

ART AND ITS REFLECTIONS MOMENTS AND PORTRETS IN THE MIRROR

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ABSTRACT. Art and Its Reflections. Moments and Portrets in the Mirror. This article is supposed to discuss the fact that art is a form of communication, that through it we are interconnected, that it is something mesmerizing that can be either very easy or very hard to understand. It all comes down to our perceptions, our perspectives that can change the way we see reality. It only takes a moment for the unthinkable to become reality. We all live a strange life in a strange world, but did our little experience and existence across the world and the universe teach us something? Or was it just in vain?

Keywords: *art, artwork, reflections, perception, connection*

The Border and the Skyline between Art and the Artist

In a continuous escape of space and time, at the border and the skyline between art and the artist, we find our tumultuous origins, defragmenting the intense and deep surrounding reality. No chip is without its own ambiguity. We are composed of fragments that make up our own existence, and when they are fully understood, certain mental and spiritual states transgress and continue to be, to exist to take another form or substance, to adapt and to live. Each and every one of us is surrounded by several realities. Thus, they seem to represent important elements of life that deserve to be studied, understood, expressed and recorded.

„The art work opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, i.e., this deconcealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of what is has set itself to work. Art is truth setting itself to work. What is truth itself that it sometimes comes to pass as art? What is this setting-itself-to-work?”¹

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¹ Martin Heidegger, „The Origin of The Work of Art”, in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. by Albert Hofstadter, Harper Colophon Books, New York, San Francisco, London, 1975. p. 39.

For centuries, art thanks to her reflections on humanity has evolved and changed both the world and her own perceptions on us and vice versa. A person is born and at some point dies but during that whole life feels the need, nearly constant, to make himself seen, heard, etc. There are ways and ways through which each of us is manifesting or trying to say something, but I think that art is the perfect tool through which we can do this.

„Truth is never gathered from objects that are present and ordinary. Rather, the opening up of the Open, and the clearing of what is, happens only as the openness is projected, sketched out, that makes its advent in thrownness. Truth, as the clearing and concealing of what is, happens in being composed, as a poet composes a poem. [...]The nature of art, on which both the art work and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth.”²

Art is a form of expression, a form of emotion. It is not only a cultural fact. It carries with it the passage towards creation: „*The Muse*”. The artist is free, indeterminate to express their own inner desires and experiences. A society lives in a body of time, of the spirit. The human kind represents art and art represents the human kind.

„The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other. In themselves and in their interrelations artist and work *are* each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely that which also gives artist and work of art their names – art.”³

Heidegger wonders [...] can art actually be an origin? Where and how does art exist? Art is nothing more than a word that is no longer true. If it is intangible and you cannot put your hands on it, it is as if it is not real, but in fact, it exists. For both Joyce and Proust, we remain suspended between time and memories. Time and space are discontinuous. Balzac was saying that the artist is loaded with a messianic force. Nothing brings us closer or somewhat closer to us than art does. As Heidegger said:

„The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work. However, until now art presumably has had to do with the beautiful and beauty, and not with truth. The arts that produce such works are called the beautiful or fine

² *Ibidem*, p. 72–73.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

arts, in contrast with the applied or industrial arts that manufacture equipment. In fine art the art itself is not beautiful, but is called so because it produces the beautiful. Truth, in contrast, belongs to logic. Beauty, however, is reserved for aesthetics.”⁴

Art must be. Art has to exist. We interconnect through it. Even though it creates some sort of paradox that does nothing but maybe give us another day, another tomorrow. It is a continuous flow that does not disturb our perpetual existence, but on the contrary, is the constant of time leading us towards innovation, creativity, and bringing us closer to one another. It is the inner space and the desire within us that goes through the moment, starting from our own perceptions, both inner and outer, regarding a vision over the world and over our existence, sometimes fragmented, fuelling the discovery of that inner reality and the subjective relativity of perception, which exists in the consciousness of the fragile nature of ephemeral in each of us.

„We inquire into the nature of art. Why do we inquire in this way? We inquire in this way in order to be able to ask more truly whether art is or is not an origin in our historical existence, whether and under what conditions it can and must be an origin. Such reflection cannot force art and its coming-to-be. Nevertheless, this reflective knowledge is the preliminary and therefore indispensable preparation for the becoming of art. Only such knowledge prepares its space for art, their way for the creators, and their location for the preservers.”⁵

Thus, art not only invites us to look at the world from a conformist or nonconformist point of view. As spectators or participants, we find ourselves either through painting, theatre, literature, freeing us from certain prejudices and constraints, perhaps some standards imposed by society or certain cultures. All these constitute a human show that can define the content of the moment, the need for self-assertion, the belief that art is part of the world in which we live. Heidegger said:

„We, however, have to take works as they are encountered by those who experience and enjoy them. However, even the much-vaunted aesthetic experience cannot get around the thingly aspect of the artwork. There is something stony in a work of architecture, wooden in a carving, coloured in a painting, spoken in a linguistic work, sonorous in a musical composition. The thingly element is so irremovably present in the artwork that we are compelled rather to say conversely that the architectural work is in stone, the carving is in wood, the painting in colour,

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 36.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

the linguistic work in speech, the musical composition in sound. 'Obviously,' it will be replied. No doubt. But what is this self-evident thingly element in the work of art?"⁶

Silent and spontaneously, probably far from reality, the writer wants to say what he feels. Even if these writings contain a truth passer-by, they represent a step forward in the gradual process of evolution, a process only known by the author. He can remain silent, unreachable, but sure of himself. As a human being, he is heading towards his own horizon.

The question of Heidegger's being did not lead to an answer, but to a deadlock. She gave meaning to philosophy in the Western world; And gave, as a simple question, the depth of art [...], language, culture, even technique, and ultimately mankind.⁷

Heidegger would need a complete universal. Therefore, he found it in the people, in a privileged situation that belonged to the people. He performs the existential analysis of human law, different from Sartre, specifically as a step in understanding the true meaning of the creature, while Sartre makes the human existence a step towards a better analysis of the existence. Therefore, the search is for Heidegger: being-human-being, and for Sartre: human-being-human.

Maybe we all live a borrowed life, for just a few moments, months or years. Maybe everything that exists only in our imagination or the mere consciousness that creates some possible links between our existence and us. Morality is not a decision. There is no enlargement, without errors. Thus, through art, her reflections upon us can be one of the safest ways of communication with the exterior and the interior, with us and with the world.

„In such knowledge, which can only grow slowly, the question is decided whether art can be an origin and then must be a head start, or whether it is to remain a mere appendix and then can only be carried along as a routine cultural phenomenon.”⁸

For an artist, and not only, I believe there are a few degrees of freedom for a personal vision, and that probably this is the moment that the creator of faces comes into place. As with any work of art, there are certain strict criteria, generally related to the aesthetics of the work. The realism and the inner beauty conveyed

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

⁷ Constatntin, Noica, „Meditații introductive asupra lui Heidegger” (studiu introductiv), in Heidegger, Martin, *Originea operei de artă*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1995. p.17.

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.* p. 78.

through art can exceed certain limits that bear the experimental seductiveness of a new century, a new era in which we are surrounded by technology. The art world and art itself are having both an interior and exterior struggle. Representation, or through representation, we open a world of inspiration that is located at the border and the skyline between art and the artist.

„This knowledge becomes all the more necessary when we risk the attempt to bring to view and express in words the thingly character of the thing, the equipmental character of equipment, and the workly character of the work.”⁹

Any work of art, regardless of the category, has a story and a history. A story of its own, even if it is real or invented and reproduced by its shape. In the moment in which the artist exposes his excitement or imagination, he communicates with him and with us through an invisible touch, through a way of communication, which is the window to the soul, feeling shared through his own creation.

„Whenever art happens – that is, whenever there is a beginning – a thrust enters history, history either begins or starts over again. History means here not a sequence in time of events of whatever sort, however important. History is the transporting of a people into its appointed task as entrance into that people's endowment. Art is the setting-into-work of truth. In this proposition an essential ambiguity is hidden, in which truth is at once the subject and the object of the setting. However, subject and object are unsuitable names here. [...] Art is historical, and as historical, it is the creative preserving of truth in the work. Art happens as poetry.”¹⁰

Thus, you can open channels of communication that will stump for an undefined time any request or retrieval. Any artist in all his art has a ritual that will maintain the structure of its exposure in his own speech, the message that can be sent and received by the other.

„Are we in our existence historically at the origin? Do we know, which means do we give heed to, the nature of the origin? Or, in our relation to art, do we still merely make appeal to a cultivated acquaintance with the past?”¹¹

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

There are controversies, as in any field; there are limits that some believe they may not be exceeded, or boundaries that can somehow be passed, without you being noticed by the person next to you. This might be the way some artists are born and it may also be the way they find their own path leading to creation or maybe abandon, in which the idea of transposing might scare them or make them feel the need to distance themselves into something spiritual or something above that.

„In the work of art the truth of an entity has set itself to work. [...] The being of the being comes into the steadiness of its shining. The nature of art would then be this: the truth of beings setting itself to work.”¹²

Any observed or unobserved experience, any feeling and perception can lead to contradictions, to a point of view that starts from our daily mashup, made by our mind and our soul. Somewhere far away, whether we choose to admire, or to create art, we are somewhat interconnected and so communication, regardless of its form becomes possible for each of us. Art and its muses take us far away on a carpet so thin that almost makes us feel like we are floating above the various forms and texts or images created by us. Heidegger asks whether

„But then where in how is this general essence, so that art works are able to agree with it?”¹³

The artist is like a face maker, where it is about sculpture, painting or photography, theatre, literature and so on. Aesthetics speak for themselves, our own perceptions do the same, but then where does the concept of beautiful fit in, or the border and the skyline between art and the artist.

„In the work, the happening of truth is at work and, indeed, at work according to the manner of a work. Accordingly, the nature of art was defined to begin with as the setting-into-work of truth. Yet this definition is intentionally ambiguous. It says on the one hand: art is the fixing in place of a self-establishing truth in the figure. This happens in creation as the bringing forth of the unconcealedness of what is. Setting-into-work, however, also means the bringing of work being into movement and happening. [...] Does truth, then, arise out of nothing? It does indeed if by nothing is meant the mere not of that which is, and if we here think of that which

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 36.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

is as an object present in the ordinary way, which thereafter comes to light and is challenged by the existence of the work as only presumptively a true being."¹⁴

I believe everyone's work is both intrinsic and fascinating, because the whole inner process is much more complicated and hard to reach or express in its perfection and plenitude. Heidegger says:

„Yet truth is put into the work. What truth is happening in the work? Can truth happen at all and thus be historical? Yet truth people say, is something timeless and supertemporal. [...] If, however, the reality of the work can be defined solely by means of what is at work in the work, then what about our intention to seek out the real art work in its reality?“¹⁵

The concept of beautiful

Regardless of the angle from which we look at or observe, regardless of any ups and downs, there is beautiful everywhere. The concept of beautiful represents not only an aesthetic value but also a fundamental one, through which we attribute it, under diverse moments and portraits in the mirror everything that art has managed to express until now as well as everything it will manage to express in the future. Art implies creation. Beauty can be found not only in art but also everywhere. One wonders, surely, why a painting today is looked at differently, or the music of Beethoven was not heard by his contemporaries? For the simple fact that our senses, including that of reality, are evolving. In his assumption Gadamer, in „The relevance of the beautiful“:

„Thus our exposition of the symbolic character of art returns to our original considerations concerning play. There too we noticed that play is always a kind of self-representation. This fact finds expression in art through the specific nature of *repraesentatio*, that increase in being that something acquires by being represented. If we wish to grasp this aspect of the experience of art in a more appropriate fashion, then I think that idealist aesthetics must be revised accordingly. We have already prepared the ground for the general conclusion to be drawn from this: all art of whatever kind, whether the art of a substantial tradition with which we are familiar or the contemporary art that is unfamiliar because it has no tradition, always demands constructive activity on our part.“¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 71.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

¹⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, „The Relevance of the Beautiful“, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker, ed. Rober Bernasconi, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986. p. 37.

Suppose that there is a category dedicated to aesthetics absolutely, which represent the object of aesthetics and that of the sublime; does the existence of beauty through its indescribable aesthetic transposition or debated, lead towards such understanding and discovery (a form of art, or art as the form itself)? As well as Gadamer claims:

„The beautiful is what can be looked at, what is good-looking in the widest sense of the word. [...] Hence, the idea of the beautiful closely approximates that of the good (agathon), insofar as it is something to be chosen for its own sake, as an end that subordinates everything else to it as a means. For what is beautiful is not regarded as a means to something else.”¹⁷

What does the man tend to, in his soul, both inside and outside, or while creating a work of art. Maybe they all represent a journey towards himself or towards each other. While existing somehow independent of any reality we will come to realize eventually that any aesthetic value can be found in the concept of beautiful. However, beautiful is not only about aesthetics. Whatever is beautiful can be found in anything, almost anywhere and almost any time. (Even if they are apparently linked to each other, they are still however different). We come to realize that any aesthetic value or aesthetics cannot predict or guess. It is created and it creates not only through the soul but also through intuition and inspiration. Everything that is nice through the first forms through which we are given, in the form of its own tastes and perceptions, it creates a vision for man over everything that exists. Even if it is assumed that the beautiful is given or takes the form of pleasure, which depends on the structure of an object or a thing, it is there. As Gadamer says:

„The basis of the close connection between the idea of the beautiful and that of the teleological order of being is the Pythagorean and Platonic concept of measure. [...] As we can see, this kind of definition of the beautiful is a universal ontological one. Here nature and art are not in antithesis to each other. This means, of course, that concerning beauty the priority of nature is unquestioned. Art may take advantage of gaps in the natural order of being to perfect its beauties. But that certainly does not mean that »beauty« is to be found primarily in art. As long as the order of being is itself seen as divine or as God's creation – and the latter is the case until the eighteenth century – the exceptional case of art can be seen only within the horizon of this order of being.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Transl. rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, Continuum, London – New York, 2006. p. 473.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 474.

We could say that the concept of beautiful can be paired with things that we consider favourable to us, or with a state of exception. The beautiful itself opens a gate, regardless of its form, or ontological horizon, being a link between an ideal and real. And if you were to talk about some playful form, with a certain interpretation, Gadamer mentions in his work, „The Relevance of the Beautiful”, about the game (that game) like a space which any work of art leaves, all the time or at the same time, in order for the participant to incorporate and seize. Thus, this game specifically identified by Gadamer, a game of intelligence, of instinct and imagination in what Kant calls *judgment of taste*.

„Thus, understanding is not playing, in the sense that the person understanding playfully holds himself back and refuses to take a stand with respect to the claim made on him. The freedom of self-possession necessary for one to withhold oneself in this way is not given here, and this, in fact, is what applying the concept of play to understanding implies. Someone who understands is always already drawn into an event through which meaning asserts itself. So it is well founded for us to use the same concept of play for the hermeneutical phenomenon as for the experience of the beautiful.”¹⁹

Finally, we reach the conclusion that beautiful does exist. Hence derives the concept of beautiful, precisely because it is divided into different directions. He can be transposed, converted or taken to the climax. There is beautiful in everyday life, not only in art and through art, but it exists beyond all this: in both society and nature and especially in human behaviour. I think beauty is one of the highest levels of becoming that can be achieved by mankind. Perhaps we cannot specify exactly what beautiful itself is because beautiful, if we look at it and analyse it as an aesthetic value, it is the subject to sudden changes of meanings. As affirm Hofmann, „*there is a rule of taste, based on which we can determine what is beautiful*”. Perhaps there is beautiful everywhere. You just have to open your soul. Hence, Gadamer, regardless of the reflections towards art, knowledge and his own perspective on hermeneutics, believes the concept of beautiful (as a transcendental one), to be as follows:

„The beautiful appears not only in what is visibly present to the senses, but it does so in such a way that it really exists only through it – i.e., emerges as one out of the whole. The beautiful is of itself truly »most radiant« (to ekphanestaton). The sharp division between the beautiful and what has no share in the beautiful is, moreover, a fact that is well established phenomenologically.”²⁰

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 484.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 476.

Art can be a renewal of life, a gate to another world, a world of beauty and discovery of your own self. The concept of beautiful opens a continuous gate without allowing the time to stop. As man and existence consists of deep feelings, thoughts, and experiences that are leading towards an abstract form of understanding. He is, perhaps, a subtle and sublime network full of reflections, just like the portraits in the mirror. These reflections create an imperceptible link system, stretching over time and transcending beyond us through art.

Any look in the history of aesthetics shows us that art and literature are related to the concept of intuition and, at least the latter, to the value concept of plasticity. Indeed, it is one of the most recent problematic domains of philosophy, but its foundation is clearly established with the delimitation of the concept and the critique of "pure" reason, which believes that it only comes to knowledge through concepts.²¹

In relation to aesthetics, Hegel's concept is based on a thesis that art is the appearance of the idea in both sensitive and concrete, it not being designed unless it has a spiritual sense. Such art is not only a great way or affirmation of freedom but is a pure form of transposition and expression. Note that Hegel asserts that specifically in art we must admit our own freedom of creation. This form of freedom is one of the main forms of manifestation of the soul and the freedom of the spirit. Therefore, art is free and unlike the minor art, can express the truths of the spirit and the soul.

With Hegel, the subject of aesthetics is neither beautiful nor taste, but art in its autonomy. In addition, the art of its historical becoming, the necessary alienation that accompanies its „progress” and the plan to disappear. [...] after Hegel, now that the autonomy of art appears as the autonomy that was in fact, it becomes possible to observe that the Hegelian dialectics maintained a systematic confusion between the positions of the amateur, the critic, the historian and the aesthetician. For even the amateur and the critic are forced by Hegel to sit down, like the historian and philosopher, in the speculative point of view of a finite history.²²

We find that for Hegel, aesthetics should not prescribe rules for the artist and the work of art, but rather, should consider and analyse that beautiful exists in those works of art. Moreover, if there is a method to define beauty, or the concept

²¹ Hans-Georg, Gadamer, „Intuiție și plasticitate”, in *Actualitatea frumosului*, trad. Val. Panaitescu, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2000 p. 143.

²² Thierry de Duve, *În numele artei: Pentru o arheologie a modernității*, Editura Idea Design&Print, Cluj-Napoca, 2001.

of beauty in art and beyond, we should reflect on those moments and moments in the mirror, so the structure of the aesthetic object in its authentic form will eventually become its most pure form.

Remembering a feeling is always a feeling, while remembering knowledge is not necessarily a knowledge. [...] Aesthetic judgment compares comparable things when experiencing a current sentiment with the updating of past feelings. The feelings are thus kept by both the memory and its guardians; there are also the feelings of forgetfulness, the signs of repentance, the mandatory repetition of what, not in memory, returns to it from somewhere else.²³

There is a beginning and an ending for any emotion or anything. Finally, we note that they are all a transposition and a combination of general, of perceptions and of the particular. There is a significant portion of a work of art that creates its own melancholic world.

These feelings can be the subject of interpretations, just as interpretations can awaken feelings. This results in a stratified complex of sense and feelings that alternate the interpretations attempted in relation to what was felt and the feelings felt about what was signified. [...] „This is art“ can retreat into experience and be covered under sedimentary layers of sense and afflictions that are hard to distinguish and thereby „unconscious“.²⁴

Everything that transcends must have an existence and significance for the human soul, for this sensitively intangible that lies in each of us. Perhaps art should not only be, but it is designed and created to emanate the essence of ourselves.

Everyone and everybody can make an idea about art, or even more, more or less simple or complex, inculcated or cultivated, homogeneous or heterogeneous, conventional or bold. Some, less privileged or less sensitive, are limited to the ideas of art that they share with their social group or strive to adopt those that are imposed by the dominant class. They are conformists [...].²⁵

For example, an artistic portrait like the Mona Lisa or La Gioconda (an incredible painting, which has crossed many people's lives over the time; the work of art done by Leonardo da Vinci, in the 1503-1506, representing a woman covered

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

by a thoughtful expression, mysterious, covered by a sublime smile which can be barely seen) where we are talking about a work of art older than 500 years, that has lasted through the ages and has crossed generations transcending art through the world and beyond us. A work of art in which our attention is drawn by the man's spiritual expression. Gadamer believes that:

„In understanding we are drawn into an event of truth and arrive, as it were, too late, if we want to know what we are supposed to believe. Thus there is undoubtedly no understanding that is free of all prejudices, no matter how much the will of our knowledge must be directed toward escaping their thrall.”²⁶

There are those who create art for the future. In addition, that future is now. Thus, building and exploring, we are going to a place unknown and boundless. Be sure to catch and preserve the beauty of the unseen and hidden, because in the end nothing matters more.

Conclusions and remarks

Art is not only a cultural phenomenon. It is an expression of our feelings, of our inner self. Art is one of the most important things in life, it is something that can transcend our existence beyond, because it can be saved and also recreated over and over again. It is something that each and every one of us can understand in a special and particular way. However, in the end we are all able to communicate through art in general and within every piece of art in particular. It seems that we live in different worlds, but I think at some point somehow, somehow, we actually live in the same world. So the question is: what makes us so different between one another? I think it is all about your own world, your perception and the way you can change your own reality.

²⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Transl. rev. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, Continuum, London – New York, 2006. p. 484.

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