COGNITIVE IMPORTANCE AND FUNCTIONS OF:
READY-MADE, METAPHOR, ALLEGORY AND SIMULATION

1. The Context and Meaning of the Work of Art

Presumption I: 'work of art', and thus 'art work', have something to do with knowledge.2

Presumption II: certain art works, and thus the work of art, point to 'THIS something that the work of art has to do with knowledge.'

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Certain artists, just to mention Paul Klee, Marcel Duchamp and Rene Magritte, showed that the perception or the reading of a visual work is not a simple process based on the scheme of the cause and the consequence. Klee experimented with written recording which are analogous to the ideographic alphabet, by organizing the picture as a text,4 while his context was the context of the reinterpretation of the northern romanticism through a visual record of expressionism.5 Marcel Duchamp, with his 'readymade', had changed the status of artist who creates or produces an object into the status of artist who works with objects — this is a distinction upon which Hintikka insists when pointing to the difference between knowing what somebody is making and knowing what somebody is doing.6 The Duchamp's context has remained throughout a complex compilation of outgrowing the cognitive horizon of

1 The 'work of art' we call the use of a paradigm which for us has the meaning, the value and function of art. The 'art work' we call the final or a possible result of the 'work of art' — 'art work' is simply a painting, drawing, sculpture, object, readymade, installation, ambient, photograph, event (performance), etc.
2 We started from an observance by Charles Harrison and Fred Orton: '...art Is cognitively (and not simply culturally) significant,' that was started in their text Introduction: Modernism, Explanation and Knowledge, in the anthology: Modernism * Criticism * Realism, Harper & Row, New York — London 1984.
3 We could say that every art work is based on the knowledge, but only a few [scholars] have questioned the 'knowledge', set forth as the object of their study.
4 In certain paintings, and in drawings in particular, Klee really simulates the text: the birth of signs into a syntagma (a linear string) and of syntagmas into the lines of a text (a vertical string). Cf. drawings The Steamer Passes Through Botanical Garden (1921) or Children's Playground (1931).
5 Klee develops the written record of expressionist character, an expressionism based upon The Blue Rider being in mind, and which semantically refers to the theory of organic world of Goethe's and to German romanticism.
6 Jaakko Hintikka: Modality; Morality and other Problems of Sense and Nonsense: Essays Dedicated to Soren Haliden, CWK Gleerup Bokforlag, Lund 1973; Cf. above, note no. 2.
cubism and futurism, dadaist game, alchemic procedures and lucid questioning of the intellect and the work of art. Rene Magritte explicitly questioned, with several series of drawings — 'Words and Images', 'The use of Words I (Ceci n'est pas une pipe.)', 'The Wind', 'The Bird', etc. — parallely displaying a drawing and a text, the status of the reference, as on the drawing of the pitcher there is the inscription 'The bird' while on the drawing of the watch there is the inscription 'The wind', while the things are even more complicated with the pipe. The Magritte's context is a context of surrealist paradox: of an omission, a joke, a transmission, etc.

All the three examples work [operate] with the 'reference': the relations of visual (phenomenon, form, etc.) with other — visual or nonvisual. In order to have this relation established one has to do something with knowing: knowing how, knowing that and knowing what. And this is rather a general scheme: which can relate the art work, and thus the work of art, to that which is outside the art work (this can be a landscape in front of you, the funeral in Ornan, the vision of God, a dream, a mathematical construction, a logical rule, a Lacanian psychoanalytical algorithm, etc.) by putting into operation certain references which are only made possible after a certain knowledge has been put into operation. If we would lean, only superficially of course, on the Hintikka's reading of the Frege's characterization of the meaning we would obtain a rather clearly sketched concept of the reference. According to Hintikka, the notion of the sense (Sinn) includes more than the reference (Bedeutung): it also includes the way in which this reference had been given to us. Namely, perhaps intuitively and perhaps deliberately, with all the cunning of artist, Klee, Duchamp and Magritte demonstrate the way in which the reference is given in their works. At the same time, the reference is not a simple mimesis (an image in the mirror) or a correspondence of two sets which should resemble each other (resemble visually in the sense of the Pierce's iconic sign). On the contrary, the reference, if we would quote the semantics of possible worlds, is the function of an entire possible world W in which it exists. The 'entire possible world' can be read, in somewhat more modest way, as 'some for us more substantial elements' of a possible world: in the Klee's work this is the romanticism shaped by means of expressionism, in the Duchamp's work by a dadaist gesture of choice instead of the gesture of creation, in the Magritte's work by a surrealist record supported by psychoanalysis, and all the rest is an index subordinated to 'some substantial elements'. In fact, the approximation which is the unconsequentialness of examples is at issue here and this is why the semantics of possible worlds is only partly at work, though it works nevertheless.

7 Duchamp was among the first to raise the question of the relationship between the artist (visual artist) and the status of intellectual. The question is drastic and has remained open to this day.
9 Just the knowledges (work of cognition) which are founded in the Freud's psychoanalysis are pointed to — we notice here the reference the 'drawing-text' — the context of psychoanalysis.
11 Iconic sign is a sign whose relations with the object are mediated by its likeness to the object.
12 'Semantics of possible worlds' can be helpful in the analysis, but we have to be careful in the application because we deal with nonconsequential examples of the work of art.
A couple of decades after Klee, Duchamp and Magritte began operating within the work of meaning, and thus within the work of knowing — by starting with conceptual art, and then, with sporadic and individual actions touching also the developments ‘after modernism’ — the explicit definitions of the ‘cognitive importance and functions of the work of art, and thus of the art work’ came into being. EXAMPLES:

(1) Joseph Kosuth:
There are no new forms only new meanings. An artist is engaged in the making of meaning, whether it is the cancellation of meaning or not.\(^{14}\)

and

It is not that the meaning of a work of art can transcend its time, but that a work of art describes the maker’s relationship to her or his context through the struggle to make meaning, and in so doing we get a glimpse of the life of the people who shared that meaning.\(^{15}\)

(2) Victor Burgin:
The impulse of conceptual art was not, as was widely misunderstood, to leave art (it was never an ‘anti-art’ — an empty avant-gardist gesture), it was rather to open the institution and its practices, to open the doors and windows of the museum. This world, certainly, is a world of objects, but these objects are constituted as objects only through the agency of representations — language and other forms of signifying practice. [...] Art practice was no longer to be defined as an artisanal, activity, a process of crafting fine objects in a given medium, it was rather to be seen as a set of operations performed in a field of signifying practices, perhaps centered on a medium but certainly not bounded by it.\(^{16}\)

(3) Zoran Belić W.:
Within these paradigms, on one hand, the entire cosmological visions had been built under the influence of old cosmologies of the East and the West, and, on the other, cultural and semiological analyses were made of paradigms themselves as well as of general cultural conditions and preconditions of their genesis. This had further conditioned the formation of a specific activity which could be called meditation rather than art, except for the case when the term ‘art’ refers to the development of the skill of thinking-and-acting, which is artistic to the point to which it owes its coming into being to diachronically preceding intrinsic paradigms of art, and to the point to which for one of the subjects of examination it takes these problems, as well as the ones related to the making of ‘artistic’ works in the domain of visually, auditory and verbally phenomenal [apparent] structures of signs.\(^{17}\)

(4) Rosalind Krauss:
For, within the situation of postmodernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium — sculpture — but rather in relation to the


logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium —
photography, books, lines on the walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself — might
be used.18

Quoted examples display characterizations of a work of art which are
defined by: (a) an unstable or open concept,19 (b) specializations within the
sphere of art: a clear distinction between and collaboration of technicians and
artists,20 and by (c) defining certain procedures for the dominant ones, such as:
readymade, metaphor, allegory and simulation.21

Contextually viewed, the prominence given to 'signifying and cognitive'
characterization has two opposing effects:

(a) the founding of cognitive work of art, which had been neglected by
the official trends of modernism22 and by the antintellectualism of post-
modernism,23

(b) the use of art work as a symptom or a probe, but also as a consequence
of semantic inflation which was caused by the redistribution of the 'power'
of ideologies, capital, informations, sexuality, knowledge, etc., etc., etc.

2. Definitions and Transformations

Let's examine the definitions and transformations of readymade, metaphor,
allegory and simulation.

2.1. READY-MADE

'Readymade' is the name for objects of various origin and purpose which
artists named — without any particular visual intervention through a decision
or act by them — 'art work' and which were thus introduced into the context

18 Cf. Rosalind Krauss: Sculpture in the Expanded Field, from the book The Originality of the
Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and

19 The term 'open concept' was introduced into discussions on art by Morris Weitz in his
essay «The Role of Theory in Aesthetics», Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 15,
1956. The term was reactualized by Charles Harrison in his essay Mapping and Filing, the
catalogue of the exhibit «The New Art», Hayward Gallery, London 1972. Weitz deduced the
idea of open concept from the Wittgenstein's theory of language games. Knowing what the
game is is not knowing some genuine definitions or a theory, but is rather an ability to rec-
ognize and explain the games and make a decision which would be, among the newly
contrived games, called or not called a game. The problem of art is similar to the problem
of game, at least in the relation: if we are really looking at and seeing that which we call
'art' we would not find their common characteristics — but only their likenesses. To know
what the art is is not to understand a manifest or latent essence, but it is rather the ability
to recognize, describe or explain those things which we call 'art' on the basis of some like-
nesses. The basis for catching sight of these likenesses within different concepts is their
openness. Under the openness of a concept understood is the ability to find out the condi-
tions and cases that are characteristic of these concepts, while it is not possible to provide
a list of all the conditions and cases, that is, a final description. The concept is open if the
conditions of its application can be corrected and changed, i. e. if some situation or case
can be conceived or included into a concept, by means of which it would become widened.
Open concepts are empirical, descriptive or normative, art belonging to them.

20 The artists of whom we speak here do not reject the technique or skill even though they
consider them to be secondary in the sense that the work can be exactly deduced through
mediation of the 'division of labor', the work is realized by a technician (videocameraman,
photographer, wall painter, etc.).

21 The matter is that the work of readymade, metaphor, allegory or simulation should be
taken apart as an applicable procedure, such as the scheme: A instead of B, C instead of
B, D instead of C, then exhibit A and D together. We speak of generating the schemes
which can be applicable alike a medium is being applicable in the realization of the art work.

One of the essential directions in accepting and institutionally verifying the modernism was
also the operation of eliminating the 'cognitive powers of modernism' — the art work was
presented as an 'empty sign'.

22 Postmodernism initiated by transavant-garde and neoexpressionism had been constituted
as a critique of intellectualism of modernism (the avant-gardes), of conceptual art in partic-
cular, by pointing out the sensual, the desire, the enjoyment in the act of painting, the local
chauvinism, etc.
of art objects, i.e. the art work, i.e. the work of art. The term ‘ready-made’ was introduced by Marcel Duchamp between 1913—1915 to designate certain relation and uses of objects coming from without art:

It was in 1915, in the United States, that I did other objects with inscriptions, like the snow shovel, on which I wrote something in English. The word ‘ready-made’ thrust itself on me then. It seemed perfect for these things that weren’t works of art, that weren’t sketches, and to which no art terms applied. That’s why I was tempted to make them.24

In the Duchamp’s initial context the ready-made is characterized:

(1) This was an unartistic object, such as snow shovel, pissoir, bottle rack, bicycle wheel, etc.;

(2) This object was chosen for an art object on the basis of a relatively arbitrary criterion, therefrom could be deduced, for instance, the criterion of a ‘banal object’, of an ‘object for everyday use’, etc. Duchamp insisted on the absence of any aesthetic criterion in the choice:

A point which I want very much to establish is that the choice of these ‘ready-mades’ was never dictated by aesthetic delectation. This choice was based on a reaction of visual indifference with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste. ... In fact a complete anaesthesia.25

(3) This object was placed, most often in the way it wasn’t usually placed in its traditional function, while the display of the object would not conceal the origin of the object, but would rather emphasize it by the ‘unnaturalness of display’.

(4) On the object, near the object, something is usually written which designates the object, for instance, the snow shovel had the inscription *In advance of the broken arm*, the bicycle wheel and the bottle rack were called just that ‘Bicycle Wheel’ and ‘Bottle Rack’, while the pissoir had the inscription ‘Fountain’ and was signed by the pseudonym ‘R. Mutt, 1917’. All these titles, and Duchamp spoke as early as in his painting period that the title of the painting was very important for him because he was interested in the intellectual and not a physical aspect of painting,26 rather play the role before the ‘name’, in the sense of a personal name, and not the role of a reference, denotation, description, explanation, etc.

As of the late 1950’s, Duchamp’s concept of ready-made became an inexhaustible inspiration for artists coming from various movements — from neodada and fluxus, through minimal art, processual art, body art, land art and conceptual art, to collage and montage of postmodernism. The ‘one and the same Duchampian scheme’ is characteristic for all these examples, as applied to various outside-the-art contexts, and thus to various objects: which strictly were not only objects anymore (three-dimensional), but also beings (humans, animals), institutions, institutional forms of behavior, etc. For example, Jannis Kounellis exhibited live horses, Tomaž Salamun exhibited a haystack, Bernard Venet exhibited scientific theories or scholars’ lectures, Joseph Kosuth exhibited copies of dictionary definitions of abstract notions, etc. However,
these at first sight 'epigonic acts' had various interests, for instance: Kounellis and Šalamun went through the phenomenology of the work of art, while Kosuth tried to examine the cognitive conditions of the work of art, etc.

The concept of 'ready-made', as well as examples of the practice of ready-made, have first of all shown that the art has to do with the use of objects, and not only with the production of objects. In other words, the work of art is based on certain conditions which are not out of the reach of the work of art. And this is why the work with 'ready-made' is always a second-degree activity as compared with the activity of the production of object.

2.2 METAPHOR AND ALLEGORY

The 'metaphor' is an undefined word, while the metaphor is an undefined concept, so that we have to be careful not to assign to it the rules of the use that are stricter than those found in the practice.\(^\text{27}\) Then there is the distinction between the 'metaphor' — as it is defined in the rhetoric, the theory of literature and the philosophy of language — and the 'visual metaphor' being an analogous contrivance which tries to apply the schemes of 'metaphor' to the analysis of the meaning of visual products (painting, photography, collage, etc.). We will point to another distinction, as it is essential for our discussion: the 'work of metaphor'. In fact, at issue here is the endeavor of artists, the artists of whose context we spoke in the first part of this paper, to simulate the work of metaphor, that is the work of its abstract principles in the realizations of visual, sound, spoken or written mediations.

Metaphor: (in Greek) 'to carry [something] from one place to another'. The metaphor is a figure of speech in which an object is described by the terms of another one. The metaphor is a word which is used in place of another on the basis of a likeness or analogy between their meanings. For instance, Richards says that the metaphor is basically a mutual borrowing and communication of thoughts, an interrelationship of contexts. Etc.\(^\text{28}\) John Searle defines just that which would be typical for the metaphor:

... the problem of metaphor deals with the relation between the meaning of words and the meaning of sentences on one hand, and the speaker's meaning or a stating meaning on the other.\(^\text{29}\)

When one speaks of a 'visual metaphor' then the problem of metaphor, in Anglo-Saxon literature in particular, is equated with the problem of reference of 'visual art work' and of the one which is outside a visual art work. On the other hand, a tendency has been observed seeking to establish analogies between the relations of the meanings of words and the sentence, and the relations of the meanings of visual elements of a picture or a picture as a whole. For instance, this, is done by Klee when in a painting or a drawing he draws the mountain like a triangle: the triangle goes in for the mountain, there is a certain likeness — the experiential likeness, the flexibility of the arbitrariness of sign, the iconic sign. We might quote quite another case,


\(^{28}\) Various dictionaries were used.


The arbitrariness of the relationship between the designator and the designated, given in the Saussure's theory of sign, allows for the 'flexibility' inserting, or connecting different designators and designated ones. Poststructuralist semiotics have just been engaged in the exploitation of the flexibility of the arbitrariness.
I would remind you of the painting by Philippe Otto Runge 'Artist's Parents' from 1806. We are almost faced with a realistic painting, alike the painting which looks as ordered almost, we would say a 'family photograph' of the artist's parents and their children. Certain authors claim that this painting is a metaphor or an allegory. The elements of the painting are linked into a chain showing that the painting speaks of the universal cosmic law: pointing to the unexisting though announced line which goes from the plants through children to the old people. In this case the painting functions as a text which can be read literally or metaphorically, while the metaphor grows into an allegory.

However, the text which is a written record of sentences: by hand, a typewriter, in an electronic way, etc. has been reduced to the transfer of meaning exclusively, while a visual art work deals with the phenomenality as well; through certain substantial traits which are not of verbal character. For instance, try to observe the physical relationship of a monk and a prayer icon during the prayer and the relationship of a museum visitor and a Newman's painting on the wall. Two different phenomenologies, but for us, today, two different semantics as well. You can, if you are an artists, build a metaphor of a physical relationship of a [Serbian] orthodox monk and a prayer icon or a museum visitor and a Newman's painting. What I want to say is that the things with 'visual metaphor' are more complex, and often less clear than verbal metaphors — this can be inspirational, can't it?

An artist today, and a more pedantic analysis would show that this also holds for artists in the past, knows a lot about the metaphor or, more precisely, about the work of metaphor and s/he tries to imitate that work. What is it that s/he's doing? S/he uses various elements: words, paintings, various forms of behaviour, outside-the-art objects, her/his art objects or art object of another [artist], etc. by applying them to the letter of their context, the way of use, or by changing the context, the way of use, etc. At this point already one can notice that the difference between the 'readymade' and the 'metaphor' has been lost. The whole matter becomes even more complicated by the fact that which had been used in most cases is not semantically uniform, but that, on the contrary, it is polysemous, and greatly so.

We would only point to two examples: the first example: the word 'Triglav' [three-headed in Slovene and in Serbo-Croatian] means 'three heads' the word 'Triglav' is the name of the highest mountain in Yugoslavia, the word 'Triglav' is the title of a work by the OHO Group (Matanović, Nez and Della-bernardina) made in 1968, both the word and the concept 'Triglav' are the Slovenian national symbol, and all the while the art work 'Triglav' is a situation in which three artists, standing in a street, are covered with a cloth out of which their heads peek though at different heights. The second example: the members of Art & Language made a 'realistic painting': Portrait of V. I. Lenin by Charangovitch in the style of Jackson Pollock, the painting is realistic, there are references between the Lenin's image and the painting, but the painting is also a metaphor, it is a transmission of 'Charangovitch's configuration' by the Pollocks's means. Art-Language insist upon the work of a visual meta-

31 If a certain text can be interpreted in the way that the meaning of its sentences as a whole, in all its particularities, is being transferred onto an entirely different series of phenomena of which not a word was mentioned in the text, and that just in that transferred meaning the real meaning of the text can be seen, then one speaks of allegory. Indeed, we can understand the allegory as an expansion of the concept of metaphor.
phor: besides the semantic level the phenomenological level also lends itself to the 'transmission' of a possible world and the references belonging to it into another possible world with references belonging to it, that is into a third one...

2.3 Simulations

The idea of simulation can be discerned already in the 'definitions and transformations' of readymade, metaphor and allegory. The simulation is a consequent or nonconsequent use of an X, the being anything which can be used syntactically or semantically. OHO simulated Triglav/triglav, Art & Language simulated the realism and metaphor, etc.

The term 'simulation', in the way it has been used in recent years in the art vocabulary owes [its being used] to the poststructuralist theory of Jean Baudrillard, which originated upon the compilation of a linguistic relativism, the realized, informational superstructure of Western societies (2), the psychological unstableness and the polyvalence of the crises of ideologies, economy, culture, etc.:

Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.32

Concretely, at the level of the work or art the simulation is based upon the mechanisms of readymade, metaphor and allegory:

(1) the readymade takes objects, beings, institutions, situations and events, as the material of work (object), the media of work and the content of work.
(2) the metaphor moves the references of the art work from one possible world into another, a third one, Nth, thus shifting the meaning to a degree when the 'knowledge' is being lost about what was the reference that and of which of the possible worlds was the initial one.
(3) the allegory; at issue here is not the allegory of rhetorics or Christianity, the one here is based on the unwholeness (is the Not-Whole of Lacan in question[?]) of the expression of man, that is, on the necessary approximation of the reference which is a function of an entire possible world W' by some for us substantial 'elements'. The 'allegory' is untollerantly insolent, because it uses any nonconsistent and Not-Whole one of ours in order to add/assign a visual work with references, meanings or uses which a 'sane or insane mind would hardly assign'. (You may notice that when I say that the allegory, and not an artist, does so and so, this is in the spirit of a discourse on the simulation — of a discourse which is separated from a subject.)

33 According to not an entirely consequential reading of the text by Craig Owens: «The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism», cf. note no. 32.
3. Cognitive Functions

When he speaks of a metaphor, Searle makes a difference between two types of meaning: the stating meaning of a speaker and the meaning of words (or a sentence). The stating meaning of a speaker is that which he designates when using words and sentences, and the meaning of words (or sentences) is that which they do not mean. Searle claims that the metaphoric meaning is always a stating meaning.

By starting from Searle we could say that the meanings of readymade, metaphor, allegory and simulation are 'stating meanings of artists'. Stating meanings of artists are always intentional, that is directed [towards something]. He does not accept the work of art, and thus an art work either, as a privilege of the Nature, the Logic, the World, the Ethos, etc., but rather as something which is constituted by his work. His work has 'stating meanings' as well, he not only states (offers, produces, uses) something, but he also makes announcement of his relationship with this. And, in a 'very strange' way, the consciousness, objects, situations of culture and that final result 'art work' are being connected. Each of the examples of art work that has been mentioned in this paper, in this way or another, discloses that 'strange connection', and this being the work of knowing the art which adroitly or not-adroitly deals with the 'Knowing How', 'Knowing That' and 'Knowing What'.

EXAMPLES: READY-MADE METAPHOR ALLEGORY SIMULATION

Paul Klee, »The Steamer Passes the Botanical Gardens«, 1921.

Rene Magritte, »This is not a Pipe«.
Marcel Duchamp, "Bottle Dryer", 1914.

Grupa OHO (Tomaž Salamun), Hay «Stacks, Corn Peelings and Bricks», 1969.


WAY IN WHICH REFERENCE IS GIVEN

PAINTING, SIGN AND TEXT

READY-MADE

PAINTING IS INCORRECTLY NAMED

POSSIBLE WORLDS

WRITING

GESTURE OF CHOICE
INSTEAD OF THE GESTURE OF CREATION

GESTURE OF CHOICE
OMISSON, JOKE AND TRANSMISSION

ROMANTICISM

EXPRESSIONISM

DADA

SURREALISM

(diagram 1)

VISUAL OBJECT

F reference

WAY IN WHICH REFERENCE IS GIVEN

OUT OF THE ART WORK
(objects, events, beings, meanings,

(diagram 2)