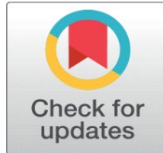
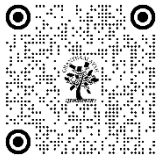


EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES IN ART: THE ESSENCE OF BEAUTY – OBJECTIVE OR SUBJECTIVE

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Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.
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ABSTRACT

Humans have been creating art in various forms since ages to express themselves. Art is a therefore not only an important but also an essential aspect of human evolution as well as civilization. This paper aims to explore art and its related issues. Since art reflects the societal values, technological advancements, and philosophical thought through different cultures and eras, the paper follows the trajectory of art through history. It also presents the key aspects of art which include its ability to evoke emotions, convey messages, and challenge perceptions, providing the human experience with platforms of intricate expressions.

The paper also emphasises on the difference between art and craft denoting both their essential features respectively. It is important to understand and appreciate the differences. It is also important to note that there are many kinds of arts, the classification of which generally includes categories such as visual arts, performing arts, and literary arts, etc. each possessing its unique characteristics and purposes.

The standards of beauty in art have been under discussion for the longest time. There has always been a debate about whether the beauty in arts should be judged by universal rational principles like symmetry and harmony, by empirical individual standards encompassing cultural contexts, personal preferences, etc. In this light the paper will touch upon the western theory of art, with special reference to theory of taste. The paper would then move on to analyse the purpose or function of art and conclude by looking at the idea of value judgement itself.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Fine Arts, Craft, Pure Arts, Applied Art, Plastic Arts, Visual Arts, Performance Arts, Taste, Immediacy, Disinterest, Expression, Form, Interpretation, Motivated Functions, Non-motivated Functions, Value Judgement



1. INTRODUCTION

The umbrella term Art includes a wide variety of human endeavours resulting in visual, auditory, or performing works, through which the creator expresses one's imagination, conceptions, or technical prowess, with the primary aim of garnering appreciation for the impact they generate via their beauty or emotional appeal. In the absence of any universally accepted definition of art, and given that perceptions regarding art have evolved over time, general descriptions often highlight imaginative or technical skills rooted in human creativity. The essence of art, along with related notions like creativity and interpretation, is examined within the philosophical discipline named aesthetics. We find that philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, and Kant have all theorised about what art means according to them. In several dialogues, Plato has addressed questions about art, Socrates maintains that poetry is inspired by the muses and is for that reason cannot be thought of as purely rational. However, being a complex and multifaceted

phenomenon, art has been a subject of extensive discourse across various disciplines, like philosophy, sociology, psychology, and cultural studies.

Since the meanings and understandings of art have changed with changing times across cultures, it is quite impossible to arrive at a precise definition of art. While traditionally art was considered a manifestation of beauty that brought aesthetic pleasure, contemporary views have widened their scope to include a broader spectrum like conceptual and performance art, which may prefer ideas to aesthetic qualities. Philosophers such as Leo Tolstoy who have contributed significantly to promote this interpretation of art believe art to be a means of communication that has the ability to rouse empathy and understanding among individuals. Apart from the fact that art can be seen as a reflection of human creativity, it can also serve as an important medium for communication and expression.

2. HISTORY OF ART

The oldest known art can be traced back to the Upper Palaeolithic period, with sculptures and cave paintings that can be dated to be approximately around 40,000 years old. We can only conjecture about the meanings of these early works since we have little to no understanding of the cultures in which they were created. Amongst such rarest finds are a shell engraved by Homo Erectus, which can be dated between 430,000 and 540,000 years ago, and 75,000-year-old drilled snail shells from South Africa. Thus we can think of artistic expression as one of the earliest human instincts.

The presence of artistic traditions was common to all the ancient civilizations such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, India, China, Greece, Rome, and Mesoamerican cultures, even though they each developed their distinctive styles shaped by the societal values that was respectively unique to each. While Greek art aimed to perfect the human form with an emphasis on anatomical accuracy and beauty, Byzantine and Medieval art engaged with religious themes, with special emphasis on gold backgrounds, and they idealized figures to somehow attempt to express the grandness of the spiritual. While the Renaissance ushered in realism, highlighting the human experience and developing techniques like linear perspective, the Islamic art rejected figurative representation and instead used geometric patterns and calligraphy. Asia was the hub of many different artistic traditions. While India and Tibet celebrated creative expressions through painted sculptures and vibrant religious art, Chinese art developed through various dynasties, involving jade carving, poetry, and painting styles that are representatives of their different respective eras.

The 18th-century Enlightenment fostered artistic depictions of rationality and political change, exemplified by works that challenged monarchic norms. This led to the Romantic movement, which celebrated emotional expression and individuality. The late 19th century introduced Modernism, which redefined the purpose of art, emphasizing the medium itself.¹ The 20th century bore witness to a successive series of different movements - Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, and Surrealism - each challenging the existing standards. With the ease of communication, there was greater interaction at global scale which in turn prompted cultural exchanges, with East and West both influencing each other in terms of art. Pop art emerged in the mid-20th century, questioning the boundaries of art through works that critiqued consumer culture.²

Philosopher Martin Heidegger posited that art plays a crucial role in revealing cultural truths and shaping communal understanding. This idea resonates with contemporary views on art as a dynamic entity that continually transforms the meaning of existence within a culture.³ Today, the line between art and craft gets blurred every now and then, reminding us of the ancient Greek notions of *techne* which represents fluidity between the terms skill, art, craft or technique depending on the context. A complete perspective on art exposes it as a medium of reflection as well as an inspiration for progress.

3. CLASSIFICATION OF ART

Parallel with humans, art has also evolved from prehistoric times to the current times. Creation of art has been pursued by humans since time immemorial. The term 'art' has etymological roots in the Latin word *artem* meaning 'skill' or 'craft' which relates to terms like 'artisan'.⁴ Modern English derives several words from this original meaning, including *artefact*, *artificial*, *artifice*, *medical arts*, and *military arts*. However, during the early 17th century, another definition of art developed which was more precise in which the term 'fine art' indicated skills through which the artist expressed his creativity for interacting with the audience's aesthetic sensibilities. This interpretation underlines the aim of art in a more meaningful purpose behind refined artistic works. Even while respecting the differences between the different forms of art, Aesthetics, the philosophy concerning beauty and art, recognises a common central idea amongst

them. This outlook encourages a well-rounded understanding and a more inclusive definition of art, acknowledging both unity and the diversity of varied artistic expressions without destroying the features distinctive to each of them.sj

The classification of art in ancient cultures varied significantly. The ancient Greeks categorized arts into two main types: productive and imitative. Productive arts pertained to the practical and commercial aspects of creating useful artefacts, such as garments, furniture, and tools, with the creators being termed 'artisans.' In contrast, imitative arts focused on drawing, painting, sculpture, music, dance, drama, and poetry. These arts were called "imitative" because they aimed to replicate nature and evoke realistic representations. The primary goal of imitative arts was not utility but enjoyment, showcasing the artists' skills in capturing the beauty and form of their subjects.

In ancient India, the classification of arts followed a different trajectory. The term 'kala' which corresponds to art in the Western context, also implied skill and craft. Ancient texts listed various arts, including singing, dancing, painting, sculpting, carpentry, weaving, and weapon-making, often linking these practices to specific castes and trades. Notably, there was no clear separation between crafts and what would be considered 'fine arts'. Unlike the Greek distinction between imitative and productive arts, Indian classifications recognized the utility of all artistic activities, emphasizing their role in the artists' livelihoods.

Larry Shiner, in his work *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, argues that earlier systems viewed art as any skilled human activity. The Greeks did not possess a term directly equivalent to 'art' instead using *techne*, which encompassed a broad range of skills, including painting, music, cooking, and even farming. In contemporary times, art is commonly divided into categories such as:

- Fine Arts vs. Crafts
- Pure Arts vs. Applied Arts

4. FINE ARTS VS. CRAFTS

The distinction between fine arts and crafts reflects a historical evolution of artistic practices. The productive arts recognized by the Greeks correspond to what we now consider crafts, while the imitative arts align with contemporary fine arts. Over time, the focus of fine arts has shifted from merely imitating reality to expressing emotions and ideas, leading to their designation as 'fine arts.' In contrast, crafts emphasize skill and technique, often lacking the same degree of originality and imaginative expression.

Distinctions between fine arts and crafts

- Crafts have been integral to human civilization, directly linked to producing utilitarian objects. The quality and variety of crafts often reflect societal development. Fine arts, on the other hand, represent aesthetic pursuits that cater to a more refined human experience, focusing on elements like harmony and proportion.
- Fine arts and crafts are not mutually exclusive; both can coexist and complement one another. A well-designed object can possess both utility and aesthetic appeal. For example, a beautifully crafted piece of furniture can be both functional and visually attractive. However, while crafts prioritize utility, fine arts are valued primarily for their aesthetic qualities and emotional impact.
- Fine art is appreciated for its ability to evoke emotions and provoke thought. A painting's value lies in its visual impact and the feelings it inspires, rather than any practical use it may have. In contrast, the attractiveness of a crafted object is secondary to its utility.
- According to Virgil C. Aldrich, the artist's work begins where the artisan's expertise ends. Artisans provide the materials and tools that artists use to create, but the artist infuses emotion and creativity into the work, resulting in a piece that can evoke deep responses from viewers.⁵
- Craft values are relative and often subject to change based on societal needs and technological advancements. Many crafts that were once essential have become obsolete due to modernization. For example, oil lamps are now relics in an age dominated by electricity. In contrast, fine art maintains its relevance and continues to resonate with audiences across generations. Works like Homer's *Iliad* remain influential, showcasing the enduring nature of fine art. Its values are absolute.
- While both crafts and fine arts require skill and technique, the latter demands additional qualities such as creativity, imagination, and emotional sensitivity. The notion that an artist is born rather than made underscores the unique attributes necessary for true artistic expression.

Further Classifications in Fine Arts

Within the realm of fine arts, further classifications can be made, leading to a more nuanced understanding of artistic expressions:

- **Plastic Arts vs. Performing Arts:** Fine arts can be categorized into plastic arts, which emphasize dimensionality (e.g., painting, sculpture), and performing arts, which involve time-bound performances (e.g., music, dance, drama). Literature occupies a distinct category, separate from both.
- **Visual Arts vs. Auditory Arts:** Fine arts can also be categorized as visual (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture) and auditory arts (e.g., music). Literature, however, does not fit neatly into either category. Dance can be considered a blend of both visual and auditory arts, especially in traditions where it is performed alongside music.
- **Pure Arts vs. Applied Arts:** Another distinction exists between pure and applied arts. Applied arts involve the application of specialized knowledge and are often created with utility in mind. While crafts and applied arts share a focus on practicality, applied arts typically emphasize continuous improvement and innovation in techniques. For example, developments in the field of technology like computers show the evolving aspect of applied arts. As opposed to this, pure arts work more in tandem with fine arts, as absence of any utilitarian purpose is common to both. The artist proceeds due to an inherent creative urge to express his/her feelings, and not due to any lust for practical beneficiary expectations. Though resounding pecuniary benefits and great acknowledgement might anyway result for the artist, these are neither the driving force nor the guiding force behind the creativity and are considered only as by-products instead of the main motivation.

The reason why it is sometimes so difficult to classify art can be shown using cinema as an example because cinema includes characteristics from craft, applied art as well as fine art. The departments for creating sets and costumes, and for managing light and sound effects can be classified as crafts, whereas the skills used in scriptwriting, directing, and acting can be classified as fine arts. The collaboration between them does not just seek financial gain in the end but to also produce as end result something that can be proudly proclaimed as art.

The field of art is very rich and diverse, where classification, as seen, is layered. Right from the ancient times till now, not only does art present human creativity but it also preserves cultural identity. Once we have grasped the nuances of these classifications, we can better acknowledge the varied forms of artistic expression, be it fine arts or crafts, and the impact it has on our lives. In a way, art is the essence of the human experience, taking us on a journey from the past to the future.

5. THE WESTERN THEORY OF ART

The term 'aesthetic' was first included into philosophical discourse in the eighteenth century after which it has been used to refer to several concepts like judgments, attitudes, experiences, and values. Aesthetic theories have largely focused on specific questions related to these definitions: Are works of art to be considered as aesthetic objects due to their inherent essence? In what way can we synthesise the perceptual basis of our aesthetic judgments through reasoning? How do we separate an aesthetic attitude from an everyday practical attitude? Should we base our aesthetic experience based on the direct straightforward experience of it or its should we look for a hidden meaning that the artwork purports to represent? Also, is there a way to tie down the connection between aesthetic value and experience?

Of late, doubts have arisen about the term 'aesthetic' since it appears impossible to understand the term independent of any references to other concepts, whether we can arrive at a consensus about applying the term to commonly agreed upon meaning, and if the term even fulfils a genuine philosophical need that requires us to include it in the philosophical lexicon. This scepticism gained traction in the latter part of the twentieth century, highlighting the need for a perspective that considers both early and contemporary theories of aesthetics.

6. THE CONCEPT OF TASTE

The idea of the aesthetic derives from the concept of taste. Taste had gained a lot of traction in the eighteenth century. While the reason for this is manifold, it is quite clear from the very outset that among other reasons, the main one is that the theory of taste emerged in reaction to the rationalist view pertaining to beauty and the growing thought about egoism with regard to virtue. The eighteenth-century theory of taste claimed judgments about beauty to be

immediate and instinctive, challenging the rationalist narrative. Additionally, it believed the pleasure derived from beauty to be disinterested, countering the egoistic thesis of virtue.

7. IMMEDIACY

The view that judgments about beauty have to be based upon reason is Rationalism. This means that whenever we judge something as beautiful, we have done it by exercise of reason, mostly by applying the established principles or concepts prescribed for the purpose. Rationalism which had gained prominence in Europe around the early eighteenth century, was quite under the influence of literary theorists known as 'les géomètres.' They sought to apply the mathematical rigor that Descartes introduced in physics to literary criticism. As Terrason put it in 1715:

The way to think about a literary problem is that pointed out by Descartes for problems of physical science. A critic who tries any other way is not worthy to be living in the present century. There is nothing better than mathematics as propaedeutic for literary criticism.⁶

British philosophers, while largely keeping within the boundaries of empiricism, started responding to this by presenting theories of taste as an alternative. The main theme of these theories is called the immediacy thesis, which says that judgments of beauty are not inferred through application of any principle or standards; they rather occur directly as a result of sensory experiences. This point of view contends that we 'taste' the beauty of an artwork directly upon engaging with it instead of reasoning toward the realization that the said artwork is beautiful.

An early articulation of this idea can be found in Jean-Baptiste Dubos's *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music*, published in 1719. Dubos argues that we do not need to reason analytically about the qualities of a dish, such as a ragout, to determine its goodness. Instead, he asserts that we possess a natural sense that allows us to evaluate whether a cook has adhered to the principles of their craft. This ability to discern quality applies similarly to artistic productions meant to please or move us.⁷

Kant further explores this notion in his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). He contends that if someone presents a poem or play that fails to resonate with my taste, they may reference established critics and their rules as evidence of its beauty. However, he insists that he would rather dismiss these arguments than let them dictate his judgment, which he believes should stem from personal taste rather than rational evaluation.⁸

Despite the appeal of the theory of taste, it faced a significant rationalist objection: the complexity of judging a poem or play compared to simpler judgments, such as determining the quality of a dish. Engaging with the intricacies of poetry and drama often requires cognitive effort, including the application of concepts and logical inferences, suggesting that judgments of beauty in these contexts are not immediate and thus not purely matters of taste.

To counter this objection, philosophers distinguished between the initial grasp of an object and the subsequent judgment of it. They acknowledged that while understanding an object can involve complex reasoning, the act of judging it can still be immediate. Hume, for example, clarifies that although reasoning may be necessary to appreciate certain forms of beauty—especially within the fine arts—immediate sensory reactions can also command our affection.

Hume and other philosophers, such as Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, viewed the faculty of taste as an "internal sense." This internal sense relies on the operation of other mental faculties to perceive beauty. Reid elaborates on this by stating that beauty arises from an object's nature or structure, and to perceive beauty, one must first grasp that nature. While evaluating complex objects may involve reasoning, the perception of their beauty remains distinct.

8. DISINTEREST

Egoism regarding virtue claims that to judge any action as virtuous is tantamount to taking pleasure in it because it serves one's interests. A central example of this view is Hobbes's assertion that virtuous judgments stem from actions perceived to promote one's safety. In contrast, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Hume, the famous British moralists, maintained that judgments of virtue are similarly based on pleasure but that this pleasure is disinterested—not self-serving. One argument suggests that since both judgments of virtue and beauty arise from immediate sensations of pleasure, judgments of virtue can also be disinterested, akin to how we perceive beauty.

The point of view prevalent in the eighteenth-century thought of judgments of virtue as similar to judgments of taste, highlighting a distinction between the concepts of taste and aesthetics. Today, we often view aesthetic and moral

judgments as opposed, where one typically precludes the other. Kant is pivotal in establishing this difference, reinterpreting the theory of disinterest — the belief that enjoyment of beauty be disinterested.

Kant argues that being ‘interested’ does not equate to self-interest in the Hobbesian sense, but rather indicates a relationship with desire. Treating an action as morally good is ‘interested’ because the anticipated pleasure leads to a desire to perform that action. The moment one acknowledges a moral duty to act, the link to pleasure is already created. In contrast, pleasure in judging something as beautiful is disinterested since it does not compel us to take specific actions. If we hold any duty regarding beautiful objects, it is simply to appreciate their beauty aesthetically.⁹

Kant was one of the first persons to redefine disinterest in this manner. In doing so, he placed the idea of taste as opposed to that of morality. His was the one of the earliest interpretations wherein contemporary understandings of aesthetics can already be sensed.

9. KEY ASPECTS OF ART

Human culture expresses itself deeply and meaningfully through art. Art embraces many dimensions that refresh us and reshape our understanding of not just ourselves but also the world around us. The following are the aspects of art that underline its importance:

- **Expression**

Art encompasses a capacity for expression. Artists use their chosen mediums to offer their thoughts and feelings, and to convey complex emotions and experiences. For instance, a painter may elicit feelings through a combination of colour and composition, whereas a musician may convey emotions through melody and rhythm. This quality of expressiveness lets the creator and the audience to interact on a personal level, forging a bond of empathy and connection. Art then transforms into a vehicle for emotional release, empowering individuals to share their innermost thoughts and unique perspectives.¹⁰

- **Form**

Art is not a fixed concept. It finds manifestation in a variety of forms, and each of these forms has its own hallmark. Classic visual arts like painting and sculpture are accompanied by performing arts like music, dance, and theatre, and literary forms such as poetry and prose. Each of these forms finds its own way to express ideas and emotions. For example, painting represents a moment caught in time using visual image as its medium, the flow of dance represents the seamless fluidity of human experience in motion. Artists can freely opt for the medium that allows them to convey their emotion in the most effective manner possible.

- **Interpretation**

Art lends itself freely to interpretation. As opposed to scientific concepts that are exhaustively well-defined, art beckons people to interact with it arriving at their individual interpretation of it. The element of subjectivity makes the interaction rich with the varied interpretation owing to the diversity arising from differences in backgrounds, belief systems, and experiences. For instance, a painting of a lion may evoke feelings of fear in one viewer while eliciting feelings of admiration in another. This plurality in opinions invites dialogue and discussion, thereby empowering art as a medium for seeking diverse perspectives.

- **Cultural Significance**

Art plays a significant part in identifying cultural and social values. Art has almost always reflected the lives, beliefs, and traditions of different communities, inadvertently documenting their history. For example, indigenous art presents cultural narratives, spiritual beliefs, and social structures, and thus helps maintain the heritage of the community. In the same way, contemporary art targets current social issues, expressing opinion on politics, identity, and human rights. Analysing art from a specific time period, we learn about the values and isms that shape societies, making art a necessary tool for understanding cultural dynamics and historical contexts.¹¹

- **Aesthetic Value**

Art is also celebrated for the aesthetic qualities, such as beauty, harmony, and composition. Aesthetic value encloses within itself all types of sensory experiences evoked by art. Be it the intricate brushwork of a painting, or the melody flowing from a symphony, or the graceful movements of a dancer, aesthetics plays an important part in how art is being viewed and considered.¹² This reverence for beauty is found across cultural boundaries, soliciting universal appeal while still making space for individual taste and preference.

To sum up, we can enumerate the key aspects of art - expression, form, interpretation, cultural significance, and aesthetic value – have the potential to singly or jointly to present a meaningful display of human artistic capabilities.

10. PURPOSE OF ART

Art has played so many roles during the history of mankind that it is impossible to narrow down its function or purpose into a singular concept. This in no way suggests that the purpose of art is unclear, instead it emphasises the many distinct reasons for the creation of art. The functions of art can be categorized into non-motivated and motivated purposes, as noted by Lévi-Strauss.

Non-Motivated Functions

Non-motivated functions of art are the ones that are contained in the internal experience of a human being over and above the personal requirement of an individual or a particular purpose which lies outside the person. Art is an essential aspect of being human – a creative and expressive pursuit that sets the human race at a different level from other species. It extends human purposes and efforts beyond mere utility into the realm of pure aesthetic.

- **Basic Human Instinct for Harmony:** Our inherent desire for balance, rhythm, and harmony finds expression in and through art. The admiration for beauty is not just an action or an object but a deep acknowledgement for something that goes beyond utility. Aristotle claimed that this innate gift leads to the nurturing of talents, producing various art forms like poetry, etc.
- **Experience of the Mysterious:** Art lets individuals to expand their horizons and relate with the universe. It is an unmotivated experience that can occur while engrossed in music, poetry, or visual art. Albert Einstein suggested that the deepest experience is that of the mysterious, which serves as the basis of both true art and science.¹³
- **Expression of Imagination:** Art is a language unto itself which breaks the shackles of the ordinary to transport us to the extraordinary. The fluidity of art as a medium of expression transcends constraints like the fixedness of the meaning of words. For example, poetry contains words that carry fluid meanings and have the capacity to transform the mundane into celestial. Immanuel Kant remarked that the invigoration brought about by art provokes thought and imagination which in turn creates channels for daring beyond the boundaries.
- **Ritualistic and Symbolic Functions:** Observing cultures across the world, we find evidence of presence of art in rituals, performances, and dances, etc. in the form of decoration or symbol. Even though these practices may not serve definite utilitarian purposes, they carry deep cultural meanings developed over generations and other universal and cosmological beliefs. Scholars who have focussed on prehistoric rock paintings or decorative objects understand this complexity, attesting to the nuanced role of art that transcends utility.¹⁴

Motivated Functions

Art has been consciously and intentionally employed for specific purposes like pushing for political change, rewriting social narratives, emotional expression, or even realising commercial aims, etc. collectively termed as motivated functions of arts which can include, while not being limited to the following:

- **Communication:** The primary function of art is to work as a medium of communication. The moment any communication has a specific intention towards a certain end, it becomes a motivated purpose. For example, maps are drawings that convey information. Similarly, art can very successfully be employed as a creative medium that conveys or communicates emotions, and moods.
- **Art as Entertainment:** Art can also be an attempt to present content that aims to entertain or please its audience. This purpose of art is glaringly evident in the employment of this medium in say films, video games, and the like throughout the entire entertainment industries.
- **The Avant-Garde:** Art movements around the beginning of 20th-century employed visual imagery with the specific aim to cause political change. These avant-garde movements looked to replace the then current norms with progressive ideas. “André Breton, a proponent of Surrealism, criticized realistic attitudes that stifled intellectual and moral advancements, advocating for art as a means of liberation.”¹⁵

- **Art without Boundaries:** Contemporary art is different from the avant-garde movements that targeted establishment of universal values. It welcomes cultural differences and experimentation. This thinking considers art as an open ground for research and exploration.
- **Art for Social Inquiry:** While similar to political function, art has the potential to challenge existing societal aspects. For example, graffiti and street art critique prevalent societal standards and express dissent, albeit sometimes they are considered illegal expressions of art.
- **Art for Social Causes:** Art can throw light on different social concerns that emphasise medical, environmental, issues. Art can promote efforts like 'Trashion' where waste is cleverly and creatively repurposed to create fashion, thereby showcasing the ability of art to help address global crises.
- **Art for Psychological and Healing Purposes:** Art can be used as a therapeutic means in which creative expression is engaged to bring about healing and help develop self-awareness. Therapists use series of drawing, etc. as a method to assess the emotional functioning of their clients/ patients further highlighting the importance of healing capacity of the process of art rather than the final product which is the artwork itself.
- **Art as Propaganda and Commercialism:** Art is frequently used for propaganda, subtly influencing public perceptions or moods. Similarly, commercial art aims to sell products, evoking emotional responses to drive consumer behaviour.
- **Art as a Fitness Indicator:** Some theories suggest that artistic ability and creativity may serve an evolutionary purpose, akin to the peacock's tail, which attracts mates. Superior artistic execution could have historically contributed to mate selection.

The functions of art described above often overlap; for example, entertainment art may also serve commercial purposes, illustrating the interconnectedness of these roles.

Value Judgment

In relation to the functions of art, the term 'art' also applies to judgments of value, as seen in phrases like 'this cake is a work of art' or 'the art of breaking hearts.' This usage reflects a subjective measure of quality. Making value judgments requires a basis for critique. At its simplest, one can determine whether an object elicits an attractive or repulsive response. While perception is inherently subjective and influenced by individual experiences, it is generally accepted that art must possess some level of aesthetic satisfaction.

However, 'good' art is not always aesthetically appealing to the majority. An artist's primary motivation may not be the pursuit of beauty. For instance, Francisco Goya's *The Third of May 1808* graphically depicts a firing squad executing civilians, evoking horror while showcasing Goya's exceptional artistic skill. Such works challenge the notion of aesthetic satisfaction, as they are created for social, moral, or thought-provoking purposes.

The evolution of values and the challenge to established notions of aesthetic superiority do not necessarily entail abandoning the pursuit of aesthetic appeal. Often, revising popular conceptions of beauty can rejuvenate aesthetic sensibility and foster new appreciation for artistic standards. Various artistic movements have proposed their definitions of quality, but they generally agree on one point: the value of art lies in its ability to transcend its medium and resonate universally, reflecting the artist's skill and the zeitgeist.

11. CONCLUSION

Art is fundamentally about connecting with human emotions. It can evoke aesthetic or moral feelings and serves as a medium for communicating these sentiments. Artists express their thoughts and feelings, prompting reactions from their audiences, often without conscious intention. Art can be viewed as an exploration of the human condition, revealing what it means to be human.

There are so many different issues, perspectives, opinions related to art that it is not possible to comprehensively address them all in one place. Judgements of value are anyway subjective and where the object of judgement itself is celebrated for the myriads of possibilities for interpretation, it becomes that much more difficult to present an overview which is uncomplicated and simple. However, the beauty of art also lies in the bandwidth it provides to cover the entire gamut of emotions that can be experienced over a single work of art.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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