

## How to Rethink and Redefine the Terminology of the Concept of Spectator in Contemporary Times

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### Abstract

This reflection aims to rethink and redefine the notion of the spectator in the context of the contemporary era. To address this issue, we draw upon Christian Ruby's hypotheses concerning the characteristics of today's spectator, as well as Arthur Danto's hypotheses regarding the role and place of the spectator in the reception process, considered an indispensable complement to artistic creation. Through an in-depth analysis of RUSKIN and GREENBERG'S theory of the "innocent eye," and Roger POUIVET 's theory of "applied ontology" —which is rooted in a pragmatist approach that considers each work as a unique entity, independent of any prior ontological reference—this reflection highlights a forward-thinking conception of the reception of artworks in the contemporary context. As this analysis unfolds, it becomes clear that the methodology adopted is analytical in nature and that the collection of information relies primarily on bibliographic research. It emerges that the viewer always remains free to interpret and determine the meaning of a work of art. In fact, it is the viewer who completes the process: once the work is exhibited, the artist no longer exercises any control over how it will be received and understood by viewers.

**Keywords:** *The Terminology of Spectator, Today's Spectator, The Contemporaneity, The Context, The Reception Aspect.*

### Introduction

Consulting Antidote's professional French dictionary allows us to trace the history of the term "spectator" as follows:

16th century	<b>spectator</b>	As for the gratitude [of beasts]... this single example [the lion of Androcles] will suffice, which Appio recounts as if he himself had <b>witnessed it</b> ... — Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, in <i>Littré</i>
17th century		Don't talk to me about this crude imitation of piety, which seeks only <b>spectators</b> ... — Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, <i>The Prince – Cardinal Richelieu</i>  It was there that the entire troupe went, and Oronte and his whole company were there to be <b>spectators</b> . — Charles Sorel, <i>The Extravagant Shepherd</i>
18th century		And they fought before a crowd of <b>spectators</b> , who silently awaited a miracle. — Gabriel de Mably, <i>Observations on the History of France</i>  But this was only for a small portion of the <b>spectators</b> , and one should not pay attention to it. — Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, <i>Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge</i>
19th century		When the <b>spectators</b> wanted a brave gladiator killed, Caesar had him removed from the arena. — Jules Michelet, <i>Roman History</i> , Part 1

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		A child of the Revolution and <b>an observer</b> of the Empire, Minoret-Levrault had never involved himself in politics... — Honoré de Balzac, <i>Ursule Mirouët</i>
20th		No one is a poet without wings (although one must fear that Pegasus might stray into the high solitudes where he alone would be his <b>spectator</b> ). — Maurice Barrès, <i>The Voyage to Sparta</i>  The tiny little theatre where the <b>spectator</b> chooses their seat, that's where I'd like to see one of my plays performed. — Jules Renard, <i>Journal, 1893-1898</i>
21st century		At the risk of disappointing some <b>viewers</b> , Mr. Evans explained that the flame works like a water heater. — Le Temps.ch  Today, there are plans to expand the Flaminio stadium because, with 29,000 <b>spectators</b> , we're playing to sold-out crowds. — Libération.fr

(Antidote French Dictionary 8) In all cases, this term refers to a person who attends an artistic performance. However, its reception and interpretation appear today to be unstable and open to new meanings.

This reflection aims to examine, rethink, and redefine the notion of *spectator* in the context of contemporary life. To better illuminate this issue, we refer to a statement by J.L. Austin (1911–1960), an English philosopher of language and philosophy: “Our common stock of words traces all the distinctions that men have thought worth making, and the relationships that they have thought worth marking, throughout many generations: since from the point of view of the question of the survival of the fittest, they have withstood the longest test, they are doubtless more numerous, more sensible, and more subtle, at least as far as ordinary and reasonably practical matters are concerned, than any that you and I are likely to imagine one afternoon in our armchairs.”» ( Austin, 2015, <http://www.lyber-eclat.net> ), cited in the book *The Philosophy of Language in the 20th Century* by Diego Marconi .

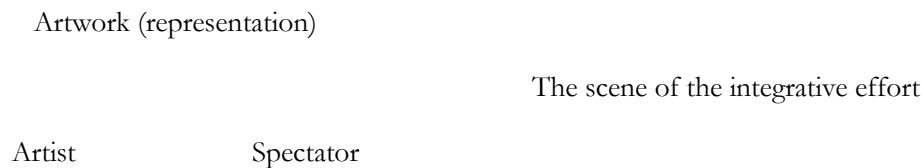
Indeed, we can connect Austin 's words about the invention of words from contemporary notions and concepts in ordinary language with our discussion of the process of learning and understanding the term "spectator" today. First, it's important to clarify that when we refer to a context, we are talking about the set of circumstances in which an event occurs. This naturally includes historical circumstances, and as Hegel said , we are children of our time and those that came before. Thus, throughout this discussion, we understand context to mean the historical context, which includes socio-political, economic, cultural, and artistic circumstances, and so on.

Here, we highlight the perspective of Christian Ruby , philosopher and professor of philosophy from 1975 to 2014, and author of the book *\*Spectator and Politics\** , which explores the question of who the spectator is today. The writer attended his speech on Thursday, December 20, 2015. During a session of the inter-arts seminar organized by the University of Strasbourg, he asserted that culture is not a natural phenomenon, and that cultural relationships can be altered at any time. He added that the natural spectator does not exist. Indeed, throughout history, we have become spectators through education. “No one is the master yet” (Ruby, 2015).

According He believes that in each era, viewers differ from those of another era due to different educational backgrounds; for example, during the classical art period, we encountered the viewer of classical art, then the viewer of modern art, and today the viewer of contemporary art. This relates precisely to *the "culture of time ,"* a term we find quite appropriate for the idea we intend to develop here .

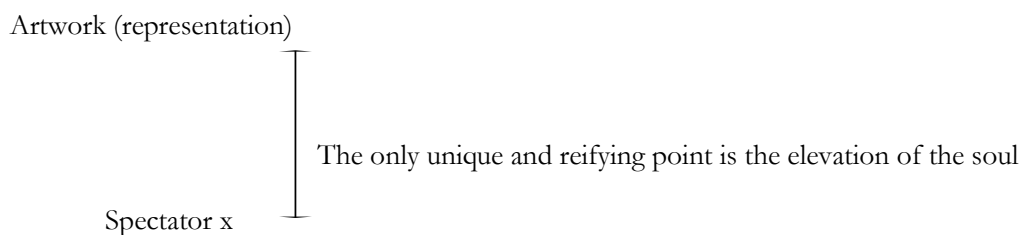
He adds that it is the work of art that educates its viewer: “[...] what work makes me a viewer and what viewer does something with the work?” (Ibid.), and he believes that we need to seek, find and establish this educational process. It seems to us that this presupposition is very close to R. POUIVET's hypothesis of "*applied ontology*". which is pragmatist. It is part of a pragmatist approach which consists of considering each work as a singular entity, outside of any ontological reference which was put forward by the philosophy and aesthetics of the *Enlightenment* and then by the institutional theories of art .

In his speech, he highlighted two diagrams regarding the relationship between the artist, the work of art, and the spectator, diagrams which are relevant to cite here, firstly the diagram of this triangle of relationship in the era of classical art:



This diagram clearly shows a triangular relationship between these three essential elements in the world of classical art. The artwork sits at the apex of the triangle, through which the artist and the viewer interact. Classical art styles were limited, and the privileged venues for exhibiting them were the museums built by the academies in Europe and America. Essentially, the academy decided who was the artist and who was the viewer. It controlled everything. Artists also knew the nature of their audience, and vice versa. Everything was clearly defined, and everyone was aware of the criteria.

The second diagram:



Whereas in the second diagram, dedicated to modern and contemporary art, we see that after the exhibition of the work, the artist's role comes to an end . Furthermore, the artist, who already knew their target audience in the era of classical art, has no idea about who will visit their works today, or where? Because today, art is becoming increasingly universal and limitless.

After reviewing his speech, we became more sensitive to the questions surrounding the spectator of today. And we realized that the word spectator is a floating word. We know that questions about the concept of the spectator—who is a good spectator? and how does a spectator position themselves before a major work of art?—emerged during the *Renaissance*. However, Subsequently, this question took on a special interest during the *Enlightenment era*, when the legitimization of the spectator's posture was placed at the center of the controversies on this subject.

## Research Literature

The Gutenberg Project is a collection of Ruskin 's works devoted to the theory of the "innocent eye" and the reception of the viewer considered as neutral. Published by Gutenberg Editions, this collection allows for an examination of the theoretical positions and debates engaged by Ruskin and Greenberg around this notion of the "innocent eye."

In his book *After the End of Art* (1996), Arthur Danto , drawing on Roger Pouivet 's reflections on the theory of "applied ontology," emphasizes the necessity of considering each work of art as a singular entity. The

artwork is presented as a symbol, whether individual or collective. Furthermore, Danto offers an explicit critique of the theory of the "innocent eye."

Zabolinezhad 's thesis (2018), entitled "*In search of the figure of the contemporary protest artist in the context of globalization: the particular case of Iranian protest artists*", analyzes and discusses the different theories of the ontology of art, from ancient Greece to the contemporary era, focusing more particularly on the ways in which visual works are received by today's viewers.

Finally, at the symposium "*The Interpretive Act and Literary, Theatrical, Cinematographic and Pictorial Works*" (2012), Gaëlle Théval presented a paper on the interpretation of contemporary literary and artistic works by spectators.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology and information synthesis are part of the analytical study. It should be noted that the information collection method is that of the library.

- *The role of the spectator in the process of understanding and receiving the context:*

Where do we stand? Is this question still relevant today? We say yes. But to whom should we ask this question? The artist, the art critic, the gallery owner, or should each viewer ask it of themselves, whether professional or not? We say that everyone should ask themselves this question.

In any case, considering the diversity of perspectives offered to the viewer, it seems to us that a non-professional viewer curious to understand the works and to grasp the artists' language should absolutely read exhibition catalogs. Indeed, at the end of the process, it is the viewer who interprets freely. We find the equivalent of this thought in the words of Gaëlle Théval , regarding the Ready-made movement practiced by Duchamp. "If every work of art has two poles, the Ready-made challenges this balance: the artist is absent from the pole of production, since he does not actually create the object he presents. Therefore, the constitution of the work seems to rest entirely on the second pole, that of reception, leading Duchamp to say that 'it is the viewers who make the paintings,' echoing Iser, who, in \*The Act of Reading\*, thus circumscribes the reader's place in the constitution of the work: 'the text exists only through the act of constituting a consciousness that receives it, and it is only during the act of reading that the work acquires its particular character as a process... The work is thus the constitution of the text in the reader's consciousness.' » (Théval, 2017, <https://www.fabula.org/> ). To make it perfectly clear what we intend to convey here, we are talking about the Frank Stella's slogan . If we don't see it In the sense of Greenberg's "*innocent eye*" hypothesis , we completely agree with him when he says, "What you see is what you see. " Yes, each work must be considered as such, and it is pointless to look outside the work to arrive at its meaning and connotations. Even to pursue reflection to determine what constitutes art and whether a given object can be considered a work of art or not. And in the era of contemporary art, even in the era of modern art, we need nothing other than the work itself, whatever its nature. And if it leads us outward, or if we are the ones who look elsewhere, why not? We look outward from our individuality, which is shaped by our personal and collective experiences due to our way of life. This lifestyle is itself a product of our geographical location, our religious beliefs, our socio-economic and cultural background, etc. Therefore, we arrive also to this idea that what we see is what we see.

is why we fully subscribe to Ernest Gombrich and Nelson Goodman 's view that pictorial representation should be oriented towards establishing a conception of image perception. This conception follows conventions internalized by the person perceiving them. These conventions differ from one another, and each of us establishes them according to our own way of life.

"A famous study, conducted in 1966 by Segall , Campbell , and Herskowitz concerning the influence of culture on visual perception, concluded that while there are differences between cultures regarding the perception of illusionary figures (Necker's cube , Muller-Lyer cube, etc. ), illusions are nevertheless, to some

degree, perceived as such by all human beings." (Danto, 1996, 44) Therefore, we can link this exercise by Segall, Campbell, and Herskowitz with Gombrich and Goodman's hypothesis concerning the conventional codes governing image perception. With the aim of showing you what is intentional on this subject, the example of the Persian miniature is highlighted. In the various principles of the numerous traditional schools of Iranian painting, we always find the indispensable principle of "*simultaneity*," namely: The painter always incorporates different interior and exterior spaces into his creation, and even different times of day simultaneously. The viewer can therefore contemplate different parts of buildings, or even day and night within the same scene.

These codes of pictorial representation are familiar to Iranian and even other Eastern viewers, as these conventional codes remain prevalent in their traditions of pictorial perception. The situation is entirely different for Westerners, who are unfamiliar with these codes and have no idea how to receive and interpret these enigmatic scenes.

It should be noted that when Ruskin, and later Greenberg, speak of *the "innocent eye,"* they are presupposing an ideal, neutral viewer. They envisioned the viewer as a child who is completely unaware of the conventional codes of pictorial perception—that is, someone who has no ideas or preconceptions about the work they are contemplating. As Ruskin explains in the following passage: "All the technical power of painting depends on our ability to rediscover what we might call the innocence of the eye, that is, a perception, in a certain childlike sense, of patches of color, simply as such, without our being conscious of what they mean, as a blind person would see them if they were suddenly able to see." (Ruskin, 2015, <http://www.gutenberg.org/>) Indeed, Ruskin has a dogmatic view of art, and believes that the artist must remain neutral, and his work must be free of all signs and probable meanings that call into question the meaning of a neutral and realistic work of art, or even a natural photograph.

However, Ruskin and Greenberg are wrong, because it is impossible not to consider the internalized ability to react upon receiving images, even when they depict real objects. This difference in object perception is due to sex, ethnicity, age, geographical location, etc., among human beings. And the difference in image perception is due to the various factors we have already mentioned.

As Danto states about Ruskin in his book entitled *After the end of art*, "[...] his mistake was to assume that the relationship between certain ideal paintings and the world is so close that the world — conceived in a reductionist and realistic way — is made up of an assemblage of patches of color, and that this is how the innocent eye sees it. But the miracle of painting is that we see objects and scenes and not just the patches of color that constitute it [...]"

The idea of the innocent eye has recently been criticized from a philosophical point of view, and it is fashionable today to argue that such a thing does not exist. (Danto, 1996, 35) There we go, we join Danto's exactly Danto's point of view. In this book where he challenges, after having meticulously analyzed it, the hypothesis of *the "innocent eye"* put forward advanced by Ruskin and Greenberg. All in all, we can entirely reject this hypothesis of Ruskin and Greenberg.

To delve deeper into this question, it is necessary to look back. Philosophical studies have long sought to distinguish what constitutes art from what does not, and this line of inquiry continues into the present day. From Plato to the present, thinkers have attempted to answer this fundamental question: what is art? and, consequently, what can be considered a work of art? This inquiry also leads to another essential question: that of the role and status of the spectator. And all reasonable conceptions and theories have been employed in order to establish philosophical theories containing the answer to this essential question.

As A. Danto states, "There is no instrument of the same type to confirm or refute the claim that something is a work of art at a time when it is historically possible for it to be one." (Ibid) We can choose to assert that there is no definitive answer to this question. And based on Hegel's perspective — the father of historical study, indeed of history itself, within humanist thought—it is also possible to say that establishing a definitive definition of what art is, and what constitutes art, is impossible in the contemporary era.

On the other hand, we adhere entirely based on the hypothesis of "*applied ontology*", Proposed by R. Pouivet: "Applied ontology is an ontological inquiry into particular entities as diverse as a quark, an embryo, a boundary, or a work of art." (Pouivet, 2003, 18) According to him, today, when we contemplate a modern or contemporary work of art, we must consider it as such, and all philosophical theories that might or might not legitimize this object as a work of art are situated outside the moment of that encounter. And we must not forget the fundamental role of the viewer in determining the meaning of a work of art. In any case, if there were experts capable of saying that a given object is not a work of art, there would undoubtedly be just as many experts claiming the opposite.

With the aim of clarifying our intended point, we will take a step back to discuss the relationship of the average viewer. Considering the viewer's unique role in interpreting a work of art draws our attention to the question of the viewer's learning process, as the person who completes the artistic creation process. At a minimum, the viewer must be initiated into the basics of modern and postmodern art. Of course, we cannot expect a fair interpretation from a viewer without any prior knowledge of art. Picasso reminds us of this important and wise notion: "Art is like Chinese; it is learned." (Picasso, 2017, <https://www.galeriethearartist.com/>) And Elisabeth Couturier raised this question in the book *Contemporary Art: A User's Guide*: "Indeed, without a minimum of learning, a work remains indecipherable. Even those that seem easily accessible only reveal their full dimension if we take the time for analysis and information. We must then look elsewhere, within ourselves, in our environment, or in books, for the keys to a language we do not yet master. [...] each work presents itself as an open book. It is up to us to identify its grammar, to note its syntax, to study its rules, to find its codes." (Courtier, 2004, 46) By referring to Couturier's discourse, we highlight the role of the spectator in every human creation. Indeed, it is possible to say that when a work is political, it must shock its spectator by pushing the boundaries and expanding the frontiers of the field of contemporary art.

Indeed, it seems that the majority of Western viewers have a stereotypical image of Iran and the Iranian protest artist, stemming from the 1979 *Islamic Revolution*. Thus, they consistently find these stereotypical concepts in the works of Iranian artists. These superficial stereotypes can be summarized as follows: Western viewers generally perceive Iranian protest artists as impoverished artists in opposition to the religious population, who support the Islamist regime, and as struggling against the entrenched taboos of a closed, traditional society. We can even go further, asserting that this stereotypical view itself leads these artists to seek the attention of international art professionals through works that push boundaries and shock the public.

However, what confers upon a real object the status of a painting, sculpture, installation, or virtual object such as a video, holography, slides, etc.—in other words, the status of a work of art according to a viewer—is not a definitive statement by this world concerning what art is and whether an object is a work of art. "Is it essential or not that representatives of the art world have reasons for what they do, if what they do is to be successful? [...] If so, these reasons will prove to be all we need to know. They will provide us with all the necessary elements to understand what it means for a painting to be a work of art. [...] Therefore, what further purpose would representatives of the art world serve?" (Wollheim, 1987, 14) An opposition that we can share with Richard Wollheim. Furthermore, we must not forget the role of time, which contributes to making a work of art real. It is quite clear that considering a urinal as a work of art (Marcel Duchamp's fountain) was outside the realm of 19th-century thought. In fact, despite the shock it inflicted on the art world, at the beginning of the 20th century, this object was already ready to be recognized as a work of art. And this was thanks to the intense controversies it provoked.

But on what theories are these discourses based? Today, the question of whether an object is art or not is already obsolete. Of course, if a particular object is discussed in the art world, or if an object is exhibited in a place dedicated to displaying works of art, then we can say that this object has already become a work of art. Or at least that it is considered as such. Our era is marked by lively debates surrounding art criticism.

Indeed, art criticism is approaching science in its search for and analysis of reasons, while also aiming to decode connotations or symbolic expressions presented in the artwork. Thus, the emergence of a new

version of criticism departs from institutional theories, according to a classical interpretation that is indispensable to it. Frankly, it is clear that today anything can become a work of art in the eyes of a viewer.

Indeed, this theorization of analytical aesthetics brings to mind two fundamental points: first, the critique of reasons, which can be inappropriate to the work of art, where the critic errs and refers to reasons that are not valid. Second, the crucial aspect is reading interviews and exhibition catalogues where artists explain their approach and develop their ideas.

Thus, as explained previously, the viewer is always free to interpret and determine the meaning of a work of art. In truth, it is the viewer who completes the work; therefore, after a work has been exhibited, the artist no longer has any control over how it will be received by viewers. “The explanation of a work could be based on the assertion of an affinity, but this would then be an essentially transhistorical explanation, that is to say, it would presuppose that there is an explanatory factor both common to and specific to all members of a class of affinities. Usually, these occupy the same position in relation to the explanatory factor as a series of exemplifications in relation to a Platonic form. In other words, art history based on affinities proceeds from an essentially Platonic mindset.” But I would simply say that until we are given a legitimate explanation, the reaction to the assertion of such affinities can only be: “So what?” (Danto, 1996, 76). Here, it's important to mention a difference between the professional spectator and the average person. When an artist and a professional spectator meet, professional exchanges sometimes take place, without either party managing to convince the other or bring them around to their point of view. That doesn't matter. What counts is the goal, the act of exchanging ideas. Therefore, the term “*unfair criticism*” seems inappropriate. Indeed, in this discussion, the term “*Inappropriate criticism*” is preferable. Which one is more suited to the situation?

To demonstrate the importance of the transfer concerning the dualism of content and form before the spectator's eyes, which is considered in the nature of a work, whether classical or not, we speak. The meaning of the theory, which always considers it as a symbol of improvisation, is based on analytical theory.

- *The Symbolization of Artworks and the Construction of Meaning By the Viewer:*

When we look at works of art created throughout art history, whether in the East or the West, there is always a common essence between them; indeed, they always contain symbolic, conventional codes. These codes differ depending on which culture they originate from. Thus, these conventions appear familiar to some audiences and enigmatic to others.

Each work of art highlights the worldview of the culture from which it originates. As members of the visual arts community, when we look at paintings from the *Middle Ages*, the Italian *Renaissance*, *Flemish* art from Northern Europe, Persian miniatures, Chinese paintings, and so on, we are familiarized with their conventional codes.

However, it is clear that a European viewer unfamiliar with the *Middle Ages* would have viewed the paintings in a different way; that is to say, for them, these conventional works contained symbols that were familiar to them. All of this was intended to guide them towards God and allow them to become a true Christian. Thus, the dove is always the symbol of the Holy Spirit, the sheep symbolizes Christ and his innocence, the cross represents the Passion of Christ, twelve sheep symbolize the twelve disciples, and so on. As time passes, this list of symbols grows longer, and we become more familiar with it. Indeed, in historical studies, these works could be used as objects of study to better understand the worldview, social changes, and paradigm shifts of each historical period within a given civilization.

Here is another example; as an Iranian, even before engaging with visual arts, we were almost entirely familiar with the pictorial conventions of Persian miniatures. We know that the artist always intended to depict another world, a transcendent one, using vibrant colors, even metals like gold and silver. The aim is to present a visual example of paradise lost for the viewer already familiar with these pictorial conventions. Thus, the exterior space is always exaggerated, suggesting a dense metaphysical atmosphere of flowers,

trees, and animals believed to exist in paradise. And the figures are ethereal, even without volume. Therefore, in this context, the concepts of time (day and night) and space (exterior and interior) are entirely different from real life. The conventional codes used in Persian miniatures symbolize the beliefs and worldview of classical Persian thought. Indeed, from the point of view of general culture, the pictorial conventions of Persian culture with which we grew up may be strange to the eyes of an unfamiliar European, who might find them enigmatic, even surreal, and *vice versa* is also true.

Thus, the remark has already been made. that experts in the field of social sciences look at works of art without regard for their aesthetic value, but that they are interested in them solely for the key role they play in highlighting the epistemology of the corresponding era.

But is it possible today to consider a work or a body of work grouped under the same artistic banner as emblematic of the contemporary worldview? The answer is both yes and no! To highlight what needs to be demonstrated, we will revisit this reflection by which institutional theories, including the theories and controversies of ontology, are rejected. We also refer to Pouivet's theory of "*applied ontology*," Danto's "*scriptible reading*," and non-cognitive discourses. Thus, in our view, the work must be considered as such, and it is not useful to look outside of it. If the work contains connotations that refer us outward, why not? But it is out of the question to try to import an ontological theory of what art is or what constitutes art within a work of art. We then present another phase of this reflection on the work of art.

Here, the idea that works of art carry connotations, familiar or unfamiliar to their viewers, is always taken into account and remains deeply internalized by the artist. Therefore, viewers need to decode them. We can say that works of art are symbolic, either possessing collective symbols or distinctly individual ones. Now, what distinguishes modern and contemporary works from those that preceded them is the presence of individual and collective symbols in contemporary artworks, symbols stemming from the origins of a given culture. Thus, as Humanism progressed, Where the individuality of each person has taken on an increasingly fundamental role, we can observe this paradigm shift in artistic processes. From the 20th century and the era of modern art onward, individualized symbols have increasingly tended to replace collective symbols in works of art, whether they are global or belong to a particular culture.

In this regard, the theory of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), the famous French philosopher, is mentioned here. From the very first contact, we were interested in his pioneering theories. in the field of modern philosophy and the criticism of modern and postmodern literature. To understand his point of view on art, particularly modern art, one must study the texts he wrote about Calder, Hare, Giacometti, Masson, Lapoujade, Wols, and Rebeyrolle between 1946 and 1970. Looking at the list of artists, we are led to wonder what they have in common? At first glance, there is no point of unity, neither in the artistic school, nor in the movement, nor even in the trend to which they belong.

Sartre's aesthetics lies in the artistic creation process, that is, in the process of making a work of art. The common thread running through all these artistic practices is that, faced with the freedom that characterizes modern art, all these artists, in themselves, are innovators who transcend limits and expand the boundaries of the art world (the avant-gardes). And as Dominique Berthet states in the article entitled "*Sartre, the Visual Arts, and Commitment*": "His approach to the work is neither scientific nor historical, but sensitive and intimate." (Ibid., p. 86) For example, Sartre described his feelings as a spectator, looking at a sculpture by Giacometti, with the following sentences: "In perceiving this plaster woman, it is my own cooled gaze that I encounter upon her. Hence, this pleasant unease into which her sight throws me [...]" (Berthet, 2009, 16) Reading Sartre's texts, we notice that he was interested in the question of individuality, and consequently, in the commitment of each of these artists. "The individual," he says, "seems to me the most important thing in art, and when one wants to study an artist, to find him in his work, the only possible method is [...] the progressive-regressive method, which goes to the painting, to the writing, through an analysis of the individual who produced it; then which goes to the individual who wrote or painted based on a progressive analysis of the object produced." (Sartre, (1948, 302) Thus, in his critiques of literature and art, Sartre is always preoccupied with the private life, viewpoints, and political commitment of each artist. All of these are strongly linked to their lifestyle and daily life, and form this individual reflection in each artist's art.

However, Sartre mentions a gap between committed art and political art ; according to him, all writers and all artists are committed, but a distinction must be made political art, and he writes about it: "The painter who wants to make a communist painting is a bad painter. On the other hand, a politically engaged painting can then be claimed by a political party as having a political meaning: that said, what the painter himself has created is not politics. The political value of the work is then given from the outside." (Sarter, 1981, 67) Thus, we entirely agree with him that today, considering the use of a work or body of works for advertising purposes from a political standpoint is a futile and unreasonable endeavor. Therefore, we see that an individual puts forward the symbolic forms that he or she has specifically invented. Naturally, these forms will be more meaningful to an audience from the same cultural background.

So, here it is established A distinction is made between symbols drawn from works of classical, modern, and contemporary periods; in other words, between highlighting symbols already so widely known and resorting to a deeply internalized and individual form of symbolism. To further explore this debate on the symbolism of works in contemporary art, we discuss the concepts of "*manifestation*" and "*expression*," referring to Danto 's perspective , which illuminates our understanding as we progress in this reflection. "All these 'expressions' are in fact manifestations, in the sense that I understand the term, since they are the outward sign of an inner state." (Danto, 1996, 86) . As far as we are concerned, we can consider that all events fell under either one or the other. This depended on the moment and the manner in which they occurred; but that in no case could they originate from both concepts simultaneously . To establish this distinction, we must carefully consider the reason (in other words, the motive) for each act. If the reason for an act is a method consciously chosen by the actor in order to communicate in their own personal way, then this act is an act of "*expression* ." In this conceptual framework, Four fundamental elements must be considered:

1. Actor
2. The motive for the act (the reason) = to make the communication
3. Personal act = act of communication
4. Presence of spectators

This is precisely the pattern found in the creative process of an artist or writer. The process is the same whether it's a work of art or literature. And of course, the venue where the work is presented must be taken into account. The actor, artist, poet, writer, etc., presents their work where their target audience is located.

Thus, if we remove the motive for the act, which is to communicate with an imagined spectator, we reduce this act to that of "*manifestation* ." The imagined actor then simply presents their own habit and its associated characteristics, without any intention of communicating with anyone, simply exhibiting their own personal manner. Therefore, these two acts reveal something about the actors' worldview.

But what nourishes the symbols of the actor's act of "*expression*"? We can simply answer that it's culture. But we must be careful. Because this culture can become global in our current context of *globalization* . Here, we're talking about the actor who is an artist and who uses internalized symbols, which are themselves influenced by their own culture of origin, and by global symbols. But before delving deeper into this questioning of individual and global symbols and their use, we must first distinguish the respective meanings of the concepts of "*symbol*" and "*index*." Indeed, The slightest confusion between these two concepts will make any discussion impossible. "In our view, indices are the effect of something, while symbols serve as a substitute for..." specific meanings. Generally, the The meaning of a clue is unambiguous. However, with regard to symbols, one cannot be one hundred percent certain of fully understanding the transformed expressions. (Zabolinezhad, 2018, 114) For example, when one finds a dog's footprint, one can deduce with certainty that a dog has passed by. When someone has a facial injury, one can be certain that something has happened to them. Therefore, the footprint and the injury are clues; the consequence of something, undoubtedly.

However, when it comes to symbols, the answer isn't so simple. Each culture has its own process of symbolization, which also differs among individuals within that culture, depending on personalities and historical periods. Thus, while white is always the color of joy, particularly the color of wedding dresses in Western culture, it is the color of mourners in Indian culture, where red represents joy and white sadness. Although today, due to globalization, this tradition has changed, and one can now see brides in white dresses all over the world, in India or Iran. In Iran, wedding dresses were already green, this color being considered a symbol of joy, life, rebirth, and so on.

However, when we speak of an internal or individual symbolism in each artist, it must be specified that the process of reading and decoding is greatly facilitated by the fact that the viewer comes from the same culture as the artist. If the viewer is a foreigner, the operation will prove much more difficult.

The various phases of lifestyles in each society have become more interconnected in the era of *globalization*, where the boundaries between concepts, societies, and their respective cultures have almost disappeared. However, when we speak of this historical context, we naturally intend to consider the context of artistic creation and reception by the viewer. For example, today when we find ourselves standing before paintings depicting a "*still life*" with a skull, the whole belonging to the *Flemish school*, whose context is already highly symbolic, each element in the painting is symbolic and emphasizes the vanity of life, recalling the approach of Death. The incomplete skull (missing only the mouth) is the emblem of the vain words spoken during life, the barely lit candle symbolizes the inexorable approach of the end of life. Whether one is an art professional or not, everyone in the West is familiar with this 17th-century symbolism. Thus, before these paintings, one experiences no emotional response. But why? The answer is simple: it is explained by the fact that the context in which this symbolism of the "*still life*" was received is already over for us. In today's context of artistic reception, this symbolism occupies no place. And the world to which it refers belongs to a time past, perhaps even lost. While Raphael's famous fresco of *the School of Athens* (1502-1512) is much closer to us, this illustration dates back to a period earlier than that of *Flamand's "still life"*, and brings together all the great scholars of history, regardless of their field of expertise. Even in this illustration, Eastern intellectuals are shown beneath the ceiling of the Vatican. Raphael puts forward a new interpretation of the Catholic religion that we, as people living in the 21st century, much prefer to other definitions. Before this formidable illustration, our minds are deeply moved by this internalized symbolism of Raphael, which, in today's context of reception, is very much present and alive. We see in it the painting still reflects the values of our time: the respect due to thought and science, in place of religions and superficial beliefs. All the great intellectuals of the world up to that time are represented. This denotes a profoundly egalitarian conception of the value of human beings in Raphael's approach. We even see the presence of a mathematician: Hypatia of Alexandria, the scientist murdered and burned by Christians in 415. The presence of a woman in this scene is a powerful and significant symbol at the time; science belongs to everyone, and women and men are equal, possessing the same intellectual capacity. Thus, this profoundly original and unprecedented symbolism certainly satisfies the proponents of feminist movements. It should also be noted that the artist sees himself as an intellectual on par with other great figures. Therefore, his presence in the painting is, in this respect, entirely legitimate. I strongly agree: the creator of this extraordinary scene, which highlights the great values of modern man five centuries ago, has the right to be at *the school of Athens*.

**Conclusion:** As we have just demonstrated, in 1502 Raphael invented an internalized symbolism acceptable within the context of contemporary creation and reception, which continues to deeply move us. A. Danto summarizes this process in the phrase "moved by representations" (Danto, 1996, 112). We can therefore deduce that the representation of a creative context is capable of moving viewers from a completely different context of reception.

And we must not forget that each context of creation or reception is entirely linked to the characteristics of its time. Thus, if we, as children of our contemporary era, are moved by Raphael's paintings, it is because the values symbolized in the paintings of *the School of Athens* are compatible with ours. This convergence of views stems from the fact that Raphael was far ahead of his time; in other words, he fits the image of the "genius artist" during the *Renaissance*.

It's important to consider that each of us interprets a work of art according to our own prototypes, which shape our worldview. Therefore, if we view Raphael's work in this light, it doesn't necessarily mean that his contemporaries, such as Pope Julius II (1443-1513), saw it in the same way. However, it's likely they were familiar with Zoroaster or understood that the figure next to Parmenides was a woman, even if they didn't know her identity.

Honestly, it's hard to believe that Raphael had a different intention than the one we've understood. This process could be called... the conversation between different generations.

In short, you can consider that this reflection highlights that in contemporary times, regardless of location, a work is valuable and relevant when it moves the human spirit today. Otherwise, the work in question can be considered outdated or obsolete.

But make no mistake: indeed, while some works of art may still manage to move us across the centuries, there is no guarantee that if contemporary artists were to try to imitate them, their works would produce the same aesthetic emotion in us.

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