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Version 140401

I put this draft on the internet hoping for your comments. **So please send me comments!!:**

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The draft is altogether unpolished and sometimes incomplete. It is bound to change very much — hopefully also thanks to your comments. At present putting much energy in polishing and editing would be a waste of time. But when I get close to a final version (which will be corrected by a native speaker), I will certainly do much editing and polishing.

## THE ART PERIOD

### *The Rise and Decline of a Much Respected and Privileged Position*

A study of art, artists and the arts' economy

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## Chapter 1 The Triumph of Art

### [INTRO]

[As said in the ch introduction, SYNC]During the last hundred and fifty years art stands out and is much respected. *I call this period the art period. During this period the respect for art is extraordinary high while established art worlds and artists have much autonomy.*<sup>1</sup> In comparison with previous centuries in the nineteenth century respect for art, though still far from universal, becomes more intense and increases, as does the autonomy of artists. Respect and autonomy probably reach their zenith around the middle of the twentieth century. Presently respect for art is no longer self-evident and the autonomy of artists and the art worlds goes down. Art is losing its privileged position. This could imply that the art period is gradually coming to its end.

→→ To be continued.

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<sup>1</sup> Instead of the respect for art I could have chosen other concepts like the sacredness, prestige and status of art. I chose respect because it connects better than prestige and status with a possible value laden goodness of art and other than the alternatives it refers to directly observable behavior: people show or pay respect. This behavior can be recognized and to a degree verified by the reader. Nevertheless, to "measure" respect I will not limit the analysis to directly observable behavior but also look at indirect expressions of respect, like the existence of prestigious art buildings.

## 1. An art period

The importance of art during the art period shows from the high *respect* for art in society. Artworks and the world-of-art have much goodness. Not only is respect for artworks, artists and the world-of-art high during the art period, respect for specific artists, artworks and art forms tend to evoke a simultaneous respect for all art. Respect for art is also widely shared in society. It often comes “naturally”. Not showing respect or showing disrespect is exceptional; a person makes a statement by not showing respect. Disrespect calls forward indignation.

The importance of art during the art period also shows from a second main characteristic: *autonomy*. Before the art period artists had little autonomy, while during this period artists and art worlds are exceptionally autonomous. In this respect art and artists hold a privileged position. —At present the autonomy of artists appears to go down, which could be a sign of a forthcoming end of the art period.— In this chapter I pay most attention to the respect for art; in later chapters I will have more to say about the relative autonomy of art and artists.

Next to much respect and autonomy there are \*nine other phenomena which are typical for the art period and which apply not or much less to the preceding periods. In the course of the book I will show that over the last decades some are becoming less important. This suggests that the art period is gradually coming to an end. I put the characteristic in the list below, and will explain and discuss each of them in the following sections and chapters.

Table \*. List of important characteristics of the art period

- *Sacredness of art*
- *Much respect for art, art works and artists*
- *Works and artists in various art forms are associated with art in general*
- *Autonomy of art and artists*
- *An art-for-art's sake ethos*
- *Separation of art and popular and common art<sup>2</sup>*
- *Uniqueness, authenticity and authorship have much value.*
- *Rejection of commerce*
- *Paternalism of art worlds*
- *Docility of art consumers*
- *Passivity of little recognized artists*
- *Poverty and exploitation of many artists*

\*Three remarks are called for. First, although in the course of the nineteenth century on average overall respect and autonomy increase and also other characteristics apply ever more strongly in order to reach their zenith around the middle of the twentieth century, this does not imply that the development of respect and autonomy as well as other characteristics followed the same path and timing in the various art forms and in different countries. The way the characteristics developed and their speed varies. To give a few examples: in order to separate art and entertainment both in Europe and the US non-profits in music, theatre, opera and dance become established, but not at the same time. Moreover, the way the bourgeois established these non-profits also differed per country and art form. For instance, non-profits in music usually preceded those in other art forms. Or the autonomy of music and musicians started to increase earlier than that of ballet and ballet dancers. Or in the first decades of the twentieth century in many countries in the music halls behavior was respectful and

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<sup>2</sup> I mention common art next to popular art, because further down in \*\* I will make a distinction between the two.

there was undivided interest for music, but in the theaters behavior was often still unruly. Finally, in the second half of the twentieth century in the US overall respect for serious art started to go down earlier than in most European countries.

Second, it is important to note that saying that art-in-general, including the world-of-art, is much respected and that people believe it to have much goodness does not imply that people have much respect for all artworks or think that any artwork, style or genre has goodness. For instance, someone may well judge specific works to be bad and to have little or no artistic merit, or even find them repulsive. Or someone may think that certain works are bad not so much for himself but for people in general or for society. Such works are then thought to be immoral. But such persons can still have much respect for art-in-general and believe that art is important. Often it is exactly because for them art is so important and calls for much respect that they are indignant about works which in their view bring art down.

Third, in the art period respect for art is indeed widely shared. Nevertheless, differences exist between various social groups. Many common people have respect for art but certainly not all. Moreover, they have respect for partly different reasons than the members of the bourgeois and the later middle classes.<sup>3</sup> Because feelings and acts of common people which reflect respect for art are far less well documented than those of the elite, the existence of overall respect is hard to prove. However, in the course of the book, I will point at phenomena which indicate that, at least until recently, also among lower status groups respect for art is considerable. For instance, workers within the labor movement of the early twentieth century not only demand access to art, they also believe they have a moral right to art and deserve access to the world-of-art. For them art was evidently important. And when in the nineteenth and twentieth century people started to publicly celebrate the death of famous artists, such celebrations are popular among common people and many participate in the festivities. Moreover, according research done by economists in the decades after the second world war in Europe and Australia a large part of the population is in favor of public support for art.<sup>4</sup>

My own experiences with people with little education cannot prove a general existence of respect for art but they certainly do not contradict it. They may remind the reader of similar experiences which are in line with mine or indicate the opposite. *Ever since I was twelve I regularly lived and worked with common workers in the Netherlands and England; and up to the present day during my journeys abroad I seek the company of people with little education. Again and again I am struck by the admiration they have for art and artists. After having become an artist myself I am treated with an attention no teacher or dentist would receive. This happened for instance in 1980 in a poor village in Bahia in Brazil, when I showed some poor peasants who had rented me a room pictures of my works. They admired them and I rose in their opinion. Moreover, they started to tell about the emotions the pictures aroused. However, unexpectedly, the latter did not happen when I was in Bangkok in 1983. There similar people only showed interest in my craftsmanship —which, by the way, they thought was deplorable. But when in 2011 I was in Taipei in Taiwan —a highly Westernized country— there was again much admiration and talk about emotions.* This may suggest that the art period as discussed in this book is a Western phenomenon or otherwise follows different paths with different timing in different countries and parts of the world. It also indicates that Western and Westernized people find expression in art important.

## 2. Art is sacred and much respected as art

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<sup>3</sup> The term middle class can be confusing because it suggests the existence of a sizeable higher class. However, usually the term *high class* refers only to the class of aristocrats or nobles, whose relative number had become very small in the twentieth century. Therefore, in the twentieth century the middle class forms the de facto “highest” class.

<sup>4</sup> Ref...→→

Try to MAKE SHORTER?? (Too much repetition??)

In the course of the nineteenth century there is art next to religion and science, and artists and artworks are put on a pedestal and are celebrated as art. Art-in-general has become *sacred* and is celebrated in ever more social situations. —In this context sacred means *worthy of respect*. The way sociologists use the term sacred it can refer to religious as well as non-religious things.— Also in just thinking about art it can be experienced as sacred. Whether talking or thinking about a certain artist or artwork at home or while visiting an exhibition or being present at an art performance, there is always the association with “the arts” or just “art”, that is art-in-general, which is sacred. In other words, where there are artworks and artists and conversation or thinking about them, there is *art* and *the world-of-art*. Most of the time the people involved feel that they are part of this makes them feel good. This almost automatic association of artworks and artists with art-in-general is characteristic the art period. For instance, the visitors of a classical concert admire Bach’s music; his music is for them a *sacred object*, something worthy of much respect.<sup>5</sup> At the same time the music also stands for or symbolizes art-in-general which is an even more sacred object and as such represents an intense symbol of membership for the people present. The people in the hall feel connected not only through their admiration for Bach but also through their admiration for art-in-general.

The triumph of art partly rests on the denunciation of popular and common art. Therefore it is good to note that the phenomenon that respect for specific artworks, artists and art forms evokes respect for art does not apply to popular art.<sup>6</sup> A visitor of a classical concert is likely to feel part of the world-of-art, but the visitor of a pop concert does not feel part of the world-of-art and also not of a possible world of popular art. This shows also from the absence of a moral dimension. The visitor of a classical concert may say “I wish people would realize how good art could be for them”, but no visitor of a pop concert would say “I wish people would realize how good popular art could be for them”.

That art, and not just specific artworks, artists, styles, genres or art forms, is a sacred objects and important symbol of membership in the world-of-art or the world-of-culture shows in many direct and indirect ways. It can indeed show from recurring references to art and artists rather than just to music or musicians in program notes. It can also show from references in speeches and conversation. “He is a true artist.” “This is art.” “Art is so important.” “Art enriches my life.” Not just music or painting or dance, but art is good. The first have goodness as well, but their goodness increases a great deal due to the association with art which is loaded with symbolic value. *Several times in the 70s of the previous century I received the Dutch art collector Mr. de Bruin in my studio and showed him my latest drawings. On such occasions De Bruin praised my drawings (even though later on he tried to lower their price). De Bruin again and again emphasized the importance of not only visual art but art-in-general for his personal life and for society at large. “I wish people would realize how good art can be for them; they don’t know what they miss.” I always went along with him. I remember De Bruin because he was dead serious and it was hard to stop him once he had started to praise art. Making even the slightest joke about art would have meant the end of our relationship —a relationship which was financially attractive for me.*

Nineteenth and early twentieth century examples of an outspoken association of artworks and artists with art-in-general can also be found in the descriptions which writers, like Marcel Proust, give of the gatherings in the saloons of the rich. In the presence of a musician, poet or painter not only their art and their specific art form but also art-in-general is praised. Up to the present day the same applies to countless conversations in the foyers of theatres and concert halls. And also in museums or at home discussions about specific artworks, artists or art forms are likely to include recurring references to art.

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<sup>5</sup> I will use the term sacred object in the way Randall Collins (Collins, 2005) does. He extends Emile Durheim’s (Durkheim, 1965)sacred object to all minor or major things which in, what he calls, interaction rituals become worthy of respect. In this paragraph, and in many other instances in the book, I base the reasoning on the symbolic interactionism of Collins.

<sup>6</sup> In this book art without adverb opposes popular and common or unrecognized art.

Showing respect is “natural” and often it comes automatic. For instance, until recently people would, without taking a conscious decision, lower their voices or adapt a more serious tone when the conversation moved to art. This was (and still is) very noticeable in the case of the radio presenters of classical music. Moreover, during public art events like visits to museums, classical concerts, theatre and dance performances behavior was and is subdued. Such behavior is not limited to those who actually participate in the world-of-art. Also by using superlatives like the term genius, while talking or writing about art and artists, people show an extraordinary respect for art. [ONLY LATER?? MOVE to EXTRO]—Other than in classical music it is presently less common to call an artist a genius and this may well be a possible sign of the forthcoming end of the art period.— [ONLY ch poor??]—In program notes of classical concerts the term is still frequently used. In those notes also living composers are often called “genius”.—

@[SYNC with last section and art criteria and badness of entertainment in ch entertainment]The goodness of art also shows from the good ‘things’ people associate with art. “Art creates profound human emotions.” “Art possesses inner beauty and depth.” “Art enriches and civilizes.” “Through art people become better people.” “Art has nothing to do with money and profit.” “Art stands for freedom and truth.” During the art period such positive stereotypes or stereotypical knowledge and stereotypical convictions are widely circulated. In conversations people may not use these exact words, but what they say comes down to it. And if art is good or has goodness, it follows that those who create art, the artists, must have goodness as well. In art events the goodness of art shines on artists and it shines from them. “Artists are creative, sensitive, vulnerable.” “Artists are authentic and free; they do not compromise but are true to themselves and show this in their works.” “Artists realize themselves.” “They are passionate as well as selfless and therefore not interested in money”.

All such convictions and stereotypical knowledge are part of a general, what I call, *art ethos* which is widely shared. In the course of the art period such stereotypes have also become part of the imagery of common people. But sometimes the stereotypes which are popular among various social groups somewhat differ, and so does the more specific art ethos of these groups. For instance in elite circles art may symbolize civilization and the superiority of the own group, while in the case of common people it may rather stand for opulent art buildings and for the riches or civilized manners of the elite. Positive associations can also change over time. Whereas in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century the association of art with the nation state figured high in the imagery of many social groups, this stereotypical association becomes less prominent in the second half of the twentieth century.

[OUT? WHERE?]That art can stand for (or symbolize) various combinations of other “sacred objects”, like freedom or autonomy, authenticity, exclusivity, civilization, renown and wealth, does not imply that anything which is associated with art is good and has goodness. To give an example, in a conversation between a host and his guests about a Kandinsky painting on the wall in the dining room the painting becomes a sacred object and has an aura which in turn may stand for civilization, faith, exclusivity and wealth. If exclusivity matters for the guests, the fact that the painting was very expensive may impress them and in indirect wordings they express that they admire the host for his wealth and the way he spends his money. However, in another situation in the same house but with other guests a different conversation may emerge after the host has left the room: in indirect wordings the guests express that they think that the host is showing off his wealth. He is less civilized than the possession of the painting suggests.

These examples show that where there is sacredness or just goodness there is always also a moral dimension. Moral convictions are involved. The host is thought to be good or bad. The moral dimension also shows from expressions like: “I ought to go more often” —that is, to the museum or art performances. The speaker implicitly condemns himself for not choosing what is good for him and what is morally good. In a way he is a “sinner”. Also when talking about art or an artist somebody says “Oh, I am not creative” this is not a neutral observation; the expression is emotional and testifies of the goodness of art. *When I pointed to the fact that De Bruin made a very good choice by selecting some of my drawings and not others, De Bruin always answered: “maybe, but I am not creative”. This*

*way he put not only me, but also art on a pedestal.* People who emphasize that they are not creative usually have much respect for art and artists and evidently think it presumptuous to put themselves at the same level as the artist.

In this respect negative expressions like an angry “My daughter of six could have done the same” are even more telling of how value laden art is. Such expressions are the opposite of respectful, but at the same time they indirectly testify of the existence of much respect for art in society. If art would not have been so sacred and treated with much respect, there would have been no need to put art and indirectly also art lovers down by comparing the artist with an infant.

Finally, one can also show the sacredness of art indirectly by looking at symptoms of sacredness. According to Randall Collins a positive answer to the following questions indicates that an object is particularly sacred: “Is it treated with respect, as a sacred object, as a realm apart from ordinary life? Is it given a spatially separate zone, a special physical location? Are there special qualifications as to who can approach and who is excluded. Does it attract vehement attackers. Is it regarded as incommensurate with merely utilitarian values?”<sup>7</sup> As noted, in the case of art the answer to these questions is usually positive. The special respect shows among others from not only many conversations but also the etiquette in art performances and museums. The spatially separate zone shows from the free standing buildings which are only used for art. Next, in indirect ways certain people, often belonging to lower social groups, are excluded by giving them to understand that they do not belong there. In response their attacks can be vehement: “My child of six, could have made this painting.” Finally, the opinion that great art is useless and vulnerable, and that its true value cannot be expressed in money is voiced in numerous situations and by all sorts of people.

### **3. Major public festivities and magnificent buildings signify the importance of art**

Public festivities surrounding the jubilee celebrations of the birth or death of famous artists form a clear demonstration of the widely shared respect for art and artists. Examples are those of the centennial celebration of Schiller’s birthday in Germany, which was already an important event in 1859, and the celebration of Rembrandt’s birthday in the Netherlands, which commenced in \* with, among others, an open air manifestation at which \*ten thousands of common *Amsterdammers* were present. Since then the Rembrandt festivities have been repeated every ten years. In the case of world-artists like Rembrandt or Mozart such celebrations increasingly draw attention from all over the world.

In the twentieth century in the Western world the public jubilee festivities around the death or birth of famous artists, like Shakespeare, Bach, Mozart, Wagner, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Schiller and \* \* have far more grandeur than those of politicians, scientists or theologians, from Cromwell, Napoleon and Washington to Newton, Copernicus, Luther and \*#Calvin. Only Jesus scores better, but he has become rather a mythological figure than a flesh and blood person.[Note out; otherwise add/remind that comparing art and religion is slippery(Rick)]<sup>8</sup>

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century festivities were initiated by local art world establishments together with local governments. They also followed from a wish to let the highly respected arts give extra legitimization and grandeur to the newly established, and sometimes still feeble nation states. In

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<sup>7</sup> (Collins, 2005)\*

<sup>8</sup> When it comes to respect for God, I think that also during the art period the respect for Him is larger than for art. It is only during the last decades that God has become less important in the daily life of many people and the writing of the term God with a capital g has become a somewhat anachronistic convention rather than the expression of an intense respect for God. (With art it is rather the opposite. Usually we do not write the term art with a capital a, but nowadays we do speak of “art with a capital a” to denote serious art, or in this book just “art”.) Typical for the nineteenth and even more the twentieth century is however, that God became an abstraction, while art and the world of art are concrete. God is primarily experienced as something floating in the air, while art has concrete connotations. Nowadays art is more grounded than God. See also note \* above.

this context it is telling, that since the nation states have become well vested, most of the more “civilized” nations do not display their power through magnificent military parades; instead they parade their art. —Evidently art can also represents power, be it in sublimated form.<sup>9</sup>— Art can be displayed on all sorts of occasions, for instance during the reception of heads of state and during diplomatic and business missions. Also during receptions of important corporations often classical music is performed —and until recently no popular music. Moreover, at a private level as well art marks the importance of major social events in the life of individuals. Even today during the large majority of funerals people listen to classical music.

Buildings that host public art events and which are built during the art period demonstrate in materialized and therefore very visible form the high respect for art. Before the nineteenth century most theatres and music halls are part of palaces, while municipal theaters are incorporated in a continuous street façade.<sup>10</sup> But since the beginning of the nineteenth century concert halls, theaters and museums are not only free standing buildings; they belong to the most opulent and prestigious buildings constructed. They can compete with churches, universities, town halls, law courts, stock exchanges and the headquarters of multinationals and they increasingly surpass them in grandeur. This phenomenon is not limited to the nineteenth century, but continues to the present day. Whereas Centre Pompidou in Paris easily surpasses its rival, the ^Lloyds building in London, the ^Sydney Opera House and the latest ‘cathedrals’ of art like the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Elbphilharmonie concert hall in Hamburg and the [\*almost finished??] ^Louvre in Abu Dabi are beyond comparison — see pictures \*\*.

At the moment almost any medium sized city in Europe and the US, from New Castle in England, Bergen in Norway, Graz in Austria to \* and \* [ASK Diana] in the US, but also cities in Eastern countries like Taipei and Osaka, have recently build eye-catching new concert halls, theatres and museums for modern art, which draw more attention than any other newly build venue in these cities. In comparison the post war venues that host public popular art events, most of all pop concerts, are insignificant. They are foremost functional and contain little unused space, whereas a striking characteristic of most of the new art cathedrals is the percentage of unused cubic meters of space, for instance in the entrance halls. [#INSERT pictures of buildings and interiors. For instance interior of museum of modern art in Barcelona. ??OMA in Taipe .]

The construction of such buildings certainly shows that there is much respect for art in society, but not necessarily that the respect is widely shared. The respect could be limited to those powerful circles in society, which have most money to spend or have the largest say in the spending of public money. However, in democratic countries the willingness of large parts of the population to spend money on such projects is considerable, irrespective of the fact that elite circles benefit more from the buildings than common people.

The fact that art buildings have become more prestigious than churches and university buildings is telling. Given the gradual secularization in the nineteenth and twentieth century it is understandable that religion could not have been the foremost symbol of civilization anymore. But why did science not become this foremost symbol? In the next chapter I will discuss the new role of art in society in the last two centuries and this may well provide an answer.

#### **4. The emergence of a single world-of-art precedes art’s triumph**

\*Three developments have enabled the high respect for art and art’s privileged position. The first is the considerable *increase in prosperity* in the early nineteenth century. The second is what I call *the*

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<sup>9</sup> (Abbing, 2002) 189-190 and 248-250

<sup>10</sup> (Blanning, 1969)131

*unification of the fine arts*, which already starts in the seventeenth century. And the third is the *increase in the uses and usefulness of art*.

First, after 1800 capitalism, which had been prepared for in the previous three centuries, spreads in the Western world. In the nineteenth century the population grows much faster than before. The number and size of towns increase, as does prosperity. Around 1800 the large majority of people are still very poor. However, from 1800 onwards in Western countries more people than just princes, bishops and a few rich merchants have money to spend on art. And even though in the course of the nineteenth century commerce in the arts is increasingly rejected —be it in theory rather than in practice— increased prosperity contributes much to the increased demand for art in art markets.

The growth in art consumption among the bourgeoisie, who form a much larger percentage of the population than the earlier aristocracy, is not that special. Also the consumption of other luxury goods increases. But the actual presence of art in many households of relatively powerful people is anyway a condition for much respect for art in a society. If the consumption of art had remained limited to the aristocracy, then in the new more democratic situation in which economic and political power is no longer limited to a small aristocracy the respect for art would have gone down instead of up. [REPEAT or REFER to in later discussions in ch exclusion on the relation between numbers of consumers and respect??]

Second, up to the seventeenth century paying respect to art is not even an option, because art in the present sense, that is art as a collective noun denoting all the fine arts, does not exist. There are only arts in the form of crafts or skills including for instance the medical and military arts.<sup>11</sup> Only in the seventeenth century the fine arts or creative arts, instead of such arts as performing art and creative writing, become a separate category among all arts next to for instance the medical arts.<sup>12</sup> However, at first this categorization is still foremost practical and not a classification which is value laden and could imply superiority. Also a possible interrelationship between all the different fine arts is not a matter of much concern.

Only at the end of the eighteenth century the term “art” instead of the fine or creative arts starts to be commonly used as a collective noun denoting the combination of fine arts, that is the visual arts, creative writing and the performing arts: music, theatre and dance. Moreover, “art” and “the arts” become synonyms. Art and the arts without adverb are now an abbreviation for fine arts and do no longer refer to other arts as well, like the medical arts and military arts, which continue to require an adverb. —Also, at least until recently, popular and common art are no art and do not belong to the arts; they as well need an adverb.— This could only happen because the fine arts had started to stand out among all arts; they have become the highest form of art among the arts.<sup>13</sup> The new use of the term art also allows the later convention of thinking of the arts and its many organizations as one world-of-art, a world which is of the same order as the worlds of religion and science, or is even superior.<sup>14</sup>

The appropriation of the term art and the unification of the fine arts in one overall world-of-art express superiority and enable the later high respect for art. It follows that a possible discord between the separate worlds of art and within these art worlds can endanger the high respect for art. This explains why in the arts, unlike in the popular arts, much energy is spend on remaining unity or restoring unity.

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<sup>11</sup> In such cases the meaning of the term art is similar to its meaning in Latin: \*\*.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. (Heinich, 2005) 16 (in French), (Doorman, 2004) \*a.o.152 (in Dutch).

<sup>13</sup> In practice the term art is not always used as a collective noun denoting all fine arts and literature. Sometimes literature is not included and sometimes the term only refers to only the visual arts. This is probably a leftover from the seventeenth and eighteenth century, when the visual arts were thought to be *the* superior art form, more important than for instance music. (According to (Blanning, 2008) since then music has become more important than visual art.)

<sup>14</sup> An exception worth mentioning is that the arts without adverb can still denote the humanities within the sciences at large as for instance bachelor or master of arts. At present this is not more than a leftover from earlier times, but it suggests that the humanities longer than any other art could compete with the arts in being social status.

The continuous strife for unity in turn explains a number of phenomena in the arts which are otherwise hard to understand, as I intend to show in later chapters.

If the fine arts or just art was already somewhat superior in the eighteenth century, this did not imply that the status of artists is already high. Artists remain craftsmen and servants. 'For instance, although more respected than many of his colleagues in music, to have dinner Haydn still had to sit with the other servants. —His position was actually close to serfdom. He received his income partly in goods and his freedom to travel was limited.—<sup>15</sup>

In the centuries preceding the art period exceptionally good artists, like Dürer, Rembrandt and Bach, are admired. They were masters in their craft and could be celebrities, but they were certainly no geniuses. Moreover, they represent exceptions to the rule of artists having no higher status than other craftsmen.<sup>16</sup> Only with retroactive effect did these artist become geniuses during the art period. However, along with increasing respect for art this gradually changes in the nineteenth century. The status of artists rises. The same does not apply to the average income of artists, which remains relatively low, be it not as low as in the second half of the twentieth century. —The apparent contradiction between respect for art and artists and a low average income of artists last to the present day.—

The third development enabling the high respect for art and art's privileged position is the *increase in the uses and usefulness of art*. This is related to the phenomenon that artworks are increasingly appreciated for themselves, the topic of the next section.

## **5. The artwork is appreciated for itself**

Before the art period paintings, sculptures and music facilitate or stimulate religious devotion. Or they serve to represent the power of the patrons of art in their own circles and often also in society at large. Or they are used as "stage-properties" in all sorts of ceremonies or gatherings, from the entertainment of guests in mercantile homes to the rendezvous with a mistress at the court. Especially in the eighteenth century paintings and music serve well as décor to the refined social interaction in all sorts of elite circles, including the court of Louis XV. Though people occasionally focus on artworks, all in all interaction takes place in social or religious events rather than in art events. And, whether or not the works are commissioned, the artists are well aware of the goals their artworks will serve and take this into account when creating their works.

All this appears to change in the art period. First, a distinction between non-applied works, like paintings and symphony music, and applied works, like beautiful vases, \*boxes to keep letters in or marching music, becomes important. Works that can straightforwardly be used for practical purposes no longer belong to the domain of (real) art. In this respect the uses and usefulness of art can be said to have become more limited. Second, in the course of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century more or less undivided attention for artworks becomes far more common. And third, artworks are more often consumed in the context of events, which are organized for the purpose of letting people focus on works of art, as in theatres, concert halls and museums.

The enjoyment of art can now be the primary goal and is no longer be part of an event in which the main focus is on other things than art. Whereas artworks had foremost been appreciated for their functional qualities, there are now also situations in which they are appreciated for themselves and for being art. Moreover, artists increasingly have the intention of making such works, that is works which are intended to be appreciated for themselves. Artist take responsibility for their works as artworks

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<sup>15</sup> (Blanning, 2008) 12, 16

<sup>16</sup> According to (Heinich, 2005) 119 (in French) in the case of some artists an exceptional life or dedication added to the value attached to their works, but she emphasizes that these artists were not representative.

and in creating their works they do not take into account possible non-artistic uses. This attitude even extends to the making of commissioned works. An *art-for-art's-sake* is embraced by artists as well as audiences.

However, this does not imply that before the art period no social events exist in which people focus relatively much and for some time on what we now call works of art. And, it also does not imply that during the art period there is only undivided attention for art and art is never used for non-artistic purposes. When for instance a prince took his guests to have a look at a special painting or sculpture in his palace, these paintings were not just decorations. Or when a prince and his family or guests came together to listen to a piece of music, the music was more than just a stage property. This will certainly have been the case after princes, like the Esterházy, had special concert halls built on their premises, in which composers, like Haydn, would perform their pieces in front of an audience that had gathered with the purpose of listening to music. And in theatres like the Elizabethan theatre such modes of production and consumption had already arisen earlier—even though attention was almost certainly not undivided. Nevertheless, all such events remained foremost entertainment events rather than art events. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, an art-setting—implying a clearer classification of art and non-art, insulation of art events and a special etiquette \*as well as specific conditions of art production— becomes established. And within this setting art consumption has become a serious matter and there is relatively undivided attention for art.

In this process the artistic “use” of art comes to the foreground and non-artistic uses of art become increasingly suspect. Already early in the nineteenth century the primary purpose of music changed from representing the power of the patron, prince or bishop, or the glory of God, to expressing the emotions of individual musicians. This development also shows in visual art education. In the course of the nineteenth century the emphasis is more and more on “pure” painting. The artisan role of the painter is denied and this as well cuts him more and more off from contact with applied art.<sup>17</sup> Artists and artworks become autonomous, or, at least, they must be autonomous.

But that artworks are also appreciated for themselves, does not imply that artworks have become less useful or useless. On the contrary.

## 6. Art becomes more useful

Part of the success of art in the art period follows from the third development which has enabled the high respect for art and art's privileged position: the *increase in the uses and usefulness of art*. This thesis runs counter to the common belief in art worlds that in the course of the nineteenth century art lost much of its former usefulness. This is not true. In practice artworks continue to serve as decoration and as a means to impress others, to propagate the nation state and so forth. Foremost, they continue to be meaningful for people and to be appreciated for the meanings they convey. Moreover, as we shall see in the next chapter, people develop a new relationship with meaningful art, an existential relationship, and this is important for them.

At the same time it is true that some uses of art have become less important or appear to have become less important. Non-artistic uses of art are no longer emphasized and sometimes denied, and many artworks no longer hold straightforward moral meanings which can be used for moral advice. But this does not imply that these uses stop to exist.

It is true that in the course of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century in the collective consumption of art in public venues some earlier *social and non-artistic uses* of art gradually disappear. For instance, during the actual performances open social interaction between audience members has become unimportant. In this respect art events are now no longer foremost social

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<sup>17</sup> (White & White, 1995) 27

events as they were before when often the majority of visitors were engaged in all sorts of activities other than that they focused on the performance—see pictures \* \* .

But, as most readers know from experience, even when listening to music or watching a play among an altogether silent audience in a music hall or theater, or when walking through the galleries in a museum with nobody around, the attention is seldom undivided for a long time; instead every now and then one's thoughts will start to \*wander to non-artistic matters —from not forgetting to water the plants to reconsidering one's marriage and thinking about problems at work. Maybe in the relaxed atmosphere brought about by meaningful music even important life determining decisions are taken. I would anyway argue that even though such secondary non-artistic uses are not intended by the artist, they represent important uses of art which.

In the art period most of the other earlier non-artistic uses continue to exist but are no longer emphasized or otherwise their existence is covered up or denied. Paintings in public spaces, offices and private homes continue to also serve decoration. And music continues to brighten up all sorts private meetings and public ceremonies.

However, second and most significantly, it is true that in the course of the art period the straightforward *moral use* of art is discouraged and sometimes even becomes taboo. But here as well, this does not imply that this usage stops to exist. Nevertheless, whereas for many centuries both religious and non-religious art held moral meanings and conveyed direct messages which tell about good and bad and people made use of the messages, in the course of the art period many artists appear to be less interested in making art with a prominent message. Also audiences appear to have lost some interest in the use of art for advice or for thinking about good and bad. And especially in the last third of the twentieth century established art worlds “punish” recognized artists for works with a clear moral message which is not \*multi-interpretable. —However, especially earlier, there are many exceptions. Think for instance of \* \* [NOT Picasso's pigeons; they are too general.], **also musicians/ ask Schuurman/Van Os etc.**. And in literature never →→.—

However, more indirect and sometimes somewhat \*multi-interpretable moral meanings and moral uses never disappear. Any art is meaningful and, irrespective of the artist's intention, people use meanings in ways which matter for them. On the basis of the meanings which they perceive in the artwork they produce their own meanings; and what is meaningful for a person is likely to carry value and so imply notions of good and bad. It anyway tells him about himself and may make him consider if he is on the right track. What is however different is that during the art period audiences increasingly tend to hide their emotions and are ashamed to admit their use of art for lessons for life; that is, when consuming art in public —home consumption of art is a different matter.— This situation, which is very much unlike what happened in some earlier periods, when for instance people could weep in front of a painting of the Madonna<sup>18</sup>, lasts to the present day.[??—see picture \*—],

In established art worlds there is little attention for the *home consumption* of art: visual art on the walls all through the house and music coming from loudspeakers. (Much of the original visual art on the walls is made by unrecognized or little recognized artists.) I think that one of the reasons for this lack of interest rests in the phenomenon that especially in its home consumption art serves all sorts of non-artistic uses: decoration, music in the background which livens up conversation, for instance during the Sunday morning breakfast, music to sing along. —*Put the music on loud and sing along with Placido Domingo***ASK theo** *while taking a shower. It's great; try it some time.*— Uses at home are numerous. Particularly one use was and continues to be very important: this is the sending of a message to visitors. This can be a subtle message: “this painting tells about who I really am”; or a somewhat less subtle message: “I am a civilized person”; or just bluntly: “I am rich”. In practice such messages are interrelated and often come together. For instance, when using expensive paintings the message may well be: I am both rich and civilized. —In this respect artworks do better than a

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. (Elkins, 2001)

Porsche.— Conveying all sorts of messages is part of an interaction which can be pleasant foremost for the sake of interacting. But some degree of showing off and showing some superiority is always present.

Earlier in the art period the use of art for vertical distinction, that is, vice-à-vice lower status groups, is certainly important. —It even has been argued that art as symbol of power served the domination of lower social groups.— Nevertheless, nowadays the use of art for showing off one's civilization, status, power or wealth appears to be less acceptable today. But this applies foremost to vertical distinction. Subtle horizontal distinction, that is, within one's own circles, continues to be important. Art as a luxury good which not everybody can afford can symbolize not only one's civilization but also one's dominant position within the own circles.

Related is the phenomenon that the use of art for the realization of political goals becomes taboo in the second half of the twentieth century. Before art could still serve nationalistic and ideological purposes. In the case of artists who are very nationalistic or strongly believe in the benefits of socialism or fascism this showed from their work. [Examples of "tendenskunst" Ask for term and example and example/picture of earlier and late in the art period Van Os / Schuurman] Literature again exceptional →→. For reasons to explain later literature →→

[However, ]the high prestige of art and artworks of dead artists continues to be used to celebrate the nation and its, sometimes dominant, position in the civilized world. This is certainly the case with the before mentioned jubilee festivities around the death or birth of famous artists, like Mozart and Rembrandt, which are now as important as they were earlier in the art period. Also the use of art to emphasize the seriousness and importance of other events continues to the present day, as in funerals and business celebrations. In all this art is directly or indirectly used for non-artistic purposes. Not only art by dead artists, but contemporary art as well is used for the achievement of political and economic goals, like when the Dutch National Dance Theater comes along in diplomatic and trade missions of the Dutch government to perform abroad. Also within the cultural competition between nations governments want their contemporary top artists to perform well and at the highest international level, and they are prepared to pay for this; and it is telling that art world people increasingly put such uses and usefulness forward to justify public support of art.

## 7. Intrinsic value does not exist. Art is never use-less

In the art period art is clearly not useless. However, one can demand that art is useless, or one argue that only art which is useless is good or real art. Given the popularity of the belief or demand that art is useless, by way of excuse, in the following paragraphs I say a bit more about the possibility of art being useless.

In the late eighteenth century the philosopher Immanuel Kant propagated the notion of a pure judgment of taste, independent of charm and emotion. Art works are "purposeful purposeless".<sup>19</sup> This notion represents a recommended way to perceive works of art and to produce art rather than that it is a statement about what really goes on. However, it still colors our thinking. In spite of all the uses people continue to make of art, what stands out in the art period and is propagated in the shared art-ideology or art-ethos is not the functionality of art but a taboo on functionality. Artworks must be "pure" and have intrinsic value only. This demand and also the belief in art's uselessness continue to be strong to the present day. *The number of people I have come across citing Oscar Wilde's "All art is quite useless." is large.*<sup>20</sup> *Only yesterday in a post on Facebook a befriended artist put down this citation, while complaining about a commissioned work he had to do.*

Such belief or demand is usually accompanied by an essentialist view on art: artworks may have non-artistic or extrinsic uses and values but, whether we are aware of it or not, a timeless core exists.

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<sup>19</sup> (Kant, 2000). Among others (see below) (P. Bourdieu, 1979) \*-\* criticizes Kant's \*.

<sup>20</sup> This is a sentence in the preface of Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Artworks are supposed to always have intrinsic value. The artistic or aesthetic value we or experts attach to a work depends on the experience of the core.\*<sup>21</sup> It follows that art can be valuable also when it is useless. Uses may actually stand in the way of a pure aesthetic experience based on an artwork's intrinsic core.

Our view of artistic master pieces is thoroughly colored by this essentialist notion of art. For instance, because of an assumed intrinsic core independent of time and place, we take for granted that the aesthetic value of Western masterpieces and artists, like Homer, Rembrandt, *King Lear*, *Don Giovanni* and *Guernica*, can be acknowledged by any generation in any part of the world, that is, if they make an effort.<sup>22</sup> As we shall see, such belief can explain several phenomena in the art period which are otherwise hard to explain.

However, the question arises if a timeless intrinsic value really exists and if an aesthetic value can be separated from other values. The answer is negative. Art cannot be useless. The \*literary scientist Barbara Hernstein Smith formulates it eloquently:

“The recurrent impulse and effort to define aesthetic value by contradistinction to all forms of utility or as the negation of all other nameable sources of interest or forms of value—hedonic, practical, sentimental, ornamental, historical, ideological, and so forth, is in effect, to define it out of existence; for when all such utilities, interests, and particular sources of value have been subtracted, nothing remains. Or, to put this in other terms: the ‘essential’ value of a work of art consists of everything from which it is usually distinguished.”<sup>23</sup>

Artworks have no intrinsic value; they only have use value. This being said and keeping in mind that the two can never be fully separated, in this book I will continue speak of *artistic or personal uses and rewards* of art next to *non-artistic or social uses and rewards*. For instance when someone consumes art and other people are (hardly) on his mind the use of art can be foremost artistic, but when the possible praise of others is very much on his mind the use of art is likely to be foremost non-artistic or social. My main argument is therefore that in the art period the uses of art which are foremost social and non-artistic —though often less emphasized and sometimes denied— have not diminished. Instead additional artistic or personal uses of art have developed which have contributed to the increased attraction and prestige of art in the art period. In the next chapter I will say more about these new and sometimes very personal uses of art.

## 8. In the twenty first century however...

Section still to be written.

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<sup>21</sup> [HERE??]In this book the terms *aesthetic* and *artistic* are used interchangeable and in a nominalistic sense. “Aesthetic” or “artistic” is that which is related to that what is called art”. In this I follow (Hernstein Smith, 1988) 35.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. (Hernstein Smith, 1988) 35

<sup>23</sup> (Hernstein Smith, 1988) 32. Speaking about the role of interpretation, the philosopher Arthur (Danto, 1986) 26-43 comes to a similar conclusion.

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