Art: A *Strange* Political Tool

Olafur Eliasson, *Ice Watch London*, 2018

Robert de Meel
Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
S0843377

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

This thesis is a contribution to the debate about the relation between art and politics. I argue that art is political insofar as it is transformative, but that any further political determination exceeds the bounds of the essence of art. The essence of art is its faculty of affording aesthetic experience and aiding in the development of our aesthetic sense. Lacking a political agenda, I argue that art is a *strange* political tool: it provides the means for an emancipatory practice that is indifferent to political contents.

Before giving voice to the many philosophers that have written on the subject of aesthetics and philosophy of art, it seems appropriate to begin with an artist's work (front page) and what *he* has to say about it. Olafur Eliasson, a Danish–Icelandic artist, is known for sculptures and large-scale installation art.

> The blocks of glacial ice await your arrival. Put your hand on the ice, listen to it, smell it, look at it – and witness the ecological changes our world is undergoing. Feelings of distance and disconnect hold us back, make us grow numb and passive. I hope that Ice Watch arouses feelings of proximity, presence, and relevance, of narratives that you can identify with and that make us all engage. We must recognize that together we have the power to take individual actions and to push for systemic change. Come touch the Greenland ice sheet and be touched by it. Let's transform climate knowledge into climate action. (Olafur Eliasson, 2018)

The above quote from the artist, stated on https://icewatchlondon.com/, forms a prelude for all the themes that will be discussed in the present thesis and allows me to introduce each of the four chapters. Before going into the separate chapters, I want to start off with a problem that *Ice Watch London* poses for aesthetic theory. In aesthetics, art is generally thought to be distinct from everyday objects as it does not have a specific function. In fact, many philosophers have included purposelessness as a necessary feature of art. *Ice Watch London*, however, is art that appears to have just that: a purpose – climate action. As inciting climate action is political, *Ice Watch London* might be considered to be a political tool.

To find a solution for the tension between the existence of art that appears to be a political tool and the purposelessness that philosophers ascribe to art, I will start my thesis by investigating definitions of art and the response it evokes: aesthetic experience (Chapter 1). Similarly to Kant, I will adopt the term 'aesthetic art' to indicate art that affords aesthetic experience. Then I will discuss how art can afford aesthetic experience (Chapter 2) and how we engage with it (Chapter 3). Finally, I will distinguish aesthetic art from propaganda and I will submit that aesthetic art is a *strange* political tool as it facilitates general emancipation – by unveiling our way of being organized in the world – without serving any specific political agenda (Chapter 4).

Are the blocks of melting glacial ice to be considered art? Eliasson did not *make* them, he merely *exhibited* them. Related to this question, one might ask: 'who decides that it is art?'. In Chapter 1, I will discuss different definitions of art and I will argue that an institutional definition of art is the most tenable. I will adopt Danto's concept of the artworld as the institution that decides what is to be considered art. Subsequently I will investigate the

special response art affords – aesthetic experience – by discussing Kant's and Dewey's aesthetic theories. Aesthetic experience relates to a direct *feeling* without the mediation of any concept, it is non-conceptual and therefore not directly communicable. I will investigate the Kantian concept of sensus communis – that in some form is also presumed in aesthetic theories of other philosophers such as Dewey – to analyze how the translation of aesthetic ideas to communicable states of mind occurs. I will accept the transcendental argument for a sensus communis – we experience that we can talk about aesthetic experience – but I will reject that the way sensus communis translates is identical in all. At the end of Chapter 1, I will offer definitions of 'aesthetic experience', '(work of) art', and 'aesthetic art'.

Eliasson asks the visitors of his art to "touch the Greenland ice sheet and be touched by it". But how does art 'touch' or affect us? In Chapter 2, I will discuss Alva Noë's theory of art as a *reorganizational practice*. He elaborates on the reorganization that aesthetic experience affords. His approach aids in the investigation of art as a political tool as reorganization implies a form of (political) change. In addition, I will argue that Noë's idea that art is made out of organized activities allows me to propose that aesthetic experience arises from 'playful imitative engagement'. Art affords an engagement that is not one of 'usefulness' that characterizes our 'ordinary' engagement with the world around us. As aesthetic experience is not exclusively afforded by art, I will suggest that art's unique capacity is the *formation* of our aesthetic sense – teaching us to engage aesthetically with non-art as well.

How art reorganizes depends on our engagement with it. Eliasson gives us clear instructions: "Put your hand on the ice, listen to it, smell it, look at it – and witness the ecological changes our world is undergoing". It is important to note that one can engage with art in a non-aesthetic way. Art can be engaged with as if it were propaganda or some other ordinary tool. As such, art – but not *aesthetic* art – can be an ordinary political tool. I submit that such an engagement does not do justice to the specialness of art. An aesthetic engagement with art is a playful imitation of the way we ordinarily engage with the world – through organized activities. In Chapter 3 I will investigate *what* in organized activities can be reorganized, elaborating on Noë's thought that reorganization through art finds place in organized activities. I will argue that organized activities have a 'conceptual' and 'phenomenal' dimension. The former makes it possible to talk about organized activities (e.g. travelling) and (changes in) related technologies (e.g. flying) over time. The phenomenal dimension of organized activities refers to the direct experience of the individual of its being organized by the organized activities. I will argue that the phenomenal dimension is best characterized by Gestalt and that its reorganization takes place through aesthetic ideas. I will adopt the Kantian concept of Geist to explain how aesthetic pleasure and non-rational aesthetic ideas are *created* by the experiencer – and not by the artist. It is the experiencer of art that 'achieves' aesthetic experience through Geist.

Can art alter our political attitude? Eliasson appears to think so and explicitly aims at changing the political attitude of his visitors: "Let's transform climate knowledge into climate action". In fact, seeing large melting ice blocks – and captions such as "The Greenland ice sheet loses 10,000 such blocks of ice per second throughout the year" – clearly addresses climate change. This large installation of melting ice appeals to feeling and the artist's intention – climate action; stopping global warming – is not a secret. These instances of

activist art support the claim that art can be a form of propaganda, as propaganda too is a persuasive tool that appeals to feeling.

One of the major aims of this thesis is to argue that when art is a form of propaganda – as in *Ice Watch London* – it is not *aesthetic* art. Art is simply that which is christened as such by the artworld. The essence of art, however, goes beyond this institutional christening. Only in the instance that art affords aesthetic experience it is *aesthetic* art. When art appeals to feeling in concordance with a concept – as is the case with propaganda – it cannot afford aesthetic experience. In Chapter 4, I will argue that in propaganda and activist art the perceived creator's intentions (objective purposiveness) are conjoined with the feeling that the work evokes. Our being 'touched' is not free of conceptual considerations. When we see the glacial ice melt, the feeling that is evoked cannot be separated from conceptual considerations. In aesthetic art, however, conceptual considerations remain in the background and do not determine the disruption that it affords. Aesthetic art first touches us and then we try to make sense of it – through concepts. Propaganda touches us while simultaneously appealing to concepts.

Ice Watch London is a work of art – being christened by the artworld as such – that has a low likelihood of evoking aesthetic experience as it does not invite a non-conceptual engagement (it invites you to *think* about a specific issue where the *feeling* the art provokes is in concordance with that issue). As discussed in Chapter 1, from the third person point of view there is a form of commensurability between the work of art as aesthetic and non-aesthetic art. In Chapter 4 I will argue that 'endfulness' of the work regulates the probability that the work will afford aesthetic experience – thus being aesthetic art – or will afford non-aesthetic experience. As such, a work can be both aesthetic and non-aesthetic art from a third person point of view (with different probabilities of being the one or the other in experience). For the experiencer, however, art can only be one of both in a particular experience – not excluding the possibility that a work can afford different modalities of experiences (both aesthetic and non-aesthetic) over time.

Aesthetic art does not serve any specific political agenda as its reorganizational effect is unpredictable and dispersive. This does not exclude that art can also be an ordinary political tool when engaged with non-aesthetically, activist art being an example of art with a high probability of affording such an engagement. As such, activist art – being merely a (more elaborate) form of propaganda – does not do justice to the specialness of art. I will conclude by submitting that aesthetic art is a *strange* political tool as it aids in forming our aesthetic sense – thereby affording us to unveil our being organized in the world and facilitating general emancipation.

Chapter 1. Art and Aesthetic Experience

> By one of the ironic perversities that often attend the course of affairs, the existence of the works of art upon which formation of an esthetic theory depends has become an obstruction to theory about them. (Dewey, 2008, 296)

The first sentence of John Dewey's major work *Art as Experience* indicates the most essential problem that the field of aesthetics is dealing with: the emergence of artworks defying aesthetic theories – thereby rendering these theories obsolete. This challenge arises from the presumption – practically unanimously agreed upon – that aesthetics and art are somehow related to each other. In other words, an aesthetic theory must both fit what we call "art" and at the same time explain by what essential trait it is related to the aesthetic. Modern thinkers that have contributed to philosophy of art can be divided in those who focus on a definition of art – 'what is art?' or 'what do we call art?' – and those who focus on the aesthetic (experience) – 'what does art do?' or 'how does art feel?'.

To resolve this discordance, I will explore the arguments of both groups of thinkers before offering a comprehensive aesthetic theory of my own. I will start this chapter with a discussion of ancient aesthetic theories (Plato and Aristotle) that do not fall into either group. They have a limitation for understanding art in the modern world as they assume that art is a kind of imitation. These theories, however, indicate what is at stake politically: art can be dangerous (Plato) or formative (Aristotle). Also, these theories serve as a background to better understand modern aesthetic theories. I will proceed by discussing theories of the philosophers that focused on a definition of art (Danto, Dickie and Weitz), which I will utilize for my own definition of '(work of) art'. The theories of Kant and Dewey – focusing on the aesthetic (experience) – will aid in my definition of 'aesthetic experience'. This brief discussion of major aesthetic theories will provide a framework to investigate Noë's theory on art that will play a major role in my thesis. Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's views on aesthetic experience will be discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 as these serve best by being analyzed together with Noë's work. At the end of this chapter I will propose (provisional) definitions for '(work of) art', 'aesthetic art' and 'aesthetic experience', the latter to be further elaborated in the following chapters. Finally, I will discuss the commensurability of art as aesthetic and non-aesthetic art.

Ancient Aesthetic Theories

According to Plato, art is (a kind of) imitation: "it is a sort of craftsmanship that is widely available and quick – and quickest of all, I suppose, if you are willing to take a mirror and turn it around in all directions" (*Republic* 596d-596e). He argues it is even worse than simple imitation. It's "an imitation of an illusion" (598b), as objects we perceive are mere appearances of their true 'forms'. Therefore, Plato concludes that art is "three times removed from the natural" (597e). Thus far, Plato's argument shows that art is useless if we want to know about the world as it really is. One could say that art does not help in achieving knowledge, but that it is a harmless means of entertaining the crowds. Plato, however, argues that art and artists are dangerous. "[A] good painter, by painting a carpenter and displaying him at a distance, he might deceive children and foolish adults into thinking it truly is a carpenter" (598c). Plato's worry is that people might not be able to differentiate between what is real and what is imitation. Moreover, according to him it is not

just the case that art may have the false appearance of reality, it also appeals to the inferior part of our soul. "[P]ainting – and imitation as a whole – are far from the truth when they produce their work; and moreover … imitation really consorts with an element in us that is far from wisdom" (603a-603b).

Aristotle, Plato's student, agrees with his teacher that art is imitation: "Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also Comedy, dithyrambic poetry, and most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation" (*Poetics* 4, 1447a). He, however, disagrees with his teacher's argument that imitation is a bad thing. In fact, he believes that we learn through imitation. "Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation" (1448b). This is an interesting point in line with my thesis, as I will argue in the next chapter that art – affording playful imitative engagement – teaches us to engage aesthetically with our environment. Moreover, *what* is being imitated also differs in Aristotle's thought. According to him, art does not imitate material objects, but human actions. "The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad … the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are" (2.II, 1448a). Even though Aristotle speaks of 'good' or 'bad' agents, he does not argue that art should be normative. The possibility of reflecting on 'good' or 'bad' agents' actions in comparison to our own, affords learning or "gathering the meaning of things" (4, 1448b). In the next chapter I will discuss a similar view on the subject matter of art: Noë's 'organized activities'.

Definition of Art

The definition of art is mainly a modern problem, as before the 19th century picking out art was as easy as picking out a urinal. Since Marcel Duchamp's 1917 *Fountain*, we have to think twice before peeing in a urinal as we might be desecrating art. Danto coined the term 'Imitation Theory' (IT) to summarize the predominant theories, including Plato's and Aristotle's, that defined art up until post-impressionism – an art movement that flourished roughly from 1880 to 1910. Artworks resulting from that art movement were not in the business of imitating real objects and therefore IT became obsolete. The predominant theories of art that tried to cope with the inadequacy of IT were summarized by Danto as 'Reality Theory' (RT). RT holds that "the artists in question were to be understood not as unsuccessfully imitating real forms but as successfully creating new ones" (Danto, 1964, 573). The problem that Danto encounters with RT is that it does not distinguish art from non-art. Especially Andy Warhol's work made it difficult to come up with a theory that provided necessary and sufficient conditions for an object to be art. Danto also noted that what would count as a work of art was apparently arbitrary and unpredictable. He raised the question why Warhol did not just "crush one [Brillo Box] up and display it as *Crushed Brillo Box*" (580). One radical response to the problem of providing necessary and sufficient conditions of art is formulated by Morris Weitz, who altogether denies this problem by arguing that art cannot be defined.

> [A]esthetic theory is a logically vain attempt to define what cannot be defined, to state the necessary and sufficient properties of that which has no necessary and sufficient properties, to conceive the concept of art as closed when its very use reveals and demands its openness. (Weitz, 1956, 30)

Weitz argues that when examining and comparing works of art "[w]hat we find are no necessary and sufficient properties, only "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing" (31). To elucidate his argument, he uses 'games' as a stand-in for art.

> Knowing what a game is is not knowing some real definition or theory but being able to recognize and explain games and to decide which among imaginary and new examples would or would not be called "games." (31)

His argument that art is an open concept – just like 'games' – is compelling. Indeed, it seems as if new art movements can only be considered art as long as the concept of 'art' is open for new additions. To be sure, a closed concept also allows for new additions of its application – but only within "some exhaustive set of properties common to all games" (30). This is not the case for art, which is characterized by a continuous emerging of new artworks or movements that do not fit in the prior set of properties.

Weitz argues that defining art is a decision problem: ""Is N 1 a novel," then, is no factual but rather a decision problem, where the verdict turns on whether or not we enlarge our set of conditions for applying the concept" (32). I agree with Weitz that assigning the status of 'work of art' to new works is a decision problem. New forms of art are recognized as such because – well – it is decided so. This decision problem is not incidental in art, as one of art's hallmarks is continuously 'breaking free' of prior conventions – continuously requesting decisions. But who decides what is art and what is not? Weitz gives an answer to this question, but remains vague: "[N]ew art forms, new movements will emerge, which will demand decision on the part of those interested, usually professional critics, as to whether the concept should be extend or not" (Ibid.). The 'interested' make up the institution of the artworld, as I will discuss in more detail later. George Dickie further works out how and by whom works are decided to be 'works of art' by elaborating on Danto's notion of the 'artworld'.

> Danto points to the rich structure in which particular works of art are embedded: he indicates *the institutional nature of art*. I shall use Danto's term 'artworld' to refer to the broad social institution in which works of art have their place. (Dickie, 1974, 429)

Dickie has an institutional definition of art: "A work of art in the descriptive sense is (1) an artifact (2) upon which some society or some sub-group of a society has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation" (Dickie, 1969, 254).

He notes that "lines of authority (or something like authority) in the artworld are nowhere codified … [t]he artworld carries on its business at the level of customary practice" (255). So, authority in the artworld is – like art itself – loosely defined. In fact, he submits that "every person who sees himself as a member of the artworld is thereby a member" (Dickie, 1974, 431). He does, however, acknowledge that there is an 'essential core' of "artists who create the works, "presenters" to present the works, and "goers" who appreciate the works" (Ibid.). In the end, to christen an artifact as 'work of art', the creating artist suffices: "only one person is required to act on behalf of the artworld and to confer the status of candidate of appreciation" (432).

Dickie's and Weitz's accounts of art are somewhat hollow. Their accounts might be summarized as 'that which some people call art is art'. They succeed in giving an account of a definition of art. They, however, do not explain why art matters and why it has been held by many philosophers to evoke a special 'aesthetic' response. Dickie, indeed, denies such a response altogether: "there is no special kind of aesthetic consciousness, attention, or perception" (Ibid.). He denies that there is a difference in the way we 'appreciate' art from non-art: "the only sense in which there is a difference between the appreciation of art and the appreciation of nonart is that the appreciations have different *objects*" (Ibid.). Later on, I will argue that Dickie is right to some extent. We can appreciate artworks and non-artworks in the same way. However, I will argue that there are two ways of 'appreciating' instead of one. Artworks and non-artworks can be 'appreciated' both aesthetically and non-aesthetically. The difference in the *objects* – more accurately in the context of the objects created by the artworld – causes artworks to be more inviting to be engaged with aesthetically. I therefore also agree with Dickie's contention that art "does not require that a work of art actually be appreciated, even by one person … many, perhaps most, works of art go unappreciated" (Ibid.). Works of art are simply christened as such and do not need appreciation. Dickie recognizes that with his definition of art we can point out what we call a 'work of art', but this definition does not reveal art's essence: "The institutional definition of "art" does not reveal everything that art can do" (437). It appears that Danto realized this later in his career as well, as he included 'embodied meaning' as an essential part of art.

> In my first book on the philosophy of art I thought that works of art are about something … I then thought that, unlike sentences with subjects and predicates, the meanings are embodied in the object that had them. I then declared that works of art are embodied meanings. (Danto, 2013, 37)

'Thinking away' the materiality of a work of art, by focusing on ideas represented by the work is "to remove art from the only sphere in which it can be truly experienced, which is the aesthetic [or sensuous] sphere" (Kramer, 2004, as cited in Danto, 2013, 155). On the other hand, 'thinking away' the embodied meaning in a work of art by focusing on materiality is to "be like a child who sees sticks as sticks" (Danto, 1964, 579). Or like Danto's hypothetical layman Testadura ('hardheaded' in Italian) who insists that he sees nothing more than paint when confronted with a painting. Danto's confession, "I must admit that I have done relatively little to analyze embodiment" (Danto, 2013, 38), explains why he – mistakenly – locates the embodiment of meaning in the work of art. In the third chapter, I will argue that the 'embodiment' of meaning is found in the relation between the individual and the work of art. As the accounts of Dickie and Weitz do not stand in the way of a theory of art that takes into account aesthetic experience, I will be able to use these accounts for my definition of art.

Aesthetic Experience

According to Williams, "[Kant] defined aesthetics in the original and broader Greek sense of the science of 'the conditions of sensuous perception'" (30). In Kant's work "Critique of Judgement", he indeed describes 'aesthetic judgement' as being a subjective, immediate faculty of non-cognitive contemplation through the senses. Kant divides aesthetic judgements in two categories.

> AESTHETIC … judgements, are divisible into empirical and pure. The first are those by which agreeableness or disagreeableness, the second those by which beauty, is predicated of an object or its mode of representation. The former are judgements of the senses (material aesthetic judgements), the latter (as formal) alone judgements of taste proper. (54-55)

Kant, amongst many other philosophers such as David Hume, held that especially the evaluative use of 'taste' was an important skill or talent that makes persons better or happier. "[A] delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality; because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments, of which human nature is susceptible" (Hume, 2008, 107). To understand aesthetic experience, I will argue that taste – both in its descriptive and evaluative sense – is unnecessary. To be sure, taste is not the same as the aesthetic sense – the capacity to engage aesthetically. Firstly, I will argue in the next chapter that aesthetic experience can be afforded by everything, including non-art, thus distinguishing art from non-art is not a requisite for having aesthetic experience. Secondly, evaluating something as being 'good' or 'beautiful' is merely a byproduct of aesthetic experience and certainly not its essence.

Other philosophers mostly reserve 'aesthetic judgement' or 'aesthetic experience' for beauty alone and do not include all sensuous experience – as Kant does. Hence, when I use the term 'aesthetic judgement', I technically refer to Kant's 'judgement of taste' – only referring to beauty. An important difference between aesthetic judgement and "judgement upon the agreeable" (Kant, 2007, 47), is that the former implies universal assent: "the judgement of taste … must involve a claim to validity for all men … a claim to subjective universality". A judgement upon the agreeable is private (i.e. non-universal), such as 'I like pasta Bolognese'. There is something compelling about Kant's claim about 'subjective universality'. It appears to be the case that when someone judges something to be beautiful it is not just an expression of personal preference.

> The beautiful stands on quite a different footing. It would … be ridiculous if anyone who plumed himself on his taste were to think of justifying himself by saying: This object … is beautiful for me. For if it merely pleases him, he must not call it beautiful. (44)

Kant notes that aesthetic judgement – being subjective and non-cognitive – is not *directly* communicable: "Nothing … is capable of being universally communicated but cognition" (48). As the immediate subjective and non-cognitive aesthetic 'response' cannot be communicated, Kant argues that what is communicable "can be nothing else than the state of the mind that presents itself in the mutual relation of the powers of representation so far as they refer a given representation to cognition in general" (Ibid.). He further explains this as a "state of the mind involved in the free play of imagination and understanding" (49). *Sensus communis* is responsible for the link between the uncommunicable *feeling* of the aesthetic response and the communicable state of mind or *cognition*. This link guarantees the universality of judgements of taste. In "Kant on Common-sense and the Unity of Judgments of Taste", Stoner argues that "the universality of judgments of taste can only be grounded in the judge herself" (84). The universality of a claim that something is beautiful,

does not reside in that which is beautiful. That is because a Judgement of Taste is *subjective* (and therefore is located in the experiencer of beauty). And so, the only way in which this subjective principle can be valid for all, is through the assumption that "this capacity must be shared by all judges" (92). In short, according to Kant we can only communicate thoughts – states of mind – and to communicate about our aesthetic experience – related to feeling – we can only communicate the translation of that feeling into a state of mind. If, and only if, this 'translating capacity' is identical in all humans, we can communicate *indirectly* about our aesthetic experience.

Even though in this thesis I cannot pursue a thorough investigation of the meaning of sensus communis in Critique of Judgement and its role in Kant's argument, I will offer a critique of the validity of the transcendental argument for sensus communis. In *Kant's theory of taste*, Allison marks two separate features of sensus communis: "it is a sense (or feeling) for what is universally communicable, which can also be assumed to be universally shared" (149). I submit that Kant succeeds in establishing the necessity of 'a sense for what is universally communicable'. When we speak of something as being beautiful, we assume that others understand what we mean by our utterances. Just as we assume that others understand us when we speak about our thoughts. However, I only partly agree with the transcendental necessity of the assumption that sensus communis is universally shared. When we speak about beauty, we do not only assume that others understand our states of mind – related to the feeling entailed in our aesthetic experience. We assume that the other, just like us, has a 'translator' – something that "mediates between thinking and feeling" (Stoner, 2019, 98). This 'translator' – sensus communis – ensures that when we speak about beauty, we are not just communicating about the 'cognitive' representation of it. We assume that the 'translator' makes it possible to *indirectly* speak about the feeling that beauty evokes in us. What I reject is the transcendental necessity that this 'translator' is identical in all. In fact, the phenomenon of aesthetic disagreement can be explained by sensus communis being common to all, but not identical in all. This is not in contradiction with the observation that when we say that something is beautiful it is held to be universally valid. When we speak about beauty – when we try to elaborate why something is beautiful – we attempt cognizing what cannot be cognized through our sensus communis which converts aesthetic ideas to a state of mind. In the process, we are also trying to unravel the way our sensus communis works (differently from others). The (implicit) assumption of a sensus communis is important to keep in mind when analyzing the aesthetic theories of more recent philosophers such as Dewey.

According to Dewey, one of the primary tasks of philosophers in the field of aesthetics is "to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience" (Dewey, 2008, 296). His project, alongside that of Noë, is the closest to my approach to understanding art – I too will focus on the experience that art affords and the continuity between aesthetic and 'normal' experience. Dewey critiques philosophers that uphold "a separation of art from the objects and scenes of ordinary experience" (298). Dewey opposes the view that the distinction between 'fine art' and 'useful or technological art' (or non-art) relies on some intrinsic quality of the work of art that thereby necessitates that distinction.

> It is customary, and from some points of view necessary, to make a distinction between fine art and useful or technological art. But the point of view from which it is necessary is one that is extrinsic to the work of art itself. The customary distinction is based simply on acceptance of certain existing social conditions. (304)

Dewey argues that the distinction of 'fine art' from 'useful art' is based on 'social conditions' – very similar to the institutional definitions of art I have discussed earlier. More importantly, however, he holds that the point of view that requires such a distinction is not relevant to the work itself. So, whether the work is a work of art does not *intrinsically* determine what kind of experience it can afford. Dewey's project of restoring the continuity between aesthetic experience and 'ordinary' experience does not reach a complete fulfillment, as he submits that only a work of art – either 'useful' or 'fine' – can afford aesthetic experience. Dewey – in contrast to Kant – excludes nature.

> [When] there is discovered evidence that proves it to be an accidental natural product … at once it ceases to be a work of art and becomes a natural "curiosity" … A difference is made in appreciative perception and in a direct way. The esthetic experience – in its limited sense – is thus seen to be inherently connected with the experience of making. (311)

Kant noted that nature only affords aesthetic experience insofar as we see it as a work of art – remaining conscious of it not being a work of art. Dewey, however, does not allow nature to evoke aesthetic experience – even if we see it as art. Before exploring whether Dewey's account of aesthetic experience justifies the exclusion of nature, I will discuss the roles of the 'maker' and the 'experiencer' of art according to Dewey. These distinctive roles are of crucial importance to understand my critique of Noë's theory of art that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Dewey holds that aesthetic experience is to be understood from the perspective of the consumer or the experiencer of art: "The word "esthetic" refers … to experience as appreciative, perceiving, and enjoying. It denotes the consumer's rather than the producer's standpoint" (311). Moreover, Dewey also holds that the experiencer "does not remain a cold spectator" (297) as experiencing is not a passive process. His phrase "The action and its consequence must be joined in perception" (309), suggests that Dewey would probably agree with the 'enactivist' approach to perception – perception as an active achievement – as formulated by Noë in his books, such as *Action in Perception*. I agree with Dewey that experiencing is an active process, *made* by the experiencer. In the next chapter I will further elucidate how an experience comes to be by the active interaction between experiencer and his world. However, further on in his text, he argues that an aesthetic experience arises from a 'collaborative effort' of the 'maker' and the 'experiencer'. "There is work done on the part of the percipient as there is on the part of the artist" (314). And these different 'works cannot be separated from each other: "the distinction between esthetic and artistic cannot be pressed so far as to become a separation" (311). According to Dewey it is not the case that the artist's work is solely making the work of art and the experiencer's work is solely 'creating' an aesthetic experience engaging with the work of art.

I agree with Dewey that the artist might be doing more than being merely 'artistic' in creating a work of art. During the process of creation, he might engage with his work-in-progress in an aesthetic way. In that case, the artist would simultaneously be a creator and an experiencer in the process of creating the work of art. Or in Dewey's words, the "artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works" (Ibid.). I do not agree with Dewey that the artist can be both *simultaneously*. I would argue that the artist might *continuously shift* between 'artist' and 'experiencer'. However, one cannot be both an artist – performing purposeful actions – and engage aesthetically, which is characterized by a lack of purpose. This lack of purpose in aesthetic experience will be further elaborated on in the next chapter.

To summarize, I argue that an artist does not need to embody 'the attitude of the perceiver' (having an aesthetic experience) while he makes a work of art. I believe, however, that contemporary artists will often shift between 'maker' and 'experiencer' in the aesthetic sense. The next point Dewey makes, is that the experiencer ('perceiver') engages in activities that are comparable to those of the maker of the artwork.

> It is not so easy in the case of the perceiver and appreciator to understand the intimate union of doing and undergoing as it is in the case of the maker. We are given to supposing that the former merely takes in what is there in finished form, instead of realizing that this taking in involves activities that are comparable to those of the creator. (313)

Dewey does not mean to say that the similarity is merely that the experiencer also 'makes' by creating his aesthetic experience: "For to perceive, a beholder must *create* his own experience … [a]nd his creation must include relations comparable to those which the original producer underwent" (314). What Dewey means with 'relations' remains vague, but it either has to do with the way of engaging with the artwork (e.g. by looking at it) or with the embodied meaning it has. Even if an experiencer could have the same way of interpreting or interacting with a work of art – which I reject; as experience is irreducible and case dependent – I would argue that this similarity is not necessary to have an aesthetic experience. In fact, I will argue in the next chapters that an 'endful' work of art – characterized by objective purposiveness – does not invite an aesthetic engagement.

According to Dewey, we continuously have experiences, but the majority are 'inchoate'. We continuously have 'distracted experiences' without unity. In Deweys' view, "no experience of whatever sort is a unity unless it has esthetic quality" (307). What brings unity in aesthetic experience, is emotion: "Emotion is the moving and cementing force … [providing] unity in and through the varied parts of an experience" (308). Hence, what makes an experience 'aesthetic' is that it has unity given by emotion. The following segment elucidates what Dewey means by 'unity'.

> Only occasionally in the lives of many are the senses fraught with the sentiment that comes from deep realization of intrinsic meanings … in much of our experience our different senses do not unite to tell a common and enlarged story. (301)

The ‘unity’ that makes an experience aesthetic is a coming together of all the senses in providing a clear story or meaning. Dewey’s unity in aesthetics brings to mind Aristotle’s idea of unity in the action that art imitates. According to Aristotle, to tell a good story – and convey meaning – one must *not* simply tell all events that took place in a chronological order. One must – as Homer did in the *Odyssey* – link events to each other in such a way as to contribute to one general story. In Dewey’s case, it would be about linking the senses – instead of events – to tell one consistent story. In line with Dewey’s argument, Noë submits that listening to Bach cantatas while doing the dishes is not engaging aesthetically with classical music. One cannot have an ordinary experience of washing the dishes whilst simultaneously having an aesthetic experience. Moreover, Dewey argues that aesthetic experience “is the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience” (310). He submits that aesthetic experience entails an increased focus to elements of experience that normally would be ignored and through aesthetic engagement become part of a whole of meaning. In the next chapter I will further discuss the idea of unity as a requisite for aesthetic experience.

Dewey argues that the unity of the senses provides us with a common story or meaning. But he does not speak of a ‘rational’ meaning – which would be a mere ‘translation’ of the sensuous experience. The meaning is found in the sensuous experience itself: “sense, as meaning so directly embodied in experience as to be its own illuminated meaning” (302). The tension between meaning – normally understood as belonging to our cognitive faculties – and sensuous experience is also present in Kant’s theory. The direct ‘meaning’ through the senses – or the ‘free play’ of imagination – is what makes the aesthetic experience that which is in-between regular perceptual experience and conceptual meaning. As discussed above, sensus communis allows for translation of this ‘aesthetic meaning’ through the senses to a state of mind – and ‘rational meaning’ – that is communicable. An important consequence or function of this ‘in-between’ for both Dewey and Kant is that it allows for what Kant calls ‘subjective universality’. Perceptual experience is private and merely the cognitive translation of it into language can be communicated to others. By creating an ‘in-between’ for aesthetic experience, both philosophers make the impossible possible: an immediate relatability on the level of (subjective) experience. Only Kant – contrary to Dewey – is explicit in stating that before we have a state of mind related to the ‘aesthetic idea’, translation through sensus communis is necessary. We might assume that for the *communicability* of aesthetic experience, Dewey too assumes a translation from sense into thought.

The ‘in-between’ feature – or feature of ‘subjective universality’ – of aesthetic experience is what justifies the ‘comparable’ relations of the experiencer and maker in Dewey’s theory. To a lesser degree, one might argue that the ‘unity’ of aesthetic experience also supports the subjective universality of aesthetic experience. The ‘unity’ might be interpreted as some ‘objective’ standard to which the senses have to adhere to create a subjective universal aesthetic experience – one which is therefore comparable in its relations between experiencer and maker. As according to Dewey emotions bring unity, we might also locate the comparability in relations on the level of emotions. Perhaps we need to have similar emotional responses to artworks in order to create comparable ‘unities’ of our senses. But how can we know that we have similar emotional responses, similar unities of the senses and similar experiences? By talking about it. And what do we observe? Disagreement! As

argued above, aesthetic disagreement is either located in the different ways direct aesthetic experience is translated to states of mind or it is caused by the fact that aesthetic experiences – being irreducible and unique on the level of the individual – are different between individuals to begin with. Communication cannot be an 'immediate' reflection of our aesthetic experience. It already is 'tainted' with the use of our cognitive faculties. As stated above, Kant accounted for this by sensus communis. Still, it could be argued that 'subjective universality' does not depend on its communicability – even though for Kant they are inseparable. So, Dewey's argument might be saved by presupposing the 'subjective universality' a-priori to communication – keeping however the problem of the irreducibility of experience – or leaving 'subjective universality' out altogether – 'comparability' then pertaining to something less radical then 'universality'. In the former position, 'meaning directly embodied in experience' might be argued to be uncommunicable and only the translation of it in 'rational meaning' would be communicable. The disagreement in communication would then be the result of the dispersion caused by heterogeneous translations of a homogeneous – universal – aesthetic experience. The latter position would make the communicability of aesthetic experience comparable to the communicability of 'ordinary' subjective judgements ('judgements upon the agreeable'). Either way – in both positions – communication about specific aesthetic experiences is detached from the actual aesthetic experiences. The translation from an actual specific aesthetic experience to a state of mind that is communicable is unpredictable and cannot be assumed to be identical in all. Thinking and talking about aesthetic experience afforded by art is untrue to the immediate 'aesthetic meaning' that art affords us.

So, I commit that we cannot assume 'subjective universality' and 'communicability' of aesthetic experience to the extent assumed by Kant by his transcendental argument. We feel that we can all have aesthetic experience, but not that we all have *identical* aesthetic experiences. We feel that we can talk about our aesthetic experiences, but not that others will completely grasp our aesthetic experience by our talking about it. We feel that when we think that something is beautiful, it is more than merely a personal taste. We feel that it is a universal truth. Something is not beautiful *for me* – it is beautiful full stop. Still, we acknowledge that there are people with bad taste. People who 'do not get it'. So, the phenomenon of our intuition of 'subjective universality' does not extend to the justification that we all have the same aesthetic experience or translate this aesthetic experience to a communicable state of mind in the same manner – this simply is not what we experience. Also, the features of an aesthetic experience given by Dewey (unity of senses, bound with emotion, completeness) do not provide grounds for a transcendental necessity of a universal capacity that translates aesthetic experience into communicable states of mind that are identical in all. Nor do these features ground the justification for assuming a comparability between maker and experiencer – or between individuals in general – in the 'intimate union of doing and undergoing' involved in aesthetic experience. I would like to go even further by arguing that the phenomenon of aesthetic disagreement supports a transcendental necessity of either a lack in universality on the level of aesthetic experience or on the level of the translation of it to a state of mind. I will further discuss my critique of Kant's transcendental argument in his aesthetic theory in Chapter 3.

In Dewey's work, no explicit justification is found for omitting nature from the possible sources of aesthetic experience. In the next chapter, I will submit that everything – including

nature – can afford aesthetic experience. Dewey agrees to an institutional definition of art, accepting that social institutions decide what is art. Also, he allows for the possibility that a work of art does not lead to an aesthetic experience. Indeed, he places the responsibility for an experience to be aesthetic with the experiencer. One can only engage aesthetically with a work of art when one does so without being distracted, by experiencing it in an absolute way. But how can subjective (aesthetic) experience depend on 'socially' defined works of art? Following my previous arguments, the answer is simple: it cannot. When committing to an institutional definition of art, one does not claim artworks to have any intrinsic feature that might justify artworks being alone in affording aesthetic experience. As I stated earlier, I agree with the institutional definition of art. This, however, implicates a distancing from any intrinsic privilege that works of art have in aesthetics. If artworks have any special role in aesthetic experience it is found in the social context in which the artworks beget their birthright. In the next chapters I will argue that our aesthetic experience *does* to some extent depend on our 'socially' defined works of art: they afford the formation of our aesthetic sense – teaching us to engage aesthetically with non-art as well. I will argue that there is no justification for excluding non-art – such as nature – from the possible 'sources' of aesthetic experience. I use 'sources' for lack of a word describing the status of an object that is part of a relation – with the experiencer – constituting the (aesthetic) experience. In the next chapters – when discussing Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'seeing-with' – my point will be further elucidated. Interestingly, Dewey holds a similar view of 'interactionism' as Merleau-Ponty: "Experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of that interaction of organism and environment" (302). Dewey made a great step in understanding aesthetic experience by comparing it to ordinary experience. However, by excluding non-art from being capable of evoking an aesthetic experience, he fell prey to the same 'ironic perversity' he described in the phrase I cited at the start of this chapter. Reserving aesthetic experience for works of art obstructed Dewey's aesthetic theory by making it dependent on some external condition – the source of experience has to have the institutional label of 'art'.

I will conclude this chapter by proposing (provisional) definitions for '(work of) art', 'aesthetic art' and 'aesthetic experience' which will be essential to engaging with the research question of the present thesis. '(Work of) art' is that which is deemed as such by the artworld – a capricious social institution. 'Aesthetic art' is a work of art that affords aesthetic experience. I borrow this term from Kant who, however, goes further by distinguishing between "*agreeable* or *fine* art" (Kant, 2007, 134). As 'fine art' has a normative connotation, I use 'aesthetic art' which technically comes closest to Kant's 'fine art'. It is important to note that the commensurability of art as aesthetic and non-aesthetic art is different from the point of view of a specific experience – by an experiencer – and by a third person point of view (i.e. categorizing the work of art independent from case specific experience). In experience, art is either aesthetic art or non-aesthetic art. In other words, it either affords aesthetic experience or 'ordinary' experience. From the third person point of view, there is a form of commensurability allowing a work to be both aesthetic and non-aesthetic art – to be further explained in Chapter 4. Finally, 'Aesthetic experience' is a private, sensuous experience – related to feeling – that arises from a playful interaction with the world. The meaning of 'playful interaction' will be developed in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. Strange Tools Afford Playful Imitation

> [I]t is impossible to make sense of the existence of the aesthetic sense in the absence of art – for it is art that gives us pictures, and it is pictures that make the aesthetic sense possible. (Noë, 2015, 71)

Strange Tools, the title of Alva Noë's book on art, already indicates that his approach to understanding art is one that combines the questions 'what is art?' and 'what does art do?'. The word 'tools' implies some form of usefulness – tools afford something – as well as some object with which we can interact. Of course, following the tradition of previous philosophers, art cannot be useful like other tools are useful – indeed this lack of (immediate) usefulness is what distinguishes art from non-art – and therefore Noë adds the adjective 'strange'. The excerpt above shows no only that Noë believes that art is necessary to understand the 'aesthetic sense', it also suggests that art is necessary to make the aesthetic sense possible. Kant too suggests that through art we can see beauty in nature: "Nature proved beautiful when it wore the appearance of art; and art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature" (Kant, 2007, 135). To see beauty, we need art. This opens up the possibility that art aids in the formation of our faculty of the aesthetic sense. Art might be a (strange) formative tool – as proposed by Aristotle who argues that man "learns at first by imitation" (1448b). I will argue that we learn to imitate our aesthetic engagement with art in our engagement with non-art (including nature).

In this chapter, I will discuss Noë's definition of art – reorganizational practices – and the 'strange affordance' that Noë ascribes to art – unveiling the way we are organized and the possibility of reorganization. I will submit that reorganizational practices refer to the aesthetic engagement with art only – arguing that engaging aesthetically with nature is not a human practice embedded in a cultural institution. I will discuss Heidegger's work on art to elucidate Noë's thoughts. Then I will argue that Noë's theory – if only unwittingly – might reconcile the Imitation Theory with modern works of art that don't appear to be imitative at all. I will argue that the 'imitation' that takes place is found in the *engagement* with it and not in its *creation*. Subsequently, I will argue that this imitation is playful and that it makes up the 'materiality' of art – a term borrowed from Noë. This playful imitative engagement is what I call 'aesthetic experience'. I will argue that art is not exclusive in affording aesthetic experience, however I will argue that it teaches us to engage aesthetically – also with non-art.

Art as Reorganizational Practice

"We are organized" (Noë, 2015, 10). This is the starting point of Alva Noë's investigation of art and its role in our lives. Organization is the essence of our very being. Importantly, we find ourselves organized, we do not organize ourselves. Noë introduces the term "organized activity" (5) to indicate organizational structures we are entangled in. The first examples he gives in his book are breast-feeding, walking and seeing. Even though 'activity' might suggest agency, Noë clearly denies that: "[organized activities] are emergent and are not governed by the deliberate control of any individual" (6). Besides being non-authored, organized activities are primitive/natural, sophisticated, structured in time, functional and (potentially) pleasurable. Art is a reorganizational practice that arises from organized activities. "They are

practices (not activities) – methods of research – aiming at illuminating the ways we find ourselves organized and so, also, the ways we might reorganize ourselves" (17). Noë also uses the terms 'level 2' or 'second-order' to indicate reorganizational practices that are made out of 'level 1' or 'first-order' organized activities. Noë's definition of art as reorganizational *practice* requires further elucidation. The word *practice* implies that Noë is not just indicating a certain 'tool' or 'object' – he is indicating human practice *related to* this object. So, even though Noë states that art is a reorganizational practice – a prima facie strange as art is considered a product or object and not a practice – I think he means to say that *making* art (meaningful) is a reorganizational practice.

This practice might be the creation of art, experiencing art – whereby art is made meaningful – or both. In describing the relation between organized activities and reorganizational practices, Noë is focusing on the artistic process – the creation of art. He appears to agree with Dewey's assumption of the comparability of relations between artist and experiencer – or between all humans for that matter – as art (level 2) is argued to relate to a level 1 activity in a universal fashion: "painting (say) responds to the fact that we are organized by pictures … And so these are raw materials for art" (20). Moreover, Noë does not seem to make a clear distinction between the way art relates to the artist and to the public. "Art is an opportunity to make experience, to make ourselves … and so, in a way, it turns out that we are artists one and all" (206). I will agree that experiencers 'make' or achieve aesthetic experience, but I will reject that this makes them artists. Artists actually make products that the artworld christens as art, they don't merely make aesthetic experience afforded by art created by someone else. And Noë is bound to agree with me, as in the prior page he states the following: "True artists don't only make experiences. They make objects (paintings, performances, whatever)" (205). Noë's ambiguity on the artists' 'making' will return in his later work, which will be discussed further on.

As discussed in Chapter 1, I locate aesthetic experience in the interaction between an experiencer and art. An artist makes a work of art, but an experiencer 'makes' it *aesthetic* art by engaging aesthetically with it. So, I will adopt Noë's concept of a reorganizational practice but only to refer to the engagement of the experiencer with aesthetic art. The engagement of the experiencer with art is 'second-order', while ordinary engagement with the world – organized activities – is 'first-order'. An artist is no superhuman that – in the process of making art – is disentangled from his being organized by organized activities. On the contrary, while making his work of art, the artist is involved in an endful activity. He is entangled in the organized activities that allow him the creation of the work of art. In the process of his creation, the artist might shift between 'maker' and 'experiencer' in the aesthetic sense' (as discussed in the first chapter), whereby the latter modality would allow him to have an aesthetic experience of his own work in progress. A reorganizational practice is *unendful*. Aesthetic engagement with art can be described by Kantian 'purposiveness without a purpose' or 'formal purposiveness'. Aesthetic engagement with nature is unendful too. However, it is not a reorganizational practice as this aesthetic engagement is not imbedded in the cultural institution of the artworld. I will elaborate on the lack of endfulness in reorganizational practices and aesthetic art in Chapter 4.

Later, I will argue that the relation of second-order to first-order is *imitative*. Art allows for a relation between the experiencer and the work of art *through* the 'involved' organized

activity (e.g. seeing a painting) imitative of the 'ordinary' relation between experiencer and its world through that organized activity (e.g. seeing a car). This imitative endeavor leads to ecstasy: "getting out of one's self, or one's state" (72). From this state of ecstasy – disruption of our embedded state of being organized – reorganization can occur. As the relation between the artwork and the relevant organized activity is described from the artist's perspective, Noë might emphasize organized activities that are less relevant for the aesthetic experience – or reorganizational practice – of experiencers in general. In fact, I submit that the most relevant organizational practice in aesthetic experience is 'meaning-making'. When I look at a painting, the way I give a meaning to it appears more significant than the way it appeals to my being organized by picture-seeing. I will further elucidate this point when discussing Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'laterality'.

Art allows you to catch yourself in the act of making meaning. However, the formal structure between level 1 and 2 is not dependent on its contents. Therefore, I will accept and adopt Noë's examples of art and his account of level 1. This will make it easier to investigate how art – according to him – can affect us. In Noë's paper "Art and the In-between" he elucidates *how* we might reorganize ourselves after engaging with a work of art, namely through 'aesthetic work'.

> [Aesthetic work] does not merely illuminate your own experience for you, it also, and this is the key thing, changes your experience, it lets you perceive new things or to perceive what you perceive in a new way, it alters how you respond. (Noë, 2019, 5)

Why taking organized activities as starting point for understanding art? Intuitively one could imagine art concerning things other than activities, for example objects or ideas. Let's take a look at Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*. You might say that this painting concerns an object (peasant's shoes) or an idea (the hard life of a peasant). Noë would argue that even though the painting might refer to shoes and the life of a peasant, the painting to be a work of art it requires among other things that is made out of an organized activity.

> [P]ainting (say) responds to the fact that we are organized by pictures (or by techniques of picture making and picture using). Pictures, crucially, *are* a technology, and picture making and picture using are organized activities. And so these are raw materials for art. (Noë, 2015, 20)

In this passage, another important term of Noë's theory is mentioned, technologies, which are "patterns of organization" (19). For example, the technology of photography exhibits a certain pattern of organization (of picture making) that is different from that of painting in the ages before photography. It is important to understand that Noë does not intend to say that art is *about* organized activities or technologies. Art is *made out of* organized activities. Art is not made out of (imitations of) objects or ideas. In response to critics of his books he opens up the possibility that a reorganizational practice can be made out of multiple organized activities: "I am oversimplifying when I suggest that choreography targets the first-order activity of dancing alone . . . it works with other raw materials as well" (Noë, 2017, 241). Indeed, I would argue that choreography, like many other forms of art, also is made out of the organized activity of seeing – besides the organized activity of meaning-making. 'Made out of' here does not refer to materials such as the canvas or the paint, it

refers to some organized activity we engage with in our daily lives. A painting is made out of picture-seeing. In other words, the creation of a painting *depends on* or *presupposes* picture-seeing. Paintings could not be an art form if we were not organized by picture-seeing. For Noë, a choreographer investigates the organized activity of dance by making a choreography (which is second-order). For me, it is about the relation between the experiencer and the choreography. As I reject the 'comparable relations' argument of Dewey, other organized activities might come on the foreground in the *experiencing* of art then in the *creating* of art.

One could ask then whether it is unique of art that it reflects on organized activities and its relation to technologies. We might simply take off our shoes and look at them to think about how shoes impact our walking. However, by taking shoes out of the context in which they play a role in our world, the relation between shoes and us being organized as walkers might fall out of grasp. This is what Heidegger argues in "The Origin of the Work of Art". In this essay, he uses Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* to illustrate how "the artwork let us know what shoes are in truth" (350). The truth of shoes is the role they play in our world. By taking shoes out of context, or out of their way of being useful, we are looking at the shoes as present-at-hand which conceals the true nature of shoes (and the way they are related to our world of walking). On the other hand, the moment when shoes are part of our world while we walk, we cannot reflect on them or on the related organized activity.

> The peasant woman wears her shoes in the field. Only here are they what they are. They are all the more genuinely so, the less the peasant woman thinks about the shoes while she is at work, or looks at them at all, or is even aware of them. She stands and walks in them. (349)

I would like to note that Heidegger's interpretation of *A Pair of Shoes* has often been criticized. Art historian Meyer Schapiro argued that Heidegger "imagined everything and projected it into the painting" (Schapiro, 1994, 138), as the shoes were not of a peasant, but of Vincent van Gogh himself. Whether Heidegger's interpretation is defensible, however, is not relevant for his philosophical argument. Heidegger's example shows how it is the ready-to-hand being of shoes that is related to organized activities. Noë, however, appears to argue that art *removes* technologies from their context – in their modality as ready-to-hand – and in that fashion, affords reflection on their role in our world.

> Art is interested in removing tools (in my extended sense) from their settings and thus in making them strange and, in making them strange, bringing out the ways and textures of the embedding that had been taken for granted. (Noë, 2015, 30)

If we only have to take a tool or technology out of context to reflect on our being organized by them, do we need art to afford this possibility of reflection? We could reflect on shoes in a scientific manner, taking them off, looking at them, investigating the fabrics and the way the sole is worn after usage, etc. Noë agrees with Heidegger that such a way of looking at the shoes as present-at-hand takes the essence of shoes – the way they organize our lives – out of grasp.

> The minute you turn your attention to the shoes and think about the role they play in your life, you have changed the situation, broken the magic. You are face no longer

> with the equipment you sought but with an object. How can we bring the shoes themselves, as we live with them, into view, into the open, if it is precisely the characteristic feature of the way shoes show up for us, when we take them for granted, that we do not notice them? (199-200)

How does art then prevent us from seeing tools as present-at-hand while also moving it out of context? How can an artist remove a tool from its context, without losing its magic or role in our world? The answer lies in art affording 'playful imitative engagement'. The experiencer engages with the 'tool', or artwork, by the organized activities that make up the raw material of the tool. Hereby he does not engage with the tool as present-at-hand. The interaction is a playful imitation of the 'endful' engagement – characterized by usefulness – that the man has with this tool. I would like to note that later on section I will argue that it is your being organized (your organized activities) – not tools or technologies – that are moved out of context by aesthetic art. To further explain what I mean by 'playful imitative engagement', I will start with Noë's concept of *staging*.

> Don't choreographers *make* dances? No. Dances are organized activities. You *can't* make them … What do [choreographers] do? A natural thing to say is that they *stage* dances. (Noë, 2015, 13)

Even though Noë is on to something very interesting, I would like to start by pointing out that he is partly wrong. A dance is not an organized activity, *dancing* is. Artists don't make organized activities, they make artworks – like dances and pictures – *through* organized activities of dancing and picture-seeing. This does not contradict Noë's assertion that organized activities are non-authored as the organized activity is merely the 'raw material' out of which art is made, not the artwork itself. Artists actually *make* things – whether material or immaterial – and that therefore it is not a coincidence that artists often call themselves 'makers'. In his most recent paper, he is again ambiguous about the artist 'making' things: "artists, even those who make pictures, aren't really making pictures. At best they are making strange pictures, or making art out of pictures" (Noë, 22, 2019).

I think Noë tries to make two points. Firstly, he wants to argue that an artist cannot investigate organized activities by 'making' them. Dancing is 'ready-to-hand' – a way of being organized in the world – and therefore cannot be made. How then does the artwork – the dance – relate to the organized activity – dancing? The creation of a dance assumes our being organized by dancing. Just as there are no pictures without us being organized as picture-seers. Secondly, I think Noë introduces the concept of *staging* to indicate the specialness of a dance or a picture that is art compared to non-artistic 'ordinary' dances and pictures. That Noë does not consider every dance to be art is clear from his example from the movie *Saturday Night Fever*, where "[dancing] served a function for Tony that has nothing essentially to do with dancing".

I would argue that *staging* is creating on the stage of the artworld. This creation does not only involve the product of the artist – the artwork – but also includes the context in which the artwork is presented. As such, it is not merely the artist that stages, but everyone involved in the way the artwork will be experienced. This includes curators, artistic directors and art critics – the artworld. These inform us about the art we (are going to) encounter and

regulate our experience in many ways: from lighting to exhibiting artworks together in some thematic fashion. One might distinguish between staging done by the artist and staging done by the people involved in presenting, curating or critiquing art. I submit, however, that this distinction is not relevant to understanding the spectator's (aesthetic) experience. The artworld – including the artist – stages the spectator's interaction with the artwork. This interaction is staged in such a way that it *invites* a playful engagement with the artwork.

Aesthetic Sense as Playful Imitative Engagement

All creations presuppose an organized activity, but not all creations are in the business of *staging*. Organized activities are always implicit in our actions and products. A picture of a lemon on the wrapping of a lemonade implies picture-seeing. However, the organized activity implied in the wrapping – the presumption of picture-seeing in the experiencer of the wrapping as a precondition for their 'getting' the purpose of the wrapping, to indicate that this is lemonade – is not staged. You might say that in this case picture-seeing is 'ready-to-hand' (although Heidegger uses this term solely for objects). Without being actively aware of it, picture-seeing is presupposed – is *used* instrumentally – when you look at the lemonade wrapping. Just as you are not actively aware of your shoes when you are walking. So, organized activities are presumed in our life. We are organized through them. Then what is staging? Staging is putting something on display, as a play is put on display on a stage. Staging is 'playing as if'.

Now we are getting to an interesting point. The relationship between staging – as a form of play – and art. I would like to propose that works of art – products made by artists and contextualized as such by the artworld – can afford playful engagement (aesthetic experience) between the experiencers of art and that which is being staged. This playful engagement takes place through the related organized activity. So, the experiencer engages with the painting through picture-seeing. This engagement, however, is playful – imitative of the 'endful' engagement when looking at the lemonade wrapping. Picture-seeing is put on display. Again, it is not a tool – such as a picture – that is taken out of context. It is your organized activity related to that tool – such as picture-seeing – that is taken out of context. Your state of being organized by picture-seeing is *disrupted*. You are not 'using' picture-seeing to engage with the picture. The picture is instrumentalized – as a strange tool – to unveil the way you are organized by picture-seeing. It is not about the picture imitating some worldly object, it is about the *seeing of* the picture playfully imitating the *seeing* of the world. Taking the organized activity – the way of engagement – as the focal point of art instead of the work of art itself, allows us to preserve some form of the imitation theory as discussed in Chapter 1. Post-impressionistic paintings do not necessarily imitate the world, but seeing these paintings imitates the relation between seer and the world in a way that unveils the 'ready-to-hand' character of this relation.

It is important to repeat that not every work of art is aesthetic art. Moreover, playful engagement can be afforded by 'ordinary' objects as well. However, *staging* is a human activity that accommodates playful engagement and thus aids in the formation of our faculty of the aesthetic sense. It is like a game that affords playing. A game affords 'doing as if'. In the case of a painting, you can 'do as if' you are seeing a picture. What do I mean with 'as if'? You are actually seeing a picture one could say. When an actor is talking to another actor on stage, they are doing 'as if' they are talking. They are actually talking, but this kind of talking

is different from the talking that takes place in the world. It is play. Talking is put on display by the actors. Talking is *staged*. When you listen to the talking of the actors in the aesthetic sense, you don't do so in an endful 'ready-to-hand' way. Your listening is not endful, because it does not serve an ordinary function. Your listening is not an instrumental way of being organized. There is no specific end (i.e. result of your listening). Your listening is play. It is 'as if' you are listening to persons who are talking to each other. And in doing so, you are putting on display your being organized by the organized activity of listening. Again, 'meaning-making' might be the more important organized activity at play here. You might take your being organized by 'listening' for granted and the way you convey meaning to the interaction between the actors might be predominantly put on display. Either way, some part of your being organized is taken out of the endful 'ready-to-hand' way of interacting with the world by the playful engagement that art affords. In other words, aesthetic art disrupts our tendency to take 'listening' or 'meaning-making' for granted.

I am not the first to investigate the role of play within aesthetics. According to Johan Huizinga, a former Rector Magnificus at Leiden University, a way to characterize what makes us human – besides as *homo sapiens* and as *homo faber*, indicating our capacity to think and to make – is as *homo ludens*: the playful man.

> Indien het spel niet regelrecht te verbinden is met het ware noch met het goede, ligt het dan bij geval binnen het esthetische gebied? [If play cannot be directly connected to the truth or to the good, is it by any means within the aesthetic sphere?] (Huizinga, 2010, 19)

Huizinga admits to be in doubt. On the one hand, he argues that play has no inherent aesthetic quality, but on the other hand play has a tendency to be associated with different aesthetic elements or with beauty. His main focus was play – and cultural instances of it – and not aesthetics. As I am not bound by play as a cultural phenomenon, but am only interested in playful engagement – which of course is related to instances of play – I can go a step further and submit that there is an inherent link between aesthetic experience and playfulness (the capacity to engage playfully).

Man, as homo ludens, can disrupt his state of being entangled by organized activities. This disruption accommodates the unveiling of one's being organized. From that unveiling, the potential of reorganization occurs. Even though one can engage as homo ludens in everyday life – like a child can play with a stick he finds on the ground – works of art form the playground in which we are taught how to be playful, how to engage aesthetically – also with non-art. It is important to note that art does not have the *purpose* of being formative in any sense. Art can *afford* aesthetic experience and the formation of the aesthetic sense – depending on the experiencer's engagement with art. As such, art is a *strange* formative tool.

Laterality and Aesthetic Meaning

We have thus far discussed what a work of art is made out of (organized activities) and how it affords aesthetic experience (through playful imitative engagement). However, works of art can be *about* more than the organized activities out of which they are made. Noë indeed opens up the possibility that paintings or pictures can be about more than seeing. "Pictures

are bound up with seeing, but not only with seeing; they are bound up also with thinking about what we see, and with the interest we take in what we see (and also in how we would like to be seen, and in how we would like to be seen *as seers*)" (146). The 'aboutness' or in Danto's terms 'embodied meaning' does not have to exclusively relate to the bare organized activities as such. In fact, I submit it is about the *meaning-making* associated to the organized activities – the way our experience of being organized ('Gestalt' as I will argue in Chapter 3) is put on display. To understand my point, Merleau-Ponty's concept of laterality can be of help: "The object only ever speaks to me laterally, it reaches me not from the front but from the side" (Merleau-Ponty as cited in Alloa, 2017, 55). When we look at a picture, what is being put on display is not (merely) 'seeing'. It is about our awareness of being a seer and the process in which we perceive ourselves as seer can change (through art). The organized activity, characterized by at least six features as suggested by Noë, is not that which 'speaks to us'. That which speaks to us, is something 'lateral' to the organized activity. Something that is not 'universal' as organized activities are, but case-dependent concerning all the lateral relations *implicated in* the organized activity. When engaging with art, it is not about our direct way of engaging with it (e.g. by seeing or listening), it is about the lateral relations involved that are put on display: "what counts is no longer the manifest meaning of each word and of each image, but the lateral relations, the kinships that are implicated in their transfers and their exchanges" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, 125). In Chapter 4 I will argue that also propaganda 'speaks to us' laterally, but does so in a 'purposeful' way in accordance with concepts. This is different from the unpredictable, dispersive way in which aesthetic art speaks to us. Laterality in aesthetic art indicates how aesthetic art evokes aesthetic meaning in us. In propaganda or activist art, however, laterality merely indicates how the object evokes a feeling regarding these lateral relations (e.g. global warming in relation to the glacial ice of *Ice Watch London*) that is in accordance with a certain belief or opinion (e.g. 'we should stop global warming'). As aesthetic meaning is non-conceptual, in the latter case the belief superimposed on the evoked feeling causes the feeling to be merely an accompaniment of a conceptual meaning. In the next chapter I will argue that 'Gestalt' might be the best way to talk about the 'lateral relations' related to our organized activities and might aid in understanding what aesthetic experience can reorganize.

Chapter 3. Gestalt in Organized Activities

> The body is the vehicle of being in the world and, for a living being, having a body means being united with a definite milieu, merging with certain projects, and being perpetually engaged therein. (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, 84)

To understand the relation between organized activities and our (aesthetic) experience, it is helpful – if not necessary – to start from a phenomenological perspective, which plays an important role in Noë's philosophical method. Noë's theory of enactivism and later his theory on philosophy of art show great similarities with Merleau-Ponty's notion of embodied experience. In this chapter, I will argue that to understand the manner in which organized activities are reorganized by art, we need to employ a first-person perspective, not a reflective third person point of view. I will claim that organized activities have a 'conceptual' and a 'phenomenal' dimension. The conceptual dimension is characterized by the six features as described by Noë and allows for a discussion of organized activities and (changes in) related technologies over time. I will submit that the phenomenal dimension is best characterized by Gestalt. The phenomenal dimension of organized activities is where reorganization can take place through aesthetic ideas.

Locus of Reorganization

In *Strange Tools*, Noë argues that organized activities can be reorganized by art: "reorganizational practices loop back and change first-order activities" (Noë, 2015, 31). In his latest paper, "Art and the In-Between", he focuses on the reorganization of 'you', the individual: "you reorganize yourself, or you get reorganized" (7). Are organized activities as well as the individual reorganized, or has the locus of reorganization in Noë's thought shifted from organized activities to the individual? I believe Noë does not speak about changes in two distinct entities. He implies that 'you' are reorganized by the reorganization of the organized activities through which your life is organized. They supervene on each other. These organized activities are so entangled with the 'you' that a reorganization of the former implies a reorganization of the latter. I think, however, that the shift of focus to the reorganization of 'you', might be a prelude to a further elaboration on Noë's theory of art by going from the more general analysis of changed organized activities to particular changes concerning the individual. This shift, however, is at risk of falling into subjectivism or internalism (i.e. the notion that conscious experience is achieved in our minds alone). Noë clearly opposes these philosophical views in his earlier works such as *Out of Our Heads* and *Action in perception* as well as in his latest paper.

> [W]hatever change it is that is brought about in you, it is not a merely subjective change. It's not as if what has happened is that you now feel differently about what you see, or have different beliefs about it. Whatever change has occurred, it enables you now to perceive, in the work, what you couldn't perceive before. (Ibid.)

Noë does not explicitly argue *what* it is that changes: "if there is a change, a transformation, it is a transformation in you, or perhaps, in your situation" (Ibid.). As argued above, I hold that the organized activity itself changes and thereby the individual changes as well. Art – in contrast to technology – puts our way of being organized on display. Advancements in technology arise from our nature of 'problem-solvers' and the aim to make our lives more

efficiently organized. The purpose of technological changes is clear and Kantian 'interestedness' characterizes their appraisal. For traveling, we try to find faster and more efficient ways to get from A to B. Art does something different. It does not have a clear goal, it does not aim at more efficiency. It affords disruption from our state of being entangled by the technologies surrounding travel and – momentarily – unveils our being organized by traveling. This moment of disruption – aesthetic experience – leads to a direct non-conceptual aesthetic meaning coupled with aesthetic pleasure. Before further investigating *what* is reorganized by art, in the next section I will first discuss *how* aesthetic experience – and the potential for reorganization – can be evoked by art.

Geist and Aesthetic Ideas

I submit that Kantian *Geist* affords the possibility that a work of art evokes aesthetic experience. This is somewhat different from the common interpretation of Kant's concept of Geist, which is often taken to be "a power of aesthetic expression" (Debord, 2012, 187). This interpretation locates Geist in the artist and not in the experiencer. I will argue that Geist is (at least) also present in the experiencer in order for him to have an aesthetic experience.

> 'Spirit' in an aesthetic sense, signifies the animating principle in the mind … Now my proposition is that this principle is nothing else than the faculty of presenting aesthetic ideas. But, by an aesthetic idea I mean that representation of the imagination which evokes much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. concept, being adequate to it (Kant, 2007, 142)

In this passage, Kant does not explicitly locate Geist in the artist or the creative process (alone). In fact, the phrase 'presenting aesthetic ideas' sounds open to the possibility that Geist is related to the process of aesthetic experience (or Judgement of Taste) in which the experiencer 'presents' aesthetic ideas to himself through the free play of the imagination. It is disputable whether Kant holds that the artist can *directly* communicate an aesthetic idea by (symbolically) expressing it in an artwork or whether Kant argues that the artist can only use his aesthetic idea *instrumentally* to inspire different aesthetic ideas in the experiencer. Regardless of the correct interpretation, I will argue that Kant's transcendental argument does not justify the identicality of the aesthetic ideas in the artist and the experiencer.

Kant's transcendental argument "focuses on finding a necessary reason of (possible) experience" (Katrechko, 2016, 109). It starts with some phenomenon to be explained: "*How is some phenomenon (thing, fact, knowledge, etc) possible?*" (98). I agree with Kant that the phenomenon of aesthetic experience necessitates the notion of Geist – and sensus communis as discussed in Chapter 1. The phenomenon of aesthetic experience – experiencing meaning through aesthetic ideas in the absence of clear rational ideas – necessitates some faculty that presents these aesthetic ideas: *Geist*. This phenomenon, however, does not entail that an artist can communicate non-rational aesthetic ideas through art. We have the feeling that we can 'know' the artist's intention, but this knowing refers to our communicable state of mind in relation to the communicable intention – a state of mind, *not* an aesthetic idea – of the artist. Therefore, the transcendental argument does not necessitate an assumption concerning the communicability of the aesthetic ideas of the artist to the experiencer.

In summary, Kant's transcendental argument does not justify the necessity of the communicability of the artist's aesthetic ideas to the public through art. A transcendental necessity of Geist is justified insofar as it refers to the experiencer's faculty of presenting aesthetic ideas in his engagement with art. Similarly, in Chapter 1 I have argued that the transcendental argument of sensus communis justifies the necessary presence of this faculty in all humans, but does not justify the necessity that this faculty is identical in everyone – sensus communis cannot transcendentally be assumed to consist of an identical 'translator' of aesthetic ideas to communicable states of mind. To go even further, I submit that the phenomenon of aesthetic disagreement justifies a transcendental necessity of inter-personal differences in either Geist – resulting in dissimilar aesthetic ideas in individuals engaging with the same work of art – or in sensus communis – resulting in disparate translations of aesthetic ideas to states of mind.

As discussed in Chapter 1, aesthetic disagreement shows that the phenomenon of intersubjective universality refers to our feeling that our Judgement of Taste is valid for everyone, but does not entail the feeling that everyone does in fact agree with our Judgement of Taste. We feel that when we claim that something is beautiful, it is valid for us all – the claim not being about a personal preference. We expect others to have Geist and sensus communis – and we can transcendentally assume they have – but we ascribe their failure in 'getting it' to a shortcoming in their capacities. People who do not 'get it' still have a potential capacity to 'get it' (taste), their capacity is just lacking (bad taste). Having discussed how Geist affords aesthetic experience and thus reorganization, I will now further investigate *what* is reorganized by means of an illustration.

Reorganization of Gestalt

In a New York Times article titled "How Guilty Should You Feel About Your Vacation?" (24 august 2019) an artistic illustration by Tim Enthoven shows a distressed man running from one touristic hotspot to another, 'pinning' them down while holding a checklist of hotspots to visit in his other hand. His body is immersed in an airplane leaving behind a trail of pollution. This illustration might afford reflection on different aspects of the meaning of travel in our lives. Let's assume that Tim Enthoven's illustration evoked an aesthetic experience in me – regardless of whether it is a work of art. Where could I locate the disruption and the reorganization of organized activities? Disruption of our being embedded by organized activities has to be caused by an idea that goes beyond the limits of our concepts in order to be 'aesthetic'. The aesthetic idea – that through Geist originates from the illustration – thus has to be the cause of disruption. I argue that *that what* is disrupted and reorganized is the Gestalt of my organized activity of travelling, seeing or meaning-making – or my being organized in general. Ultimately, I can have a representation of this reorganized Gestalt in a communicable state of mind. This is my 'reflection' about which I can talk.

Noë's 'aesthetic work' indicates our effort of getting ahold of the reorganized Gestalt of our organized activities by creating states of mind of the ungraspable experience of reorganization and engaging in a discourse about it. But according to Noë aesthetic work goes further, it "does not merely illuminate your own experience for you … it alters how you respond" (Noë, 2019, 5). This is an interesting thought that would allow for the possibility of aesthetic experience – afforded by art – bringing about political change. The alternation of

the way we respond to our being organized as travelers for example – such as feeling more responsible for our 'carbon footprint' – is politically relevant. One could realize how travelling leads to pollution and therefore is something one should become ashamed of. Individual aesthetic responses to art cannot be generalized. However, it is possible to generalize how our engagement with the organized activity has changed. Flying was first seen as civilized and prestigious. Seeing a lot of the world by way of flying was seen as being cultivated. Today, flying a lot is not all that prestigious anymore. Instead, it is becoming something to be ashamed of – indicated by the introduction of the Swedish term 'Flygskam' (translated 'Flight Shame'). The degree to which art has played a role in this 'shift' of meaning attached to (certain forms of) travelling, is unclear. Non-art might have played a much greater role in this shift. Climate activism might have reached more people. However, the endful way in which climate activism aims at persuading the people's views – often in a negative way (by imposing feelings of shame) – might be less effective than art in altering behavior.

> But shame is the wrong emotion. "The more we try to change other people's behavior — especially by making them feel bad — the less likely we will be to succeed," Edward Maibach of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University told me. (Kugel, 2019)

I cannot pursue such an investigation here, but it might be possible that aesthetic work – bringing about change through illuminating your reorganization that is caused by aesthetic experience not determined by anyone's intention – could be a more effective way to evoke political change than 'convincing' people to change through propaganda or activism. In Chapter 4, I will further explain how the 'endful' attempt at change aimed at by propaganda and activism differs from the reorganization that can occur after 'unendful' disruption by art, what Kant described as "formal purposiveness, i.e. a purposiveness without a purpose" (Kant, 2007, 57).

Phenomenal and Conceptual Dimension Gestalt

Let's get back to the concept of the organized activity. If an organized activity can change, and the way it changes can differ between individuals, can we speak *in general* of the organized activity of travel? For indigenous people – such as the Sentinelese – travelling has another role and meaning than for people from the Western world. But even within the Western world, different individuals can have different meanings attached to travelling. If art can reorganize individually, it follows that at a certain point in time an organized activity is different for different individuals. Even if a work of art reorganizes everyone who engages with it in the same way (which I have rejected in the previous chapters), there are people who at this moment have not seen – and maybe will never see – Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*. Therefore, organized activities cannot simultaneously change for everyone at the same time in the same way. What follows? Does every individual have one's own organized activity of 'walking' or 'travelling'? The fact that we can speak in general about walking, seems to reside in the 'conceptual' dimension of that organized activity which makes it possible to identify it as an organized activity to begin with. Even though some of the six features of organized activities may have a different content between individuals, these differences are not radical; otherwise we could not speak of travelling as something that both the Sentinelese and the 'Western' man do. In the same fashion, we can talk about

reorganizational practices for both the Sentinelese and the 'Western' man, notwithstanding the big differences in art for both groups. But, is the relation between art and being organized the same for the two groups? In other words, is art in both cases a reorganizational practice (or does it afford reorganization, as I would phrase it)? Some critics of Noë would argue that this is not the case. Carroll accuses Noë of "overgeneralization" (Carroll, 2017, 214).

> Throughout history, choreography has been composed to perform functions other than displaying for scrutiny our dancing selves or even our moving selves . . . For example, the haka is an ancestral Maori dance. Its function is to frighten the enemy. Maori warriors stamp their feet, wave their arms, bulge their eyes and stick out their tongues ferociously in order to scare off would-be interlopers . . . In short, a great deal of choreography historically was a matter of plain tools, not strange tools. (217-218)

The question whether art *universally* affords reorganization – independent of time and culture – is less problematic with my account of the relation between art and reorganization. As discussed earlier, it can be assumed that all humans have the capacity of aesthetic experience. And as I have defined 'aesthetic art' as a work of art that affords aesthetic experience, the possibility of works of art *not* affording aesthetic experience remains open (as in the example of Carroll). I submit that humans also have in common a tendency to engage aesthetically and to form their aesthetic sense. This tendency is expressed by man's creative efforts throughout the ages without clear functional aims; from cave paintings to primitive music. The artworld of primitive civilizations would have been radically different, but still some institution – perhaps the drawing caveman himself – would see the 'unproductive' creative effort as something different from directly productive efforts such as crafting a bow for hunting purposes.

We can talk about what causes reorganization in general, which according to Noë is art. However, I will argue that the *effect* of reorganization cannot be generalized. Reorganization is an event taking place for a certain individual in a certain place, at a certain time, and in a certain context. Alloa's analysis of Merleau-Ponty's 'seeing-with' gives a clear account of how our engagement – thus also *aesthetic* engagement – with the world resists generalization.

> Seeing with images then means that the evidence they provide the spectator resists generalization without further ado: iconic evidence is not a ladder that could be thrown away after we have climbed it, but remains inherently situation-dependent, case-sensitive and thus, ultimately, precarious. (Alloa, 2011, 190)

So, if the way our engagement with organized activities can be reorganized, this change cannot be generalized and is found in the phenomenal dimension of the organized activity. I would like to argue that this phenomenal dimension is somewhere in-between of the irreducible, situation-dependent and case-sensitive experience of organized activities and the relatively stable universal understanding of organized activities (the conceptual dimension). I submit that the phenomenal dimension of organized activities is personal or case-sensitive but at the same time retains some stability over time. It being case-sensitive

makes it uncommunicable, but still we perceive our being organized as something relatively stable. For example, the way we experience being organized by picture-seeing appeals to more than a specific instance of an experience of being a picture-seer. We cannot give an account of our being organized as a picture-seer – this would be too reductive of our experience of being a picture-seer. However, we can become aware of some change in the way we perceive ourselves as picture-seers. The awareness of this change – reorganization – implies awareness of an a-priori and a-posteriori state of being organized as picture-seer (which become unveiled in the moment of reorganization). Thus, the phenomenal dimension of picture-seeing is in-between experience and the conceptualization of organized activities and we become aware of it through reorganization.

Even though art reorganizes organized activities over time, it is not clear how the individual on this account is being reorganized on a *personal* level. Organized activities are phenomena that lie neither 'outside' nor 'inside' the individual. The individual is entangled with them as an organized being in the world. I will argue that organized activities have a component of personal engagement, the phenomenal dimension, which is subject to 'seeing-with'. This component, and any changes in it, cannot be generalized. It is categorically different from the six features of an organized activity described by Noë, that allow for generalization. Therefore, this new component will not be a 7th feature of organized activities, but rather another dimension of it, the phenomenal, ungeneralizable, individual (but not 'subjective') dimension. This dimension is different between individuals and can change for individuals (through art). Before further elaborating the phenomenal dimension of organized activities, I will discuss Noë's implicit thoughts on it. It appears that Noë is trying to find this phenomenal dimension in what he calls the 'in-between'. This dimension is neither entirely objective (as the six features of organized activities), nor entirely subjective (which would not align with Noë's rejection of subjectivism, internalism and intellectualism).

> We need an account that does justice to the fragile, productive, in-between, that is to say, to the manifestly neither-quite-fully-subjective-nor-entirely-objective character of aesthetic responses, judgments and demands. (Noë, 2019, 16)

However, we can 'objectively' and generally talk about changes in organized activities or art. I argue that this talk of organized activities occurs in a historical sense, far removed from the actual engagement with the (changing) organized activity.

> [The Sex Pistols] fit perfectly into a musical lineage with clear antecedents and borrowings and an obvious effect on what came later. Today it can be difficult even to recognize the ways in which these songs seemed utterly outside the bounds of the known . . . So aesthetic response has a history . . . aesthetic work changes us. (8)

Aesthetic work – discourse about our aesthetic responses to art – changes us individually. When speaking about how aesthetic work changed us in *general*, two different aspects related to aesthetic responses can be taken into consideration. The categorization of the Sex Pistols as English punk rock band with certain origins and with certain influences to the music industry changed the conceptual context of the artwork in question (i.e. the songs of The Sex Pistols). When we talk about how 'aesthetic work changes us' – how we have changed as 'music listeners' – we are referring to the 'looping back' of art to the

organizational practice it relates to. In that case, we are talking about the conceptual dimension of the organized activity. Importantly, we can only speak about the *history* of aesthetic responses – by discussing the aesthetic work related to these responses. My argument is in line with Merleau-Ponty's view: "[T]he reference to a sensible or historical given . . . [has] meaning only as a means of conceptualizing the perceived world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1963, 145).

I submit that the most adequate term to describe the phenomenal dimension of organized activities, is 'Gestalt'. This term does not implicate a belief or internal representation that resides in the individual but indicates a relationship between an individual embodied consciousness and its surrounding world. Alternatives such as 'belief' and 'idea' assume an internalist/detached point of view and are already mentioned by Noë as involved in distinct organized activities: "philosophy is a level 2 reorganizational practice that stands to our level 1 cognitive undertakings – reasoning, argument belief formation" (Noë, 2015, 29). Another alternative to Gestalt for the description of the phenomenal dimension of organized activities could be 'form'. Form, however, might suffer from implications such as it being distinct from matter (as ancient philosophers suggested). Some philosophers use Gestalt, form or figure are as synonyms. Most importantly, Gestalt helps integrate Merleau-Ponty's idea of 'irreducibility' of experience with Noë's concept of organized activities (or being organized in general). Gestalt is irreducible – a whole that precedes its parts – and not generalizable. Still, Gestalt is experienced as relatively stable over time and one can become aware of reorganization of it through aesthetic experience. Being organized implies a whole (humans are organisms) but allows for it to be considered in distinctive parts – different organized activities that can be reorganized over time. The Gestalt of our being organized, however, clearly marks its case-dependent phenomenal aspect – it is the whole of how we experience our being organized (over time).

Merleau-Ponty and Gestalt

I shall fine-tune the definition of Gestalt according to the critique of Merleau-Ponty on this definition – without however adopting his proposed alternative, 'form', for the reasons listed above. In Merleau-Ponty's *The Structure of Behavior*, he attacks the Gestaltist's appropriation of form in their term 'Gestalt'. He accuses them of treating "forms as transcendent realities, rather than treating them as phenomena of perceptual consciousness . . . [from which] reductivist errors follow" (Sheredos, 2017, 191). However, as stated above I would like to use 'Gestalt' nonetheless, with Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of 'form' to be adhered to 'Gestalt'. "[F]ar from the 'physical form' being able to be the real foundation of the structure of behavior and in particular of its perceptual structure, it is itself conceivable only as an object of perception" (Merleau-Ponty, 1963, 143). In this sentence 'structure of behavior' could be substituted with 'organized activity', which also indicates a form of structured behavior. In other words, for my purposes 'Gestalt' indicates the perceptual experience of an interaction between an organized activity and the individual's embodied consciousness.

As mentioned above, I argue that Gestalt as phenomenal dimension makes it more intelligible *what* art reorganizes in organized activities. I will illustrate my point by referring to Merleau-Ponty's essay "Cézanne's doubt" in which he describes Cézanne's painting's potential to 'reorganize' the way we see pictures.

> By remaining faithful to the phenomena in his investigations of perspective, Cezanne discovered what recent psychologists have come to formulate: the lived perspective, that which we actually perceive, is not a geometric or photographic one. The objects we see close at hand appear smaller, those far away seem larger than they do in a photograph. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, 4)

For the sake of argument, I will assume that Cezanne's painting afforded an aesthetic experience for Merleau-Ponty. By giving a hypothetical reconstruction of Merleau-Ponty's engagement with aesthetic art, his aesthetic experience and subsequent aesthetic work resulting in his essay, I will be able to illustrate the theoretical framework I have worked out above. It is important to note that it is a *hypothetical* reconstruction, which involves describing the indescribable (aesthetic experience). However, it might elucidate my theoretical framework.

Cezanne's painting afforded aesthetic experience for Merleau-Ponty and through Geist resulted in aesthetic ideas related to picture-seeing or perspective (in paintings). These aesthetic ideas are non-rational and related to *feeling*. Merleau-Ponty's engagement with the painting – principally through the organized activity of picture-seeing – is playful. He is not engaging with his organized activity in an endful way – he is not *using* picture-seeing as a means to something specific (like reading a map to get to a certain destination). The *unity* – as described by Dewey – of the aesthetic experience implies the simultaneous presence of aesthetic pleasure and aesthetic idea (both concerning *feeling*) and this sets into motion Merleau-Ponty's sensus communis which translates the aesthetic idea into a communicable state of mind. Where does Gestalt come into play? Gestalt of Merleau-Ponty's picture-seeing *becomes unveiled* by his aesthetic engagement with Cezanne's painting. The aesthetic idea – an indescribable feeling disrupting the way he was organized as *picture-seer* – is followed by a change in Gestalt. This aesthetic idea directly *affects* the Gestalt of Merleau-Ponty's picture-seeing. The picture is the playground that affords the playful engagement with picture-seeing. Subsequently, his sensus communis translates this Gestalt shift of picture-seeing in a communicable state of mind. This is the start of his aesthetic work. Merleau-Ponty describes that through Cezanne's work, he comes to understand that a picture cannot imitate or represent nature by artificially including perspective, creating a 'trompe-l'oeil'. In fact, Merleau-Ponty seems to argue that Cezanne's paintings made him realize the difference between his being organized as *seer* and as *picture-seer*. To reflect on our being organized as seers, paintings have to evoke the experience of seeing. We experience circles in our world, even though we frequently see them obliquely as an ellipse. Drawing an ellipse to represent the way we see circles, would not align with our experience of seeing. Merleau-Ponty argues that "in reality we see a form which oscillates around the ellipse without being an ellipse" (Ibid.). Interestingly, he also opens up the possibility that a painting can reorganize organized activities beyond seeing or can broaden the scope of seeing: "We see the depth, the smoothness, softness, the hardness of objects; Cezanne even claimed that we see the odor" (5). Merleau-Ponty's Gestalt of (picture) seeing has shifted. And the way he thinks about his being organized by (picture) seeing and pictures has changed as well.

It is clear that Merleau-Ponty's interpretation – aesthetic work – of Cezanne's paintings is presented as more than a mere opinion. It is a claim for universal validity. However, it is also obvious that not everyone will agree with this interpretation of Cezanne's works. Even Cezanne himself might have a completely different view. This is where aesthetic disagreement comes into play. In "The Death of the Author", Roland Barthes argues that "it is language which speaks, not the author" (143). He discusses the central role that authors are given in their works. I would extrapolate Barthes' argument to all artists and their creations. As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, Schapiro and Heidegger have two distinct interpretations of Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes*. What they have in common is that they both appeal to the *intention* of the artist Van Gogh. A similar appeal to the intention of Cezanne we see in Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of his paintings. As argued before, an artist is no superhuman that can translate his aesthetic ideas *directly* into the act of creation. Creating is an organized activity. If we want to understand the aesthetic idea of a work of art, we should not investigate the creator's intention. To consider the writer's – or artist's – intention as the absolute and definitive source of the aesthetic idea or meaning of the work is "to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" (147). This author-imposed limit does not respect to the irreducibility of an aesthetic experience of the reader. The embodied consciousness of the reader interacts with the writing – not the author – to establish aesthetic experience. In fact, Barthes rightly argues that "a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (148). Of course, the writing has a conceptual context (such as information about the writer and his possible intentions). But this context is solely the *background* against which an aesthetic experience can occur. In the next and last chapter, I will discuss how the work's endfulness is related to the sort of 'change' it affords.

Chapter 4. Art and Propaganda

> The arts can also function as propaganda and, again, to apply the term is by no means to imply condescension (O'Shaughnessy, Nicholas, 2004, 30)

The role of art in activism – as a means to bring about social change – has become increasingly relevant over the last decades. The increased explicit focus on utilizing art for political purposes arguably began around 1916 with the Dada artists – whose disruptive works were often considered 'protest art'; often expressing their discontent toward war and nationalism. Art – in contrast to more rational tools of persuasion, such as philosophical texts – appeals to feeling. As O'Shaughnessy rightfully asserts that "[e]motion is the core of propaganda" (39), it seems reasonable to compare art to propaganda. According to him, art has been used as propaganda throughout the centuries.

> Manifestly, the greatest art has sometimes had propaganda intent: El Greco and Titian were propagandist celebrants of the Counter-Reformation, glorifying the wealth, power and renewal of the Roman Church. (30)

Propaganda – like art – appeals to feeling. However, the feeling propaganda affords coincides with the rational ideas it aims at supporting. As discussed in Chapter 2, the *laterality* in propaganda – it's 'indirect' communication – is accordance with certain beliefs or opinions. One of the major aims of this thesis is to repudiate the claim that aesthetic art – a work of art that affords aesthetic experience – can bring about a reorganization of beliefs *determined by the artist's intentions* and thus be endful. In other words, I mean to reject the claim that art can be a form of propaganda while retaining its essence. I will argue that by 'utilizing' artworks as propaganda, that which makes art special – the formation of the aesthetic sense – vanishes. Such artworks are 'seen as' non-aesthetic art – ordinary tools. As discussed in Chapter 1, the commensurability of art as aesthetic and non-aesthetic art depends on the point of view that is employed. There is commensurability of art as aesthetic and non-aesthetic art from the third person point of view and later on I will argue that this allows art to have a certain probability to been 'seen as' the former or the latter. From the point of view of a specific experience there is no commensurability between 'seeing as aesthetic art' or 'seeing as non-aesthetic art'.

In this chapter I will argue that non-art, such as propaganda and activist art – works of art whose 'success' would impede their being categorized as aesthetic art – are less likely to afford aesthetic experience due to being 'endful', or in Kantian terms, provoking 'interestedness'. Propaganda and activist art can change our political attitude in accordance with the artist's intention. This is different from aesthetic art, which can also afford a change in political attitude, yet one contrary to the artist's intention. Even though in both cases 'purposiveness' or 'intentionality' are perceived – a Kantian assumption that will be discussed later on – in the case of aesthetic art it is merely formal (i.e. without representing any conceptual content). I will conclude this chapter by answering the main research question of my thesis: 'Is art a political tool?' My answer will be that it is a *strange* political tool. Art aids in forming our aesthetic sense thereby facilitating general emancipation, but does not – at least not intentionally – serve any specific political agenda. I will argue that a work of art 'seen as' serving a political agenda would make it an *ordinary* tool – appealing to

feeling in union with specific concepts and to this extent not affording aesthetic experience. Aesthetic art accomplishes what the 'ordinary' political tools cannot: changing political attitudes influenced by aesthetic ideas originated from a moment of disruption. A moment in which our being entangled by organized activities is unveiled.

Disruption and Endfulness

In the previous chapters I have argued that disruption is related to aesthetic experience. I will now elucidate different forms of disruption in order to distinguish aesthetic art from propaganda and activist art. Disruption in the broad sense means interrupting anything that is being taken for granted. I would like to make a distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic ('rational') disruption. Aesthetic disruption is non-conceptual and targets Gestalt – an individual's embodied experience of being organized in the world. Non-aesthetic disruption is conceptual and targets the beliefs of an individual (about one's being organized). Aesthetic disruption, however, is a 'feeling' of unveiling the embodied experience of one's being organized. It is only afterwards that the cognitive faculties – through sensus communis – come into play.

I have distinguished two forms of disruption. However, the potential of a particular work to disrupt in either way is not absolutely determined. This is in line with my argument that *anything* can afford aesthetic experience (also non-art and nature) but *nothing* necessarily will afford aesthetic experience (even if it is a work of art). Therefore, I would suggest we consider the potential form of disruption that a work affords as belonging on a sliding scale instead of dichotomously. I will use 'endfulness' to indicate the probability that an artist's intention dominates the experience of the work – that the work is 'seen as' endful and thus non-aesthetic. Endfulness affects the interaction between the work and the experiencer – regulating the probability of an engagement of 'seeing as aesthetic art' or 'seeing as non-aesthetic art'. In both cases, we perceive purposiveness according to Kant.

> [A]n object, or state of mind, or even an action may, although its possibility does not necessarily presuppose the representation of an end, be called purposive simply on account of its possibility being only explicable and intelligible for us by virtue of an assumption on our part of a fundamental causality according to ends, i.e. a will that would have so ordained it according to a certain represented rule. Purposiveness, therefore, may exist apart from a purpose (Kant, 2007, 51-52)

In aesthetic art, merely a *formal* purposiveness is perceived. In non-aesthetic art, a perceived *objective* purposiveness or non-formal intentionality (i.e. also representing content) conjoins the 'feeling' a work affords with rational ideas, thereby making an aesthetic experience impossible. Note that this is not to say that aesthetic experience occurs in a vacuum of non-rationality – there is always a conceptual context. This conceptual context, however, is not directly determinant for the 'feeling' involved in aesthetic experience. I will elucidate this point further on.

On the one extreme we have complete unendful disruptiveness: works whose disruptive power is merely to bring about aesthetic experience. On the other extreme we have complete endful disruptiveness: works whose disruptive power is exclusively to bring about

a non-aesthetic experience. Having laid out these extremes, I would like to immediately note that no work can be found at either of these extremes. Every work of art has the potential to invoke a non-aesthetic response, as a person might 'perceive' an intention or end even if that intention is completely different from the artist's intention. One might look at Van Gogh's *A Pair of Shoes* and see it as a critique of social injustice (the dirty shoes of the hard-working peasants, who provide us with food but live under miserable conditions). Even in an abstract work of art objective purposiveness might be perceived. The phrase *a posse ad esse non valet consequentia*, is perfectly applicable to the relation between a work of art's potential of affording aesthetic experience and its outcome. On the other hand, every work of propaganda has the potential to invoke an aesthetic response. An easy example would be to show someone who lacks knowledge of Nazi Germany – for example a Sentinelese – a work of Nazi propaganda. One can imagine that such a work might provoke an aesthetic experience as the feeling evoked in the experience does not coincide with any rational ideas.

The Artist and the Experiencer

In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière argues that in aesthetics and art studies the role of the spectator – what I have called 'experiencer' – has been overlooked. In fact, Rancière would probably agree with me that the cultural background of the spectator – as in my example of the Sentinelese – plays a large role in the type of experience that the work will afford. When discussing Martha Rosler's *Balloons* from the series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, he argues that the Vietnamese man holding a dead child held in the middle of a luxurious apartment, only produces its political effect with the assumption of certain beliefs.

> For the image to produce its political effect, the spectator must already be convinced that what it shows is American imperialism, not the madness of human beings in general. She must also be convinced that she is herself guilty of sharing in the prosperity rooted in imperialist exploitation of the world. (93)

It is important to mark the different roles of the artist and the experiencer in ascertaining the endfulness of a work. The artist cannot but work with concepts. So, even if an artist does not intend to make activist art – i.e. does not want to explicitly express a political opinion or sway the opinion of the public – he will still use concepts in order to create. Again, an artist is no super-human that creates without employing concepts. In fact, artists strive to master the medium they utilize to express certain *artistic* ideas. Both technical and conceptual intent is found in the artist's process. Rancière sums this up nicely: "Art entails the employment of a set of concepts, while the beautiful possesses no concepts" (70). The beautiful – that which affords aesthetic experience – indeed possesses no concepts. The experiencer *ascribes* aesthetic ideas to the beautiful through Geist.

I do not intend to make normative claims about what the artworld should accept as works of art. The artworld might not be so concerned with the endfulness of art and its potentiality of affording aesthetic experience. To understand the special relation between politics and art, I have distinguished between aesthetic and non-aesthetic art. I have argued that the relation between non-aesthetic art and politics is similar to that between propaganda and politics, because of objective purposiveness or endfulness in both. In addition, I have argued that the endfulness is not solely dependent upon the artist. It is not just about how much he intends

to express his political opinion. It is also about the cultural – conceptual – context in which the engagement between experiencer and work takes place. As said before, aesthetic experience does not occur in a non-rational vacuum. A conceptual context that is not *conjoined with* the feeling afforded by aesthetic art does not impede aesthetic experience. If the artworld would want to promote aesthetic art, it must try to prevent the experiencer's cognitive faculties from superseding the autonomy of appearance – the directly sensible – by concepts or beliefs. According to Arendt, we can succeed in this endeavor by creating a certain distance.

> [I]n order to become aware of appearances we first must be free to establish a certain distance between ourselves and the object … This distance cannot arise unless we are in a position to forget ourselves, the cares and interests and urges of our lives, so that we will not seize what we admire but let it be as it is, in its appearance. This attitude of disinterested joy (to use the Kantian term, *uninteressiertes Wohlgefallen*) can be experienced only after the needs of the living organism have been provided for, so that, released from life's necessity, men may be free for the world. (Arendt, 1977, 210)

Artists and people involved in exhibiting works of art – if committed to increase the potential of art becoming aesthetic art – might aid in creating this distance. It goes far beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss possible techniques to succeed herein. However, it might start with the artist's intention. The artist committed to creating aesthetic art might try to prevent himself from explicitly expressing political opinions, in accordance with Kant's thought that "art seems like nature … i.e. without a trace appearing of the artist having always had the rule present to him and of its having fettered his mental powers" (Kant, 2007, 136). The less an artist forces his rational ideas, the more probable an experiencer is to create – through Geist – aesthetic ideas (of his own). A somewhat similar line of reasoning is found in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, where the 'culture industry' takes away the active contribution of the subject in experience.

> The active contribution which Kantian schematism still expected of subjects—that they should, from the first, relate sensuous multiplicity to fundamental concepts—is denied to the subject by industry (98)

I submit that the critique of mass culture is also applicable to works of art that are presented in a 'predigested' way. The people involved in exhibiting works of art have a great role in determining the extent to which a work becomes predigested. Think about the 'explanation' provided by captions or audio guides. This is not to say that every form of conceptual context provided with the artwork is detrimental to its potential of affording aesthetic experience. On the contrary, the right context might increase the disruptive potential of an artwork without increasing its endfulness (too much). The easiest examples would be things like lighting and instructions on how to engage with the artwork. But perhaps even some type of descriptive texts might aid in affording aesthetic engagement. Again, it is not the aim of this thesis to give an account on how to increase the probability that an artwork affords aesthetic engagement, or how to increase an artwork's 'aesthetic efficacy'. Giving such an account might even prove to be impossible as it is unpredictable what Geist picks up and translates to an aesthetic experience. Rancière effectively describes this impossibility.

> Aesthetic efficacy' means a paradoxical kind of efficacy that is produced by the very rupturing of any determinate link between cause and effect. It is precisely this indeterminacy that Kant conceptualized when he defined the beautiful as 'what is represented as an object of universal delight apart from any concept'. (Rancière, 2009, 70)

Even though I have borrowed much from Noë's thought to give an account of the relation between art and aesthetic experience and to investigate if art might be a political tool, I depart from his view – similarly to Dewey's – that entails that there should be a relation between the artist's or work's intention and the aesthetic experience that the work affords.

> The artist, rather, shows you something that you can't see, or says something you can't understand. And the artist gives you the opportunity to catch yourself in the act of trying to get your bearings. The artist says: Get me, make sense of me, bring me into focus, see me, if you can! This is his or her motto." (Noë, 2015, 102)

By comparing 'getting' a joke to 'getting' art, he holds that there is one way to get it. "The value of the joke – what we might call its aesthetic value – consists in its affording us an opportunity to get it" (110). Noë – inexplicitly – defies the Kantian thesis of indeterminacy between the work of art and the way it affords aesthetic ideas and communicable states of mind.

Aesthetic Art and Politics

Aesthetic art cannot be a form of propaganda. Or – to be more precise – aesthetic art cannot be propaganda unless it is unsuccessful propaganda. Propaganda – or activist art – has a specific aim, aesthetic art doesn't. In, "Does it Work? The Æffect of Activist Art", Duncombe goes as far as "to introduce the process of developing appropriate metrics for activist art by providing a methodology with which to think through the æfficacy of activist art" (130). As discussed in the introduction, thinking about art as if it were an ordinary tool with a specific aim, is starting on the wrong foot. It disregards the widespread notion of art not having a specific aim. It is treating art as if it weren't special – as if it is a form of propaganda. It does not take seriously the notion of 'aesthetic experience' as something that art affords. Kant would turn in his grave if he heard how art – and that which it affords – is discussed by a contemporary professor: "For whatever we establish as the goal for activist art, we need to have a method for thinking about whether it has done the work it set out to do" (127).

Having rejected the view that aesthetic art is a means to propagandistic persuasion, I would like to end my thesis with the positive findings of my investigation. In Chapter 1, I have engaged with the problem of defining art and analyzing the aesthetic experience it affords. I have adopted the institutional definition of art. An institutional definition, however, does not entail that art always affords aesthetic experience. Therefore, I have proposed the term 'aesthetic art' to indicate art affording aesthetic experience. Throughout my thesis, I have argued that 'aesthetic art' is not defined 'objectively'. Rather, whether art is aesthetic or not depends on a case-dependent act of 'seeing as'. In Chapter 2, I have used Noë's concept of art as 'reorganizational practice' to aid my investigation of the relation between art and politics. I have argued that the relation between organized activities and reorganizational practices – aesthetic art – helps understand the spectator's aesthetic engagement with art.

In addition, I have argued that reorganizational practices refer to our aesthetic engagement with art rather than the creation of art – the former being unendful where the latter implies an end. I have argued that anything – also nature – can afford aesthetic experience. However, I have reserved the term 'reorganizational practice' for aesthetic engagement with art only. It is a practice – something humans in a society do in the context of the institution of the artworld. Aesthetic art affords a 'playful imitative engagement' – art forms the playground where our organized activities are put on display without becoming 'present-at-hand'. This engagement with the organized activity is playful, because it is neither a 'ready-to-hand' – characterized by 'usefulness' – way in which we experience our being organized through art. I have argued that aesthetic engagement affords an imitation of the way we *ordinarily* engage with the world through organized activities. Moreover, I have argued that aesthetic experience is not afforded exclusively by art. Art's unique capacity is the *formation* of our aesthetic sense – teaching us to engage aesthetically with non-art too. In Chapter 3, I investigated *what* in organized activities can be reorganized. I have proposed a distinction between the conceptual and phenomenal dimension of organized activities and have suggested that the latter can be best described as 'Gestalt'. I have then argued that Gestalt is what can be reorganized by aesthetic experience through the experiencer's Geist. In this final chapter, I have compared art to propaganda in order to support my answer to the main research question of this thesis: artworks are *strange* political tools that facilitate general emancipation by disrupting the Gestalt of organized activities without serving any specific political agenda. Gestalt forms the in-between of the irreducible experience and the generalizable conceptualization of our being organized. Gestalt's reorganization by art entails an awareness of the way we perceive our being organized and changes herein. I have argued that the difference between art and propaganda lies in *endfulness*. A perceived end (a political agenda) in the work makes aesthetic engagement impossible. Aesthetic art is political in an unendful way (i.e. without perceived political contents). Aesthetic art facilitates general emancipation by unveiling our being organized and affording the possibility of reorganizing the way we experience and respond to our world.

Bibliography

Adorno, Theodor and Horkheimer, Max, 2002, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Allison, Henry, 2001, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Alloa, Emmanuel, 2011, in *Image and Imaging in Philosophy, Science, and the Arts. Volume I. Proceedings of the 33rd International Wittgenstein Symposium*, edited by Elisabeth Nemeth, Richart Heinrich, Wolfram Pichler and David Wagner. Berlin: The Gruyter.

Alloa, Emmanuel, 2017, *Resistance of the Sensible World*, New York: Fordham University Press.

Arendt, Hannah, 1977, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, London: Penguin Books.

Aristotle, 2008, *Poetics*, in *Aesthetics: a comprehensive anthology*, edited by Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin, Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Barthes, Roland, *Image-Music-Text*, 1977, New York: Hill and Wang.

Danto, Arthur, 1964, "The Artworld", *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19: 571-584.

Danto, Arthur, 1998, "The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense", *History and Theory* 37, no. 4: 127-143.

Danto, Arthur, 2013, *What art is*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Debord, Charles, 2012, "Geist and Communication in Kant's Theory of Aesthetic Ideas" 17, no. 2, 177–190.

Dewey, John, 2008, "Art as Experience", in *Aesthetics: a comprehensive anthology*, edited by Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin, Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Dickie, George, 1969, "Defining Art", *American Philosophical Quarterly* 6, no. 3: 253-256.

Dickie, George, 1974, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis, New York: Cornell University Press.*

Duncombe, Stephen, 2016, "Does it Work? The Æffect of Activist Art", *Social Research* 83, no. 1: 115-134.

Heidegger, Martin, 2008, "The Origin of the Work of Art", in *Aesthetics: a comprehensive anthology*, edited by Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin, Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Huizinga, Johan, 2010, *Homo Ludens proeve eener bepaling van het spel-element der cultuur*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Hume, David, 2008, "Of the Standard of Taste", in *Aesthetics: a comprehensive anthology*, edited by Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin, Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Kant, Immanuel and Nicholas Walker, 2007, *Critique of Judgement*, Oxford: OUP Oxford.

Katrechko, Sergey, 2016, "On Kant's Transcendental Argument(s)", *Con-Textos Kantianos* 4, no. 2: 98-117.

Kugel, Seth, (2019, August, 24). "How Guilty Should You Feel About Your Vacation?", The New York Times: 6.

Noë, Alva, 2015, *Strange Tools*, New York: Hill and Wang.

Noë, Alva, 2017, "Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noëll Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 94, no. 1: 238-250.

Noë, Alva, 2019, "Art and the In-Between", unpublished manuscript.

O'Shaughnessy, Nicholas, 2004, *Politics and Propaganda: Weapons of Mass Seduction*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 1963, *The structure of behavior*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 1964, *Sense and Non-Sense*, Evanston: Northwestern University

Press.
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 1968, *The Visible and the Invisible*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 2012, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Abdingdon: Routledge.
Plato, 2004, *Republic*, Translated by C.D.C. Reeve, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.
Rancière, Jacques, 2009, *The Emancipated Spectator*, London: Verso.
Schapiro, Meyer, 1994, *Theory and philosophy of art: style, artist, and society*, New York: Braziller.
Sheredos, Benjamin, 2017, "Merleau-Ponty's Immanent Critique of Gestalt Theory", *Human Studies* 40: 191–215.
Stoner, Samuel, 2019, "Kant on Common-sense and the Unity of Judgments of Taste", *Kant Yearbook* 11, no. 1: 81-99.
Weitz, Morris, 1956, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15, no. 1: 27-35.
Williams, Raymond, 1976, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press.