

# **Demarcating the artistic**

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For reference:

ZAMAROS, PANAYOTIS (2008), *Demarcating the Artistic*, Vignette, Lausanne: P. Zamaros.

Demarcating the artistic involves finding the separators that help establish what is artistic and what not. But before doing so, one needs to understand the artistic. This is because in establishing the contours of the artistic, one will be able to use this very contour as the delimiting frontier to include that which will eventually be characterized as artistic and what not<sup>1</sup>.

If the artistic is a function of myth-ology, then one could quickly conclude that the myth-ology is the criterion looked for in that it establishes the perspective from where one can make sense of thing or movement as artistic. But this leads to a plurality of criteria which upset art as a sign since these myth-ologies pull it apart. One therefore needs to explore another route.

The route that is here suggested is that of the *art-event* in the sense that 'art is temporary, fleeting, only to *return again and again*, to be made present, repeatedly and differentially, to bring together, in an instance, both artwork and artholder'<sup>2</sup>

Art is an event on grounds that it cannot radiate. It can thus be understood as a manifestation, an emergence, or *aletheia* as unconcealment in the Heideggerian sense. But does this imply that art is *not* a quality that is attached to a particular thing or movement? Indeed it does, because if it were a quality, it would have been a priori attached to thing or movement - or a posteriori once the unconcealing is effected. But the a priori attachment of a quality requires its definition, hence the prior establishment of a criterion for defining such a quality – infinite regress. The posteriori attachment of a quality involves selecting from all the a priori defined qualifiers the most suitable to be attached to thing or movement. Yet again this takes us nowhere.

Thus, since neither a priori nor posteriori attachment of qualification is possible, one is left to consider that attaching any quality to *any* thing or movement involves getting to know such thing or moment at the same time as attaching the qualifier. Put otherwise, getting to know thing or movement, experiencing them, is what gives thing and movement its quality. Their qualification is thus derived from the event of experiencing on grounds that what renders both qualification and experience is their *own différenciating* quality.

Having said this I am faced with a paradox: on the one hand I seek to use the artistic as the very delimiting factor for qualifying thing and movement, whereas on the other art as an event removes the very possibility for establishing such a quality in the sense that such a quality cannot be fixed or attached to thing or movement.

Yet there is nothing paradoxical about it: art as an event resists attempts to qualification and the establishment of criteria. Seen otherwise, criteria are temporary...they are events themselves...prone to change. This means that one cannot demarcate the artistic...indeed!

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<sup>1</sup> I do not need to define beforehand both the artistic and non-artistic and this requires a criterion for doing so; it is only necessary to define the contours of one qualifier and by default anything that cannot fit the definition so to speak, can be considered to be not artistic.

<sup>2</sup> Online 1 : §41.

## Reference

Online 1: ZAMAROS, PANAYOTIS (2007), 'Art', online lecture, *DrZ. Network*, <http://www.zamaros.net>, 29.10.2008.