

PICASSO'S BULL



Brief introduction to the understanding of art

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PART I

THE NATURE OF THE PAST

PROLOGUE

In music, literature, theatre, film, different approaches coexist. One digs deeper than the other, some forms are traditional, others experimental. Each movement serves its 'own' audience, although it sometimes wants to take a different view, or even switch to one.

The exception is the visual arts. For 75 years now a single movement has dominated there: that of (post)modernism. This monopoly is maintained by the idea that visual art is something that requires a special 'knowledge'

Well, the reader of the following pages is given all the necessary 'knowledge' in the first part and it is not very complicated.

In the second part it is explained how and why this idea came into the world around the visual arts. How visual art was caught in the grip of an ideology. How, as a result, more was lost than won.

And finally, that artists around the world are now resisting this, because they feel that visual art, too, should not be uniform, that here too all movements can and may exist side by side, each for its own loving audience.

PICASSO'S BULL

When Pablo Picasso first saw the 15,000-year-old cave paintings of Altamira, he was deeply impressed. None of us could paint like this,' he said, 'After Altamira, nothing more brilliant has ever been made' and even more so, *'Après Altamira, tout est décadence'*.



Altamira



Pablo Picasso

That's a very strong statement, and it needs an explanation. After all, a lot has happened to mankind in the past 15,000 years and the difference between a palstave and a smartphone is not overlooked, but - and that's what this is about - Altamira's bull and Picasso's bull only differ in opinion, not in technical or visual quality.

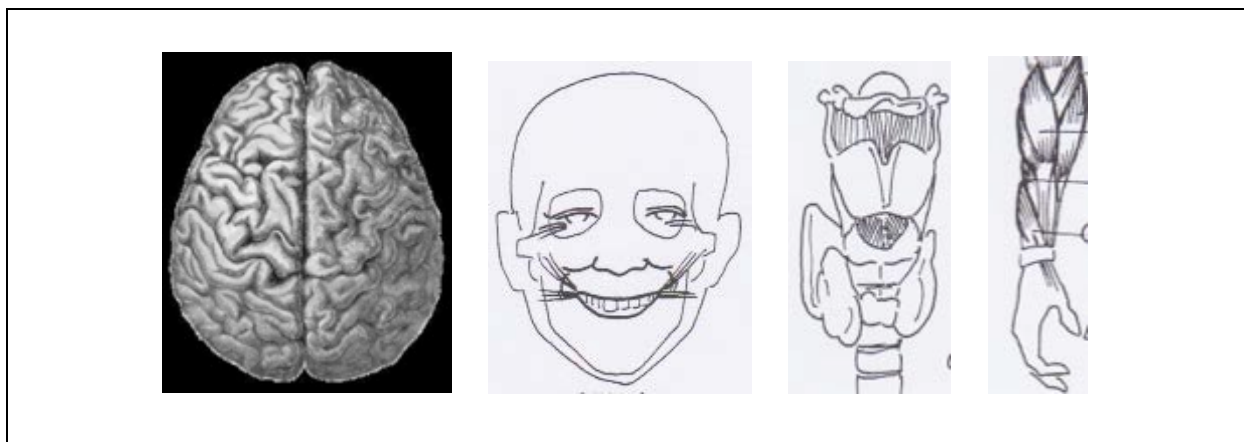
Of course there have been many changes in art in all that time, both in practice and in vision, and especially on the technical side significant steps have been made. Occasionally an artistic flourish developed, but it was always local and temporary, and was invariably followed by a decline. The essence of art remained the same.

The cause of this timelessness lies in the nature of art, for it mirrors the nature of man. For man's knowledge may have increased, but anatomically speaking he has not changed.

THE ANATOMY OF ART

Man in his present form has only existed for a few hundred thousand years. We, the Homo Sapiens Sapiens, are a subspecies of the Primates (apes), with four unusual anatomical abnormalities.

The fact that we walk upright is not so special in itself. Forest apes have long arms, short legs and gripping hands and feet, suitable for swinging from branch to branch. People apparently descend from savannah apes, where a high field of vision is useful to see the lion coming from afar. Contrary to most animals, it is not the smell, but the eye that is the most important organ. The length of the leg and the construction of the foot is set to sprint: once at the nearest tree the gripping hands come in handy.



The most important biological abnormality of Homo sapiens is of course the exceptionally large brain mass.

According to an interesting theory, the earliest humans were scavengers of the weakest species - they had to wait until all the bigger and stronger animals had been eaten. The bones remained. The cracking of bones stimulated the use of tools and the menu of bone marrow would have led to the growth of that large brain and the intelligence connected to it. But apart from that brain, three other anatomical peculiarities are exclusively human.

Two of them are used for communicative purposes: a special muscular system in the face that can display all kinds of expressions. And then there is the complex construction of the larynx, which allows a rich variety of sounds.

The fourth unique feature is more practical: a system of muscles in the forearm that govern the most refined movements of the fingers, with many applications: from mechanical engineering to piano playing.

It is likely that these four components have evolved evolutionary in coherence, with the result that humans are now at the top of the food chain.

DUALITY



Behold, man, a hotchpotch of reason, emotion, instinct and sensitivity - some people live in an extreme: one loses himself in rudderless chaos, the other clings to rigid discipline, a third combines fear with distrust, but most of us live somewhere in between.

This is controlled by the poles in our brain.

To begin with, we have the brain stem. At the very bottom of the skull, at the place where the brain turns into the spinal cord, is the original, primitive mammalian brain: the source of instincts and reflexes, of primal drives such as aggression, fear, flight behaviour, food gathering, envy, greed, lust, and so on, in short, the domain of animal drives. A domain that is closer to us than it is supposed to be.

The brain on top of it is split into two halves with a rather thin connection between them.

They are evolutionary excrescences, synonymous with human civilization, culture, art and science. Because of these growths, man is able to rise above the animal.

In the left hemisphere it dominates the more business analytic, on the right the more holistic sensitive thinking and feeling. The one influences the other, man thinks and feels reciprocal, dualism is thus the essence of human existence.

And this same dualism is also the source of the most important capacity of the human mind: the power of imagination. The ability to invent things that do not (yet) exist or are perceptible. To make connections between possibilities and options. To make inventions and to develop oneself - sometimes all of humanity.

Every human being lives somewhere between these three poles in the brain, what dominates differs per individual, and also per society. For what applies to the individual also applies to the collective: where the culture in a society flourishes, the highly developed brain hemispheres dominate and where not, a community crawls back, towards the brainstem.

And what goes for man also goes for her art.

For art arises in the field of tension between the opposites, somewhere between drives, ratio and free spirit and each pole is of equal importance, the difference is that the drive is a given, ratio can be developed, so one can learn and freedom is something one allows oneself, outside all conventions.

Art is also the field of tension between form and content, because what the artist wants to convey must be adequately represented, because if the public is not reached, the work of art overshoots the mark.

And in this design we encounter similar contradictions, such as those between actual perception (perception) and imagination (concept).

To clarify this, we look at some of the oldest preserved works of art we find on two continents: Europe and Australia, counterparts, geographically and artistically.

Discipline versus freedom



Brain, outside



Inside



Mondriaan



De Kooning

A work of art arises in the field of tension between order and freedom, between insight and feeling, between facts and imagination, between care and daring, between craft and spirituality. And there are also persistent primitive instincts, whether or not in the background. In other words, art interprets the paradox that man himself is essentially.

Perception versus concept



Europe, Lascaux, horse



Australia, Worora country, the Python River

In the European cave painting of a horse in the cave of Lascaux, perception dominates. The painting undoubtedly had a meaning and a (magical) purpose, but we do not know it. We see a clearly recognizable horse, sharply observed and anatomically correct, albeit a bit caricatured.

The Australian cave painting 'the Python River' revolves entirely around the meaning, the concept:

'Groups of large Pythons came from the east and slid through the landscape like rivers. This is how they came to the land of Worora. The Rock Python was tired and her children were crying, so she rested in a cave and painted herself there'.

Recognising the physical form of the python, compared to the horse, requires some good will, because they are stylized symbolic forms, no less beautiful, but from a completely different approach. This is not about the exact appearance, but about the interpretation of the concept of 'group' as a 'river' and about the story.

These poles crop up all the time and everywhere in art history: in terms of expression, the disciplined 'factual' approach contrasts with free feeling, and in interpretation, the image varies from the representation of an exact perception (realism) to abstraction and symbolism. And in the instincts lies a great deal of recognition and spontaneous contact with one's fellow man.

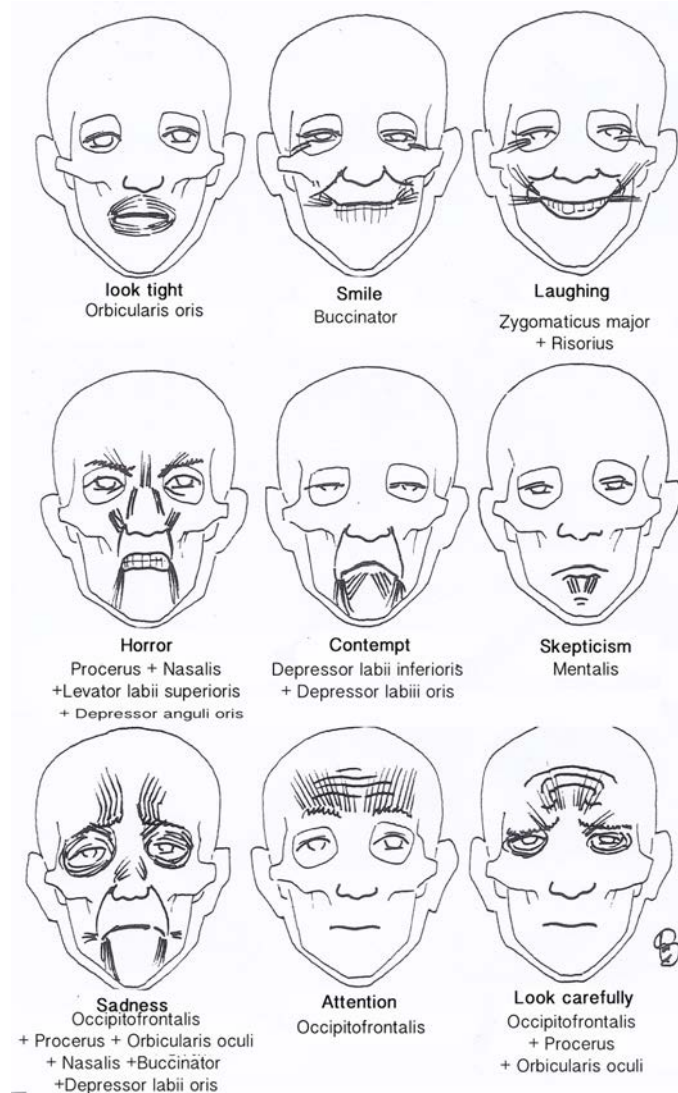
EXPRESSION



There are twenty-five muscles in the human face without any practical use. They can wrinkle the skin, move eyebrows or corners of the mouth, and that's it. Yet they are unique to humans in number and variety of functions and their purpose is the transmission of emotions. Thanks to these 'mimic muscles' we can express, without words, appreciation, or aversion, joy or sorrow, disappointment or interest, and much more.

Art can be compared to that, it serves no purpose, but is full of meaning..

Facial muscles



In other words: expression is the goal of art, but in a broader role, it is not so much about the one-on-one contact, but about a larger reach, the connection with a social context or function. This is how much music wants to bring about a form of ecstasy, varying from organ concerts - with a spiritual inspiration - to dance music - with an erotic excitement. Poems and literature try to convey special insights, or give insights into other people's spiritual lives. And visual art has similar goals, with the eye as an entrance. It depicts unknown worlds, or the known in an unknown, original way.

Epic versus lyricism

When Michelangelo saw the work of Titian, he buzzed, "It is nice in color, but it lacks the beautiful drawing of us Florentines". Indeed, the Venetians like Titian and Tintoretto worked from the smooth stain, the Florentines from the strict contour.



Michelangelo: Sistine Chapel, 1510



Titian, Adam & Eve, 1550

This contrast between the 'epic' Florentines and 'lyrical' Venetians, between line and stain, was and remained a point of conflict in art for centuries.



Stella, Christ cared for by angels, 1656



El Greco, the 5th Seal, 1614

Forms of expression that move between discipline and freedom can be described - in terms of content - with terms from literature.

In the epic (the heroic poem) it is about telling the story as clearly as possible, preferably in a tight metre of verse. In painting it goes the same way: first the contours are set out, then the

colours are filled in. In both cases the expression is strict, unambiguous and often somewhat distant, but soon elevated, sometimes pompous.

The lyricism is about feeling, about evoking emotions. The poet allows himself freedoms and exaggerations, to ambiguities, the painter shows handwriting in line and touch and allows himself stronger colours. The lyrical expression is much freer, more direct and earthy.

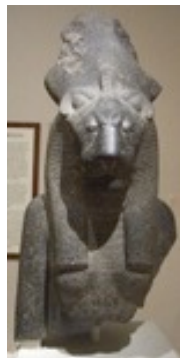
Lyricism can be almost physically seductive.

Imagination versus simplification

There are also opposites in the interpretation. Some artists let the imagination run free, with all possible excesses, others try to keep a story as simple as possible.



Lionman
30.000 BC



Sekhmet, Egypt
1390 BC



Pablo Picasso,
1937



Max Ernst,
1940

Een vorm van vrije verbeelding is de symboliek, bijvoorbeeld in combinaties van mens en dier (deels observatie, deels fantasie). En een andere werkwijze is de abstrahering, het versimpelen van vormen tot hun essentie. Beide benaderingen – de complicerende en de simplificerende – zijn van alle tijden.



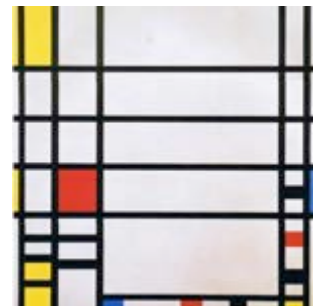
Head, Cyclads,
2000 BC



Suncross, Scandinavia,
1500 BC



Constantin Brancusi
1912



Piet Mondriaan,
1939

The importance of interpretation is very clear in theatre: an insignificant piece can be highly appreciated thanks to a strong interpretation - and vice versa, bad play can ruin an excellent piece. With interpretation, the content stands or falls. And it is partly based on spirit and talent, and at the same time on skill and ability.

COMMUNICATION



A lot of meaning is conveyed by the word and in the visual arts there has always been a relationship between narration and image.

As in religious art, or in the representation of poetry or myths. Sometimes the transmission in images is even more effective than that with words.

Narrative versus Interpretive

In earlier times, art was almost always narrative in nature. Like illustrations of biblical stories or Greek myths. Sometimes the intentions were very edifying and sometimes it was a good excuse to paint naked ladies.



Rubens: Susanna and the elders



Boucher, Bathing Diana

But with a work of art, the perception itself, without any story or concept, can also be the goal, and then the meaning revolves around an artist's personal interpretation.



Sargent, 1884



Kuindzhi, 1880



Manet, 1872

Communication generally serves some purpose: conveying a message, a meaning, an emotion, and so on. In art, communication and expression are closely related. There are messages possible in an infinite number of types and forms.

The edifying message Religious art is often instructive, it warns, for example, against hellfire or mortal sins (and the pleasure of painting then splashes off).



Albi cathedral: Last judgement



Hieronymus Bosch, 7 deadly sins: Wrath

The elevating message The worldly version of the edifying message is the elevating: concepts such as heroism and virtue are artistic inventions.



Van Poelenburgh, gathering of Gods



David, Death of Socrates

The political message Art has been used from the beginning of time for political propaganda: for example, images with heroic monarchs in the front lines on the battlefield.



Hettieten



Assyrie



Ramses II, Slag bij Kadesh,

A temple relief in Abu Simbel glorifies Ramses II's glorious victory over the Hittites in the battle of Kadesh - but Hittite sources tell how they chased the Egyptians a long time ahead of them. Propaganda always serves an interest, rarely a truth.

SKILLS



Skill-based art

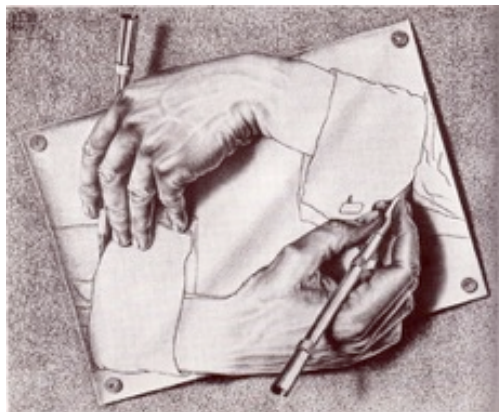
Human hands can make or do the most extraordinary things. This is best achieved when there is a balance between technical ability and successful choices, between the effective cooperation of hand and brain.



A special aspect in painting is called material expression: being able to depict different materials with their properties, such as different types of textile, with their own matt or gloss. Or the moisture of a fruit.



Bougereau



Escher



Rembrandt

Or anatomical credibility. Painting people is already difficult, the hardest part is the hand (many portrait painters prefer to hide it behind a back, in a pocket or in a vest). And suggesting a hand in a few lines is the most difficult part.

Expression is possible, directly from the brain stem with an appeal to the most primary urges. Such primitive expression generates rapid excitement and is therefore the basis for political - and religious - agitation, for fake news and for advertising.

But human civilization floats mainly on the later brain hemispheres, and the expression that emerges from there is more complex, both in terms of content and interpretation.

A good work of art then compels admiration, starting with the special skill of the artist, a skill of mind, but - certainly in the visual arts - also a skill of hands.



Steel engraving

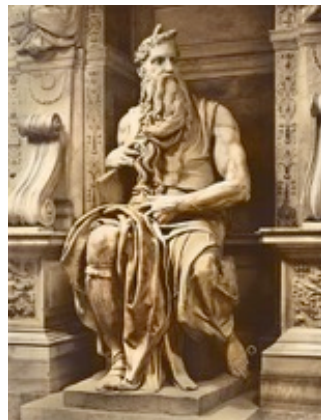


Wood engraving

Opposite the suggestion is perfection. As in reproduction techniques that flourished in the 19th century: steel and wood engraving. Extremely meticulously executed.



Bernini



Michelangelo



Messerschmidt

Sculpting begins with a block of stone and according to Michelangelo it is otherwise very simple: the sculpture is already there, you chop away everything that is superfluous.

Art is a complex profession, but it is not at all the intention that the viewer sees this, but rather that they get the impression that the work of art has been made without any effort or difficulty, as a matter of course. But no artist receives it as a gift, not even the greatest artists.

THE 3 VALUES IN ART

In order to distinguish quality in art, the following values must be considered in their context.

- **Intrinsic values:** why is a work of art made? What is its purpose or meaning?

Art is always made in response to a social demand, or, in terms of supply and demand: for a market (although it does not necessarily have to be a money market).

And that question is in turn related to the culture for which the work of art is intended. Different cultures have different needs and form different 'art markets'. And in the course of time, the reverse also appeared to be true: supply can create demand, which in turn opens up new markets. But in any case, art is linked to a social need.

- **Formal values:** what kind of knowledge, skill and ability is a work of art made with?

There is a distinction - and coherence - in substantive and technical knowledge.

Substantive content means: how do you set up an interpretation and technical: how do you carry it out?

The necessary knowledge can be passed on within a tradition, from father to son, from master to apprentice, or in a vocational training, but it can also develop interactively within an artistically stimulating environment in which artists bring each other ideas, inspire and set development in motion. A kind of biotope, which then becomes known as 'a centre of art and culture', or focal point or hotspot. The most successful is of course the combination of the two: knowledge transfer in an inspiring environment.

- **Distinctive values:** in which one work of art rises above another and through which special works of art are given an exemplary function, become trendsetters or the basis for an art theory. Some artists have a unique combination of talents with which they create such distinctive works of art on the assembly line, there are artists who work steadily upwards, others grow to a top and then descend, while others have occasional hits between many misses. And some can't do better. But not only individual artists can distinguish themselves, also societies can stand out above others, at least when art flourishes there. The question then is to what extent a society wants to invest in this.

Because we know that man hasn't really changed in the last 15,000 years - between Altamira and Picasso - it's worthwhile to see how things have gone in the meantime.

INTRINSIC VALUES

There are two different goals in art: the personal and the public.

Personal goals are aimed at enriching one's own world of experience, but also at embellishing one's own environment. We like to display both to the outside world.

Public goals have a lot to do with religion, the display of power and propaganda.

And regularly the public and personal functions mix: in religion both collective and individual motives play a role, in the construction and furnishing of mansions to palaces it's both about the personal ambiance and impressing visitors.

As far as public functions are concerned, art was originally primarily religious in nature.

Animists and shamans evoked magical powers with it; polytheists saw images as housing for gods; monotheists illustrated their religious histories.

In the course of history, more and more functions were added, because in addition to religion, the social structure and economy of a society also played a role.

And of these, history provides four main types (and later various hybrid forms).

HUNTERS-GATHERERS

In prehistoric times man made small statues and cave paintings.

We don't know why, unless we look at natural peoples who lived fairly recently in the Old Stone Age: like the Australian AboriginALS or the San in Southern Africa.

Magic functions



Venus van Hohle Fels



Australië, Wandjina



Afrika, San (Bushman)

The San in Southern Africa are quite realistic in their depictions of animals but also make narrative representations. About the latter we know:

Topics are people and especially animals. Animals are not only 'portraits' but also personifications. For example, the lion is associated with the sun: the 'Sun Lion'. And a Shaman identifies himself with the lion in initiation rituals and thus with the powers of the sun. The buffalo is synonymous with the moon. In the case of the moon its phases are significant: the monthly cycles of rise and fall, the fact of rebirth as a subject of worship. The springbok is the symbol of rain, the giraffe stands for lightning, the ostrich is the cloud animal, and so on..

Hunters/gatherers live in a tribal context and lead a roaming existence, in the tracks of herds of edible animals, usually within a somewhat loosely defined territory: the intrusion of

territory from the neighbouring tribe can lead to hostilities. This idea of belonging to a tribe is still alive, although we call it: nation, homeland, species, state or race. The social organisation within a tribe is quite egalitarian: chiefs and captains of the hunt.

Wealth is expressed by hunters in hunting booty and can vary from day to day, depending on whether it's good or bad.

Such peoples live in a magical world, in which dreams are just as important as reality during the day, in which plants, trees, but also rocks and rivers are animated. And in which ghosts intervene in daily life. Contact with that spirit world is made by special tribesmen, who hear voices that no one else hears, who have visions, whether induced by seizures or by mind-expanding drugs.

Some of these tribes have places of pilgrimage, decorated with all kinds of signs and images, which are visited every now and then to perform magical rituals. When in such a place the actual shape of an existing animal is depicted, the goal is not only magical but also practical: the easily recognisable springbok must eventually be eaten; the rain dance serves to generate rain. In other words, the recognizable representation has very concrete goals. And as it once began it has always remained, primitive or not, magical power is still a core value in art.

SHEPHERDS

Some 15,000 years ago, humans discovered ways to tame nature, and the cultivation of animals and crops gradually took the place of hunting and gathering.

Animal species were tamed and then cultivated by leaps and bounds of about 2,000 years.

It started with the dog (useful for hunting), at least 14,000 years ago. The goat followed about 12,000, sheep and pig about 10,000 years back, again 2000 years later it was the cattle's turn.

But especially the domestication of the horse about 4000 BC somewhere in today's Ukraine led to revolutionary developments. Horsemen from Central Asia periodically invaded agricultural areas in the Middle East, Europe, India and China, some - such as the Aryans - to settle there permanently.

Shepherd cultures remained close to those of hunter-gatherers. They, too, lived in tribal groups, wandered around within a territory and remained shamanic for a long time: some tribes went to places of pilgrimage from time to time, in others the shaman pointed out a rock or tree at the camp site as the shelter of a deity, and some tribes worshipped an invisible, but omnipresent god.

Shepherds not only developed their own culture, through their wandering existence they also contributed to the spread of culture - and of all kinds of inventions - all over Eurasia.

The nomadic culture is quite conservative. Patterns of fabrics from burial finds dating back thousands of years correspond almost seamlessly to contemporary patterns.

Many of these patterns are abstract and ornamental. Functions were decorative and representative: at the temporary residence the aim was to make the tents as pleasant as possible.

And they also liked to decorate themselves, with jewellery and tattoos.

For beauty stimulates the endorphin gland, where the hormone of happiness is produced.

A beautiful and pleasant environment therefore works as blissful and enriching, as the shepherds understood very well in their tents.



Early testimonies of cattle breeding cultures can be found in the heart of the Sahara: cave paintings in the Tassili Mountains, depicting herds of cattle and their shepherds, whether or not inside fences (5000-2500 BC). The size of such a herd determines the prosperity of a tribe.

Ornamental functions



Shepherds roam with their flocks from grazing place to grazing place. So their art was easy to move: carpets, felt work, goldsmiths, etc.

FARMERS

In that same era, at the end of the Ice Age, 12-10,000 B.C., the first crops were also grown, starting in the Middle East, in the fertile regions of Iraq, via Syria to Israel, not by chance because 32 of the world's 56 edible grasses and grains grow there in the wild.

Probably women were the first farmers, because in the hunter-gatherer culture they collected the vegetable food, while the men were hunting.

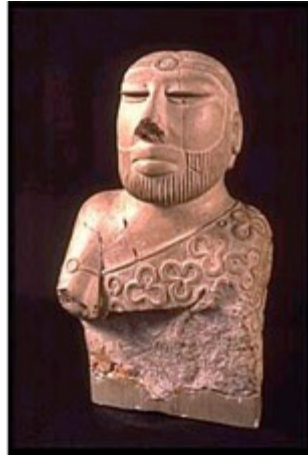
Whatever the case, the cultivation of crops made a declined surface important: farmers know the ownership of land, and their wealth equalled land ownership. You can increase land ownership by buying, robbing, war, strategic marriage and so on, until the land ownership becomes so extensive that you need workers - or slaves - to work the land. And then automatically a new social order of have's and have not's arises.

Farmers also have collective organisation of, for example, irrigation works, and of permanent settlement in villages and towns. In addition to being the centre of an agricultural area and political and religious centres, these towns and cities have over time increasingly served as centres for industry, industry, services and trade.

Connecting functions.



Mesopotamia



Indusculture



Egypt



China

The demand for art was first and foremost a religious one: temples were built and they asked for decorations, images and statues of gods. Religion, a common faith, leads to togetherness: it connects people to a group (and every other group with a different faith is an enemy).

Impressive functions



Luxor temple



Djoser's pyramid



Djoser

The commissioners were spiritual and secular authorities, with different intentions: spiritually making the spiritual perceptible (and therefore accessible to large population groups), secularly emphasizing authority and conducting propaganda.

As cooperations became more complex and land ownership increased, hierarchical power structures developed in agricultural cultures: city-states waged war on each other, forming kingdoms, which sometimes developed into gigantic empires.

And those in power had to demonstrate their important position as impressively as possible. With statues or through their graves.

After 5,000 years, the Egyptian pyramids are still the largest compact masses of stone that man has ever piled up.

CITY DWELLERS

Services, trade and industry flourish in cities.

Payment in kind and barter remained in use for a very long time. Until the sixth century B.C. in Lydia (Asia Minor) coins were invented: a tool with which, simpler than before, a cow could be exchanged for grain.

And much later, in the capitalist system everything revolves around credit, with fictitious or 'fiduciary' (trust-based) money.

Displaying functions



Pompeji, brothel scene



Antwerp, Van Reyerswael, tax collectors



Milaan, Solari, music

In the cities, the idea of status changed: in addition to the religious and authoritarian adornment of temples and palaces, a public status also arose in the cities: the beautification of the surroundings, private, in public spaces and even of the entire city became goals. The latter also as a form of communal bragging to competing cities.



Agora, Athene



Forum Romanum

Production of goods, trade and money economy led to a new culture, alongside that of agriculture and cattle breeding. Different social relationships and different needs for art arose in cities. A 'middle class' of merchants, industrialists and service providers formed there. And the subjects in which they were interested were generally fairly profane. For in this culture, the person-centred function of art is playing an increasingly important role. The personal satisfaction of the mind is gaining in importance.

FORMAL VALUES

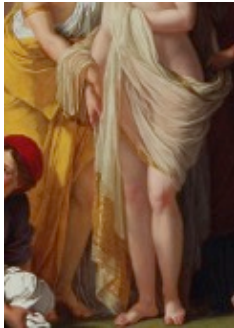
Intrinsic values, whether poetry, decoration or monumentality, political persuasion, religious messages or aesthetic pleasure, come into their own through interpretation. And mastery of the profession is a prerequisite for this.

Form and tonal values: For centuries all art academies have drawn from plaster casts of famous sculptures, because it is the ideal combination of studying form and tonal values at the same time. As a study of form, you draw from masterpieces. As a study of tone you learn to master all gray tones.



Drawings by plaster model

Colour: There are different forms of use of colour. The most common are: Tonal use of colour, in which colours follow the shades from light to dark; and also prismatic, complementary, autonomous, expressive and symbolic use of colour.



Tonal use of colour



Prismatic use of colour



Complementary use of colour

Composition Together, shape, tone and color are ordered on a given plane (e.g. a rectangle). In sculpture, a composition has to fit all around, from every angle of view.



Spatial composition



Central composition



Eccentric composition



Triangular composition

Mastery of materials and techniques is not enough.

The artist must be able to render forms with insight into tonal values and colour, brought together in a composition. Then there is the knowledge with which space on a flat surface is suggested: chiaroscuro, perspective, anatomy, ordinance, substance expression, etc.

And that too is not enough: to enchant the viewer requires more than technique, for that is a means, not an end. Enchantment is still the practice of magic. But every illusionist knows: without technique and tricks it won't work...

DISTINCTIVE VALUES

The Distinctive Artist

Mastery combined with a powerful personality distinguishes itself and makes itself recognizable next to all others at first sight.



Rembrandt van Rijn



Johannes Vermeer



Frans Hals

Right beneath the Great Masters we find the subtop.



Melchior d'Hondecoeter



Adriaen Coorte



Joachim Wtewael



Judith Leyster

And that doesn't alter the fact that the 'little' master is also very worthwhile



Margaretha de Heer



Wybrand de Geest



Hendrick Goltzius



Dirck van Baburen

A distinction is made between 'great' and 'small' masters, but that is far too coarse. In fact, it is a sliding scale that creeps up from the dilettante to the genius, with all possible articulations in between. Beneath the top is a sub-top, there is a large middle class and in the professional field there are also smaller to very small masters.

The personal taste and preference of the spectator also play a role in each assessment, because what one person likes, another does not care.

This immediately explains the rough distinction between 'big and small' masters: one usually agrees on a very large difference in level.

The collector



Francken, 1625, Cabinet of a collector



Teniers, 1640 Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his gallery

The Salon de Paris



Heim, the Salon of 1824



Dantan, the Salon of 1880

But not only artists, also, whole societies can distinguish themselves by favouring art. Benefactors can be governments and individuals in two categories: interested parties and enthusiasts. Both collect art, the first for reasons of prestige or propaganda (or investment and speculation), the second out of love.

But whatever the background, collectors were - and still are - drivers on the market and thus potential causes of blossoming.

Collectors also stood at the cradle of the first museums to emerge in the 18th century. Elias Ashmole donated his collection to Oxford University, which built the world's first museum for it: her Ashmolean Museum (1683).

More museums followed: the collection of the Elector of Saxony went to the Dresden Museum (1744), that of Sir Hans Sloane led to the British Museum, London (1759), that of the Popes came to the Vatican Museum in Rome (1784), that of Pieter Teylers van der Hulst to the Teylers Museum, Haarlem (1784) and the collection of the French kings ended up in the Louvre, Paris (1793).

An important contribution to the success of French art in the nineteenth century was the annual Salon de Paris. It started in 1673 as a final exhibition of the 'Academy Royale'. It started quite modestly, a century after the start, in 1761 only 33 painters, 9 sculptors and 11 graphic artists took part.

But in the nineteenth century it grew into the largest art event in the world.

In 1887, 5318 works of art by 3963 artists were exhibited, including 2521 paintings, 1046 sculptures, 1042 drawings, pastels and watercolours, 476 copper and steel engravings, 187 architectural designs and 46 medals and carved gemstones.

A Salon lasted several months and attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors.

THE MEANING OF ART

Art is a universal human need. There is no culture in the world, however isolated it may be, or stories are told, there is singing, there is dancing, there are images made. In short, the history of man's civilization is measured by his works of art - rather than by technical inventions.

What we call civilization is not that we can drive a car or bake a hamburger, but is based on spirituality, on an understanding of philosophy and on the appreciation of art. On our ability to rise above the animal in ourselves.

DUALITY



There is also a duality in the reach of spirits among themselves. For there are two main roads along which art reaches the public.

One road is direct: a direct contact of the artwork with the user. By the way, these are contacts that can vary from ephemeral amusement to philosophical revelation, from skimming over the surface to diving into the depths.

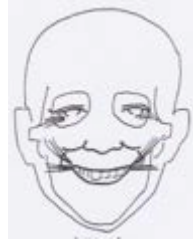
In these direct functions music can lead to ecstasy, literature can offer unexpected insights, visual art can bring visions to life. And often the recipient will identify with that art, from a momentum to a way of life.

The collective path is manipulative: impressing, seducing, admonishing, manipulating a broad audience, the masses, by stakeholders. These interests vary from religious docility, to obedience to social authority, to participation in commercial gain, to the acceptance of exploitation, to collective suicide on a battlefield.

In its manipulative functions, music - from psalm to folk song - can create connections and lyrics can steer masses in any direction, especially when they are helped by image.

Identification here can take the form of a general cultural pattern, either permanent (a tradition), temporary (a fashion) or disturbing (an ideology).

EXPRESSION



Expression is related to identity, in which both the personality of the artist and that of the recipient matter: the artist offers, the recipient feels.

But art can also provide identity, either by reinforcing an existing personality or by creating and sharing one.

Identity



Carreno de Miranda, Charles II



Bronzino, Lorenzo de Medici



Goya, Charles IV and his family

The function of head of state or banker can be interesting during life, but those who want to make it sustainable rely on art. By being portrayed by a great artist, or by making a name for himself as protector of the arts. Weighty people who fail to do so lose their meaning immediately after death.

What the facial muscles do for the individual, art does for society.

Art is the expression of a society. It makes the identity, the soul of a society visible and recognizable.

A cultural identity can be linked to a nation - and this is often what is strived for - but there is not necessarily a causal connection: national borders can enclose several cultural identities - or not, in China, for example, there are significant cultural differences between Hanchinese and Manchurians, Uighurs, Mongols, Tibetans and 50 other minorities; in Africa, on the other hand, national borders were once drawn, right through tribal cultures.

Europe offers a sample of cultural identities, with numerous subcultures: Catalans distinguish themselves from Andalusians and even in a small country like the Netherlands there are considerable differences between north and south, between east and west.

A cultural identity is therefore regional rather than national. The question is whether and to what extent this is a problem. As long as it does not lead to war, oppression or

exploitation, that diversity is only fun and fascinating. But wars - and colonialism - do arise out of interest considerations, but are legitimized by the fact that one cultural identity considers itself superior to another. Then culture can be life-threatening. Even within one and the same culture, cultural identity can take on disturbing forms, for example in cultivating stand differences or racism. Culture is not as non-committal as it is supposed to be.

Europe



Rogier van der Weijden



Jheronimus Bosch



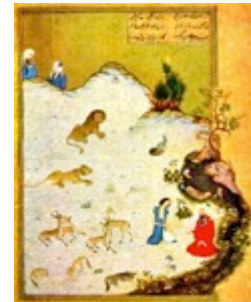
Jan Miense Molenaer

The art of Europe has always strived for recognizability of forms. in religious experience, in fantastic images or in the representation of everyday life.

Oriënt



Laila & Majnun



In the art of the Middle East, paintings were often illustrations of poems.

Like the love story of Laila and Majnun, or Laila and the madman. They were in love with each other, but Laila was promised to another man, so understandably Majnun went insane. He retreated into the desert and read his poems to the wild animals.

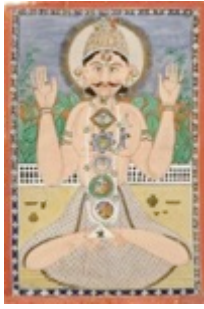
Globalisation has a levelling effect, but certainly before, for the influence of mass media, a regional cultural identity - and diversity - was very common.

One could recognise a society's culture at a glance by its art.

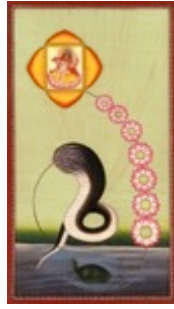
And art is still the entrance to a foreign culture.

Anyone who wants to fathom the mystery of a different way of thinking, an unknown way of dealing with feelings, peculiar manners, etc. can most accurately delve into literature, poetry, music, or at a glance into visual art.

India



yoga



Ganesha



Tantra

In India, art reflected a spirit of mysticism and philosophy. Mysticism has physical forms as in Tantra and Yoga. But it can also express itself in abstract forms.

China



LiangKai



Chan



Ming



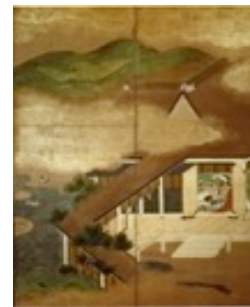
Gao Qupei

In China, art was the synthesis of poetry, image and calligraphy. Art expressed a mood, a deep emotion or even a complete character. Or was the representation of an abstract spirituality.

Japan



Eitoku 1590



Itcho 1720

Decorative aesthetics were important in Japan. Beauty served not only to give status but also to contemplation and meditation.

COMMUNICATION



Why is art made? The idea of 'inner necessity' or 'vocation' comes from Romanticism, a movement around 1800 that centred on sentiments, but before that time (and frankly also after that) artists had little interest in it. They worked for a reward. Art was always made because there was a demand for it, a 'market'.

Opdrachtenmarkt



Rigaud, Lodewijk XIV, 1701



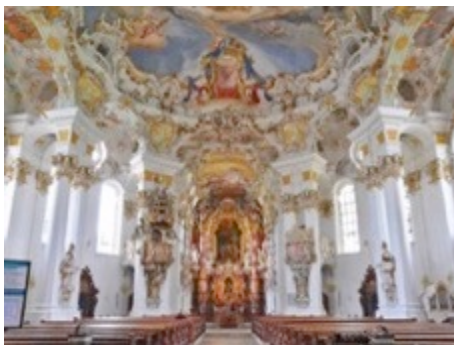
Velazquez, Philips IV, 1634



Gérard, Napoleon, 1804

In a hierarchical society, commissions had everything to do with the status of that client, which could be emphasized by pomp and splendour.

And a great deal of 'commissioned art' was illustrative, such as the depiction of religious stories.



Wieskirche, hoogbarok 1740



Fra Angelico, De hel 1431

And religious propaganda is also very common. For example: nowhere is the High Baroque so luxuriant and exuberant as in Central Europe. In Bavaria, Austria and Bohemia. Exactly the areas where the counter-reformation was fought: the Catholic churches offered the believers there a glimpse of the 'Kingdom of Heaven'.

Originally, artists were production companies. As is customary with companies, they accepted commissions and, as with commissions, they served the interests of the client: the shaman wanted a magical painting and a tribal companion who was good at it made them. The priest asked for convincing idols. The ruler paid for the talent that gave him status.

But that changed

In the fifteenth century the Netherlands had become rich, the South by transit trade with the Mediterranean ports, the North by herring fishing and the sea trade with the Baltic countries. The Low Countries were the bankers of Europe and the founders of capitalism, a system in which it was not the actual value of a gold or silver coin that played the main role, but credit, an idea that allowed the same coin to be issued several times.

The free market



Bosschaert, Flowers 1621 Van Honthorst, Flea hunt 1625 Van Ryck, kitchen maid 1628

Supply raises demand: someone started with flower still lifes, another with interior decorations, a third with Vanitas still lifes, etc. and many a customer pulled the purse.



Ter Brugghen, The duet, 1628 Duyster, drunkard, ca 1630 Molenaer, 5 senses (smell), 1637

Around 1500 artists started to offer for sale on the market of Antwerp works made for their own account and risk, such as travel altarpieces, pictures of saints, and so on. And what started small with some market stalls in the shadow of Our Lady's Cathedral, developed rapidly in the Netherlands.

The demand turned out to be great and varied, as did all forms of art on offer: still lifes, cityscapes, biblical stories, landscapes, ice scenes, drinking layers, interior paintings, comic anecdotes, group portraits, and so on, a variety of subjects, from high-pitched to vulgar, hitherto unprecedented.

THE MASSAMARKET

There are all kinds of routes to a public: the direct within a private collection; the communal gathering in a public space, a cave, a temple, a cathedral, a museum, or the mass dissemination through a medium.

Reproduction techniques: In relief printing, everything that must remain white is cut from a wooden plate, the remaining lines and surfaces are rolled in ink and printed on paper. Intaglio printing works the other way round: lines are cut with a pointed chisel, or bitten out with acid in a metal plate, ink left in the sunken lines is printed.



The **Diamond Sutra** China 868



Le Bois Protat, 1370



Schongauer, 1480

Book printing: Revolutionary was the invention of loose letter printing. Pi Chang was first who printed in China around 1040 with loose characters. In Europe, Johannes Gutenberg was the inventor from c. 1450 onwards. And the art of printing proved to go hand in hand with graphic techniques. Thus arose the first mass medium with word and image.



Incunabel 1491



Postincunabel, 1530

Reproduction techniques can be used to multiply an image in an edition. And the first medium for mass distribution was paper.

It is said that paper was invented in China by Cai Lun in 105, he should have copied the art of wasps, which after all produce a kind of cardboard for their nests.

In the battle of Talas (751) between Chinese and Arab armies some Chinese papermakers were captured and so the paper came into the Arab world. For a long time it remained an Arabic export article, the first European paper mill was built in 1282 in the Spanish kingdom of Aragon. After that, paper quickly became commonplace in Europe.

Photography: Another invention of importance was photography. The first permanent photograph was made by Joseph Niépce in 1826. The process developed, until the arrival of the roll film camera, by Kodak in 1888; it spread widely.



Niépce 1826



Renoir 1876

Film: The Lumiere brothers showed the first film "La Sortie de l'usine Lumiere à Lyon" on 22 March 1895 in Paris. 25 years later, film was a popular entertainment and cinemas were founded everywhere.



Murnau, Nosferatu, 1922



Wiene, Das Cabinet des dr. Caligari, 1920

Computer: Between 1975 and 1985, the 'personal computer' developed into a mass article in the 1990s. Soon the digital design and filmic computer animation developed.



Cyril Rolando



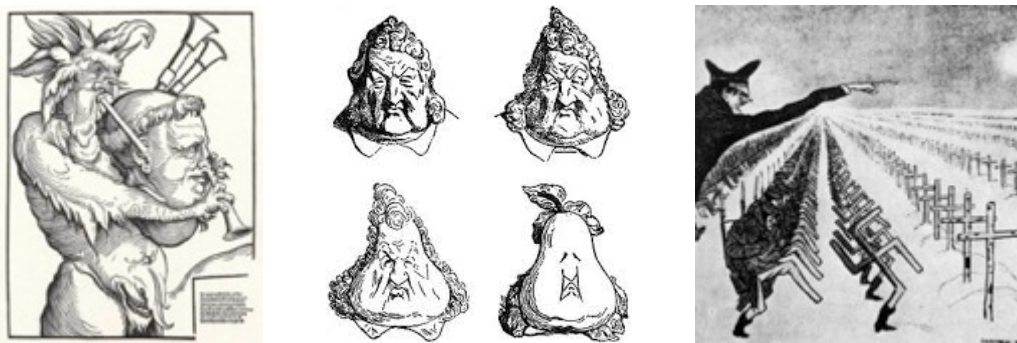
Iet Wouda

THE MANIPULATION OF THE MARKET

Mass media have great merits in disseminating news, culture, knowledge and science to broad sections of the population. But they can also be used to manipulate that same mass.



The power of persuasion of art can be used to incite people, for example, to war, or to glorify people, to indoctrination, to rebellion and resistance.



But it also serves to criticize, even mock those in power.



And the seductive power of art is also used to persuade people to do something. For example, to buy products or services that they may or may not need.

SKILLS



There is a wide variety of forms, from fleeting amusement to deep inner enrichment. Effort and receptiveness play a role, but so do circumstances: an organ concert by Bach is less appropriate for a carnival celebration, just like the polonaise for a commemoration of the dead. The level of a work of art is related to the depth of its intrinsic value and the complexity of its interpretation, and this has consequences for its range: there is more interest in superficial art forms than in the deeper ones.

Static tradition



Egypte, c. 2480 BC



Egypte, c. 640 BC



Thessaloniki, c. 700



Rusland, 1830

In Ancient Egyptian art the visual language remained more or less the same over thousands of years, something that also applies to Byzantine (later Russian) icon art. Here there were fixed rules or canons.

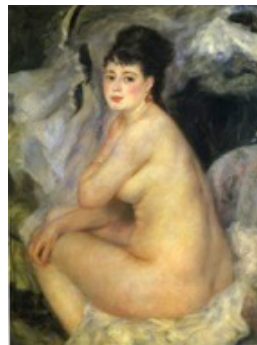
Dynamic tradition



Cranach 1531



Rembrandt 1629



Renoir, 1876



Freud, 1989

Classical and subsequent European art, on the other hand, change with the passage of time, with ever new insights, and forms: a dynamic tradition: Renewal is the rejection of rules.

The question is then what interest is served. The deeper it goes, the smaller - and more selective - the receiving audience will become. But one's own identity plays a greater role the deeper the appeal. Here a personal interest is considered: how rich does a person want to be in life? In the superficial form, larger groups are reached; the true stakeholders here are rather investors and advertisers. In other words, how rich does one person want to make someone else?

Quality in art develops within a tradition in which knowledge and skills are passed on from generation to generation. And also interactive: within a special social context, a so-called 'flowering culture' in which artists inspire and motivate each other.

Incidentally, there are various forms of tradition: the static variant is based on precepts, fixed rules and canons that are considered inviolable. The dynamic one, on the other hand, is developing: rules are at most rules of thumb here, they are never fixed. New elements are added to existing knowledge; the past is the stepping stone to new forms and possibilities. The composer Gustav Mahler put it this way:

"Tradition is to pass on the fire, not to worship the ashes."

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Giotto was born in the countryside in the village of Vespignano. His father Bondone was a poor smallholder; he himself was a shepherd at a young age. Already at the age of ten he made chalk drawings on rocks while shepherding. One day the painter passed Cimabue and saw him drawing a sheep, so natural and perfect that he asked Giotto's father if the boy could become his pupil.

Initially, knowledge was transferred at the Master's workshop, which passed on his knowledge, up to and including professional secrets, to pupils. This fitted in with the guild structure, in which there were gradations from master, companion, pupil to carpenter's prentice. Pupils rubbed the paint in a daily quantity (paint was expensive). With proven talent, they could continue as Companion, they enlarged design sketches, worked on the underpainting, or on certain parts they were good at - or carved out the rough form with sculptors.

The very best were allowed to take a Master's Test and settle down independently.

A guild was a union, cartel and brotherhood of competitors in one. They were organised locally for each city and engaged in protectionism: competition from other cities was scarcely or not tolerated.

In the sixteenth century a new form of knowledge transfer emerged. The first art academy, the Accademia dell'Arte del Disegno was founded in 1562 by Giorgio Vasari in Florence. Rome followed in 1593 with the Accademia di San Luca and Paris in 1648 with the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. The first academy in the Netherlands was the Haagsche Teeken-Academie in 1682.

Academic education searches for independently teachable principles. Vasari therefore shared art in style (*maniera*), idea (*invenzione*) and design (*disegno*). His academy taught design (*disegno*) alongside 'hard' subjects such as anatomy and geometry.

Later academies followed this approach, but during the foundation of the Academy Royale in Paris there was a fierce dispute in France about 'good' and 'bad' art. The Classicists or 'Poussinists' advocated careful elaboration within the contours à la Poussin, bolder Baroque painters, the 'Rubenists' swore to a free construction with colourful stains like Rubens did.



Poussin: Venus & Mercurius 1638



Rubens: Venus & Adonis 1616

Essentially, this dispute was not about technique at all, but about expression: the Classicist working method à la Poussin is suitable for depicting the sublime: from angels and saints to mythological scenes. And also to praise kings.

The lyrical way of working gives a much more earthly expression: an angel of Rubens is fleshy and voluptuous, and a high-ranking one remains human and comes very close. Louis XIV steered the discussion in his direction by filling the 'Academy Royale de Peinture et Sculpture' with Poussinist artists.

13 years later, in 1661, under the authority of Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who propagated a 'royal style', the Academy glorified the king and his institutions.

With Charles Lebrun as its director, Classicism definitively became French state art. During the French Revolution, in 1786, the guild system was abolished, and from then on the transfer of knowledge took place almost exclusively at academies. From 1816 onwards, the programme of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (the successor to the Royale Academy) in Paris became the standard for all art academies in Europe.

But revolution or not, Classicism (now Neoclassicism) remained the starting point, not only because the Napoleonic Empire drew back on the Roman Empire, but also because this direction was most limited to definable forms and rules.

The nineteenth century academic training was very strict. Students were only admitted on the recommendation of a professor. The course lasted for years and consisted only of drawing. Initially to Old Masters: by copying them one could find out how they had done it. Those who passed this part were allowed to continue drawing according to a plaster model and finally according to a living model. Painting only became part of the training after 1863, before that time you had to learn it in the studio of an 'Academicus' (a member of the Academy Française, the highest achievable).

THE FLOURISH OF ART

An interesting question: how is it that art (and science) in any period of time in any country flourishes, writes history, and then withers again?

This happened in the fifth - third century BC in Greece, in the fourteenth - sixteenth century in Italy, in the fifteenth - seventeenth century in the Netherlands and in the eighteenth - nineteenth century in France.

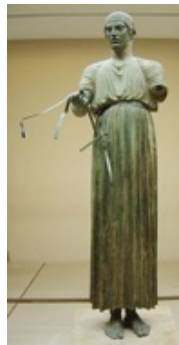
To begin with, these 'flourishing cultures' were urban, 'bourgeois' cultures. Money economies with a large, prosperous middle class, willing to invest in art. And so it turns out that bourgeoisie and the flourish of art are connected. Bankers, merchants and industrialists were the instigators of a 'dynamic' tradition and of developments, rather than sovereigns and prelates who more often have 'static' and conservative preferences.

Not surprisingly, innovation rarely serves the interests of nobility or prelate, but merchants and industrialists soon see advantages in it.

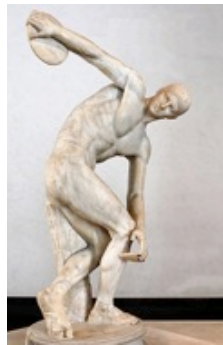
CLASSIC FLOURISH



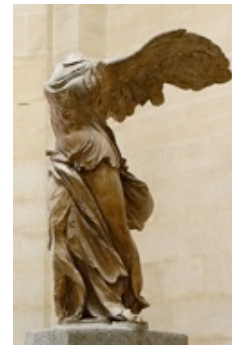
Kouroi, ca 600 vC



Charioteer, ca 500 vC

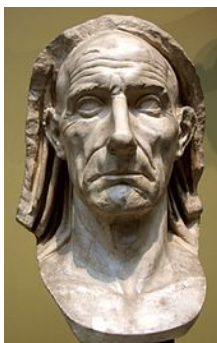


Discobolus, ca 400 vC

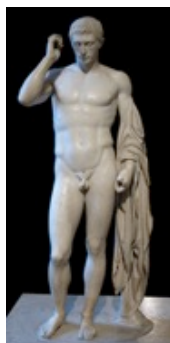


Nike, ca 300 vC

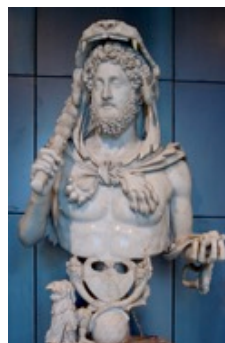
Greece Over the course of several centuries, Greek art developed with increasing perfection, both in form and liveliness.



Rome ca 100 BC



Marcellus as Hermes ca 0



Commodus ca 180



4 Tetrarchs ca 300

Romans were more pragmatic, they developed from Verism - the striking resemblance - via idealised to Baroque forms, until they took other paths in the 4th century.

The European tradition started 2500 years ago in Greece. Philosophy, art and science took a whole new direction. Analytical thinking conquered philosophy, thesis and antithesis steered science and -also analytically- perception became the foundation of art. This classical civilization is the foundation of our current Western culture.

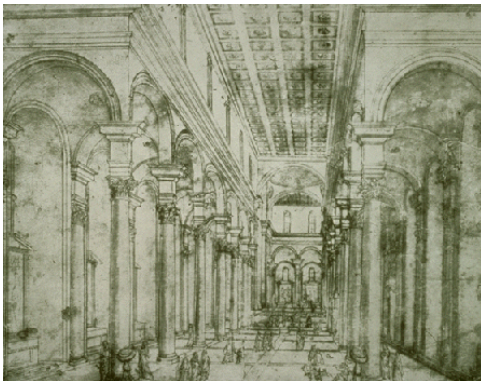
The classical era of Greeks and Romans lasted for about a thousand years, only to make way for the religious concepts of Byzantines and other 'Middle Ages' for the next thousand years, after which in the fourteenth century in Italy and in the fifteenth in the Low Countries a revival began, the Renaissance, which heralded new periods of flourishing in that region.

ITALIAN FLOURISH



Masolino, 1425

Perspective theory: The story wants the main line of linear perspective (all parallel lines converge on a point on the horizon) to be discovered by Brunelleschi when he drew a city view on a mirror.



Brunelleschi, ca 1420



Uccello, 1430



Mantegna, 1470

Giorgio Vasari, 1511-1574, painter and architect, not only founded the first academy, but is also the founder of art history. This by a book from 1550: *Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri* (The lives of the greatest painters, sculptors and architects of Cimabue to our time).

In short, the 'Vite' with biographies of 133 artists over a period of 300 years.

He introduces the terms 'Middle Ages' and Renaissance (Rebirth).

Half a century later he was imitated in the Netherlands: Karel van Mander wrote 'Het Schilder-Boeck' 1604), which was repeated a century later by Arnold Houbraken: De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen (1718-1721).

In Germany appeared by Joachim von Sandrart, 'Teutsche Akademie der Edlen Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey Künste', (1675) and in England by William Aglionby 'Painting Illustrated' (1685). As a result, art history had become international.

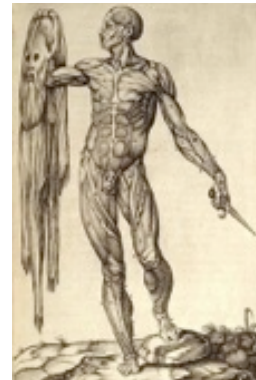
Anatomy The first anatomical research was done by artists. Before that they stole corpses from the gallows field to cut them open at home.



Da Vinci, 1482



Michelangelo, 1504



Vesalius, 1543

The first known anatomical atlas was drawn by Leonardo da Vinci, for which he had performed more than 30 autopsies until his death in 1519. The first physician to compile an anatomical atlas was the Belgian physician Vesalius, half a century later (1543).

In the Italian Renaissance, supported by excavations of antique sculptures, the perception in art was perfected, among other things by the suggestion of plastic volumes through light and shadow and the shades within them (tonal values). Through the development of perspective (atmospheric and geometric). By increasing anatomical knowledge. By the increasingly sophisticated applications of colour, and so on.

DUTCH FLOURISH

In the fifteenth century, a Renaissance also began north of the Alps, with the Southern Netherlands as its focal point. In the ports of Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp the galleys from Venice and Genoa moored, loaded with southern products, including the supply from the Silk Road (from China) and the Spice Road (from India). From Flanders these goods were spread over the rest of Europe.

In the sixteenth century the Dutch rebelled against the authority of the Habsburg king of Spain, the north won and trade and wealth moved northwards. When the United East India Company was founded in 1602 the wealth increased even more.

In the seventeenth century, the Dutch Golden Age, around 3000 artists worked on a population of 1 ½ to 2 million. They produced an unprecedented amount of visual art of an

unprecedented high quality. Foreign travellers wrote with amazement how paintings hung on every miller, baker, cobbler and tailor - and the high prices paid for them. It was also an export item. The Dutch, for example, painted portraits of all the European royal courts. And many European artists were apprenticed to the Netherlands.

But in the eighteenth century that was suddenly over. Was the virus of inspiration out of the blue? Or was it because in the capitalist system money flows increasingly to fewer and fewer people and the market of the middle class dried up?

Northern Renaissance



Jan van Eyck, the Lamb of God, 1432

The Flemish painter Jan van Eyck was the first to use oil paint for a highly developed painting technique at the beginning of the 15th century.



Gerard Dou



Gerard Houckgeest



Rachel Ruysch



Adriaen van Ostade

Dutch painters in the Golden Age also developed scientific ideas about painting. About the numerical reduction of incident light in a room, for example, or how to create a suggestion of air around objects. Or how a blue paper placed in front of a sky in the same blue is closer by the relative roughness of the material, it was called "Kenlijkheit" and it served the suggestion of 3 dimensions on a flat surface. They developed the 'more point perspective', with several vanishing points (when, for example, a building is viewed from the corner instead of straight from the front as in the central perspective). In short, art theory was close to natural science - which at the time was also very popular in the Netherlands.

ART POUR L'ART

After 1750 all kinds of revolutions took place in a short period of time.

The 'industrial revolution' had far-reaching economic and social consequences. An uprising by the French bourgeoisie against the rule of king and nobility turned political Europe upside down. And philosophers placed the ratio to religion as the leading way of thinking.

An invention that changed the world was the steam engine and with it mechanical production. By way of example, with the rise of textile factories, countless home weavers were left without income.

They rediscovered themselves as factory workers, i.e. from respected members of a guild to members of an underclass. Progress is not always improvement.

It affected most of the artisans, except for the artists, who in turn had to deal with theorists.

Until now, theories behind works of art were mainly formulated by and for artists, but from the eighteenth century onwards, philosophers also dived into it.

For centuries it was assumed that art served to convey a meaning or a message. This could be symbolic language, the depiction of religious or mythological stories, propaganda or the remembrance of something historical, anyway, something that lay outside the work of art itself. Art was a messenger, an interpreter of an idea or a story.

Immanuel Kant introduced another notion: that a work of art could exist for its own sake. For its own intrinsic qualities instead of the narrative or imaginary. For the power of the image itself and not of any concept or subject, the 'art pour l'art'.

This idea was particularly popular with supporters of romanticism and realism.

But it was also criticised: George Sand called 'art pour l'art' an empty concept and Friedrich Nietzsche believed that art should serve general values. Georg Hegel thought mimesis, or 'imitation of reality', might be technically attractive, but artistic at a low level, he rejected all realism...

And according to social philosophers like Karl Marx, realism served a social purpose in art: to expose the problematic reality of workers, fishermen, peasants, and the like.

FRENCH FLOURISH

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, art developed rather linearly: there were two main directions, a stricter and a freer, but styles followed one another, from early Renaissance to High Renaissance, from Baroque to High Baroque. But in the nineteenth century this changes and we see an increasing proliferation of stylistic directions side by side, each with its own views and a different approach.

In the course of the eighteenth century the focus of art and culture shifted from Italy and the Netherlands to France. And in the nineteenth century Paris is the cultural centre of the world. Through exemplary functions and active art politics, a flourishing artistic biotope was formed here, attracting artists from all over the world.

Neoclassicism Because Neoclassicism had become the dominant style and the leading direction in European art education, resistance came naturally from artists who saw other possibilities. Already in the early 19th century other movements emerged. This began with Romanticism and Realism.



David, 1784



Ingres, 1814

Romanticism glorifies feelings as an attitude to life and interprets themes such as passion and heroism, but also desolation and the coming of death. It depicts the power of nature, the zest for life and vitality of youth, the joy of love, but it also has a black side full of tragedy, misfortune and damnation.



Eugene Delacroix, 1830



Theodore Gericault, 1819

Romanticism sets sentiment against reason, free brushstroke against bound form, dramatic expression against the exalted. At least in the southern, the French variant. The northern, or German, movement sought it in the 'sublime' in which man was submitted to the higher power of nature.



William Mallord Turner, 1812



Caspar David Friedrich, 1817

Realism focused on the everyday life of everyday people. No nonsense, painting what you see. Nothing exalted or sentimental fuss. Reality as it presents itself is enough subject. A

variant of realism was the landscape: the invention of paint in tubes by John Goffe Rand in 1841 suddenly made it possible to paint with oil paint outside the studio, in the open air.

Realism



Gustave Courbet, 1854



Honoré Daumier, 1864

Until now landscapes were mainly a backdrop for wandering travellers, hunters, nymphs or bathing goddesses, with the rise of plein-air painting the beauty of nature became a subject in itself.



Henri Rousseau, 1854



Constant Troyon, 1850

THE 'BELLE EPOQUE'

The period between the Franco-German war of 1870 -'71 and the beginning of the First World War in 1914 is called the 'belle époque'. Within one generation a large number of developments take place side by side and interchangeably, which together form the basis of contemporary art.

The revolution from religion to philosophy led to an interest in other forms of spirituality. In 1875 Helena Blavatsky started the 'Theosophical Society' in New York, and in 1888 her most important work appeared: 'The Secret Doctrine'. A worldwide esoteric movement emerged alongside the established religions, which also made its mark on the arts. And the tumultuous development of technology and science led to a great deal of optimism, a view of unlimited possibilities and rich perspectives. The idea of progress became an ideology in itself. Because education at all European art academies was based on Neoclassicism, in the second half of the nineteenth century that style was named after the study programme: 'Academism'. But in that Academism, much more than before, a synthesis was sought between line and

colour, between Classicism and Romanticism. Thomas Couture stated in a book that 'colour is a way of determining the value of a form'.

The 'lofty message' was also stretched: the allegory behind the landscape disappeared from view, the virtues of the Roman republic were increasingly replaced by orgies, in Orientalism people surrendered to erotic fantasies around Harems. Academism became more and more frivolous...

Academism and synthesis



Albert Bierstadt: 1870



Lourens Alma Tadema: 1888

'Academic' paintings were still based on clear contours, but are much more colourful than at the beginning of the century.



Edouard Debat-Ponsan 1883



Henri Cervex, 1878

In the mid-nineteenth century Karl Marx published the 'Communist Manifesto,' slavery was abolished and attention was drawn to the poor position of the working class, which had been created by the Industrial Revolution. Attention that was fuelled not only by philosophers but also by artists such as novelists, painters and sculptors.

Naturalism followed the Realism of Courbet et al.

As a style it was somewhere between Academism and Impressionism. In a socially engaged variant it was the champion of the underclass, exposed poverty and hardship, was socially engaged and supported the emancipatory to revolutionary movements in society.

Naturalism and engagement



Fernand Pelez 1885



Jules Adler 1899



Edouard Kaiser 1893

Impressionism and free perception

The established order thought that Impressionism was only a superficial and ragged manner of painting ('no more than an impression,' according to a reviewer who thus provided the name).



Bethe Morisot 1885



Renoir, 1884



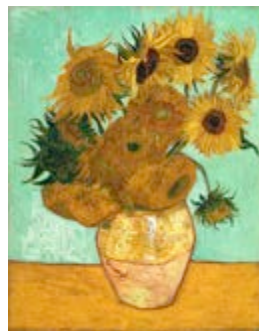
Krøyers, 1886

Towards the end of the 19th century, more and more experiments in form came into play. Painters like Van Gogh and Cezanne came up with idiosyncratic interpretations of their observations, with no deeper meaning than that a vase of sunflowers or a bowl of apples with colourful brushstrokes could be transformed into a very special image.

Post-impressionism



Cezanne, 1895



Van Gogh 1888



Seurat 1884

At least as influential was the rise of Impressionism. In terms of content, this direction was an extension of realism: painting what you see.

The scandal it caused had two reasons. The style of painting was based on the free use of brushstrokes and handwriting, and on the free use of colours: shadows were no longer portrayed as dark tones, but as cool colours (blues and violets).

But just as scandalous was the fact that it was all about nothing. People on a terrace, or sailing in a boat, bathing young girls without a mythological reference, landscapes in which it was all about colour.

As is often the case in art, emotions were running high, impressionists were refused for the official Salon.

The breakthrough came in 1897, when an alternative Salon was held in the Palais de Luxembourg with painters such as Cezanne, Degas, Monet and Manet.

Jean-Leon Gerome, professor at the Academy of Beaux Arts, warned against this: he foresaw the downfall of art, yes, of the entire French nation, but to no avail.

Impressionism became leading in the first half of the twentieth century and swept Academism off the stage.

Symbolism and the free concept



Arnold Böcklin 1872



James Ensor 1891



Odilon Redon 1893

It was mainly artists with a Symbolist background who, with increasing abstractions, took the first steps towards compositions without recognizable forms (in the walk 'Abstract Art'). The Czech Symbolist Frantisek Kupka was the first to make purely abstract paintings.



Edvard Munch 1894



Leon Spilliaert 1910



Frantisek Kupka 1912

But the concept as a source for art was certainly not left out of the picture. Hitherto ideas had been derived from the Bible, mythology or history, but now there came a movement that took the free imagination as its starting point: Symbolism. Some artists lived out their fantasies in Academic forms, others sought it in experiments in form that went much further than those of their Post-Impressionist colleagues, after all, based not on observation but on imagination. And that is a world in which literally anything is possible.

As an extension of both freedom of perception and freedom of concept, a freedom of expression also emerged. This through the deformation of forms and through an autonomous use of colour.

Expressionism and the free feeling



Henri Matisse, 1905



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1910



Wassily Kandinsky, 1913

The French Fauvists and German Expressionists developed a system of colour of their own, more in line with the idiosyncratic use of colour by the symbolists, just as their distorted formal language was in line with the symbol language of some symbolists.

Pointillism and colour mixing



Georges Seurat 1888



Paul Signac 1900

When you mix blue with yellow you get green. This also occurs when you paint blue over yellow in transparent layers on top of each other (glaze). And a third possibility is to put blue and yellow dots close to and through each other (optical mixing).

The latter is tried out by the 'pointillists' and has later become the standard in colour printing and printing technique, in which all possible colours are made with three 'primary' colours: magenta, cyan and yellow, together with black, with small dots next to each other.

At the end of the nineteenth century, three-quarters of the earth was in European hands. From a European point of view this was quite normal: Europe spread civilisation among the wild pagans, with or without the help of genocide.

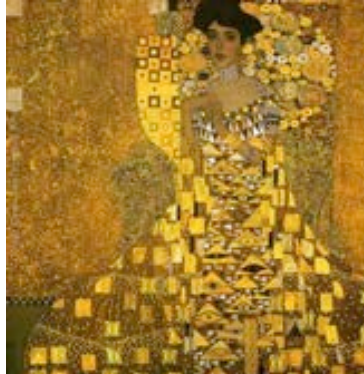
The foreign cultures also made an impression and cultural interactions, or crossovers, arose. Such a crossover with Japanese art led to Art Nouveau at the end of the nineteenth century (in German 'Jugendstil') And according to one story, Matisse showed the young Picasso an

African sculpture: the faceted design in African art, in which, among other things, front and side views are depicted simultaneously, inspired Picasso to Cubism. And that inspired others.

Crossovers, exotic sources of inspiration



Jan Toorop, 1892



Gustav Klimt, 1907



Pablo Picasso 1908

Suprematists and Esoterics



Kasimir Malevich 1915



Tantra, India, 17th Century

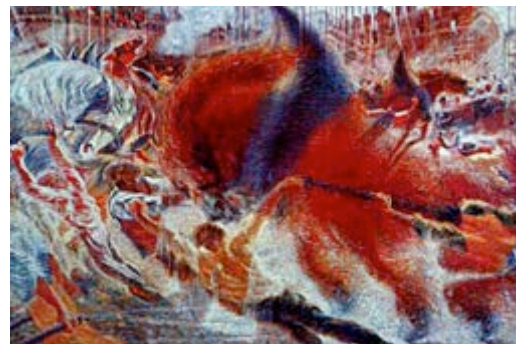


Piet Mondriaan 1914

Futurists and Progress Thinking



Carlo Carra 1910



Giacomo Balla, 1911.

The esoteric ideas of Theosophists, Anthroposophists, etc. also found their way into art. The image served to capture an essentially abstract idea.

The Russian Suprematists with Malevich as their most important representative were followers of Theosophy, Malevich's abstractions can be seen as milestones in the search for the absolute and the one true. By the way, he was neither the first nor the only one to find a form for 'the absolute'.

And Piet Mondrian was a confessing member of the European division: the Anthroposophy

A movement in art that gave a face to the idea of progress was Futurism. It originated in Italy in 1909 and glorified the dynamism and movement of machines and fast vehicles. And also of war as a means of destruction and liberation from old structures. Shortly afterwards, in the First World War, many Futurist artists were shot at the front: the actual future gave less cause for optimism.

PART II

THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT

PROLOGUE

Alfred Barr was the first director of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York from 1929-'43. In 1936 he organized an exhibition called "Cubism and Abstract Art" with about 400 works of art illustrating his ideas about modern art.

In 1936 Barr also wrote his history of modern art in which he described modernism as a linear development from realism to abstraction.

Pressa

Alfred Barr compared two posters that advertised the Pressa, a trade fair for printed matter and designers in 1928 in Germany. One poster showed a traditional illustration of Cologne Cathedral, the other an abstraction of the tower of the exhibition building.



Barr argued that the realistic image was banal and the abstract progressive. According to him, the realistic imagery was meant for the American public in 1928, and the abstract for the then German "progressive" public.

At the end of his comparison he stated that now the roles had been reversed, that Nazi Germany preferred the realistic image in 1936, and that the progressive American public actually appreciated abstraction.

It set the tone for the post-war theories: including denial of divergence, that movements coexist on an equal footing. The propagation of linear developments, which never existed, and the canonization of views and opinions, even the beatification of some artists seen as precursors.

THE WORLD WARS

The First World War was a poorly orchestrated massacre. Young men died with hundreds of thousands at a time on the battlefields and afterwards no one understands why.



John Singer Sargent, "Gassed" 1919

Governments sent artists to the front to record it all:



Stanley Spencer, 1919



Edward Wadsworth, 1919



Paul Nash, 1918

The horror of war was so far beyond comprehension that artists reacted to it with absurdism.

Dada



Hugo Ball, 1916



Hans Arp, 1917



Francis Picabia, 1917



Marcel Duchamp, 1917

In Zurich, in neutral Switzerland, the Dada movement began in 1916 in the cabaret Voltaire: a mixture of theatre, cabaret, literature and visual arts. It was a direct attack on Western civilisation and its sham values, including art itself:

"The Dadaist considers it necessary to speak out against art, because he looks through the swindle of art as a moral safety valve".

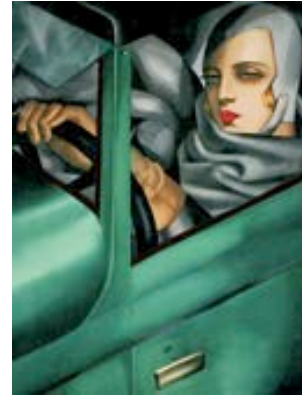
THE INTERBELLUM 1918-1939



Utrillo 1922



Van Rysselberghe 1925



Lempicka 1925

Impressionism in particular had become popular. Some still worked in the 'Academic' style and others were influenced by a new decorative style, the 'Art Deco'.

L'armée tas



Georg Grosz en Heartfield, 1919



Kurt Schwitters, 1920

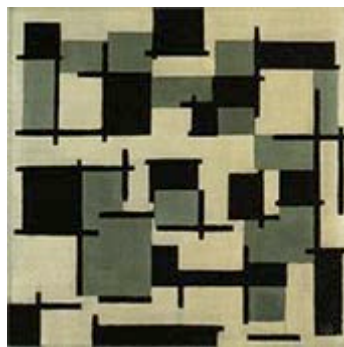


Hannah Hoch, 1920

The most experimental forms of art in the late Belle Epoque are retrospectively, with a military term, called 'Avant Garde'. And military follows after the vanguard the 'Armée tas' or army bunch.



Henri le Fauconnier 1915



Theo van Doesburg 1918



Jan Wiegiers 1925

After the 'Great War', most artists worked in line with the prevailing pre-war styles. But also the experimental forms that had begun in France, Italy, Germany and Russia spread throughout the world, such as Dada, Expressionism and Constructivism. In the Netherlands, for example, this went as follows: the French 'Fauvist' Henri le Fauconnier was surprised by the war during a stay in the Netherlands in 1914. To avoid conscription he stayed in the Netherlands. He became a founder of the 'Bergense School'. In 1917 Theo van Doesburg started in Leiden, 'De Stijl' a movement focused on primary colours and elementary forms, with a.o. Bart van der Leek and Piet Mondriaan as most important representatives. In 1921 the Groningen painter Jan Wiegiers met the German expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in a sanatorium in Davos. And so German Expressionism came to the Netherlands through the Groningen artists' collective 'De Ploeg'.

Het onderbewuste



Giorgio de Chirico, 1914



Max Ernst, 1921



Salvator Dali, 1931

Scientists such as Freud and Jung had laid the foundations for psychology: a form of inner research that also fascinated artists. Especially the idea of a subconscious appealed to them. Freud looked for it near the brain stem, but Jung saw it as something spiritual and that, together with the interpretation of dreams, appealed very much to the imagination.

Symbolism also received a new impulse.

The forerunner in the world of dream and alienation was the Italian Pittura Metafisica, quickly followed by Surrealism.

DAS BAUHAUS

Germany was severely battered from the First World War. For 15 years, the Weimar Republic ruled with great problems (hyperinflation, mass unemployment).

But at first art in Germany returned remarkably resilient from the war with literature (including Mann, Remarque), theatre and music (including Brecht, Weill), film (including Lang, Murnau, Von Sternberg) and visual art.

After the Paris 'Academy of Beaux Arts' another course became internationally leading, especially in the field of architecture and design: 'das Bauhaus', in Weimar.

As an extension of the Bauhaus, the 'New Objectivity' became a direction with great commitment.

A variant of the 'New Objectivity' was 'Magical Realism', a movement that also gained support in the Netherlands.

Een variant op de 'Nieuwe Zakelijkheid' was het 'Magisch Realisme' een stroming die ook in Nederland aanhang kreeg.

The New Objectivity



Georg Grosz, 1920



Kathe Kolwitz, 1922



Otto Dix, 1922

Magic realism



Alexander Kanoldt 1922



Raoul Hynckes 1925



Dick Ket 1935

EUROPEAN DICTATORSHIPS



Fascist and communist dictatorships around 1938

Karl Marx had previously advocated a class struggle: the uprising of the labour masses against the ruling class and at the same time for a different social system in which wealth would be distributed more fairly.

By the end of the First World War, the time had come: a revolution broke out in Russia and Tsarendom was replaced by 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.

RUSSIA

Initially, the communist regime in Russia was sympathetic to Modernism in art.

Constructivism: formed around 1915 was even the official art of the revolution from 1917 to 1921. After all, Modernism stood for Progress.

Communist art



Vladimir Tatlin: design for the State Meeting Tower, 1919 El Lissitzky: the red wedge beats the whites, 1920

Socialist realism



Aleksandr Deineka, 1934



Alexander Gerasimov, 1929



Yury Pimenov, 1937

At the beginning of the 1920s, the Politburo changed its mind.

It felt that this modernist art was too far removed from the people and introduced 'Socialist Realism' as the official art of the state.

As a style, this was the continuation of 'Naturalism' with the emphasis on the socially engaged approach. Although here that engagement coincided with propaganda.

ITALY

Economically, fascism aimed for a corporative state, but then strictly hierarchically structured: there was one corporation that had everything to say: the one at the top. At its core was collectivism: the voice of the individual did not count, only that of the collective, or the state. And that through the leader, the Duce, Mussolini. He came to power in 1922 and established a dictatorship with strong nationalistic traits.

Fascist art



Vinicio Paladini, 1932



Renato Bertelli, 1933



Alessandro Bruschetti, 1935

For the Italian fascists too, art was a propaganda tool for their ideas.

But unlike Hitler, Mussolini did not have much interest in visual art. Stylistically, the artist even enjoyed relatively great freedom in fascist Italy.

GERMANY

In 1933, the National Socialists came to power under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. National Socialism derived many ideas from Fascism, but distinguished itself by a racial theory, which meant that the Germanic race was superior to all others and that some races (Jews, Gypsies) were so reprehensible that they had to be exterminated. Because of German aggression the Second World War began in 1939.

After the seizure of power by the National Socialists all vitality was at an end: Adolf Hitler called modernism and all that seemed to be 'degenerated art'.

What played a part was that Hitler himself had artistic ambitions. He had once been turned down for an art academy and had made a living for a while by watercolouring cityscapes.

The smaller the master, the more fanatically he clung to the chosen stylistic direction and tolerance was not a feature of Nazi ideology anyway.

In 1937, the exhibition 'Entartete Kunst' travelled throughout Germany: it was intended as a terrifying example. In any case, it was the busiest exhibition of its time. And Hitler, like Stalin, declared 'Naturalism' to be state art.

National Socialists and Communists were sworn enemies, but artistically they shared the same preferences for athletically-built workers, cheerful blond peasant girls, and war rhetoric.

National-socialist art



Hubert Lanzinger, 1934



Leopold Schmutzler, 1940



Arno Breker, 1939

Degenerate art



Paul Klee



Emil Nolde

Hitler's paintings show a serious but limited talent - the other leading amateur painter at the time, Winston Churchill, was a lot more adventurous and therefore more interesting.



Adolf Hitler, Wiener Oper, 1912



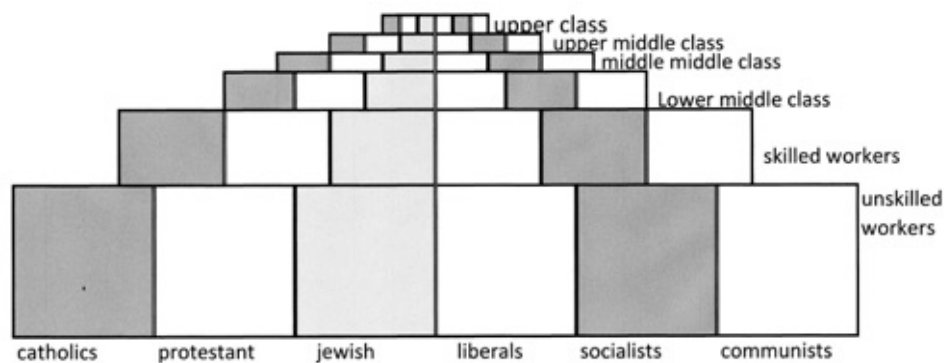
Winston Churchill, View on Jerusalem, 1921

THE COLD WAR

Like any war, the Second World War was a humanitarian and cultural catastrophe. And also artistic without any enjoyment.

The contrast with the liberation was great, the pre-war dictatorships had -although in Western Europe- been demolished, the horror of the Holocaust made it clear what a perfidious regime it had been. And Europe was largely in ruins and had to be rebuilt. Although in 1945 the German armies were de facto defeated by the Russian, in Western Europe America was welcomed as the great liberator. Soon it became clear, not only militarily, but also culturally. The standless society, the material prosperity and informal manners of the Americans became the symbol of true freedom, propagated by jazz music and Hollywood films.

Classes and Pillars



Until the Second World War, European culture was organised in a tight framework.

Horizontally there were classes, built like a stair pyramid: the base was a large group of unskilled workers, above that a smaller group of low-skilled workers. The middle class was divided into the small, the ordinary and the upper middle class, and the (very small) upper class had almost everything in control, democracy or no democracy.

Vertically, society was divided into 'pillars': some were religious: Jews, Catholics, various Protestant churches, others ideological: liberals, social democrats, communists. Each pillar was very principled and determined to fight all the others.

One was born somewhere within that framework in a demarcated compartment, determined by class and conviction, and remained imprisoned in it for a lifetime.

Immediately after the Second World War, the 'Cold War' began.

It was an armed peace between two political-economic systems. On the one hand the 'Free West' - Western Europe and North America - with multi-party systems and a capitalist market economy; on the other hand the 'Communist East' with a one-party system and a party-led economy.

The Cold War consisted of two components: an arms race with the atomic bomb as the most terrifying threat, and a propaganda war. In the end, this war was limited to the latter - and humanity got away with it.

MODERNISM

After the war it was perfectly clear to the European artist. What Hitler thought was right was wrong and vice versa. Hitler's 'Degenerate Art' was the only right one, the 'True Art'. And all Hitler ever praised was 'Wrong', so reprehensible art.

It was overlooked that an inverted Nazi ideology is still a Nazi ideology. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' art at all.

But in the heat of renewal - and with a sunny outlook on the future - no attention was paid to such details. On the contrary, tradition became an obscure concept; the past had to be forgotten and buried. The bourgeoisie with its conventions and etiquette was an oppression, freedom was the magic word.

The artistic break with tradition was directed against 'Academism' (every form of perceptual art was now included) and Academic art education in particular.

The strictness of the nineteenth-century education had long since been weakened: in the first half of the twentieth century the majority of artists painted neither 'Academic' nor 'Modern,' but Impressionist and were also taught in them, but old nuclei such as plaster model drawing, education in perspective theory, anatomy and model drawing were still standing. Between 1955 and '65 all this was discarded and exchanged for Modernist values such as feeling and experimentation. This went rather rigorously in the ideological fire of those years: centuries-old plaster casts disappeared, along with a great deal of craftsmanship, into the waste container.

Education in Modernism focused on expression through matter: with fierce brushstrokes and thick layers of paint. The aim was to express spontaneous feelings, beyond all the complexity of traditional art; to replace technical issues with personal insights. No discipline but freedom, no lessons but feelings.

Art students loved it.

INFORMAL ART

Informal art' is called retrospectively, a collective term for various directions that were in vogue at the time: colorfield painting, drippings, action painting, tachism, abstract expressionism, Cobra, material art, etc.

Non-perceptive (popularly known as 'abstract') art was held in high esteem, but strongly deformed representations were also just barely acceptable.

Freedom of art was paramount and everything was allowed, except everything that was NOT allowed: aesthetics, poetry, realism, in short, about the whole of European artistic history.

Technique, tradition, Academism, they were curse words alike. Like bourgeoisie, the artist had to live as a Bohemian, preferably in Paris. It was a lifestyle that appealed to many, while the required technical background seemed feasible.

The ultimate expression was sought through fierce handwriting and a simplified representation (Picasso had recommended the open-mindedness of the child as the artistic norm).

Everything now revolved around 'feeling,' this in a limited sense, by the way, because not all feelings were allowed - certainly not the softer ones. And matter was no longer seen as a tool, but as a goal: the skin of the painting as the essence of painting, everything else was additions and was superfluous.

Informal art



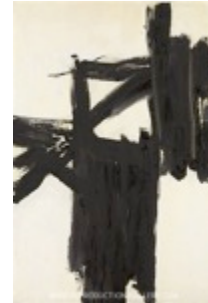
Rothko 1949



Newman 1948



Fontana, 1959



Kline 1959

It is this material aspect that will receive a great deal of attention in post-war art.

Partly in an autonomous variant: the paint for the paint, the colour for the colour. Sometimes executed with knife cuts or with autonomous brushstrokes.

Ultimo primitivism



Jorn, 1946



Gottlieb, 1947



Constant 1949



Appel, 1948

Any form of intellectualism was suspicious, the artist was supposed to limit himself to the functioning of the brainstem, a primitive, undescribed soul, filled with pure emotion, without any notion of history.

The raw matter



Burri, 1953



Pollock, 1946



Wagemaker, 1960

Material art was made with all possible materials (paint, plaster, straw, clay shards, objects) and was seen as a transition to sculpture - particularly relief art.

On the one hand this art caused a lot of scandal among the general public (which was seen as an advantage), on the other hand it also attracted many small to non-talents, who in their upward striving were helped more by a big mouth than by artistic ability. Both movements eventually led to inflation of social respect and appreciation for visual art. And thus to a decline of the market.

THE 4 PHASES OF COLD WAR ART

FIRST PHASE: 1945-'55

The first decade after the war was marked by major social reforms, at least in Western Europe. In some countries communist parties had grown, in others social democratic parties, and new social structures were emerging: old age pensions, benefits for the unemployed, and help for the socially weaker. But also general health care, wider access to higher education for the lower classes, and so on.

Musea



Guggenheim museum New York, 1959



Guggenheim museum Bilbao, 1997

In addition to exhibitions in museums, there are major events: such as the Venice Biennale, every two years since 1895, and the Documenta in Kassel, every four years since 1955. Museums and events took over the role of the nineteenth century 'Salon de Paris', but on a global scale.



Heinz Mack, Documenta 1964



Roy Liechtenstein, Biennale Venetie, 1966

And the attention mechanism for art concentrated on the museums of modern art. These had already emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. One of the oldest is the 'Stedelijk Museum' in Amsterdam, which started collecting 'modern art' as early as 1909, including Braque, Chagall, Kandinsky and Picasso. The 'Museum of Modern Art /

MoMa' in New York opened in 1929 with an exhibition of Van Gogh, Dali, Gauguin, Cezanne and Seurat; Paris followed with the 'Palais de Tokyo' in 1937. Museums of Modern Art grew rapidly in number and influence after 1945. The emphasis shifted from collecting to alternating exhibitions, thus supplanting the art trade as a leading authority.

Propaganda



Rockwell *The connoisseur* 1962



Komar & Melamid *The origins of socialist realism* 1982

The 'Cold Propaganda War' returned to the distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' or 'degenerate' art of the Nazis.

Socialist Realism



Karpov



Samochmalov



Koulikov

The communist Eastern bloc adhered to the European style tradition. Thus Modernism became a symbol of the freedom and innovativeness of the "Free West". The "Socialist Realism" of the Soviets - and everything that resembled it - was the art of the enemy.

Modernism



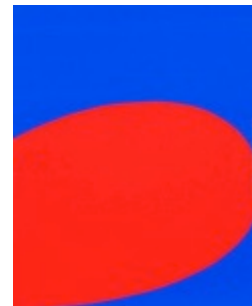
Pollock



Newman



Rothko



Kelly

Shortly after the war, there was also strong political guidance: a former CIA intelligence officer, Donald Jameson, explained it as follows:

"It was recognised that Abstract Expressionism was the kind of art that made Socialist Realism look even more stylised and more rigid and confined than it was. And that relationship was exploited."

The CIA initiated (and financed) exhibitions such as 'Masterpieces of the twentieth century' (1952), 'Modern art in the United States' (1955) and -in all major European cities- 'The new American painting' (1958-59).

Piquantly, the CIA had to operate against its own public opinion; American president Harry Truman put it as follows: *"If that's art, then I'm a Hottentot."*

SECOND PHASE: 1955-'65

For centuries, printed books, prints, magazines and newspapers determined the dissemination of text and image, of knowledge and the development of insight and taste. But new forms were on their way. The rise of modern media began before the war with the radio, which spread music and text (e.g. in the form of radio plays) to a wide audience. And after the introduction of the 45 rpm vinyl record in 1950, the record player took off.

Rock & jazz



Rock 'n Roll



Beatniks

The Rock 'n Roll came from America, just like Blues, Bebop and Cool Jazz. The music marked ages and social groups: the working class youth danced to Rock 'n Roll, boys wore leather jackets, girls pettycoats. The bourgeois youth listened to Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Thelonious Monk and dressed in denim suits. Their 'bible' was a book by Jack Kerouac, "On the Road" a glorification of the rough and unadjusted life of the 'Beatnik'.

A breakthrough was the invention of the transistor around 1956: the portable radio distributed and consumed popular music worldwide, such as Jazz and Rock 'n Roll. From about 1960 television became commonplace: in addition to music, film, theatre and dance now also appeared, evening after evening, in almost every living room. America was at the forefront, but Europe was still in the lead, with much influence coming from France, for example: chansons by Edith Piaf, Gilbert Becaud, Jacques Brel, existentialist literature by Sartre and Camus, Nouvelle Vague films by Godard, Chabrol,

Truffaut, Malle and so on. And the painters of the 'Ecole de Paris' still competed with the 'New York School'.

Film



Bergman, The seventh seal 1956



Fellini, La dolce vita, 1960

There were many leading filmmakers in Europe: Fellini, Visconti, De Sica, Pasolini, Bergman, Bunuel, and many more. They distinguished themselves from Hollywood films by both special cinematic and dramatic qualities (it didn't always finish with a happy ending).

Anti art



Piero Manzoni, Artist's shit 1961



Yves Klein, Bodymerge, 1958

Much was also happening in the visual arts: in addition to the temperamental material of the first generation of Modernists (in line with Expressionism), forms of anti-art as a statement and in performance (in line with Dada) revived.

POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a movement in philosophy that is diametrically opposed to the propositions of Modernism:

According to the Modernists, knowledge is the basis of science. According to the Postmodernists, there is no unambiguous path to reality: man is irrational, his thinking is just as irrational.

According to the Modernists, knowledge leads to universal principles and truths. According to the Postmodernists, every knowledge is a thought construction: a universal truth does not exist.

According to the Modernists, set goals can be realized. Progress results from a rational process. According to the Postmodernists, progress is a relative concept, moreover subject to complications in reality.

In the visual arts too, Postmodernism is a reaction to radical post-war modernism. It questions the 'truth,' 'purity' and 'authenticity' of the 'Modernists' and opposes this with eclecticism and irony.

Postmodern art



Jeff Koons 1984



Andy Warhol 1964



Keith Haring 1985

Through Postmodernism, expressions that were considered inferior in Modernism, e.g. kitsch and graffiti, acquire museum status.

Popart



Oldenburg 1962



Warhol, 1962



Liechtenstein 1964



Wesselmann 1964

In art this was translated into Popart, an abbreviation of 'popular mass culture', introduced in 1949 by a British critic, Lawrence Alloway. The movement opposed expressionism and abstraction and attracted worldwide attention in the 1960s.

In the mid-1960s, the 'global focus of art' shifted from Paris to New York. It confirmed the cultural hegemony of the United States of America over ancient Europe.

This dominance extends from the film industry to the music industry, from television series to the visual arts. The vast majority of pop music between 1965 and '75 came from the USA, as did the daily supply of series and films on television.

Europe's cultural identity was almost equated with that of the United States.

And the visual artist who wants to belong no longer moves to the French capital, but to 'The Big Apple'.

THIRD PHASE: 1965-'80

There are a few movements going on in society at the same time in this era: a materialistic and an idealistic one.

Revolt



Greasers dancing in the street (Amsterdam)



Dam sleepers (Amsterdam)

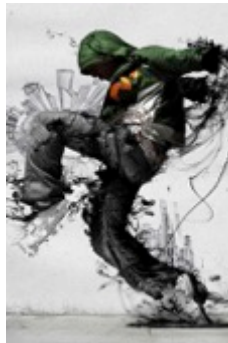
This revolt can be seen in youth culture, because youth played a major role, so great, in fact, that there was spoken of a generation gap between young and old.



Hippie



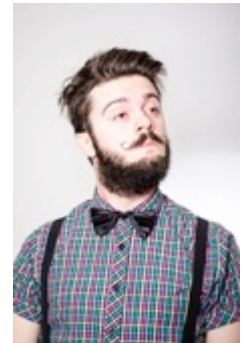
Punk



Hiphop



Gothic



Hipster

In the 1950s and 1960s this youth culture still had strict social divisions, but from the 1970s onwards youth culture became split into 'identity groups' with music as the distinguishing factor. Hippie, Punk, Hiphop, Gothic, Hipster were created right through social divisions.

As a result of increasing prosperity, a wasteful society is developing floating on disposables, bio-industry, fast food, mass communication and mass tourism: the consumer society.

At the same time a revolt against the old bourgeois structures begins, driven by an idealistic pursuit of world peace, equality and personal freedom.

Both movements are supported by the modern mass media, which create focal points that are widely shared and imitated. This revolt was partly politically inspired (for example, the Vietnam demonstrations, against the American-Vietnamese war), but mainly culturally.

It was about participation in education, companies and other organisations, rejected the class structure and turned against the ideological and religious 'pillars' in society.

Idealisme



It was not only the class difference, but also the bourgeois culture with its conventions that was targeted: the limitations of outer formality were exchanged for a striving for demarcation and the breaking of taboos. This led, among other things, to a colourful visual culture, more relaxed manners, a freer sexual morality and a coarser use of language.

Minimal art



Judd 1973

By the way, around 1970 there lived in the museum world a very own version of 'the Zeitgeist'. In their view, this was represented by 'minimal art'. This was art that resorted to geometric forms, in line with 'Cubism', 'Constructivism', 'De Stijl', etc. And at the same time on the aesthetics of simplification, of emptiness.

It was not only prosperity that broadened; even more important was the fact that higher education was becoming increasingly accessible to the 'lower classes' - who were thus moving up in ever greater numbers, socially and culturally.

In the period between 1965 and 1975, the old class society was dismantled.

FREE EXPRESSION

Dilettantes have always been there. The early academies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could not survive without their contributions. Some dilettantes even reached a professional level.

In the fifties special institutions for amateur art were created, first on a small scale, from the seventies on it took off. Here, examples from official art are imitated: direct representation of emotions through primitive manual and material use: the 'Free Expression' By far the majority do this exclusively for pleasure. A small part is ambitious and rubs up against professional art - which, in the case of free expression, is also feasible for them.

The free expression



De Werkschuit, Amsterdam 1950



SKVR, Rotterdam 2019

Another cultural development of importance in those years is the rise and growth of amateur art practice.



Free expression is borrowed from abstract expressionism: the display of uninhibited feeling, freely translated: the experience of personal pleasure in messing around with paint.

Both the museum world and art education saw that this 'Free Expression' made the boundaries between amateur and professional art very thin.

In addition, the possibilities of matter as an art form were exhausted: even more abstract than a white canvas was not possible.

Or it did not have to be a canvas, and so we entered the realm of conceptual art.

Conceptual art



Kienholz, installation, 1972



Christo, installation, 1972

without a storyline), installations (unusual interiors and reconstructed situations), land art (interventions in the landscape), video art (films, also without a storyline, deliberately unprofessionally filmed) and loose objects or images that illustrate an idea.



Smithson, landart, 1970



Nam June Paik, tv-buddha, 1974

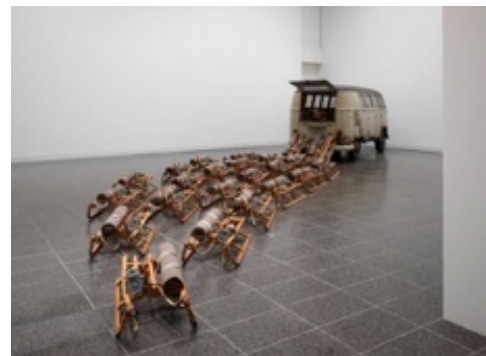
Conceptual art is all about the idea, not about design, material or technique. The word is more important than the image. Conceptual works of art are therefore accompanied by extensive texts. Or vice versa.



Marta Minujin, performance, 1965



Abramovic, performance 1980



Josef Beuys, installation, 1969

FOURTH PHASE: 1980-'90

The revolt was followed by the restoration. In the 1980s, materialism triumphed over idealism. The 'consumer society' became the norm, because society became accustomed to - and spoiled by - all prosperity. Neoliberalism gained ground and slowly but surely the achievements of the welfare state that had been fought in the 1950s were fought over.

In art, too, in the 1980s, dynamics gave way to stagnation and decline.

The idea of experimentation and renewal faded, conceptual art became a dictate and lost itself in repetition.

This lack of dynamism is clearly visible: the early installations by Kienholz and Christo, Smithson's interventions, etc. were impressive and convincing, the repetitions of the followers are much less so. Originality cannot be copied.

Underground realism



Wyeth 1948



Willink 1952



Freud 1973

And of course traditional figurative art was also made during the Cold War.

In Western Europe, certainly in the Netherlands, this was, at least officially, little appreciated - despite that (or precisely because) there was a large audience for it.

It was only after 1990, after the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War, that museum attention to tradition and realism reluctantly resumed.

This was also because there was that large audience - and the subsidizing government was keen to see this again.

THE REVERSAL OF ALL VALUES

With the rise of museums of modern art, the market mechanism was reversed. The fact is: for the art dealer, market demand plays the main role; the dealer can influence it a little as an advisor, but remains dependent on demand, and therefore also on fashion.

But for the curator employed by a museum, a work of art is part of an exhibition, not a commodity. That exhibition is about the statement, the underlying idea or art theory (although it is just as much based on fashion).

In other words, theoretical and ideological thinking took the place of the laws of supply and demand in both the commissions and the free market. The ideology became a guiding - even monopolistic - force that created (limited) demand.

Fictive art



Trading in a fiction or an idea is not new. Already in the seventeenth century a similar market arose in the Netherlands around the trade in tulip bulbs, and in the eighteenth century the 'wind trade' flourished with worthless shares. That even has a name: Emotion Economics.



Hendrick Pot, Tulpomania, 1640



John Law, Stichter van de 'Mississippi-compagnie

But a reverse market is just as much a market, with similar mechanisms.

Museums of modern art serve as hallmarks - a status they actually derive from their predecessors, the museums with collections of old masters. An artist who is included in the circuit of museums of modern art increases in value considerably.

This led to a new market: in addition to the commissions market, the lover's market and the investor's market (in old art), a speculative market arose in museum product.

Investors discovered that art is one of the few trading objects in which profits of hundreds, even thousands of percent are possible. Artworks that are purchased for a few thousand can yield ten to one hundred times as much with good marketing. Museums, especially in America, are highly dependent on private financiers. Ideology and speculation have come together in an iron front of closed circuits, conflicts of interest and nepotism (both with private and community funds).

REVERSAL OF ART POLICY

In political terms, the left stands for warm-hearted, empathic, tolerant, socially engaged, supportive of the weak, selfless - but also emotional, naive, with a penchant for security and regulation. The right stands for coolly calculating, intolerant, focused on personal gain, the law of the strongest and selfish - but also for practical, worldly, with daring and successful entrepreneurship.

In this division of left and right, the functioning of the cerebral hemispheres is reversed. They are in fact derived from the ranking of seats in the first parliament after the French Revolution and not - as more often in politics - on the functioning of the brain.

Throughout this runs the terminology of progressive thinking, in which 'conservative' means standstill (a static tradition) and 'progressive' progress (the dynamic tradition). To complete the confusion: the notion of tradition is taboo in all camps, in economics left-wing communism is called conservative, right-wing capitalism progressive, but in politics it is just the other way around.

The political goal should be to promote the flourish of art in society.

ThIS flourish of art goes far beyond economic gain and prosperity; it is about cultural deepening, about nature and character, about the nuclei, and also about the prestige of a society. Something that concerns both 'left' and 'right', because just as in the brain, it is after all about the interaction of opposites that can inspire and stimulate each other. Governments do have some idea of this, there are even ministers with 'Culture' in their portfolios, but there is no question of any effective policy.

Because of the myth that one should have a special understanding of art, all policy is handed over in advance and left to those who are supposed to have that understanding. One can of course hand over tax policy to taxpayers, or leave the infrastructure to contractors, but the results are then predictable. This is also the case in art.

Stakeholders then form conglomerates, who do everything in their power to perpetuate and defend the position they have acquired. If these conglomerates are able to sustain themselves by means of a co-optation system, their position is even inviolable.

And because a lot of money is involved at a certain level, this is begging for corruption.

THE REVERSAL OF INTRINSIC VALUES

In the Belle Epoque, some artists explored the boundaries of art in form, colour and composition. They discovered that every good painting is also a good abstract painting, or vice versa. They found new ways of expression through exaggeration, distortion or simplification of forms. They invented new, non-prismatic colour schemes to intensify expression. They experimented with skin of paint, brushstrokes, or weathering. And skimming along the borders, they ended up at many extremes from Constructivism to Expressionism.

During the Cold War all of this is repeated in a more extreme, but in principle not different, way of working. For reasons that never became entirely clear, the absence of a representation was considered of great importance. The aim remained to explore (the same) boundaries.

It led to all kinds of theories, in artists' manifestos, in reviews and articles.

But after the 1960s, with the rise of conceptual art, a reversal took place: works of art no longer gave rise to a theory, but the theory had become the work of art, still accompanied by some visual material, but above all by many pages of explanatory prose.

Genealogie



Monet 1870



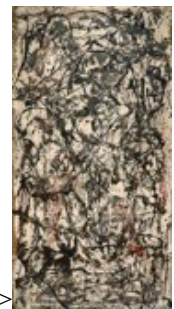
Lautrec 1889



Picasso 1910



Mondriaan, 1929



Pollock 1947

Influential theorists of Modernism were the Americans Alfred Barr ('Chart of Modern Art', 1936) and Clement Greenberg ('Avant Garde and Kitsch', 1939).

They preached a line of development with an almost biblical genealogy: Monet won Lautrec won Picasso won Mondriaan won Pollock, roughly in that style. Each step would be an improvement on the previous one. According to this logic, Jackson Pollock would be a considerably more highly developed artist than Claude Monet.

But artists are not at all engaged in any art-historical causality. One is inventing this, the other is busy with something completely different, a third can be brought to ideas by both, while a fourth is throwing it far away.

But the theorists won: an intellectual discourse arose in which - in the name of freedom - art was once again divided into 'good' and 'bad' art.

This discourse, incidentally, used little or no arguments, but made use of propositions.

As a rule, these were mockery, imputations and insults.

Everything that did not fit into the domain of modernism was dismissed as 'kitsch'.

Kitsch



Peder Balke



Louis Douzette

For example, natural phenomena such as moonlight or sunsets were declared kitsch.



Joseph Farquharson



Herman Herzog

As well as herding cattle, or beautiful nature scenes in general.



Hans Zatzka



Alexandre Cabanel

And from the human emotions, everything between sweet and sentimental was rejected as kitsch.

THE REVERSAL OF FORMAL VALUES

For centuries, art was known as a difficult profession to conquer, reserved for a few very talented people who, moreover, had to follow a tough education.

The academic training of yesteryear focused on technical skills: the more perfect the better. Within this, little or no attention was paid to personal identity.

And in the art of the early twentieth century it was precisely this identity that came to the fore, and technique was seen as a somewhat elastic foundation.

So far no problem, as long as one serves the other.

But after the Second World War, the goal of art education was reversed; from that time on, skill was seen as a superfluous, even suspicious concept.

After the switch from the 'outer' to the 'inner', the subject matter revolved exclusively around identity. Art academies became dream factories. The curriculum focused on a personal lifestyle, not on a function, not on a social demand or market, and certainly not on any social perspective.

It only trained for the 'Museum Market', which is very limited. Of the many tens of thousands of art students who are being prepared for it, only a few hundred are being shown. The rest are dependent on the traditional market, in fact as autodidacts.

This is defended with the (romantic) thesis that art is something that is outside or beside the economic system. A sympathetic idea, but the art academies failed to teach how to survive outside the economic system.

For that matter, art education is well aware of these weaknesses and has been searching for decades for an alternative social meaning and function. As a rule, they find them in the assumption that conceptual art creates a better world (from better interpersonal relations to world peace).

Not only the goal, but also the didactic model has been turned upside down. Previously, the initiative lay with the teacher, who offered the student his knowledge, but that shifted to the student. From now on, the tutor would show self-made attempts to the tutor, who then provided them with substantive commentary - which was often difficult to distinguish from a private opinion.

With the entrance of conceptual art, the lifestyle of the artists also changed.

The growling, sniffing primeval man of the 1950s made way for a very eloquent generation, which was able to put any idea into words with verve.

Art education adapted to this, although nothing changed in the methodology.

Only the discussions lasted longer.

Consequence of the break with tradition was that incompetence and ineptitude became laudable artistic goals.

The question then, of course, is whether in a rapidly changing society with the expansion of the middle class and the rise of the mass media, ineptitude is an advantage or a disadvantage, or a logical consequence. In music, for example, we see that although pop

music is much less complex in construction than classical music, it knows how to reach millions of people and can also enchant them.

The latter is not the case in contemporary visual art, on the contrary, the masses have turned away from it, there is even a great loss of respect to indifference. Modern museum art functions for a relatively small, conditioned audience.

The charm of the clumsiness

Paintings by Rousseau le Douanier were much appreciated by then 'modern' artists. Although they were somewhat clumsy (while Rousseau imagined himself to be a true Academic artist).



Rousseau le Douanier, 1897



Grandma Moses, 1944

They show a bizarre world, which is cast in a very adequate form precisely because of the ineptitude. But they also have a magic that stems from an academic technique: layered painting. Where that magic is lacking, an clumsy painting is never more than an clumsy painting.

Ineptitude also has charm, but in the post-war (post)modernism, driven by the aversion to bourgeois Academism - and by laziness - it has become the norm.

The fallacy that was made boiled down to the fact that professional knowledge was no longer necessary, because it would only stand in the way of spontaneous emotion.

For this reason, (post)modern art education focuses directly on the artistic end goal, the expression and the magic of the image, but with a neglect of all the necessary skill and ability to ever achieve that goal.

We are now a few generations further on, teachers in art education don't know any better for a long time, because they themselves have been brought up this way.

THE REVERSAL OF DISTINCTIVE VALUES

In the hunt for attention and success, many artists have turned cause and effect upside down. A work of art can stand out above others because of special qualities, usually because the artist in question was better than the rest. But such a distinctive value is no longer seen as the result of skill and talent, but as the only goal that counts.

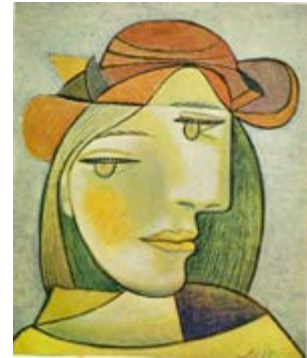
Own style



Rembrandt 1654



Van Gogh 1889



Picasso 1938

There are artists who are recognized by a fairly broad public at first sight with name and surname: Rembrandt, or Van Gogh, or Picasso. From Modernism onwards, such a striking 'own style' became a must for the artist, and because it was forced, often turned towards the convulsive.

Attention value



Da Vinci 1492



Michelangelo 1510

Work by great artists has a great 'attention value', one says in the world of advertising. Sometimes so much so that their work becomes regular icons in the same advertisements. But when they focus on that attention value instead of on the intrinsic, the art value, all that remains is a gimmick that briefly attracts attention and is quickly forgotten. As by advertisements.

It is overlooked that a distinctive style is the result of a special mastery, and that 'little masters' who make up the majority of artists everywhere and at all times, work more conformistly in a 'general' style.

There is nothing wrong with that, as long as it achieves a high visual quality.

Succes de scandale



Le déjeuner sur l'herbe, Manet 1863



L'origine du monde, Courbet, 1866

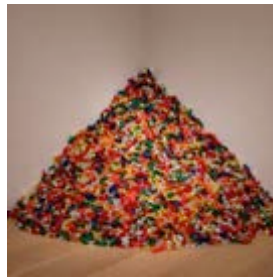


Duchamp 1966

Manet's 'Dejeuner sur l'herbe' aroused scandal. The Realist Courbet grossed in scandals; the first exhibitions of the Impressionists aroused scandal; Marcel Duchamp aroused scandal. Scandals are of course an attention value in themselves. Already pioneering and taboo-breaking, many artists were looking for the scandal.

Until populist TV programmes took over from them.

The importance of incomprehension



The purpose of art is communication, transmission, thus recognisability: the power of Pharaoh, the might of the deity, the splendour of the wealthy, is depicted crystal clear and can be grasped at a glance. Moreover, one only pays for works of art that are understood and appreciated.

But appreciation for art is also based on expectations - certainly in a free market.

Art that does not live up to those expectations can - at least initially - come up against incomprehension. This happened to the Impressionists, Van Gogh, all experimental art forms in the Belle Epoque. After an incubation period, this understanding came about naturally and the reproduction of Van Gogh's Sunflowers hung in many workers' homes. After the war, a number of artists - and curators - took the view that ununderstood art is by definition good art, so it should be incomprehensible to the general public and at most accessible to a small educated elite: in other words, one had to have an 'understanding' of art. From this point of view, biennials have been showing variations on the same thing for decades, and museums of modern art have become very boring. For instead of focusing on the advantages of the Salon de Paris of yesteryear: stimulating a flourishing art climate, they cling to the drawbacks: the propagation of conditioned forms.

THE DIGITAL AGE

Thanks to the latest breakthrough, the computer, followed by the internet, cultural consumption has become a 24-7 affair. Film and music industry are switching to streaming services. Publishers are switching to e-books, or books 'on command'. And above all: every citizen suddenly has a chance of world fame with a 2-minute film. But in addition to democratisation, there is also increasing volatility and cultural flattening, texts on the internet cover no more than one paragraph, and films do not last more than one minute. In culinary terms: art as fast food: fastart (to be abbreviated to 'fart').

The main objective is not the content, but the range (number of likes or followers). The cultural identity of society is flattening and banalizing at a rapid pace.

There is then only one solution: the quality of the offer has to go up, in other words the artist has to go down in depth. But this can only succeed in a favourable social context: where societies and their governments are aware of the importance of their 'own' cultural identity and want to distinguish themselves in it, rather than swimming in the global soup.

THE RESURRECTION

After the fall of the 'Berlin Wall' in 1989, the image of the enemy attached to perceptual art faded and classical tradition was revived.

For development in art is cyclical: rise, flourish, decline, for a while nothing and then resurrection. In 1986 the Musée d'Orsay in Paris was condemned after its opening because it also showed 'Academic' art, but already 5 years later museums elsewhere in the world followed suit. Paintings by Lourens Alma Tadema, which had been thrown out of the dustbin as kitsch in the 1950s, were worth tons.

Artists - and some curators - entered into a dialogue. In 2012 the 'California Lutheran University' organised an international conference in the USA: 'The Representational Art Conference' (TRAC). Participants came from all over the world. It was repeated a number of times. in California, in Florida, and in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. There were dozens of guest speakers and hundreds of academic papers were discussed. That initiative continued with online conferences.

Other artists' initiatives include exchanges and international exhibitions, because people are curious about each other's work...

But most of the initiatives can be found in education: private 'artisan' art schools are springing up all over the world like mushrooms.

In Eastern Europe and parts of Asia, this traditional training has never been absent. There, the route has been reversed and classical forms are being used to seek connections with contemporary concepts.

In this global resurgence of the demand for skills, knowledge and skills in the visual arts, there is a growing need for exchange in all regions of the world.

In Europe (the Netherlands) the 'Classical Art Center' is committed to this as an artists' initiative, in the USA the 'Art Renewal Center'.

TRADITIONS

Tradition is embedded in every society, in the upbringing of children, in religious experience and social agreements, in thinking, morality, ethics, and so on. Cultural identity is an inevitable conditioning.

Traditions



Henk Helmantel, NL



Wen Ji, China

Some contemporary art follows its 'own' tradition without imitating the past.



Eugene Titov, Russia



Batarzorig Batjargal, Mongolia



Ray Morimura, Japan



Emma Masenga, Congo

And in all corners of the world it makes the cultural identity of a region visible



Bobur Ismoilov, Uzbekistan



Marc Kouame Kourassi, Cote d'Ivoire

THE INTRINSIC RESURRECTION

Artists harking back to all movements from the nineteenth century and sometimes even earlier. Neoclassicism and Academism are hot again... As well as Romanticism and Naturalism. Nineteenth century painters such as Gerome, Bouguereau and Cabanel are contemporary icons - certainly in the USA.

Classicism is again en vogue.



Michael Triegel D Eja Siepman van den Berg, NL

Roberto Ferri, Italy

Margot Homan, NL

And **Romanticism** is back, too.

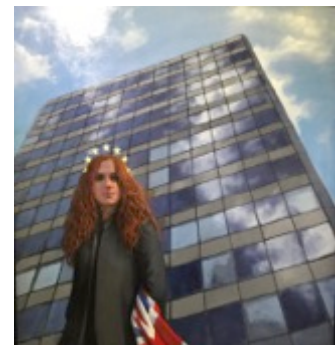


Odd Nerdrum, Norway

Conor Walton Ireland

Javier Marin, Mexico

In addition to sentiment, there is also room for **Engagement**.



Max Ginsburg, USA

Rigoberto Gonzales USA

Gen Zendahl, UK

In addition, contemporary realism occupies itself with people again, in all kinds of variations.



Ikenaga Yasunari, Japan Andrej Remnev, Russia Lee Böhm, Germany

Zhang Honhnian, China



Daniel Gamelas, Portugal Teresa Oaxaca, USA Michael Borremans, Belgium Lotta Blokker, NL Eline Cerla, UK



Igor Morsky, Polen Francien Krieg, NL Roman Zaslonov, Belarus Lili Hill, Germany Minli Gao, China

And all possible genres as we know them from the Dutch Golden Age, for example, are in full development again.

And especially those subjects that were forbidden for a long time by (Post)modernist puritans, because forbidden fruits are the most delicious.

Companies



Carl Dobsky, USA



Olga Suverova, Russia



Alexandra Manukyan, USA

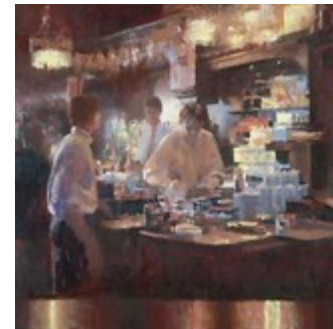
Interiors



Douwe Elias, NL

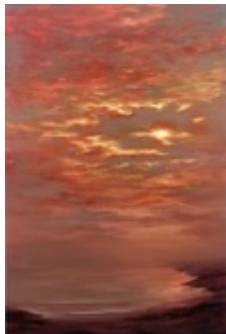


Jordi Diaz Alama, Spain



Peter Hartwig, NL

Sunsets



Cheryl Kline, USA

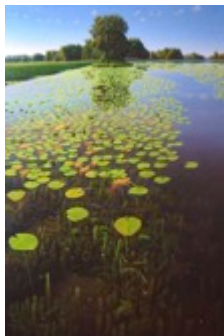


Heiner Altmeyden, Germany



Jan van Loon, NL

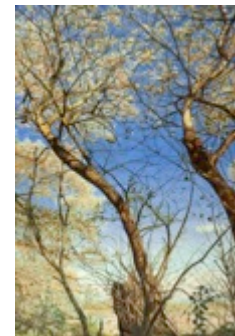
Landscapes



Hans Parlevliet, NL



Jangzhe Piao, North Korea



Gezien vd Riet, N

In line with Symbolism, Surrealism, Magical Realism, Fantastic Realism, the imagination in art has blossomed again.



Regina Jacobson, USA



Rein Pol, NL



Pamela Wilson USA



Matthijs Röling, NL



Ivan Sagita, Indonesie



Tom Hageman, NL



Nicola Samori, Ital



Pedro Requejo Spain



Thom Puckey, UK



Lin Baogang,China



Michael Pearce, USA

THE FORMAL RESURRECTION

Photography



Garry Winogrand, USA



Ed van der Elsken, NL

The advantage of photographs is that they reproduce a scene exactly in the blink of an eye. For capturing moving images, the camera surpasses the eye and it is certainly useful as a sketch material.



Philip Lorca Dicorcia, USA



Erwin Olaf, NL



Mark Engelen, NL

The disadvantage is that the camera cannot analyse, it records light and shadow, whether or not in colour. Nor can it compose freely and certainly not interpret or characterise.



Nilüfer Demir



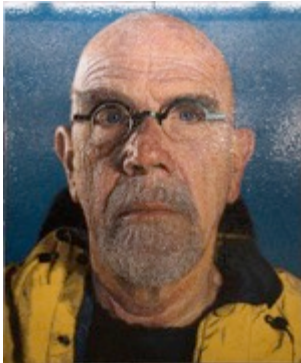
John Moore

On the other hand, a good photographer, i.e. with a good eye for composition and atmosphere, is capable of taking an iconic picture - which can influence world opinion.

And by the way, like paint, the camera is a tool for expression: a good photograph does that better than a bad painting.

The literal post-painting of photographs seems a superfluous effort, the image is already there, unless something special is added. That is the question in many photorealistic art,

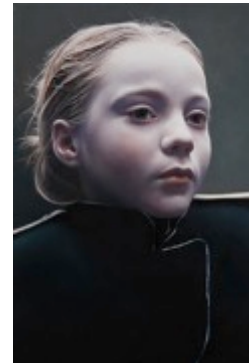
Photorealism



Chuck Close, USA



Richard Estes, USA



Gottfried Heinwein, Austria

There are various techniques: the post painting of a photograph still offers a chance of its own interpretation, at least when it is deliberately sought after. The image can be made more intense. When overpainting a projection that chance is smaller, especially when overpainting a print.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

So far, art academies have operated in extremes: in the nineteenth century in rigid discipline, a century later in rudderless freedom; a good education is somewhere in between.

It is not up to an educational institution to propagate one or the other stylistic direction or artistic ideology. That is called indoctrination, because every direction is legitimate. Skills, technique, mastery, are conditions, not goals.

That is why art education must pay attention to the necessary skills, mastery, as well as the personal capacities, talents and possibilities of the student.

Education must provide a solid foundation, the necessary tools and may both criticize and stimulate the student. It is then up to the - well prepared - graduate artist to determine what he or she will do with it.

The experiment of the twenty-first century is the synthesis: how do we create interactions between old techniques and new insights?

To begin with, by treating all currents of thought as equals and stimulating interaction from there. And there are examples of this.

Around the end of the twentieth, beginning of the twenty-first century, an art education in the former East Germany gained worldwide success. The Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst in Leipzig became the founder of the Leipzig School of Fine Arts.

Teachers such as Hans Meyer-Forst, Bernard Heisig, Wolfgang Mattheuer and Werner Tübke combined the techniques of Socialist Realism with a new visual language and created a winning concept: the Neue Leipziger Schule became a worldwide success.

Leipziger Schule



Werner Tübke



Wolfgang Mattheuer



Bernard Heisig



Hans Meyer-Forst

A special feature of the Leipziger Schule is that it is not a definite style direction, at least two currents are distinguished: The 'Formstrenge, nüchtern-sachliche' (strict in form, sober and businesslike) and the 'Expressiv-leidenschaftliche' (passionately expressive) in which we effortlessly recognize the contrasts between Florence and Venice, between Poussin and Rubens, between two hemispheres of the brain. Within one institute.



Neo Rauch



Michael Triegel



Aris Kailaizis



Peter Schnürpel

The Leipziger Schule has now delivered several generations of artists. But also elsewhere in the world artists are looking for restoration of visual quality. Reclaiming classical skills is the number one goal, but the synthesis of these skills with contemporary insights is the essential goal.

THE DISTICTIVE RESURRECTION

What one can also find of the nineteenth century Academic painters: their technique was fabulously excellent. They could paint anything they wanted: sunlight playing through foliage, lamp light, all kinds of fabrics, people in every pose.

With an accuracy and sharpness that equalled, often surpassed, the current HD photo. That same precision is sought again in contemporary 'Academism'.

But the twentieth century has also seen the emergence of new directions, sometimes parallel to developments in literature, sometimes to those in society.

Distinctive resurrection



Sergej Marshannikov, Russia



Oliver Sin USA



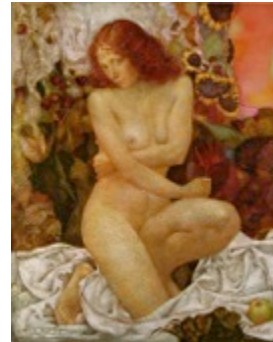
Stone Roberts, USA



Jan Worst, NL



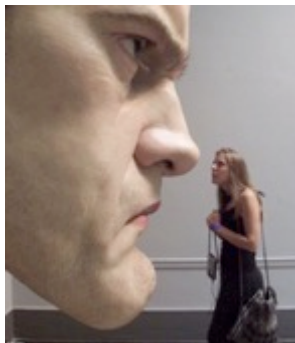
Daniel Enckell Finland



Alexander Sigov, Russia



Jane Clatworthy, UK



Ron Mueck, Australia



Matthias Verginer, Italy



Peter Demetz, Italy



Richard Stipl, Czech Rep.

NEW TECHNIQUES

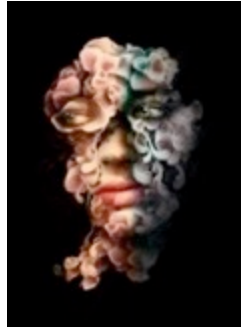
Digital techniques open up infinite new possibilities: in China, for example, operas are enlivened with dancing or acrobatic holograms, and in Tokyo there is a Digital Museum, which does not offer the visitor separate works of art, but where each space is a separate and interactive visual spectacle.

In earlier times, inspirational books were the Bible or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. New inspirations have emerged in contemporary literature - and therefore in the visual arts - art: 'Fantasy' art stems from science fiction and fantasy literature. Started as illustrations, it has become a new direction.

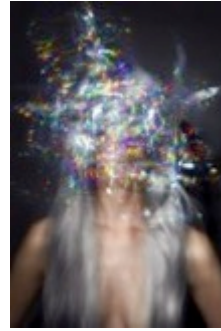
New techniques



Digital Art Museum, Tokyo



Alberto Seveso, UK, digital art



Hologram

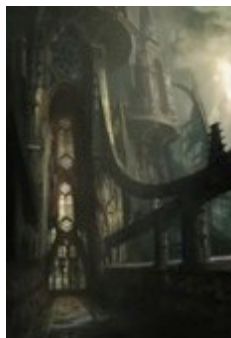


Nick Willems NL, woodburning

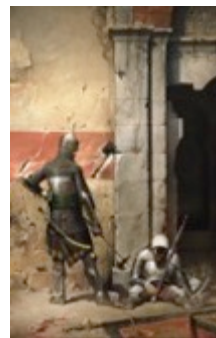
Fantasy



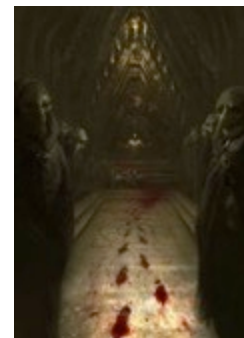
Paquette



Wang Ling

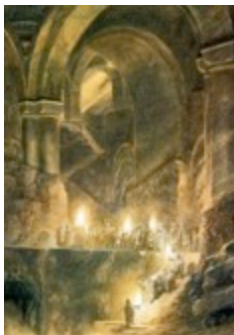


Cabrera Peña

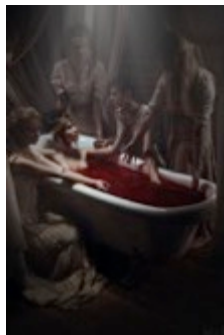


Manzanedo

Techniques used in fantasy range from oil paints via manipulated photographs to digital images. The images themselves are generally very classic in design and execution.



Chunyangwang



Lee



Bathory



HeeWann Kim

Graffiti are of all times and all cultures, but it has developed into a serious branch of art in the twenty-first century.

It is called 'Street-art' with unexpected 3-dimensional shapes in public spaces or ingenious street paintings that should be seen as an anamorphosis of one point.

Street art



Banksy.



Müller



John Pugh

A special technique is the Anamorphosis: a drawing or painting that reveals a spatial representation from a single point of view.



Kurt Wenn



Catelynn Lowell



Issac Cordal



Anamorfose

CONCLUSIONS

The human mind can't be captured. Certainly not by a theory or ideology. Anyone who wants to fix the brain on one of the poles immediately has the other in front of him. Freedom of mind is the essence of art.

Intrinsically there is no right or wrong art. Opinions may differ on subjects or principles, but artistically it is of no importance whether an image represents the god Bacchus or Saint Nicholas.

Formally there is well-made and badly made art - and even that is arbitrary, because culturally determined: is an sculpture of Michelangelo better made than an anonymous African fetish ? Assessing quality is the comparison between equivalent forms.

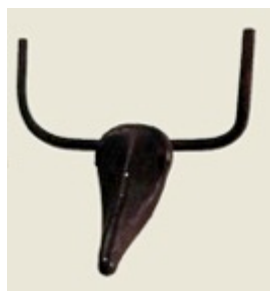
Distinctively, popular art is not necessarily the best - nor is unpopular.

The distinction is made by the individual, a group, a mass.

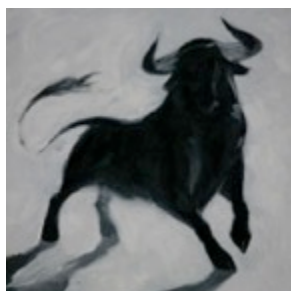
It is up to you, the reader, what counts.

EPILOGUE

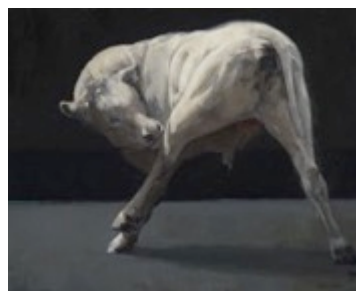
Art is the expression of a society: where it flourishes, cultural identity rises to great heights - and vice versa. Fascinating question: what are the preconditions for art and culture to flourish?



Pablo Picasso



Salvator Dali



Pieter Pander

The movement from below are artists who know themselves freely, who can develop and unfold in their 'own' critical biotope. They have received a good and thorough education, after which they can decide for themselves what to do with it.



Terceira: Renato Costa e Silva



St Marie de la Mer: Peter Eugene Ball

The movement from above is a government that does not judge art, but that realizes that several movements exist side by side and wants to build a good infrastructure for this.



New York: Arturo di Modica



Franz Marc

The movement from the middle is the mature audience that is left free in the demand for art, that is allowed to follow their own taste, find beautiful or captivating what appeals to them personally. Because in the arena of art, all the bulls are running around each other.



TOM HAGEMAN OPENS THE 6TH SILK ROAD INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION IN XI'AN, CHINA

Tom S. Hageman (Amsterdam, 1943) is a Dutch visual artist.

He graduated from the Minerva Academy in Groningen in 1968 and has been working as an artist, art teacher, director and entrepreneur ever since.

In the 1970s he was, among other things, the president of the Dutch Association of Visual Artists and a member of the National Council for the Arts. In the 1980s he taught model drawing and anatomy and coordinated various courses at the Minerva Academy.

In the 1990s he was, among other things, a visiting professor at the Vitvarnich Umeni Academy in Prague and a member of the Council of the Arts, Design and Architecture Fund. In 2005 founder of the Classical Academy in Groningen and initiator of various events in the Northern Netherlands. He now focuses on online art education with the classical ART college.

From 2015 he is active in the worldwide resurrection of skills and abilities in the visual arts. In 2018 he brought 'The Representational Art Conference' from California to Leeuwarden, Netherlands and was initiator of the foundations Classical Salon, Classical Art Center and International League of Fine Art Schools. In 2019 he organised exchanges of exhibitions between China and the Netherlands and in 2020 he set up a worldwide database of skilled artists.