



From The Conventional to the Computational: Continuities and Ruptures in the Epistemological Shift of Aesthetic Experience

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the epistemological shift in the aesthetic experience of art, tracing the transformation from conventional, normative artistic frameworks to computational art. It explores how the relationship between the artwork and the art object has evolved that have shaped this shift. By employing qualitative and conceptual analysis, the research highlights the transition from artworks as unique, material entities to dynamic, algorithmic processes that redefine the conditions of artistic existence.

The study particularly focuses on Uğur Tanyeli's distinction between normative and speculative epistemology, Walter Benjamin's concept of aura, and the duality between the artwork and the art object, providing a theoretical foundations. The study argues that computational art inherits and expands the speculative epistemology of conceptual art, shifting its focus towards process-based systems. Consequently, the distinction between the artwork and the art object has been reshaped by reducing the art object to a mere executorial process.

The theoretical proposition in this study for understanding the moment of epistemological shift in the aesthetic experience of art is that all continuities and ruptures are reflections of the distinction between the artwork and the art object.

Keywords: Epistemological Shift, Artwork–Art Object Distinction, Conceptual Art, Generative Art, Computational Art

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, sanatsal deneyimin epistemolojik kaymasını inceleyerek, geleneksel, normatif sanatsal çerçevelerden işlemsel sanata geçiş sürecini ele almaktadır. Sanat eseri ile sanat nesnesi arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl evrildiğini ve bu dönüşümü şekillendiren temel fikirleri araştırmaktadır. Nitel ve kavramsal analiz yöntemleri kullanılarak, çalışmada sanat eserlerinin benzersiz, maddi varlıklar olarak kabul edilmesinden, dinamik ve algoritmik süreçlere dayalı yeni bir varoluş biçimine geçişi vurgulanmaktadır.

Bu bağlamda, çalışma özellikle Uğur Tanyeli'nin normatif ve spekülatif epistemoloji ayrımı, Walter Benjamin'in aura kavramı ve sanat eseri ile sanat nesnesi arasındaki ikili yapı üzerine odaklanarak teorik bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Çalışma, hesaplamalı sanatın kavramsal sanatın spekülatif epistemolojisini miras aldığını ve bunu genişleterek odağını süreç tabanlı sistemlere kaydırıldığını savunmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, sanat eseri ile sanat nesnesi arasındaki ayrım, sanat nesnesinin yalnızca icrasal bir sürece indirgenmesiyle yeniden şekillendirilmiştir.

Bu çalışmada sanatsal deneyimdeki epistemolojik kayma anını anlamaya yönelik teorik öneri; tüm sürekliliklerin ve kopuşların, sanat eseri ile sanat nesnesi arasındaki ayrışmanın yansımaları olduğu yönündedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Epistemolojik Kayma, Sanat Eseri- Sanat Nesnesi Ayrışması, Kavramsal Sanat, Yenilemeli Sanat, İşlemsel (Hesaplamalı) Sanat

INTRODUCTION

Art praxis is a process shaped by the transformation of not only formal understandings, but also modes of knowledge production and epistemological assumptions. The assumptions about the field in which art exists have constantly changed within the historical



and cultural context; these changes have directly affected the ways in which works of art are produced, received and evaluated. The field of knowledge that art possesses is shaped by the tension between the limits set by norms and the questioning framework offered by criticism. This, in essence, points to an area related to the epistemology of art.

In this context, the stylistic transformations of artworks cannot be considered merely as superficial stylistic changes; on the contrary, they should be read as a transformation of the basic conditions of existence of art and the practices of knowledge production. How the relationship between the artwork and the object of art has been shaped historically and how it has undergone a break in the contemporary understanding of art is a fundamental question that needs to be addressed within the framework of epistemological shift.

While this process continues with breaks and continuities, it is parallel to the evolution of the accepted answers to the question "*where is the place where the artwork comes into existence?*". How did the artwork evolve from a time when it existed only as a physical and unique object to a time when it derives its meaning from the context in which it exists? While the traditional understanding of art suggests that the artwork must have a material existence, how are computational artworks accepted as works of art outside of this assumption? The axes on which these questions, which arise in the academic or daily mix, should be addressed also find their way within the framework of epistemological shift. This divergence model has not only been limited to art debates, but has also played a decisive role in other fields of knowledge such as philosophy and science as a fundamental element of epistemology (Bachelard, 1938; Kuhn, 1962).

This study will trace the epistemological shift from traditional art to computational art by analyzing important breaking points such as the transformation of aesthetic norms and the birth of conceptual art. It will be argued that this transformation and the answers to the questions asked at the beginning should be addressed in the context of the distinction between the artwork and the art object, and it will be emphasized that the theoretical ground should be sought within this equation.

METHOD

This study draws a theoretical framework using qualitative and in-depth conceptual analysis. This research was conducted in order to understand the transformation from the assumptions of classical art to the aesthetics of contemporary art, and to examine and critically evaluate how the ontological assumptions of traditional artworks have changed to overlap with the possibilities of existence of conceptual and, in the last stage, transactional art.

In this context, firstly Uğur Tanyeli's definition of "Normative Epistemology - Speculative Epistemology", Walter Benjamin's concepts of "aura" and "uniqueness" and finally the duality of artwork - art object, which is one of the main problematics of contemporary art philosophy, will be discussed. This theoretical ground will be used to trace the "continuities and ruptures" in the transformation from traditional art to computational art and the change that makes contemporary art aesthetics possible. Furthermore, the concept of "epistemological shift" will be used to make sense of the most decisive moment of this transformation.

In line with these determinations, it is argued that the basic trace that needs to be followed in order to understand the conditions of existence of the artwork is the assumptions about the relationship between the artwork and the art object. By tracing this trajectory, the study will reveal how the ontological status of art and reception processes have been reshaped. Thus, the theoretical framework that determines the axis from which computational art should be considered in order to make sense of its position in art history and to clarify the questions that create confusion will be reached.



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Normative Epistemology and Speculative Epistemology

Uğur Tanyeli's article "The Limits of Modernism and Architecture" is based on a distinction he calls normative and speculative epistemology (Tanyeli, 1997). This is related to the change of the field of knowledge in art. In this article, he constructs the basic distinction of modernist thought through normative and speculative epistemology. This distinction provides a critical framework for making sense of the transformation in the field of knowledge of art. While in the normative epistemological framework, art gains meaning within certain rules and predefined systems, the speculative epistemological framework offers a critical framework by determining that the world can be comprehended and interpreted by reason. In this context, the transformation of art in the field of knowledge is not only a formal or technical transformation, but is also directly related to how art is produced, how it is conceived and how it is evaluated.

In periods dominated by normative epistemology, architectural and artistic issues are not formulated as problems waiting for a solution; on the contrary, each field of knowledge exists within a system shaped by predetermined rules and norms. In the pre-modern period, artists and designers produce in line with the patterns of action and thought available to them, and instead of producing a solution from scratch for each singular situation, they make various adaptations using a limited number of patterns defined within existing systems. Since these systems predefine all the possibilities that can be encountered with a certain number of solution models, they ensure that the answer to any question is ready before it is asked. By guaranteeing that art and design take shape within certain limits, normative systems leave no room for ambiguity or debate, because they can only function as long as they can produce predefined answers. Therefore, these knowledge systems are tautological and do not allow the formulation of questions that cannot exist within their boundaries. Any question can only exist as long as it has an answer within the system; otherwise, it becomes impossible to even raise the question. This is why normative epistemological systems are binding and indisputable; when they dominate the field of art and architecture in a certain period, they force all producers to agree with the rules of this system. This binding power is so strong that the system is so persuasive that no dissenters emerge; artists and designers can only show their individual differences at the level of how they apply the existing patterns. For example, in the pre-modern period, there is not the concept of "wrong architecture", but of "wrong construction", because architecture is considered a field of knowledge defined by certain rules and does not allow for flexibility. Similarly, in the Baroque music period, composers could express their personal style through certain compositional techniques; however, they could not go beyond these techniques because the formal structure of music was predefined by the normative system and all artists were obliged to produce within the same framework. Accordingly, in periods when the normative system is dominant, artists or designers produce art and design products using the answers provided by the existing system, not their personal aesthetic understanding; therefore, individual creativity has to take shape within the limits allowed by the normative framework. Even those who are distinguished by their personal skills are in harmony with the dominant normative system of the period and use the same set of ready-made answers as other practitioners (Tanyeli, 1997).

In addition, speculative epistemology is defined by the destruction of normative assumptions and is based on a mechanism of constant questioning and criticism instead of certainty in knowledge production. The belief that the world is comprehensible, interpretable and manageable by reason constitutes the main source of speculative epistemology. Unlike normative knowledge, speculative knowledge does not propose absolute and unchanging truths; on the contrary, it asserts a truth claim that remains valid until it is falsified. In this sense, speculative epistemology sees knowledge not as part of a dogmatic system, but as a structure that is constantly evolving and open to criticism and re-evaluation (Tanyeli, 1997).



Especially the results of the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution accelerated this process of epistemological transformation and opened a critical struggle against the unquestionable authority of normative knowledge. Instead of knowledge being solely determined by an authority and accepted as absolute, its empirical and inquiry-based structure constitutes the basic mode of operation of speculative epistemology. Over time, the shaking of the hegemony of normative epistemology and the widespread spread of speculative thought brought about radical transformations in the processes of art production and reception (Tanyeli, 1997).

This transformation led to the reevaluation of the assumptions that required art to be subject to strict normative rules through the critical filter of reason, so that the meaning of the artwork, its mode of production and its relationship with the audience began to be shaped within the dynamic structure of speculative thought instead of predetermined norms .

Aura and Uniqueness

Walter Benjamin's concept of the aura of the artwork provides an important framework for understanding the historical transformation of aesthetic experience. In his essay "The Condition of the Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Production" (1936), Benjamin examines the fact that photography and cinema have displaced the dominant idea of the ontology of art on the plane of aesthetic experience (Benjamin, 2008).

Conventional art experience is based on uniqueness and direct experience. With the emergence of media such as photography and cinema, the fact that the artwork can be copied and experienced in more than one place at the same time has eliminated the characteristics of uniqueness and directness in the way art is received. Interaction with the artwork that is here and now has been replaced by interaction with copies, which has made possible an experience that can be experienced in other places at the same time (Benjamin, 2008).

Benjamin's concept of aura becomes functional at this point. The fact that the artwork can be copied, that the artwork has a unique energy that it has carried since social ritual, means that its essence has been lost. In traditional works of art, the experience between the viewer and the work is based on the state of being "here and now". However, reproducible art forms such as cinema and photography have removed the temporal and spatial uniqueness of the artwork, detaching it from its ritualistic context and placing it in a wide circulation network. Benjamin conceptualizes this in terms of the lost aura of the artwork (Benjamin, 2008).

This transformation has caused the artwork to lose its originality within a ritualistic and cultural context and its sense of sacredness, which always carries an unattainable distance, and transformed it into an object of display. The artwork has now turned into a form of copy that can be technically produced, reproduced and re-presented in different contexts (Benjamin, 2008).

The fact that the artwork can exist in more than one place at the same time raises the ontological questions of where and how does the artwork exist? Is what is experienced in the copy really an aesthetic experience of the artwork? These questions have formed the basis of contemporary art theories that question the ways in which art produces knowledge and creates aesthetic experience, and have become an important reference point in the interpretation of contemporary artistic practices such as digital art, new media art and artworks produced with artificial intelligence.

Artwork and Art Object

The process of the establishment of contemporary art aesthetics is directly parallel to the diversity of philosophical and conceptual expansions. The discussion of the layers of



existence of the artwork has become one of the fundamental issues of the philosophy of art in this process, and phenomenological studies in particular have developed intensive theoretical frameworks on the mechanisms of perception through which the artwork passes in the process of producing aesthetic experience.

In this context, thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Roman Ingarden, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Hans-Georg Gadamer, following the phenomenological line opened by Edmund Husserl, have developed conceptual distinctions such as "art object", "artwork" and "aesthetic object" by addressing the ontological layers of the artwork. With different perspectives, they have developed various approaches to a process ranging from the existence of the artwork as a physical object to the sensations in the experience of the receiver.

According to Heidegger, the artwork is not merely a physical object; it is an event that makes truth visible as an unfolding of being. While the art object can only be a substance or a functional tool, the artwork exists in a spontaneous becoming that creates meaning. In this context, the artwork cannot be reduced to an art object (Heidegger, 2007).

Similarly, Roman Ingarden argues that the artwork gains objectivity only in the process of aesthetic reception by the viewer, based on the artist's intentional act. The physical object on which the form is located constitutes the existential basis of the artwork. However, its transformation into an aesthetic object depends on the activity of the receiver. In this case, the artwork comes into existence not only as the work of the artist, but also as a joint process between the artist's production and the experience of the receiver (Ingarden, 1973, 1989).

M. Merleau-Ponty brings an interpretation of the work that goes beyond the art object. Rather than an objective form, an artwork is an entity that gains meaning through its relationship with the viewer. This approach emphasizes that art is a perceptual experience and presents a structure determined by how the viewer experiences it (Merleau-Ponty, 1993, 2021).

Hans-Georg Gadamer, on the other hand, sees the artwork as an experience that is constantly reproduced within a historical and cultural context. The existence of art ceases to be merely a material object and becomes a phenomenon that is determined by the relationship of meaning that the viewer establishes with that object. In this context, the distinction between the art object and the artwork is shaped within a hermeneutic process based on the interpretable nature of art (Gadamer, 2021).

The ideas supporting the distinction between the art object and the artwork have been discussed not only in the axis of phenomenology, but also in different intellectual traditions such as metaphysics, analytic philosophy, and semiotics. 20th century thinkers such as Nicolai Hartmann, Roland Barthes, Nelson Goodman, George Dickie and Arthur Danto have explained this distinction with different conceptualizations in line with their theoretical orientations (Hartmann, 1981; Barthes, 1977, 2017; Goodman, 1976; Dickie, 1974; Danto, 2014, 2010).

Although the intellectual orientations of these philosophers are not identical, their efforts to analyze the relationship between the art object and aesthetic experience have been decisive in the construction of the epistemological foundations of contemporary art. These multi-layered analyses, which reveal that art cannot be explained solely by physical existence, but is shaped by aesthetic experience, interpretation processes and context, reveal the theoretical breadth and diversity of the philosophy of art.

CONTINUITIES AND RUPTURES

In this conceptual framework, in the field of knowledge opened up by normative epistemology, the guide lines necessary for the evaluations to be made regarding the



success and acceptance of an artist's work or the arguments of art criticism are evident. This situation also makes the relevant filters clear and decisive as to whether or not a product can be considered an artwork. An artwork can only survive if it conforms to the criteria defined within this normative framework.

For example, when designing temple architecture in Ancient Greece, a master builder could not think of a form other than the triangular *pediment*, because such a normative framework was already pre-given within the architectural order. Such structural preferences are not the results of conscious discussions about artistic production, but a set of norms into which artists and craftsmen are born and which are considered immutable. Therefore, a work that is produced in violation of this normative framework will not be accepted as an artwork on the social and artistic plane. Since normative assumptions consist of the sum total of certain aesthetic and technical norms, any alternative, normal or conception that falls outside this framework cannot find a space of existence for itself and is pushed out of the system.

The relationship between the artwork and "beauty" has a necessary and unchangeable bond within the normative epistemological system. In this climate of thought dominated by normative epistemology, art is not allowed to move towards other aesthetic expansions, because the artwork is seen not only as an aesthetic object, but also as a vehicle that carries certain moral, intellectual and ideological values. The necessity for art to be the "bearer of the beautiful" necessitates its positioning as part of an order in which it enters with the "good" and the "right". In this context, "beauty" is considered not only as an aesthetic category but also as a holistic concept that includes different areas of experience such as "good" and "truth". An artwork cannot be ugly, bad or wrong because these possibilities fall outside the order constructed by the normative system. This approach, in which art is morally and aesthetically bound to predetermined categories, has existed as an unquestionable assumption for a long time. This has been accepted unquestionably until the criticisms that emerged in periods such as the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution (Tanyeli, 1997).

As an extension of this situation, it is possible to conclude that the concrete characteristics that an artwork must possess in order to be "beautiful" must also have normative qualities. For example, in the normative epistemological framework, the recognition of a work produced in the fields of plastic arts such as painting and sculpture as an artwork in the public sphere depends on an acceptance process shaped in line with certain artistic norms. To concretize this situation, it is clear that a beautiful work cannot be produced with all kinds of materials, because certain materials are considered to have artistic validity in traditional art practices. A work that is accepted as an artwork will be addressed by a wide audience only if it is produced in a certain variety of materials. For example, in the art of sculpture, marble and bronze have normative validity as artistic materials, while the production of the same sculpture in a temporary material (e.g. clay or paper) would position it more as a sketch or an experimental work. In the same way, an artist's production outside of predetermined technical and material limits will not be considered as an artwork by the art community, but perhaps as a sketch, a by-product, or merely an individual endeavor. Therefore, normative assumptions about the materials, techniques and formal rules by which an artwork is to be produced are among the factors that directly affect its public acceptance.

Likewise, the necessity for an artwork to have a figurative representation emerges as one of the basic assumptions of art within the normative epistemological framework. The figurative structure is defined by the fact that the shapes and forms contained in the work refer to the reality outside the work. In this context, the artwork gains meaning not only through its internal aesthetic organization, but also through its references to the outside world.



Within the normative understanding of aesthetics, a completely abstract work has difficulty in gaining artistic acceptance and it is not possible to open a social space for it. Because it is assumed that art derives its meaning and aesthetic value from the relationship it establishes with the outside world. Within the framework of this idea, the acceptance of art in the historical process is largely linked to the understanding of mimesis and reflection. A form of expression that is not figurative, that has no reference to the outside world, will at best be seen as an incomplete work, a draft or an incomplete personal attempt by the artist.

From another point of view, the fact that an artwork meets the requirements of figurative expression or the use of perfect materials alone does not guarantee its acceptance as an artwork. One of the most important elements that ensure the aesthetic and conceptual integrity of an artwork is that it has internal organizational principles within the hierarchical universe required by the subject matter. This is not an arbitrary choice of the artist, but is related to the chain of obligations defined in the normative epistemological framework of art.

This set of rules builds a structure that ensures not only the technical aspect of art, but also the correct reflection of the content and the conveyance of beauty in the work. It is based on the principle of compositional unity, which develops based on a system of specific schemes, patterns and proportions. Unless an artwork coincides with the expectation of schemes, patterns and proportions already present in the viewer's mind, it will not be able to complete the reception process and will not be aesthetically internalized by the viewer. Therefore, the existence of an artwork as an object of aesthetic experience depends on the harmony established by its internal organization, which is a necessity. Within the normative structure, it is possible for a form to gain the characteristic of a work by acquiring a perceptible and meaningful form, provided that it meets these conditions. The aesthetic experience of the perceiver is completed within the framework of his/her ability to recognize this order and the mental harmony he/she establishes with it. In this context, an artwork is considered not only as an object that contains a figurative expression or a perfect use of materials, but also as a structure that can establish a relationship with the receiver within a certain system of epistemological and aesthetic codes.

The effects of the aforementioned Age of Enlightenment, which emphasized critical reason, and the complexity of social life with the acceleration of technological production and circulation by the Industrial Revolution accelerated the critical processes of conceptual norms, which in turn led to the strengthening of the aforementioned speculative epistemological process regarding art, the artwork, the art object and the experience of beauty. Of course, the change of this epistemological dominance in the field of art and design has gone through many moments.

The mediations that the artist encounters in the process of producing the work, that is, all the stylistic norms necessary to convey the artistic idea to the audience, have become a burden with changing living conditions and intellectual transformations, and the process of purification from these burdens has begun over time. Approaches such as impressionism and academic realism, which could initially be considered as in-system solutions within the normative field of knowledge, turned into important steps that enabled the severing of ties with the decorative & ornamentalist aesthetic understanding and historical art norms. In this context, the simplification of figures represents not only a formal transformation, but also a leap that radically changes the narrative and conceptual structure of art. The artist's effort to eliminate figurative details should be considered not only as a stylistic choice, but also as a process that redefines the ways in which art produces meaning and the epistemological status of the artwork. At this point, different art movements have developed various strategies to set art free from the normative framework. In addition, the expansion of the materials used in the production of artworks beyond the limits of normative epistemology and into unacceptable genres has radically changed the definition



of art. The fact that everyday objects or ready-made can be part of the art frame has transformed art from a purely formal and aesthetic practice into a conceptual and speculative field of inquiry. The principles of compositional unity, which are a sine qua non condition of a normative aesthetic experience, have also been subjected to a critical scrutiny where they have become a burden to the complexity created between the essence the artist wants to express and the work itself.

THE SHIFT MOMENT OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE: THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ARTWORK AND THE ART OBJECT

The theoretical proposition in this study for understanding the moment of shift in the aesthetic experience is that all continuities and ruptures are reflections of the separation in the fundamental relationship between the artwork and the art object. By art object I mean the physical presence of the work, and by artwork I mean the artistic meaning contained in the work and the conceptual and intuitive aesthetic world it creates in our minds. While normative epistemology has the unity of artwork and art object, speculative epistemology creates a vector towards the dissolution of this unity.

All these speculative transformations cannot be read as a mere formal change; on the contrary, they should be considered as the result of aesthetic and intellectual strategies that made it possible to radically reconstruct the epistemological framework of art. Speculative epistemology has not only transformed art as a field of knowledge from a practice that reflects aesthetic norms, but has also enabled it to be considered as a field of inquiry.

This epistemological shift is directly related to the construction of the ground that enables the process from the traditional understanding of art dominated by normative epistemology to the dynamics of computational art. However, this new epistemological structure cannot be considered only in terms of radical ruptures; on the contrary, it should be evaluated as an intertwined transformation process in which continuities and ruptures are articulated. This transformation in the modes of production and reception of the artwork has become possible not only through a process of monitoring the artwork itself, but also through the monitoring and analysis of the historical and conceptual status of the art object.

Within normative epistemology, the artwork and the art object are considered identical; this system operates within a framework that directly overlaps the art object with the artwork. However, this identity is not a matter limited to formal preferences; on the contrary, it takes shape as a set of rules, a protocol of guarantees, that secures an object's access to the status of an artwork. In this epistemological framework, since an art object is seen as the artwork itself, it is imperative that it fulfills the requirements of the mediation of the beautiful that will enable it to be recognized as an artwork. In this way, the art object is not only a physical entity, but also gains the status of an artwork through the aesthetic and normative values it carries.

In this epistemological framework, the essence that the artist wants to convey and make the viewer experience becomes possible by fulfilling the requirements of the mediation of beauty. In this system, where the artwork and the art object are considered identical, the physical existence of the object directly embodies the uniqueness of the artwork. This uniqueness overlaps with Walter Benjamin's concept of "aura" and reinforces the idea that the artwork must be unreproducible, original and singular. The unrepeatability of the artwork, which is shaped by cognitive and unconscious processes, becomes immanent to the status of the art object's existence; thus, the art object itself, as well as the artwork, can be established as a one-off and unique entity.

In the relationship that the receiver establishes with the object of art, necessarily through sensory means, he or she actually encounters directly the artwork itself. In this context, the art object is not merely a carrier, but an ontological identity that makes the existence



of the artwork possible. Likewise, if for any reason the physical integrity of the art object is destroyed, the artwork will also disappear irreversibly. The existence of the artwork is closely tied to the conditions of existence of the art object; therefore, the disappearance of the art object means the epistemological and ontological erasure of the artwork. This absolute identity between the artwork and the object of art is one of the fundamental assumptions of normative epistemology.

One of the first major ruptures in the normative epistemology of art was the crisis of the identity relationship between the artwork and the art object with the invention of photography and cinema. These new techniques enabled the art object to be copied and reproduced, introducing a new mode of production and reception that directly threatened the uniqueness status of the artwork. The traditional principles of uniqueness, originality and subsidiarity of art began to lose their validity in the face of the possibility of mass production and reproducibility created by photography and cinema, thus initiating a process of transformation that brought the ontological status of the artwork into question.

However, the identical nature of the objects copied and reproduced here has not eliminated the idea of the identity of work and object. Instead, due to the dominance of the traditional identity relationship between the work and the object, it paved the way for the acceptance that the artwork lost its uniqueness when the copied object lost its originality. Nevertheless, the debate opened by the invention of photography and cinema has led to a reassessment of the ontological status of the artwork based on its physical existence and the epistemological framework of art.

The continuities and ruptures discussed in the above section are primarily concerned with the qualities of the art object. Traditionally, the artist's aesthetic idea continues to be presented in the identity of the artwork and the art object. However, the process of the artist's purification from the burdens of formal elements in an effort to reach the essence of art is not only an act of simplification; it also prepares the ground for a discussion of the position of the art object as the carrier of the artwork. Although this transformation initially appears to be merely the elimination of unnecessary elements, it points to a preparatory process that allows the question of whether the art object bears a necessary identity with the artwork to be questioned more and more openly.

From this point of view, all the conventions of the mediation of "beauty" of the traditional artwork, such as material, figurative content and compositional unity, were gradually abandoned and replaced by "context" as the constitutive principle of aesthetic experience within speculative epistemology. From now on, whether a masterfully produced high artisanal product or an ordinary everyday object is an object of art is determined by the artist's positioning of the object as an artwork, regardless of its intrinsic qualities.

Context is the sole element that defines whether the experience established "at this moment" and "in this space" is an art experience or not. An art object gains the status of an artwork only within a specific practice of "display" and contextual positioning; therefore, the condition of existence of an artwork no longer derives from the physical and aesthetic properties of the object itself, but from the context in which it is located. Even if the same materials and the same formal organization are brought together, if the context changes, the status of the object as an artwork will be lost and it can be perceived only as an everyday object.

The fundamental distinction that emerges here, which changes the processes of artistic production and reception, is the necessity to reproduce the context in each artwork. Whereas in the traditional understanding of art, there were normative protocols that guaranteed the uniqueness of an artwork, once these protocols disappeared, the context itself became the only element that would allow an object or set of objects to be recognized as an artwork.



In this case, the status of any object that is considered an artwork is no longer determined by its physical presence or formal properties, but by the reconstitution of the context in which it exists. Therefore, the existence of an artwork has become a dynamic process that requires the reproduction of the context for each specific work. From now on, the ontological existence of the artwork can no longer be defined as an immanent quality of the art object and cannot be directly traced through the art object. The identity between the artwork and the art object is broken, so that the artwork is no longer one and the same thing with the art object.

In this new epistemological framework, the condition of existence of the artwork is equated not with the physical existence of the object, but with the idea it carries, or more accurately, with the concept. The artwork now gains meaning as a conceptual structure and the status of art in the field of knowledge is redefined by the continuities and ruptures that occur in line with these speculative thought vectors. While this distinction between the artwork and the object of art shows that the epistemology of art has undergone a fundamental transformation, it has also paved the way for the formation of a new field of knowledge in which this distinction has become dominant.

As expected, this ground resulted in the birth and rapid spread of Conceptual Art. The emergence of Conceptual Art can be considered as the moment when the normative framework that dominated art epistemology was replaced by speculative thinking and the epistemological hegemony changed (LeWitt, 1967).

At this point, the art object is no longer seen as the carrier of the "beautiful"; if the artwork is to be connected to an entity, this entity is not the object, but the concept itself. The epistemology of art is no longer a system shaped around the art object; instead, the fundamental element that ensures the unity and meaning of the artwork has become its conceptual framework. With this transformation, although the art object continues to constitute the condition of existence of the artwork, it ceases to be identical with the artwork and the ontological link between the object and the work is radically dissolved. Thus, the artwork no longer exists as a physical entity but as an intellectual structure. This has led to the point that the most decisive characteristic of the reception of art is the experience of the concept.

The theory of epistemological shift presented in this study, which is based on the dissolution of the unity between the artwork and the art object, opens the door to a transformation that emphasizes the uniqueness and unrepeatability of the artwork, not the art object. In this new framework, the art object is no longer positioned as the artwork itself, but as an element that points to it.

Accordingly, although the only way to reach the artwork is through the art object, the relationship established within the new epistemological structure operates within a system that reduces the art object to the status of a mere signifier, moving away from a structure in which the artwork is directly identical to the object. Although there is no other element that can physically point to the artwork, the overlap between the art object and the artwork is no longer a definite and obligatory bond. In this new paradigm, the art object still constitutes the condition of existence of the artwork, but it no longer has the same ontological status.

In this case, since the art object gains meaning through the context of the work, the concept that "stands there" can regain its object in the form of being reconstructed multiple times at different times in different places. If the object has only a signifying function, the construction of the art object is only a process of construction. In this context, the same artwork can be reproduced in different places and through different objects, and each time it can be re-signified within the same context. Likewise, an art object whose physical integrity has been lost can be reconstructed in another place and time and enter into the



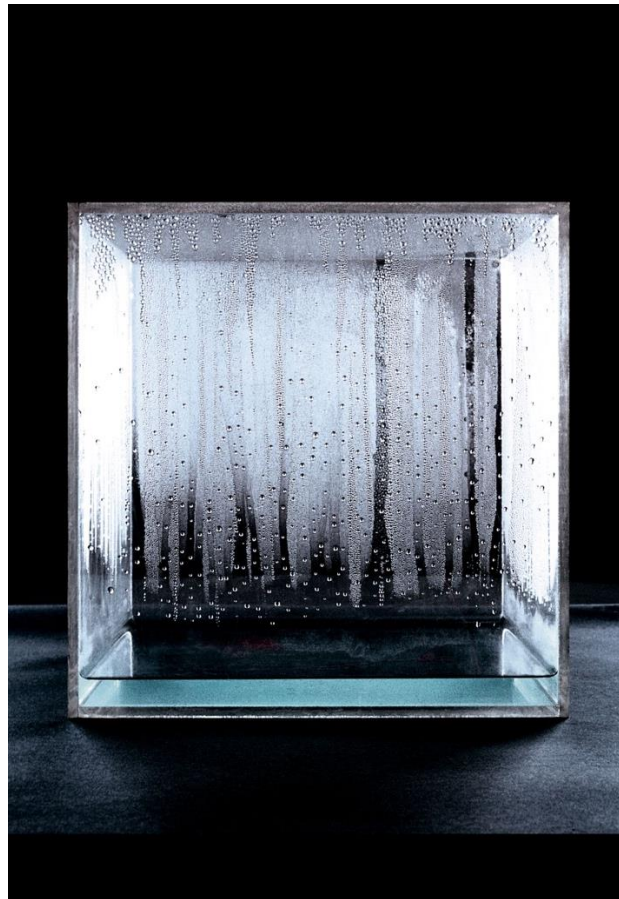
same semiotic relationship with the artwork. It is no longer considered surprising that the artist does not even directly participate in the reconstruction process of the artwork. Because the artwork is able to survive independently of the physical intervention of the artist, thanks to its reconstructibility within the context. Thus, the relationship between the artwork and the art object is defined as a structure that is reproduced through a semiotic representation rather than an identity based on physical existence.

When evaluated within the framework of this theoretical proposition; since the relationship of the art object constructed through reproduction with the artwork is no longer based on an identicalness but on a symbolic bond of representation, the uniqueness of the artwork can be mentioned again.

TRANSITION FROM THE CONCEPTUAL TO THE COMPUTATIONAL

The emergence of conceptual art is an important milestone in the shift in art epistemology, as it shows that the artwork can be freed from its object. As the concept behind the object, rather than the object itself, became more important for the artist, the artwork ceased to consist of the existence of its material object.

In this sense, there has been a shift from artworks that are represented by static objects to works with dynamic and generative objects that represent the relationships contained in the conceptual content. Hans Haacke's *Condensation Cube* (1963-67) is a powerful example of this process. Although this work is a cube as an object, it is not its physical form that determines the work itself, but the process it embodies.



Hans Haacke, *Condensation Cube* (1963-67).
The work has a dynamic appearance that is constantly changing.

This new situation has taken shape in a context in which the artist's focus shifts from the physical presence of the work to its conceptual framework. If the artwork can exist as an idea, the possibilities offered by generative art make it possible to propose the artwork without reducing it to a specific and static physical form. One of the main characteristics of generative art is that the production of the artwork can be realized without the direct physical intervention of the artist. Generative art processes offer a model in which art production can be guided through an algorithm or system and can produce works that are constantly renewed in line with variable parameters. In this context, once the conceptual proposition of the artwork is defined as a procedure, the question of who produces the art object loses its importance. The existence of the artwork becomes reproducible with each application of the defined procedures, regardless of the physical object itself. Thus, the artist only creates a framework that determines the process, but the physical production or reconstruction of the art object does not require his direct intervention.



Sol LeWitt, *Wall Drawing #260*, (1975).
The work consists of a set of procedure lines.

The opening of art to generative production processes has naturally made it possible to present a computational unity defined by algorithms as an artwork. In the age of digital production, computational art brings the ontological transformation of conceptual art to its systematic and consistent results by placing computational processes and algorithmic production at the center of artistic practice through computer codes.

The construction and reception of art objects through the execution of computationally designed and coded algorithms takes place after the conceptual framework of the work has been determined. This mode of production shows that the artwork can be constructed through computational processes, algorithms and dynamic data flows. When the ontological existence of the artwork is considered in the context of these "asynchronous" moments of the work and object coming into existence, computational art opens up a new intellectual space regarding the conditions of existence of the artwork by proposing a radical transformation in the epistemological framework of art. In this context, it offers an important point of reference for discussions on the ways in which art comes into existence through codes, processes and algorithms, beyond the artwork's acquisition of a physical form.



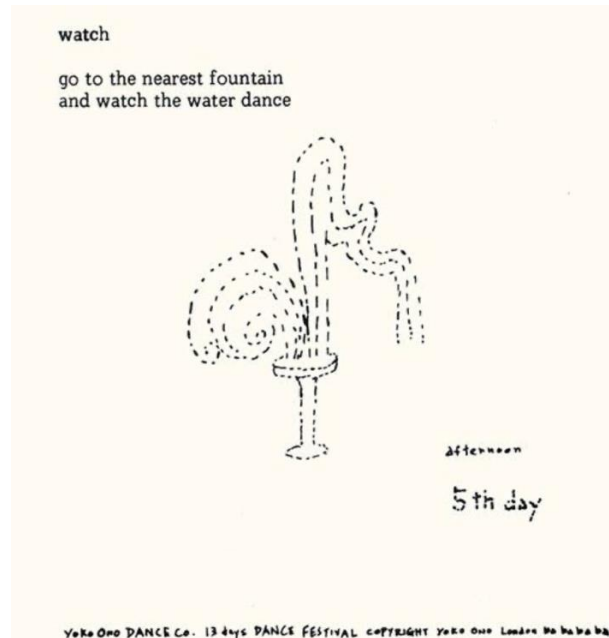
Universal Everything. *Future You*, (2019).
The viewer participates in the constitution of the art object.

At this point, it can be said that computational art is closer to the work-object relationship of conceptual art than the reproduction logic of photography and cinema. While in photography and cinema, a copy of an existing object of the artwork is produced, in computational art, the object of art is recreated each time.

Computational art has a structure that links the condition of existence of the art object only to the moment of production and the conditions under which it was produced. While the artist makes the receiver experience the essence of the work through an object produced "at that moment" and "in that place", this process causes the art object to be subject to certain variables and its form to become dynamic each time it is reproduced. However, despite this variable production process, the work continues to exist by preserving certain conceptual and aesthetic qualities.

In this context, computational art considers the art object not as an absolute and static entity, but as an ever-changing process depending on the conditions of production. As the art object is produced within an indeterminable context, the artwork continues to exist by maintaining its coherence on a conceptual level, independent of physical form.

Conceptual art's epistemological shift, which radically transformed the relationship between the artwork and the art object, was taken to the extreme with computational art. With this new paradigm, the existence of the art object is no longer a necessary condition and a structure has emerged in which it can be produced by the receiver. In this context, it is no longer surprising that the artist produces a work but not an art object.



Yoko Ono, *Do it yourself festival 5th day afternoon*, (1967).
The performance of this work will be carried out by the audience.

In computational processes, the status of the art object's existence has become directly independent of the artist's production, thus transforming the art object into an entity that changes within the production process and environment, rather than a specific and unchanging physical form. This transformation also marks a radical transformation of the modes of reception and production of art. Art is no longer defined solely on the basis of an object created by the artist, but on the basis of the conceptual framework of art and the dynamization of production processes.

CONCLUSION

As a result, the speculative epistemology of art can be read in a continuum that expands from conceptual art's understanding of the object to the algorithmic production processes of computational art. Conceptual art's positioning of the work of art as a conceptual structure paved the way for the emergence of computational art and enabled the transition to a production paradigm that eliminates the dependence of the art object on physical existence. Computational art has carried the transformation initiated by conceptual art even further, making the existence of the art object dependent only on environmental presentation. In this sense, computational art has inherited the epistemological legacy of conceptual art and evolved into a new model of artistic creation by redefining forms of artistic production and centering on algorithmic processes.

Following this epistemological transition in the projection of the distinction between artwork and art object leads us to clarify the fundamental questions raised at the beginning of this discussion. If the experience of an artwork depends on its production in a specific context, does the artwork itself exist independently of this moment of performance? These questions emphasize the ontological break that computational art creates within the framework of traditional artistic existence. If an artwork is only performed when its code is executed, then does it really exist before it is performed? If an artwork is capable of generating infinite variations based on real-time input, then is there still a singular, definitive version of the artwork? These are not just technical questions; they are epistemological questions that challenge our understanding of art and the anthology of artistic experience. And the emergence of computational art has marked a profound transformation of these issues.



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