

CREATION VS. TECHNE: THE INNER CONFLICT  
OF ART

ABSTRACT

Three foundational concepts can be extracted from the modern idea of “art”: the ancient concept of “techne” (becoming the corner stone to the history of the notion of “art,” representing skillful manual labor and indicating a specific knowledge), the concept of “creation” (as a result of the Renaissance synthesis), and the “institution” or “system” of “arts” as a modern social construct (based on the eighteenth century developments). In this paper I address the first two concepts as opposite concepts that, despite their contrast, became incorporated into the modern idea of “art.” The conflict between “techne” and “creation” manifests itself historically in the gradual disappearance of “techne” and its relevance to the practice of modern art while, conversely, the rise of “creation” becomes the relevant descriptor of the artistic act. The only solution to the inner conflict on which the modern concept of “art” is based involves the disappearance of particular art practices producing material artworks (objects). Thus, the concept of art “creation” becomes a subversive principle within the field of “art,” leading to the overcoming of all aspects of “techne” concept, in order to enable “full” actualization of “creation” as a metaphysical and axiological category.

In this paper I examine relations between “techne” and “creation” as concepts that constitute our modern understanding of the “visual fine arts.” My intention here is to show: (1) that there is a collision between the concepts of “techne” and “creation” and (2) that manifestations of this collision can be seen in the history of art, since these concepts became incorporated in the modern idea of “art.”

If we consult contemporary dictionaries of the English language in search for the meaning of the word “art,” we find many different definitions. If we look only at the entries that are related to what we call “fine arts” (and set aside meanings such as “liberal arts” or “sciences”), we see that the contemporary understanding of “art” as recorded by modern dictionaries can be summarized by three main categories:

1. Skill; skilled workmanship or workmanship as distinguished from nature; craftsmanship; practice; knowledge; conscious use of skill in production of an aesthetic object.<sup>1</sup>
2. Creativity; creative activity; imagination; creative or imaginative power and resource; creative skill and imagination.<sup>2</sup>
3. Various branches or disciplines of the arts; the study of particular arts or human creativity; aesthetic principles, field, genre and category of art; fine arts as a class; the practice of exhibiting art products.<sup>3</sup>

#### TECHNE

The first meaning of the word “art” indicated above is based on the ancient (Greek) concept of τέχνη (*techne*), which represents the earliest stage of the development of our modern (western) understanding of visual art. Although the content of the word “art” (*ars* in Latin) has permanently been changed over the course of history, it has never lost this original meaning, even in our modern perception, as dictionary definitions show.

*Techne* explains not only how the ancient Greeks looked upon different occupations, such as sculptors, painters, craftsmen, stonemasons, etc., but also shows the way in which they understood the world and human existence in it. The Greek world (“cosmos”) was not “created” but rather formed from pre-existing material (“chaos”).<sup>4</sup> Greek “cosmos” (order) is not a state of freedom but rather a necessity that both gods and human beings face. The way in which “cosmos” exists implies that neither gods nor humans are ontologically free from it.<sup>5</sup> William Hasker clarifies this point, relating it to Plato’s Demiurge:

“The Demiurge is not ontologically supreme, but clearly is subordinate to the Forms. The good intentions of the Demiurge are limited and often frustrated by the recalcitrant matter with which he must work, but which he had no part in creating.”<sup>6</sup>

Since gods are not ontologically free from the world (cosmos) they are not able to perform a genuine act of creation, which means that they can be characterized as “demiurges,” i.e. those who reshape pre-given material rather than those who “create” it. Consequently, the human activity in the world in the Greek model is limited to *techne*, that is to *reshaping* the material already given by nature (first to produce something useful and then something beautiful too), which is a task that requires knowledge and skill to accomplish.<sup>7</sup>

#### CREATION

The concept of “creation” was associated with “art” much later. “Creation” or “creative activity” as a western concept has its roots in the Judeo-Christian idea

of “creation out of nothing” (ex nihilo).<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the ancient Demiurge, the Christian God creates the world “out of nothing” and is free from any constraints or pre-giveness.<sup>9</sup> Although “creation” in its absolute meaning was the concept associated primarily with the Divine creation “ex nihilo,” from the very beginnings of Christian thought creativity was also perceived as a human capacity (together with freedom or rationality).<sup>10</sup> Since the human being was created in the “image and likeness of God” (Gen 1: pp. 26–27), which is exclusively the privilege of the human being among all creatures, he/she also possesses the capacity of freedom and creation as human abilities for overcoming the boundaries of the created world.<sup>11</sup>

Human capacity for creation was first recognized in language use—in poetry and literature—human activities that can be encompassed by the collective term “word based production.” This is not a surprise if we keep in mind close relations between the word and God in Christianity: God creates by “saying” (Gen 1: pp. 3–29) and God is identified with the “Word” (Jn 1:1). Consequently the concept of the “author” as someone who *creates with words*, was used to address both God in his creative capacities and man in his act of (word based) creation.<sup>12</sup> *Creation*, however, was not a concept that included the artist, who was still *technites*—performing *techne*.

#### TECHNE—CREATION

It was necessary to wait until the Renaissance to connect the concept of “creation,” as the human capacity of producing something new and original, which has never existed before, with visual arts. This transformation did not happen at once but represents rather a longer evolution, the origins of which can be traced back to this period. The change is most clearly visible in the “new type” of the artist that began to emerge.<sup>13</sup> In this new paradigm, painters, sculptors and architects are not perceived only as craftsmen but as men who perform “spiritual,” “intellectual” and “creative” activities, possessing even “divine powers.”<sup>14</sup> This process of adopting *creation* into the concept of art (while preserving *techne* as well, which is manifested primarily in looking for “perfection” of artistic execution and an imperative to imitate nature) was basically the process of merging the concept of the “author” and his capacities with the concept of the visual artist, which resulted in a new concept of “artist as author.”<sup>15</sup> Although it was only the beginning of this new meaning of art (*techne* + *creation*), the contrast between *techne* and *creation* had already appeared. Thus, Leonardo, one of the greatest “masters” of Renaissance art, became more interested in conceptual problems, the solutions of which he attempted to find in paintings rather than in skilled, manual and physical aspects of labor. Once he solved a problem, he had no interest in doing the “technical” side of the

work, which resulted in many unfinished works. This contradiction of creative work in the visual arts records Vasari too, ascribing to Leonardo the words that “men of genius are sometimes producing most when they seem least to labor, for their minds are then occupied in the shaping of those conceptions to which they afterward give form.”<sup>16</sup>

According to Michael Wetzel, this Renaissance contribution to the new (expanded) understanding of the concept of art became fully recognized in eighteenth century.<sup>17</sup> During the middle and second half of the eighteenth century, artists were generally perceived as possessing creative capacities, freedom, imagination, originality or ingeniousness.<sup>18</sup> The artist became a “creative spirit” or “genius,”<sup>19</sup> someone whose “spiritual,” “free” and “creative” capacities differentiate him from the craftsman.<sup>20</sup> This change was parallel to the final split between the “fine arts” and “crafts” that took place in eighteenth century, which marks the formation of the “modern system of arts,” as Oscar Kristeller calls it.<sup>21</sup> This was the time of yet another (third) rising meaning of art, as acknowledged in the beginning of this paper—art as “institution” or social construct.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the concept of “art” began to denote all three things together.

The eighteenth century also brought the first strong indication of a sharp contrast between *techne* and *creation* as concepts that were already incorporated into the concept of art at that time. This was through seemingly a paradoxical idea of the “artist without work” that Michael Wetzel uses as a paradigmatic image of the new artist ideal:

“Zusammen mit der säkularisierenden Theodizee-Deutung als authentische Auslegung der unvollendeten Schöpfung durch das Subjekt kommt hierin die im Sturm und Drang rezipierte spinozistische Dynamisierung der natura naturata als natura naturans in einer Weise zur Geltung, für die ‘der absolute Vorrang der Autorindividualität vor ihrem Werk’ im Ideal des ‘Künstlers ohne Werk’ gipfelt. Die Vorstellung vom melancholisch, in reiner Kontemplation befangenen, untätigen Künstler hat ihren epochalen Ausdruck in der Figur des Werther gefunden, der sich nie als ‘größerer Maler’ empfindet, als wenn er keinen Strich hervorbringt; eine Referenz auf rein geistiges Schaffen ohne handwerklichen Anteil, wie sie kurz zuvor schon Lessing in der *Emilia Galotti* als Ideal eines ‘Raffael ohne Hände’ gebraucht. . .”<sup>23</sup>

Accentuation of “pure spiritual creation” without the involvement of “manual labor” in the field of visual arts, becomes from this moment a topic that will reappear periodically throughout the modern history of art. This “inner conflict” of art, which comes from an inability to fully connect *creation* with manual, skilled work, is manifested in its future development through five phases:

- I Accentuation of the artist's personal capacities of creation, freedom, ingenuity, originality and imagination, and, consequently, a decrease in comprehending the significance of skilled and manual work for the condition of art;
- II A claim for the "autonomy" of art as a field free from any preconditions and utilitarian ends, in which "pure" artistic creation becomes the central motif;
- III Disappearance of the mimetic approach as the universal artistic methodology;
- IV Disappearance of manual and skilled labor in the production of art;
  - V Disappearance of artwork as material object;
- VI Disappearance of the artist and "emptiness" as art.

### I

In further developments, both art practice and theory continued in significant part to claim freedom and creativity as the artist's capacities. Romanticism brings a specific concept of the artist that is based on the accentuation of the subjectivity and autonomy of the artistic work and of the artist's personality, while concepts such as genius, creation, inspiration, imagination and freedom are inherited from earlier times.<sup>24</sup> These concepts stress the "non-technical" (manual) qualities of the artist's work as essential. Michael Wetzel even observes that the very understanding of the (visual) artist was identified with the author concept, in terms of his capacities and the features of his art.<sup>25</sup> Despite the character of the categories by which the artist and his art were described in this time, it was only the first step in the modern project of liberating art from its *techne*-components.

### II

Another symptom of the decline of *techne* aspects in the field of visual arts can be found in the nineteenth century in the *l'art pour l'art* idea. Promoters of *l'art pour l'art* claim, first of all, the "autonomy" of art. This "autonomy," which defines art as a specific field of human creation and freedom that should not serve any other end, will become the most influential idea in modern art, and even "the most important project" of the whole modern art, in Filiberto Menna's view.<sup>26</sup> In the field of the visual arts, *l'art pour l'art* has come to mean not only liberation of art from its social (bourgeois) or religious services, but liberation from the mimetic definition of art as well. Art is no longer considered as something that necessarily "represents" something else, or a field of human

activity whose basic function is the imitation of a certain motif or illustration of a narrative, but as something that has its own “content.” If we consider this idea in a historical perspective, we are able to see that mimesis as both artistic theory and practical methodology has been incorporated into the concept of *techne* from its very beginning. Therefore, rejection of the mimetic definition of art means also an implicit negation of *techne* as the foundation of art. Painters such as Whistler searched for ways of implementing this doctrine. In his “Nocturnes,” he comes to the edge of abstraction, negating not only the significance of a narrative represented in a painting, but also the significance of the mimetic approach generally.<sup>27</sup> Reciprocally, the visual phenomena and their arrangement on the canvas become increasingly significant. Thus, the exploration of “art’s own means” and artistic personal capacities come to occupy the whole understanding of the concept of art, while *techne* aspects, via negation of mimesis, become marginalized.

The whole Symbolist project can also be seen as a quest for freedom and creation outside the mimetic boundaries of art.<sup>28</sup> The artist’s creation is even compared to God’s creation, again on the basis of stressing the non-*techne* components of art.<sup>29</sup>

### III

By the end of nineteenth and during the early twentieth century, “art’s own means” became one of the most important preoccupations of artists as well as of thinkers on art. With his “Nocturne” canvases, Whistler showed the path that led art practice into complete rejection of the mimetic approach in the visual arts, including the appearance of any recognizable forms. The most remarkable experiments in this sense were those of Vasilij Kandinsky, who turned his work into “abstract,” non-figurative and non-mimetic art. Even more interesting is the case of Kazimir Malevich, whose strategy was to expel all the constraining factors from the field of art, so that “pure” creation could be reached. To achieve this aim, the first confrontation was with the sphere of objects and the mimetic understanding of art.<sup>30</sup> To get to “absolute” or “endless” freedom and creation,<sup>31</sup> Malevich was forced to take a further step, and to reduce his art to the logical minimum of the phenomenal manifestation of a painting—to an almost totally empty canvas, or “white on white.”<sup>32</sup>

However, even this was not enough, since the canvas, although abstract and thus non-mimetic, has still been too closely tied to its *techne* heritage: after all, it was still a material object that the artist painted with his hand. It was necessary to reduce another remaining aspect of *techne*: the manual execution of a piece. Although this will be the strategy of future art, Malevich foresaw it in his own work. He stopped painting for a couple of years, soon after his

most important Suprematist works were made (1923–1927). Such a strategy can be understood as reaching the point of “freedom” and “creation” in art. To demonstrate and further explain them, Malevich continued to deal with art, not as painter but rather as writer on art.

#### IV

The emancipation of the artist from manual and skilled work can be seen in the example of Marcel Duchamp’s “ready-mades.” For the first time, artistic creation and creativity had nothing to do with the manual execution or physical labor of the artist. On the contrary, in this case creation consists in a “decision” to “make” art.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, everything can “mystically” be transformed from non-art into art by virtue of the artist’s decision, which is a genuine act of creation not bound to anything. It can also be said that material objects are merely a way by which artistic creation becomes visible, while the creation itself has nothing to do with objects. The artist here creates in a way very similar to God’s creation. It is enough for him to “say” *let it be* art, and anything becomes art.

Although Duchamp’s art significantly transcends *techne* aspects of art, such as mimesis, skill and manual labor, it is still connected with material objects. Artistic objects are not made by the artist, their physical characteristics are also not a limiting factor for the artist’s creation, but they are a material manifestation of creation, which comes out of the artist’s mind.

Reduction of this final remaining (material) aspect of the *techne* concept in the field of art was the subject of the next phase, generally called the “dematerialization” of art.

#### V

Liberation of art from every possible *techne*-aspect, for the sake of free creation, arrived definitively with conceptual art. Joseph Kosuth claims that “objects are conceptually irrelevant to the condition of art.”<sup>34</sup> Consequently, any skilled work which would transform the pre-existent material, including any arrangement of perceptible (visual) elements within the artistic media, is for Joseph Kosuth a “pure exercise in aesthetics” that has nothing to do with art. It is clear that this rejection of all visual elements is also the rejection of the entire visual art tradition. But here precisely the whole contrast between *techne* concept and *creation* becomes visible, since the whole history of art as a history of *techne*-art has to be rejected in order to enable the emergence of *creation*-art history. To be able to artistically create means for Kosuth to lay aside everything that can be connected with *techne*.

Another sign of “dematerialization” are art practices such as performances, actions or happenings that do not use any material objects or skilled (manual) execution to *create* art. Artists try rather to “perform” art which consists of bodily actions, interactions between human beings and their surroundings, and among living human beings themselves. *Techne* is negated by the very fact that a “piece” is removed and replaced by a “process” or “something “happening” among the persons involved.

## VI

The final stage of reduction of all *techne*-aspects that prevented art from full manifestation as “free creation,” can be seen in the *absence of the artist’s body* from art and complete *emptiness* as art.

Keith Arnatt performed his “Self-Burial” in 1969, a “work” in which the artist gradually disappears under the ground level until he becomes completely invisible. An even more radical example is Andy Warhol’s “Invisible Sculpture” of 1985. This “work” consists literally in “nothing.” He stood in a corner in the club “Area” in New York, and then he moved away. It is not the action that produces a work, but rather this “emptiness” relieved of any presence as such, or, in other words, this “nothing” out of which art meaning and creation appear.

Yves Klein was the most important figure in the second half of the twentieth century who pointed to emptiness as the “material” of art production. With his “The Void” exhibition (Iris Clert gallery, Paris, 1958), Klein exhibited *nothing* whatsoever as art. In this exhibit, everything is removed: any manifestation of mimesis, manual or skilled labor, artworks as objects, the artist. Complete absence becomes the “zero” point of creation, the final logical consequence of the expulsion of *techne* from art. Art as *techne* ends in nothingness, so nothing now becomes the pre-condition of artistic creation. The parallel to God’s creation is remarkable. In order to be able to create unconditionally, the artist had to come to “nihil” which alone can guarantee a free and genuine act of creation. But unlike God’s creation, this reduction of art to nothing goes hand in hand with the vanishing of the artist, i.e. of the creator who is supposed to perform the creation.

## CONCLUSION

The concepts of *creation* and *techne* are two opposing concepts associated with art. Their collision can be traced in the history of art through approximately six phases of gradual disappearance of the various aspects of *techne*. This



process is not the only one that can be seen in the development of modern art. There were also number of other, even opposite processes in the history of modern art (such as revival of the “crafts,” “skilled,” “technical” and “industrial” approaches to the arts during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries). But this process I consider one of the most important, if not the crucial process in the course of modern art history. I think that this process is precisely what led art into its “death,” as perceived in contemporary art discourses.<sup>35</sup> However, instead of identifying one “death,” when one looks at this process as a process of historical actualization of different layers of meanings incorporated into the concept of art, art potentially becomes the subject of various “deaths” and “resurrections.” The “deaths” and “resurrections” of art can be seen in a slow separation of the three components that formed our modern understanding of “art.” We can, thus, speak of “art” as “art-skill,” based on the remaining aspects of its original meaning. On the other hand, with “art-creation” the “liberated” concept of art can be addressed—the concept which overcomes the scope traditionally known as art. Finally, we can also speak of “art-market” as a concept which includes all important institutions that utilize “art” (together with particular works) as goods. Separation of one aspect of art from the general concept represents the “death” of other components. Thus, *Kunstgeschichte* becomes the *Kunstgericht* via constant attempts to liberate the “art” concept from its roots that lie in the field of necessity. In our modern perception, as long as “art” is, at least partially, *techne*, it cannot fully be *creation*. So if “art” ceases to have any physical manifestation, it is not necessarily in order to become a “theory” or a social construct, but possibly to try to attain freedom from any pre-given materials or conditions.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See ART in I—*Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*. (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5; II—*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. (6th Edition, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), I 3, II 6, III; III—*Webster’s New Explorer College Dictionary* (Springfield: Federal Street Press, 2003) • syn SKILL, CRAFT; IV—*Oxford Dictionary of English*. (2nd Edition, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1; V—*Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*. (2nd Edition, New York: Random House, 2001, 5, 9, 12; VI—*Webster’s Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield: Merriam-Webster INC., 1990), 3, 4a; VII—*The Oxford English Dictionary*. (2nd Edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 5, 6, 19b, c; VIII—*Webster’s New World Dictionary of American English*. (Cleveland/New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988) 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. I—1, 3; III—● syn ART; IV—1; VI—4a; VIII—1, 5, 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> III—2, 5; IV—1, 2, 3; V—2, 3, 4; VI—4b; VIII—11-2.

<sup>4</sup> Explaining the meaning of these concepts in the context of ancient Greek thought and etymology of the word, Bianca Theisen notes the following understandings of “chaos” as basic ones: “Die stoische Ableitung des Wortes ‚chaos‘ von cheō (gießen) impliziert über die Konnotation des Fließenden (Wasser) eine stoffliche Ungeschiedenheit und zielt auf einen Begriff der Vermischung, aus der sich die Elemente dann ausdifferenzieren. (. . .) Daß es Leeres gebe und damit einen Raum, der keine Körper enthalte und also etwas von ihnen Unabhängiges und Selbständiges sein müße, während umgekehrt alle Körper nur in einem Raum denkbar seien, sieht Aristoteles durch Hesiod bestätigt, der mit dem Chaos den ‚leeren Abgrund‘ als Erstes setze und damit anzeige, daß alles Seiende sich nur in einem Raum ausdifferenziere, der Raum also ‚allem vorgeordnet‘ sei.” See in Bianca Theisen, “Chaos und Kosmos,” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, ed. Karlheinz Barck. (Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2000), Vol. 1, p. 753.

<sup>5</sup> The concept of “ontological freedom” I use here in the same meaning in which the coinage appears by John Zizioulas. In his study *Being as Communion*, John Zizioulas states that the ancient understanding of “cosmos” and “chaos,” both in a philosophical and in a broader cultural setting, has direct implications towards the concept of freedom. He also argues that “ontological freedom” is unthinkable in the Greek world, and that the direct repercussion of the very concept of “cosmos” is the lack of the idea of freedom from the pre-existent material and absence of the idea of creation as a unique “bringing into being.” See Zizioulas, John. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 27–33.

<sup>6</sup> Hasker, William. “Creation and Conservation,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig. (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 695. It might seem that the only exception from this rule is the poetry, or poetic (or poietic) activities that are embraced by the Greek concept of ποίησις (poiesis) and the verb ποιεῖν (poiein). Although this concept was later used to address the Christian concept of “creation” (compare to Septuagint “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποιήσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν,” Gen 1:1), there is not any clear evidence that it originally implied creation in the absolute meaning of the word. The concept ποιεω can be translated as “to make,” “to produce,” “to perform,” “to work,” “to manufacture,” “to execute” etc. (Compare to *Lexikon des Frühgriechischen Epos*, ed. Bruno Snell (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), Vol. 3, pp. 1313-1317; Passow, Franz. *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970), Vol. 2, pp. 973-977; Majnarić, N., Gorski, O., *Grč ko-hrvatski rječnik*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1960, 455. *A Greek-English Lexicon* from 1968, explains the same concept as “used in two general senses, *make* and *do*”-*A Greek-English Lexicon*, ed. Henry George Liddell. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 1427. This lexicon further interprets the concept as “create, bring into existence” (ibid., p. 1428, Section A 2), but this “creation,” from the context in which it appears, implies more “to bear” or “bring something into being by birth” than creation as such. N. Majnarić and O. Gorski warn that the concept ποίησις was also used in the meaning “to adopt” a son for instance, i.e. to give him new “being” or new “birth” (compare to N. Majnarić and O. Gorski, ibid.). In the classical period the noun is used to describe the activity of a poet, who writes or tells his poetry by “divine madness,” as Plato puts it. Therefore, it is not a concept that describes genuine creation as such, but rather something that comes from Muses and gods who tell the poet or orator what to express. So, despite the difference in the meaning between *poiesis* and *techne*, there is no reason to understand any of them as implying a genuine act of “bringing something into being.”

<sup>7</sup> Compare to the analyses of the *techne* concept by Kockelmans, Joseph J., *Heidegger on Art and Art Works*. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), p. 6; and Bošnjak, Branko. “Techne

als Erfahrung der menschlichen Existenz: Aristoteles—Marx—Heidegger,” in *Kunst und Technik: Gedächtnisschrift zum 100. Geburtstag von Martin Heidegger*, ed. Walter Biemel and Friedrich-Wilhelm v. Herrmann. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), pp. 94–96.

<sup>8</sup> The first explicit mentioning of creation “ex nihilo” in the Bible we find in the second book of Maccabees (“...look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made everything out of nothing” 2 Macc 7:28).

<sup>9</sup> Both Bianca Theisen and William Hasker note this contrast between the ancient understanding of the world as basically static and not-created and the Christian idea of the world as being created by God: “In der christlichen Theologie verbinden sich die antiken Chaosvorstellungen mit den biblischen des Tohuwabohu; da die kosmologische Vorstellung einer Schöpfung aus dem Chaos jedoch mit dem christlichen Schöpfergott unvereinbar ist, wird der emergente Aspekt des kosmogonischen Chaosbegriffs gestrichen und durch die Vorstellung einer Schöpfung aus Nichts mit ihren theologischen Folgeproblemen ersetzt”. Bianca Theisen, op. cit., p. 754; “On the contrary, creation ex nihilo means precisely that there is no pre-existing ‘stuff’ whatsoever—that things have come to exist solely because of the Word and creative power of God.” William Hasker, op. cit., p. 696.

<sup>10</sup> Compare to Georges Florovsky’s analysis of the human creative capacities in respect to the early patristic theology in Florovsky, Georges. *The Eastern Fathers of the Fourth Century (The Collected Works)*, ed. Richard S. Haugh. (Belmont: Nordland Pub. Co., 1987), Vol. VII, pp. 135–166. See also Zizioulas, John. “Human Capacity and Incapacity, a Theological Exploration of Personhood,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1975), Vol. 28, pp. 401–448; and Džalto, Davor. *The Role of the Artist in Self-Referent Art*. (Berlin: Dissertation.de, 2007), pp. 29–33.

<sup>11</sup> For further explanation of the human capacity of freedom in early Christian theology, see Zizioulas, John. *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, *ibid*, pp. 27–35.

<sup>12</sup> Donald E. Pease explains the medieval notion of the “author” as implying “initiative, inventiveness, autonomy, creativity, authority and originality— see Pease, Donald E., “Author,” in *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*, ed. Seán Burke. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p. 263. Creation and creativity are the concepts that Oswald Bayer also recognizes as attributes of the “author,” being related primarily to “God as Author,” but also to the “writer” or “poet” as terms that can be attributed, and in fact were attributed, both to God and to human beings—see Bayer, Oswald. *Gott als Autor: zu einer poetologischen Theologie*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), pp. 2–3. According to the same author, the identification between God’s and human creative capacities can be established if we think of God as “Der Poet der Welt.” God does not simply create but his creation is free and performed with words “Als ‚Poet‘ ist Gott Schöpfer und Erzähler zugleich; et tut, was er sagt, und sagt, was er tut.” (Oswald Bayer, *ibid*, p. 30). For further investigation of the concept see Steiner, George. *Grammars of Creation*. (London: Faber and Faber, 2001) and Bennett, Andrew, *The Author*. (London/New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Rudolf and Margot Wittkower call it, for example, the “new ideal of the artist”—see Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn—The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963), pp. 14–16. See also: Badt, Kurt. *Kunsttheoretische Versuche*, (Köln: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1968), pp. 39–95; Baker, Emma, Webb, Nick and Woods, Kim. “Historical Introduction: the Idea of the Artist,” in *The Changing Status of the Artist*, ed. Emma Baker. (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Vasari, for instance, speaks of Leonardo’s ability to “create in his imagination”—see Vasari, *Lives of the Artists, Biographies of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters and Sculptors of Italy*, ed. Betty Burroughs. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), p. 192. On many places Vasari refers

to the Renaissance artists as having “divine powers.” Moshe Barasch also sees the capacity of creation (“the ability to produce a work of art that has not existed before”) in the field of visual art as the crucial concept of the Renaissance. See Barash, Moshe. *Theories of Art, From Plato to Winckelmann*. (New York/London: New York University Press, 1985), pp. 174–190.

<sup>15</sup> In my study *The Role of the Artist in Self-Referent Art*, I analyze the concepts of “freedom” and “creation” as concepts that became associated with the artist through connecting the labor of the visual artist with the “word-based” production in the Renaissance period. That enabled new perception of the artist I called “artist as author” (see Džalto, Davor, *ibid.*, pp. 23–27).

<sup>16</sup> Vasari, *ibid.* The question about Leonardo’s unfinished paintings Lazar is also raised by Trifunović, whose answer points to the contrast between abstract, intellectual, spiritual activities and manual labor: “Here, in the beginning of Leonardo’s art we can observe paintings left unfinished, as the very feature of his work. Why did he do that? . . . A painting for him was finished. . . when all problems in it were clearly fixed. Further work on it and completion were merely a matter of technique and patience.” Trifunović, Lazar. *Leonardo da Vinci* (Belgrade: Knjiga za nas, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> “Andererseits etabliert sich erst im 18. Jh. der Begriff des Künstlers als Freischaffender im allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch nicht nur gegenüber dem Kunsthandwerker, sondern vor allem als Allgemeinbezeichnung für alle im Bereich der Kunstakademien Ausgebildeten bzw. Tätigen. Und wieder ist es das Modell des Dichters als geistiges Schöpfender, das für die ästhetische Begriffsbestimmung des Künstlers zum Vorbild wird.” Wetzels, Michael. “Autor/Künstler,” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe*, *ibid.*, p. 513.

<sup>18</sup> Compare to Wetzels, *op. cit.*, pp. 510–519, and Kristeller, Paul O., “The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II),” *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 13, (1952), pp. 17–46.

<sup>19</sup> “Deren ideologische Emanzipation vollzieht sich in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jh. für den Künstlertypus maßgeblich in drei Figuren eines Rollenwandels: als wissender Künstler oder ‚peinture philosophe‘, als schöpferischer Geist oder Genie, schließlich aber als bildender Künstler in dem von der deutschen Klassik geprägten universalen, für Text- und Bildmedien gültigen Sinne.” Wetzels, Michael., *op. cit.*, p. 515.

<sup>20</sup> “Diderot geht in seinen Enzyklopädie-Artikeln ‚artisan‘ und ‚artiste‘ zwar auch vom Unterschied des Künstlers als Inbegriff des geistig frei Schaffenden gegenüber der rein mechanischen Arbeit des Handwerkers aus, betont dabei aber zugleich den Bezug ihrer intellektuellen Fähigkeiten auf praktische Realisierung als Besonderheit derjenigen. . .” Wetzels, Michael., *op. cit.*, pp. 515–516.

<sup>21</sup> See Kristeller, Paul O., “The Modern System of the Arts (I),” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XII (January 1951), pp. 496–527., and “The Modern System of the Arts (II),” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. XIII (January 1952), pp. 17–46.

<sup>22</sup> By “art as institution” I mean the new social role of art that is entirely the product of modern (eighteenth century) synthesis. The new role includes the whole set of new institutions and occupations that deal with art, such as museums, galleries, art academies, new disciplines that analyze art, critiques and journals that all together select, define, preserve, exhibit, analyze, evaluate, publicize, advertise and sell art—compare to Shiner, Larry. *The Invention of Art* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 75–152. Thus, our modern understanding of the concept of “art,” does not include only skilled execution or creation, but also the whole “system” of arts or the “world” which deals with art, encompassing not just artworks or artist, but a whole set of other institutions and social roles. Full affirmation of this component of art came in the second half of twentieth century with the idea of “artworld” (Arthur Danto) and “institutional theory of art”

(George Dickey), where this aspect was theoretically strongly developed and used to denote art almost exclusively.

<sup>23</sup> Wetzel, Michael., op. cit., p. 516.

<sup>24</sup> Compare to Wetzel, op. cit., p. 520.

<sup>25</sup> “Dem widerspricht schon Delacroix, der als romantischer Gegenspieler zu der von Ingres repräsentierten klassizistischen David-Schule gewissermaßen zu einem ‚spiritus rector‘ für Balzacs Künstlernovelle wurde, indem er den Blick des Künstlers nach innen, auf die ‚imagination‘ lenkt, die der Ursprung ‚des tableaux, des images‘ sei. Er verweist damit zugleich auf die schon von Gautier betonte Orientierung des Künstlerbegriffs an der literarischen Autorfigur, die bei ihm zwar nicht—wie bei seinem jüngeren Zeitgenossen Eugène Fromentin—zu einer Doppelkarriere als Dichter und Maler geführt hat, aber immer wieder Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Autor und Künstler in den Vordergrund rückt.” Wetzel, Michael., op. cit., 527.

<sup>26</sup> “Here we can observe that modern art, since the end of the last (nineteenth—D. Dž.) century, tries to build its own system of expressive means and to ascribe them specific autonomy.” Filiberto Menna, *Analytical Line of Modern Art*. (Belgrade: Clio, 2001), p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> In the context of symbolist art, Michelle Facos addresses the interrelation between the conceptual aspect of Whistler’s paintings and its repercussions on the formal structure of the canvas: “Whistler’s desire to evoke rather than to describe produced compositions that were radically simplified in form and color.” Facos, Michelle. *Symbolist Art in Context*. (Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2009), p. 55.

<sup>28</sup> Michelle Facos addresses this question, making parallels with literature and poetry: “Like their writer colleagues, Symbolist artists sought to clothe ideas in perceptible forms, while believing that art should direct viewers toward immaterial entities and metaphysical truths. The particular artist’s goals, instincts, and imagination determined the specific forms that these creations assumed.” Facos, *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> “The assertion that an artist’s creative powers were divine, arrogant though it might seem, found a measure of support in contemporary scientific findings. The research of the Russian scientist Ivan Pavlov in the 1870s suggested that animals could draw logical conclusions about experiences and modify their behavior accordingly. Pavlov’s findings required the formulation of new criteria for differentiating human intellect from animal thought processes. Many researchers concluded that the decisive criterion was creativity rather than a capacity for rational thought, as had long been assumed. According to this hypothesis, because the greatest act of the Creator had been the genesis of the world, the artist who drew on his imagination to envision new worlds took full advantage of human potential. As Gauguin explained in an August 14, 1888, letter to Émile Schuffenecker: “think more about the act of creation than about the rest; it is the only way to ascend to God while imitating our divine master in the process of creation.” Facos, Michelle., *ibid.*, pp. 33–35.

<sup>30</sup> “In referring to non-objectivity, I merely wished to make it plain that Suprematism is not concerned with things, objects, etc., and more: non-objectivity in general has nothing to do with it. Suprematism is a definite system in accordance with which color has developed throughout the long course of culture. (. . .) The artist too must transform the color masses and create an artistic system, but he must not paint little pictures of fragrant roses since all this would be dead representation pointing back to life.” Malevich, Kasimir. “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. (Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 292–293.

<sup>31</sup> In his text “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism” Malevich refers to the artist as “free creator” (“an artist is under obligation to be a free creator”) who should achieve “absolute creation” (“Only in absolute creation will he acquire his right”). In the next line he explains the methodology by

which “freedom” and “absolute creation” can be reached: “And this is possible when we free all our art from vulgar subject-matter and teach our consciousness to see everything in nature not as real forms and objects, but as material masses from which forms must be made, which have nothing in common with nature.” Kasimir Malevich, “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” op. cit., p. 175.

<sup>32</sup> “Our world of art has become new, non-objective, pure. Everything has vanished, there remains a mass of material, from which the new forms will be built.” Malevich, Kasimir. “From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism: The New Realism in Painting,” in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ibid., p. 181. “I have ripped through the blue lampshade of the constraints of color. I have come out into the white. Follow me, comrade aviators. Swim into the abyss. (...) Swim in the white free abyss, infinity is before you.” Malevich, Kasimir. “Non-Objective Art and Suprematism,” op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>33</sup> “Weather Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.” Duchamp, Marcel. “The Richard Mutt Case,” in *Art in Theory 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, ibid., p. 252.

<sup>34</sup> Kosuth, Joseph. *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings 1966–1990*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 18. *Art After Philosophy*, Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> *The Death of Art*, ed. Berel Lang. (New York: Haven Publishers, 1984); Belting, Hans. *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte?*. (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1983); Danto, Arthur. *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).