

ESSAYS

FISHING BOATS IN A FOREST

TWO WAYS OF SEEING

AN ESSAY ON ABSTRACTION AND EMPATHY

ABATING AESTHETIC CHARACTER

THE REALITY OF PAINTED OBJECTS

PRIMALISM

BASIC PRINCIPLE: READYMADE OBJECTS

THE CONCEPT OF THE MISSING ART OBJECT

WHY ART CANNOT BE SUBDUED



Withdrawn, An Installation Art Work by Luke Jarram 2015

There are divided opinions as to what artists try to achieve when they create works of art. There are those who think an artist should make superbly crafted objects that are meaningful to society and can be understood by their relevance to our concerns and beliefs in life, but there are also those who think an artist should avoid these refinements because they distract us from sensing the world in a more natural way. Filling art full of technique and meaningful content suppresses, rather than reveals, an emotive 'inner' experience of mind that is only sensed when

our thoughts are free of intellectual intelligent commands.

Art that avoids skill and technique can bring natural intuitive sensations back into how we perceive objects and events, but our powers of observation have evolved to vanquish this experience in all we see and do. Natural intuitive sensations are generated from a deeper older arena of our mind that once allowed our distant animal ancestors to survive without intelligent learned understanding. This experience is inherent from our past but we now act to overpower and replace this sensation in our day-to-day view of the world. Our intelligence has evolved to take these impulses, generated in this old part of our mind, and transform them into learned understanding before we can become conscious of the inherent view, and our old way of sensing by instinct is lost to us because of this process at work in our powers of observation.

However, the old way of sensing is still alive in the depth of our minds, and it works without conscious input. Sometimes, when we come across an object or an event that fails to meet our learned understanding of what confront us, we find the old experience returns to disturb our ordered controlled thoughts. This often happens in unusual situations, and is especially true in the world of art. Here you will often find people reject art that fails to uphold traditional values on the grounds that it requires no skill to create and, therefore, is thought to be dubious art. You do not have to be an artists to think up an idea that requires you to take an everyday object and place it in the world of art, you just need the money to be able to act in this way. You could, for example, pay someone to kill a shark and preserve it in a tank of formaldehyde (Hirst 2011), and this, in itself, has nothing to do with art. It is just an act that takes a natural object and brings it into the world of art by exhibiting it in an art gallery. This creates a sensation of uncertainty, and to understand how this relates to art you have to realise art is a sensation of mind and not an object an artist makes. This realisation was first advanced when the free-thinker Marcel Duchamp (Sanouillet & Peterson 1989) took a mass produced toilet urinal and submitted it as a work of art at the New York Society of Independent Artists in 1917. He used the pseudonym of R Mutt and, as you might expect, his gesture was promptly rejected. This laid the foundations for a new understanding of what the art experience is about, and the idea of presenting an everyday object as a work of art has become commonplace. You can find unmade beds (Tracy Emin), an old shed (Simon Starling) and fishing boats (Luke Jarram) now taking pride of place within the contemporary art scene.

This, to those outside the elitist attitude that now pervades the art world, seems like a bad joke.

The history of art has always been dominated by the idea that the art experience should be portrayed through crafts like painting, sculpture, music or dance, and that these creations are useful to us because they tell stories, are decorative and collectable. This way of thinking arose from prehistory and began with the portraying of hunting and fertility rituals in primitive societies and, later, this usefulness of art was reinforced by artists finding a market for their skills by creating images of gods for temples or painting religious icons for churches. This brought about the traditional idea of art that believes the experience is created as a product of skill and meaningful content that has entrenched itself in the mass psyche. Today, this belief that art is a

useful collectable product can be found in the popularity of images like those of repetitive cans of soup by Andy Warhol, or the "badly conceived soft porn" (Renolds 2007), or "brainless erotica" (Collins 2012) of Jack Vettriano. This has resulted in modern art becoming a business that Dave Hickey alluded to as "calcified, self-reverential and a hostage to rich collectors who have no respect for what they are doing" (Helmore & Gallagher 2012).

To counter this view a line of enquiry has emerged that looks to the artist as an individual who possess a more intuitive emotive inner experience of the world that cannot be translated into a product. These artists will not be concerned with portraying art as something that can be bought and valued because their efforts are directed to draw our attention to a part of our own minds that most of us look to keep out of our day-to-day experience. To do this these artist will not be making traditional forms of art, but will be working to reveal the art experience as an event that has to be directly experienced so that it embeds itself in our memory to bring recall of a far older way of sensing that we inherit from our animal origins. These artists work to draw our attention to raw experience. That is to say they try to stop us fantasising about the material value of an object as we do when we look at art in the traditional way. Also, the old view of art directs our thoughts away from the raw reality of what we see to an imaginary world that is created inside the illusion of a picture frame; or performed on a stage. We see landscapes, buildings, portraits or still-life, etc. and we watch plays and listen to music that create a fantasy withdrawal from the reality of the real world. What we experience is not real but is recognised through our learned knowledge of how things look in an illusion of time and space. We know how to recognise the shape of real world landscapes and buildings, etc. and we call upon this learned knowledge to recognise a picture by ignoring the reality of paint and canvas. This is clear to understand when we look at images in paintings or photographs because we ignore the canvas or paper that the image is arranged upon. However, this principle also applies to everyday objects and events because we recognise them through learned understanding rather than intuitive insight, and this leads some artists to want to make art as a real experience rather than a product that calls to imaginary worlds. A real world experience requires removing all imagined ideas of the usefulness and purpose that we impose over everyday objects, and, therefore, a picture would have to be sensed without calling to mind the learning that allows you to recognise the image. You would *fail* to see the image if you could look using intuition and instinct because these sensations cannot learn, as intelligence does, to 'imagine' an object that is not there. You would only experience the reality of the object, which, in the case of a picture, is canvas or paper with smudges of paint or ink upon its surface. The recognisable image requires you to learn to ignore your old intuitive and instinctive powers of perception and look through learned understanding, and, therefore, an older way of sensing through intuition and instinct is lost to us because of this thought process. We have all evolved to overwrite an older way of looking at the world without intelligent understanding, and our way of looking is now dominated by a view that filters out the old experience and replaces it with ideas of objects that we project over everything that surround us to suppress the old view. The bed we sleep upon, the cup we use for our first drink of the day, the trees we see outside our windows, etc. are all

recognised through intelligent learned ideas and this deadens any experience of these objects that could be sensed by instinct. This is the way the human mind commands perception over the animal view, but this experience bequeaths, for a few individuals, the unsettling sensation that the way we look at the world creates a hidden reality.

This realisation of a lost inner way of sensing the world, that we have inherited from the past, now drives some modern artists to look to the idea that they need to find ways to stop our intelligence dominating our experience of what we see. This requires creating art that provokes raw experiences of objects and events, and this is in direct opposition to the traditional idea of art, that looks to create a refined intellectual. The latter view, whilst more appealing, is shallow compared to this search for raw experience. It is easy to comprehend the idea that the art experience is created through the clever content that a work displays because you can direct your thoughts to technical perfection and subjective meaning. One can talk of the way the paint has been applied to the canvas to create a perfect likeness, or how the clay has been moulded into a recognisable image, and one can discuss the subject of the work with just as much ease. The biblical stories, the hypnotic mosque decorations or the comic strip images of superheroes are the subjects of the day, but beyond this surface observation lies a far deeper insight. There is more to art than appearance, and arts true analysis lies in its power to help us recall a far older way of sensing the world that our minds now work to keep out of our day-to-day view.

It is this deeper, older, way of sensing that a true artist will be attuned to recalling, and it drives them to want to show us objects in a more direct emotive way. Placing everyday objects in an art environment is one way to do this. It forces us to look through a loss of our learned ideas. Our idea of art – the traditional idea of technique and meaningful content – is removed when an artist places an everyday object in an art gallery. All the old values associated to art are not available in what we see because the artist has not had to do any skilled work to create this object. She, or he, has just had to place the ready-made into the gallery. This, on its own, would discredit the work but, as Marcel Duchamp (Tomkins 2013) tried to show us, this act has far greater significance than we at first realise. Our minds will reject the ready-made gesture because it provokes recall of an older inherent way of sensing without learned ideas. Our minds have evolved to suppress this experience in all we see and do, and so we feel discomfort and we set to work to remove this sensation by the act of rebuff. A ready-made in an art gallery removes our idea of art, and, because the object is in an alien environment to that which it would normally occupy it acts to remove our learned understanding of the functional use we associate to what we see. A toilet urinal in an art gallery does not allow us to apply our traditional ideas of art to it. If it is mass produced it is unlikely to possess any unique skilled workmanship and perfected technical accomplishment that is associated to our ideas of art, and our belief in what a urinal is made for is also removed. You cannot urinate into the Duchamp urinal on show in an art gallery without incurring the wrath of authority, and the same principle applies to other ready-made art installations. Fishing boats dragged into a wood, a shark in a tank of formaldehyde, an old shed or an unmade bed in an art gallery are all works that create a

sensation of uncertainty within your day-to-day command of perception.

For those who care to stand and look towards uncertainty and not knowing this kind of experience offers an unexplored sensation of the mind. This requires you to look *without* all the clever learned ideas you normally associate to what you see, and in this experience you will begin to get recall of an older inherent way of sensing by instinct. Where this direct 'inner' experience originates from is questionable, but, with modern understanding of our animal origins, the view has emerged that it could be a recollection of the remains of an older way of sensing the world being glimpsed through what remains of our animal intuition and instinct.

Looking at object without learned ideas is an 'animal' experience and your mind will try to stop you sensing in this way. It is very difficult to look at a toilet urinal in an art gallery and not recognise it, and it is equally as difficult to do this with old fishing boats in a forest, a shark in a tank of formaldehyde, an old shed or an unmade bed. The intuitive experience generated by these objects being removed from their rightful place in the world should bring recall of our old instinctive view of what we see, but it seems this is not an easy thing to achieve. The artist creates the sensation of not knowing by depositing the ready-made in an alien environment. We wander into an art gallery to be confronted by a toilet urinal exhibited as a work of art, or we meander through woodland and come face-to-face with old fishing boats. We find this disrupts our learned understanding of what we expect to see but, this act on its own, is not enough. To get us to sense an object by instinct, and to bring recall of our natural powers of observation, an artist would need to find a way to stop us recognising what we see. This has yet to be achieved.

Collins 2012. Amy Collins, *The Singing Butler Did it*. Vanity Fair July 2012

Helmore & Gallagher 2012. Edward Helmore & Paul Gallagher.

www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/oct/28/art-critic-dave-hickey-quits-art-world

Damien Hirst, ' We're Here for a Good Time, not a Long Time ', Interview with Alastair Sooke, *The Telegraph*, 2011

Renolds 2007. Nigel Renolds, *Jack Vettriano's £1.8 m Bluebirds of happiness*. The Daily Telegraph 18 July 2007

Sanouillet & Peterson 1989. Michel Sanouillet & Elmer Peterson, Ed. *The Writings Of Marcel Duchamp*. Da Capo.

Tomkins 2013. Calvin Tomkins, *Marcel Duchamp: The Afternoon Interviews*. Badlands Unlimited

TWO WAYS OF SEEING



If I hang a black square in an art gallery the question I am often asked is, “What is it supposed to be?” I presume this implies that what I hang on a wall in an art gallery is 'supposed' to uphold some sort of value and meaning, and that, to the person asking the question, these qualities are missing from my work. If the qualities were present the person would know what 'it was supposed to be', but an object like a blank black square is thought to represent fraudulent activity in relation to artistic values. My black square requires no skill to create and it has no story to tell or profound meaning, and therefore it is considered by many art lovers to be of dubious value in relation to their understanding about what an art object should represent. Most people who walk into art galleries believe art is about recognisable qualities, and when you remove these qualities you often get a hostile response to what you claim to be is your work of art.

It is this hostility that interests me. I find that we have all been conditioned to think the experience we should find in an art gallery is knowable. That is to say that the experience we learn to expect to find when we look at art is an experience that can be recognised like all other experiences we encounter in day-after-day life. This is not what I believe, and to me art is an unknown experience in my day-to-day view of the world. It is the opposite to what the majority think art is about, and this makes you something of an outcast in the eyes of those who look to art to bring meaning and value into their lives. To me art is the one experience that my mind works to stop me sensing when I look at an object or an event, and I try to create work that generates a state of mind that is only encountered when confronted by an object that I do not know how to recognise. Anything could do this. Any object could be a work of art that provokes this experience that is only 'felt' when we face the unknown, but few objects will give us this experience. Few objects do this because we are born to look at the world around us to find recognisable things and not uncertainty in what we see. When the values of what we expect to find in an object are missing, as they are with a meaningless black square exhibited in an art gallery, then we find ourselves confronted with an object that provokes, rather than suppresses uncertainty in what we see. This, of course, puts the artist who seeks to explore this sensation

at odds with people who look to understand everything in their world. Such people walk into art galleries to fulfil their powers of recognition, and they don't come to art to be disturbed by something they do not know how to recognise. We find, therefore, that when confronted by an object that fails to uphold what they expect the response is to reject the object that is provoking this sensation of the unknown.



LOOKING TO RECOGNISE

LOOKING TO UNKNOWING

Our minds generate a sensation of learned understanding towards the Hobbema painting on the left, but a sense of uncertainty towards the Pollock (detail) on the right. This reveals a behavioural response that attracts us to recognisable art, because it fosters a 'feeling' of safety and assurance, but rejection towards unrecognisable art, because this provokes recall of our old natural 'animal' intuitive way of sensing what we see. We still inherit this old way of sensing but our intelligence has evolved to dominate our view of the world and suppress this old experience in all we see and do.

Rejecting anything that provokes a sensation of the unknown is an ancient response and it is not just confined to art. Few of us realise we are conditioned by life itself, and by the way we learn to survive, to look for what we recognise. If I failed to learn to recognise a bus then the chances are that one day when I cross a road I will get run-over by one of these types of vehicle. The chances are that I won't survive very long because I have failed to learn to recognise buses, and so, just as it was essential for our distant ancestors to learn to recognise tigers and lions, we are born to look towards ever greater powers of certainty as a way of sensing what confronts us. It is therefore a natural response, when we find ourselves confronted by any object or event that fails to fit into this model of how we respond, to remove as much uncertainty from what we see. We look to project the best idea we can call to mind to stop the object provoking the sensation of the unknown. This is what most people do in art galleries. They look for ideas they have learned to apply to things they find in art galleries, and this response is what a meaningless black square hanging on a wall challenges. It disrupts your learned idea of art and brings to mind a sensation of the unknown, and it is here that the art

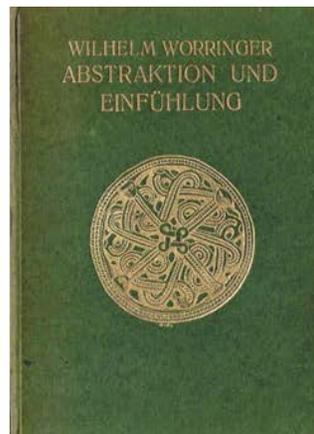
lover and many artist part company.

The art lover, and artists who work to satisfy this audiences craving for meaningful creative work, look towards recognising objects that uphold established principles. These principles, in art, have always been about workmanship, engaging subjective content, or fine performance, etc. and these criteria enforce upon the art experience a class of object that we know how to recognise. Remove these established principles in art and you are faced with objects that begin to provoke an underlying behavioural response from the human mind. This response emerges with loss of recognition and has evolved to make us look to suppress the unknown from our view of the world. Because of this response you will 'feel' disturbed and unsure when confronted by something in an art gallery that fails to display the values that create your idea of the art experience. You will look to find a way to reassert your control over your powers of recognition, and the easiest way to do this is to reject anything that fails to display the required values that are expected of art.

A simple black square holds very little value in art. It does not try to represent something other than what it is, and it is an object that you have to look towards not understanding. There is nothing profound or meaningful in this object, and if you find yourself thinking up such ideas then you need to realise your mind is working to find a way of suppressing the sensation of the unknown that a meaningless black square will begin to provoke from your mind. This is what we do in life, and so we find ourselves thinking that this meaningless black square has been placed in an art gallery to say something profound. We think about gestalt, or that this work has something to say about social values, or even ideas as bizarre as suggesting a black square is a gateway to an alien world - reminding me of the black obelisk from the Stanley Kubrick film 2001: A Space Odyssey. It is very difficult to create an object that stops people doing this. Trying to look without imposing any ideas over your experience of an object creates a negative response, and we seek to suppress this experience in what we see. We look to dismiss the work as fraudulent art, or to find the nearest idea we can apply to what we see to rid our thoughts of any sense of an older way of looking at the world through instinct.

C J Hollins 26 February 2014

AN ESSAY ON ABSTRACTION AND EMPATHY



Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style, Wilhelm Worringer 1908.

'Let us recapitulate: The original artistic impulse has nothing to do with imitation of nature. This impulse is in search of pure abstraction as the sole possibility of finding rest amidst the confusion and obscurity of the image of the world, and it creates a geometric abstraction starting with itself, in a purely instinctive manner. It is the realized expression, and the sole expression conceivable for man, of the emancipation from any arbitrariness and any temporality of the image of the world. But soon this impulse tends to rip out the individual thing from the exterior world, which retains as its main interest its obscure and disconcerting connection with this outside world, and so tries to get closer to it through artistic restitution of its materials individuality, to purify this individual thing of everything that is life and temporality in it, to make it as much as possible independent both from the surrounding world and from the subject of contemplation, which does not want to enjoy in it the vitality that is common to both, but the necessity and the legitimacy where this impulse can find refuge from its connection with ordinary life, in the only abstraction to which it can aspire and which it can attain. Restitution of the finite material individuality is both important and possible underneath the surface boundaries but also in the intermingling of artistic presentation with the rigid world of the crystallo-geometric: namely, the two solutions that we could observe. Anyone who understands his own solutions in the light of all their presuppositions can no longer speak of "these charming childish mumblings of stylization."

Now, all these momentums that we have just analysed, and which revealed themselves as so many aspects of the need for abstraction, are what our definition wants to gather and summarize with the help of the notion of "style," and what it wants to oppose as such to any Naturalism that results from the need for Einfühlung [empathy].

Because the need for Einfühlung and the need for abstraction appeared to us as the two poles of man's artistic sensitivity in as much that it can be the object of pure esthetic appreciation. These two needs are antithetical, they exclude each other, and the history of art never ceases to display the continual confrontation between the two tendencies.

An Excerpt From: Ferrier, Jean-Louis, Director and Yann le Pichon, Walter D. Glanze [English Translation]. Art of Our Century, The Chronicle of Western Art, 1900 to the Present. New York: Prentice-Hall Editions. 1988. p. 94]

Style in art is more than a transformation of the day-to-day complexity of observation into design. It also presents us with a depth of awareness that gives us a glimpse of how our perception can be modified to show us alternative ways of sensing objects and events. For most of us, in day-to-day life, all the objects that surround us are not thought to contain elements of alternative visualisation. We awaken each day and call to mind our learned knowledge to allow us to go about our business without having to re-evaluate every encounter we make. We know, from information acquired when we were young, what the objects and events in our immediate surrounding look like and what their use is, and most objects take on a background presence in our experience of the passing days. We don't get up in the morning and look to the glass we use to get a drink of water in any other way than that of its usefulness in allowing us to quench our thirst. The simple glass just takes its place as a background object within our requirements for sustenance, and perhaps only the artist, looking at the empty glass, will become aware that hidden behind all the great details such background objects possess is a sensation of uncertainty. This sensation is heightened for the artist by nature's ability to intensify our awareness for sights, shapes, sounds and movements. The morning sunlight will, perhaps, pass through the glass and fall upon the surface of the table where the glass stands, and our artist will look at the reflections and the spectrum of colours that are revealed by this event. Our artist will, perhaps, bring learned knowledge of the spectrum of light to his, or her, understanding of what they see, but the glass itself will hold more meaning to the artist in that all this knowledge serves to hide a sensation of style that, in itself, is only in the mind. The artist, seeking as they should an intuitive insight in all things, might begin to wonder as to a depth of the power to this simple image to entice a sense of style that is the basis of wonderment from the mind, and in a metaphysical illogical way an experience of uncertainty as to the nature of how to conceive of this event will take over from the logic of day-to-day assurance.

The glass becomes a catalyst for contemplation and our artist will, perhaps, set to paint a picture of this glass, or write a sonnet to its wonderment, or compose music inspired by the 'singing' of the crystalline structure of our glass in the light. The resulting art object, whatever it may be, now brings to our idea of a simple drinking glass new insight. A more profound awareness for drinking glasses becomes the subjective nature of the painting, the poem or the music, and we look, read and listen in wonderment at a work of art, but here in lies a strangeness in what has happened. A transformation has occurred between the reality of the uncertainty of the experience that the artist encountered in the glass, and the art object that results from the artist's attempt to give this experience expression. The artist makes a work of art that is not, nor could it ever reproduce the reality of the experience. In truth the art object

has, by the very nature of our ability to impose a learned idea of what we see over the artists work, destroyed any uncertainty that the artist wanted to draw to our attention. We come along and look at, read or listen to a work of art that has become an object that, contrary to popular belief, will no longer portray what the artist encountered in the real world. What we are now faced with is an object that directs our thoughts away from the reality of what confronts us. We look into an imaginary space, or discern an artificial arrangement of sounds, and our powers of observation cannot, in this way, reproduce the reality of the uncertainty felt in the presence of any object or event. What the artist has done is transform their experience of the drinking glass into a work of art, and, presumably, in doing this the artist tried to reveal a profound sensual awareness for this object but, in this transformation, the artist removed the reality of paint and canvas, or words, or sounds, and created a model of an imaginary object. Now, this imaginary object works to direct our thoughts away from sensing the reality of what confronts us towards an experience of an image of a drinking glass transformed into a work of art. The real empty drinking glass held the reality to provoke a more profound awareness from our artists mind, and the artist found this simple object was attuning their thoughts to this inner experience, but, in trying to portray this experience, our artist has removed the reality that allowed this sensation to be felt in the mind. The artist has imposed their view over the reality of an object made of paint and canvas - or words or sounds - and this has destroyed the profound reality of paint and canvas - or words and sounds. The reality of any object is a direct sensation and cannot be translated into another form. You cannot paint a picture of a direct sensation of a glass of water because the direct sensation of your picture is that of paint and canvas and not the image it depicts. The image removes the direct sensation and this works to suppress the wonderment of the experience. It seems that, to get a glimpse of this insight, we have to be in direct contact with the reality of what confronts us, and when an object stands out from the mundane day-to-day dullness our learning imposes over all things, this wonderment of the reality of all things comes to mind.

We become complacent as to this sensation of wonderment in all things by the daily grind of waking up and projecting our learned ideas over what we see. We don't look in wonderment upon all things and this sensation only returns to mind when a real event - like sunlight passing through a drinking glass - rekindles an alternative view. That is when the day-to-day dullness is disturbed and we become aware that even the mundane is more noticeable. Our day-to-day ideas are brushed aside, and, for a short time, our mind is open to an older way of sensing without learned understanding suppressing the experience. We find ourselves in possession of a way of sensing that has become buried at the back to mind by our learned way of classifying and categorising all we see and do. This is what our simple drinking glass has done for our artist. The glass has draw his, or her, attention to the uncertainty of its mundane nature that, through learned understanding, has, day-after-day, been used to place the drinking glass into a way of thinking that reduced the sense of wonderment that all things possess. The glass, by being placed in the sunlight has, through it's reflective qualities, created a visual display that propelled its place in the mundane reality of day-to-day awareness to a more profound position.

The sensation of wonderment in the glass become more noticeable, but even though this sensation exists in all things we very rarely get a glimpse of it. It is just that the glass in the sunlight triggered it more than in any other object, and a deeper sensation of perceptual acuity arose in the mind of the artist.

Our artist, being perceptive to this sensation, then set to work in the only way they know to bring this sensation to our attention. The artist tried to picture the wonderment - or write it into a poem or compose it into music, and, in theory, this should draw our awareness to what the artist experienced into an art object. But theory is one thing and reality something quite different, and what we find is that what the artist has done is to ignore the wonderment of paint and canvas - or words, sound or movement - and tried to use these materials to direct our thinking to picture a glass in sunlight. Now, this picture is not a direct experience of what confronts you and it therefore work to suppress the reality of an experience of any object that is needed to get this sensation of wonderment to be triggered in your mind.

What we need to understand here is that creating an art object be taking material and modelling it into some form of representation works against the reality of what you experience in real life.

Art, as Wilhelm Wollinger wrote in 1908, is...

“...realized expression, and the sole expression conceivable for man, of the emancipation from any arbitrariness and any temporality of the image of the world. But soon this impulse tends to rip out the individual thing from the exterior world, which retains as its main interest its obscure and disconcerting connection with this outside world, and so tries to get closer to it through artistic restitution of its materials individuality, to purify this individual thing of everything that is life and temporality in it, to make it as much as possible independent both from the surrounding world and from the subject of contemplation, which does not want to enjoy in it the vitality that is common to both, but the necessity and the legitimacy where this impulse can find refuge from its connection with ordinary life, in the only abstraction to which it can aspire and which it can attain”.

The art object becomes imitation of reality rather than direct experience, and, for anyone aware that their mind is working to suppress the direct experience, what you create can, if you are not very careful, propel your thoughts away from the very thing you seek to discover. Ask an artist and they will try to tell you that this direct experience of reality is the core sensation of what makes them want to be an artist - assuming, of course, that an artist is a perceptive individual sensitive to discovering an intuitive underlying sensation in their view of the world. This underlying intuitive sensation is triggered in your mind by the suspicion that there is a great deal of uncertainty in every-day things that your mind works to stop you sensing. Your mind wants to suppress this disturbance in your powers of observation because it will cause you to fail to recognise what confronts you. Suppressing uncertainty in what you see is an inherent behavioural response that ensured your distant ancestors survived to pass on this power of recognition that now allows you to look with such assurance about all you see around you. The art experience is the sensation that arises when this assurance is disturbed because, only then,

does your mind open to being full of a sensation of wonderment for all things. Not understanding what you see brings this sensation to mind, but it is a very impracticable way of sensing the world. To survive it is essential to possess precise powers of recognition and understanding about what you see. The artist does not think like this. The artist looks to not understand and becomes a dreamer because of this need for wonderment. You begin to look not to paint a picture you can recognise but to capture the uncertainty you feel in what you see, and this will make you an artist whose work becomes an impression, or an expression, or a total abstraction. Let us say you look at a glass of water, but you don't want a recognisable photographic representation of this object. That would remove the sensation of uncertainty from what you see, and so to try to get the paint and canvas to create the sensation of wonderment, and here lies the difference between traditional and modern art working procedure. A picture of a glass of water - or anything else for that matter - does not reveal the wonderment of the reality of what the picture purports to depict. It cannot, because the art object works to remove its own reality by directing your thoughts away from the paint and canvas towards an imaginary image. Or, in the case of music or dance, away from the reality of sounds and movements towards the imaginings stirred by the performance. We, as viewers of art objects, come along and ignore the reality of what confronts us. We don't look to the reality of an object made of paint and canvas to experience the wonderment that these materials hold but we look away from this experience. We look to the artist's image and, as strange as it may seem, the artist has, in creating a recognisable image of a glass in sunlight, destroyed the wonderment of the reality of paint and canvas. The subject - the picture of the glass - directs your thinking away from the direct sensation of what confronts you, and it is only in this direct sensation that the wonderment that is the cause of the art experience can be found.

Of course the artist's skill and craftsmanship will be full of our admiration and respect for this picture of a glass of water in sunlight, but this is not what the artist is about. The artist is looking beyond craftsmanship and the desire for a product because the artist is a person who senses in a deep original way. They look to expose this depth of perception but this, as we now understand, will be destroyed by any attempt to translate it into an art object. Only the directness of the reality of what confronts you can give you this wonderment that is the core of the art experience, and it is this sensation that is art and not the object the artist makes in an attempt to draw our attention to this depth of perception.

Now, we might wonder, what if the artist did not try to translate the art experience into an art object. What would happen if the artist took paint and canvas and tried to make us look directly at the wonderment of the sensation of this reality by creating an abstract. Our artist can easily do this by throwing paint so that we cannot find a recognisable image to draw our thoughts away from the reality of what we see, but now our artist finds they are faced by a dilemma. Still the sensation of wonderment for what confronts us will be lost because to show it to you our artist is going to have to stop you recognising the object as a work of art. That very idea will suppress the reality of what we see, and so our artist has to just place paint and canvas in an

art gallery, or a real glass in an art gallery, and called it art. We will come along and shout this is not art because it fails to uphold the established principles of the profession. The artist, you see, cannot win. The art experience will be lost in any attempt to reveal it because the artist will have to destroy the art object to get you to sense the reality of what you see.

Most people don't realise that to come to know the art experience requires you to find wonderment in a direct confrontation with a real object. You cannot find the art experience in a picture an artist has painted, or in music or dance, because this directs your thoughts away from the reality of the experience. People look to the artist to portray the wonderment of the world, but no artist can do this. You cannot paint a picture of this sensation, nor turn it into words because all these actions will take the wonderment of the reality of any object and direct your thinking to a leaned idea that your mind uses to suppress the direct intuitive view of what you see. In the case of a painting of a glass of water on a table in sunlight the artist will transform the direct experience into paint and canvas that destroys the reality of the event, and replaces the uncertainty and wonderment of this object with an idea of an art object that works to suppress the experience it tries to portray.

Of course this is a simplified view. I am a naive thinker, but the clarity of the simplified view will be swamped in the more complex concept that ensues from the argument that the art object has to become a tool of communication. At an intellectual level of meaning the art object is thought to form language where, in the case of painting, images allow us to transmit information about our experiences of the world. The artist will want others to become aware of what he, or she, senses, but what is communicated changes the reality of the sensation. In art this often leads to an established idea being applied to objects that served a very different need to that of direct experience. Painting is no more immune to this need to communicate the identity of an idea about an object or an event than anything else. For example; a painting of a sabre toothed tiger was not crafted upon a cave wall for the same reason as a framed print of an endangered animal adorns a modern living rooms. The ideas we apply to what paintings represent have changed over time, and there can be no reason to insist that what we believe a painting should be about today is what painting is about, per say. Indeed, because our ideas about objects and events change over time we should remain sceptical about what we believe, and in painting the only certainty is that the reality of the object is something made of paint applied to a flat surface.

All other ideas as to what this object made of paint on a surface communicates should be treated with suspicion.

Until the turn of the twentieth century the reality of painting - that is to say the material with no subjective image and no information to communicate - was never considered to be any more than part of the substructure of the work of art. The paint and it's support was not the main element in the creation of a work, because the artists thinking was fully occupied with higher ideals. The painter learned technique so the handling of the paint became second nature and became subservient to the subject being portrayed. All the artistic endeavour was directed to transforming the reality of paint and canvas into a picture. We looked to comprehend an art

object by understanding the painted image, the carved sculpture, the composed music, choreography of the dance, or the story in films or books. Even the quality of workmanship was, until modern times, always seen to be an essential part of what art was about, and the artist created a work through these time honoured procedures to emphasise empathy in what they did. We came along and looked to the work of art, and this object worked to remove our thoughts from our immediate surroundings for a short time through the enjoyment of watching a film or reading a book, or, as is the case with a painting, by immersing oneself in an image. Wilhelm Worringer gave emphasis to this concept in *Abstraction and Empathy* 1908. **“To enjoy aesthetically means to enjoy myself in a sensuous object diverse from myself, to empathise myself into it.”** When we find ourselves faced with a more direct immediate experience, as in an abstract work of art that makes little or no reference to recognisable content or composed forms, we begin to confront a different sensation generated in our minds. A feeling of alienation arises from a more direct encounter with the object in front of us because the reality of the object - the paint, clay, sound, movement that was used to make the object – begins to become more noticeable than the content. The reality of the work begins to infringe into our empathetic way of comprehending the world, and, as Hilton Kramer wrote in his introduction to the 1997 reprint of *Abstraction and Empathy* “Worringer also understood that this feeling of alienation expressed in the will to abstraction was a phenomena of immense relevance to modern culture. **“That which was previously instinct is now the ultimate product of cognition,”** he (Worringer) wrote. And taking his cue from Schopenhauer, he cautioned his readers to understand that **“man is now just as lost and helpless vis-a-vis the world picture as primitive man”** – a statement that was soon to be restated in even more powerful form in Kandinsky's treatise *On the Spiritual in Art* written in 1910 and published in 1912.

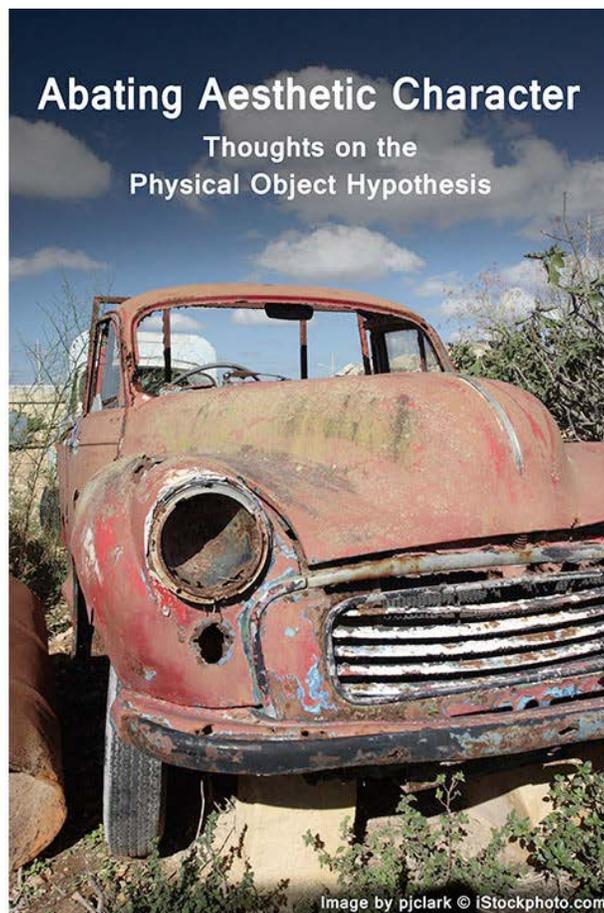
From my own point of enquiry I look towards the world picture that we now live with as being more 'lost' than ever before. Despite our vast understanding of what surrounds us and our ability to control and manipulate the natural world for our own needs we seem further away from the state of wonderment for day-to-day things than ever before. This sensation of wonderment was once thought to be a spiritual thing. A kind of affinity with all things, that we once lived with in the natural world, became, through our conquest of that natural world, a suppressed view. I prefer to steer clear of this word 'spiritual' because it encourages thoughts of ethereal overtones in the art experience and in our view of nature. I would rather have it that the sense of wonderment in life comes when you remove all learned ideas about what you see. The paint in the tube is full of wonderment but once you guide it to form a recognisable image you have lost that intuitive sensation.

I much prefer this downward looking way of thinking about the reality of all things. It gives to me an affinity with the nature of our animal responses to the world, (Darwin 1859, Dawkins 1972, et al.) rather than the upward view that believes our minds have been miraculously endowed with some magical powers. Art, to me, is not a product of intellectual refinement that we have been endowed with by grace of god, I see art as the outcome of a behavioural response we have

inherited from our distant animal ancestors. That this response drives us to make beautiful things can now be understood to be a reaction to an 'animal' based way of sensing the reality of an object or an event through instinct. We look to move away from this raw sensation at work in the depth of our minds, and in doing this, we are driven to create order and organisation in our view of the world. This way of seeing creativity, as a reaction to animal instinct, is a modern concept that was not available before our times. We can now begin to understand that artists create art objects to suppress disturbing intuitive responses within their powers of observation, and there is nothing more disturbing than loss of this power of recognition and meaningful content in an art object. When an artist brings reality to what they do we find ourselves faced with paint and canvas, concrete noises without composition, or meaningless movements that confront us with the actuality of the art experience, rather than the imagined transformation of it into intellectual dreaming.

The one good thing about abstract painting, as it is with abstract sculpture, concrete music and dance, is this removal of meaningful content. Even though this type of work seems 'empty' of clever reasoning, and is subject to much abuse, it does give, for those who seek to discover it, this sense of wonderment that we have learned to suppress behind learned understanding. The intuitive 'feeling' of uncertainty that not understanding brings to mind is what the artist so longs to come to know. You may not like this 'feeling' when you look at the abstract meaningless result, but this is your mind working to suppress an old inherent way of sensing the directness of the world, and it is only here, in this face to face confrontation with an uncertainty of all things, that the power of the art experience as wonderment can be sensed. Nothing before modern art allowed the artist to explore this directness in what they experienced.

ABATING AESTHETIC CHARACTER



In supplementary essay III, of *Art and its Objects* by Richard Wollheim*, a distinction is drawn between the aesthetic qualities of the idea of art and its physical properties. Wollheim makes no commitment as to whether-or-not aesthetic qualities are more revealing of the art experience, or, as I state, draw our attention from it, but he outlines the basic premise. He begins by declaring his middle ground.

“This theory is to the effect that in those arts where the work is an individual, i.e. painting, carved sculpture, and, possibly (see Essay II), architecture, the work of art is a physical object, and, after some consideration given to the theory, I suspend judgement on its truth. My plea is the metaphysical complexity of the topic. I give no conclusive answer to the question as to whether in those arts the work of art is really identical with, or is merely constitutively identical with or made of the same stuff as, some physical object.”

One could add music and dance to the Wollheim distinction. These activities display a similar physical object in that, even though they do not create a singular concrete image through the music score or the patterns of the dance – or the structure of film for that matter – as you would get in paintings or sculpture, sounds and movements are no less physical objects. They mould a discernible structure spread out over time, and their components are, like paint, clay, or stone, guided into patterns through an ordering of an arrangement of their elements. That you cannot hold a sound, or movement – or a moving image - in your hand does not mean it is any less real than paint, clay or stone. It would be intriguing to be able to stand and look at a solid

form of music as you do a painting, or run your fingers around the shape of a dance as you would a sculpture or building, but sounds and movements display a different physical object. If you take a still from a film you destroy the essence of this physical object that only comes to mind through watching the entire film. This does not make music, dance or film any less physical, and just as the painter, sculpture and architect model their materials into a controlled form given structure through artistic intentions, the composer, the choreographer, and the film maker bring to what they do an equally physical object that reveals its reality over time. Even a conceptual artist, who claims to work with thoughts, has to write down in words, or set up an exhibition of an empty space, to draw our attention to a state of mind that we are asked to consider to be the essential element of the art experience. Conceptual art has to be filtered through physical material to make itself known, and whatever the conceptual experience is said to provoke from our minds an object has to be made to direct us to think in a certain way. The conceptual artist has to take material and arrange this material to tell us that a loss of the physical object is art.

We would do well to broaden our horizons and consider the physical object hypothesis in another way. Not just as a material object that points us to an idea of art that is of the mind, but let us bring to the argument the realisation that when we talk about art we are talking about an effect provoked within the mind by a physical thing. We learn to project well defined concepts about the objects we encounter in day-to-day life that, in some way, stop us sensing the physical object hypothesis. This hypothesis implies the physical object will be difficult, if not impossible, to grasp because what we make of objects will depend upon the ideas we learn to project over them. For example; the physical object of a motorcar is that of a pile of metal, plastic and rubber that has been arranged (designed) to uphold a certain order that set in motion material interactions that exhibit a useful purpose. In the case of a motorcar this arrangement of metal, plastic and rubber works to propel us from one place to another, and therefore we don't see the physical object for what it is. We don't look at the experience of a motorcar as a pile of metal, plastic and rubber, but we suppress this physical object through our ideas of the usefulness of the arrangement of the material. My neighbour spends every Sunday washing and polishing his pile of metal, plastic and rubber whilst my pile of metal, plastic and rubber failed to start ten years ago and I abandoned it – much to my neighbours annoyance – in my back yard. It now looks more like a pile of junk than a motorcar because the weeds have grown all over it and moss and mould cover the windows. One door has fallen off and it is open to the elements and wildlife lives in it. I think this is a beautiful pile of metal, plastic and rubber because, to me, it displays more of the physical object hypothesis than it did when I used to think of it as a functional motorcar. Here, you see, is the point of our argument about the physical object hypothesis. What the physical object hypothesis has at its core implies an experience of an object is denied to us through the way we think about what we see. My rusting useless motorcar now serves another purposes and one of these other purposes annoys my neighbour because he still thinks my pile of metal, plastic and rubber should uphold the value of a motorcar. He does not see the physical object has changed, and that what he so loves to

polish every Sunday is an idea that stops him sensing the physical object hypothesis in his experience of the world. He is not an artist and so he has no interest in researching a way of sensing that his mind works to suppress through the ideas he projects over all he sees and does. If I try to explain this to him he will think me insane, and because my house displays a similar physical object hypothesis to my rusty useless motorcar – in that I hoard things – he may well declare me an undesirable in the neighbourhood. Old washing machines, old chairs and many other discarded items litter the outer and inner environments of my abode but, to me, my surroundings give to me a truer interpretation of a natural state of mind. My surroundings represents an awareness of the reality of the objects that surround me rather than that of artificial ideas that we learn to impose over things by polishing them, or, as in the case of the artist, turn paint or clay into a recognisable image. The residence in my road think I bring the value of the area down, but, for someone like me, a natural way of sensing is being suppressed by the ideas people 'think' they should impose over the material that surrounds them.

In modern art this division between the physical object and the need for ordered structured thinking is more pronounced than in traditional art. The physical object became the kingpin of modernism and created a rift between people who look to artists to make things that can be understood and useful through their ability to project ideas over the world– the traditional concept – and the modern realisation that only when you avoid this way of thinking does an insight into a lost way of sensing the world, once experienced through instinct, return to mind.

“The likeliest, though not the sole, alternative to holding the physical object hypothesis is to posit, for each work of art in question, a further individual, or a 'aesthetic object' with which the work of art is then identified. Light is thrown on the physical object hypothesis by examining this alternative to it – let us call it 'aesthetic object theory'- and, in particular, by contrasting the two different ways in which such a theory may be motivated, which are in turn reflected in two different forms the theory may take. One motivation is familiar, and much discussed in contemporary aesthetics, but the other motivation is less clearly recognised though it is to my mind more compelling.”

Aesthetic object theory does not reflect the base sensation of a world view built without learned understanding. The theory still looks to an ideal in what an artist creates through reasoned thoughts; an ideal view rather than a loss of ideals. Some form of mind over matter that injects into the material reality of all things the view that only intellectual intelligent commands in both art and life can result in guiding the artist, and the good citizen to a purposeful output. The physical object hypothesis has to be understood to uphold an almost opposing view to aesthetic object theory. The physical object looks to a natural way of sensing without learned thoughts, whilst the other, aesthetic view generates an artificial way of thinking that ignores the material and looks to the idea the material has been guided to portray. I assume, of course, that modern thinking now allows us to look towards the realisation that art could be a way of sensing without learned ideas having to be imposed over what the artist creates. The modern question is to ask as to whether-or-not art is a remnant of a way of sensing that only comes to mind when we stop

trying to impose our will over all things? This question is now beginning to be taken more seriously in the light of our ideas of evolution. The case in relation to the concept of a physical object hypothesis is that it seems to have arisen in contrast to the age old human desire to uphold superior command over nature through the belief in the arguments for design. Design is an essential part of aesthetic object theory, whilst the physical object hypothesis is a glimpse of the hard realism of a vision of the world without design. That patterns are discerned in the world has always, until modern times, been assumed to be the work of a designer. Nature, it was thought, was designed by some omnipotent benefactor, but now it seems the patterns that emerge in nature do so by trial and error. What looks like purposeful design is an illusion created by cause and effect, and wondrous things evolve because the pattern propels order out of chaos. The physical object hypothesis implies that no matter how much thought and skill an artist puts into arranging the material to create a work that is classed as art, under any aesthetic criteria, the reality is that the end result is nothing more than a rearrangement of the material. Any intellectual meaning that is thought to be endowed into the art object is not a consideration in the physical object hypothesis because material, no matter how much you work on it, is all you are left looking at in the end result. Any aesthetic implications the artist imposes over the material can only direct your experience of what you see away from the reality of the physical object. This view of the raw physical reality of all things was available to you at the beginning of your work, but you possess no way to model it because any work will have to be directed through thoughts that have evolved to drive you away from seeing this base experience in what confronts you. The process by which an artist works, indeed the very way we all think, drives us away from sensing a raw material view towards looking for controlled meaningful content in what we see. The end result, whatever it claims to be about, is not what is relevant in the physical object model, indeed, aesthetics here in the western world has always driven us to look upon nature as a disordered place that needs human input to be controlled and brought to meaningful use. We look to engineer nature for our own ends, and this need to look for design is the basis of a philosophy of mind that is in direct opposition to the physical object hypothesis in art. The physical object cannot be thought to bring into existence an experience beyond the reality of the material through any input of controlled reasoned actions. Any such control will suppress the raw view that is generated by the sensation of uncontrolled input, and this view, because it seems destructive and disruptive, is a view that all our minds have evolved to remove from our sensation of the world.

“The first motivation comes from reflecting upon the physical painting, carved sculpture, or building quite timelessly. Such reflection reveals that the properties of the physical object may be divided into those which are, and which are not, of aesthetic interest. An aesthetic object to be the bearer of all of the first but none of the second set of properties, and it is concluded to be the work of art.”

The view from this reasoning is that the properties of the physical object are given a layered interpretation that covers the very base experience of what is seen as an undesirable state of

the reality of raw material. Art is not considered in this view of aesthetics to have anything to do with the unguided accidental seemingly meaningless reality of the world around us without human input. The view is that human input is considered the essence of art that is infused into an object through varying degrees of order that models the material to reflect concepts of beauty, taste, design and intellectual command. That a view exists, that was once 'felt' (you cannot say known) without reasoned powers of recognition, and that this view will have remained at the very foundation of all we see and do, is not a concept that sites easily within any aesthetic model.

“A premiss to this argument is that a work of art has only aesthetic properties, it cannot have non-aesthetic properties, and the best way of considering this first vision of aesthetic object theory is through considering this premise. This premise gives the motivation behind this vision, which may be expressed as that of trying to safeguard the aesthetic character of the work of art”.

No matter how crude the object is it will, if it has been modelled by human hand, hold aesthetic qualities. Wollheim points out differentials in this view...

“The first questions the validity of the distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties, at any rate for the present purposes. For, though there is little difficulty in understanding the distinction broadly, aesthetic object theory in its present version requires us to have a fine grasp of the distinction so that every property of the physical painting, sculpture, building, can without remainder be assigned to one category or the other, so that it can be assigned between the two objects”.

Every property of the physical painting, sculpture, building (and music, dance and film) is given an aesthetic level of order. At the lowest level it is crude and naive and at the highest level it is refined and superior. The idea that there is no aesthetic in a natural way of sensing the world but only in the human intellectual view is not considered as relevant to the idea of aesthetic object theory. Art is only considered to be a human endeavour and therefore art will hold to some degree aesthetic qualities that the natural world does not. The physical object hypothesis, by contrast, would have it that art is an experience that only comes to mind as an inherent unlearned natural way of sensing and is, therefore, void in any aesthetic content. The artist will, in trying to model this experience bring aesthetic content into what he, or she, makes but the question is does this reveal the art experience or destroy it? The refined argument for aesthetics in art brakes down at this level, and it is here that a rift emerges in the assertions as to what is, or is not, an art experience. Is art created by the human command of mind over matter, or is it that this command is suppressing the reality of the experience artists — of a certain natural disposition — are more sensitive towards 'feeling' in their view of the world than the rest of us?

The second objection is that the aesthetic object theory distorts critical procedure.

"In trying to exhibit ways in which the work of art realizes the creative intention, criticism puts

much effort into matching, alternatively contrasting, a single property or a set of properties with another : Distribution of pigment with representational effect, manner of cutting the stone with heightened drama or increased environment of the spectator, use of materials with declaration of architectural function. Now, if we allow ourselves the distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties – that is to say, we interpret it as broadly as we need to so as to make sense of it – we must recognise that, in many cases where the critic makes such contrasts or comparisons, he is in effect pairing aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties or sets of properties.

The match or contrast is across the divide.”

The aesthetic object theory exists by demanding quite well defined limits. It upholds that you cannot venture beyond the art object as it is made by human thought and control of material composition to reflect some aspect of a seemingly desirable achievement. Marcel Duchamp's fountain hits this idea right where it hurts. His toilet urinal has to be brought into the aesthetic object theory as an example of a reaction against established values, and it is not thought to uphold the essence of artistic endeavour because it is ready-made. It is, quite wrongly in my opinion, explained away by critical contrast and comparison with the aesthetic object theory. In Duchamp's case a contrast is evoked between the high ideals of workmanship and meaningful content in art and the lower lesser ideals of a reaction against these values. The physical object hypothesis on the other hand would have it that this object is closer to the base sensation of the art experience in that the artist has had little influence upon creating it. Thousands of toilet urinals have been manufactured to a set standard of design and so the Duchamp exhibit points to a different set of considerations as to what the art experience is. Duchamp tells us the art experience is not unique but that it exists in any object and its presence depends upon how you think. You are looking at an object that is not art and an object that has had its functional use removed. You are presented with an object that tries to make you look with no ideas about what you are looking at. This is a true reflection of the physical object hypothesis, but, of course, the urinal fails. It cannot present itself to you as something you have no ideas about because this is very difficult to achieve. What the Duchamp ready-made does do is point to the raw experience of the physical object that is the foundation of the art experience in a way that no composed aesthetic idea of art ever could.

A universal presence exists in all things that the aesthetic object theory fails to discern. Wollheim touches upon this realisation when he discusses a second motivation within aesthetic object theory. A universal quality comes to light that can only be glimpsed when you stop yourself looking at the story, or the intellectual content of the art object. When you stop looking at technique and all imposition of learning that the artist puts into the work. When you remove these values you find yourself faced with the raw reality of what confronts you and your mind gets to work to reduce the disturbing impact of this physical view. You find yourself...

“...reflecting upon the physical painting, carved sculpture or building not timelessly but at different moments in history. Such reflection reveals that, if we exclude merely determinable properties such as being of some shape or another, or being marked in some way or another,

then for each object there is a continuum of sets of properties, such that each set is defined by the time at which it qualifies the physical object. This expresses the fact that in its determinate properties the physical object changes over time, and it is explained by the fact that pigment, stone, and wood are eminently corruptible: colour fades, damp loosens the plaster, the atmosphere erodes the carving, But, by contrast, the work of art itself is incorruptible: its character does not alter with time, and it has no history – though it has, most likely, a prehistory. Accordingly, what is required – or so reflection suggests – is to select out of the indefinitely many sets of properties that qualify the physical object over time, one privileged set, which reflects the optimal state of the object, then to posit an aesthetic object, and make this object the bearer (atemporally) of these and only these properties. This object is the work of art. So we get the second version of the aesthetic object theory, to which may be ascribed the aim of trying to safeguard the aesthetic condition of the work of art”.

The whole point of the physical object hypothesis is rejected to safeguard the aesthetic condition. The aesthetic object theory bottoms out by forcing us to imagine art is a human quality that has been imparted into the material properties of the art object so that, even if it decays over time, these qualities will remain the essence of art as a human command over the nature of events. The physical object hypothesis would challenge this notion of grand design by seeing that the universal element in the art object is something far more subliminal in our thinking. The decaying object will not retain the grand essence of some artificial imposition of human command over a natural state of affairs. On the contrary, the decaying material of the art object, so lovingly placed into order by the artist, is returning to a natural disorder that will, by virtue of our inability to sense this underlying state of affairs, provoke an inherent unlearned way of sensing from the depth of the mind. We begin to sense that the artistic content of the object will decay and be corrupted and that disorder will reclaim the material, and we fear that all the intellectual imposition of ordered thinking will be lost. Popular belief would have it that some miraculous creative content will survive the inevitable decay of material, but the harsh fact is there is no grand message that transcends this inevitable event. Art is not some grandiose message from God that keeps the vulgar reality of nature out of our experience of the world, but is an artificial imposition of human aspirations upon a natural order of events. We look to suppress the seemingly disturbing meaningless and disruptive nature of the reality of decay through a desire for aesthetic concepts that impose order and organisation over our view of the world, but this is not the essence of the art experience as it is conceived through the physical object hypothesis. The decay of order and organisation can only be returning a sensation of natural awareness to our view of the world, but we look to transcend this seemingly undesirable state of affairs through the belief our thoughts can live on after the inevitable decline of material existence.

It begins to look as if the loss of the imposition of aesthetic control and order in art gives a glimpse into a far older inherent way of sensing. A view of the world void of intellectual command and belief, and in this state of mind the artist vaguely grasps a glance into a remnant

of an older inherent sensation of intuitive instinctive awareness. In the light of modern thinking this experience that resides in the deepest darkest oldest areas of our minds can be no more than a sensation of animal origin that the artist will either want to bury behind the aesthetic content of their work, or try to reveal by the removal of this demand for intellectual command over what you do. Controlling your actions through learned thinking generates an aesthetic interpretation of the material reality of your work, and, depending upon your disposition, you will either think this destroys the essence of an original experience, or that you possess the ability to model the original experience. This contrast in thought is what discerns the physical object hypothesis from the aesthetic object theory of art, and you will either believe in one point of view or the other. There is no common ground between these two extreme points of view, and your idea of art will depend upon believing that either art is an attempt to discover your natural alliance with nature, or to suppress this alliance through your ability to control and design the physical world. To preserve the aesthetic object theory even change and decay that is beyond the artist's control has to be thought to have a purpose. There can be no surrender to the mindless reality of natural events.

“The present version of aesthetic object theory as it stands calls for two minor refinements. First, it might be thought that the privileged set of properties which the aesthetic object comes to enjoy are identical with the earliest set of properties possessed by the physical object: it is only if these are assigned to the aesthetic object that aesthetic condition is safeguarded. However, this is not in all cases correct, and specifically it does not hold when the physical object was made with the aim of maturing into its optimal aesthetic state. Examples of such works of art would be Chinese pots (e.g. Southern Sung) with a pronounced crazing which develops after the firing; Saarinen's John Deere Corporation Building on which the Cor-ten steel was intended to redden over a period of seven or eight years; of William Kent's garden at Rousham, conceived of with full-grown trees. In such cases fidelity to the artist' intentions requires us to privilege a later set of properties and ascribe them to the aesthetic object”.

Some modern artists now make works that only have a limited life span. Examples of can be found in the *Wrapped Trees and Coasts* made by Christo and Jeanne Claude with their temporality and feeling of fragility, vulnerability and urgency to be seen; Robert Smithson is noted for his *Spiral Jetty*, that consists of an arranged rock, earth and algae structure that forms a spiral-shape protruding 1500 ft into Great Salt Lake in Utah, U.S.A. How much of the work, if any at all, is visible is dependent on the water levels. Since its creation, the work has been completely covered, and uncovered, many times by water. The aesthetic element in these examples, rather than being drawn out over time, is lost.

"But this struggle (to safeguard the aesthetic condition of the work of art) is not best viewed as something forced upon us by an altogether accidental process of corruption to which the works of art are contingently subject. Two considerations support this. The first being that across all the arts aesthetic consideration is permanently at cognitive risk, through changes in culture, convention and perception. That in the individual condition is also at permanent physical risk

serves to mirror this fact. But, secondly, there is the consideration that we have no clear way of conceiving of anything which is physically constituted – as works in these arts necessarily are – and which yet never dims or decays. What we need is not so much a theoretical bifurcation of the physical object and the aesthetic object, but a systematic account of how just the same predicates can be held to be both true of the work of art just at certain times in its existence and also, and as a consequence, true of it throughout its existence".

The physical object hypothesis would have it that such a predicate will be upheld because the art experience has nothing to do with the arranging of material to create a work. It makes no difference if you throw the material on the floor in an unguided way or chose to labour to model the material to create a form controlled and structured through your powers of intellect. The end result in both cases upholds that the art experience as an inherent way of sensing any object or event (Duchamp) and the only difference is that the unguided accidental form is closer to this innate experience than the guided output created through much thought and effort in the traditional way.

"At the beginning of this essay I said that aesthetic object theory is not the only, it is just the likeliest, alternative to the physical object hypothesis. The next likeliest alternative derives from the proposal of Nelson Goodman's that we should ask not, What is art? But, When is art? The proposal meets with two difficulties. It asks us to accept what its author recognises is the counter-intuitive proposition that something, which at certain moments is a work of art, at other moments is not. But, more significantly, it requires us to be very clear indeed about the function of art so that we can identify those moments when the thing becomes a work of art. Indeed what the proposal amounts to is the suggestion that the stable property of art should be understood in terms of the intermittent function of art. The function of art is an obscure issue, but there is an additional difficulty, relevant here, which a theory like the institutional theory, for all its imperfections, brings before us: and that is that some functions that works of art perform they perform only in virtue of having been recognised as works of art".

An object becomes art by being accepted into a classification of type.

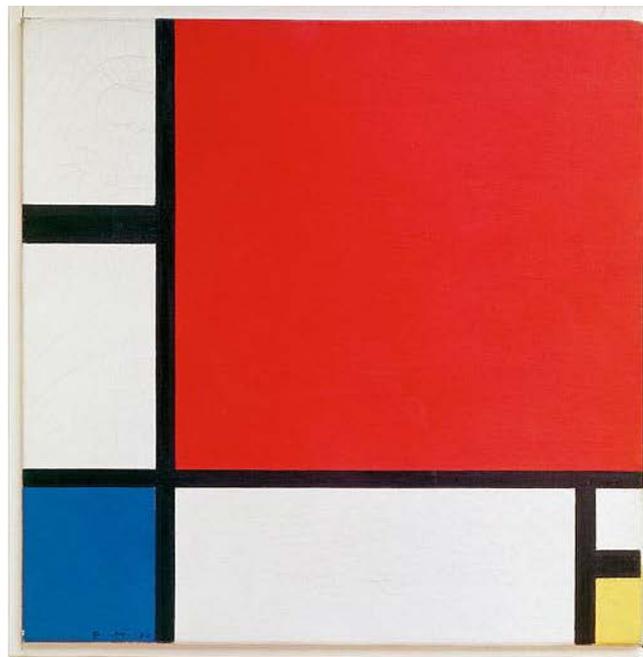
"Art trades on trust".

What we find is that to maintain this point of view any none-art object has to be adopted as an art object because this act will safeguard the aesthetic character of the idea of art. There will, however, be a short interval in time when the non-art object creates a disturbance in the aesthetic arena that compiles the classification of type, and a different experience will enter the world of art. A view of an object or an event will be glimpsed without any established principles and an old inherent way of sensing will flood the arena. The safeguarded position of the aesthetic theory, that arose before we realised we inherit an older way of sensing the world, will falter. An new movement will arise in the art scene and we will sense the world as never before. The view will astound us, but it will quickly be assimilated, and the status que will be regained because our minds have evolved to rid our thoughts of the raw reality of what confronts us. The

new none-art will be given a label that brings it within the establishment, and the professors and the theorists will fill our thoughts with ideas about the aesthetics of design and purpose in this new art form. The none-art object will become art and this widening of the classification of type will suppress the reality of an inherent way of sensing the world around us. We feel discomfort when faced by art that looks to abate aesthetic character.

* All quotations in this essay are from pages 177-184 of *Art and its objects. Second edition. With six supplementary Essays*, by Richard Wollheim. Cambridge University Press, 1990

THE REALITY OF PAINTED OBJECTS



Piet Mondrian: *Composition II in Red, Blue, and Yellow*, 1930 *This image is in the public domain*

At some distant point in time, now lost to us in the mysteries of the past, painters began to make images on flat surfaces. I doubt they ever thought about why they felt compelled to do this. They took coloured earth and began making recognisable outlines of the animals they hunted. They filled their cave walls with a sense of wonderment, and it must have seemed to be a natural thing to do. Now, thousands upon thousands of years after this genesis of art we modern painters take our tubes of paint and, mixed with water or oil, we guide this material with a brush to paint a picture. It all seems unquestionable. As if the first artist knew what they were doing and all we need to do was to refine the procedure, but I have never understood why this dogma has remained unchallenged. It seems to me that something much more fundamental is going on in this need we humans display to want to picture objects and events on flat surfaces. We seem to be acting unconsciously to direct our minds away from the reality of what confronts us. We transform the paint into an illusion; an image of something we have seen in the real

world, or wish we could see. We ignore the physical vulgarity of what you do in favour of turning the messy paint into a nice clean image. Like washing your dog so it does not foul the studio with its natural odours, and it is for this reason I prefer not to wash my dog. I want to sense the reality of what I see, or smell, rather than an artificial transformation of this experience into a false image. This is why I paint in the third dimension on torn-up or screwed-up paper. This stops you looking into an imaginary space and you are confronted by the concrete reality of a real world object, rather than, as traditional painters do, transform reality into a representational image.

Abstract painting began to move towards this need to be part of concrete reality but it was encumbered by the very word that was chosen to categorise it. To abstract is to 1. have no reference to material objects or specific examples; not concrete. 2. not applied or practical; theoretical. 3. hard to understand; recondite; abstruse. 4. donating art characterised by geometric, formalised, or otherwise non-representational qualities. And so on and so forth. The word fails to mention its demand that the painter shifts their vision from the representational image to concrete reality of the paint on a surface. The abstract shapes have to avoid illusion if they are to be truly concrete but this was found difficult to achieve on the flat surface of the canvas. The plane still enticed an imaginary idea of space within the rectangle of stretched primed fabric, and this illusion stopped the reality of painting imposing its raw presence upon your mind. Piet Mondrian saw this reality of what he confronted, and said, "Abstract art is concrete and, by its determined means of expression, even more concrete than naturalistic art". (Mondrian 1945, p17). And this prompted Rudolf Arnheim to ask "But what exactly is this 'determined means of expression'?" Once the depiction of natural objects had been given up, something else had to take its place" (Arnheim 1992, p 16). Mondrian tried to model this "determined means of expression" as a concrete experience of the painting. That is to say that you have to look at the painting not into it, but classing it as abstract distracts from this idea.

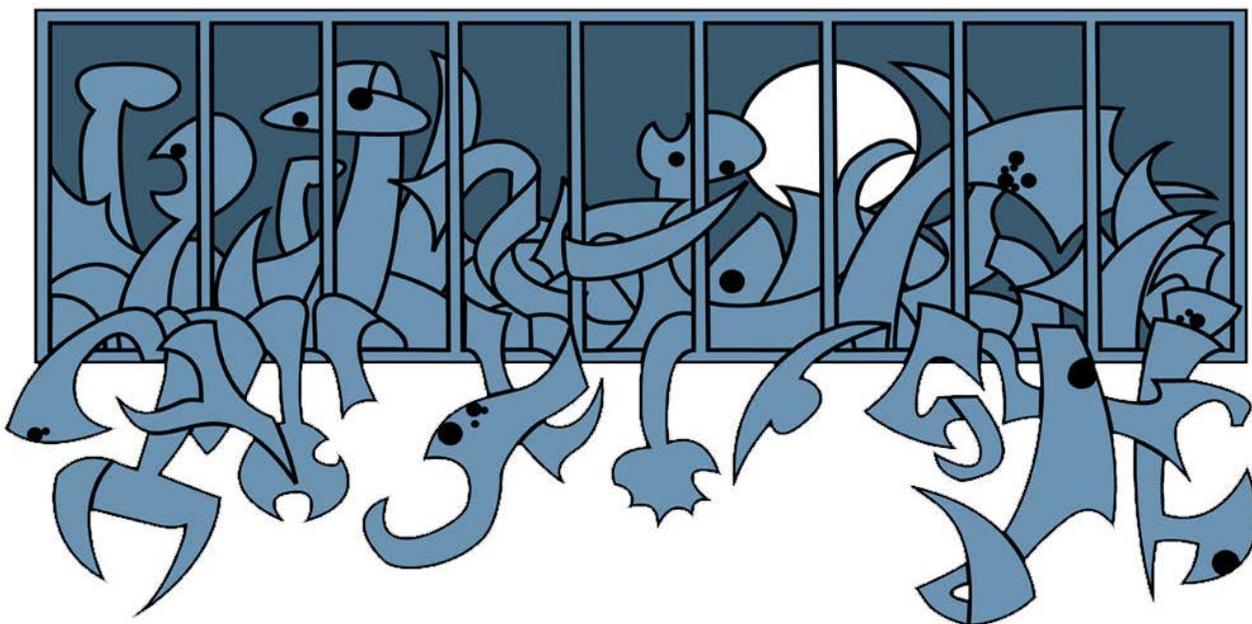
One would not class a tree or a mountain as an abstract, nor would one try to picture the concrete reality of these natural objects as representational of some other 'imagined' place. One does not look into a tree or a mountain to picture an image of something removed from the reality that confronts you as you do when you look into a painting of a landscape. The aim of abstract painting was to make an object you cannot look into and escape into a fantasy, but must look at. The idea being to create a painting that stands in front of you like solid walls with no illusion of vast spaces full of landscapes, figures, portraits, or whatever, but it proved difficult to reach this end on a flat stretched canvas. The plane drives you away from sensing the reality of what you see, and your mind ignores the real experience and looks to suppress it by imagining worlds inside picture frames that are full of illusions. Some abstract painters added dirt, sand and other solids to try to stop the picture plane calling to the imagination, but abstraction never achieved the reality of painted objects that it set out to explore. The movement was lost to pointless pretty patterns of colours and shapes that appealed to little more than decorative values.

I began to paint of screwed-up paper to remove the illusion of the picture plane and to try to bring a more concrete reality back into my work because I realised this need for painting to displace its reality with clever controlled images and intellectual story telling is a behavioural response that developed all those thousands of years ago as our ancestors struggled to survive in caves. Faced with blank walls they lived with no illusions as to the reality of what confronted them, and painting on walls helped them imagine other worlds. The direct intuitive awareness of the 'animal' mind began to be replaced by the indirect imaginative illusion of the awakening intelligent view we live with today, and art was born. It began a rapid journey – of little more than 40,000 years - that propelled us from from cave-dwelling primitives to the all-conquering city-living creatures we are today. All that learned technique over all those thousands of years has driven the reality of the painted object out of our experience of what we see, and so I search to rediscover the painting you cannot look into. The thick paint on an uneven shaped surface, and bold colours that direct your senses to recall of bestial origins.

Mondrain 1945. Piet Mondrian, *Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art*. New York: Wittenborn.

Arnheim 1992. Rudolf Arnheim, *To the Rescue of Art; Twenty-Six Essays*. University of California Press.

PRIMALISM



Primalism would be a way of looking at any object or event to remove the established intelligent ideas we learn to apply to what we see. The aim of this type of work would be to reveal the art experience as an old inherent way of sensing generated in the mind before conscious thought, and a Primalist artist would be looking to direct our thinking to a redundant form of perception that remains from old powers of animal instinct. This is a directly opposed working procedure to the educated definition of art – that looks to the production of works of intellectual meaning and

higher learning. A Primalist Artist would be trying to explore the art experience as an inherent biological sensation of intuitive awareness that only comes to mind when our learned view of the world is disturbed, and this artist would be an individual who is particularly attuned to recall of any genetic expressions that remain from our original animal state of mind. To define Primalism from other art forms it is necessary to realise artists display two distinctly different behavioural responses to any recall of our old animal way of sensing by instinct. They will either work to suppress this experience through controlled technique – the traditional way of working – or try to reveal this experience by disrupting established values – the modern phenomena. Modern artists who look to disruption and disorder as a way of working would be individuals who are seeking to expose a direct response from our minds to how we conceive of objects and events when deprived of intelligent learned ideas. The Primalist view being that our higher thought processes have evolved to suppress this experience in our day-to-day powers of observation.

ART AS A BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSE THAT NEGATES INNATE PERCEPTION.

This update 7_August_2017

1_ The Idea of a Primary Universal Mechanism of Mind as an Underlying Influence in the Art Experience.

The central premise of this essay rests upon the evolutionary psychological proposal that a universal state of mind, inherited by all of us, is at work as a primary mechanism within our powers of observation. Such a state of mind would endow us with an original way of sensing objects and events, created through inherent instincts, that have become buried behind our ability to project precise recognition over all we see and do. This idea is of great interest to artists because it implies our need for art could be expressing cultural behavioural responses that have developed in differing social environments to keep an older universal way of sensing sight, shape, sound and movement out of our day-to-day experience.

Because art is concerned with the way we interpret human emotions into organised forms of sight, shape, sound and movement, this idea looks towards a deeper behavioural response in any artistic endeavour, that, regardless of the social use of the outcome of an artist's work, belies a universal way of sensing. That is to say that our emotional view of the world stems from an older inherent form of perceptual awareness that is now being translated into an intelligent learned response in our modern thought processes. Art objects have always, until modern times, reflected this learned view of the world, rather than a blind 'animal' insight that was once, and still is generated for us by instinct. As to whether-or-not an artist uses art to research this older 'animal' insight is a choice that is more demanding in this day and age than ever before.

No knowledge of a universal inherent psychological mechanism behind our powers of observation was understood before our time and so no artists considered it an influence upon their thought processes. Today, in science, the study of an inheritance of intuitive awareness lies at the very heart of the conceptual integration into evolutionary psychology from disciplines

of psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, sociology and history, and, therefore, the implications for artistic research remain more relevant than ever before. Even though a concept of a universal state of mind would be the prime cause of an artists' involvement in rearranging our day-to-day awareness of sight, shape, sound and movement into more complex forms, this view is not, in artistic explanation, considered to be the artists main preoccupation. My reason for writing this essay is to try to alleviate this bias. I see that the scientific concept of a universal state of mind is offering a way to comprehend the art experience that is quite unlike any other theory that artists have had at their disposal in the past. For the first time in art history, we are beginning to see art may not be about cultural products, but that these products result from a more basic behavioural response to the way we sense the world. Most people working in biology accept that we have evolved from, and will have inherited, animal responses from our ancestral origins that are now overwritten in our minds by intelligent powers of observation. In the case of artistic enterprise, the product of the artists response to this inherent power of observation drives them to want to heighten how we comprehend sight, shape, sound and movement through the making of an art object. This has always been thought to be evidence of a gift of creativity, but it could also be seen, from the behavioural point of view, to be caused by artificial responses created to suppress an older experience within our minds. Indeed, we would all be acting to suppress this underlying way of sensing in every observation we make, but artists would, under this principle, be more attuned to the universal psychological mechanism still generated at the back of their minds. Such an unconscious influence at work in an artists' powers of perception would, therefore, propel an artist to work harder to suppress the effect by creating art objects that impose more order and organisation over how we experience sight, shape, sound and movement. The question I am asking here is whether-or-not artists are individuals who will possess a greater inclination towards this unconscious universal way of sensing inherent from our past? Are artists more attuned to this inheritance, and are they being driven to suppress this sensation more than the rest of us through their need to make art objects? Any person with recall of this inherent universal way of sensing would find themselves fostering uncertainty as to the accuracy of our modern thought processes in relation to visual, tactile and auditory perceptions, and the response to these sensations will be to either bury this uncertainty - by creating expertly structured and meaningful art objects or seek to expose it. In this later view, the artist will be working to create uncertainty and disorganisation as the core sensation in what they do. In basic terminology an artist would, from this point of view, be an individual who gets a little recall of an old inherent way of sensing, presumably generated from the redundant remains of our animal powers of instinct, and, because we have evolved a state of mind that works to suppress this sensation, the artist is driven, unconsciously, to find a way to impose more order and organisation over how we comprehend the world to rid their mind of the disturbing sensation. This would make art a behavioural response that an artist displays by creating an object that works to suppress an original awareness generated by instinct.

From an artists point of view the scientific model of the mind that is beginning to emerge from evolutionary psychology would place artists as individuals who retain a faint recall of a much

older way of sensing the world by instinct. We have all evolved to replace this experience with reasoned intelligent thoughts that take those original impulses and transform them into learned powers of observation. This makes us look at our surroundings through a way of sensing that, whilst more successful than the original instinctive view, is far less intense. Artists will 'feel' our day-to-day powers of observation are lacking in depth of emotive content, and, presumably, they will set out to create work to try to redress this imbalance. Most of us don't get any hint of this sensation, but some of us will retain a perturbation caused by the original way our minds once formed its awareness of the world without reasoned thought, and if this is the case then any artist unaware of this influence will be working to suppress a universal inherent intuitive way of sensing objects and events. Such an individual will want to heighten our awareness of sight, shape, sound and movement because they 'feel' day-to-day experiences are in some way impairing their powers of perception. This will drive them to create art objects, but the realisation is that in doing this they will be working to suppress, rather than reveal, the underlying view. This concept reveals that traditional artists - by which I mean those involved in the establishing of culture from say, the rise of the Shang, Minoan, Egyptian, Indian and Sumerian civilisations, and everything we take for granted in relation to these beginnings; the fresco and canvas painting techniques, ornamental and formal sculpture, music and opera, film, museum display, and so on, are all the products of individuals - or groups of artists - who are involved in working to heighten our intelligent powers of observation. Presumably, what has arisen in the last few thousand years - and that we now class as artistic endeavour - is a behavioural response that works to offset a loss of an inherent intuitive way of sensing by instinct. This would mean art is the result of an adaptation of recall, that artists are more attuned to experiencing, of an underlying way of sensing that drives them to want to heighten our powers of observation. To do this the artist creates an art object but this is a reaction against the driving force not an attempt to reveal it. This is because all our minds work to suppress the underlying way of sensing by instinct that the artist 'feels' in their view of the world and, therefore, everything we do will be working to suppress a universal way of sensing. This is what evolutionary psychology would imply is the cause of our age old desire to create art. From the artists point of view this implies we have inherited minds that have mutated at some distant point in our past and this mutation has revealed itself in the last 40,000 years through the rise to our need to make art objects. Presumably, artists are more attuned to the original way of sensing by instinct and are, therefore, driven to rid their minds of this disturbance by making art objects.

That these art objects are then adopted for other cultural usage is a secondary consideration in this theory. The cause of the artists need to make the object in the first place is what we are interested in understanding, and regardless of its later use, this is the premise for what I term Primalism in art. You need to look beyond art history to understand that Primalism will be at work in all an artist does because it is an inherent way of sensing sight, shape, sound and movement our minds work to suppress in all we see and do. With modern knowledge about our distant origins in the hunter-gather mentality of the Pleistocene era it can now be realised that

the cultural use of art is a very recent development in what an art object actually represents. The cultural usage of art objects is an adaptation of a far greater implication that the art object upholds, and this stems from our most distant ancestors who spent the last two million years as Pleistocene hunter-gatherers. They left no trace of a need for art, and, of course, several hundred million years before that we were foraging and scavenging in the natural world with only this universal mechanism of mind that we have now buried under intelligent cultural learning.

Picturing the vast time involved before the rise of art objects is important because it allows an artist to realise a very different set of conditions underlie their desire to make art. We are not talking about art here as a cultural phenomena, but as a behavioural response to an inherent way of sensing objects and events. That the outcome of this response creates art objects that are then adopted for cultural and social needs is a different line of enquiry. Presuming, of course, that this desire I am talking about is the true calling of the artistic mind it becomes important to understand that other considerations, like commercial and financial demands, are going to be distractions. If you are a true artist then you are working with thought patterns that originate from older powers of observation generated in your mind by instinct. This will drive you towards a deeper awareness of sight, shape, sound and movement, and this gives rise to the realisation that other demands by society and cultural requirements for your work will redirect your awareness away from exploring this older inherent power of perception. We are now born into a modern world where we are taught to manufacture required products and to adapt to a cultural information overload, but this is counter-productive in any search for a primal way of sensing objects and events. Such objects would need to avoid commercial and financial viability because these considerations are ideas of cultural and social values that have evolved to suppress the view you seek to come to know.

Artists need to see that we all possess two states of mind. One is full of intellectual learning and demands for understanding and usefulness and production, whilst the other state of mind is a much more hard wired inheritance that once sensed the world without this cultural adaptation. Behind our civilised demands there is a mind that was moulded over a vaster period of time to the hunter-gatherer life-style of the Pleistocene. As to whether-or-not you choose to seek to explore this influence or ignore it is your choice, but knowing this choice at the beginning of what you undertake is the most important realisation for the true artist. It clears the mind of undesirable commercial and financial requirements that will work to suppress the research. The evolution of this hard-wired way of sensing through your powers of instinct is far greater than the seemingly all dominant way of cultured learning that we now adopt through intelligent reasoning, and to get even the smallest glimpse of the old way of sensing through instinct you need a clear mind free of commercial and financial demands. The cultured view and its art products are more popular and desirable, but what we are talking about here is something far older and inherent in the mind. Any artist working to get to this level of mind won't be too concerned as to whether-or-not their work has viability. The consideration is just irrelevant in

relation to what you are truly trying to picture.

Beyond the useful cultural adaptation of the art object there is a deeper, more disturbing and uncomfortable, presence. A reminder that we may be making and using art to suppress a primal way of sensing that these objects came into existence to help us overpower. This conclusion is based upon the fact that the evolution of complex design, like the hard-wired working of our minds, is a slow process when contrasted to historical time. The few thousand years of cultured reasoning and information overload is a very recent development in a much longer relationship that we held to the origins of art, and yet even this time scale is insignificant in relation to the inheritance of the Pleistocene hunter-gather mentality. Indeed, cultural adaptation in society is so recent that it would hold an undetectably small measure on the scale of historical human evolution. The time span between the very first signs of cave art - more than 40,000 years ago - to the rise of civilisations with their cultured demand for artefacts seems vast, but in comparison to the time that preceded cave art the mentality of the hunter-gather mind at work through intuition and instinct is almost unimaginable. We simply hold no way to picture how our distant hunter-gatherer ancestors of the Pleistocene sensed their environment, and yet this way of survival is ingrained into the physical architecture of our brains. Historically speaking we are still hunter-gatherers in fine clothes. We work to suppress our animal instinct and primal desires in our cultured view of the world, but despite civilisations vast demands for us to do this, we still possess an ingrained construct of intuitive responses that don't like to be tamed. The most interesting, and complex, functions of our actions to uphold civilisation and cultured modes of thought are very thin and fragile in comparison to the hard-wired design features of the human mind that evolved over vast periods of time to a hunter-gather way of life.

Whatever we civilised human beings think we are doing in day-to-day life one thing is indisputable, we are all working to suppress our inherent animal intuitive way of sensing our surrounding that we have inherited from our Pleistocene ancestors.

2 Absence of Coherent Principles in Art

In science there has developed a robust coherence to the many diverse disciplines that give to the field of enquiry a strong sense of purpose and exploratory power. All practical and theoretical work in science adheres to an overall procedure that gives to the vast diversity of subjects a singular standard of systematic analysis. No matter what field of enquiry you specialise in - psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, sociology, history, biology, genetics, etc. the overall concept of science itself upholds a singular standard of purpose. This is not the case in art where there is no direction for all the different theories and working procedures to aspire towards. No single overall purpose of endeavour exists as it does in science and one sees great contrasts of technique and theory. Painters, for example, range from those who create almost photographic realism and reflect subjects as diverse as still-life to religious icons, to those who throw paint without purpose or meaning, and no one technique or subject in art is in any way relevant or proper to the concept of art itself than any other. The traditional artist will assert that art has purpose in aspiring to the human need for spiritual ascent through the

as traditional art seems to have arisen to do – becomes essential insight. With this insight modern art could become a tool to explore the effect of the experience of objects and events that awaits to be encountered if we could learn to look without our intelligent powers of recognition, and this would foster art as a search for an older sensation we once lived with by instinct. And yet, not until such a way of understanding art is brought to bear on theory will a model of the subject be built that reveals our need for art to be a reaction to inner animal impulse. That animal don't create art is because, unlike us, they have not evolved to suppress their natural powers of perception with an artificial view created through intelligent learning. Only when we realise art is the outcome of our need to suppress animal instincts will the subject become, like science, a discipline where the vast differences of all ideas as to what art objects represent can be unified.

3 Traditional Art Objects as Agents of Suppression in an Artist's Powers of Observation.

The study of any artistic endeavour has, until recent times, followed lines of enquiry based upon the principles laid down by the social sciences. The arena of study being considered to be the outward manifestation of the artists intellect rather than any inner effect from the workings of biological and evolved psychology generated by the physical architecture of the mind. In both the social sciences and the arts the physical workings of the brain - the natural sciences - has always been held to be subservient to the output of artistic endeavour, but it is becoming understood that the actual physical architecture is the artificer. In the case of art the output is a product of more than just the intellect guiding the motor skills of the artist. There is a growing opinion that a deeper psychological motive underlies whatever an artist does, and this motive is a behavioural response that, unconsciously, has always propelled the artist to rid their thoughts of any disruptive uncontrolled inputs into what they do. The new picture sees the artist as an individual who is being pushed by the physical architecture of their brain to suppress an older way of sensing sight, shape, sound and movement. Such a model as this would imply the artist is an individual who encounters a greater degree of the influence of this old way of sensing in what they do, and they are driven to increase their need to control and organise how we comprehend sight, shape, sound and movement to offset this disturbance from the physical workings of the brain. It must be assumed we all possess this influence because, physically, artists are no different to any one of us. That they 'feel' the need to rearrange the day-to-day sensations of sight, shape, sound and movement into art objects is an outward display that they sense something within their powers of observation that most of us fail to notice. We look to the artist to reveal to us what this something is, and we believe the work they create reveals this something in the form of an artistic experience. The prevailing view has always been that the artist expresses this 'inner' sensation through the objects they make that reflect their time and place in culture, but this idea is now being challenged. If, as is becoming realised, the influence the artist suspects lurks in the depth of their mind is a product of the architecture of the way the brain has evolved then what we are talking about has little to do with culture, and far more to do with the intellect working to suppress the effect of an old underlying power of observation. The

art object, from this point of view, does not express the art experience but has been created to lessen its effect because this effect is recall of an older way of sensing.

Most of us do not get any inclination of this underlying disturbance from the workings of the brain because our power of observation are dominated by our modern thought process. Our intellect is all-commandeering and we don't 'feel' that our day-to-day encounters with the sensations of sight, shape, sound and movement are hiding an underlying effect. We don't 'feel' any disturbance in our day-to-day powers of observation, and so we are not driven to take these sensations and rearrange them into objects that display more order and organisation in the form of paintings, sculpture, music and dance. This view was never considered before modern times because artists did not realise we inherit an old way of sensing objects and events suppressed in day-to-day observation. Now that we hold a vision of the evolution of our brains that has arisen by adaptation and modification of an intuitive animal form, the view is emerging that what an artist experiences is a remnant of the old way of sensing objects and events that this original architecture once generated.

Presumably we have all evolved minds that work to suppress this old inherent way of sensing through our intellectual and intelligent thought patterns, but, in some of us with stronger recall of the old patterns, the view of the world we learn to build will be in some way less than perfect. Our day-to-day view will seem a little uncertain and we will set out to modify what we see, touch and hear to give it a more structured form. This is what artists seem to do, but the realisation is that this results from a response to rid the mind of the disturbance rather than reveal it. This changes the direction of enquiry into the purpose of artistic endeavour from that of the product of intellectual output to that of the result of a behavioural response to the biological architecture of the workings of the brain.

This line of enquiry into art offsets the old view where the emphasis has always been placed upon the higher workings of the intellect as the driving force of the need to create art objects. With a greater awareness of subconscious influences from the biological workings of the brain the view is beginning to form that art, like all other acts of human enterprise, has arisen in response to environmental pressures in the struggle for survival. This response would have driven us to seek to find a greater degree of accuracy in our powers of observation, and this is what an art object drives an artist to place before us; and is what we seek to find in our experience of such work. Long ago individuals, at the genesis of our awakening to our greater increase in capacity of mind, would have been encountering the very beginnings of an emerging way of sensing objects and events through reasoned thoughts. This way of sensing, that is now fully established in our minds, would have been in its infancy and the remnants of the older, less accurate, way of sensing by animal instinct would have still held influence. Becoming aware of recognisable images in the cracks and shadows on cave walls, or in twisted tree roots or wind-eroded rocks, arises into the mind as an experience of thought that we call imagination. This way of looking at the world through an invented image removes the raw intuitive experience of what confronts us. Enforcing this invented image by emphasising shapes

with coloured earth gives rise to an advanced way of sensing by learned understanding. You begin to look for the recognisable image in place of reacting by instinct to any shape, and this way of thinking helps you attain more order and organisation in your powers of observation.

Animals, without the increase in capacity of mind, would, presumably, not display this behavioural response that drives us to seek to find recognisable images. The emphasis in art theory has always been placed upon what these images and products were used for, rather than why we created them in the first place. This later adaptation of the basic response of the output of the artistic mind for cultural use resulted in the products - the painted images, carved sculptures, or composing of sound into a controlled rhythmic pattern of music, or movement into dance - being employed for other social and economic needs. The images were used for hunting ritual, dance for ceremony, and so on, and this has always been considered to be the purpose of our need to make art objects, whilst the view that we could have made these things in the first place to overpower a more intuitive way of sensing, is not considered. That art objects are the by-products of a far greater underlying motive, and that this motive would seem to be a desire to suppress the older way of sensing by animal instinct, seems to be a distasteful idea because it implies our need for art arises, not from intellectual supremacy but from an unconscious biological influence.

Just as in the Standard Social Sciences Model of enquiry Art Theory seems to have developed with the idea that it is in some way divorced from the natural goings on in the physical architecture of the biological and evolved psychological patterns of brain activity. Art theory seems to have developed from the age old social desire to look outwards and upwards for what influences our humanities and social interactions rather than inwards and downwards towards older less desirable origins.

4 The Concept of Evolution in Relation to the Art Experience.

“The fact that living things are machines organised to reproduce themselves and their kin does not mean that evolutionary functional analysis focuses narrowly on such issues as copulation and pregnancy (things intuitively associated with reproduction) over, say, taste preferences, vision, emotional expression, social categorisation, coalition formation, or object recognition”.
John Tooby & Leda Cosmides; *The Psychological Foundations of Culture; The Adapted Mind*.
Oxford 1993. Page 54.

Art seems greatly removed from the concept of evolution (or descent with modification, as Darwin phrased it). Evolution describes an unguided process of natural selection that works through a set of causal principles that govern the dynamics of reproduction needed to bring about cumulative adaptations that give better features suited to the task of survival. However, because accurate object recognition is needed in art - as is displayed through our ability to discern shapes and images as indicative of real world objects and events in pictures - there is a probability that this ability arose to help increase of powers of observation. Children, when they begin to draw and paint learn this need for a way of looking at an object or an event through pictorial form. Before an artist imposes socially meaningful content into their work they use their

basic powers of recognition to take shapes, sounds and movement and restructure these day-to-day sensations into a greater form of ordered representation. Paint is, in the traditional sense of art, arranged to uphold the appearance of a real world object, and, at this basic level of analysis, this is a display of a state of mind that is working to structure an advanced way of looking. This is the outcome of natural selection at work in the mind, and there is no reason to postulate divine intervention for the rise of the development of art in human history. Art is no more than an advanced way of recognising sight, shape, sound and movement, and artists rearrange these experiences to create an object that 'heightens' or intensifies our awareness of these sensations. The adaptation of this need to find a greater sense of order and organisation in an object for social and economic uses (decoration, story telling, entertainment, propaganda, etc.) can be considered a by-product of the original purpose of art as an evolved response to a 'lower' less advantageous way of recognising sight, shape, sound and movement. The seemingly easy way we learn to recognise an image in a photograph is a case worth considering. One might wonder what evolutionary advantage in the struggle for survival such an ability would endow us with before the invention of the camera, and the obvious realisation is that image recognition is a response we have evolved to display because it allows us to imagine objects in their absence. You don't have to be in front of a sabre-toothed tiger to recognise a painted outline of it on a cave wall, and this implies you have evolved to learn to generate an idea of this creature before you have to confront it. This anticipation of a real world experience, as far as we know, does not occur in the animal mind. Animals don't seem to hold the ability to recognise pictures of themselves or other things. It is, I must admit, hard to know if an animal thinks about prey when wandering the environment, or simply senses it by instinct when a threat is imminent. Do chimpanzee's dream of bananas, or do they only seek them when hunger dictates the need for food? Chimps' can be taught to point to an image of a banana, but this is not a natural response, and although many do recognise reflections of themselves in mirrors, our powers of image recognition seem to go far beyond animal responses. We seem to generate an advantage that imposes into our powers of observation a response that allows us to anticipate our powers of recognition of an object without having to go and look at the real thing. We imagine a conceptual image of a real world object in it's absence, and this, as you can imagine, is a great asset in predicting how to respond in the real world. What image recognition is giving you is the ability to predict an objects attributes before you see them, and this gives you an advantage in conceptual accuracy; it allows you to manufacture recall of a conceptual model of an object, and this is a very different behaviour response to reacting in the direct presence of the real object. This response seems unique to human thought processing, and, in evolutionary terms, this artistic way of picturing objects and events is allowing you to suppress your original intuitive responses to real world confrontations. You recognise an image of an object that, in reality, has nothing to do with the real thing – you see a face in a twisted tree root, or the outline of a horse in a wind eroded rock – and this creates, in your mind, a conceptual model that is very different to the real world experience of real faces and horses.

Few realise that artists, in our emerging species, must have been individuals who held this advantage in their powers of observation. They recognised and used coloured earth to outline images of objects and events in the world around them, and other individuals learned from these images how to think about real world objects and events in a new advantageous way.

Indeed, children still learn this technique of looking at real world objects and events and translating the direct intuitive experience into an imaginary image. This, in the young, is a record of how our minds have evolved to translate an inherent way of sensing the real world experience into a form of conceptual modelling (in this case drawing) that allows us to think of objects and events before we have to go and face them. This, in effect, replaces our old way of sensing the direct experience of an object or an event through instinct. For any artist who retains recall of the remains of the old way of sensing by instinct the task becomes one of creating work that helps provoke a return to mind of this lost natural experience rather than, as traditional working practice has always done, suppress this sensation through the making of an intellectual intelligently controlled idea of art.

BASIC PRINCIPLE: READYMADE OBJECTS



Marcel Duchamp exhibited a mass-produced toilet urinal as a work of art in 1917, and our understanding of the art experience was changed forever.

If we place a simple everyday object in an art gallery we do two things. First, we remove the idea of art because our simple everyday object upholds no values we associate to art. Second, we remove the idea we associate to the functional use of the object. This is what Marcel Duchamp did in 1917 when he presented a toilet urinal as a work of art, and this object therefore reveals an unconscious influence at work in our powers of observation.

What we have in front of us is an object that tries to remove all our intelligent ideas about what confronts us so that we are forced to look through an older inherent way of sensing. This inherent sensation of any object or event would be generated by instinct, but we look to stop this experience emerging into our mind by projecting intelligent learned ideas over what we see. Removing this learned way of looking is what an every day (ready-made) object does when it is placed in the art environment. It challenges your established idea of what you look at, but we have evolved minds that work to suppress this way of sensing. Recognisable creative art objects have always directed our experience of what we see to learned ideas of classification rather than loss of our powers of recognition. We are taught to look for a work that upholds the values we associate to an idea of art, and, therefore, when this idea is removed from an object placed into the art environment, where this classification is expected to be upheld, our mind begins to generate a 'feeling' of an older way of sensing created by loss of a learned idea. Another 'older' way of sensing by instinct is provoked from our mind, However, what we find is that when robbed of learned ideas our mind no longer recalls how to respond to the instinctive view. The implication of the gesture of the ready-made in art is that objects have always upheld a reflection of the way our minds have evolved from animal origins to take a vision of the world, generated by instinct, and transform this experience with a view controlled through intelligent thinking. This, in effect, has destroyed our original natural powers of observation. When first presented as a work of art the ready-made removed our understanding of what constitutes an object within the classification of art, and this caused most people to reject this work as fraudulent, but this is a knee-jerk reaction to a far deeper unconscious response. A urinal placed on exhibition in an art gallery also robbed us of the day-to-day idea we normally impose over a urinal. What this work should do in an art gallery is make our minds generate powers of observation through a unlearned natural way of sensing because all learned ideas of classification have been removed from this exhibit. The ready-made reveals this to us but what we find is that our way of thinking work to suppress any hint of the original way of sensing through instinct returning into our mind.

Our problem is our intelligent command over perception. We learn, at a very early age, to project intelligent ideas over all the objects we see in day-to-day life, just as we learn to expect to find ideas of art when we look at objects in an art gallery. Our mind imposes these learned intelligent ideas into our thoughts even when the status of art and the function of the object have been removed from what we look at. If we are faced with a urinal on exhibition in an art gallery we look for ideas of art in this common object, but a urinal upholds no such values. What we experience is therefore a loss of intelligent ideas, and we should, under this principle, revert to sensing what confronts us in an older inherent way. The great problem with any ready-made object presented as art is that we no longer know how to grasp the original experience of an intuitive way of sensing that such an object could provoke from our minds. Modern knowledge of evolution tells us that we will still possess an older 'animal' way of sensing without intelligent ideas because the view will be inherent and still generated by instincts passed down to us from our distant origins, but, because we have evolved minds that work to suppress this

sensation we no longer possess any way to comprehend the original impulses. The old intuitive way of sensing will still arise from expression structured through proteins ordered by the DNA that guides the growth of our brains, but our intelligence learns, at a very early age, to overpower and to ignore any stray expressions that arise from this old inherent experience.

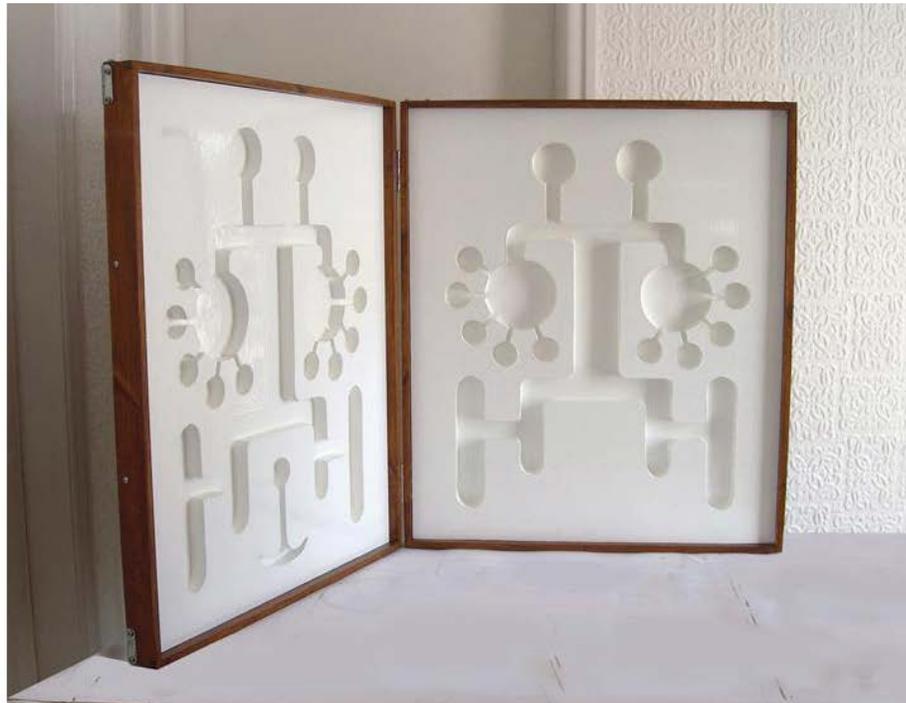
A ready-made object placed in the art environment can be interpreted as an attempt to remove all intelligent ideas about what we see so that we can experience an object in an old instinctive inherent way, but this type of gesture cannot create a work that gives us this sensation. It only upholds the principle of the idea, and Marcel Duchamp introduced it because he realised it exposes the concept of modern art as it should be understood as a search for a primal state of mind.

The problem for a modern artist who understands this idea is one of having to find a way to reach this primal state of mind. You cannot model the ready-made in any way. If you sculpture it or paint it, your work will be thought to bring artistic values to the object, and this will give people an intelligent idea that they will use to suppress the primal sensation of what they see. You cannot disguise it because if, for example, you wrapped it in plastic sheet or brown paper, people hold ideas about wrapped up objects and these ideas will suppress the primal sensation. You can't paint a picture of it, can't remodel it, and can't disguise it. The task, therefore, sounds impossible and yet we possess a way of looking at any object, art or not, in a primal instinctive way. The urinal could be sensed by instinct, but our intelligent minds will not let us see this view. Our powers of recognition are now dominated by learned ideas that give an artificial transformation of intuitive sensations and so, when an artists places something that is not art in the world of art, our learning falters and we sense the loss of our ideas of art. We fail to realise that the none art object could, if we knew how to sense it by instinct, show us how we used to once experience objects in an original natural way.

The problem for a modern artist is one of having to find a way to reach this primal state of mind.

You cannot model the ready-made in any way. If you sculpture it or paint it, your work will be thought to bring artistic values to the object, and this will give people an intelligent idea that they will use to suppress the primal sensation of what they see. You cannot disguise it because if, for example, you wrapped it in plastic sheet or brown paper, people hold ideas about wrapped up objects and these ideas will suppress the primal sensation. You can't paint a picture of it, can't remodel it, and can't disguise it. The task therefore sounds impossible and yet we possess a way of looking at any object, art or not, in a primal instinctive way. The urinal could be sensed by instinct, but our intelligent minds will not let us see this view. Our powers of recognition are now dominated by intelligent learning and so, when an artists places something that is not art in the world of art, our learning falters and we sense the loss of our ideas of art. We fail to realise that the none-art object could, if we knew how to sense it by instinct, show us how we used to once experience objects in an inherent intuitive way.

THE CONCEPT OF THE MISSING ART OBJECT



This idea of creating an empty box that displays the place where an art object was kept is an attempt to understand a sensation called ORBS. ORBS is an acronym for Object Recognition Breakdown Syndrome, and this condition of the human mind is 'felt' when we are faced with an experience towards which we are unable to project any ideas that we use to identify what confronts us.

In art the syndrome known as ORBS is generated by the exhibiting of a found object or the performance of bizarre or ludicrous acts that remove our ideas of art from the work. However, the principle of ORBS extends beyond art and applies to any object that we find difficult to recognise. Object Recognition Breakdown Syndrome forces our mind to sense the external world without the imposition of established ideas, and the sensation this creates within our powers of observation generates a feeling of uncertainty. The human mind actively seeks to avoid this condition in all we see and do. It has become habitual behaviour for us to seek to find something we know how to recognise in what we experience to stop ORBS being sensed in our view of the world. This behaviour reveals that any object or event that we fail, or find difficult to recognise, exposes us to an underlying way of sensing that our powers of perception have evolved to suppress in our minds. The underlying way of sensing will be inherent from our primal origins and will still be generated in the depth of our minds in the form of any genetic expressions that remain of our old animal instincts, but our thought processes now block-out these sensations by forcing us to look through our intelligent powers of recognition.

In order to create a primal sensation of an object I believe an artist needs to find a way to remove all the intelligent ideas we project over what we see. If I just painted a picture of an object you would recognise the image that I portray, and you will also project an idea that

allows you to categorise my work as a painting. Painting a recognisable image is not, therefore, going to create a primal sensation from the depth of your mind.

Creating sculpture, music and dance will fail for the same reason. You possess well-established ideas that will suppress the primal experience of these objects in your mind. You will look to recognise an arrangement of control and organisation that the artist has given to the work. If I present a ready-made object as art (a urinal, a dead shark, or whatever) this will remove your idea of artistic workmanship (anyone could place a ready-made in an art gallery) but doing this will not disturb the intelligent ideas you possess that you use everyday to recognise ready-made objects. To get an object to generate a primal sensation from your mind I need to find a way to stop you projecting all these established ideas that you have learned to impose over your view of what confronts you.

My solution to this problem is to remove the object and only allow you to see the empty place the object occupied. Because no two people will think up the same idea of what the missing object should look like, this type of work should, in theory, provoke an intuitive instinctive response from your mind.



WHY ART CANNOT BE SUBDUED

A portrait of a dictator could never be a work of art because the painter, to create a likeness of the tyrant, has to shackle the desire for free thinking that an artist so yearns to call to mind. If the portrait painter stood true to the pursuit of artistic freedom, then they would have to throw paint at the canvas. They would have to make the painting reflect the disdain they feel for a subject that they have been forced to portray that stops them coming to know a freedom of thought and actions that art should uphold. This they would be foolish to do, and throughout the

history of art mirror images of dictators stare back at us from canvases with perfectly pictured medals, glittering in golden ochre. The dictator, stern and totally authoritarian, stands resolute and assured immortality, whilst the painter is left to skulk away in disillusion; having betrayed the true calling of art. Of course, I am assuming the artist understands the true calling.

Before the modern age this calling could never have been determined because, to grasp it, requires the artist to work free of all social requirements. Many modern artists are no longer willing to remain shackled by the demands for commercial content in their creations. Some artists - not all artists - have thrown off the mantle of repressive working practices, and, for the first time in the history of art there are those who are willing to search for a true understanding of what the art experience is about. This requires moving away from controlled intellectual content. It requires abandoning the age old belief that the art experience can be created through a recognisable picture, a carved image, a choreographed dance, a composed symphony, an opera, or the story told in a book. The pursuit of a true understanding of the art experience can produce no useful commodity because, to do so, would contaminate your mind with subjective content rather than direct experience. It is here, confronted by unguided paint, unformed clay, jumbled sound and tangled movements sensed without intellectual restraint that your mind is open to the recall of an original way of sensing the world. Here the artist searches for a state of mind, not a picture to hang upon a wall, but how is the artist to eat when the art object no longer reflects the need for a product that can be sold at the marketplace? Alone and penniless, the artist works away to create a state of mind that only total freedom to act without restraint can give.

But what is this total freedom that lies hidden behind art? For many it could only be the unquestionable evidence that a greater presence of mind is a work calling us to restrain our natural instincts and rise to greater achievements through the control of our thoughts. Many become convinced a God gives us our desire for free-will, but, with modern understanding, the answer may not be quite so uplifting as most people would like to believe. The human spirit feels like it reaches for ethereal possibilities, but the reality is that the artists may be getting a sense of freedom that is more likely the outcome of biological recollection of an older 'animal' state of mind. A distant memory, we all inherit in our genes, that gives some of the 'feeling' our intellect and our need to control the paint, model the clay, compose the sounds and movements in art are the result of our mind working to suppress the remains of an older natural way of sensing the world.

From this point of view the traditional high ideals of art have to be brought down to earth, and so the modern artist reacted against the established principles that placed our idea of art on a lofty pedestal. To begin with the disruption was very subtle; like the trickle water that reveals the crack in a dam wall. Painters, for example, began to disturb the realistic image. In place of the recognisable landscape, or portrait, the brushwork began to take over, and the scenes dissolved into oceans of form and colour that no longer held any resemblance to a given subject. In sculpture, the quest for perfect shape was replaced with gouged deep finger marks

that deformed the reality of all proportions. In music, the harmony and melody began to be destroyed by accidental noise, and in dance, the perfect choreography was lost to a distorted tumbling of irregular movements. Writers found they possessed no words to describe an emerging sense of uncertainty because who could describe a vision that, deep in our thoughts, came from the echo of the mournful cry of the animal we had once been. An animal that was now entombed beneath all the intellectual and intelligent ideas that people looked for in the artists work, and so the artist stares into an abyss. She sees a lost arena of the human mind that is still crying for freedom that only the wild animal can know, and, seeking this freedom, becomes a search for what remains of our old powers of animal intuition.

This is why throwing paint at a canvas is more revealing than picturing a perfect likeness. The act removes your reasoned thoughts and only the unguided gesture remains that, even though you may not like what this artists has done, is the only way to gain this insight. You may feel this is the work of a charlatan, but only here, in this gesture, a deeper desire of the human mind is exposed that reveals we have evolved to suppress a natural way of sensing we once lived with in our animal past. The need of the artist who throws paint may seem inartistic, but it directs us to sense the world through instinct rather than intellectual intelligent understanding.

This we will find difficult to comprehend because we are now born to sense objects and events to suppress the feeling of uncertainty that looking without learning brings back into our minds. This feeling has become alien to our powers of perception, and yet this feeling is our heritage. It is all that remains of the animal sensations we once lived with, and that is now keep suppressed behind all the learned ideas we project over all we see and do. The painter throws paint to disobey the rules, because this painter realises it is only when we look without rules that we will see in a truly inherent way.

Like the untamed stallion that must be broken and brought to heel, this desire to suppress the wild mind is a reflection of our own retreat from our primal origins. The stallion running free upholds a vision we have evolved to overpower in our perception of the world. We find, like the portrait painter, that our very powers of recognition now generate a sensation of loss of freedom that was our old animal urge to escape anything that tries to trap us like a bird in a glass house.

We sense the recall of an ancient state of mind that our ancestors once lived with through intuition and instinct. A sensation that is still at work in every cell and sinew of our brains because it has been passed down to us in the deepest, oldest, parts of our mind. A call from the wild mind that our very way of thinking works to hide, and our fate is to enslave our original animal sense of freedom. We retain our primal origins in our psyche, but it has become a feeling we fear to recall because we are forever driven away from animal intuition towards intelligent understanding. For any artist, getting a little recall of what remains of this inherent view, the challenge is to find a way to avoid clever intellectual content and to look to unlearned ways of acting. Only here, in art that abandons the rules, can the artist seek to rediscover the animal freedom our ancestors implanted in our genes.

