Luc Nancy as "interruption of singularities" (Nancy 1991, 31), where a better awareness of political and social conflicts can be addressed.

In fact, the audio archive has become an open laboratory on the relevance of social and political changes in the personal and intimate sphere of citizens. It has traced personal and emotional reactions during the first democratic vote in Egypt after 30 years of Mubarak's dictatorship in 2012, and the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom in 2016. In the latter case, the inflatable capsule was installed at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield 2 weeks after the vote on leaving or remaining in the European Union. Listening to the collected recordings, most of the dream and wish testimonies revealed a persistent use of the word 'anxiety'. Even though memory dreams will have little truck with the convention of realistic narrative, they do represent a combination of historical, poetic and legendary forms of speech, where personal and collective imagination are intertwined. As Alessandro Portelli argues on oral history life stories, "the degree of present of 'formalised materials' like proverbs, songs, formulaic language, stereotypes, can be a measure of the degree of presence of a collective viewpoint" (Portelli 1981, 96–107). Given the nature of the survey's engagement with its participants, with an appeal directed towards their future

selves, the investigation reveals personal perceptions about the experience of being a part of contemporary global society. Thus, the delivery process represents an invitation for participants to gain a better comprehension of their pasts and actions and it can provide crucial insights into a range of themes, including personal expectations or anxieties about politics, or the formation of alternative social identities.

Dreams' Time Capsule at the Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, 2012

Dreams' Time Capsule at the kim? Contemporary Art Space, Riga, 2013 © Ansis Starks

Dreams' Time Capsule at the Al Majaz, Sharjah, 2016

Dreams' Time Capsule at the Carmine Monastery, Bergamo, 2016

Dreams' Time Capsule at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Wakefield, The United Kingdom, 2016

Dreams' Time Capsule at the Neuer Garten – World Heritage Site, Potsdam, Germany, 2021 © Adam Sevens

Participant in Cairo, 2012

Participant in Stockholm, 2012

Participant in Potsdam, Berlin, 2021.

4. The Delivering Process

Originally, the delivering phase was planned to start in 2021, ten years after the first collecting event in Torino. This long time interval incurred a risk of losing contact with former participants, in view of the speed of technological evolution, or due to the fact that they might change their email addresses, or die. The time span was an integral part of the work whose aim was to record personal and collective expectations and changes dictated by time. However, it was impossible to know that the second phase would coincide with a pandemic causing social distancing: this made the chosen protocol more actual than ever envisaged. While entering the capsule, participants were informed that they would be contacted by email after several years, to receive their audio recording. Thus, surprisingly, this project, which started with subjects present in person, continued through the technological filter of the email.

The shifting modality was mainly justified by the digital nature of the file audio and the itinerant nature of the project. However, only during the delivery did I realize how effective it had become during the pandemic, even though people have been using digital devices and the email system in a great variety of ways. Nowadays, digital devices have become the main filter for work and leisure, and people are experiencing new ways of sharing their thoughts (digital online platforms, audio apps). However, the COVID-19 emergency has redesigned the concept of geographical distances and movements' habits, and the use of digital devices has increased the engagement of a larger number of people. Online conferences, and the use of digital platforms to speak with families in the contingency of an enforced distance, have amplified the use of virtual encounters. Thus, the chosen protocol of sending the audio recording years after it had been made may also be enmeshed in an ever-changing scenario of peoples' attitudes to, and the use of, technology. I believe the process of delivering has also been enriched by this contingency (i.e., the globally shared fear of an 'invisible enemy', the state of emergency, and the possibility of remembering the pre-pandemic experience of crowds).

The main idea was to offer donors the chance to 'freeze' their voices, but also to understand their expectations in order to reflect on what might happen in the interim between the two-time spaces, the recording and the listening. It is a way of creating a 'spell' on the future, whatever it might hold, of facing the fear of losing control or being disappointed. Participatory events since the 1990s have less predictable aesthetics, and risk being part of the artwork. Indeed, a series of unpredictable factors, such as the attendance, response and interaction of the viewers, is now being included and accepted in the situations constructed in artistic projects. The action has thus reversed the passivity of viewers, who now participate in creating and empowering a non-hierarchical social model. The 'situations' created by Rirkrit Tivaranija, Thomas Hirschorn amd Jeremy Deller, among other artists of that decade, assumed the presence of the audience as essential to the action. Likewise,

the situations created for the *Dreams' Time Capsule* project face the dictatorship of time and the unstoppable dynamic of events. The itinerant inflatable structure was conceived to overcome physical limits, likewise the action of collecting email contacts was aimed at challenging the forthcoming geographical and temporal distances experienced by the participants.

On the 7th of April 2021, I started to send emails to donors with their attached audio recordings, and the process is ongoing at the time of writing this article. The sending order is determined by the order in which the dreams were collected, which corresponded to the number reported in the recorder. All the names, emails and numbers are noted in a notebook which I consider a catalogue. Each step starts with a list, a referential list with a number indicating the order of recording, the name, email, age (when available), nationality, or birthplace. In some instances, during my listening of the recordings, I subsequently reported a D (for Dream) or W (for Wish) and the language in which participants were speaking (English, German, French, Hindi, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Russian etc.).

Ernst Van Alphen describes the relationship between artists' archival practices and lists, making an interesting distinction between lists that activate mnemonic functions and those "positioned in the present" (Van Alphen 2014, 107). He brings as an example a few lists created by the French artist Sophie Calle, "always produced on the basis of a self-imposed protocol" (Van Alphen 2014, 13). In her works, Calle realizes reports full of details of people's reactions observed in the conditions and situations she has created to engage them. In so doing, the accumulation of features is more like a suspended catalogue of human features and speeches than a temporal list that recalls the past.[69] Thus, it anchors the viewer to the present, rather than projecting him/her to what happened before.

69 Van Alphen brings the example of the work The Sleepers (1979), where Calle invited friends and acquaintances to sleep in her bedroom in Paris for eight days. She took pictures and noted the day and time, the first name and initial of the last name of each person interviewed. In her notes she reported thoughts and contents of the interviews, but without any temporal order.

From this perspective, the audio archive created with the *Dreams' Time Capsule* project is inscribed in a suspended and never ending present where the dreamer's voice recalls his/her presence during the time of listening. Thus, the recording is referred to a temporal order in which it has been taken, and even though there is a suspended time between the acts of recording and listening to the catalogue, but through reaching the person interviewed, we reactivated his/her presence. The nature of the audio recording works as a dispositive of presence, measurable with the time length, more 'physical' than a picture, with its pauses and whispers, and more abstract than a video, because of its invisibility. In fact, the sound voice does not provide any visual element that could inform us about the conditions of the recording (year, location), and this lack of information facilitates the listening of the encounter.

More than two thousand people spread across 12 cities are receiving their own voices after 10, 9 or 5 years. This practice of sending emails is also waving relationships that started before the pandemic and it is in the digital form, like most interactions happening daily nowadays. The first group of recordings is composed of 59 audios, collected during the event that took place in Piazza Santa Teresa in Torino, during the Artissima Art Fair in November 2011. The preparation of the text for the email underwent some intermediate steps: first I self-sent the text to simulate the effect it could have on an acquaintance and on a stranger, then I started to customize the text. At the beginning I included information on the project (i.e., 'the project traveled to various countries, collecting more than two thousand dreams') to give a universality perspective, and to involve the reader. However, this made the text too long, so I began to synthesize in a letter that referred to the elements of the collection event, the place, the day, the temporal conditions etc., to remind participants of our first encounter. This happened following the evaluation of the effect I wanted to obtain, a feedback on the vertigo of the time elapsed from the recording moment, and perhaps the call to projection they may have done knowing they would receive their voice back after ten years. Therefore, the text

also had to be a way to recall the past self and to put it in front of the current self. The second step was preparing the email to engage each participant: addressing personally each of them and writing the text in the spoken language chosen for the recording (Italian, English, French). They were informed to be receiving this communication as former participants of the *Dreams' Time Capsule* project. Then, they were asked to focus on what they remembered of the event and of the content of their recording before listening to it. Lastly, they were asked for feedback on the effect the listening had on them. Over seven days, I sent all the recordings. Just a few emails got back as 'mail failure delivery', and half of them received a reply. By that point, I continued to send emails with the recorded audio and corresponding email accounts collected in Cairo, Stockholm, Bogotà (Dr 0355, Dr 0336, Dr 0337, etc…). With the 0426, I decided to take some time to evaluate the progress of the delivery, almost three months after the beginning of the process.

At this point, I could examine what was surfacing importantly in my research: the different approaches that people have with email exchanges. If we consider the quantity of replies, the chosen modality through email is testing people's reactions not only to their past expectations, but also to the shifting of the relationship from a physical to a digital state. It is interesting to underline that even though the people engaged in the phases 'in presence' and 'in remote' are the same, there is a great discrepancy between these two modalities. During the delivery I kept note of the recordings sent, and I received notification of those emails that were checked and those that return back as a Mail Delivery Failure. I made a distinction between 'Read' and 'Not read' because I received notification of checked emails. Each email corresponds to a participant. Among those 'Read' there is a subgroup of emails that received also a reply, under the section 'Replied'. Among the 'Not Read' group there is the section 'Delivery Failed', referring to those emails that never reached the participant.

Among the 59 emails related to the event in Torino in 2011, 32 were 'read', 7 were under the category 'Mail delivery failed', 19

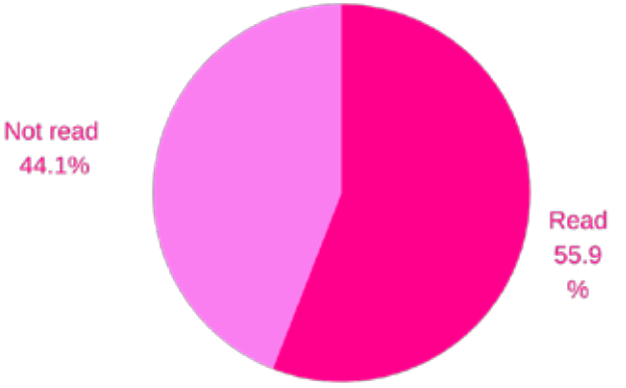
emails are 'not read'. Among 33 'read', and only 19 received a reply. Not all responses came via email, 2 people commented on a Facebook post, and 3 called by phone, because some people left also their phone contacts. This data will change if people reply later during the year. However, two elements are emerging at this stage: 10 years after the event, about 56% of the participants are still using the same email given during the event; just 12.5% do not use that email, but we cannot know the reason (i.e., the person could have deactivated the account, or s/he could have passed away. The only thing we know is that there is no longer any relationship between that person and that email account. The second interesting factor is the response among those who read the email and their response to give feedback. Less than half of the participants responded by giving a thought, an evaluation, or just by thanking for having received the dream back. What does this figure tell us about those who did not answer (49%)? Are they unfamiliar with participatory projects? Did they distrust technology, or the email as a tool for disclosing their thoughts? Do they consider their contribution irrelevant? Did they regret having taken part in the project?

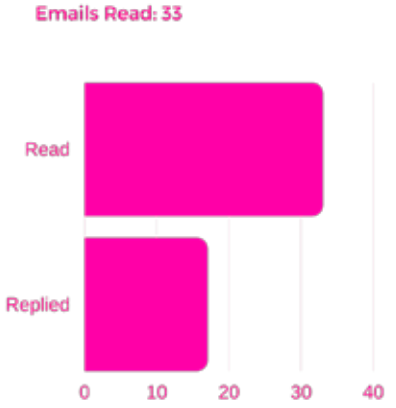
Those emails that were read, but were not replied to, do not provide the reason behind the participant's silence. However, it is still interesting as a data *per sé*, to witness this discrepancy between the physical and digital participation. We can only make some hypotheses: it might represent a certain distrust towards digital interactions, or towards emails contacts as tools of communication. A certain percentage must depend on the already mentioned differentiation based on technological knowledge, as stated by Groys (Groys 2008). In fact, we can assume that some people who were easily engaged in the street or in the safe environment of an art space, do not manage emails easily, or are not inclined to communicate via emails. For example, it is the case of the audience engaged in Cairo, where often more than 10 recordings were collected but linked to the email account of a collaborator of the Townhouse Gallery (the art residency that hosted the event). On the other hand, we noticed that people who were not replying via email preferred to respond via Facebook or Messenger. More than

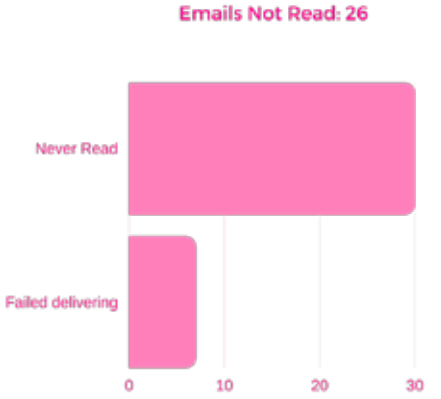
12 participants replied only to texts received through Messenger, declaring that they do not check frequently their email accounts. Thus, it seems that in a certain percentage social networks have replaced the emails as tools for social interactions, because of their immediacy.

DELIVERY REPORT | TURIN

- DELIVERY PERIOD: 8.04 – 13.04.2021
- DISTANCE FROM THE EVENT: 10 years
- TOTAL EMAILS DELIVERED: 59







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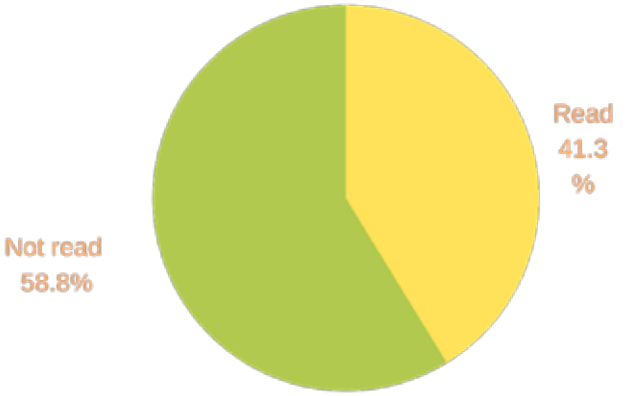
DELIVERY REPORT | CAIRO

- DELIVERY PERIOD: 16.04 – 01.05.2021
- DISTANCE FROM THE EVENT: 9 years
- TOTAL EMAILS DELIVERED: 58



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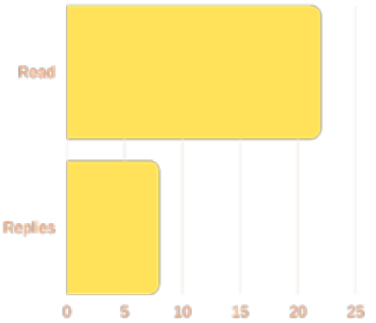

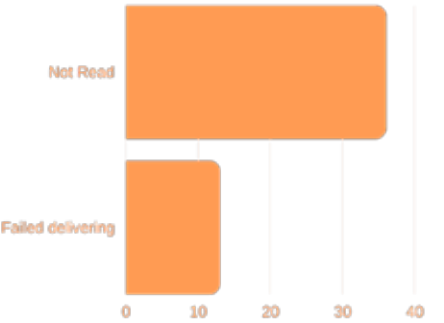

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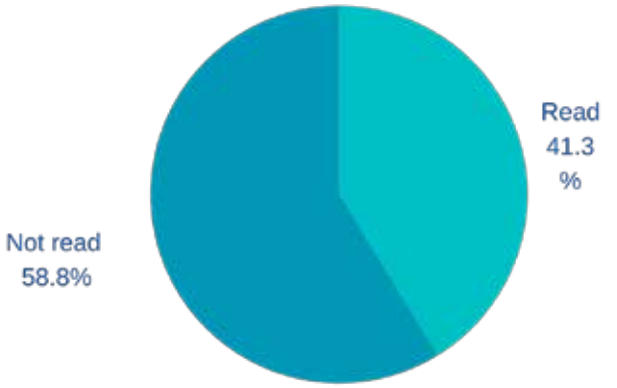
DELIVERY REPORT | SWEDEN

- DELIVERY PERIOD: 01.05– 06.06.2021
- DISTANCE FROM THE EVENT: 9 years
- TOTAL EMAILS DELIVERED: 80



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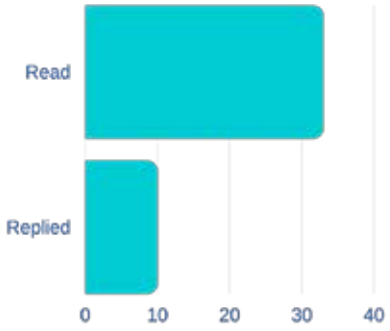

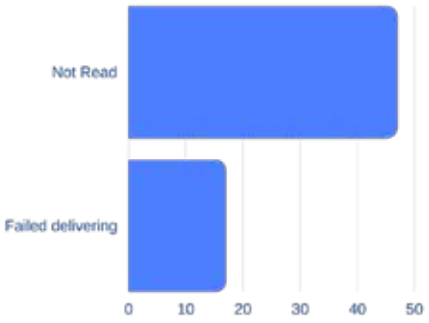

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Replies / Feedbacks: 10

Emails Not Read:47
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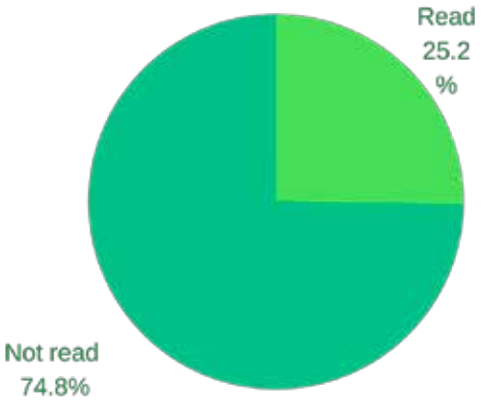
DELIVERY REPORT | COLOMBIA

- DELIVERY PERIOD: 29.06 – 04.07.2021
- DISTANCE FROM THE EVENT: 8 years
- TOTAL EMAILS DELIVERED: 111



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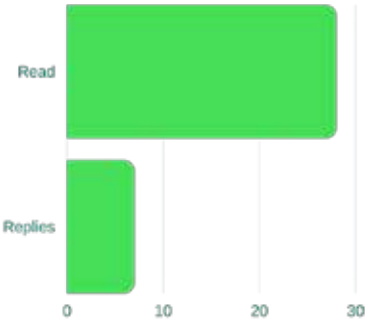

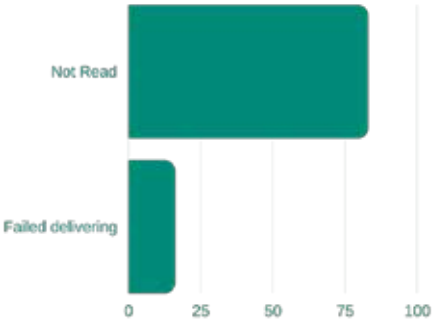

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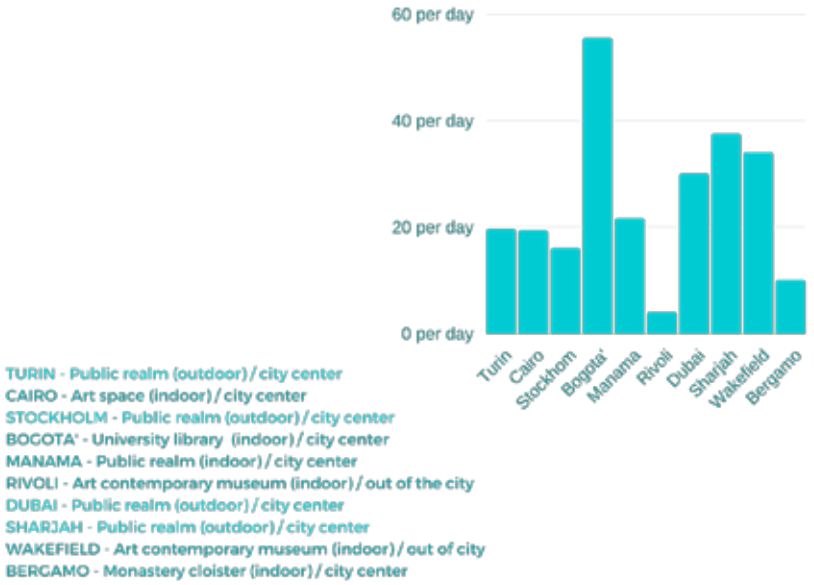

THE PARTICIPATION DURING THE EVENTS IN PRESENCE

5. Conclusion

This research allows me to compare reactions among contributors from Egypt, Italy, Latvia, Colombia, United Arab Emirates, Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom. In general, the opportunity for listening to their voices, after a long period of time, is a sort of catharsis for the participants that enables them to grasp their past thoughts, desires, friendships, etc. A similar state occurs during the pandemic, which has obliged us to reconsider our habits and reflect on new ways of living. It aims, however, to reflect on the current state of our lives, which exists in the confrontation between the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic life, and to reflect on how we are dealing with social distancing. Most of the replies speak about the trace that the event left on the participants' memory, others about their reactions to listening to the recording years after. But there are also collateral considerations based on participants' age, gender, and education, intertwined with what has

happened 'in between' and with the relevance the dream assumed across their life experience.

According to the data collected so far, we can make a differentiation between participants based on their country of residency. In those countries where participatory projects have a longer record, and the audience is accustomed to being engaged in the public realm (United Kingdom, Germany, Colombia, Sweden), there was less feedback to the delivery. Thus, there is a privileged role of the body language and human interaction that is still considered 'unique' and necessary in participatory events, because people are not just participants, but also the protagonists of the action: they must be constantly motivated. As previously mentioned, this overview of the data collected is describing different reactions to the shifting modality from physical to digital interactions: there is a great discrepancy between them, even though both the phases 'in presence' and 'in remote' engage the same people, and they were aware of the second phase through email contacts.

The presence, the physical interaction, is still the primary way of creating this 'osmosis', the ever changing exchange between the audience and the artwork. The physical presence is still hardly replaceable, and we cannot renounce to participatory practices, to empower people's awareness of being part of a community. As Giuliana Bruno argues, "the Greek etymology of haptic tells us what makes us *able to come in contact with* things, thus constituting the reciprocal con-*tact* between us and our surroundings" (Bruno 2014, 5). In this sense, the interest in physicality and the engagement trying to address the distance with spectators, their movements make them 'able to enter in contact' with the artist's research. The experience of visiting a show or taking part in an artistic project have often transformed the spectatorship with new itineraries through memory and imagination. The use of space, the redefinition of light and sound are directed to create a public intimacy with the visitor through a persistent relationship between motion and emotion, through the sense of the haptic. The reactivation of spectatorship is even more stimulated through the display,

which tries to, first, capture visitors' attention through the sensorial perception, and then to focus and engage their interest through the discovery of the content. The spectators are proposed an aesthetic journey, where the form embodies the content, and the visit becomes the opportunity to test the appropriation of critical perspectives by spectators. We cannot underestimate the importance of 'being' in a show, especially in the digital era, where the interactive tension and the state of engagement are incredibly divergent in visitor's experiences.

Consider Douglas Crimp's expression that "works were constituted *in a situation* and for *a duration,"* and "the spectator *literally had to be there*" (Crimp 1980, 91–101). An artist's practice can cross different disciplines, giving a broader perspective beyond the time and the location in which the viewer lives. It is widely accepted that the artwork affirms not only its presence but also a new world, as an encounter that permits us to think otherwise. Visual art deals with images as documents of the past and products of contemporary culture. Speaking about engaged art that represents authors' political views and invites spectators to come together (*con-venir*) to new statements of truth, we focused on the sense of spectatorship in the exhibition space. Through the physical engagement, and the haptic, the exhibition design stimulates new perceptions of the reality, and they can address, through aesthetic strategies, contemporary political issues.

In this sense, the dialogues between artworks, participants and the art space are central to the dynamic evolution of citizenship and privacy in the digital era. The exhibition space can be the perfect environment to facilitate and test awareness of these contemporary issues by visitors, spectators, and citizens. In fact, compared to the pre-digital society, nowadays there are fewer opportunities for being personally engaged with new perceptive experiences. Meanwhile, as we are writing there are collateral effects that are taking their steps in the relationship between people and cultural events. For example, this forced condition has created an alteration in the habits of the youngest generations and those ad-

dicted to art. Those who did not have the chance to visit exhibitions or biennials before the COVID-19 will not feel the need to enter museums and art spaces after the pandemic. Likewise, the art-addicted are already finding alternative ways to discover artists and artworks through the internet and the social networks. However, the lack of physical interactions and cultural opportunities will mainly damage the social role of cultural agencies (i.e, museums, art space, festivals) and their capacity to attract marginalized communities with their programmes. We cannot underestimate that the highest risk in this period of transition is the disappearance of the general audience and the disparity of the cultural growth.

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Elisa Caldarola

Conceptualist Strategies in Pandemic Time: The Case of Beeple's NFT

During the peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic, several art exhibition spaces around the world have been closed to the public, while citizens have been discouraged, even prohibited, from leaving their homes. Suddenly, art could only be experienced inside one's home. How did artists react to this situation? Probably, for those who produce art that is designed for being accessed online, this was not a big challenge.[70] However, those artists are only a minority within the art world. In this essay, I put forward a brief philosophical analysis of a practice developed during the COVID-19 pandemic which, as I shall claim, contrary to appearances, allowed an artist to produce an artwork that can be accessed through means that do not rely on the experience of online content. The practice at issue was developed by Beeple (a pseudonym for Mike Winkelmann), an American graphic designer, and revolved around the sale of an NFT. Let us first look deeper into NFTs.

NFTs are sequences of code, of digital data. Importantly, each

70 Cases of art designed for being experienced online are, e.g., Internet art (for an overview see https://anthology.rhizome.org/, accessed December 6th 2021) and TV series distributed through platforms such as Netflix.

of them is unique, which is why they are called 'non-fungible': being unique, they are not interchangeable. NFTs are like cryptocurrencies (such as Bitcoin) in that monetary value is associated to them, and there is a market for exchanging them. However, they are unlike cryptocurrencies in that they are non-fungible: while, e.g., any Bitcoin is like any other Bitcoin, just like each one-dollar banknote is like any other one-dollar banknote, every NFT is essentially different from every other NFT, in that each of them is constituted by a unique sequence of code. This peculiarity makes NFTs a particularly effective tool for marking ownership: for instance, we can establish a convention that attaches a certain NFT to a certain artwork and stipulate that possession of the NFT indicates ownership of the artwork, just like possession of a valid sales contract indicates ownership of whatever object has been sold. Since each NFT is unique, there cannot be any equivocation: whoever buys the specific NFT that marks the ownership of a particular artwork will be the only owner of that artwork. Suppose an NFT is associated to the *Mona Lisa* and someone buys that NFT: as a consequence, they become the owner of the *Mona Lisa*, a unique physical object. Qua ownership of the *Mona Lisa*, they have the right to, e.g., establish where the work can be accessed and who can access it.

Now, consider that we can distinguish between unique pictures, such as the *Mona Lisa*, and pictures such as etchings, that usually come in multiple instances. If an NFT is associated to a single instance of a Matisse etching for Joyce's *Ulysses* (1935), which comes in an edition of 150, then whoever buys that NFT becomes the owner of that instance of the etching. Thus, they acquire the rights to, e.g., establish where that instance of the work can be accessed and who can access it.

Let us look more closely into the relationship between one of Matisse's etchings for Joyce's *Ulysses* and its instances, taking inspiration from some remarks by Anthony Cross (2021). There are three interesting roles the etching's instances perform: first, they specify what counts as a true encounter with the etching. Only en-

counters with the 150 instances of the etching authorized by Matisse count as true encounters with it. Forgeries of instances of the work or unauthorized instances of it do not provide true encounters with the work.

Secondly, authorized instances specify what the work is, what its essential properties are. This is relevant because, by comparing its authorized instances with each other, it is likely that we will get to know Matisse's work better: we might notice, e.g., that while the thickness of a certain line, which does not vary across the instances, is crucial for the emergence of a certain aesthetic property in all instances, some chiaroscuro effects, which vary slightly across the instances, do not make a substantial contribution to the emergence of aesthetic properties in any of the instances of the work.

Finally, since it has been sanctioned by the work's maker that the number of authorized instances is limited to 150, the work's instances create *artificial scarcity*, which is instrumental to endowing them with high monetary value.[71] The latter point is better understood if we compare one of Matisse's *Ulysses* etchings with the Mona Lisa. The latter is a unique material object: thus, all the monetary value of the *Mona Lisa* is in the hands of whoever owns the painting. The same is not true of works such as Matisse's *Ulysses* etchings. Usually, what gets sold are instances of those works, each of which has a certain monetary value. In principle, there could be infinite instances of each etching, each one with a certain monetary value. However, to put it simply, because of how the market works, the more instances there are of something, the less monetary value they have. To avoid depreciation, then – among other things – an artwork's instances are usually made artificially scarce, by sanctioning a limited edition.[72] To go back to NFTs, if one buys an NFT that is associated to an instance of a work whose instances

71 In 2019, Christie's sold a suite of six instances of different etchings for Joyce's *Ulysses* by Matisse for USD 33,750 (see https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6228570 (accessed December 6th 2021).

72 For a brief introduction to the notion of artificial scarcity see https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/scarcity-principle.asp (accessed December 6th 2021).

have been made artificially scarce, one does not run the risk that the unlimited multiplication of the work's instances diminishes the monetary value of one's purchase.

Now, consider that there is a particular variety of pictures that come in multiple instances: digital images. For instance, when we take a photograph with a smartphone and then send it to our friends via text or email, we produce an instance of that digital image. Unlike, e.g., the instances of etchings, instances of digital images are extremely easy to produce. Moreover, if no limit (both legal and technical) has been set to the multiplication of instances of a certain digital image, then instances of the image can easily be found around the internet (this is the case, for instance, for many of the freely-usable digital images available on websites such as unsplash.com). Finally, while the matrix of an etching (usually, a metal plate) is a unique physical object, the same is not true of the matrix of a digital image, which is a set of code that can itself have, in principle, infinite instances. More specifically, whenever an instance of the digital image is produced, an instance of its matrix is produced as well.

Let us look more closely into the relationship between a digital image and its instances, taking as an example *darn you, baby walrus!!111111*, a digital image produced by Beeple on February 16th, 2008 which, importantly, used to be freely available online: the image had no limited edition, and everybody could produce an instance of it, as well as of its code. Developing on Cross (2021), we can observe, in the first place, that no particular *instance of the code* constituting the matrix of *darn you, baby walrus!!111111* is such that the *instance of the digital image* resulting from it counts as the one which gives us a genuine encounter with the work, since all the instances of the code of the digital image can perform this job.

Secondly, we can observe that there is no limited set of instances of *darn you, baby walrus!!111111* that specifies what that digital image is, given that the image used to be freely available online. This makes the goal of truly getting to know the work un-

reachable.[73]

Thirdly, it is important to stress that both the instances of the code constituting the matrix of the image and the instances of the image resulting from the code are likely not to be scarce, since code and related digital image were freely available online. It is then surprising to learn that, on March 11th 2021, Christie's sold for over $69 million a collage of instances of codes of digital images by Beeple, titled *Everydays: The First 5000 Days*, through the sale of the NFT associated with the collage; one of those images was *darn you, baby walrus!!111111*, and the other images did not differ from *darn you, baby walrus!!111111* in terms of their ontological status. Furthermore, it is also surprising to learn that the NFT buyer did not acquire the copyright on the images, which remains in the hands of Beeple, who can decide, e.g., to have the images freely available online, and/or to sell another token of their codes, via the sale of another NFT.[74]

Vignesh Sundaresan, the NFT buyer, did not acquire any right over where the images related to it can be exhibited and by whom the images can be accessed. Neither did he acquire rights over who can use instances of the images, or instances of the sets of code constituting their matrixes. Thus, it seems that, by associating an NFT to a set of instances of digital images' code, a *mere perception* of monetary value grounded in some features of an artwork was produced: it looked like some scarcely available art object was being sold – an object that deserved being endowed with high monetary value in virtue of its limited availability, among other things – although, at a closer analysis, it was clear that what was being sold was just one of the many sets of instances of the codes of certain digital images. Still, there was an extremely scarce object that Christie's sold in the occasion of the sale of *Everydays: The First*

73 It is likely that the digital context, in which a digital image is presented, matters to its artistic appreciation: this grounds the view that, at least in certain cases, it might be relevant to get to know all the instances of a certain digital image, in their respective contexts, in order to appreciate the image more fully, from an artistic viewpoint.

74 This is stressed by the artist himself (see Locke 2021).

5000 Days: it was the NFT attached to the work which, along with being, strictly speaking, the real object of the sale, is also extremely scarce in that it is, by its own nature, a unique set of digital data.

Was the sale of the NFT associated to *Everydays: The First 5000 Days* just an elaborate scam? I believe we should answer in the negative, for reasons that can emerge if we consider some analogies and disanalogies between this peculiar sale and practices already explored by conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt.[75]

Sol LeWitt's 'wall drawings' – a series of works that the artist started to produce in the late 1960s – consist in sets of instructions for producing drawings on walls. LeWitt never sold any instance of drawings produced by following a certain set of instructions, while he only sold the instructions themselves. Similarly, Beeple did not sell any specific instance of a set of his digital images, while he sold an instance of the matrixes of a set of his digital images. LeWitt's point was to have the public focus their attention on some properties of the instructions, as opposed to the aesthetic properties of the drawings produced by following them. He suggested the public appreciate, from an intellectual viewpoint, the concept grounding the production of the drawings, which is explained by the instructions, rather than appreciate, from an aesthetic viewpoint, some perceptual properties displayed by the drawings themselves.[76]

What about the point of Beeple's work? To answer this question, let us consider also some disanalogies between his and LeWitt's practice. Unlike Beeple's, LeWitt's work is not digital. In particular, producing an instance of an image codified by LeWitt's instructions is not easy, and requires instead significant manual labor. On the opposite, producing an instance of one of Beeple's digital images is automatic, provided that the code runs on the appropriate kind of machine. Beeple's digital images, then, cannot be appreciated for the artisanal effort it takes to produce each of their instances.

75 Conceptual art has often been linked to scams, starting from the most famous predecessor of this artform, Duchamp's *Fountain* (1917).

76 For a more thorough analysis see Caldarola (2020, ch. 4).

Another disanalogy between the two works is that LeWitt set a limit to the number of authentic, authorized instances of the instructions for his wall drawings, while, as we have seen, this is not the case for the sets of code constituting the matrices of Beeple's images. LeWitt's work, then, presents us with something that has successfully been made artificially scarce: the authorized instances of his instructions and, relatedly, the authorized instances of the drawings issuing from those instructions. The same is not true of Beeple's work.

Finally, as we have seen, whenever an instance of one of Beeple's digital images is produced, an instance of the code constituting the matrix of that image is produced as well. The same, however, is not true of LeWitt's work. One and the same authorized instance of LeWitt's instructions can ground the production of instance i_1 of a wall drawing at time t_1, and then the production of instance i_2 of a wall drawing at time t_2, and so on.

The above comparisons suggest the following remarks. One of LeWitt's goals with his wall drawings was to channel the attention of the public towards objects of high intellectual value: his instructions for producing wall drawings. The instructions' intellectual value lies in the fact that they sum up the key information for producing quite complex, and beautiful, physical configurations. Thus, it is appropriate to think that devising the instructions required some hard intellectual work. LeWitt was interested in producing art that we appreciate for its intellectual, rather than for its aesthetic value. To enhance the perception of their value, as well as to profit from their sale, the instructions were made artificially scarce.

I submit that, just like LeWitt, Beeple, too, is interested in producing art that we appreciate for its intellectual value, rather than for its aesthetic value, but in his case the intellectual content we are presented for appreciation does not concern the rules for the creation of some beautiful, complex physical object, but rather concerns the very issue of attributing value to objects, be it monetary or artistic. Many of Beeple's images are hardly remarkable, in

terms of the achievement they embody: as we have seen, it is not difficult to produce either instances of his digital images or instances of the code that is the matrix of those images; moreover, the images' aesthetic properties are often not very remarkable. Finally, both the code and the images are not scarce, and thus the perception of their value is not enhanced by their scarcity. It seems, then, that neither the code of the images, nor the images themselves, possess a value, be it intellectual or aesthetic, that Beeple is trying to bring to the center of our attention. When we think that Beeple managed to sell *Everydays: The First 5000 Days* for over $69 million, the only thing about this work that really looks salient to us is the price of the unique NFT attached to it, which was the real object of the sale. More precisely, it looks like a remarkable achievement, and perhaps even a scam, that someone managed to sell, at such a high price, property rights that do not allow the owner to establish who gets to see the artwork, where the artwork is exhibited, and what the authentic instances of the artwork are. This suggests a hypothesis: perhaps what Beeple is trying to get us to focus our intellectual attention on is *the action* of selling that particular NFT at such a high price and the *significance* of that action – a kind of *performance*. Entertaining the thought that the NFT attached to the work was sold at a very high price, largely in virtue of the fact that it is an object that has been made, artificially, extremely scarce, can easily bring us to think about the reasons why we assign value to objects, be it market value or artistic value, or lack thereof. The *intellectual value* of *Everydays: The First 5000 Days*, then, lies in its ability to make us focus on those issues, and the object that is at the center of our attention when we appreciate the work are not the digital images produced by Beeple, but rather the performance of selling at a very high price the NFT attached to them. As artist Seth Price observes:

> A financial instrument is a contract between people. Literally, that is all that it is, a highly abstract agreement. And that's what art is, too. There is a weird consonance here. Art has no consistent agreed-upon value, there is no common definition of what art even is. So an NFT artwork is a pretty complex social agreement that, first of all, this is art; second of all, it has value; third, we'll transfer it into this even more crazy realm.

> All of this transformation is a kind of suspension of disbelief, or a kind of magic. It's like, the more we dematerialize everything, the more potential material we can get. (Price and Kuo 2021)

To conclude, I would like to focus on the fact that the sale of *Everydays: The First 5000 Days* took place in March 2021, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic.[77] As I have argued, not only the NFT attached to Beeple's images was, strictly speaking, the object of the sale, but it also seems legitimate to claim that Beeple presented for appreciation (of the intellectual kind) the very action of selling the NFT, rather than the images attached to it. If Beeple's artwork is to be identified with that performance, rather than with its images, and if we are invited to appreciate the performance for its intellectual value, rather than for the aesthetic properties grounded in its perceptual properties, then this looks like a case of conceptual art and, more specifically, a case of conceptual art that does not require direct acquaintance to be properly appreciated (see Hanson 2015). To appreciate the intellectual value of Beeple's performance it is sufficient to be told quite accurately about it: we don't need to see the digital images attached to the NFT that was sold, nor do we need to have witnessed the sale of the NFT. A corollary of this claim is that here we have a case of artwork, produced during the pandemic time, which does not rely on the perceptual experience of online content in order to be appreciated, and a case of art practice that brilliantly eludes the constraints imposed by the lockdowns, developing on the tradition of conceptual art. On the one hand, conceptual artists are famous for their attempts at 'dematerializing' art and have produced works that can be fully appreciated without direct acquaintance with them;[78] on the oth-

77 There are morally controversial aspects to the production of NFTs and to the sale of Beeple's work in particular. For an exploration of these issues see Simpson (2021). The goal of this essay is not to provide an overall assessment of Beeple's performance or of the practice of selling NFTs in the art market more generally, but only to show that an aspect of Beeple's performance can prompt interesting remarks on what happened to art making during the Covid-19 pandemic.

78 On conceptual art and dematerialization see the seminal Lippard (1973). I have chosen to put the term 'dematerialization' in quotation marks because,

er hand, during the pandemic time, access to visual artworks that require direct acquaintance to be fully appreciated has often had to be limited to indirect access and, in a sense, it has been partly dematerialized, since we have mostly been presented with digital images of artworks. It is remarkable that, during pandemic time, Beeple produced a work that, albeit exploiting the production of digital images, did not provide yet another occasion for partial, indirect, and ultimately unsatisfactory appreciation of digital images of visual art, but rather bypassed the limits imposed by the lockdowns, exploring a more rewarding side of 'dematerialization'.[79]

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Locke, T. (2021). Millionaire Artist Beeple: This Is the Very Important Thing 'I Think People Don't Understand' about Buying NFTs. *CNBC Make It*, March 26th 2021, URL: https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/26/digital-artist-beeple-common-misunderstanding-about-nfts.html, accessed December 7th 2021.

along with other philosophers, I don't believe it is possible to fully dematerialize art: artworks are always material objects, or they are always instantiated by material objects, be they concrete particulars or events (see Caldarola 2020: chapter 4). What Lippard referred to as 'dematerialization' should more accurately be characterized as the irrelevance, for the artistic appreciation of many conceptual artworks, of the aesthetic properties emerging from the perceptual properties of the particular objects or events we are presented with when encountering those artworks.

79 I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Iris Vidmar Jovanović, who invited me to take part into the *Artistic Aspects of The 'New Normal'* workshop on October 15th 2021 as well as to contribute to this volume, and was very patient with me during the editing process. A warm thanks to the workshop participants, who prompted me to look deeper into the case-study I present in this essay.

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Marta Maliszewska

Street Art Revolution in the Time of COVID-19

1. Introduction

To talk about street art, one must also talk about public space. It comes as no surprise that, if during the several waves of the coronavirus we have observed such a phenomenon as the 'pandemic public space', then there is also such a thing as 'pandemic street art'. In this paper I analyze it by arguing that to understand its significance, we should look at it not only from the perspective of aesthetics, but also from the perspective of social practices.[80]

To illustrate my thesis, I analyze street art interventions during the *All-Poland Women's Strike* protests that took place in the middle of the pandemic after an almost absolute ban on abortion in Poland. One may suppose that any correspondence between abortion law and public space/street art can only be a coincidence. Nevertheless, they have much in common. The lockdown measures

80 I do not claim that these two perspectives exclude each other or that they cannot be combined. Following Rancière (2013), whom I refer to in this paper, one should say that on a deeper level, they are inseparable. However, by focusing on the social practices, I aim at describing social processes of street art creation and reception, rather than the aesthetic values of these artworks.

that have had negative influence on public space have severely affected those in need of an abortion. With the restrictions on foreign travel, it has become even harder to get somewhere where fundamental rights are being respected. Despite the claim of Jarosław Kaczyński, one of the strongest anti-abortion law proclaimers, that "every half-witted man can organize an abortion abroad", it is not true, especially in time of the COVID-19 pandemic, that this is so.[81] Therefore, the protests, and street art as their ally, gained a special significance during the last year.

The paper has the following structure. In the first section, I briefly discuss the public space crisis under capitalism and during the recent pandemic lockdowns. In the second part, I present a practice-oriented perspective on street art, which is better suited for describing the pandemic one. The "Lockdown, Protests and Street Art in Poland" section is devoted to implementing the account I am proposing to the case of pro-choice protests in Poland. In the last section I present a summary of my argument.

2. Pandemic Threat to Public Space

As I argued elsewhere (Maliszewska 2021), the current pandemic crisis should be seen not only as an epidemiological or socioeconomic crisis, but as a crisis of public space as well. Lockdown restrictions drastically affected the ways in which public space is being used, disrupting its role as a place for democratic debates. If no critical voices can be expressed and no contacts between strangers can take place, public space stops being public. What remains is just a *space* filled with discourse produced by governments and corporations. As Margaret Kohn (2004) shows, this is more dangerous than it might seem at first glance. The disappearance of public space affects not only the space itself, but society living in it

81 https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114884,27117600,jaroslaw-kaczynski-kazdy-srednio-rozgarniety-czlowiek-moze.html (accessed September 7th 2021). Jarosław Kaczyński is the leader of Law and Justice (PiS), the ruling party in Poland.

as well. Democratic values are endangered with the loss of a place where the perspectives that counter the dominant discourse are manifested.

It would be false to believe that these processes started with the COVID-19 pandemic. As theorists emphasize (among others, Harvey (2008); Klein (1999); Kohn (2004) or Baldini (forthcoming)), for many years now the democratic use of public space has been restricted by different measures. Recently, Andrea Baldini (2020) analyzed how aesthetic concepts like *decorum* can be used to limit non-commercial activities in the public places. Thus, the situation of public space under capitalism was already bad, but due to the pandemic it got even worse. Coupled with fear and given the initial lack of information about the virus, the outbreak gave those in power more opportunities to control civil activities in the public space, especially in the early stages of the pandemic.

The seriousness of the COVID-19 threat to human lives or a need for action should by no means be denied. However, all the measures taken in the face of the pandemic should be analyzed not only from an epidemiological perspective, but also from a political one, and their influence on the public space should be considered, particularly if some governments – among others the Polish one – tried to use lockdown periods as an opportunity to implement controversial laws threatening fundamental human rights.[82] I will get back to these issues, while interpreting the case of visual wars on the streets of the Polish cities during the COVID-19 pandemic. But let me first reference some street art theories, to examine how the understanding of street art is influenced by the threat to public space resulting from the pandemic.

3. Street Art as a Social Practice

Trying to define 'street art', many philosophers agree that its main property is subversiveness. Subversiveness is presented as a

82 See: *Amnesty International Report 2020/2021. The State of the World's Human Rights*, pp. 293–295.

result of an *artwork*'s social features (Baldini 2016; Chackal 2016) or its content (Baldini & Petrucci 2017; Bacharach 2018). Thus – despite this variety – in most street art theories the *artwork* itself is the main focus. Contrary to this artwork-oriented perspective on street art, I claim that street art interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed that, at least in some cases, to understand street art we should see it not as a collection of artworks, but as a social practice. While I agree with the thesis about the subversive nature of street art, I propose to focus on how it can be analyzed from a practice-oriented perspective that presents street art as a visual resistance.

There is already a long and well-established tradition of writing about the political nature of street art. Theorists often analyze the role that street art plays during social, political, or economic crises (among others Leventis (2013); Tunali (2018); Davies (2017)). Let me focus on Dominic Davies (2017), who defines graffiti – after Maria Daskalaki and Oli Mould (2013) – as Urban Social Formations that can resist violence of 'walling' – creating physical barriers that exclude some groups of people from freely using different territories. Graffiti change these walls into canvases that bring critical messages. Similarly, Guillaume Marche (2012) describes graffiti as an infrapolitical form of protest, claiming that it might be used to express critical voices if traditional social debate is silenced. Even though these two conceptions have much in common with what is presented in this paper, they do not represent a practice-oriented perspective on street art. At the end of a day, authors writing about graffiti as a protest focus on interpreting political messages connoted in street art artworks. Instead, from a practice-oriented perspective, an artwork's features are secondary. What matters most is the process of street art creation and reception. Instead of interpreting street art artworks themselves, a practice-oriented perspective points to issues such as: who (which group) created these artworks and for whom? Why have they chosen this form of expression instead of some other? How were street art interventions used by their creators and spectators? The list is

not complete, as these are just some exemplary questions that arise from a practice-oriented perspective.

Another difference in the suggested methodology is an attitude towards street art spectators. Many characteristics of that medium describe its subversiveness as an influence on an artwork's public. Sondra Bacharach claims that due to the street art's aconsensual nature, it "challenge[s] and change[s] the viewer's experience of her environment" (2015, 495), which is why street art is a form of visual activism. On the other hand, Joe Austin calls street art "aesthetic pedagogy" (Austin 2010, 44) that teaches its spectators that a different visual and political order is possible. In both theories street art is presented as enlightening spectators about the function of public space and their role in it. A street art artwork should change people's political opinions or even make them see themselves not as passers-by but as active creators of a common space. Nevertheless, such an understanding of street art's influence on spectators presents them as passive recipients of art who can be transformed only when they bump into an artistic object. This is a very traditional understanding of a division between an author, an artwork, and a spectator. Even if an author herself – due to the street art anonymity – is not in the spotlight, she is still an important figure in the artwork-oriented perspective on street art, with spectators' function marginalized to someone who only receives political message of art.

However, in light of the protests during the coronavirus pandemic – when many people, despite police brutality and regardless of the fear for their health, took to the streets to protest in the name of social justice – it seems doubtful that people still needed to be woken up by street art artworks. However, that does not mean that street art has lost its significance, or that from now on its sole purpose is to exist only for the artworld to look for another Banksy, or to give philosophers and art critics something to write about. Nevertheless, to understand what street art and its subversiveness mean in the time of the pandemic, I propose to look at it from a practice-oriented perspective. This framework enables me

to ask a question not about artworks' or artists' influence, but instead about relations between creators and spectators established by street art interventions, about solidarity shown, in the face of pandemic and state violence, by drawings on the walls. In the next section I analyze it in detail, recalling the pro-choice protests in Poland during the middle of the second wave of COVID-19 in Europe.

4. Lockdown, Protests and Street Art in Poland

On the 22nd of October 2020, Polish Constitutional Tribunal announced a judgement that banned abortion almost entirely.[83] This was a highly unpopular decision, challenged on ethical and legal grounds.[84] From that day on, despite lockdown restrictions, people have been protesting in big cities and in small towns, with many of them facing legal charges and different forms of physical abuse from the police. Members of the ruling party, Law and Justice (PiS), justified the repressions invoking the need for public health protection, even though it was obvious for some time that

83 The Constitutional Tribunal is a constitutional court in Poland whose task is to examine whether the laws are in line with the Polish Constitution. There are 15 members of the Tribunal, chosen for the period of 9 years by Sejm (the lower house of the Parliament). However, after the 2015 Polish Constitutional Court crisis, the Tribunal is dependent on the ruling party. Moreover, its current President, Julia Przyłębska, was appointed unconstitutionally by the Polish President Andrzej Duda, instead of being elected by the other judges of the Tribunal.
From 1993, abortion was legal in Poland only if: (1) the pregnant person's life or health were in danger, (2) prenatal testing showed that the fetus has serious and incurable damages, or (3) the pregnancy was a result of a criminal act. According to the Tribunal judgement in 2020, abortion in Poland became legal only under conditions (1) and (3).

84 From the legal point of view, commentators have stressed that the Constitutional Tribunal cannot implement new laws. The Tribunal judgement has changed the Polish abortion restrictions without a social debate on it or even without voting in the Parliament. It was a highly unpopular decision, and the judgement is evaluated negatively by more than 70% of the society (https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,26447191,sondaz-dla-wyborczej-polki-i-polacy-nie-popieraja-wyroku.html (accessed September 20th 2021).

the SARS-CoV-2 virus is less reactive in an open-air environment (Bulfone 2021). Rather unusually for the Polish society, as a response to these events, street art war took place, with protests extending for several months.

From the very beginning of the protest, organized by The All-Poland Women's Strike, people were gathering on the streets and were also writing on them.[85] Protesters physically marked routes of the demonstrations by writing anti-governmental or pro-choice slogans. One of the most common was the number of the helpline that supports people in need of abortion. The graffiti interventions were in different shapes and colors but the most common was a red lightning bolt, the logo of The All-Poland Women's Strike. They were soon drawn in many different locations, in urban landscapes as well as in rural areas. [86] The apogee of the common writing took place when a privately founded anti-choice billboards (that cost approx. 1,2 million euros) were put all around major Polish cities. They showed a drawing of a baby bundled-up in a heart-shape womb. Shortly after, most of them, particularly those accessible from the street level, were redrawn by pro-choice protesters, adding the lightning bolt or short sentences, such as: "Abortion is ok", Pro-abo", "Choice, not coercion" or "Yes to in-vitro".[87] There were also supporting slogans aiming at those who might consider abortion, stating "You have a choice!". Some of these were quickly re-painted by anti-choice advocates. Then again, The All-Po-

85 In the early stages of the protests, their participants wrote pro-choice and anti-governmental slogans not only on the streets, but also and in particular, on catholic churches. It was a gesture of disagreement with the Catholic Church's high political impact in Poland and its engagement in restricting the abortion law. However, drawing on the churches was presented as highly objectionable by almost all mainstream media in Poland.

86 Appearance of street art bottom-up interventions supporting The All-Poland Women's Strike in small towns and rural areas is contrary to the often repeated conviction about the urban character of street art (Chackal 2016).

87 The slogan „Yes to in-vitro" refers to an ongoing debate in Poland considering in-vitro. While some claim that in-vitro should be publicly funded, others demand this medical procedure, presented by some conservative groups as murdering of embryos, be forbidden.

land Women's Strike supporters put new pro-choice slogans over them… again, and again, and again…[88]

In the middle of the pandemic an iconoclash took place on the streets of Polish cities. Iconoclash is defined by Bruno Latour (2002, 16) – in opposition to iconoclasm – as a process in which images are not being destroyed but instead gain another meaning from acts of destruction. The anti-choice billboards were changing their message every time someone was re-drawing them. Two groups with opposite political agendas fought each other in a war of images while social visibility was at stake (Rancière 2013). In the case of the All-Poland Women's Strike protesters, who did not have a governmental support that anti-choice advocates had – it was a way of showing that even if demonstrations were slowly getting smaller and got less and less coverage from the media, the war was not over. Slogans on the walls marked the existence of the newly established community unified in their fight for fundamental rights. Even with no physical bodies on the streets, which were empty, due to the lockdown measures, resistance was still there.

In the context I am discussing, one cannot talk about street art *artworks* – neither in the case of the scrawled pro-choice slogans, nor in the case of painting them over. Instead, I propose to call them 'street art interventions', to signal that they aimed at manifesting the existence of a group that has created them – similarly to the function of graffiti during the gang wars.[89] None of these piec-

88 Referring to Adam Andrzejewski's thesis about the authenticity of street art artworks manifested in "the spontaneous creation of new visual and conceptual commentaries to artwork" (2017, 168), one could say that the iconoclash in Poland has proven authenticity of the street art war.

89 In the Polish landscape most of graffiti interventions are made by groups of football hooligans. Their drawings are created to glorify the club or – even more often – to threaten an opposing one. Lots of them refer to nationalistic symbols or to anti-Semitic discourse. Wojciech Wilczyk's photographic project *Święta wojna* (ang. Holy War, 2009-2014) documents hooligans' graffiti in Poland. Even though some theorists distinguish between graffiti and street art (Bacharach 2015) I fully agree with Baldini (forthcoming) who calls graffiti 'street art in its most authentic and radical sense' based on its confrontational and subversive character.

es was created to trigger an aesthetic appreciation or even a change of opinions in spectators (the pro-choice vs. anti-choice conflict in Poland was already fixed at the time). The iconoclash made a social conflict – which the government tried to hide by implementing anti-abortion law during lockdown – visible. However, unlike in the gang wars, the visual manifestations addressed not only 'enemies' and those who already knew that they were supporting each other, but also strangers. Street art made it possible for them to recognize each other as allies supporting one another, as evident in one of the All-Poland Women's Strike's slogans: "You Will Never Walk Alone". I experienced this myself when I was walking in my hometown (that has approximately 5000 residents) one day in November 2020. Suddenly, I saw the pink lightning bolt painted on a sidewalk. I wrote "You Will Never Walk Alone" next to it and put the helpline number with a sentence "free abortion" in some other spot. Few days later somebody added "legal" to the word "abortion". We have never met, and I do not know who that person was. Nevertheless, I know they are somewhere out there, ready to support me, as I am ready to support them.

Those forms of common writing on the walls are undeniably subversive in nature. Their subversiveness results not only from questioning the new abortion law but above all from giving visibility to a fighting community in a space deprived of it by the lockdown measures. Seen from these perspectives, street art practices come not so much to substitute (Kohn 2004, 206) as to supplement the public space during its pandemic-related crisis. Every lightning bolt on a wall meant that there is the community behind it, ready to support its members (one way or another) in every instance of violence from public authorities. Street art in the site-specific context of the pandemic in Poland became a social practice of showing solidarity, instead of being a constellation of artistic works. It does not mean that one cannot distinguish its aesthetic values, but they are not the source of street art subversive character in this context. Instead, their creation is a result of street art functioning as a reinforcement of the community that has created it. Thus, one should

focus above all on the social process that they reveal, rather than on aesthetic features of a final drawing.[90]

The public of street art as a social practice is not passive. It is already fighting on the streets for reestablishing public space. However, this does not mean that street art during pro-choice protests in Poland was just an ornament. It was a sign of solidarity between protesters, and it gave them strength to fight despite all the pandemic-related obstacles. It was not just a metaphor, but rather a promise that, behind those drawings, there stand real people, ready to support each other. A promise that you are never alone – not when you get police pepper spray into your eyes, receive a letter summoning you for questioning, or when you must face those uncanny anti-choice billboards. Writing on the walls meant giving your word, that you are going to be there, if others need you.

One may suppose that the pandemic lockdown and the common drawing on the walls taking place at the same time is just a coincidence. However, there is no coincidence in introducing such a controversial law during the 'stay-at-home' period, and there is also none in a street art revolution taking place at the exact same moment. As in other times of crisis, people recognize that there is no objective value in many laws within a society. This makes it easier to question even those norms that constitute the axiom of the dominant discourse – such as property laws. The visual manifestation of it is street art questioning owners' exclusive privilege to shape the city where, over the years, public space has been disappearing. In the context of the All-Poland Women's Strike, the government reactions to protests have revealed that even the COVID-19 threat can be used as a pretext to silence critical voic-

90 Referring to Elisa Caldarola's (2021) analysis of "very early tags" one may ask how to understand the practices described not only in the context of "street" but also in the one of "art". These issues need further examination but one of the answers might be interpreting drawings of the All-Poland Women's Strike protesters as a form of relational art (Bourriaud 2002), that focus not on visual aesthetics of an artwork but rather on social interactions it provokes and communities emerging as a result.

es.[91] Paradoxically, that could be the exact same reason that gave people courage to protest, despite fear. Nevertheless, those questions about psychological and social nature of the protest stay open for empirical researchers. What is important from a philosophical perspective it that, as an expression of solidarity, street art gained unique significance in the public space abandoned during the lockdown.

5. Conclusion

As I have presented in this paper, the COVID-19 pandemic has strongly influenced not only public space, but at least in some cases, the street art itself. Against the empty landscape of the lockdown, it has become a practice of visual resistance – a sign of protest against using anti-COVID-19 measurements to erase critical voices. But, above all, it has strengthened the community which, via street art interventions, has shown the true support and solidarity in times of coronavirus.[92]

Several months later, one can wonder what all of these faded lightning bolts and pro-choice slogans on the streets of Polish cities and towns mean today, when the streets are more crowded, and the anti-abortion law was introduced anyway. Nevertheless, they make us remember the protests that took place during the COVID-19 autumn of 2020. They remind us that behind those

91 Grace Blakeley (2020) and Slavoj Žižek (2020) stress that without well-organized civil resistance, the pandemic crisis is going to be used by the wealthiest to strengthen their financial monopolies and political power. From this perspective, the new post-pandemic future is presented as even less democratic and just than the previous one. According to Blakeley and Žižek, 'the new normal' must provoke societies to question neoliberal capitalism, for it will otherwise resemble a post-apocalyptic scenario.

92 Especially in the early stage of the pandemic, public art projects about solidarity in the face of the COVID-19 threat were popular in many countries. However, as I analyze in detail elsewhere (Maliszewska 2021), most of them had understood solidarity in an abstract way and in fact excluded various marginalized groups. Contrary to that, graffiti during the All-Poland Women's Strike speak about readiness to support each other.

walls, there is still a community ready to rise again. The community that knows the methods to fight in spite of all, with street art being one of them.[93]

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Connell Vaughan

Public Art and the Pandemic: Reflections on the Aesthetics of Memorial Lists

The consideration of public art may seem a frivolous activity in the context of the global public health crises wrought by the Covid-19 pandemic.[94] However, as a practice, that according to Mary Beth Willard (2019), necessarily hinges on accessibility and location it is a worthwhile area for philosophical reflection. Given the different restrictions on general mobility, artistic production and aesthetic reception in the form of public response, experienced in most countries since early 2020[95] the pandemic has served to realign, in the short term at least, the boundary between the public and the private, between place and space, between indoor and outdoor. The effect of this unclear, uncertain and unsettling realignment in the face of a dizzying flurry of restrictions and easing is

94 An abridged version of this paper was presented at the Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin to mark World Philosophy Day 2021.

95 Adam Tooze (2021) convincingly argues that in most jurisdictions the restrictions are better described as shutdowns. However, in this paper, I will use the term lockdown for both convenience and as it is the term that has predominated in common parlance as opposed to shutdown or even circuit breaker.

a profound phenomenological uncertainty. Havi Carel (2020), for example, has described "the locked-down body" as experiencing a "pandemic phenomenology" that frames social interaction in public space with anxiety.

In this paper, I consider what both the public health restrictions on mobility, and the public art responses to Covid-19 reveal about public art. I argue that first, the restrictions reveal that public art, a form characterised by proximity, has to be reconceived in a time characterised by physical distance guidance and anxieties of social congregation in terms of temporality and memory. Second, I furthermore argue that many initial public art responses to the pandemic are drawn to an aesthetics of listing in the face of the overwhelming scale of the heavy death tolls experienced. This listing is an approach that seeks to both commemorate and understand the scale of the experience. There are, I conclude, strengths and limitations to this aesthetic approach.-

1. What Happens to Public Art in Lockdown?

The standard clichéd way to understand public art is in terms of work of sculpture commissioned specifically for a defined location. It is usually designed to be visible and declare something definitive in the public arena and as such, public art presents a historical narrative, usually of the city and or state. Monuments, often in the form of statues, are perhaps the classic form of public art. However, increasingly artists, theorists, and the public alike accept less permanent work (such as street art, performance art, and installation art) as public art. As such, public art is less defined by its medium and more by its fact of being located on a public site. Though the term 'public art' suggests the material and visual arts, this need not be the case. It is necessary to consider it as presenting a multi-modal experience. By explicitly engaging its location/context public art can potentially be appreciated in the full gamut of sensory experience.[96]

96 See for example the work of Nikola Bašić in Zadar. *The Sea Organ* which

Public art, like social life in general, when defined by physical accessibility emphasises the role of embodied public response. We may standardly think of a response coming in the form of addition and or subtraction, but it also comes in the form of ignoring. Much of this is denied in strict lockdowns. No stumbling stones to trip over,[97] no serendipitous plaque discovered, no fading statue passed by on the daily commute without regard. Accessibility and restriction have however always been a critical spectrum in the practice and theory of public art. Just because a work is outside and touchable does not mean it is necessarily accessible. Public art can be inaccessible in content as much as physical form, as the long history of public art controversies testifies.[98]

The context of the pandemic, which only heightened reflection on public art's symbolic role, was no doubt a factor in the significant iconoclastic reckoning with public monuments in a host of different countries throughout 2020. These included the toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol, UK, the overthrowing of a statue to Confederate President Jefferson Davis on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia, USA, and the official removal of a statue of Leopold II in Antwerp, Belgium. The global dissemination of these occasions of response reveals that public art in a specific location is evermore intertwined with a global public.

With the physical spaces of the public sphere shut to most in lockdown, there was a messy and intense migration to a dig-

plays the sound of the sea waves and using tubes under the marble steps of the pier and *Monument to the Sun*, a 22-meter diameter circle of photovoltaic solar produces a light shown at night.

97 A stumbling stone or "*stolperstein*," is a ten-centimetre concrete cube with brass plate inscribed with the name and dates of victims of Nazi persecution usually installed on the ground by a site of significance to the victim This ongoing project of commemoration, begun by Gunter Demnig, is the world's largest decentralised memorial. See http://www.stolpersteine.eu/ (accessed December 17th 2021).

This ongoing project of commemoration, begun by Gunter Demnig, is the world's largest decentralised memorial. See http://www.stolpersteine.eu/ (accessed December 17th 2021).

98 Willard (2019) describes this as "epistemic access."

ital public sphere. Though this enabled increased accessibility in certain contexts, such as virtual meetings on platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Skype, this was no panacea to the loss of the physical public sphere. Here the popular use of the term 'social distancing' is revealing. The message to physically distance was correctly interpreted as carrying an implicit command to engage in forms of social isolation. In practice, physical distancing entails not just a retreat from the social but also the public and by extension public art.

In this context, how are we to conceive of public art? One option would be to similarly transpose public art to the virtual realm and declare that like the public sphere itself it continued as a mere simulacrum of its physical incarnation. Here we could consider the publicness of artistic performances and screenings on the aforementioned platforms perhaps. Absent here would be the physical growth of new work in dialogue with existing public art. This approach would no doubt be unsatisfactory, not because it challenges traditional mediums of public art nor for issues of inequality of access, for this is a longstanding feature of the work generally accepted as public art. Rather, the loss of location and the potential for the unengaged passer-by and the tourist are crucial in public art. These are not readily achievable in the disembodied and deterritorialization processes of digitalization.

Another option would be to deny public art's possible existence once it is denied a public. Here we would consider public art as paused in some sort of solipsistic suspension only to return to art status upon the easing of public health guidance. This light switch approach to art status is unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. It strangely converts the public health authorities into the artworld intermediaries. When in fact the opposite is the case. It was not art that went into hibernation, it was people that retreated from the physical public space. The open-air museum of public art was still exposed to all the other usual elements.

Furthermore, this approach incorrectly assumes a kind of completeness to the so-called lockdowns. People's experience of

public art did not vanish; rather, it was altered, bent, and distorted. It remained in our memories and expectations of the public sphere. Of course, some limited engagement also remained. So-called essential/key/frontline workers, for example, still eerily occupied public space. Depending on restrictions and the different approaches to 'bubbles', some citizens limited to a specified radius from home and at specified times and absent of tourists, even had the luxury to discover new work. In fact, in the context of museum and gallery closures, public art retained a key sliver of accessibility.

To the question, is a statue still public art, even when there is no public to consider it? Yes, there was a public; there may be a public in the future. In short: yes, the bird shit still falls on its head! The experience of COVID-19 may be an experience of limited engagement with public art but it is not a public artless experience. There remains a tenuous symbiosis of public and art. The living apart that lockdown brings does not eliminate the memory of the relationship. The popularity of homemade *tableau vivants* of famous artworks (Smith, 2020) during 2020 is a testament to the desire to comprehend the situation in terms of the canon of art but also a desire to experience art in an embodied, relational and visceral way.

A more intriguing option in the current conception of public art, and the one that I am more partial to, is to consider public art in temporal terms and regard the narrative arc of public art as changed. Just as a cataclysmic geological event deposits a layer of sediment (like the K-Pg boundary) in the geological record or a bad winter leaves a timestamp in the dendrochronological record, COVID-19 restrictions on the public sphere have left a mark on public art. This mark may not be immediately visible but as a cultural accretion, it is worth exploring. It entails consideration of how public art was witness to the absence of the public and its response. For though the events and new installations of public art were for the most part cancelled, memory cannot be cancelled. Just as elite sport continued in empty stadia, public art remained. This approach better recognises lockdowns as a disruption to pre-pandemic 'normality', a break in continuity.

It is also an approach that can better accommodate the reality that in this context there was too an opportunity for previously unrealisable public art. Christopher Steenson's *On Chorus* [99] was one such example. For a fortnight at the end of November (16th to 29th) 2020, for an hour each morning (8 am to 9 am) the national rail service of Ireland, *Iarnród Éireann*, broadcast a recording of the spring dawn chorus via the public address system in its stations. Steenson's field recordings were created in the then-novel lockdown of spring 2020 when Dublin was relieved of much of its usual noise pollution. Crucially *On-Chorus* was presented in public and not limited to the online environment. As such, as presented to the limited frontline workers taking the train it was better able to speak to the physical separation the pandemic brought. That this work explicitly responds to the pandemic is clear. What it also demonstrates is that in the field of public art restriction begets response.

2. Public Art Responses to the Pandemic

[Fig. 1] Asbestos, *Pass Freely*, Dublin, July 2021, photograph by Connell Vaughan.

99 See https://on-chorus.com/?about (accessed December 17th 2021).

In June 2021, the Irish street artist Asbestos painted a mural entitled *Pass Freely*[100] (Fig. 1) on 40/41 O'Connell Street, the main street in Dublin. The figure, a profile of the artist, is composed of 4,989 individually painted burnt matchsticks, each representing a victim of the pandemic in Ireland at the time. The work utilised a quote from Joseph Beuys "Pass Freely from one level of existence to another" (1974) in its title and on the ground level. The mural was part of an initiative for the nearby Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, which sought to move its program onto the street in the context of the pandemic. At its best *Pass Freely* presents both a stirring gesture and captures the scale of representation required in a public memorial of the pandemic.

The risk of such aesthetic listing is recognised in Michel-Rolph Trouillot's account of commemorations contributing to:

> […] sanitize further the messy history lived by the actors. They contribute to the continuous myth-making process that gives history its more definite shapes: they help to create, modify, or sanction the public meetings attached to historical events deemed worthy of mass celebration. As rituals that package history for public consumption, commemorations play the numbers game to create a past that seems both more real and more elementary. (Trouillot 1995, 116)

Though the public contribution in *Pass Freely* is limited to beholding at a distance, this work demonstrates the difficulties involved in simultaneously representing in public the scale of the human tragedy and memorialising the individual victims without recourse to a bland body count. Here each victim is commemorated as a burnt matchstick, not as an abstract number.

Current examples of public art/memorials that deploy the listing aesthetic but crucially build from public participation include the *National Covid Memorial Wall* in London,[101] the Balally *Wall of Crosses* in Dublin,[102] and the *Pinwheel Memorial* in São Paulo, Brazil.[103] In these examples, different objects are placed or markings

100 See https://www.artofasbestos.com/pass-freely (accessed December 17th 2021).
101 See https://nationalcovidmemorialwall.org/ (accessed December 17th 2021).
102 See McCormack (2020).
103 See Benassatto and Ramos (2021).

are inscribed on a public space. In London, the work consists of a mural composed of over one hundred and fifty thousand red and pink hearts. In Dublin, thousands of palm white crosses adorned the red brick walls of the Church of the Ascension of the Lord. In São Paulo thirty-eight thousand pinwheels, representing the dead of the city, were attached to fences in Praca Franklin Roosevelt, in the city centre. Thousands of hearts painted on the walls of the square, for the dead of the country, accompanied the installation of the pinwheels.

The attractiveness of what I call a "listing aesthetic" is I believe obvious. In the anxious uncertainty of the pandemic, listing achieves two key aesthetic goals, making sense of the world and representation. A kind of egalitarian counting (even when anonymised) allows for some limited representation and inclusion. It also allows us to behold the sublime scale of the tragedy. Furthermore, it does so in a unified and usually harmonious way.

Although each entry in these examples is not numbered and there is no clear logic of placement, such as chronology, there is a basic equation of one entry per victim throughout. That these works allow for and are, in part, created by personalised hand-crafted labour and collective creativity lends them their poignancy in the absence of public funereal traditions and rituals that have been restricted by the pandemic. Asbestos, for example, ritually repeated the Beuys quote before painting each match. In London, the hearts were individually hand-painted, while in São Paulo personalised messages were written on the pinwheels. In Dublin, the public was offered the opportunity to 'adopt a cross'. These examples reveal that public art is by its nature a collective public gesture. This collective gesture need not necessarily be present in the making but it is essential in the public beholding of the work. Though they are not explicitly tied to the name of each victim each heart, each cross, and each burnt match is unique, like the life it memorialises.

In these memorials, we are confronted with the 'public as artist.' A limitation of the artist-led-commissioned work is that it can rightly be regarded as 'art in public' and not 'public art' *per*

se. The latter is a term perhaps better reserved for art that goes beyond location and an ideal of accessibility and is created both 'in' and 'by' a public. Nguyen argues "[…] art can function as a vessel for emotionally-laden group attitudes" (Nguyen 2019, 973), and that monuments specifically can act as public declarations and commitments to future actions. These memorials, as collective gestures, resist the traditional career building of the artist-led project; instead, their creation can be valued for their attempt to engage the locked-down body to tackle the anxiety of social interaction. Despite having planning permission to be exhibited, the anonymity of Asbestos is, in the case of *Pass Freely*, significant here as it partially presents a creative persona that obscures the artist's identity from the public, if not the art institution.

Just as the public is not confronted with the named artist in these examples we are also not confronted with an official final tally. These are not state-led commemorations and as such, they do not serve the standard functions associated with memorial walls that list names such as Maya Lin's *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington D.C., USA (1982). Although *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* eschews a hierarchy in its listing, its recourse to the alphabet gives it a formal order absent in the examples this paper is focused on.

These works do not function as directories, nor as memorials to each victim, in order, after the fact. Rather they are public gestures within the pandemic. Here ambiguity and anonymity are positively productive insofar as no name is necessarily excluded. As such, these pandemic public memorials are immune to the sort of direct riposte to *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* seen in Chris Burden's 1991 artwork *The Other Vietnam Memorial* that explicitly seeks to memorialise the names of the 3 million Vietnamese victims of the war overlooked in the original. Accordingly, Jacqueline Wernimont has noted that "[…] death counts are anything but neutral registers. Rather, they exist in complicated technosocial assemblages that permit certain kinds of being and becoming for both the living and the dead" (Wernimont 2018, 22).

By avoiding a politicised token for counting, the London and São Paulo memorials avoid the risk of becoming exclusive and potentially divisive memorialisation. The religious symbolism of the *Balally Wall of Crosses* is, by contrast, akin to the use of 888,246 ceramic red poppies to represent each British and Colonial serviceman killed in the First World War in Paul Cummins and Tom Piper's *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* (2014). Thus to Wernimont's suspicion of the neutral list, we can add a suspicion of the icon of counting and the aesthetic presentation of the list.

As inexact, unofficial, unauthorized, and atelic lists, these running mortality counters are not tools of state apparatus, nor the direct product of calls capitalist quantification technologies. They are not body counts in the official manner of registration; they aim at scale and not precise quantification. Despite the personalization of some of the hearts on the *National Covid Memorial Wall* in London, these memorials do not function even as counter body counts to official narratives.

There are contemporary examples of such unofficial counter database practice. These include the *Iraq Body Count,*[104] which systematically records the violent deaths of civilians and combatants resulting from the 2003 military intervention in Iraq. Other artistic examples include Banu Cennetoğlu's *The List*[105] which tries to count each asylum seeker and migrant death within, or on the borders of Europe since 1993, Ai Weiwei's *4851*,[106] a looped video, which lists the names of 4,851 children who died in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, and Steve Locke's self-explanatory *A Partial List of Unarmed African-Americans who were Killed By Police or Who Died in Police Custody During My Sabbatical from Massachusetts College of Art and Design, 2014-2015, 2016*[107]. Though the latter examples have been presented in public settings they differ from the

104 See https://www.iraqbodycount.org/ (this, and all the following references were accessed December 17th 2021).

105 See http://www.list-e.info/

106 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qssniSdhQO8&ab_channel=AiWeiwei

107 See https://www.stevelocke.com/a-partial-list

spontaneous public COVID memorialisation this paper is focused on.

Instead, the COVID memorials are closer in aesthetic practice as participatory public monuments to Aida Šehović's annual nomadic monument/performance *Što Te Nema* (2006-)[108] which remembers the victims of the 1995 Srebrenica Genocide by presenting *fildžani* (small porcelain cups), each filled with Bosnian coffee, brewed on-site, and placed together by the public in a public square on July 11th.

3. The Limits of the Listing Aesthetic and its Spectacle

The aesthetic of the list has its limitations, however. It is difficult to be stimulated and moved by numbers, even when names are included. In the words of Wernimont, "[…] tables of numbers are poor vectors for the emotional and social impact of human mortality" (Wernimont 2018, 21). Humans are more inclined to be stimulated and moved by images, icons, and narratives. Hence the appeal of the figure in *Pass Freely*. For the beholder, the list is closer to a statistical and abstract marking than a stirring gesture. The experience of the pandemic cannot solely be measured in terms of an aestheticized body count. As such, the formal list necessarily fails to capture the tragic drama of the pandemic. Here we could go further and claim that the numbness of listing aesthetics serves to silence the victims of the pandemic as mere numbers to be counted. Hence, the desire to transcend mere abstract representation in the form of crosses, hearts, pinwheels, burnt matchsticks, *fildžani,* etc. In so doing there can be read in these works an attempt to resist, or at least overcome, the desensitising spectacle of the list. For this, however, the grand scale of these works necessarily requires appreciation in person in the public space.

Roland Barthes would, no doubt, identify listing at its worst as a technique of mythologizing that "[B]y reducing any quality

108 See https://stotenema.com/en/monument

to quantity, myth economizes intelligence: it understands reality more cheaply" (Barthes 1957, 154). Barthes writes of this economization in terms of the value of theatre being measured and commodified in terms of the cost of a ticket. It can however be extended to Facebook likes, GDP, and the daily counting of death tolls on the evening news. In Dublin, the crosses on Balally church even traced the daily death figures in the grim live computation. These spectacular images of public accountancy present us with an abstract spectacle of death.

By spectacle of the list, I refer to the critique of the spectacle that can be traced back to the work of Guy Debord and Situationist International. *La société du spectacle* (1967) is Debord's description of the everyday exhibition of capitalist economisation. Through spectacles to be consumed and engrossed by, society is pacified and life itself "degrades." This influential idea of the fetishization of the image has been developed in a plethora of ways.

An enlightening application can be seen in the work of Nicholas de Genova. Following Debord, de Genova theorises a spectacle of the border. The "Border Spectacle" entails a framing visualization of enforcement, illegality, and ineligibility. Missing is the meaning of the situation, contextualisation of the scene, or an analysis of the regime of exclusion. In fact, "[…] the law, which, in demonstrable and calculated ways, has produced the terms and conditions for the 'illegality' of the migrants in question, is utterly naturalized and vanishes from view" (de Genova 2013, 1182). All that remains are abstract numbers.

Similarly, the spectacle of the list hides the suffering, the responsibility, and accountability. It renders the numbers as the measure of suffering. Even more, it reduces the numbers to the primary measure of responsibility and accountability for public health restrictions. According to Debord's fourth thesis: "The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images" (Debord 1967, 19). For Debord, this pointed to the way that social life under capitalism is increasingly mediated by images and commodities.

In the context of the pandemic, this mediation entails a fixation with the movement of numbers in terms of total cases, new cases, total deaths, new deaths, cases per capita, tests, cases in the hospital, cases in ICU, the 'R' number, number of vaccines doses administered, number of booster shots administered, etc. These numbers we then compare and graph internationally, demographically, and historically. Central to this fixation with numbers is the anxiety that accompanies the drama of its algorithmic projection as the tally comes to stand for a proxy of the health of the society and an indication of the continued duration of the pandemic. The listing of these numbers is anxiety-inducing for the simple fact that it apparently governs our approach to social interaction.

Like the images that make up the "Border Spectacle," the spectacle of the list is wholly unreliable. The methods of data collection are unstandardized, differing wildly across location and time. This does not, however, detract from its compelling appeal. If the immediate aesthetic appeal of these works lies in their scale and visualisation of the abstract, the critical appeal of these memorials lies in their political reworking of the numbers. These works, as spontaneous and semi-spontaneous shrines, resist the top-down directionality of such statistics. As such, they start to expose, to differing degrees, the human reality of the suffering that the pandemic entails. In so doing these works can potentially present a counter spectacle.

When looked at in this way this public art reveals not only the aesthetic potency of un-commissioned public art but the significance of its rhetorical and discursive politics. Inevitable in practice, unpredictable in form and content, this public art can be seen as representing a counter or rival public and publicness through a counter-public art.

Michael Warner has theorised "counterpublics" as "formed by their conflict with the norms and contexts of their cultural environment, and this context of domination inevitably entails distortion […]" (Warner 2005, 63). The framing of graffiti writers as vandals and subsequent framing of certain elements such as com-

missioned murals as semi-acceptable street art is a quintessential example of such distortion.
For Warner,

> A counterpublic maintains at some level, conscious or not, an awareness of its subordinate status. The cultural horizon against which it marks itself off is not just a general or wider public but a dominant one. And the conflict extends not just to ideas or policy questions but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public or to the hierarchy among media. The discourse that constitutes it is not merely a different or alternative idiom but one that in other contexts would be regarded with hostility or with a sense of indecorousness. (Warner 2005, 119)

Counterpublic art in the context of the pandemic can respond to the novelty of the situation, the unusual layer of sediment, with discursive practices that strategically rework what is possible in the public sphere. Just as Steenson's *On Chorus* commandeered existing public space and infrastructure, the commemorative examples, in adopting the list form of a body count achieve what Debord would identify as *détournement*. This term can be variously translated as "diversion," "reroute," or "hijack." Though this practice is usually identified in the satirical defacement as seen in activities such as subvertising, it is better understood as a strategic transformation of "spectacles" to expose their falsity and absurdity and thus deprive them of their authority, naturalness, and inevitability. *Détournement*, in the words of McDonough, is a "strategy of diverting elements of affirmative bourgeois culture to revolutionary ends…" (McDonough 2002, *xiv*) It not only reuses the images of the dominant spectacle and in this case its form, but also seeks to uncover its masked repression. In their construction as collective gestures, these memorials have the potential to circumvent the norms and politics of public art commissioning.

The *National Covid Memorial Wall* in London, for example, is located directly and rhetorically[109] across the river Thames from the UK Houses of Parliament. It is a collaboration between the

109 See Endres & Senda-Cook (2011).

Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice and *Led By Donkeys* campaigning groups and documented on https://nationalcovidmemorialwall.org/. While a location for audio recordings of the bereaved families does not by itself constitute public art, the site-specificity and physical accessibility of the wall are vital for this. The website is a useful supplement to leverage and crowdfund its political aims.

The publicness of these works is ensured by site-specificity and accessibility. Subsequent digital dissemination is better understood as message enhancement and an expansion of the places that public art can go to. Similarly, Steenson's decision to make the audio available online only during the same hours that it played in the train stations can be understood as an attempt to amplify the work for those who couldn't travel to participate without simultaneously disrespecting the original site-specificity of *On Chorus*. The advantage of public artwork such as this, as opposed to the monumental listing works, is that they are better equipped to address the specifics of the physical disconnects and sensory disruptions of the experience of the pandemic. Lockdown is marked by a change in the perception of time while a common feature of Covid-19 is the loss of the senses of smell and taste. That these works are created in public and not delivered complete to the public space is crucial. Like official statistics, they count and are seen to count, in time. In their performance, they each point to a future reckoning. As 'living memorials' they communicate that the pandemic is ongoing and seek to approach a catharsis through public art.

4. Conclusion: Public Art Lists and Memory

There was, at least at the beginning of the pandemic, adrenaline for a positive post-pandemic reconfiguration of society in areas of labour, culture, transportation, housing, etc. Unlike the certainty of the beginning of the pandemic, there is an uncertainty of its end and accordingly, these hopes are evidently not the focus of the public art that responds to the pandemic. Instead, we can see from the select examples considered above, that accounting and

appreciation of the experience are the initial primary concerns. Our semi-frozen relationship to public art after our self-imposed hibernations is undergoing a slow thawing.

It is, of course, too early to offer anything like a definitive judgement concerning the artistic and aesthetic responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. The dendroclimatology of public art can only be suggested at this early stage. What is clear however is that the previous comparable pandemic, commonly known as 'the Spanish Flu' was subject to what Michael D. Higgins has called a collective amnesia (Higgins 2019). Reasons for this forgetting include the restrictions on reporting, the timing of the pandemic (coinciding with the First World War), its short duration, and the absence of obvious glory in its defeat.

Following the work of Maurice Halbwachs (1992), it is generally understood that remembrance is by its very nature a social practice. Contrary to the thesis of 'collective amnesia', which envisions a total deletion of the memory of an event, Guy Beiner has argued that such practices are better understood as routinely subject to political machinations that often serve to homogenise. Beiner regards what he terms 'social forgetting' as central to these processes. This is active retention of 'muted recollections'. As he describes it, "Social forgetting is to be found in the interface of public silence and more private remembrance, which sustains subdued memories that are occasionally allowed to re-surface into the public sphere" (Beiner 2018, 28).

Public art, or at the very least art that claims to be public art, is often a political tool, installed to generate, perpetuate and maintain specific narratives. Equally, resting as it does on the pillars of location and issues of accessibility public art can be the locus and focus of civic protest and resistance, from graffiti to iconoclasm to subversion. It is of course far too early for the official state and civic memorials that commemorate this pandemic to be fully realised. However, the proximity and rawness of the pandemic offer clarity that permits reflection in advance of the general social forgetting. Accordingly, it is worth taking Beiner's notion

of "social forgetting" to reflect on those memorials that have surfaced into the public sphere. What we see in these examples that embrace ephemerality is a form of what Beiner would identify as a kind of deliberate "pre-forgetting" in the strategic public art of remembrance and commemoration. By purposely using material that will fade and be forgotten, this public art seeks to preserve the commemoration *as part of* the pandemic and not as *a monument to* the pandemic. After all, these are counts undertaken where those counting are unclear when the counting will end.

It is well known that: "[…] historical traces are inherently uneven, sources are not created equal" (Trouillot, 1995, 48) and any act of listing and memorialisation is an act of inclusion and exclusion. Though the public may speak as artists, the victims remain silent, they cannot speak. Through genuine public participation and performance, these works visualise a combination of the different forms of silence described by Jay Winter. Winter (2010) argues that silence comes in several forms; 'sacred' such as a minute's silence, 'essentialist' where only those who experienced an event can speak of it, and 'politically-motivated' silence. This is why it is so important in the public memorials that there is an explicit effort to count everyone by the survivors of the pandemic. In short, these examples succeed aesthetically and politically where they go beyond being simple transcriptions of the official roll calls of the dead by distant generations. Their impact is not best measured by standing the test of time but rather in the solace they provide in real-time.

Forgetting, as occurred in the case of the 'Spanish Flu', would appear to be impossible in the world of endless broadcast media, social media, and detailed public data collection. However, this is not necessarily a barrier to forgetting *per se*. As anyone who has lived through a lockdown will know social memory like public art required degrees of physical accessibility and site-specificity. In these temporary memorials, we witness commemoration in the form of what Jan Assman (2008) calls communicative memory, an informal, diffuse, and embodied form of communication of the re-

cent past transmitted by participants and their direct descendants. This form of memory he contrasts with 'cultural memory', a formalised mythical history that lasts centuries and is mediated by classic texts.

All of the examples that I have considered in this paper are created without a clear route from 'communicative memory', to preservation in 'cultural memory' beyond the standard digital documentation. As the memory of the so-called 'Spanish Flu,' they are unlikely to stand the test of time in the public consciousness. This implicit acceptance of their inevitable forgetting is revealing of their politics of memorialisation and memory. The attempt to preserve these public artworks, as seen in the case of the *National Covid Memorial Wall* in London, is best conceived as a proxy to preserve the memory of and to seek justice for the pandemics' victims. Public art like graffiti/street art must be vulnerable to human touch. It must be vulnerable to modification by any passer-by, the weather, and pollution if the description of public art is to retain its currency. The in-built deterioration of these public artworks is in keeping with recent trends toward temporary and more immediate art in public space and can be seen in the use of contemporary materials that are not intended to last. As such, this counting operates as the performance of public memorialisation in the context of the pandemic. As such, they are not memorials in the strictest sense of permanent reminders that will last. Rather, they are better appreciated as process memorials that function as public performances of political communication and catharsis.

The examples considered in this paper demonstrate that public art, in the context of this pandemic and the restrictions it brings, is a practice that (by its very nature that engages issues of site-specificity and accessibility) continues to contribute to the production and resistance of social imaginaries. In time, these contextual icons may be appropriated in capitalist commodification or even captured by the artworld as art objects, but they are more likely to be forgotten as intended as their associated publics and the pandemic pass. Nevertheless, for now, they remain poignant

hand-painted hearts or burnt matchsticks on a wall, pinwheels in a square, or crosses on a church that evokes the human tragedy of the pandemic in public.

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Kalle Puolakka

The Literary Space in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Literature's position in the COVID-19 pandemic is fairly peculiar compared to many of the other arts. While the pandemic caused an almost complete standstill of the performative arts and many of them are facing even a kind of gradual process of rebuilding after performances with full live audiences are permitted again, literature has remained strangely unaffected. In fact, the effects of the pandemic on literature have been partly quite contrary to those of the other arts. The basic reason is simple: both the production and experience of literature requires very little, if any, real-world human contact. The uneventful life caused by the pandemic also created a fertile ground for the consumption of literature, as people now had more time to read.

Although more research is needed for a comprehensive account of the effects of the pandemic on literary culture, some preliminary data already support these assessments: many people do report having increased the time devoted to reading.[110] The pan-

110 The background material for the introduction of the article has been gathered from the following online sources: "New Stanford study finds reading skills among young students stalled during the pandemic", https://news.stanford.edu/2021/03/09/reading-skills-young-students-stalled-pandemic/; "How

demic also shows up in the renewed interest that works like Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*Cien años de soledad*, 1967) and Albert Camus' *The Plaque* (*La Peste*, 1947) have engendered in readers globally. The attitude people have taken toward literature during the pandemic, however, seems partly divided. For some, the freed time for literature has meant the possibility to explore new territories of literary culture, while for others literary stories have formed a source of comfortable escape amid an unsafe world.

It is still too early to make any serious predictions about the long-term effects of the pandemic on people's reading habits and the literary culture in general, but it could, of course, mean a welcome rectification to a process that has caused global worry: the decline of literary reading. Even here the effects of the pandemic are not straightforward, for streaming services, such as Netflix, also report having received millions of new subscribers and the rise of sales of audio books – a format that many still regard as a diminished form of literary engagement – overshadows the increase of paper book sales quite substantially. The usual suspects for the decline of literary reading, digitalization and modern technological culture,[111] in other words, showed no signs of diminishing presence in people's lives during the pandemic.

This paper continues the exploration of the status of literary reading in the contemporary world by trying to enrich the picture of the forms of comfort and security that have made literary

reading habits have changed during the COVID-19 lockdown", "Book sales are up: this is what we've been reading during the pandemic" https://theconversation.com/how-reading-habits-have-changed-during-the-covid-19-lockdown-146894; https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/05/covid-19-book-sales-reading/; "Pandemic reading habits survey results", https://bookriot.com/pandemic-reading-habits-survey-results/; "The transformation of reading habits in Italy during the pandemic in 2020", http://www.aldusnet.eu/k-hub/transformation-reading-habits-italy-pandemic-2020/; "Reading and Wellbeing revisited: surviving the pandemic", https://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/book-history/blogs/reading-and-wellbeing-revisited-surviving-pandemic. All accessed October 11th 2021.

111 See, for example, Twenge, J. et. al. (2019).

reading into an important pastime activity for many during the pandemic. As I hope to show, the comfort provided by literature goes far beyond the comfortability of a catching literary narrative. My estimation of the contemporary status of literary reading overlaps with the pessimism expressed by Nicholas Carr in his well-known book *Shallows. What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (2010) according to which "the cost" of our digitalizing age is the "further weakening, if not a final severing, of the intimate intellectual attachment between the lone writer and the lone reader" (Carr 2010, 108). My goal is to dig deeper into the experiential sides of this development with an analysis of what I term 'the literary space'. The concept of space is widely used in different quarters of aesthetics and architectural theory to characterize experiences where the experiencer is inside some environment or other spatial formation, such as a building. Such investigations usually emphasize the multisensory character of spatial experience, as well as its nonconceptual character. The experience of space is something we can in many cases distinctly feel, even if we might be unable to express the experience fully in words. My argument is that a distinct kind of literary space gradually builds up between avid readers and the world of literature as well. Drawing on different philosophical views, such as Peter Kivy's (2006) account of the performance of reading and theories of trust in social epistemology, I will illuminate the structure of this peculiar immaterial space in terms of four concepts: performance, routine, gap, and trust.

Based on this analysis, I hope to bring new elements into the discussion on the effects of digitalization on literary reading. From the perspective of this article, the development, in which the different forms of our digitalizing culture from the social media to streaming services take over space from literary reading, might not just concern our attention-span and reading capacities, as some have feared, but also an intimate aesthetic sphere.

1. Performance

From a historical perspective, our current understanding of reading as a primarily private and silent act is a relatively recent phenomenon. For example, in ancient Greece and Rome, where literacy was still not widespread, reading was essentially a communal and performance-like happening that gathered people together to hear someone else's oral reciting of a text. These gatherings formed for many the primary means by which they were able to be in touch with the literary tradition of their culture. As Carr notes, "silent reading was largely unknown in the ancient world" (Carr 2010, 60). Literacy started to spread after antiquity, but the dominant way of reading was still rather afar from our current conception, for reading was something done aloud, not silently. The reason for this was the very unsophisticated syntax of the times that posed its own challenges on readers. Writing meant a kind of direct transcribing of speech into a visible form and, most significantly, no spaces were inserted between words, as is done in more modern grammars. Like in antiquity, reading was still something done primarily aloud, as it significantly helped the reader to decipher the meaning of the texts composed in this form of writing called *scriptura continua*. This "nuisance to decipher", as Carr calls it, was the primary mode of writing until the end of the first millennium (2010, 65). Saint Augustine's (354–430) wonder in the face of bishop Ambrose's silent reading beautifully captures the unusualness of the bishop's manner of reading in this period: "When [Ambrose] read, his eyes scanned the page and his heart explored the meaning but his voice was silent and his tongue was still. Often, when we came to see him, we found him reading like this in silence, for he never read aloud".[112]

According to Carr, further developments in grammar meant significant advances in intellectual history. The less burden texts posed on readers' attempts to make sense of syntactic structures of texts, the more brain capacity was freed to address their actual

112 Quoted in Carr (2010, 60).

intellectual, emotional, and expressive content. At the same, silent reading started to emerge as the most common way of reading. For Carr, this development also meant that the performative character of reading, which had characterized earlier historical periods, was gradually left behind.

While putting forth a very similar account of the history of reading to Carr's view, the philosopher Peter Kivy claims that the earlier performative aspects of reading are still relevant for understanding literary reading in a modern context. For Kivy, even a silent reading of literature is a kind of performance. It is, of course, a rather strange performance, as it is silent and has no other audience but the reader herself. Neither of these factors, however, in Kivy's view, undermine the possibility of considering silent literary reading as a performance, for there are already some established types of performances that lack an audience or are silent. For example, the silent engagements with musical scores musicians frequently undertake with their minds ear can be thought of as performances of the explored music even though the music, in this case, is "audible" only within the mind of the silent musician. Also, as Kivy notes, a play-through of a sonata undertaken by a pianist without an audience counts as a performance of that piece. Both cases, in Kivy's view, show that there is no contradiction in the idea of a silent private performance.

Kivy's account of literary reading has raised some ontological worries: can the reading of a literary work truly be considered a performance in a sense similar to a performance of a musical work?[113] My interest, however, is in the insights that I believe Kivy's understanding of literary reading as a silent performance gives into the specific private, even intimate character of the experience of literature, and how this might help to explain the significance of literary reading. For Kivy, the novel is "the quintessentially 'private work' of art, to be experienced alone by the silent reader" (Kivy 2006, 18). From this perspective, the value many avid read-

113 See, for example Davies (2008) and Ribeiro (2009).

ers place on literary reading becomes understandable; it is a silent performance for themselves. In fact, referring to Plato's much disliked orator, Kivy calls the literary reader "a silent Ion", who tells the story to herself (Kivy 2006, 63). However, as this silent performance advances and the reader becomes more fully immersed in the world of literature, a connection to something external to the reader gradually develops that could be labelled trust, as I hope to show in the latter parts of the article. In fact, slightly paradoxically, this sense of trust to something external strengthens the intimate character of the reading performance suggested by Kivy's account.

Behind these features of literary reading, it is also possible to discern some important historical developments. Before a private, intimate reading became possible, the book had to take a certain form. Carr singles out the pocket-sized octavo book introduced in 1501, which, unlike earlier stone tablets and scrolls of papyrus, was easily portable, as an important step in the history of reading. Simultaneously books became more "personal" and "book-reading" became more strongly weaved into "the fabric of everyday life"; in short, the octavo-book meant an important step in the development of private reading (Carr 2010, 70–71).

One fundamental aspect of the act of reading strengthens the performative character of reading emphasized by Kivy, the silent inner voice of the reader. The reader of a novel in a way has to fit her inner voice to the novel's language, style, and structure. Sometimes the reader must make some effort to find a proper inner voice in a very concrete sense, trying out different inner reading rhythms, tones of voice, nuances, and emphases, that is, how the text sounds and feels in her inner ear. For example, the back cover of the Finnish translation of Jenny Erpenbeck's *The End of Days* (*Aller Tage Abend*, 2012) describes Erpenbeck as an author who "is able to distil human life to its most fundamental elements", as well as to show how seemingly insignificant events can lead to significant causal chains, irrevocably altering the course of our lives. These cognitive features of Erpenbeck's novel are reflected in – or exemplified by, as Nelson Goodman and Catherine Elgin

might put it – the novel's structure and style of writing. As a result, grasping the emotional, expressive, and aesthetic features of *The End of Days* requires a specific kind of inner voice from the reader the reaching of which may take some time and effort – at least in my case it did. Different authors also pose different challenges on readers and there are novels that require very different kinds of inner voices from the reader. In many cases, this inner sounding and contemplation of different reading possibilities comes close to the way in which a musician tries out, in his inner ear, different ways of performing the piece under rehearsal.

Noting the important role of the reader's inner voice in the experience of reading further emphasizes the performative character of reading, but at the same time it also gives new insight into the specific kind of privacy and intimacy of literary reading. The French philosopher Maurice Blanchot draws attention to similar features:

> Doubtless [reading involves] a sort of call… It is a silent call, which amidst the general noise imposes silence, and which only reaches the reader's ear because he answers it. This call turns him away from ordinary relations and toward the space in whose proximity the reading, by abiding there, becomes the approach to the work and an utterly joyful welcome to the work's generosity… The reading is this abiding, and it has the simplicity of the light and transparent yes which this sojourn is. Even if it demands of the reader that he enter a zone where he can scarcely breathe and where the ground slips under his feet… reading still seems… in itself [to be] tranquil and silent presence, the calm center of measureless excess, the silent yes at the eye of every storm. (Blanchot 1982, 196)

Despite evident differences in their philosophical styles, Kivy and Blanchot's accounts of reading importantly overlap: as a reader's silent performance to herself, literary reading is a highly intimate endeavor. Precisely this specific sense of intimacy is one of the fundamental elements of the literary space sketched in this article.

2. Routine

For some people, this silent performance turns into a routine. Laura Brown in Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* is precisely such a reader:

> Laura Brown is trying to lose herself. No, that's not it exactly – she is trying to keep herself by gaining entry into a parallel world… [H]er bedroom… feels more densely inhabited, more actual, because a character named Mrs. Dalloway is on her way to buy flowers… She should not be permitting herself to read, not this morning of all mornings… She is allowed, for now, to read unreasonably, to linger in bed, to cry or grow furious over nothing… She will read one more page. One more page, to calm and locate herself, then she'll get out of bed. (Cunningham 2006, 37–38)

Many researchers in everyday aesthetics have, in turn, analyzed our experience of the everyday through the concept of routine. For them, the everyday is a kind of patchwork of routines. Routines bring a sense of control into our everyday lives and permit its almost unnoticeable flow. By relying on our routines, we can carry out various everyday actions and tasks without much mental effort. Precisely routines explain the everydayness of the everyday. Theorists of this bent emphasize that we hardly pay attention to the everyday world until a crack appears to the patchwork of our everyday routines, requiring our more conscious attention.

Some have furthermore argued that the sense of everydayness that routines bring into our everyday lives involves its own specific aesthetic character. Arto Haapala (2005), for example, calls this type of aesthetics "the aesthetics of the lacking". Unlike the imaginative and emotional engagements enticed by specimens of what Haapala terms "the aesthetics of the strange", such as many artworks, an important aspect of the aesthetics of the everyday is "the quiet fascination of the absence of visual, auditory, or any other kind of demands from the surroundings" (Haapala 2005, 52). The aesthetics of the everyday is, thereby, constituted by such experiential features as closeness, recurrence, familiarity, and safety.

Especially the daily silent engagements with a book of avid readers like Laura Brown can be colored by these sorts of experi-

ential features. To put the sense that I am trying to capture here in the most romantic way possible, let me quote from Michael Burke's study *Literary Reading, Cognition and Emotion. An Exploration of the Oceanic Mind*, where he sums up his detailed empirical analyses of everyday reading by writing "the combination of bed and book… might grant us 'a kind of home' to which we can return, no matter where we are or how old we have become" (Burke 2010, 96–97).

It should be emphasized, however, that literary reading is a very different kind of routine from many other everyday routines, in that it is more or less in our own hands whether we decide to engage in it or not, whereas some routines are determined by our biological makeup and the conditions of social life. Carrying out some everyday routines are necessary for just staying alive and for having at least some sort of social life. Some routines are, in other words, voluntary, while others are necessary. An arguable important difference between voluntary and necessary routines is that voluntary routines can embody much more meaning than necessary ones, like going to the toilet. Voluntary routines are also routines in which we can develop ourselves and the daily instances of which can form a kind of accumulative chain that, in the best of cases, leads to the deepening of the experience. For example, the daily silent literary performances do not necessarily merely follow one other mechanically, but they can build on one another. Along with literary reading, this type of structure seems to characterize many other hobbies as well, which explains why going to the toilet cannot a hobby.

From this perspective, there is at least one important difference between the reading experience of the occasional reader for whom books are just time fillers and the avid reader – or someone whom Kivy calls "serious in-it-for-the-story-reader" (Kivy 2011, 37). This is that the occasional reader's reading is not underlain by the sense of familiarity or even safety that can color the daily silent reading performance of the routine reader. Precisely in this respect, I believe, the more seriously the reader takes literary reading

the more spatial endeavor it becomes. Readers like Laura Brown are in a way embraced by a familiar intangible space each time they begin a serious reading of a novel.

3. Gap

A Finnish politician and former member of the European Parliament, Paavo Väyrynen, became famous for his claim that he had read the entire literary output of Dostoevsky in only three days. Most of us, however, are not this accomplished readers; we have to take breaks from reading a book. The reading of particularly novels is paced by gaps. This means that what Kivy calls "artistic time" and "real time" do not coincide in the case of reading a novel, as it usually does with the experience of other kinds of artworks. That is, it can take several days to read a novel from beginning to end, but the actual or artistic time the reader is directly engaged with the novel during this period is much smaller. In fact, Kivy is somewhat cautious about attempts to live up to the standards set by the abovementioned Finnish politician. For Kivy (2011), novels are artworks that are intended to be experienced with gaps. The gaps are an essential part of the reading experience of a novel. Kivy sums up his position: "It makes little sense to think of the gaps in literary fiction as, somehow, a necessary evil… The gaps, rather, must be considered a *positive* part of our literary experience, where thinking about what we have read goes on as part of the literary experience" (Kivy 2006, 81, italics in the original). In this respect, novels have "a sloppy outer boundary" (Kivy 2006, 108). This account of the role of gaps in literary reading suggests that novels can be part of our everyday lives even when we are not directly engaged with reading.

Kivy's take on reading gaps is highly cognitive; the gaps in reading are the time for cognitive reflection on the book's content and for gaining a better sense of the conceptions and viewpoints the novel seems to embody. Besides possible cognitive reflection, the reading gaps, however, can also involve experiential features.

The most basic of these are anticipation and suspense; we cannot wait to get back to the novel we are reading. But these experiences can also take more nuanced forms. It can, for example, happen that after reading the first few pages of a novel we become hooked to it, which might very literally alter our experience of the everyday for the days ahead, as a new sense of connection arises to the literary work we are hooked to. The literary scholar Rita Felski has analyzed this phenomenon as a form of attachment in which we are "drawn into a responsive relation" to the artwork behind our attachment. For Felski, attachment is not "a specific state, but a state of affectedness" (Felski 2020, 41–42). My point here is that this state of affectedness raised by the literary work we are hooked to, in a way, spills over into our everyday lives during the gaps in reading, even coloring our experience of the everyday with a hazy and difficulty articulable sense of presence. Moreover, during the gaps in reading, we experience novels, not as things in our past, but as "works in progress", as Kivy puts it, which gives its own flavor for the affective attachment spilling over into our everyday lives (Kivy 2011, 91).

Although Felski has some reservations about using the terms mood and atmosphere in her account of attachment to artworks (Felski 2020, 76), I think the misty feeling with which the novels we are reading can color our everyday lives can be helpfully illuminated by precisely these two notions. Both mood and atmosphere have been rather widely used in aesthetic approaches to such misty experiences. Following William James, Richard Shusterman considers moods to give our daily experience "general affective orientation that selectively shapes our feelings, receptively encouraging some while resisting others" (Shusterman 2012, 435). Moods are less intensive than emotions and feelings and they usually lack a determinate object, but at the same time, compared to emotions, moods are "more pervasive, enduring, and general", and thereby are operative in our everyday lives in a more all-encompassing sense than emotions and feelings, giving our experience of the everyday "its basic tonality", as Shusterman puts it (Shusterman 2012,

438). Similar emphases come up also in Gernot Böhme's famous analysis of atmospheres. Atmosphere is something we can distinctly feel, but which nevertheless is "indeterminate" and "difficult to express". Atmospheres "seem to fill the space with a certain tone of feeling like a haze", Böhme clarifies (Böhme 1993, 113–114).

The concepts of mood and atmosphere capture well the particular experiential tail that I think novels can leave to readers' everyday lives. The coloring characterizing reading gaps is an unusually subjective and private experience, which can also be seen to enhance the intimate character of literary reading emphasized earlier. The reader in a way carries the book she is reading experientially in her everyday without anybody knowing. Despite the subjective nature of this experience, it has also been the subject of some empirical research in the light of which it seems that the deep concentration and perseverance of literary reading also makes its experiential ripple effects stronger and more long lasting than the listening of a sad piece of music for example.[114] The back cover of the Finnish translation of Toni Morrison's *Jazz* promises that the book "captures the inexpressible atmosphere that we in our minds relate to the lives of black people in the city [New York] and to the music that seems to be emerging from their souls". This hard to articulate mood and atmosphere that a novel can leave to our everyday lives is again an important element of the literary space.

4. Trust

The issue of trust relates to the question of the cognitive value of literature. While philosophers have been highly interested in analyzing how the cognitive content of literature should be understood, there is also another side to this epistemic coin, namely what justifies the reader to take in the beliefs, conceptions, viewpoints, and experiences that a literary work seemingly tries to get the reader to reflect upon and even absorb. Trust might offer one potential analysis of this epistemic issue, which is also relevant for

114 Mar, et. al. (2011, 829).

the idea of the literary space.

Trust is a vital factor of our epistemic lives in general. Most of our knowledge derives from second-hand sources and one potential explanation of why we are justified to believe in them is that they merit our epistemic trust. According to the so-called assurance view in social epistemology, the epistemic force of trust is based on the fact that the teller takes responsibility over the truth of his telling and, by doing so, subjects himself to criticism and blame, in case his telling turns out to be misconceived or underthought. According to Richard Moran, for example, the act of telling involves an "offer of trust" to the interlocutor (Moran 2018, 208). Some philosophers have also argued that at least in the case of realist novels there is an unspoken contract between the author and reader that involves certain guarantees and responsibilities (Carroll 2007, 36). Following Moran's analysis, it could be said that in publishing the novel the author makes her thoughts public and, with this act, she can be seen to call the reader to trust her.

It is possible to locate even deeper layers in the sense of trust readers might feel toward an author. Some authors can, for example, be exemplary figures in some ways. The idea of "an epistemic exemplar" is central to Linda Zagzebski's analysis of epistemic trust and authority (Zagzebski 2012, 132–133). What makes someone into an exemplary figure in this instance is that they are in a way better versions of myself, in exemplifying those epistemic qualities, which "I trust in myself insofar as I am epistemically conscientious". Zagzebski continues: "[The epistemic exemplar] may have special insights that I trust, and in many cases I would not have those insights if I were forming the belief independently. The general point is that an epistemic authority is someone who does what I would do if I were more conscientious or better than I am at satisfying the aim of conscientiousness – getting at the truth" (Zagzebski 2012, 111). Epistemic exemplariness in Zagzebski's sense is not just about acquiring the most truthful beliefs, but it concerns the refinement of one's epistemic capacities in a more wide-ranging sense, with the exemplary epistemic agent serving as a kind of

guide: "The point of epistemic authority is to help me in believing conscientiously" (Zagzebski 2012, 111), The epistemically exemplary figure is exemplary precisely in the sense that I feel her to be more successful in the epistemic endeavors that I myself value and strive to achieve (Zagzebski 2012, 93).

Now, some literary authors can arguably be considered epistemic exemplars in Zagzebski's sense. For example, Noël Carroll (2007) attributes to especially great realist authors intellectual virtues that he collects under the concept of "the art of observation". According to him, we are justified to rely on the insights and thoughts of such authors in a sense similar to the way in which we rely on the views of experts in non-literary fields.

What makes Zagzebski's philosophy of trust especially interesting for the idea of the literary space is that she also attributes important experiential features to epistemic trust. The most central of these is admiration. We trust someone, because we admire her. Zagzebski belongs to the growing number of philosophers who argue for the rationality of emotions and for their important and justified role in reason-giving for our choices and beliefs. Thereby, admiration, when it is based on well-working emotions, can serve to justify our epistemic trust in a given exemplary person; the admiration grounds the epistemic trust.

Literary authors, too, can arguably be the object of such admiration. We can, for example, admire how some authors stake themselves in their literary outputs, how they put their whole persona in play, the courage they exhibit in giving voice to those who have none, how they might fight deep-rooted prejudices, and bring hidden and underappreciated levels of experience to the public eye through their works. It seems that the author Zadie Smith sees, in Toni Morrison, precisely this sort of epistemic exemplar. She writes:

> Like a lot of black girls of my generation, I placed Morrison, in her single person, in an impossible role… No writer should have to bear such a burden. What's extraordinary about Morrison is that she not only wanted that burden, she was equal to it. She knew we needed her to be not just a writer but a discourse and she became one, making her lan-

> guage out of whole cloth, and conceiving of each novel as a project, as a mission – never as mere entertainment. Just as there is a Keatsian sentence and a Shakespearean one, so Morrison made a sentence distinctly hers, abundant in compulsive, self-generating metaphor, as full of sub-clauses as a piece of 19th century presidential oratory, and always faithful to the central belief that narrative language – inconclusive, non-definitive, ambivalent, twisting, metaphorical narrative language, with its roots in oral culture – can offer a form of wisdom distinct from and in opposition to, as she put it, the 'calcified language of the academy or the commodity driven language of science'. (Smith 2009)

When the trust in the literary author is underlain by this detailed features, the experiential bond to her also seems highly strong, as it evidently is in the case of Smith's admiration toward Morrison. Such authors become, to quote the famous words of Wayne Booth, "the company we keep", an ethical idea that Booth says is based on the assumption "that what makes life human, and what makes human life worth living, are our relations of trust and affection" (Booth 1989, 173). These forms of trust and affection of literary reading are the remaining elements of the literary space that I have sketched in this paper, and they supplement the picture provided by the concepts considered earlier – performance, routine, gap – of the immaterial circle and space that I believe literature can form around the avid reader.

5. The Literary Space Now

Given this account of the literary space it is no wonder that literature has been an important haven for numerous people during the COVID-19 pandemic, though I hope to have shown that the comfort literature can provide is far more complex than the coziness of an engaging literary narrative. When writing this, different parts of the world are gradually moving to a phase in the pandemic, where restrictions have been lifted due to the increasing vaccination numbers, and COVID-19 is started to be accepted as one disease among many. We are entering the phase of "the new normal" and it remains to be seen how lasting the slight increase in literary reading seen during the pandemic will eventually be.

But there are, of course, other tectonic plates in motion that need to be considered when thinking about the future of literary reading. In this case, the threats are part of the general digitalization of our culture that has been considered to weaken those sides of our cognitive capacities that are required in any kind of deeper long-term processing. In short, this development has to do with what Nicholas Carr thinks "the internet is doing to our brains", to quote the title of his 2010 book, or what, according to Maryanne Wolf, happens when, in the press of information overload, "skim reading" becomes "the new normal" (Wolf 2018). The very same factors that, in light of the most recent brain research, weaken our powers of attentive focus and intensive concentration undermine the foundations of the literary space as well.

Carr's starting point is the phenomenon called "neuroplasticity" according to which the human brain is a highly plastic organ. The development of our brains does not end in the beginning of adulthood, as was for long believed, but the brain seems to have an almost "astounding" capacity to "reorganize" itself (Carr 2010, 25). For example, new brain cells and neural pathways are continuously formed, their connection to one other can take new levels of strength, and different parts of the brain can assume new tasks. Carr sums up the idea of neuroplasticity: "Evolution has given us a brain that can literally change its mind – over and over again" (Carr 2010, 31). The way in which the brain develops is highly dependent on the stimulus environment; certain kinds of stimuli strengthen certain brain processing.

There is also a downside to neuroplasticity. The stronger a certain brain processing becomes, the harder it is to change it. Plasticity does not mean "elasticity". What also makes the reorganizing of our brain difficult is that we want to proceed according to already established neural pathways, because it is simply easier and requires less effort than neural reorganizing. In Carr's words, we want to go along "the paths of least resistance". Our brains also do not care for the virtuousness or possible negative effects of the processes. Repetition is all that matters, in other words what sort

of processing our brains are tuned to. The seeds of "intellectual decay" are, thereby, inbuilt into our brain's plasticity (Carr 2010, 35).

Technology has had a deep effect on the development of the brain throughout history. The clock with a second hand changed our sense of time, maps strengthened our capacity for abstract thinking, while "the technology of the book" reinforced the aspects of our cognition having to do with concentration and imaginative absorption. According to Carr, concentrated reading is, from the perspective of evolution, a highly unnatural activity for us humans, even a "strange anomaly" in the history of human kind. This is because, due to the principles of evolution, it is natural for us to direct ourselves outwards to the world to screening our environment and reacting to the perceived changes in it. Especially highly concentrated reading or "deep reading", as Carr calls this type of reading, requires an almost full turnabout from our brain, namely an "unbroken attention to a single, static object" (Carr 2010, 64).

Carr locates the starting point of this type of deep reading to the point when the earlier mentioned decryptable nuisance *scriptura continua* began to be replaced with more refined forms of grammar. Now the brain energy that was earlier used to understanding the basic sense of words and sentences could be readdressed to a deeper engagement with the actual contents of texts beyond their surface semantic qualities. This reversal of attention, however, meant that humans had, in a very concrete sense, "to train their brains to control and concentrate their attention". Humans, in other words, "had to forge or strengthen the neural links needed to counter their instinctive distractedness, applying greater… control" (Carr 2010, 64). The book is, for Carr, an anomaly in human history precisely because it required or inspired a very unnatural form of processing of things.

Carr's fear, however, is that, due to the internet and the general digitalization of culture, our brains might undergo a very substantial transformation. He thinks the internet might well be "the single most powerful mind-altering technology that has ever come

into general use" (Carr 2010, 116). It is impossible, within the space of this article, to go through the substantial background material of Carr's research, as well as how the role of the cognitive and other benefits of technology should be weighed in an overall account of the cultural value of technology, but the basic direction seems evident: the Net 2.0. and different technologies inspire a very different kind of cognitive processing than the deep reading to which a novel encourages the reader. In Carr's eyes, the aforementioned technologies, in fact, in a way return "us to our native state of bottom-up distractedness, [by] presenting us with far more distractions than our ancestors ever had to contend with" (Carr 2010, 118). In the sea of these technologies, our brains are in danger of "turn[ing] into simple signal-processing units, quickly shepherding information into consciousness and then back out again" (2010, 119).

The development outlined by Carr is also relevant for the idea of the literary space. If Carr's analysis is on the right track, the digitalizing of culture can also undermine the foundations of those processes upon which the literary space is built: the silent performance requiring intensive concentration, the deepening routine, the reflective reading gap, and the long-term engagement with the literary output of a single author, such as Morrison, initiated by the sense of trust toward her. Precisely in this respect the space of the digital world is very different from the literary space. It is, however, equally important to notice that digital culture involves its own modes of literature, which might well develop into great imaginative heights, creating still unimaginable forms of literary engagement, and the literary space is not intrinsically tied to traditional forms of the printed book; I don't want to be a complete contrarian. There is also no reason why the different forms of digital culture could not involve the experiential features that have been regarded as important for the literary space in this article. However, what arguably does make literature into a unique cultural medium is that the experiential features of performance, routine, gap, and trust come together in literature in a strong, mutually reinforcing sense, in the same package as it were. The derogation of the literary

space could, therefore, very well mean the decay of an important, even unique human experiential sphere. For this reason, the literary space might even deserve a place in the UNESCO list of intangible culture heritage.[115]

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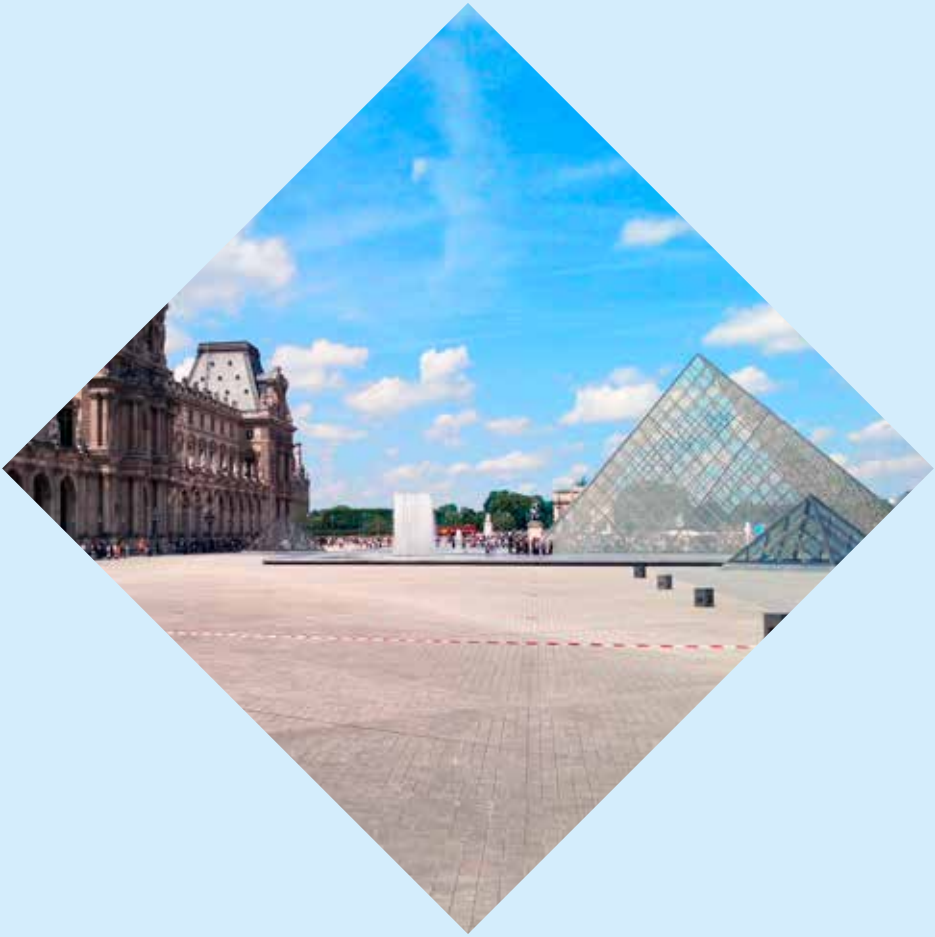

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