BRUNO TRENTINI (Metz)

Institutionalization and autonomy of art: Can socially engaged art be institutionalized?

Abstract

This paper deals with the autonomy of art and more specifically with the autonomy of socially engaged art once it is institutionalized. The originality of the article is its use of Goodman's terminology to theorize socially engaged art. By comparing two works of art from the same collective (one without an institutional framework and the other in a festival), the main issue is to defend the hypothesis that artistic consecration prevents an emancipatory action from functioning as art or prevents an action from functioning as socially engaged art. Thus, in the context of engaged art, the question is no longer "when is art?" but "where is art?".

Keywords: autonomy of art, socially engaged art, emancipation, aesthetic attitude, institutionalization of art

Introduction

Caravaggio was marked by an altercation, on May 28th 1606, during which he killed a man and received a blow to the head. This event earned him a death sentence. According to the art historian Catherine Puglisi, Caravaggio gave himself the features of Goliath in his painting *David holding the head of Goliath* (1610), in an allusion to the incident of his wounded head and the death that awaited him (Puglisi 2005, 257, 365-366). The implicit art criteria at Caravaggio's time would certainly have relegated this accidental occasion to anecdotal: probably, the congruence between the blow he received and the blow he depicted did not make the work of art more relevant than it would have been without this congruence. However, since the praxis of the modern avant-garde and especially since the second half of the twentieth century, this kind of cross-fertilization between art and life has been a part of the artistic process and has been attracting the attention of art theorists. The artist's attitude is then part of what has been named "individual mythology", following the title given by Harald Szeemann to a section of his Documenta 5 in Kassel. Indeed, at least since Joseph Beuys' remarks on social sculpture followed by the exhibition *When Attitudes Be-*

come Form, organized by Harald Szeemann in 1969, the work of art has clearly exceeded the object of art. In other words, what "makes a work" is no longer just the object (for a work that is anchored in an object) but the process and the attitude with which it was made. Since then, the attitude with which artists have created artworks has contributed entirely to developing their public reception.

What is at stake with this possibility of attitude being able to become a "form" is that this notion seems to be the only one enabling an understanding of the artistic functioning of very different artistic approaches that are rarely thought about together in contemporary aesthetic theories: on the one hand, conceptual and self-referential propositions such as those of the young Lawrence Weiner and, on the other hand, the more socially anchored approaches of Joseph Beuys. While the former are studied from the point of view of formal and aesthetic considerations, the latter are often studied through the lens of political considerations. This results in an apparent problem for aesthetics, as regards its unity, its autonomy and its disciplinary coherence: is aesthetics able to theorize this second art form?

Although Adorno has developed an aesthetic theory precisely focused on art as a social fact, his interest in the social engagement of art is not an interest in socially engaged art in the usual sense of the term; for him it is precisely the absence of any social function that fully justifies art:

> "What is social in art is its immanent movement against society, not its manifest opinions. Its historical gesture repels empirical reality, of which artworks are nevertheless part in that they are things. Insofar as a social function can be predicated for artworks, it is their functionlessness." (Adorno 1997, 227)

Thus, the best criticism of society takes place when art does not seek to be socially useful. However, this strong line in Adorno's thinking may not be as topical as it used to be. In fact, the relationship between the artistic avant-garde (or its contemporary version) and society has changed. This change is perhaps due to several factors, such as the multiplication of art centers and, perhaps also, the gradual opening of contemporary art to new practices. These practices are neither European nor American, but postcolonial. They immediately seize upon emancipation, particularly because they are confronted with a strong history of authority: colonial history. Independently of these explanatory hypotheses, there are in fact many art practices that explicitly aim at citizen emancipation. This emancipation can be understood in the light of the Kantian idea of access for the majority (Kant 1996) and autonomy (Kant 2002, 48-49), i.e. an emancipation from an authority outside oneself in favor of one's own authority (autonomy differs from heteronomy depending on whether or not the law comes from oneself). Perhaps such a formulation of the Kantian philosophy of emancipation is not incisive enough: trying to guarantee a stable order stands in opposition

to the development of laws. In other words, the Kantian natural majority explains more the situations of appropriation of the law than those of the possible irrelevance of the law and its violation. In order to avoid those difficulties, it is much better to define emancipation as an awareness of and distance from the social frameworks of domination and authority (some processes of deconstruction may contribute to emancipation). Such a conception of intellectual emancipation is then not devoid of agentive power.

This paper focuses on the understanding of the place of aesthetic experience in art that is socially engaged in a citizen emancipation. The main problem of this topic lies in the difficulties of overhauling the spectatorial figure in a context of political engagement. In fact, although Jacques Rancière's book *The Emancipated Spectator* deals precisely with an emancipation of individuals as spectators (Rancière 2009), it does not exactly deal with their emancipation as citizens: the fact that spectators take liberties with what is expected of them in the context of an artistic experience does not presuppose that they take other liberties with social frames in non-artistic situations. Thus, the question surrounds the conditions that enable art practices to be incisive from within a social superstructure that is not always favorable to emancipation.

The central hypothesis of this paper is that artistic consecration (here defined by institutional recognition) necessarily weakens the emancipatory scope of works of art. In this context, instead of functioning as art (Goodman 1978), they would "dysfunction" as art. Contrary to what a reader accustomed to subjects of analytical aesthetics might think, the question is precisely not about the definition of art. Goodman was against an institutional definition of art such as that formulated by Dickie (1969). However, despite this disagreement, he never saw the institutionalization of art as a process that would prevent a work from functioning as art. This is probably because Goodman's aesthetic theory is made for an art that is not imbued with society: even if his theory of symbols intended to discredit a "pure" formalism like Greenberg's theory of abstraction (Greenberg 1960), his aesthetics did not confront the question of socially engaged art. Yet, it is this kind of art that would most often dysfunction in the institution: the institutionalization of the work would indeed prevent it from exemplifying (Goodman 1976, 252-255) its engagement. Yet, "exemplificationality" is one of the "symptoms of art" that Goodman itemized when he wanted to describe situations that promote an object to symbolically function as art, rather than to formulate an intensional definition of art.

Dysfunction occurs at two levels. On the one hand, from the point of view of praxis and poiesis, getting into an institutional network necessarily alienates the autonomy of the practice. This lack of autonomy can produce modifications of the initial attitudes (and therefore different forms, according to Szemmann's formula). On the other hand, from an

aesthetic point of view, the institution not only frames, but also generates a horizon of expectation (Jauss 1982, 22) for spectators and impels a specific aesthetic attitude that can inhibit the emancipatory scope of the work. The only solution would then be to rethink the aesthetic experience as a playful fictional behavior.

The criterion chosen to mark artistic consecration is the institution, but all the biases generated by the constraints of the exhibition space must be avoided. Indeed, one creates differently in a white cube than in an alternative place or a station that has become an art center. That is why the examples in this article come from urban practices and mainly from the collective Luzinterruptus. This choice is motivated by another aspect: the artistic projects in this collective draw attention to certain authoritarian social frameworks that run counter to the autonomy of citizens, and therefore to their emancipation, especially with regard to the appropriation of public space. Thus, the context of visibility of the works plays an important role in their social dimension.

Institutionalization and loss of autonomy of art

On July 1st, 2015, a new public safety law came into force in Spain. Accused of being unconstitutional, this law appeared to violate freedom of expression and assembly, especially for those working on the streets. The same evening, two sites in Madrid (including the symbolic Constitution Square) were covered with toilet seats, lit up by small LED. Some pages had been placed in the center of these seats. Those pages were taken from the Spanish constitution relating to the use of public space. Entitled *The Government don't give a shit about the Spanish Constitution*, this initiative was led by the Spanish collective Luzinterruptus. This artistic collective absolutely wanted to react to the law not only because it reduced citizens' liberties, but also because it threatened the collective's own public activities: Luzinterruptus regularly invests public places with its small lights in order to draw the attention of inhabitants and passers-by to issues generally related to the political context. So as to diffuse its interventions, the artistic group disseminates photographs of its operations on its website. The collective works on the street, and gets involved in topics dealing with the appropriation of public space by passers-by. For example, in 2011 they made the work *Touch! Touch! Nothing will happen…*: they positioned luminous silicone nipples on some legal public artworks which were placed on high pedestals, in order to encourage the public to fully take possession of their own environment. Obviously, they were concerned about a law on the occupation of the street, but they had to deal with an inherent contradiction in their works, which are displayed illegally in the public space. Indeed, more generally, how does Luzinterruptus manage not to deprive others of their part

of the public space when its works occupy the street for citizens? How do they intend to target a better appropriation of urban space for all citizens in those conditions? It is not just the street: this problem is encountered in any attempt to emancipate others. In fact, trying to change things necessarily has to be done in opposition to established society. Depending on one's point of view, the same action seems to work either for the community's property or against it. Circumventing this aporia is the only solution to avoid falling prey to legalists opposed to these forms of illegal (but legitimate?) claims. The history of art has even seen some examples of art strategies allowing this constraint to be enjoyed, such as the reverse graffiti initiated by Moose consisting in removing dirt from the medium. This technique was notably taken up by the Brazilian street-artist Alexandre Orion in 2006 when he partially washed a tunnel in São Paulo of its pollution, revealing numerous skulls. In line with these strategies, Luzinterruptus has also found a way to maintain its ethical stance: one of their guidelines is that their actions leave no damage behind. The structures that the collective put in place generally remain there for an hour or two before being completely dismantled by the group itself or spontaneously taken away by passers-by. Since the group is claiming a truly "public" space, then briefly occupying it on condition that it is not degraded is not contradictory. Most of the descriptions of their artistic projects written on their website mention that no damage has been caused. Thus, the label "damage caused: 0" is a guarantor of the attitude of the collective. In the words of Harald Szeemann, this guideline becomes a full-fledged form of their works of art. It crystallizes Luzinterruptus' solution to the problem inherent in all emancipatory actions. In this sense, even before and independently of any institutional artistic consecration, Luzinterruptus' actions functioned as art while being explicitly aimed at citizen emancipation.

With almost two hundred actions carried out since 2008, it is not surprising that Luzinterruptus has been invited to participate in institutionally supervised operations, such as Nuit Blanche Toronto and Lumiere London, both in 2016. As those actions were authorized, the collective took advantage of the opportunity afforded to them: they designed larger works than usual, which required a long installation time (between four and twelve days). For example, *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto* consisted of 10,000 books donated by The Salvation Army, each with a small light characteristic of the collective. On October 1st, 2016, all the books had been set down on Hagerman Street, a street that is usually very crowded with cars but that was closed for the cultural event. Of course, no damage was caused during this operation and, once the Nuit blanche Toronto festival was over, traffic was able to resume. The label "damage caused: 0" logically remained valid, but the slogan had lost its meaning. The institutional superstructure and logistics were what returned the street to normal. Without this institutional frame, the public space of Toronto would have

been damaged. The books that were not carried away by passers-by were picked up by the maintenance department of the city. Thus, the fact that the work of art did not cause any damage no longer seems to be "exemplified" by the work (Goodman 1976, 252-255). This logistical shift reflects a shift in the attitude of the collective, which had to deal with the constraints of the cultural event. The constraints of the cultural event were consistent with Luzinterruptus' demands; one could even say that they anticipated them. Thus, paradoxically, Luzinterruptus' action lost some of its substance and what underpinned their artistic purpose: although the absence of damage is usually immanent to the collective's works, and although their works usually exemplify that absence of damage, here, Toronto's absence of damage was transcendent to the piece of art; which was thus no longer able to exemplify these guidelines. Because of the institutional framework, *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto* ran the risk of becoming an opportunistic work.

The weakening of the emancipatory impact of the work was proportional to the loss of its autonomy due to its relation to the festival. It would indeed be unsatisfactory to attribute emancipatory powers to a heteronomous work of art, a work which is submitted to an authority that oversteps it: if it is true that autonomy is the capacity to give oneself one's own laws, it is understandable that integrating an institutional circuit runs counter to autonomy: some laws are bound to be imposed externally. The institutional laws that weaken the emancipatory power of socially engaged art may guarantee that the works will circulate under the label of "art". This label avoids them being confused with other non-artistic practices, but it comes with a price: it brings about a lack of art autonomy. Contrary to certain preconceptions, the autonomy of art does not concern non-confusion with other fields. Following Hans Belting's proposal, the loss of "traditional public functions" (Belting 1987, 40) meant that art "justified its survival by insisting on absolute autonomy" (Belting 1987, 40). In line with this, one might have thought that an autonomous work of art would necessarily be devoid of considerations outside the so-called sphere of art. However, it is important to distinguish, on the one hand autonomy and, on the other hand, independence or purity, as theorized by Clement Greenberg (Greenberg 1960). Indeed, the autonomy of art is not a question of non-involvement in considerations that are external to art, but concerns the non-dependence of art upon these external spheres. According to Adorno's analysis, from the moment that the arts have emancipated themselves from constraints, notably religious, moral and social, thus from the moment that a first autonomy is acquired, they become potentially dependent on the constraints of the capitalist economic system (Adorno 1997, 1-2). As Albrecht Wellmer notes, Adorno has introduced a new form of heteronomy of art. This form states that artistic production depends on the needs of mass consumption, which is highly oriented towards entertainment (Wellmer 2005). The work must now deal

with the injunctions of the culture industry (Horkheimer & Adorno 2002) and the society of spectacle (Debord 1970), even though these injunctions are implicit and seem to go in the direction of the artistic approach (in the case of Luzinterruptus' work, by encouraging people to inhabit the public space while ensuring that all will be restored at the end of the duration of the work of art).

Domestication of emancipatory power through artistic consecration

Literature vs Traffic in Toronto by Luzinterruptus invited the public to sit on the ground, to rummage among the multitude of books available, to read and, eventually, to go home with a book (and a light). While it is true that the collective aims at an emancipation of the public, the work in its context induces a certain form of contemplation rather than a call for emancipation. In fact, the festival occupied the public space, regardless of whether or not Luzinterruptus' action aimed at defending this public occupation. There was therefore no longer any reason to be vigilant against a deprivation of liberty. Locally, in the moment of the art experience, the socio-political context seemed favorable to emancipation. However, this favorable context has more to do with a cathartic carnival than with a long-term emancipatory approach: Nuit Blanche Toronto was a one-off event on a night during which certain types of misbehavior were allowed. After that artificially lawless moment, the next day, everyone had purged his or her emancipatory impulses which had exposed the established social order to danger. Without further developing this critical stance towards the festival and the flavor it gave to the actions of Luzinterruptus, it must be acknowledged that the purposes served by this work of art were more aligned with entertainment than emancipation.

Adorno's criticism of the culture industry extends beyond large mass entertainment events such as those seen on television (especially because they change the way in which less massive cultural events are viewed). Thus, any singular form of emancipatory practice that is in the process of institutionalization runs the risk of being dissolved in the culture industry. The culture industry may pick up on these actions so as to push them to the forefront as actions dealing with buffoonery. However, make no mistake about it, those original figures must be understood as having a mistrustful connotation of eccentricity and quirkiness. Two tendencies can be distinguished.

On the one hand, people whose works aim at collective emancipation can be perceived as bordering on madness and being a danger to themselves and/or others. The artist Piotr Pavlenski is an interesting borderline case: as a result of *Stitch* (2012), during which he sewed his lips, the police forced him to undergo a psychiatric examination.

Declared sane, he protested against the misuse of psychiatric diagnoses for political purposes by performing *Segregation* (2014). Thereupon, he stated: "Armed with psychiatric diagnoses, the bureaucrat in a white lab coat cuts off from society those pieces that prevent him from establishing a monolithic dictate of a single, mandatory norm for everyone." (Pavlenski 2014) Whether this seclusion was due to censorship (as Pavlenski seemed to be saying), fear or precaution, they led to the paradoxical marginalization of people who strove for the collective (and who were therefore against a certain conservatism).

On the other hand, when these people are not marginalized by psychiatric diagnosis or more simply by isolation, which could result from mistrust from others, they can be integrated into the world of entertainment. If they want to maintain this weird situation, their eccentricity must no longer frighten and must appear to be under the control of an entertainment framework. This is reminiscent of the performance staged in Ruben Östlund's film, *The Square*. To inaugurate an exhibition of a contemporary art museum dealing with mutual assistance, a performer was invited to play an uncivilized person. Beginning as an entertainment during the gala dinner with patrons, he makes the audience smile less and less when he physically threatens a man before pulling a woman across the floor by her hair. Even though this scene comes from a work of fiction, it very clearly shows the importance of not crossing a certain threshold if one wishes to remain an inoffensive original. At the same time, this scene also highlights the insolent relevance of crossing that threshold. Indeed, as soon as spectators wonder whether or not the performance is getting out of control, the originality of the performer is no longer touching, but instead suddenly becomes disturbing. Crossing the threshold of institutional decorum leads to a kind of censorship. But, making sure not to cross this threshold deadens and quietens the emancipatory scope of the actions. Thus, without meaning to, the art institution, which is in any case often linked with the world of entertainment, incidentally becomes a depoliticizing vehicle: it contributes to social cohesion by picking up marginality and transforming it into originality, by harnessing engaged art. Institutionalization is a form of domestication and the institution is a kind of *domus* of art: domesticated actions are necessarily less offensive than undomesticated ones. This new form of domestication is perhaps an echo of the "individual mythology" section that Harald Szeemann curated at documenta 5 in Kassel three years after *When Attitudes Become Form*. By exhibiting works of art alongside productions of art brut such as those by Adolf Wölfli, Szeemann gathered together some very diverse practices. Regardless of whether or not this was his intention, he contributed to putting the art world in touch with the human inclination for the original: strangely, the same fascination is at work in Adolf Wölfli's 25,000 pages as in Luzinterruptus' 10,000 lights arranged in 10,000 books.

Beyond the question of originality picked up upon in a logic of entertainment, a fundamental difference remains between the actions of Luzinterruptus that are institutionalized and those that are not. In the first case, the framework allowing passers-by to wander around the city and to inhabit public space existed prior to the *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto* installation. It was generated by the festival. As a result, the people coming to this festival were already in a situation in which they were (or thought they were) living in the city and inhabiting its space. A work that encourages them to do so in this context is less relevant than a similar work seen by people going to work. Many non-urban artists encourage the assimilation of public space: for example, when the photographer Paul Graham published his book *The Present*, he sought to make the viewer aware of what was happening in the street. He aimed at appreciating the incongruous and unexpected gifts offered by the present (the term present meaning both "gift" and "present time"). John Smith's *The Girl Chewing Gum* may fulfill the same role. However, neither Paul Graham's photographs nor John Smith's film were unexpectedly shown to the passer-by: they were watched in an institutional context, supervised by a publishing house or a projection room. Despite the differences in spectatorship conditions, those two works of art operated on the same principle as *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto*. When all is said and done, the fact that the latter work took place on the street is anecdotal: once there is such an institutional framework, the work necessarily loses its critical significance in comparison, for example, to *The Government don't give a shit about the Spanish Constitution* which took place in the "real" street. People's positions were not the same and could not be the same.

Although the institutional framework inhibits the emancipatory scope of *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto*, it should be recognized that this installation would probably not have been able to happen autonomously, unlike the collective's other actions (and leaving aside the logistics involved in deploying this installation). Independently of any festival frame, an art action which blocks cars and people from circulating on the street as usual would probably not attract the same public enthusiasm. Probably far fewer people would be sitting on the ground reading. Some of those who actually did in Toronto might already have feared for the inconvenience to the established order. In other words, where institutionalization inhibits the impact of the work, its non-institutionalization provides it with far too much impact. To illustrate this, one need only refer to a similar action taken on line 13 of the Paris metro, a line well-known to be very often crowded. On December 9th, 2018, a carriage had been filled with cattle hay, with a sign reading *Enclos à bétail* (Cattle

Post) as the title. The operation, claimed by the art collective Omerta Project,[1] was not as well received as Luzinterruptus' Toronto installation.[2] In retrospect, some people may think they would have rolled and slumped in the hay, but no one actually did anything of the sort. Perhaps the real addressees of this work were precisely the people who discovered the action later through the fictionalization of what their experience with the work would have been if they had actually seen it. This fictionalization resembles that experienced by spectators of *The Square*, who could imagine themselves in front of the evening performance: without really wishing to participate in this kind of work, one may like to fictitiously project oneself into it, as if there were a necessary split between aesthetic experience and civic engagement.

Is there an aesthetic attitude *of* and *through* engagement?

The sociology of audiences emphasizes the fact that people who go to cultural events, such as the Nuit Blanche festival, belong to a more privileged socio-professional category than those who do not (Bourdieu 1984). In the same vein, it is also undoubtedly necessary to recognize that the institutional framework alienates people who go there: just as with works of art, the institutional public loses its autonomy. However, the dividing line between heteronomous and autonomous art is also a question of the attention of the public: varying one's attention may be enough to shift art into entertainment. The artistic consecration of Luzinterruptus' actions may influence public attention on two points, with the second stemming from the first: on the one hand, the institution frames and therefore limits attention. On the other hand, and consequently, the attention, which is culturally constructed, that one pays to works of art implies a distance that politically and socially disengages the spectator from any action.

Surprisingly, some artistic productions frame and constrain the audience's expectations more than others: for instance, knowing that a film has been inspired by a true story influences the way one watches it. Likewise, some people want more clues than

[1]Omerta Project also entitled it *L'enclos à bétail de la ligne 13 est officiellement ouvert (Cattle Post of line 13 has been officially opened)*. For further information please refer to the collective's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/omerta.project/>

[2]One also remembers the action by the artist Aníbal López (A-1 53167) in Guatemala City: *One Ton Of Books Dumped On Reform Avenue* (2003). The artist did it again the same year at the first Prague Biennale, in the session curated by Marco Scotini. Although these actions look like that of Luzinterruptus, they differ from it because the first Prague Biennale foiled the institutional art frame. This event and Nuit Blanche Toronto cannot be likened.

others and want to know, for example, whether they are about to read a detective novel or a heroic romance. In fact, even in minimal situations, a title, a publisher, a poster or even a place is enough to draw what, since Jauss, reception theory has called the "horizon of expectation" (Jauss 1982, 22). This notion generally reflects conscious expectations on the part of potential readers (or spectators) so as to summarize the "aesthetic distance" (Jauss 1982, 25) between the expectation experience and the real art experience. However, the structure is more complex than it might appear. In fact, the aesthetic distance needs to be re-evaluated according to the influence that the horizon of expectation has on the actual experience: the experience is not devoid of any antecedent. That is to say that the horizon of expectation functions exactly as a priming effect. Thus, the mere fact of going out during an art festival, without even knowing what one is going to see, "primes" the spectator for a specific experience. This situation influences the experience very differently from a situation in which a person unexpectedly sees a Luzinterruptus action in the street. One of the specific characteristics of public art without an institutional context is precisely that it is most often aimed at people who have no artistic expectation. The aesthetic distance in that latter situation is the greatest. Without already being a spectator beforehand, one becomes an actual spectator. On the contrary, being present at an artistic event induces an expectation that is so particular that, despite everything, it turns spectators into consumers. It is true that the same people who were in Toronto would, in another context, have been sensitive to a production about civic engagement and emancipation, but their preformed expectations inhibited the socially engaged scope of the work. Indeed, there remains both an ethical and an aesthetic problem with the mere possibility of acting as a citizen and as a spectator at the same time.

Since the emergence of aesthetics in the eighteenth century, and in particular the theme of disinterestedness already discussed by Hutcheson (2008, 25-26) and Kant (2007, 36-37), aesthetics has dealt with the question of whether works of art are apprehended within the same behavior as other things in the world. Twentieth-century philosophy, and especially Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy, has debated this question under the name of "aesthetic attitude" (Stolnitz 1960, 29-64, Dickie 1964, Stolnitz 1978). However, since aesthetic attitude is an extension of Kantian disinterestedness, the debate has focused more on works that are not directly and explicitly socially engaged. In this context, it is easier to defend the idea of a distant and independent aesthetic attitude. Everything is as if only works that fall under the banner of a so-called "art for art's sake" or "medium purity" (Greenberg 1988, 6) can be appreciated by an aesthetic attitude. Within this framework, any aesthetic attitude would necessarily water down the emancipatory impact of any work of art as soon as it was viewed as a work of art. Thus, the idea of an aesthetic attitude implies that

what was questionable from the institutional point of view also becomes questionable from the point of view of reception: as soon as an emancipatory practice functions as art, it dysfunctions as socially engaged art. However, just because the art form is engaged does not mean that it does not expect a specific attitude. The problem raised by this peculiar reception is undoubtedly the counterpart of the aforesaid problem about the confusion between the autonomy of art and the independence of art. It also affects writings in aesthetics: there are very few publications in aesthetics attempting to understand the kind of aesthetic attention which would be directed towards engaged art. Many publications deal with aesthetic attention, many others with engaged art. Even if the latter do not neglect the reception of engaged art, they do not tackle the problem of its aesthetic experience. The usual remarks about aesthetic attention lead one to think that the challenge is to find the proper distance (Bullough 1912) between oneself and the work. Thus, in line with Goodman's words, the question "what does it mean to function as socially engaged art?" seems really problematic. As a reminder, when Goodman tried to answer the question "what is art?", he judged that it was badly formulated and preferred ask "when is art?" or else "what does it mean to function as art?". But, if "what does it mean to function as socially engaged art?" is badly formulated, it is therefore necessary to understand why "what does it mean to function as art?" is well formulated. Perhaps the whole problem lies in the fact that aesthetic judgment is generally considered from the much-criticized bias of purity and self-centered art. Art should also be considered as a "social fact" in those respects. Artistic consecration conveys the cultural construction of the distant spectator, who is both critical and respectful of the dignity of works of art. It is not a question of deconstructing what has already been deconstructed by Jacques Rancière (2009), of alienating spectators from mass industry, nor from their free will. In fact, in that context, a deconstruction process should concern the spectators accustomed to autonomous art as long as they consider that enjoying an authentic and autonomous work of art requires detachment and contemplation.

In *The Distinction*, Bourdieu already analyzed the difference between the "taste of reflection" of the ruling class in favor of an unnatural art and the "taste of the senses" of the ruled class (Bourdieu 1982, 488-491). It would seem that Bourdieu's studies enable us to falsify the parallelism between "art/leisure" and "detachment/amusement". In other words, it is not because a production is entertainment that it is necessarily playful, and even less so reciprocally. Non-entertaining art can be playful without losing its autonomy. Solemnity should never qualify the aesthetic attitude. Therefore, perhaps the proper attitude to have faced with *The Government don't give a shit about the Spanish Constitution* is to sit down on a toilet seat, alone or in a group, and wait for a discussion with others who also have a

seat. Thus, in order to function as art, some works need participation, not that of the public, nor that of enrolled entrants (Bishop 2012), but that of citizens. As was the case with the performance within the film *The Square*, *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto* could perhaps have existed as fiction without an institutional framework. More radically, the case of socially engaged art with regard to the critique of the culture industry and the institutionalization of art is aporetic.

Undoubtedly the experience of *Literature vs Traffic in Toronto* requires another form of fictionalization, such as the playful fictionalization which links art, spectators and play (Gadamer 1989, 108-110, 131-133). The people experiencing the work may mentally put themselves in a possible world in which the work exists independently of the festival. This special world is also characterized by the fact that no one would worry that the social order was being shaken by engaged art actions. The work of art would then carry an emancipatory power: the mere fictional thought of such a possible world paves the way for an underlying struggle between the will to obediently preserve the social order and that to make it better. In this context, Kantian theories about emancipation and majority (i.e. without external authority) can be matched with the Deleuzian notion of "becoming-minor" (Sardinha 2011). Indeed, this notion evokes the child who is ready to play with the rules of the game and thus to reinvent its world without fetishizing the frameworks that constrict it.

Conclusion

Autonomy confers on the work of art an illusory independence that inhibits the emancipatory scope of socially engaged art.

Two sources may explain the relationship between autonomy and independence. On the one hand, the classical heritage of the thinking of art through the prism of imitation and representation gives details of why artistic creation falls within the scope of a distance and of contemplative attention. On the other hand, this illusory relationship seems to have been reinforced by a misreading of Kant's analysis of beauty. When Kant wrote that the judgment of taste is disinterested, he was above all making a descriptive remark about the world: it is possible to find something beautiful that one morally abhors. Beyond this description, and irrespective of whether one subscribes to it or not, he adds that a judgment of taste devoid of any moral consideration (and neither pleasant nor useful…) is more communicable and universalizable (Kant 2007, 42-43). Kant, who was interested in a possible subjective universality, gave a lot of space to this "pure" judgment. However, aside from the sphere of the beautiful, even the most Kantian approaches to art can be caused to renounce the wager of universality. It is certain that an artistic form that aims at an

emancipatory scope does not claim to be universally pleasing.

More generally, these confusions are based on the false preconception that perception has nothing to do with action. These confusions are based on the illusion of a possible contemplation detached from the world. The cultural construction of distance in art probably reflects the Western construction of a subject which is opposed to the world, which is outside the world. Phenomenology, postcolonial studies, embodied and ecological approaches to cognitive science, but also artists, are deconstructing this thought pattern.

Ass. Prof. Dr. Bruno Trentini, Université de Lorraine, Centre Écritures,
bruno.trentini[at]univ-lorraine.fr

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