

Jožef Muhovič
Art ↔ Aesthetics ↔ Philosophy

I. Introduction

The issue discussed in this contribution is the *logic* of relations between art, aesthetics and philosophy in their practical, everyday interactions, which is, in my opinion, a topical question for two reasons at least. *First*, because the postmodern era, oscillating between the cult of the radical distinction between phenomena and the opposing cult of their pragmatic (con)fusion, is itself calling out for an appropriate answer. And *second*, as an individual engaged in art theory and practice, I am interested in the logical conditions under which art, aesthetics and philosophy can – if at all – mutually support and inspire one another in establishing the most direct contact with reality, which is their »subject«, without losing their autonomy.¹

II. Exposition: Mini-definitions

A fundamental step in studying relations is the identification and definition of their constitutive elements. And this is already the first crucial problem encountered in exploring the relations between art, aesthetics and philosophy. It is generally known that, because of their nature and complexity, a single and ultimate definition of these fields is not possible. But if I am to proceed, I have no other choice but to risk some *elementary* defini-

¹ It is certain that by far the most competent individual for enlightening the issue discussed would be someone who is equally talented, educated and creative in all three fields, i.e. in the arts, philosophy and aesthetics, in the deepest sense of these words. Despite having studied all three fields, I do not feel entirely qualified to fulfil this criterion, as I am creatively active *only* in the fine arts. And so, in attempting to explore the logic of relations between art, aesthetics and philosophy, I have consciously or unconsciously resorted to certain professional apriorisms and thus my view of the problem will most likely appear biased. Nevertheless, there are two reasons why I dare to present my personal conclusions to the public. The first is that I shall explicitly support my findings, allowing others to verify them at all times. And second, I consider a public presentation to be the best opportunity to have my views made more complex or rejected, with arguments, of course.

tions of these three fields. In spite of all the dangers involved. In order to capture the phenomenon as a whole and present its essence in a few words or sentences, it will be necessary to make reductions, simplifications and arbitrary syntheses, all of which can easily lead to vague, incomplete or oversimplified results.

Nevertheless, I dare to ask (myself): What are the elementary characteristics of the phenomena designated by the terms »art«, »aesthetics« and »philosophy«?

1. Art

If one disregards all the particularities – stemming from means of expression, technical procedures and ways of thinking – which make artistic phenomena and fields distinguishable, one may draw two maximally generalized conclusions: (a) art is the articulation and activation of thoughts and emotions with the mediation of sensual equivalents adapted to them, and (b) works of art are systems of organized sensations (*A. A. Moles*) provoking symbolic reactions when experienced. Both generalizations show art as a special »form of operating with experience« (*L. A. White*), whose goal is to make experience intelligible *simultaneously* on the sensual, emotional and spiritual levels, and thus help man to holistically adapt to his environment. However, there are two preconditions for such operating with experience: (i) practical sensual cognition, and (ii) effective »communication« between sensual recognizability and conceptional abstraction.

(i) In art, the creation of forms to represent the artist's experience and touch the thoughts and emotions of the public is always an act based on sensations. Yet this act cannot be realized without a knowledge of the principles on which the production and organization of sensations employed by a specific branch of art is based. For this reason, a work of art is always the result of the level of knowledge of such principles and the effectiveness of their application in practice. Its contents are not only the contents of the artist's thoughts and emotions, but also sensual cognition itself. One may therefore say that art is the expression of *thoughts and emotions by means of sensual cognition*, and that this fact is the basic element for its definition.

(ii) If one of the determining characteristics of art is expressing spiritual contents through mediation of the sensual, it is also evident that such expression can only function if art disposes with the means and methods enabling the effective »translation« of the sensual into the spiritual and vice-versa. Practice has shown that art masters such translation superbly. Even more: its artefacts are nothing short of exemplary and inspirational

prototypes of the translation of the empirical into the conceptual and ideas into reality.

In addition to the characteristics stemming from the reflections made, artistic phenomena have many other characteristics and aspects which will not be considered here. But since the articulated characteristics should not, in my opinion, be missing in any phenomenologically consistent description of the *differentia specifica* of art, I shall take the liberty to make the following mini-definition: art is the expression of thoughts and emotions by means of sensual cognition; the operational form of such expression is the development of spiritual contents into an artistic form with the purpose of articulating human experience in a poetical way, simultaneously adapted to the sensual, emotional and intellectual abilities of man.

2. Aesthetics

It is generally known that aesthetics was born as a philosophical discipline in the mid 18th century from the desire of systematic philosophy to cover one of the great white blurs on the map of its reflections – the sphere of the sensual. A. G. Baumgarten introduced this discipline as a philosophical theory of sensual cognition (*scientia cognitionis sensitivae*), considering it to be, together with logic, an essential propedeutic discipline of theoretical and practical philosophy.² His fundamental idea, inspired by the enlightenment, was that conceptions and sensual cognition are two separate and independent areas governed by their own unique principles and rules, and thus must be treated equally by philosophy. He developed his aesthetics in order to study, in a philosophical way, the sensual so ignored in the past, and use it to explore the immanent laws of the sensual in a similar way as logic reveals the laws of thought. The fundamental concept of Baumgarten's analyses of the sensual is »beauty« as the representative of the most perfect form and highest level of sensual cognition. And because it is generally believed that, in art, beauty appears in the most purified and perfect forms, for Baumgarten this meant that his aesthetics, as the »fundamental analysis of the beautiful«, is *eo ipso* also the theory of art.

Hence, Baumgarten's aesthetics is, at its core, »dualistic«. On one side it is a philosophical theory of the sensual and sensual cognition, and on the other a philosophical theory of the beautiful and of art as an activity of creating beauty. The subsequent development of aesthetics grasped both concepts, continuing to develop them always in close connection with current philosophical debates.

² Cf. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Aesthetica*, Frankfurt a. d. Oder, 1750, § 1–3 (reprint lat./ger. Hildesheim 1961).

My mini-definition: aesthetics is a philosophical theory of sensual cognition in the broadest sense of the word, and considering the fact that art is »expressing through sensual cognition«, also a philosophical theory of art, or, more precisely, a theory of the philosophical aspects of art. Bound by its subject to the sensual, and by its methodology to the high conceptual abstraction of philosophy, aesthetics operates at the intersection of the spheres of interest of two key human cognitive abilities: perception and thought. This location allows it to study their interactions »on its own skin« and treat them »from the inside«.

3. Philosophy

The problem of defining philosophy lies in its nature, in the fact that it is not possible to once for all define neither its subject (as the subject of philosophizing may literally become everything that exists) nor its universal methodology (as each new approach to philosophizing is *ipso facto* an invention of a new methodology).³

Philosophical speculation begins with the notion of »being« (*Sein*) and its strong distinction from the notion of »the existent« (*Seiendes*). Only when an awareness of the unity or oneness of being awakes in connection with a multitude of the existing does a specifically philosophical way of thinking about the world occur. But this thinking continues to remain linked to the sphere of the existing for a considerable time. The beginning, origin and foundation of the being is sought in the sphere of the existing. For philosophy, the particular must not remain particular, but should be included as a functional part in a certain whole, in a certain universal form of law and order.

Therefore, the fundamental philosophical question is how to identify and articulate in notions the being and essence of the existing. Since, contrary to existence, being and essence do not present themselves directly, and because the hidden foundation of a thing must be revealed by a specific activity, philosophy can only arrive at an answer by developing various cognitive strategies. In addressing the question of the being and essence of the existing, philosophy has developed (and continues to develop) many concrete answers. A close look at their logical structure will reveal that all

³ From this aspect philosophy, in contrast to other sciences, does not dispose with a fund of generally accepted and conclusive knowledge, or with a specific "introduction to the profession" in the usual sense of the word. More precisely see for example Albrecht Wellmer, *Adorno, Anwalt des Nicht-Identischen. Eine Einführung*, in A. Wellmer, *Zur Dialektik von Moderne und Postmoderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, ⁵1993), p. 135 ff.

these answers are, in a certain sense, the fruit of three macro-strategies which have developed through the long history of philosophizing. I will adopt W. Welsch's approach and call them *metaphysical*, *modernistic* and *postmodernistic*, and, as Welsch has done, employ the notions *aesthetisation* and *anaesthetisation*⁴ to illustrate them.

The *metaphysical* macro-strategy is defined by the belief that the hidden foundation of the existing can only be discovered by peeling off as thoroughly as possible its sensual, aesthetic shell. Thus, by means of deaesthetisation, which directs us from the sensual to the transcendental, from *aesthetic* (i.e. material, physical, sensual) to *anaesthetic* (i.e. nonsensual, reflective, spiritual). The metaphysical model attempts to maximize the difference between the sensual and the transcendental, which is why the predicates of the transcendental sphere (non-movable, non-changeable, non-spatial, non-temporal, etc.) are in all cases the negative predicates of the sensual sphere. This is also one of the traps of the metaphysical model.⁵ – On the other hand, the *modernistic* strategy announces a completely different model: *aesthetisation*. The being and essence of the existing can not be reached by eliminating the sensual, but, on the contrary, by intensively exploring its multiformity, by »attempting to penetrate through it« (but never successfully, due to the exclusiveness of a single direction and a single manner of such penetration). – The present-day *postmodernistic* strategy is seeking new ways of revealing the being and essence of the existing by functionally linking both models in order to avoid their traps. Its maxim is: to graft the anaesthetic on the aesthetic⁶ and »the whole only *via* difference«. ⁷

Therefore, I may briefly summarize my view of the action range of philosophy as follows: philosophy is a reflected contemplation of the being and essence of the existing, which, in its plurality, appears as the inseparable unity of the aesthetic and the anaesthetic. The goal of philosophy is to explore the logic of this unity and the conceptual integration of the particular into a universal whole. Philosophy attains this goal by methodically questioning the existing and the known.

⁴ Cf. Welsch, *Ästhetisches Denken* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, jun. Verlag, 1990), pp. 23–30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–111.

⁷ Cf. Wolfgang Welsch, *Unsere Postmoderne Moderne* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993), pp. 60–63.

III. Topology of the Interactive Space

1. Context and its elements

As incomplete as the definitions of art, aesthetics and philosophy given above may seem, they nevertheless point to an interesting situation. They make it perfectly clear that, in spite of all of their radically different objectives and methods, art, aesthetics and philosophy have a recognizable common denominator: *all three deal in one way or another with the relation between the aesthetic and the anaesthetic.* – In my opinion this very fact is the proper basis for further reflection.

In other words, one could say that the *working space* of art, aesthetics and philosophy is the interaction area of the aesthetic and the anaesthetic. Therefore, I shall first attempt to show how this interaction area is manifested in man as the creator of these arts and sciences. – Man, says *J. Huxley*, is the indivisible and simultaneous unity of matter and spirit.⁸ This means that he lives at the intersection of two worlds and that man himself is the intersection of these two worlds: a closed material world, determined by physical impulses and determinisms, and an open, spiritual world, governed by the conceptual flexibility of the mind (*intellect*) and the liberty to make decisions (*will*). The first world existentially attaches man to »physics« or »aesthetics« (i.e. to the material and sensual objects and phenomena of the real world), while the second links man to »metaphysics« or »anaesthetics« (i.e. to phenomena founded on experience, such as substance, principle, essence, rule, law, etc.). This attachment makes man existentially unable to abandon neither the material nor the spiritual dimension of reality which he feels inside him, but even more, he extrapolates them to the external world and recognizes them as equal and equivalent parts of the whole comprised of the world and the universe. Man's existence is dependant on the *functional cooperation* of these two worlds, as the spirit can only constitute itself on a »background« of the material and the sensual, while the material and the sensual can only become humane reality when animated with the spiritual.

In man, the relation between the aesthetic and the anaesthetic presents itself in concrete form through man's activities. From this aspect one could say that art, aesthetics and philosophy are nothing more than *operational forms of exploring* relations between the aesthetic and the anaesthetic, adapted to their specific goals: (a) art is a form of exploring relations between form and content, (b) aesthetics is a form of exploring relations between percep-

⁸ Cf. Julian Huxley, *Essays of a Humanist* (London: Penguin Books and Chatto & Windus, 1964), p. 43.

tion and cognition, and (c) philosophy is a form of exploring relations between material and spiritual reality.

My fundamental question is, how do the particularities of these three forms of exploring relations between the aesthetic and the anaesthetic influence their behaviour in practical everyday interactions? Due to the vitality and complexity of the three spheres, a conclusive answer to this question is evidently impossible. But it is perhaps possible to identify a certain basic *logic* of their interactions, both those that have become historical facts and those still slumbering in the potencies of their natures. For this purpose I will attempt to enlighten the following relations: (a) philosophy ↔ aesthetics, (b) aesthetics ↔ art, and (c) art ↔ philosophy.

2. Philosophy ↔ Aesthetics

Of those mentioned, this relation is probably the most comprehensible and least problematic. It is an easily proven fact that, from the very beginning, even before acquiring its present name, aesthetics was a philosophical discipline in the full sense of the word. This means that it has always approached its »subjects« (the sensual, beauty, art) *in a philosophical way*, with the help of philosophical concepts, and in consonance with the current philosophical debates. This, of course, has its consequences. – Every science, including philosophy, has developed a specific corpus of fundamental concepts for the purpose of studying those contents within the sphere of its interest. Thus, when a certain science throws the net of its concepts beyond the reality it is studying, it can catch only those contents which its concepts are able to identify and its specific terminology capable of expressing (*Wittgenstein*). For aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, this means that it is capable of catching only the *philosophical* aspects of the realities studied. And, of course, realities have many more, equally significant aspects.

3. Aesthetics ↔ Art

The relation between aesthetics and art is more complex and complicated, primarily because this is still an open relation. It may be approached from two aspects dictated by the very history of aesthetics.

As already mentioned, aesthetics was not born of any special love of philosophers for art, but of their love for philosophy. The purpose of its interest in art was to develop and test philosophical themes and problems, because philosophy discovered that art was, from its viewpoint, an excellent »*modelsphere of reality*« in modern philosophical terms.⁹ One aspect of the

⁹ Cf. Welsch, *Ästhetisches Denken*, pp. 111–113.

relation between aesthetics and art is the inclination of aesthetics towards philosophy: with the help of aesthetics in art, philosophy is *searching for a path to itself*. The second, also historically documented, but much weaker aspect of this relation is the inclination of aesthetics towards art, a trend announced by Schiller¹⁰ and Nietzsche, which, in modified form, has extended into our period: aesthetics should stop being the *maid-servant of philosophy* and should devote itself more intensively to its subject.

a. *Aesthetics as a »philosophy via art«*

There are several reasons why, for many philosophical strategies, art is an extremely useful *»modelsphere of reality«*. I shall mention only two, in my opinion, key reasons. The first is that art does not explore the relation between the aesthetic and anaesthetic in a theoretical way, but *establishes it in practice*; in its highest achievements, art even managed to establish such relations in an exemplary (*archetypical*), purified (*catharsis*) and holistic way, again and again, and employing extremely plural solutions. In this respect art often is, for philosophy, a representative of reality, its concentrated *sucus*, which is considerably easier (despite the difficulties) to deal with than reality itself. Philosophers confirm this when they say that, for them, art is an *organon* which opens the door to the totality of reality¹¹ and to its extremely plural nature.¹² The second reason is that art as a phenomenon is so very complex and as a general notion such a flexible area that practically any philosophical theory can be tested and proven in this area.

If I attempt to schematically present the aesthetic strategy of *»philosophy via art«*, I could say that its basic purpose is the philosophical treatment of the relation between aesthetic and anaesthetic in the totality of the existing. But since unpleasantly extensive and unpurified reality makes the treatment of this relation difficult, philosophy attempts to attain the same goal indirectly: through the interaction of art (as a representational *»model«* of unpleasant reality) and aesthetics (as a philosophy open to the sensual).

The goal of aesthetics with such orientation is to develop, in confronting art, the concepts, reflective strategies and methods that will help philosophy to establish closer contacts with its subjects. For this reason it is required to provide answers to particularly certain major (epistemological and ontological) questions of philosophy, or even *»empirically«* defend certain already formulated general philosophical theses and positions. Even

¹⁰ Cf. W. Welsch, *Traditionelle und moderne Ästhetik in ihrem Verhältnis zur Praxis der Kunst. Überlegungen zur Funktion des Philosophen an Kunsthochschulen*, in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. XXVIII/2 (1983), p. 265.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.* p. 266.

¹² Cf. Welsch, *Ästhetisches Denken*, pp. 111–113.

when it is research oriented. Let me make the following analogy: aestheticians of this provenience have a similar attitude towards art as artists do towards nature – they consider it the source of (philosophical) motives and inspirations.

In this perspective both art and aesthetics are treated instrumentally.

b. Aesthetics as a philosophical inclination towards art

A different attitude towards art (and, of course, toward themselves) is fostered by aesthetic theories, which I conditionally refer to as »art-devoted« theories. These theories declaratively abandon the positions of philosophical instrumentalization of art and aesthetics, and attempt to approach art because of art itself. They attempt to meet art in its working environment, and are willing to view things from its perspective and contemplate art through the dioptr of *formative experience*. There are several reasons for such an open *inclination* of aesthetics towards art. One of the main reasons is, in the opinion of followers of this aesthetic trend, that art with its broad range of results has reached far beyond the boundaries of its own sphere; not, as in classical aesthetics, regressively to the field of philosophy, but progressively to the field of life.¹³ More specifically, in modern civilization, modern art has great diagnostic, therapeutic and development potentials to function as a »laboratory of sensual cognition«, as an indispensable modelsphere of reflection on the sensual and, consequently, of modern self-understanding.¹⁴ (However, it cannot be disregarded that even where there appears to be a sincere desire to bring aesthetics closer to art, there are still instrumentalizational motives immediately beneath the surface).

The fundamental motive of art-devoted aesthetics is to analytically explain the concrete formative strategies, development and social-critical potentials of each branch of art. Arts also explicitly wish to be – and this is supposedly even a criterion of their modernness – useful in the process of their creative self-reflection and self-articulation. Any dogmatism and any normativism are explicitly excluded; from this aspect, the role of aesthetics should be limited solely to that of a »maieutic ferment« (Welsch).

At this delicate point, art-devoted aesthetics always encounter difficulties due to the very »ontological difference« between the two fields, if I am allowed to employ such philosophical diction.

The first problem is in the fact that aesthetics can study art only when art is already articulated. Because art is continuously recreating itself by

¹³ Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Geburt der Tragödie*, in *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* vol. III/1, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin/New York 1977), p. 8.

¹⁴ Cf. Welsch, *Traditionelle und moderne Ästhetik in ihrem Verhältnis zur Praxis der Kunst*, pp. 272–273.

defining itself and thus exhausting its creative abilities, aesthetics only gets the opportunity to study it *post festum*. In other words: art has to die (in the creative sense) so that aesthetics can dissect (analyze) it. The primary position of an aesthetician in relation to art is the position of the user, not the producer. And, as P. Valéry writes in his famous *Cours de la poïétique*, the producer and the user are two essentially separated systems. For the first, the product is the end, and for the second the beginning, of development. The ideas which the two of them have regarding the same work of art are not compatible.¹⁵ Valéry's theory of absolute difference may be exaggerated, yet I nevertheless support the opinion that the differences between the attitudes of an artist and an aesthetician towards a work of art should be considered. An aesthetician is – namely as an aesthetician, irrespective of his actually attitude towards art – the user of a work of art, although somewhat special, a user *a posteriori* condemned within the limits of his position and his philosophical roots.

An aesthetician is, on the one side, always too late to tell a creating artist what to look for and create, because when aestheticians finally discover, through investigation, what this is, their discoveries are no longer significant for the producer of art (the very moment art stops walking in front of aesthetics, it would no longer be art, but would return among crafts).

Like a philosopher, an aesthetician searches for the philosophical essence of art, which is why he finds it difficult to simultaneously take aesthetic pleasure in a work of art. His interest is devoted to the philosophical aspects of a work of art (and not its immanent artistic aspects), though the purpose and meaning of a work of art are never exhausted by them. An aesthetician's »infrastructural« philosophical system represents a barrier between him and a work of art.

This brings us to the second obstacle preventing aesthetics from being directly *useful* to art in the creative sense. Aesthetics as a philosophically *formatted* theory can never, in any form, be neutral towards art. It favours precisely those contents, forms, functions, problems, etc. in art which stem from the categories and axioms of its philosophical *background*. The basic method employed by aestheticians in relation to art could therefore be schematically described as follows: first of all they identify and delineate, depending on the categories and axioms of their philosophical infrastructure, the area of art which these categories and axioms are capable of covering, proclaim this area as art, and then, within such a restricted area, attempt to prove and »prove« that this is »true« art. Artists also use the same

¹⁵ Cf. B. Ghiselin, *The Creative Process* (London: A Mentor Book, 1961), p. 96.

method when, through their work, they delineate that part of reality which they are able to capture with their means and modes of expression, and shape it as their (artistic) reality. Evidently, a considerable amount of reality remains on the outside and is left to future generations of artists, who usually find their uncultivated fields precisely on this »remainder«. Nature, i.e. the real world, is such an extensive area that it cannot be fully exhausted by any art, nor can any aesthetics embrace art in all its dimensions.¹⁶

The model of aesthetic inclination towards art could be schematically presented as follows: aesthetics tries to take a true interest in art, but on this path it implicitly drags instrumentalizational intentions justified in its philosophical background.

On the one side one has to admit that, despite the »fatal attraction« that binds them, art and aesthetics are nevertheless two very different spiritual postures, each with its own categorical apparatus and way of thinking. The concepts and categories which they occasionally lend to one another usually change their character as soon as they are integrated in a specific system of artistic or philosophical thought. On the other side, there is no denying that it may be assumed, without exaggerating, that in relation to art, aesthetics has far from utilized all its reflexive potentials and that all great art also has *philosophical* dimensions.

c. *Aesthetics as a philosophical »centralizing on art«*

This last approach is, in my opinion, an opportunity for future interdisciplinary shifts in the relation between art and aesthetics. I have designated these shifts with the expression »centralizing on art«. In practice they are not numerous, but may be expected wherever (1) aesthetics begins to realize that artistic happenings are not merely a reflection of its philosophical background, and, with the reflexive experience it possesses, it makes itself available to the artist as a collaborator in the purification and articulation of the artist's formative thoughts and desires,¹⁷ and (2) the theories that have *autochthonously* grown from individual disciplines of art develop to a level of conceptual consistency allowing them to establish fruitful con-

¹⁶ Today it is becoming increasingly more clear that it is not possible to generalize and systematize all artistic expressions and styles in a single philosophical system. In the same way as philosophical systems differ among themselves, so do artistic expressions and the valuations of the world and life expressed in them. Only those aesthetic trends that grow from the same life substance and the same valuation of the world as artistic systems of expression are able to merge with them into sufficiently homogeneous reflective and paradigmatic emotional systems which allow understanding and mutual fertilizing.

¹⁷ Cf. W. Welsch, *Traditionelle und moderne Ästhetik in ihrem Verhältnis zur Praxis der Kunst*, p. 280.

ceptual contact with aesthetics as a philosophical discipline. Therefore, I can see the perspective in the interactive linking of an emancipated aesthetic theory prepared to offer art its reflexive philosophical services in the sphere of art's »philosophical dimensions«, and a theory of art that will give access to philosophical reflection and inspire aesthetics for the reflection of the artistic, aesthetic dimensions (i.e. bound to the sensual aspect of a certain branch of art) of arts.

For aesthetics, centralizing on art does not mean stepping from one form of slavery (maid of philosophy) into another (maid of art), but fully devoting itself to its »subject« and giving back to art what it managed to »tear away« from art in purified form by the sweat of its face. An aesthetics which manages to reach the tip of the brush, chisel and heart...

3. Art ↔ Philosophy

In its relation with art, philosophy can, in my opinion, equally utilize all three macrostrategies accessible through aesthetics: *instrumental* (philosophy *via* art), *metainstrumental* (philosophical inclination towards art) and *phenomenological* or *investigative* (philosophical centralizing on art). Depending, of course, on the circumstances and current goals. Philosophy can see in art the key that opens the door of reality, a means of helping it to grow, a phenomenon that addresses and reflexively inspires it, or as a complex reality whose dimensions it wishes to discover. – Something similarly gradual is seen in philosophy by art or the artist as he replenishes his »philosophical« tanks for new expressive feats.

IV. Code

The relation between art, aesthetics and philosophy presented in this contribution is, as was expected, merely a rough (macro) »mapping« of the interactive space. I do feel, however, that this contribution has the potential to open a debate on the practical need for more systematic reflection on the relations between art, aesthetics and philosophy, and offers a good starting point. This starting point could be the following: thinking about art is possible only with its assistance. Without its help we are unable to enter into it. If, in the course of creation, an artist thinks about his art, then theoreticians should also make an effort to understand his artistic »language«. This is the only way they understand and realize that art – in the same way as philosophy – is continuously questioning itself about itself, that it is questionable to its own self, and thus far from being something that is self-understandable.