Art and boundaries
On the genome and models of the expanded art space

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Preamble

At the turn of the last millennium, Peter Sloterdijk (1989, 271) wrote that the present-day culture is a great epilogue machine that produces concluding words and, by undoing what pertains to yesterday, produces a glimmer of orientation in the present. During this time, the modern brain, according to Sloterdijk, is still warm from the flow of the last waves created by great epilogues. There is a multitude of post-rhetorics, for example post-Freudianism, post-Marxism, post-structuralism, post-metaphysics, post-historicism—who would not love them for their enthusiasm in bidding farewell to the past, given that the future already looks hazy and intangible?

1. ART OF THE BASIC AND EXPANDED FIELD

Hypothesis

Analogous applies to the field of art. Here, too, the brain is still warm from the flow of the famous waves of the concluding words accompanying the excessively limiting or excessively serious past, which during the last three hundred years flooded in succession the European cultural space: Gesamtkunstwerk, avant-garde movements, objets trouvés, Beuys' erweiterter Kunstbegriff, the collapse of aesthetic difference, the social construction of artistic reality, etc. The more impetuous the concluding words, the sooner the present space opens up for new conceptions and trends. While concluding words do not necessarily bring long-term results, periods, with their epilogic genius, can nevertheless achieve a relatively high degree of self-reflexive awareness in a given moment.

My hypothesis is therefore that in order to trace the nature of transformations in the art space of Modernism, especially late Modernism, it is sufficient, as a first step, to follow the concluding words that the newly emerging ideologies, trends, and movements express in relation to the art of the past, starting from the Enlightenment up to the present day. These words serve as a basis for trying to unravel the logic of change in the morphology, phenomenology and axiology of art.

Time frame

The time frame of the research is the era of modernity. It is the period of the ascent towards the modernist zenith and the period of descent from the zenith. This descent is not characterised only by the waning of the modernist vigour, but also and mainly by a certain impatient need for change, for a post-period that would be able to convincingly suggest, at least to some extent, "that something is in progress, because something else has passed" (Sloterdijk, 1989, 166). The upward path has the character of progression, the downward path the character of deconstruction. As a philosophical concept, Modernism is a modern era movement that characterises the cultural, political, philosophical, and artistic spheres of the last three centuries in European history.[1] On close examination, it represents the secularisation of ideas and perspectives that were already conceived in Christian metaphysics and entered

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1   The beginning of Modernism is defined differently according to the context of the discourse. In the humanities it coincides with the High Renaissance, in economics with the industrialisation of the mid-18th century, in political science with the French Revolution of the late 18th century (political Modernism), in literary and art history with the emergence of aesthetic Modernism at the beginning of the 19th century, and, in terms of stylistic labels, with the waning 19th century (Osterhammel, 2009, 1827).

the secular sphere after the rejection of any relevance of transcendent dimensions.[2] In its late phase, it is characterised by the following processes: individuation, through the transformation of old forms of belonging to a community; massification, through the adoption of standardised behaviour and conformist ways of reacting; desacralisation, through the replacement of "big stories" of sacred origin by a "scientific interpretation of the world"; rationalisation, through the dominance of the pragmatic mind, technical efficiency, and the free market; and finally, universalisation, through the global expansion of a single social model that, in its cosmopolitanism, presents itself as the "end of history" (Benoist, Champetier, 2018, 31).

Such structured matrix is also the context of the discussion on the nature of transformations in art, which, in the space of Modernism, is marked by characteristic phase shifts, such as Gesamtkunstwerk, avant-garde movements, objets trouvés, and Beuys' Erweiterter Kunstbegriff. The antecedents of this discussion are the birth of anthropocentrism and secularisation from the spirit of the Enlightenment, and the birth of aesthetics from the spirit of a philosophical sense for sensuality, emancipation and system.

Gesamtkunstwerk

At the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, the idea and practice of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*[3] began to pave the way for the radical transformation of the field of art: at first with the philosophical shift from the sacred to the secular, and then with the reform of opera. In this context, the total work of art was not only a "multimedial" union of all the arts in one piece, as this would be called in today's era modern speak, but contained at its core the tendency towards the emancipation of art. This meant that after 1750, when philosophical aesthetics was "invented", "good works" could emigrate from the territory of religious and historicist basis to the autonomous and secular aesthetic territory. In this process the works retained their "redemptive relevance" (Rettungsrelevanz), thanks to the cult of the artist's "genius" and the interest in the problem of wholeness in the form of the then-popular concept: the notion of "system".

It became central wherever the notion of Creation as a concept for Wholeness with a capital letter was in crisis, and also wherever there was a lack of faith in man as the master of nature and the absolute

2   Cf. Benoist, Champetier, 2018, 31–32

3   The idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk emerged during the Romantic era. The term was first used by the writer and philosopher Eusebius Trahndorff in *Ästhetik oder Lehre von der Weltanschauung und Kunst* (Aesthetics or Doctrine of Worldview and Art) in 1827. 22 years later, the term reappeared in Richard Wagner's *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (Art and Revolution, 1849), and it remains unclear whether Wagner was familiar with Trahndorff's essay.

creator of human history. The concept of system neutrally bridged the distance between the Wholeness belonging to God – the Creator and the wholeness belonging to man in the role of creator. Where the real creators, God and man, had problems with wholeness—and a series of system concepts indicates their existence—the artists as fantastic system creators stepped to the forefront. Whole people for wholeness, and so from that point on, the Whole has its domicile in the work of art, which, in turn, has domicile in the system with a small and a capital S. The works that were sought and appreciated were those that achieved the highest degree of systemic wholeness. In philosophy, the fusion of the Whole, the System, and the Work of Art first occurred when Schelling proclaimed that "the actual way in which philosophy has to be understood is aesthetic, and therefore [...] art is the true organon of philosophy". This, as Odo Marquard argues, is the origin of the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk (Marquard, 1983, 40–41).

The subsequent criticism of the "religion of the Gesamtkunstwerk" showed (cf. Strawinsky 1945, 90–91) that the arts encompassed by Gesamtkunstwerk lose their artistic freshness due to the totalitarian application of the concept and too often remain mere epiphenomena of philosophical speculation; nevertheless, the expansion of the artistic territory from the heteronomous and religious-historicist sphere to the autonomist and aesthetic sphere remained in place.

Avant-garde movements

The "historical" avant-gardes, which emerged at the turn of the 20th century, include movements such as, *Expressionism*, *Futurism*, *Cubism*, *Surrealism*, and *Dadaism*, which were born out of a particular relationship to the concept of "progress" and out of opposition to the existing culture. The main characteristics of avant-gardists were industriousness, an adventurous tendency towards progression, and a *nihilistic* belief that traditional art was "dead" and everything had to be started anew. In contrast to today's *trendsetters*, who are only able to launch short-lived fashions and are content with that, the avant-gardists self-identify as the forerunners of fundamental, long-term, and historically-binding shifts. This aspect of their work is nowadays subject of doubt and criticised as authoritarian, because throughout history many avant-garde conceptions of progress showed that even the loftiest notion of progress is nothing but a leap of the mind into a world of high goals, which in practice often tends to translate into a farcically hard landing. Or as the French writer Romain Gary expresses in a well-known aphorism: "Les avant-gardistes sont des gens qui ne savent pas exactement où ils veulent aller, mais qui sont les premiers là-bas".[4]

The avant-gardists were not satisfied with the Enlightenment-Romantic model of the artist-genius, who in an ivory tower creates extraordinary value in the hope of being noticed by society one day. For them, this type of energy flow between artistic and social empirics was absolutely too extensive. Such a model did not offer the basis to consider changing social life, let alone achieve progress. The intention of the historical avant-gardes was therefore to change social life much faster and much more actively through artistic revolution. However, since the belief that this could be obtained only by artistic means was weak from the start, the historical avant-gardes tried to ally with the political avant-garde. In Italy, Futurism embraced fascism, the Russian avant-garde moved toward Bolshevism, and Surrealism in the 1930s was drawn toward French communism. These relations were uncertain, sometimes friendly, sometimes opposing. With their autocratic structure, fascism and communism represented a marked contrast to the anarchic way towards which the artistic avant-gardes gravitated in the process of changing the world. Despite this, the artistic avant-gardes saw and sought support in the political avant-gardes. When Italian fascism fell, Futurism ended; when communist socialism took over in Soviet Russia, the artistic avant-gardes experienced a sobering experience in the conservatism of socialist realism; when communist socialism withered away, the left-wing artistic avant-gardes lost ground.

Two facts can be deduced from this. Firstly, that the historical avant-gardes consciously—by force of circumstances, but nevertheless—sacrificed the autonomy of art to the heteronomy of political issues, and secondly, that the collaboration with the political avant-gardes did not ultimately help them to achieve their goals, as in pursuing the hypothesis of the political progressiveness both merely languished, deactualised, and grew old (Fleckler, Schieder, Zimmermann, 2000; Beyme, 2005). There are lessons for the future that can be learnt from both outcomes.

Objets trouvés

A third aspect of the transformation of the field and concept of fine art is represented by *objets trouvés* and Duchampian readymades from the beginning of the last century, which, in the form of a shift from the "retinal" to the "mental" (Tomkins, 1999, 50, 148), denote the expansion of art from the production of artefacts to the finding and secondary semanticisation of facts (Benjamin, 1982, 466; Muhovič, 2014, 55–59).

The move away from metaphysical fictions, which at the zenith of

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4   "The avantgarde are people who don't exactly know where they want to go, but are the first to get there."

Modernism became subliminally incorporated in artistic artefacts and interpretations, understandably leads towards their demystification. The positive side of the turn from the metaphysics of the sublime to the factual consists in maintaining contact with the everyday life and drawing the unarranged world between the horizons of artistic interest. On the other hand, the downside undoubtedly lies in the danger of slipping from one extreme, i.e. from the idealised intention of transcending what is given in an artificially made (artefactual) form, to the other extreme, consisting in an intellectualistic adopting of factual, the already given, and the ready-made, which might well be an even more intense fiction than the metaphysics of "pure plasticity" and the "sublime".

Der erweiterte Kunstbegriff

It is a modernisation and extrapolation of the avant-gardes' intention to change social life through artistic revolution, but this time with different means and partially different alliances. The term "der erweiterte Kunstbegriff" describes the central notion of artistic theory and practice by the sculptor and performer Joseph Beuys (1921–1986). Starting from the belief that every human being is an artist and as such capable of creating art, Beuys' interpretation of the syntagm "expanded concept of art" understands human creativity in a very broad sense and is conditioned by his ideological adoption of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy as well as of Steiner's notion of the "social organism" and "social creativity" (Beuys & Beuys & Beuys, 1990, 270). The latter, according to Beuys, could produce world- and society-changing social art in the form of so-called social sculpture (Soziale Plastik).

In the 1960s, when a new satiation and a new complacency raised their flag over the Euro-American West, Beuys' expanded concept of art revived the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk by means of multimedia and in a pan-artistic way, drawing from avant-garde movements (Situationism, Fluxus, Happenings) and the political and social discourse of the New Left with elements of anarchism, subversion, de-aestheticisation, internationalism, and emancipation. The problematisation of the concept of art by objets trouvés and readymades reached its end in the 1960s. Beuys' "expansion of the concept of art" is an attempt to revive it using new foundations. It brought into play a series of radical ideas about the role of art in society, the role of artists and their materials, production, audience, perception, communication, etc. The artist's desire for a direct relationship with the recipient and the social environment significantly changed the traditional conception of the work of art. In the new perspective, not only artefactual products can appear as forms of work of art as was the norm before, but also—and

even predominantly—situations (installation, environment), interactions (performance), processes (happening), concepts, communications, institutions, ideological activisms, the politics in which art is supposed to be actively involved, and even the social order itself. Under the banner of "social sculpture", Beuys' vision draws into the field of art the entire social sphere, all areas and forms of social life and social creativity. In this framework, the artist is not a producer of "spiritual objects", generally characterised by communication difficulties and which we try to approach by various forms of hermeneutics and exegesis, but a medium, an agent, and a catalyst of social and political life, having the function which in primitive societies was performed by shamans, but today seems to be in the hands of the artist.

Beuys' "Erweiterung" has its basis in the demystification of the high modernist postulates of purity, sublimity and elevated aestheticism. This demystification was prompted by Neo-Dadaism and American abstract painting, which, in the middle of the previous century and in the form of radical minimalism (F. Stella, R. Ryman) both bade farewell to the "idealism of the spirit" in favour of the "anti-idealism" of pure objectivity (Meinhardt, 2008, 82–85). The consequences of the shift of attention from image, appearance and reference to the objectness of the artefact, from the artefact to facticity, from aesthetic to functional perception, and from art space to the space of social action have been numerous and their effects extend into our time.

The first consequence was the crossing and blurring of the boundaries between art and life, which was the deep desire of the representatives of Happenings in the early 1960s. This was followed by a departure from the traditional (painting and sculpture) medium and a turn towards radically different ways of communicating meanings, in particularly meanings with a discursive, contextual, and socio-critical note and provenance (Seel, 1996, 17–38; Menke, 1993, 391–407).

The shift away from the old media, characterised by a high degree of communicative difficulty, brought into focus new visual and digital media that are based on a high degree of communicability (Schapiro, 1978, 222–224; Muhovič, 2018, 28–51). This resulted in the computerisation and virtualisation of life and had a sobering effect due to the problems brought about by the consequence of this consequence: the derealisation of reality (Welsch, 1996, 9-61; Gumbrecht, 2004, 161).

On the charisma of the basic and expanded state

This is roughly the state of affairs since the reinforcement of the widespread perception that history, according to Sloterdijk (1989, 266–267), has no timetable and that we are making our way through a processual

no-man's-land to the best of our ability. The possibility for the unbridled realities to be expressed and their predictability are both limited. We only know that we can learn about life retrospectively, but we must live it in prospectively (Kierkegaard, 1933, 203). The same is true of art.

From the point of view of the visual arts, the following expansions of their space, concept and competences can be noticed during the historical wave of Modernism:

- Gesamtkunstwerk marks the transition of art from a heteronomous commitment to the religious-historicist tradition towards aesthetic autonomy;
- the avant-gardes support the expansion of the space of artistic autonomy (back) into the space of political heteronomy, favouring the concept of progress as well as artistic means and strategies;
- objets trouvés imply the expansion of the territory of creativity from creative to recreative processes, from the production of semanticised artefacts to the secondary semanticisation of facts;
- Beuys's Erweiterter Kunstbegriff represents a continuation of the avant-garde efforts by "other means", having at their core the expansion of the artist's activity from being the producer of art objects to becoming a trans-métier catalyst (initiator, guide) of social processes, whose ultimate goal is obtaining "world- and society-transforming" effects, driven by the belief in their healing power.

During the course of the described transformations, art with an adjective (fine arts, musical art, literary art, etc.) seems to move away from its centre and is in a situation where it is supposed to discover its centre outside the area of its own métier and competences. Its medium, métier and competences appear to be insufficient, because they are too specialised and have to be combined or even completely replaced by multi- and trans-artistic competences that the "artist with an adjective" does not possess (e.g. activist, managerial, new-media, socio-cultural, and similar competences). In this perspective, the diversity of artistic disciplines becomes a hindrance or a secondary consideration, and everything that makes artists different is perceived as irrelevant, accidental or obsolete. Art is increasingly becoming art without an adjective, unisex. In short: in the shadow of industrialisation, democratisation, market economy, scientification, post-industrialisation and digitisation, the ways in which art "engages with the existing", the medium, nature,

ART OF THE BASIC FIELD	ART OF THE EXPANDED FIELD
Artefact	Fact
Spiritual object	Incoming event
Closed work of art	Open work of art
Form	Interaction
Solidity	Fluidity
Aesthetic perception	Functional perception
Material production	Conceptual production
Formativity	Informativity
High degree of non-communicativeness	High degree of provocativeness
Production of artefacts	Social construction
System of signs	System of ideas
Métier competences	Multimedia and transmedia education
Métier competences	Socio-cultural and political competences
Intimate/complex	Engaged/activist
Personal	Public
Emphasising the difference	Blurring the difference
between art and life	between art and life
Constructive	Critical
Representative	Manifestation
Intrinsic	Extrinsic

FIGURE 1: The relationship between the art of the primary field and the art of the expanded field. There are contrasts between the two paradigms, which can be represented by a certain number of ontic, production, and target differences.

society and man, have radically changed over a period of two to three centuries.

The result of this media and competence transformation is the coexistence of the art of the "basic" and "extended" fields (cf. Frelih, 2018, 6), which we witness today. The art of the basic field is characterised by an adjective related to the discipline and attributed on the basis of art's competences and scope, whereas the art of the expanded field has no adjective. There are contrasts between the two types or paradigms, which can be represented in the form of a certain number of ontic, production, competence and goal differences, which are shown in the diagram in Figure 1.

Despite the simplifications, the diagram suggests that talking about the paradigms of the basic and the expanded fields of art is realistic and provable, even though the paradigms in contemporary experience and practice do not only cohabit, but are also intertwined and intermixed. The paradigm of the basic field is productive of forms and

artefact-centred. Within its framework, the artist is the producer of unique, analogous, contemplative, representational "spiritual objects", which, on the part of the recipient, presuppose specialised knowledge of the métier and competences, and on the part of the artist, "a sincere and humble submission to a spiritual object of the other person, an experience which is not given automatically, but requires preparation and purity of spirit", as Meyer Schapiro wrote in the middle of the last century (1978, 224). The ultimate goal of this paradigm is "the sheer joy over the independent existence of something that is excellent", to use the pithy words by Iris Murdoch (1971, 86). In order to fulfil this, the paradigm's productive processes have to lead to the "perfection of form" that is capable of inviting the individual into non-possessive contemplation, protecting them from the shortcuts of mental myopia and self-centred daydreaming (adapted from ibid.).

The paradigm of the expanded field, on the other hand, is meaning-making and socio-centric. It represents the expansion of the artist's activity from the level of a producer specialised in their métier to that of a supra-disciplinary, multimedia and multicultural catalyst of social and political developments, for whom artistic materials and creative processes are merely a means of promoting "world- and society-changing" projects. In this context, the artist acts bona fide, so that their ideas about the direction and manner in which these processes develop are in fact the most appropriate for reality, and not just what they consider as something that can be self-satisfied. An adventurous and provocative concept of the mind is therefore the answer to the postmodern slogan "everything is permitted".

2. THE MODEL OF ART SPACE AND ART SPACE AFTER EXPANSION

Based on what has been presented, the following questions arise spontaneously: What actually happened with the expansion of art space during modernity? Did this space merely increase, or did it also change? And if there was a change, what actually changed?

To find out, it would be necessary to have a comparison with the situation before the expansion, i.e. a structural model of the basic and non-expanded art space or at least a "standard model" of this space to which the new situation could be compared. Here, I use the term "art space" in opposition to the more widespread and established term "art system" in order to turn attention from the organisational-technical and institutional aspects of art in a given time and society (education,
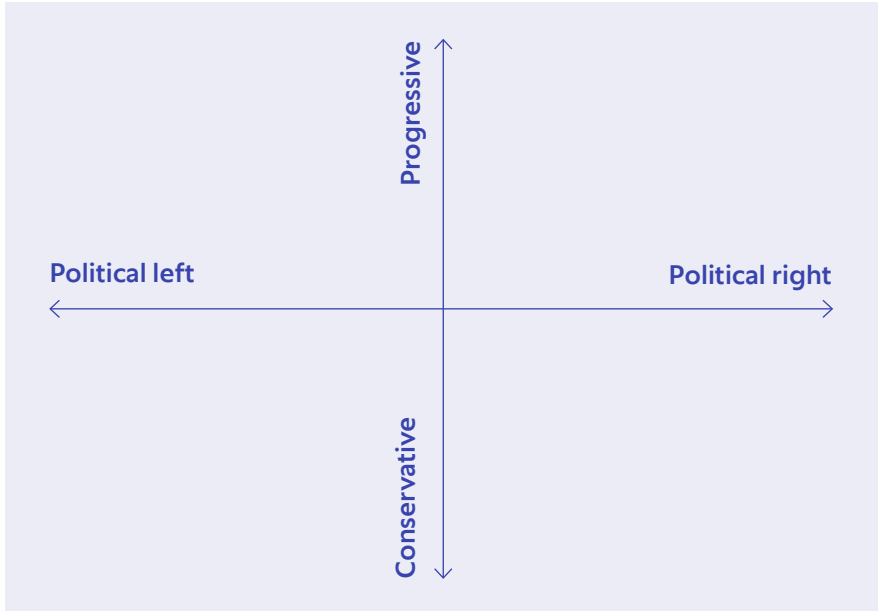
FIGURE 2: The coordinates of the political space in democracies.

production, reception, promotion, exhibiting, etc.) to the deep-structural matrix of conditions that define the very need for art and the general assumptions of its articulation, axiology and pragmatics. Since in aesthetics, at least to my knowledge, there is no theory of art space and, consequently, no standard model of art space, it is necessary to take an indirect path, the path of analogy. The closest analogy is with the theory of political space, which the contemporary political science offers in a reflective form. The analogy, of course, does not presuppose the equivalence of political and artistic phenomena. This is sufficiently evident from the fact that what in the modern period is referred to as "political" is created by the reduction of authentic human beings, on whom art counts, to the "subjects of interest", on whom politics counts. The basis of the analogy can by all means be the structure of the operational matrix.

Prototypical art space model

As the starting point, we can take the space of democratic political arrangements, which is favoured today. The political system in democracies needs to have the capability to resolve and mitigate two fundamental social conflicts: economic and cultural. The economic conflict is manifested in the fact that democracies are based on a market economy, and that they also share the wealth gained through market surplus according to market laws, i.e. extremely unequally. This conflict has been traditionally mirrored in the political system by the distinction between

right and left political parties. Left-wing parties strive for state regulation of economy, redistribution of market surpluses, and a strong welfare state. Right-wing parties argue that redistribution leads to less and less of what could be redistributed, and that too much state regulation causes a decline in competition and efficiency. However, the fundamental cultural conflict in a democratic society manifests in the difference between those who have an interest in preserving the social tradition and those who wish to transcend it in the first place. Democratic elections ensure that economic and cultural changes are always accepted by the majority, thus allowing the system to reach integrative decisions (Lehmann, 2020, 6–7). The picture of such a political space has therefore two coordinates, adapted to the fundamental social conflicts: an abscissa representing economic tensions with opposing left and right parties, and an ordinate showing cultural tensions with conservatism at the bottom and progressivism at the top, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Structural analogies between the political space and art space are undoubtedly risky and dubious. Nevertheless, in the context of a dubious analogy, they can be helpful in providing guidance for our reflections about art space and in verifying these reflections through the art empirics of the past and present. A fundamental characteristic of any political space is therefore the resolution of social conflicts at the economic and cultural levels. If events and developments in art space are observed on the basis of this assumption, it can be concluded that despite the undeniable existence of conflict in art space, conflict resolution is neither its primary task nor its characteristic trait. On closer reflection, this is... differentiation. Differentiation of informative qualities. Analogous to the resolution of conflicts in the political sphere, differentiation takes place in a coordinate system whose base consists of the axis of pragmatics, which is comparable to the axis of economic tensions in the political space, and the axis of axiology, which in the political space is comparable to the axis of cultural tensions.

The axis of pragmatics. Since antiquity, the differentiation on the axis of pragmatics has been marked by the distinction between the so-called *artes vulgares* and *artes liberales*, which differ in the degree of their dependence on immediate practical utility. The former, with a high degree of dependence, would today be referred to as "applied arts", and the latter, with a high degree of independence, could be regarded as "liberal arts". Due to the artisanal-technical nature of the *artes vulgares*, the Greek term "techne" (Gr. τέχνη) came into use as their common denominator, while the Greek term "poiesis" (Gr. Ποίησις) became the common denominator of the *artes liberales*, describing their imaginative
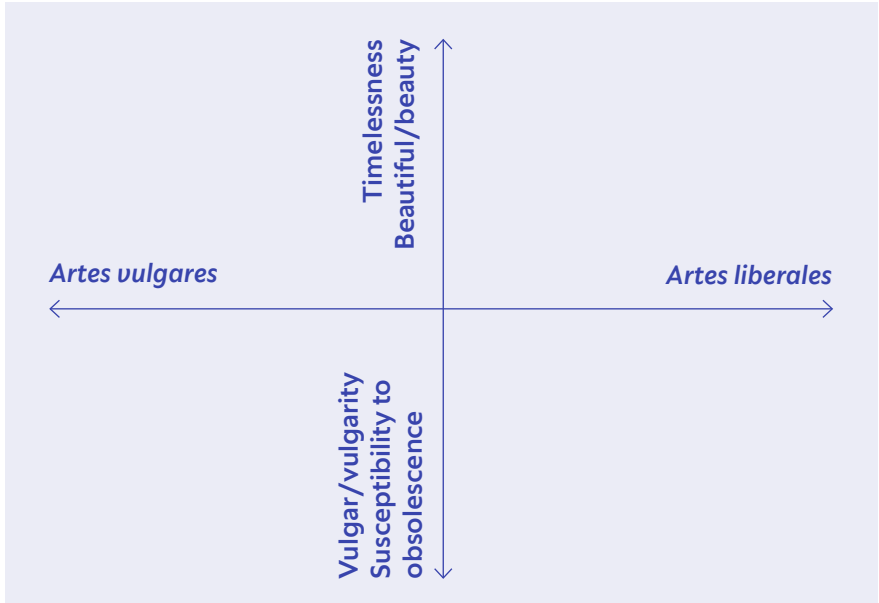
FIGURE 3: The model of a prototypical art space consists of an abscissa of pragmatics with the applicative *artes vulgares* on the left and the *artes liberales* on the right and of an ordinate of axiology with the standards susceptible to obsolescence that apply to ordinary presented below and the timeless standards of beauty indicated above.

and poetic nature.[5] While it is true that from the very beginning only musical art was included among the *artes liberales*, i.e. among the humanistic disciplines, such as grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, it is equally true that between 1400 and 1500 the visual arts and their genres were added to the category, assuming a prominent role, and from the 16th century onwards the term became synonymous with the "fine arts", which, although also committed to utility or pragmatics, are of a higher, spiritual, archetypal, perennial rank.

The axis of axiology. Roughly speaking, art was not born as an ideal but as its measure. The forms produced by art are created to establish and consolidate a sense of the reality and immediacy of the ideal, but especially to measure the direction of the ideal and the degree of its realisation and presence in the world (Muhovič, 2002, 15). What I call "the ideal" in this context has always been present in a concrete form in the social conception of beauty. It has been a frequent subject of reflection since the mid-18th century, when the concept of "beauty" became the central category of the newly founded philosophical discipline of aesthetics – the study of beauty in nature and art. The litmus test of

5   For the old distinction between "poíesis" and "techne", see Sloterdijk 1989, 154–155.

beauty ideals is the art that realises and presents the ideals in a sensuously explicit manner by means of aesthetically shaped forms. These forms compete with each other in the degree of their approximation to the ideal, testing its attainability, presence, and relevance. The verification takes place on the axis of axiology, which, through art space gradually ranges from the vulgar—which is characterised by normality, routine, simplicity, and susceptibility to obsolescence—to the beautiful, characterised by invention, originality, complexity and timelessness.[6] The situation is illustrated in Figure 3.

Models of transformations in Modernism

Although the model of the prototypical art space is provisional, its conceptualisation and structure can nevertheless contribute to the verification or at least contextualisation of the expansions discussed in the first part of this paper.

If we compare the model of the prototypical art space with the art space of the 18th and 19th centuries (Enlightenment, Pre-Romanticism, Romanticism), which had at its core the departure from historicism and classical models and whose most prominent feature was the systemic ideology of the Gesamtkunstwerk, we can notice transformations on both of its base coordinates. On the abscissa of pragmatics, attention then shifted completely to the territory of the "fine arts". Consequently, the differentiation between *artes vulgares* and *artes liberales* on the axis was replaced by a differentiation between the semantic heteronomy of art (art in the service of religious, historicist and representational expectations) and its semantic and aesthetic autonomy, of which aesthetics became the guarantor. Aesthetics, as mentioned, made it possible for the "good" works of art to emigrate from the sphere of religious and historicist basis to the autonomous and secular aesthetic sphere while retaining their "redemptive" relevance. On the ordinate of axiology, attention was cautiously but increasingly clearly leaving behind the axiological early poles of the vulgar and the beautiful, moving in the direction shaped by the philosophers Friedrich Schelling and Friedrich Nietzsche, who adopted the conceptual pair of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Thus, the concept of the Apollonian started beating the rhythm to the beauty ideals with moderation and harmony, while the concept of the Dionysian not only profiled the identity of the vulgar with expression and excess, but also raised its rating. Figure 4 shows the coordinate system of the post-Enlightenment art space.

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6   Or as George Steiner writes: "the painting, the composition are wagers on lastingness. They embody the dur désir de durer (the harsh, demanding desire for durance)" (Steiner, 1989, 27).
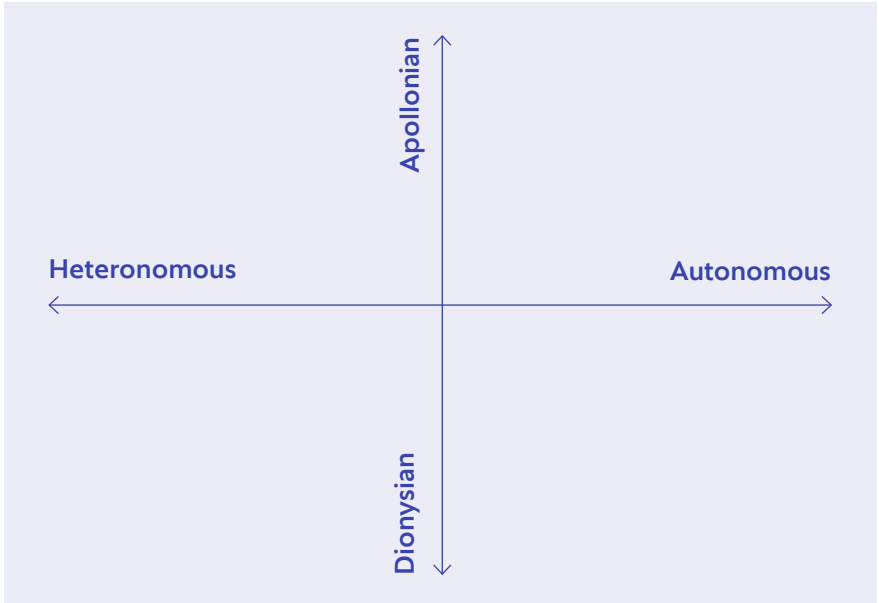
FIGURE 4: Coordinate system of the post-Enlightenment art space.

The emergence of the historical avant-gardes and readymades in art space shook especially the Apollonian-Dionysian axiological axis, which still persisted in the form of expression, but was no longer in the foreground. It was superseded by the avant-garde concepts of "progress" and "progressiveness", which are rooted in opposition to the existing culture. The Apollonian-Dionysian axis was thus transformed into a progressive-conservative axis. In this context, the secondary semanticisation, which entered culture at the beginning of the last century through the doors opened by objets trouvés and readymades, was evaluated as progressive, while the "primary semanticisation" of artefacts from earlier periods was regarded as conservative at least to a certain extent and in certain environments. The pragmatic side of the differentiation on the heteronomous-autonomous axis was gradually being replaced by a differentiation between the visual arts heteronomy (figuration, objecthood, mimetics) and the visual arts autonomy (abstraction, non-objectivity, Mondrian-style "pure plastic art").[7] The model of art space at the beginning of the last century is presented in Figure 5.

Art space transformed again with Beuys' "expanded concept of art". On the pragmatic axis, it expanded from the media- or métier-specific basic field towards the media- and métier-non-specific expanded field of art, which primarily performs the role of a "world- and

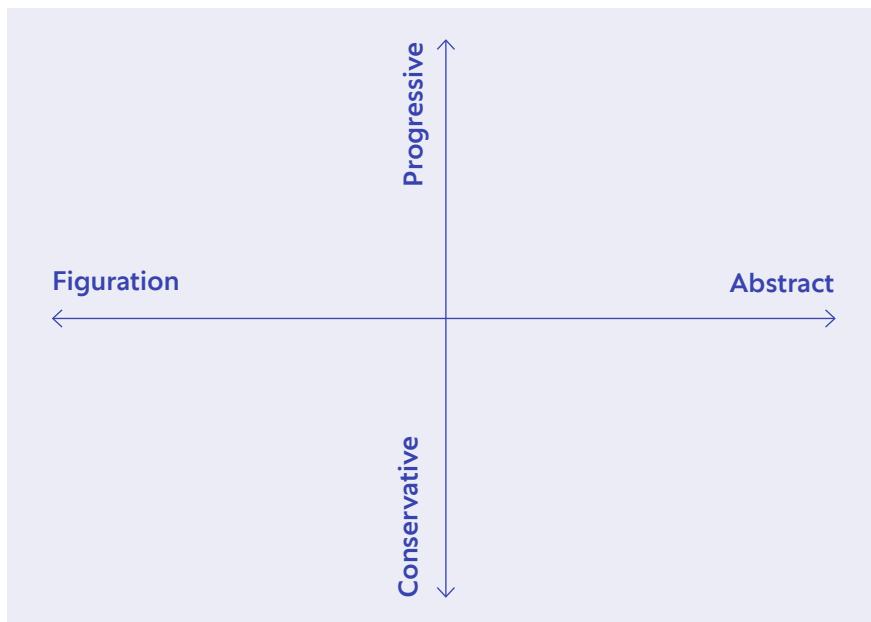7   Cf. Holtzman & James, 1987, 288–300.

FIGURE 5: Model of the early 20th-century art space: abscissa of figural-abstract and ordinate of conservative-progressive.

society-changing" artistic agent. The core of this expansion is the relation to the artistic medium and, consequently, the relation to the typology of the "art product". Below, I will try to explain what this means. On the other hand, the shift at the axiological level is somewhat paradoxical, if we take into account the developments in art in the second half of the 20th century. Art movements such as New Image Painting demonstrated the necessity to abandon the model of progress and progressiveness in the light of which the avant-garde-calibrated art history was written, as well as the necessity to abandon the avant-garde anathematisation of tradition. The reintroduction of old artistic modes and styles with the prefix of "progressive art" undermined the old model of constant growth and development from bad (conservative) to good (progressive). This axiological transformation cannot be observed for all the forms of artistic creativity in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Progressivism is implicitly but persistently preserved by movements that conceive art as a "world- and society-changing" agent of social construction. In line with their orientation from "worse to better", it is clear that the adepts of this creativity cannot saw off the branch they are sitting on. But it is certainly sensible that they strive to modernise and refine it. And this is what is happening. Progressiveness tends towards "hyperculture" and conservatism towards "cultural essentialism", at least according to schematic

b

Progressive
Hyperculture

Monomediality of art   **Multi- and transmediality**

a

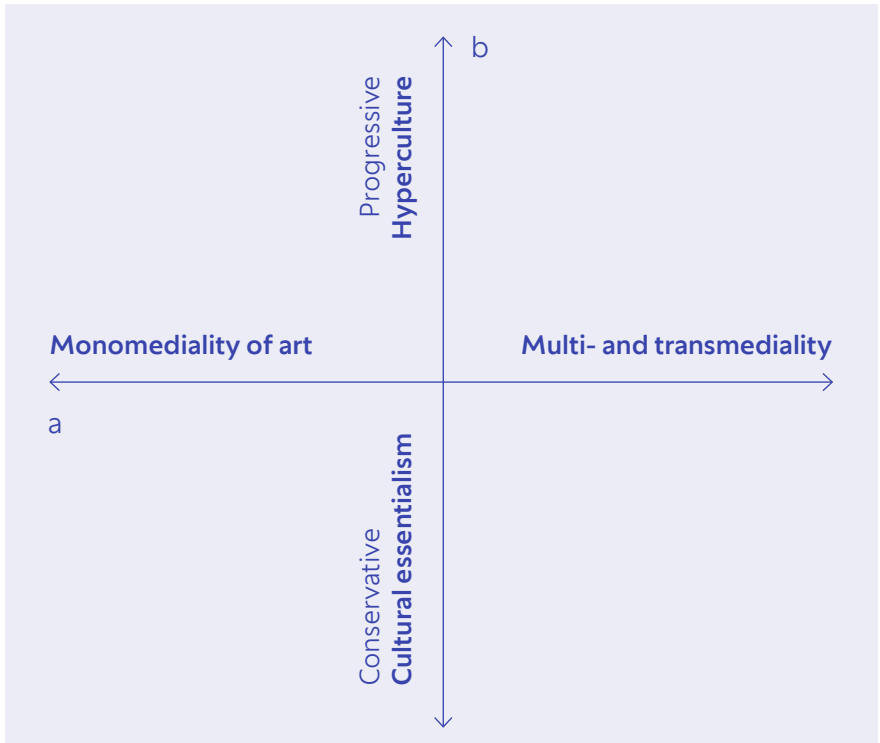Conservative
Cultural essentialism

FIGURE 6: Model of the (post-)Beuysian art space: a) axis of pragmatics (monomediality of art – multi- and transmediality of art), b) axis of axiology (progressive: hyperculture – conservative: cultural essentialism).

representations of development prepared by researchers dealing with socio-cultural contemporaneity. They observe that the era of modernity, as it is unfolding in a globalised world, has been manifesting the need for a profound transformation at the economic, political, and cultural levels. They reckon that the basis for change are the differences in relation to the past, which are indicated by the post-industrial economy of singularity, the technical revolution of digitisation and networking, and the favouring of authenticity, which is demanded by the lifestyle of the new middle class in the post-industrial era. In connection with the latter, the phenomenon that sociologists refer to as the "culturalisation of what is social" has a particular prominence. This takes two contrasting forms, which Andreas Reckwitz (2017, 2019) calls "culturalisation I" and "culturalisation II".

Hyperculture. The first culturalisation can be called "hyperculture". At its core, it adopts the form of an expansive aestheticisation of lifestyles, occupations, social contacts, housing culture, travel and, last but not least, the body, and could be ultimately derived from the ideal of the "good life". In this case, culture is to a certain extent hyperculture,

in which everything can potentially become important and precious. The abstract form of this culturalisation is determined, on the one hand, by the objects that move on the cultural markets and, on the other, by the subjects that stand in opposition to these objects with their desire for self-fulfilment. In the context of hyperculture, culture always takes place in cultural markets on which cultural goods compete. This competition only appears to be merely commercial, since there is primarily and essentially a competitive struggle between "articles" that have a more distinct identity, a greater appeal, a greater attractiveness, and are in one way or another exclusive on the market.

Cultural essentialism. Another aspect of culturalisation is what Reckwitz calls "Kulturessenzialismus". The focus of this aspect is on movements and communities that refer to a collective identity and to a culture of identity. This identity is to a certain extent related to the so-called identity politics in which the original American communities recognise themselves, but it also applies to the new nationalisms in Russia, China and India, and to the so-called fundamentalist communities, especially Muslim. These, often in contradiction to what their globalised environment favours, reactivate pre-modern cultural patterns and ways of life. This occurs in explicit opposition to modern patterns, which can be understood as a reaction to the cultural vacuum of modern rationalism and to the global explosion of hyperculture after 1980. In this regard, cultural essentialism is in contrast with hyperculture in a threefold sense: firstly, within its framework, culture is not an endless game of openly competing differences, but a closed system that constantly shapes the world by means of an antagonism (inside–outside, ingroup–outgroup) that for the subject also has a validating function (important–irrelevant, good–bad); secondly, the instance and reference of the cultural sphere is not the self-actualising individual, but the collective, the community; thirdly, it no longer operates through a regime of innovation, novelty and self-transcendence, but by belonging to the traditional, which to a certain extent leads to the essentialisation of culture and life (adapted from: Reckwitz, 2017).

It can be noticed that Reckwitz spontaneously attributes positivity to the "creative dispositif of hyperculture", while denying it to the "creative dispositif of cultural essentialism". This may be questionable, since such an implication can easily be just a matter of theoretical contrasting of phenomena in a state of affairs, rather than a description of that state of affairs. Nevertheless, it has to be considered that such a spontaneous evaluation is performed in the space of empirics. In this respect, hyperculture and cultural essentialism can certainly figure as pre-experiential provisional manifestations of the two extremes

on the axiology axis in art space characterised by the (post-)Beuysian expanded field of art, as shown by the model in Figure 6.

Theoretical self–reflection

The theoretical models, including those presented here, are, of course, only conceptual means by which theory tries to catch the essence of living creativity, which certainly does not exist to validate the theoretical models, but rather the other way around. In the age when theory has assumed a charismatic character, the phenomenological truth constructed by the "art system" dominates the charismatic nature of artistic pursuits, achievements and outstanding results only temporarily and seemingly, as a half-truth. The theory of the art system sometimes tries to "believe" that the "relevant" works are mainly those that the system can control and define by its coordinates. However, in the long run, artists demonstrate again and again that they are not only the creators of the material for postulating and proving the models on which the theories are based; in fact, what they find in art space and is truly original and unique lies in the "dead corner" of constructed models and theories. Their forms do not describe, do not fulfil theoretical requirements, and do not mark, but rather name and evoke. In this way, they do not form an attitude that would be an algorithm for an actionist intervention in the world, but an inimitable life composed of thoughts, forms and actions, "an unnamed need for order, for rhythm, which three words are opposed to chaos and nothingness" in our lives, as Czesław Miłosz expresses. The work of such artists cannot be incorporated into any a priori system that has developed in a space marked by the structuralist abolition of man. Their nature is, by definition, so unique that they are not even remotely suitable to become a cog in the axiological and ideological machine of the art system.

The recently deceased American historian John Lukacs underlined on several occasions that a half-truth is worse than a lie, because it does not contain half of what is true and an equal proportion of what is untrue, but it is an inseparable mixture of a hundred per cent of both—having the appearance of the former and the consequences of the latter. Because of this, art theories and models have to be applied cautiously and prudently—it is the same level of prudence that is required in the field of law. This is particularly the case if these models and theories are measured against a prediction of the future or the temptation to establish the normativity of view.

3. ART AND BOUNDARIES

The fact of moving from art in the narrower sense to art in the broader sense, from its basic to its expanded field, spontaneously calls into discussion the problem of the "border" and the "crossing of borders" in art.

We are physically and spiritually surrounded by many visible and invisible boundaries. We can only act by respecting, verifying, defending and crossing borders and the limits they impose, as well as by setting and respecting them. Each of us crosses the boundaries between sleep and wakefulness, between rest and work, defends themselves against environmental influences relaying on boundaries of their own identity, and sets high standards in various fields of activity. Crossing psycho-physical boundaries results in a change of the state of affairs and does not necessarily represent an achievement. The situation is different with the so-called spiritual boundaries (cultural, artistic, scientific), which require reflection, distinction, decision-making and a high level of creativity in order to be crossed and reformulated. Such boundaries are, for example, the boundaries between everyday and productive thinking, between functional and aesthetic perception, between what is standard and what above standard, between the serial and the unique, between lower and higher quality, between life and art, etc.

The crossing of spiritual boundaries has two fundamental modalities: deconstructive and constructive. The former refers to the crossing of boundaries in the sense of questioning, problematising, transcending and liberating oneself from the rules and values governing within the boundaries; the latter refers to the setting of boundaries by raising qualitative standards. The first aspect takes the form of abandoning a particular creative paradigm and searching for expanded alternative paradigms, while the second occurs as deepening and growing complexity of goals and outcomes within a particular paradigm. The first has the character of lateral thinking, the second the character of vertical thinking.

The art of transcending

The deconstructive or lateral aspect of transcending boundaries in art is linked to a sense of confinement and the need to break free from existing form-making rules and values. In art, this "ability to change perception" is embodied in the mannerist, especially avant-garde movements, where artistic freedom is conceived as the freedom to break with all the constraints of tradition. Opposition to the existing order is usually presented as profoundly subversive: we were prisoners of uniformity, now we are released into the freedom of difference, experiencing a
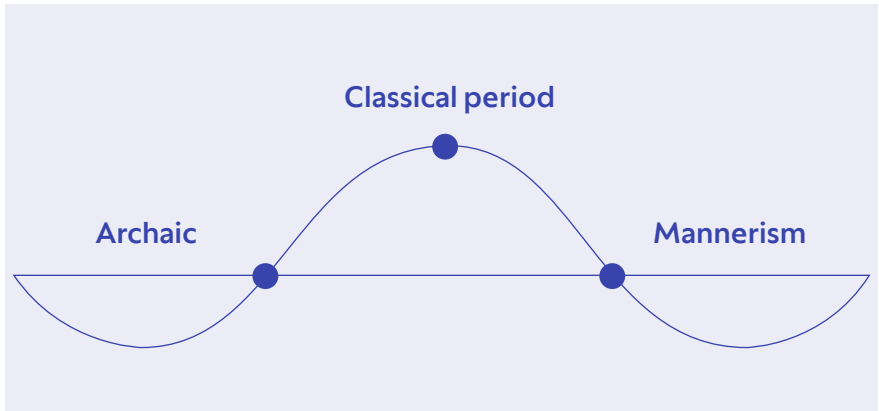
FIGURE 7: The diachronic rhythm of art in the light of form-making transformations, which are prototypically defined by initial, zenithal, and final moments: Archaic, Classical period, Mannerism.

liberating break with established form-making means, modes and values. This type of boundary crossing is, for example, the transition from Impressionism—which still remained in the fine arts medium and followed the classical tradition of painting, further developing it (divisionism)—to the use of readymades. This tradition was abandoned, and a completely different one was adopted: the tradition of dulia (Gr. δουλεία (douleia) 'veneration') or the veneration of already-made and found objects, i.e. a completely different medium and a different aesthetic, meaning-forming and value system. An analogous type of boundary crossing is the above-described transition from sculpture to the unconventional Beuysian "social sculpture". Here, the exchange and transition are achieved by "forcing", when objects and contents that cannot be expressed in the language of the form-making situation are "forced" into this situation. The situation becomes unstable and requires a radical change in the form-making infrastructure (medium, values, formative and informative methods, axiology, etc.). The context of the constraints that define the situation clashes with practice, which in the given situation consciously aims to overthrow the system of rules, traditions and institutions, which are the reason for dissatisfaction by unconventional authorities. In short: the goal is to break the shackles of traditional expressions of consciousness by discovering another—supposedly superior—form of consciousness.

The deconstructive perspective is, at its core, directed towards a radical critique of the initial paradigm. Its path is the path of negation, which is the only means for establishing the limits of a domain within which the form- and meaning-making rules of the initial paradigm are no longer relevant.

Every paradigm that wants to prevail over the previous one tries first to dominate human memory. It all starts with the advantages of the new paradigm. The past is passé, irrelevant, reactionary, compromised by prejudices, myths and legends. This is also true of the self-conception of our age, which proclaims high developmental expectations regarding the disconnection from nature and in relation to belief in technology and social construction, although, paradoxically, it is faced with what sociologists call "a widespread loss of the future" (Williams, 1989, 103)

The art of establishing

The constructive or vertical aspect of crossing boundaries in art is the aspect of establishing new boundaries by raising the quality standards within a given paradigm (vertical thinking). This mode is about replacing the "medium of novelty" with the "medium of quality". In other words, conversion is about reorienting creativity from the systems of criticism, boundary crossing, leading the way, deconstruction, etc., to the systems of constructiveness, deep insights, original solutions, high complexity and horizons of timelessness.8 The constructive aspect is analogous to record-setting in sports or to the economic term "added value". In its concrete form, it can be observed in the difference between superior and mediocre performances in the field of artistic interpretation and is intensely expressed in masterpieces from specific artistic disciplines, which in the field of aesthetics used to be described by the potent concepts of "archetypical" (universal) and "perennial" (timeless). The driving force and destination of verticalisation in art was exemplified in a unique and simple way by the painter Sol Le Witt, who once aphoristically wrote: "We cannot believe in art if we do not believe in some kind of unchanging attitude towards, or timeless standards of, what is important, and what is essential in life" (Hubbard, 2010, 6).

The vertical aspect of transcending boundaries at all levels occurs continuously or by quantum transition. This is the case whenever the creator manages to establish an authoritative contact between the particularity of their form and its universal, human effect.

Remarks on the rhythm of spiritual–historical time

Lateral boundaries are primarily boundaries in space (limitedness, confinement, transcending, expansion), whereas vertical boundaries are primarily boundaries in time (unfolding, maturation, duration, timelessness). In this case, the reference is, obviously, to cultural space and cultural time (kairós).[8] Each period needs both lateral or deconstructive

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8   Gr. kairós (καιρός), qualitative time, an "important" or "decisive" time when something special, ground-breaking, or of lasting importance happens.

and vertical or constructive boundary crossings, although these cross-
ings are dosed and coordinated differently in each period.How? If we
observe the spiritual-historical, i.e. form-making, rhythm of art in the
light of diachronic transformations, we find that this rhythm takes the
form of a curve, prototypically defined in its ascending and descend-
ing by the initial, zenithal and final moments. Broadly speaking, the ini-
tial moments are represented by the so-called archaic periods, and the
zenithal and final moments by classical and mannerist periods respec-
tively (Figure 7).

The archaic periods are characterised by the opening up of new,
fresh and more ambitious form-making horizons, clear solutions and
the tendency towards primary expression. Such periods can be identi-
fied in Greek Archaic, Early Christian Impressionism, early Romanticism,
and 19th-century Impressionism, because they essentially share the
same spiritual and form-making distinguishing features. The classical
periods, which represent the culmination of a certain form-making ori-
entation or paradigm, and in their exceptional creativity rely entirely on
the ideal, perfection and beauty consistent with the ideal, include the
Greek Classical period, the Renaissance, the Baroque and Modernism.
Mannerisms, which, by their variations, exaggerations and travesty
of previous classical ideals prove that when you start at the zenith,
you can only progress by descending (adapted from: Sloterdijk, 2007,
16), include, for example, Greek Hellenism, Flamboyant, 16th-century
Mannerism, and the Rococo, but also our late modernistic era, and share
a similar developmental and creative fate (see Figure 8).

Let us see how the deconstructive and constructive aspects of
boundary-crossing in these prototypical form-making milieus are related.

In archaic periods, the deconstructive and constructive aspects
of boundary-crossing are necessarily coordinated and complemen-
tary, since these periods simultaneously require both the dynamics of
(a search or exploration) process and the dynamics of (a qualitative)
progress. The deconstructive aspect breaks through the spiritual and
media horizons of the preceding period, expanding them, while the
constructive aspect simultaneously intensifies quality form-making
standards leading to form-making solutions that are alternative to those
of the preceding period.

In classical periods, when on the basis of an elaborated idea of
the ideal, perfection and beauty (e.g. the Renaissance) man believed
that the world can be dominated by knowledge in combination with this
elaborated idea, the constructive aspects of expanding and transcend-
ing boundaries came to the forefront. This is all orientated towards
establishing the highest possible standards for the realisation of the
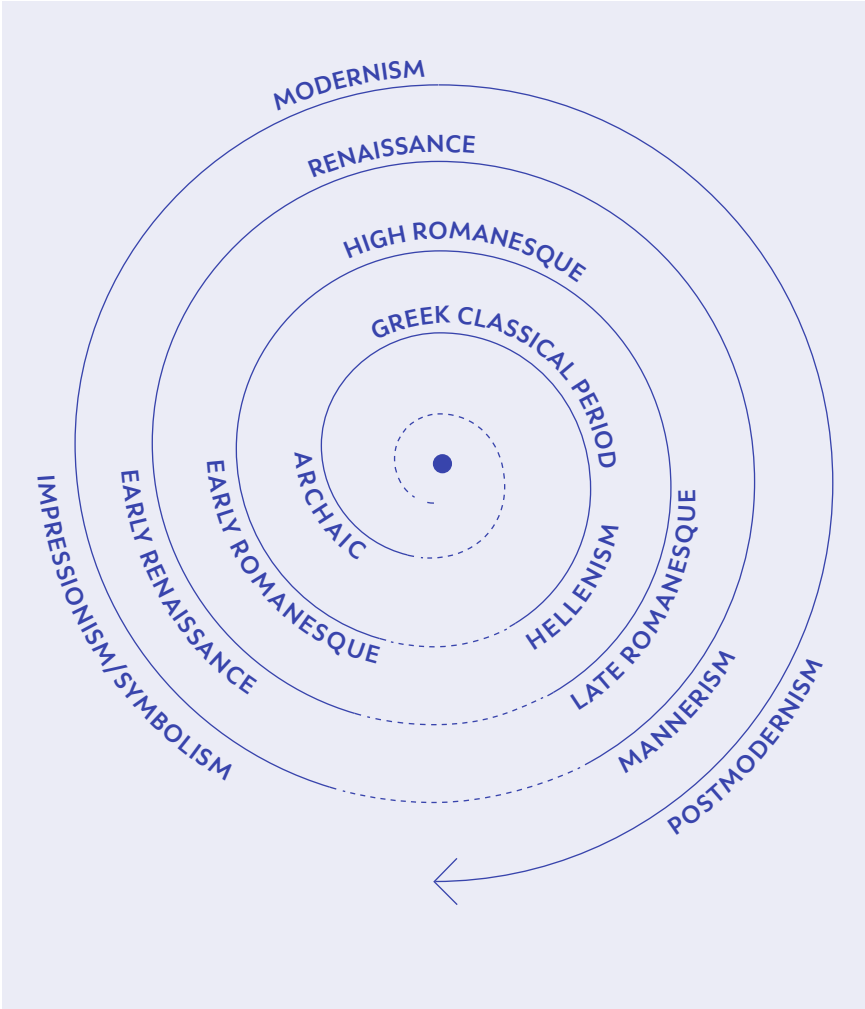
FIGURE 8: Diachronic rhythm in the light of the history of styles.

ideal, perfection and beauty in the world. Since the ideal is already available and does not have to be found, the deconstructive aspects can recede into the background. Waiting vigilantly. In mannerist periods, in which man's great need and desire that something new, different and exciting would emerge again from what is already known, makes it necessary to activate the deconstructive aspects of boundary-crossing, so that a sufficiently large number of lateral searches directed towards discovering alternativities could reveal what this "new" and "different" should be. In this case, the verticalisation of the results can wait for the situation to stabilise and for the new ideals and goals to become more clearly profiled.

From this point of view, it can be said that the "natural" relationship between lateral and vertical services in the arts is complementarity, i.e. functional cooperation and complementarity. This natural relationship ends when one service starts gaining ground at the expense of the other and, for example, deconstructive and constructive ways of crossing boundaries begin to intermix and substitute each other. This happens when, for example, the new (described as avant-garde, provocative, etc.) is automatically equated with quality or originality (cf. Steiner, 1989, 27). In exceptional cases, the concepts of "new" and "quality" may coincide, but they are by no means automatically identical. They are not interchangeable, and one cannot become the other. If we lose the sense of distinguishing one from the other, we are bound to run into a crisis in the sphere of culture—that is to say, finding ourselves in a situation which requires distinguishing, judging, and deciding.[9] Crises are a constant in culture. According to René Girard (cf. Cowdell, 2013), they have their origin in the collapse of the old cultural order, which implodes when distinctions or boundaries within it begin to disappear. For example: when we no longer know what is real and what unreal, what is good and what evil, what is beautiful and what ugly, what is art and what life, what is constructive and what deconstructive, what is vertical and what lateral, etc. This is exactly the situation in which it is only relevant to make decisions without looking for shortcuts to please the idols of mediocre taste, popularity, fashion or political correctness.

9   Gr. κρίσις (krísis) – opinion, judgement, decision; from κρίνειν (krinein) – to judge, to decide.

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