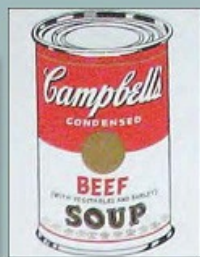


Who Says That's Art?



A Commonsense View of the Visual Arts

Michelle Marder Kamhi

"Forceful and persuasive. . . impressive . . . accessible?" —*Kirkus Reviews*

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the Visual Arts

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INTRODUCTION

If Art Can Be *Anything*, Then It Is Nothing

The radical transformations that have occurred in the once-splendid realm of the visual arts since the early twentieth century are nothing less than astonishing. For many, like myself, they are deeply disturbing.

My own sense of loss is exemplified by an experience I had some years ago in response to a press release from the Metropolitan Museum of Art touting an exhibition that promised to be truly exciting. Entitled *Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof*, it would showcase the work of a living artist on the Met's roof, the "most dramatic outdoor space for sculpture" in New York City. The first show of its kind in this auspicious location, it would display five works by Kelly—whom the *New York Times* considered "one of America's pre-eminent postwar artists."¹ Who could resist such an announcement?

Yet a visit to the Met soon after proved both disappointing and dismaying. Of the five works on display, just four were immediately visible. They were large abstract "sculptures" that offered so little visual interest, however, that they prompted no desire to linger and reflect upon them. Hoping that the fifth work might prove more interesting, I looked around but couldn't find it, although the Met's roof garden is not large.

Thanks to the aid of a discreet wall label, the missing work was at last spotted. Affixed to the roof's east parapet, it was a long curved

slab of dark-grey bronze, entitled *Horizontal Curve II*—so undistinguished that it could easily be mistaken for part of the wall itself. Having found it, I thought “This is *it*?” Wasn’t visual art supposed to catch the eye and hold it? And wasn’t it supposed to stir the heart and mind? How could the art of our time have come to so little?²

Those questions have reverberated with increasing intensity for me in the years since then—in response not only to other contemporary work featured on the Met’s rooftop but also to that displayed inside the museum, and to the “contemporary art” given prominence at other leading institutions, not just in the U.S. but abroad as well.³ Nor is it surprising to me that the public is often baffled or disappointed (if not outright disgusted in the case of more offensive examples) by what now passes for art in our leading cultural institutions. Chances are that you’ve had comparable experiences. If so, they may be what prompted you to begin reading this book.

“Expert” Views vs. Common Sense

Many books written in recent years have attempted to bridge the gap between the contemporary artworld and the public. One of them—entitled *But Is It Art?*—is by Cynthia Freeland, a professor of philosophy at the University of Houston. Offering “an introduction to art theory” for general readers, the book promises to shed light on “what art is, what it means, and why we value it.”⁴ In her conclusion, Freeland quotes the not uncommon lament that the term *art* “has come to mean so many things that it doesn’t mean anything any more.”

Yet the works Freeland refers to *as art* throughout her book are themselves symptomatic of that trend. They include not only such bona fide examples as Vincent van Gogh’s *Irises* and the *Birth of Venus*, by the Italian Renaissance master Sandro Botticelli, but many twentieth-century works whose status as art is often questioned by the non-expert public. These range from “Pop artist” Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* and Jackson Pollock’s *Blue Poles* (one of his signature “drip paintings”) to the French “performance artist” Orlan’s surgical alterations of her own body and photographer Andres Serrano’s notorious *Piss Christ* (a photograph of a crucifix submerged in a container

of his own urine), which incited a furor over federal arts funding in the United States in the 1980s. In all cases, Freeland begins with the implicit assumption that the work in question *is* art. She then attempts to justify it by explaining the artworld theory behind it, thereby implying that the theory itself has merit.⁵ Like most contemporary philosophers of art, she shares the basic premise of today's artworld professionals—the view that virtually anything can be art; that, in effect, as Warhol is said to have declared: “Art is whatever you can get away with.”⁶

Since the early years of the twentieth century, what reputed artists have gotten away with is astonishing indeed. It ranges from *Black Square* paintings by the Russian modernist Kazimir Malevich (1879–1935) to cans of excrement labeled *Merda d'artista* (“Artist's shit”) by the Italian postmodernist Piero Manzoni (1933–1963) to a shark preserved in a tank of formaldehyde by Damien Hirst (b. 1965), who is reported to be today's wealthiest artist. The Hirst piece, which he portentously entitled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, has been more aptly dubbed a “pickled shark” by others.

Worthless though such works seem to many art lovers, the artworld establishment has conferred high status upon them, granting them space in major museums and prominence in standard accounts of art history. Still worse, the rate at which “cutting-edge” work (the more outrageous the better) “pushes the envelope” and gains acceptance seems ever-accelerating. When Hirst's pickled shark was first exhibited to an American public at the Brooklyn Museum in 1999, it seemed little more than a sick joke or momentary aberration, which would soon be forgotten. Less than a decade later, however, the work was purchased for a hefty sum (reported to be as high as \$12 million) by a trendy private collector, the hedge-fund manager Steven A. Cohen. By the summer of 2007, New York's Metropolitan Museum announced that it would exhibit Hirst's shark, on loan from the collector, for three years.

As for that premier art institution's views on the subject, Gary Tinterow (then chief curator of nineteenth-century, modern, and contemporary art) was quoted in the official press release as saying: “For three years, we have endeavored to bring work by younger art-

ists into the Museum, so we are thrilled to exhibit . . . a work that epitomizes the art of our time.” Philippe de Montebello, the Met’s director at the time, more equivocally stated: “It should be especially revealing and stimulating to confront this work in the context of the entire history of art.” Indeed. Though the skeptical among us may be forgiven for wondering whether the Met was mainly interested in promoting a public debate on Hirst’s proper place in art history or was just shrewdly courting a wealthy collector.⁷

In any case, many art lovers and even casual museum goers resist the notion that something scarcely recognizable as art at all—which seems more properly to belong in a museum of natural history than at the Met—“epitomizes the art of our time.” For such individuals, the term *art* is likely to conjure up a Rembrandt *Self-Portrait* or Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* or Michelangelo’s *Pietà*. The term “art,” in their view, refers to such images. And they reasonably assume that today’s art should resemble such work in essential respects—variations in style and subject matter notwithstanding. If not, why call it *art*?

Moreover, if art can be virtually anything, everyday logic suggests that it is then nothing in particular. And if it is nothing in particular, what is the point of institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of *Art*, or of federal and state endowments for the *arts*—not to mention the whole enterprise of *art* education in our schools? Surely the very existence of such institutions and undertakings implies that art has a particular identity and value, that it is distinguishable from other aspects of culture, that it cannot simply be whatever the whim of a would-be artist declares it to be at any given moment.

The Artworld’s “Institutional Theory” of Art

Since ancient times, philosophers have striven to offer insights into the essential nature of art. Many of today’s philosophers, however, have abandoned such analysis. Far from casting a critical eye on the present artworld chaos, they have (like Freeland) contributed to it. Embracing the artworld’s guiding premise that virtually anything can be art, they have even endowed it with quasi legitimacy—dubbing it the “institutional theory of art.” In all its variations, that theory boils down, in effect, to this: *Art is whatever a reputed artist says it is.*

Wait, you may protest, isn't defining *art* in terms of *artists* a circular definition? And doesn't basic logic tell us that such a circular definition has no value? Since an artist is someone who creates art, don't we need to know what "art" is to determine whether someone qualifies as an "artist"? You would be right, of course. But basic logic is not operative in today's artworld, which is ruled instead by a body of abstract theorizing largely divorced from everyday human experience.

The very term *artworld* (as one word instead of two), in fact, refers to a cultural and intellectual realm governed primarily by familiarity not with *works of art* as such but rather with the *theories* surrounding them. In the thought of philosopher-critic Arthur Danto (1924–2013), who coined the term, the *artworld* comprises all persons who are knowledgeable about, and accept, such theories. This includes not only artists, critics, and philosophers like Danto himself but also members of the public who are "in the know"—the "artworld public," as Danto's fellow philosopher George Dickie (b. 1926) dubbed them.⁸

The work that inspired the institutional theory was Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*. In an influential essay on the subject, Danto acknowledged that the Warhol piece was a mere "facsimile," visually indiscernible from actual Brillo boxes you might see in a supermarket. Nevertheless, he argued, there was a significant difference between them—that is, "a certain theory of art."

It is the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is [indistinguishable from]. . . . [W]ithout the theory, one is unlikely to see it as art, and in order to see it as part of the Artworld, one must have mastered a good deal of artistic theory as well as a considerable amount of the history of recent New York painting. It could not have been art fifty years ago.⁹

Such thinking is now dominant in the artworld. Yet it is surprisingly undercut by Danto's own admission that he did not "love" Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*—the very work that gave rise to his institutional theory of art—"with anything like the same intensity or in anything like the same way" he felt about paintings by the Dutch masters, for

example.¹⁰ That fact should have prompted him to inquire further, since a widely acknowledged attribute of art is its capacity to evoke or inspire strong feeling (as I will argue in subsequent chapters). Unfortunately, it did not.

In his last book, entitled *What Art Is* (2013), Danto surprisingly challenges the now widespread notion that *art* is undefinable. In his view, works of art can be defined as “embodied meanings.”¹¹ The kinds of work that he assumes to be art are bafflingly disparate, however. They range from uncontroversial examples of pre-twentieth-century painting and sculpture to highly questionable anti-traditional pieces such as Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* and the ordinary urinal that the art-world trickster Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) dubbed *Fountain* and signed “R. Mutt 1917.”

Ironically, the book on the nature of art that I co-authored is also titled *What Art Is*. Published in 2000, it, too, argues that works of art consist of embodied meanings.¹² However, the argument it offers, which I further develop here, could not be more different from Danto’s. The crucial difference lies in *how* art works are deemed to embody meaning, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Who Decides What Art Is?

To get to the root of what has gone wrong in the artworld—to grasp why theory now matters more than actual works of art—requires understanding how ideas about the nature of art have developed. Such an inquiry ultimately touches upon both art history and the realms of cognition and language. In addition to considering a wide variety of works from diverse periods and cultures, it involves understanding how concepts such as *art* are formed, and how they are related to the terms used to express them.

Many of today’s philosophers regard terms and concepts as if they were entirely arbitrary constructs, with no objective basis in reality. They therefore reject the idea that any one thing’s claim to being called “art” has greater legitimacy than any other. In so doing, they ignore the way the human mind works, however. Like all concepts, that of *art* originated in the natural tendency of the mind to classify or categorize things according to notable similarities and differences.

Spend some time with a toddler and you will observe that process operating at its basic level.

Even before my granddaughter, Nya, had learned the word “key,” for example, she had begun to recognize that certain notched metal objects could be inserted into slots and turned to open things. By the age of twelve months or so, she would reach for the key ring in my hand when we arrived at her apartment door, and she would attempt, however clumsily at first, to insert one of the keys into the keyhole and turn it. She also recognized that the little plastic keys that came with one of her toys could be used to open the miniature gates of cubby holes containing variously shaped objects. And she could indicate her desire to open something simply by miming the action of turning a key.

Nya’s grasp of the concept did not depend on learning the word “key.” That verbal tag, acquired somewhat later, merely enabled her to communicate more efficiently. And having formed the concept, she could readily adapt to the fact that while her father and I call each of those little objects “a key,” her German-speaking mother also refers to such objects as *ein Schlüssel*. Similarly, she soon learned that the utensil used for eating liquid foods, for example, is called “a spoon” by her father and me, and *ein Löffel* by her mother.

If I had held a spoon up to Nya, saying “This is a key,” she would surely have shaken her head and smiled at me. And if I had inserted the spoon into the keyhole and attempted to open the front door with it, she would probably have laughed and called me a silly goose. But if instead of joining her in laughing at my silliness, I had gravely insisted that the spoon was a key, she would have been distressed (just as she once was when a family member insisted, in mock-earnest, on stacking her graduated block set out of size order). While the verbal tags associated with certain objects may be relatively arbitrary in their origin, once they have been established we cannot change them at will without risking cognitive and emotional confusion.

In other words, language is not infinitely elastic. We can reasonably extend the concept and term “key” to a small plastic card that performs the same function as an old-fashioned key, but we cannot sensibly extend it to a lock. True, words have sometimes taken on meanings diametrically opposed to their original sense—“sanction”

and “cleave” are prime examples. But no one can reasonably argue that such reversals have enhanced clarity of expression. On the contrary, unless the context clearly signals the sense intended, they result in total confusion.

The same cognitive principles apply to the formation of more complex concepts such as *art*.¹³ Tellingly, the confusion that has resulted from today’s promiscuous use of that term—as well as from the equally indiscriminate use of related terms such as “painting” and “sculpture”—has been lamented even by critics who accept virtually anything as art. As Peter Schjeldahl, art critic of *The New Yorker*, has observed: “Art used to mean paintings and statues. Now it means practically anything human-made that is unclassifiable otherwise. This loss of a commonsense definition is a big art-critical problem.”¹⁴ A critic for the *New York Times* has similarly noted:

Contemporary sculpture knows no boundaries. . . . This makes [it] a zone of enormous creative freedom. The down side is, if sculpture can be anything, then maybe it is not anything in particular. . . . And it becomes hard for people to care very passionately about it . . . , much less evaluate it.¹⁵

Yet both critics treat as art everything put before them as such by the artworld.

How, then, does one determine what *art*—or *painting* or *sculpture*—is? Often this question is mistakenly posed in the form “*Who* decides what art is?”—as if it were a question of some individual having the authority to dictate the matter.¹⁶ That is as inappropriate as asking, “*Who* decides what a *key* is?” What we need to do is trace the term and concept back to its roots, to discover what sorts of objects it originally referred to, what purpose they served, and how they did so.

What This Book Argues

As implied above, the concept of art dealt with in this book is that of “fine art” (as distinct from the “decorative arts”). Tracing that concept back to its roots reveals that the works it originally referred to consisted, essentially, of *imagery* in two or three dimensions. The decisive

turning point in the breakdown of the concept of art, in my view, was the invention of “abstract” painting and sculpture in the early years of the twentieth century. On that key point, I differ from the vast majority of critics, including those of a conservative bent.¹⁷

Conservative critics generally reject *postmodernism* in the visual arts—as exemplified by Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* and Hirst’s pickled shark. Yet they champion *modernism*, represented pre-eminently by abstract work. Unlike most combatants in this culture war, I say “a plague on both their houses.” In my view, modernism’s rejection of imagery through the invention of abstract painting and sculpture had fatal consequences for art as a vehicle of meaning. Significantly, the often bizarre forms of postmodernist expression that dominate today’s art scene owe their very invention to “abstract art.” They originated in a direct reaction by many in the mid-twentieth-century artworld against the dominance of Abstract Expressionism, as epitomized by the work of Jackson Pollock. As I see it, that reaction was justified in principle, though not in the unprecedented forms it took.

As suggested by my subtitle, *A Commonsense View of the Visual Arts*, I appeal to readers to exercise their own judgment in assessing the validity of my arguments and claims. By “commonsense” I mean ignoring the dictates of purported experts and relying instead on the natural operation of one’s own powers of reason. Alexis de Tocqueville, the astute nineteenth-century French commentator on American life, wisely observed that Americans “found no need of drawing philosophical method out of books [because] they have found it in themselves.” The intuitive method characteristic of Americans, he argued, consisted in “seek[ing] the reason of things for oneself”; in regarding “[one’s] own reason as the most obvious and proximate source of truth” and in “insist[ing] upon judging the world from there.”¹⁸ What Tocqueville was describing is what I mean by “common sense.” And as he noted, it is not the exclusive possession of Americans but is (or should be) the governing habit of mind in every true democracy.

With respect to art, however, that habit of mind has sadly abandoned many who should know better, both in America and abroad.¹⁹ What now prevails instead in diverse realms, from the media to our educational and cultural institutions, is an unthinking acceptance of

the artworld's dominant assumptions, however absurd they might appear on reflection. As a result, journalists, teachers, museum trustees, officers of charitable foundations, public and corporate arts administrators alike (not to mention influential patrons of the arts) have no basis on which to question what is being put forward as "art." Thus institutions ranging from art museums to schools of art education promote modernist and postmodernist work that ordinary citizens regard as worthless non-art, while contemporary painters and sculptors who are creating art of genuine value are officially ignored.

Artworld partisans will of course declare that to appreciate "cutting-edge" work one must be aware of art history and theory. One of the chief aims of this book, therefore, is to debunk the now prevailing views on those subjects—and thereby to reveal just how shaky the artworld's theoretical foundation is. Instead of legitimizing "art" that consists of pickled sharks and canned excrement, such theorizing may more properly be laughed into oblivion.

Some will no doubt say (as others already have in regard to my earlier writing along these lines) that I am merely attempting to establish my personal taste as universal, by arguing that the sort of work I prefer is the only true art. On the contrary, a good deal of what qualifies as art in my view isn't to my taste at all. By the same token, I find at least some of the work that I don't regard as art to be pleasant, amusing, or appealing in some other respect. The issue of liking something is quite separate from that of deciding what category it belongs to, though the two matters are often conflated.

What I *am* seeking to do is offer reasoned arguments regarding the essential nature of visual art. It is then up to readers to assess the validity of my arguments, based on their own personal experience and independent judgment. If this serves to provoke in-depth public debate on the subject, so much the better. Such debate is sorely needed.

A Brief Overview

Chapter 1, "What Exactly Are We Talking About?" further defines the concept of art that this book deals with (that is, *fine art*, or "Art with a capital A"), tracing its roots to antiquity, and showing its relevance to non-Western and pre-literate cultures as well. Chapter 2,

“What Qualities Make a Work ‘Art’? And How and Why Do We Respond?,” considers the essential nature of works of art—their chief characteristics and their primary function. Chapter 3 answers the question “What’s Wrong with Abstract Art?,” in part by showing the mistaken premises and unattainable goal on which such work is based. Chapter 4, “Anti-Art Is Not Art,” debunks the various inventions of postmodernism—from “Pop art” to so-called conceptual and performance art—by documenting the anti-art intent that gave rise to them. Chapter 5, “Do Photography, Video, and Film All Qualify as ‘Art’?,” sorts out important differences between those media and the arts of painting, drawing, and sculpture. Chapter 6, “Critics and Curators—Informed Guides or Intellectual Bullies?,” considers the role and influence of critics and curators, both good and bad. Chapter 7, “What Do Cognitive Science and Evolution Tell Us about Art?,” examines evidence from the fields of cognition and evolution that illuminates the view of art presented here. Chapter 8, “Rethinking Art Education,” critiques destructive recent trends in art education and counters with constructive suggestions for the future. Chapter 9, “Today’s Dysfunctional Artworld—Who Is to Blame?,” considers the forces that conspire to promote pseudo art in today’s culture, from art dealers and wealthy collectors to museum trustees and public officials. Chapter 10 is a very personal reflection upon “The Pleasures and Rewards of Art—Real Art, That Is.” Finally, a brief Postscript entitled “What Can Be Done?” suggests a few simple steps toward restoring cultural sanity with regard to contemporary art.

Notes

N. B. *Most of the articles cited in the notes are available online. If an article can be readily found by a simple title search, the URL has been omitted, to avoid cluttering the notes. The entire contents of Aristos—the online review of the arts that I co-edit at www.aristos.org—are archived there. Many articles from the earlier print edition of Aristos are also available (in PDF) on the website, and can be located by a title or keyword search.*

Introduction - If Art Can Be *Anything*, Then It Is Nothing

1. Carol Vogel, “On the Use of Buildings for Decorative Effect,” *New York Times*, April 28, 1998.

2. Kelly’s work is dubbed “Minimalist” by those in the know, as if that stylistic designation were sufficient to justify it.

3. Regarding the Met’s rooftop exhibitions, see the following items in online Notes & Comments in *Aristos*: “Who Cares about Caro?” (on *Anthony Caro on the Roof*), October 2011; “Roxy on the Roof” (on *Roxy Paine on the Roof: Maelstrom*, December 2009; “Andy Goldsworthy, ‘Sculptor’—So They Say” (on *Andy Goldsworthy on the Roof*), November 2004. A telling example of what passes for contemporary art abroad is *Marilyn*, by Joana Vasconcelos (b. 1971)—a giant shoe “sculpture” made of stainless steel pots and pot lids, exhibited in the famed Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in 2012.

4. Cynthia Freeland, *But Is It Art?: An Introduction to Art Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), xvii. Art historian and critic Suzi Gablik’s *Has Modernism Failed?* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1984, 2004) even more explicitly aims “to bridge the gap in understanding . . . between people outside the artworld and those within it” (p. 26).

5. A more recent example of a book by a philosophy professor who accepts virtually anything as art is *Art, Self and Knowledge* by Keith Lehrer (Oxford University Press, 2011). Gablik, too, accepts much of the “art” and many of the artworld premises that I challenge here.

6. Though generally attributed to Warhol, that provocative statement actually originated in a slightly different form with the influential media theorist Marshall McLuhan, who declared “Art is anything you can get away with” in his book *The Medium Is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam, 1967), 132–36.

7. As suggested by Michael Gross, the author of *Rogues’ Gallery: The Secret History of the Moguls and the Money that Made the Metropolitan Museum* (New York: Broadway, 2009), such pressures may have been what prompted de Montebello to step down after a historic tenure as director.

8. George Dickie, “The New Institutional Theory of Art,” reprinted from *Proceedings of the 8th Wittgenstein Symposium*, 10 (1983), 57–64, in Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art—The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 51.

9. Arthur Danto, “The Artworld,” reprinted from *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 61 (1964), 571–84, in Lamarque & Olsen, 32–33 (emphasis mine).

10. The quote is from Danto’s reply to essays in *Danto and His Critics*, ed. by Mark Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 198.

11. Arthur Danto, *What Art Is* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 149.

12. Louis Torres and Michelle Marder Kamhi, *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000).

13. A quite remarkable confirmation of my point has recently come from an acquaintance who told me of the distress experienced by her eleven-year-old son during a visit to the Museum of Modern Art in New York. On viewing a strange video exhibited there of a man jumping up and down on a trampoline, he burst into tears and wailed in protest: “Mom, that’s not art! They shouldn’t *say* that’s art!”

14. Peter Schjeldahl, “Gated,” *The New Yorker*, February 28, 2005.

15. Ken Johnson, “Is Sculpture Too Free for Its Own Good?” *New York Times*, May 7, 2004.

16. See, for example, Amei Wallach, “Is It Art? Is It Good? And Who Says So?,” *New York Times*, October 12, 1997.

17. For a brief exploration of this point, see “Kandinsky and His Progeny,” *Aristos*, May 1995.

18. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835), Ch. 1, “Philosophical Method of the Americans.”

19. One exception worth noting is the British art critic and curator Julian Spalding, whose 2003 book *The Eclipse of Art* courageously, if not entirely consistently, challenged the art establishment. (See Louis Torres’s review “Artworld Maverick,” *Aristos*, November 2007; and Spalding’s letter in response, *Aristos*, June 2008.) Another is philosopher Roger Scruton’s work, such as his article “The Great Swindle” [captioned “From pickled sharks to compositions in silence, fake ideas and fake emotions have elbowed out truth and beauty”], *Aeon* (online magazine), December 17, 2012. There is also the collection of essays in Dutch entitled *Niet alles is kunst* (Not everything is art), by Diederik Kraaijpoel, Willem L. Meijer, and Lennaart Allan, published in The Netherlands by Aspekt in 2010. See, too, the various manifestos of the Stuckists at <http://www.stuckism.com/manifest.html>. An international art movement founded in 1999, Stuckism boldly advocates “contemporary figurative painting with ideas,” as well as (if less prominently) sculpture, drawing, and printmaking, and does not hesitate to say what art isn’t.

Chapter 1 - What Exactly Are We Talking About?

1. *The World Book Dictionary*, ed. by Clarence Lewis Barnhart (World Book - Childcraft International, 1981).

2. In the words of one philosophy professor, “Art as we have generally understood it [in the sense of “fine art”] is a European invention barely two hundred years old.” Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 3.

3. The Latin term for “art” in general was *ars* (plural *artes*). The corresponding Greek term was *techne*, from which the English term “technique” derives.

4. Aristotle’s view of art’s psychological function is examined in depth by the classical scholar Stephen Halliwell in a comprehensive and illuminating study entitled *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), esp. 202–206. As his subtitle indicates, the subject is highly relevant today.

