

Keti Chukhrov

# On the False Democracy of Contemporary Art

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e-flux journal #57 — september 2014 Keti Chukhrov  
On the False Democracy of Contemporary Art

1.

Historically there have been two methodologies of resisting the complacency of the culture industry and bourgeois society's reliance on the judgment of taste. One was the modernist stance: it required extreme estrangement and abstaining from alienated capitalist reality; it turned the artwork into a piece, blocking perception, pleasure, or the judgment of taste, so that such work would exist in extra-social conditions rather than be perceived by a society that can never evade the capitalist economy and the cultural industry. This was the standpoint of Theodor Adorno.

Another position – the avant-garde one – resisted bourgeois culture and its traditions of connoisseurship via dissolving art within life and making life the matter of political and social transformation. Both stances reached their peak in 1960s and '70s. Contemporary art absorbed and comprised both of them. But today these legacies – albeit reenacted, reinstated, and revisited all the time – nevertheless lose their social and aesthetic viability.

Such a decline has reasons: modernist reductionism and rigidity long ago turned into successful abstract art production. Formalist or abstract tendencies were not able to further revolutionize their methodologies in striving to detach the piece from perceptive pleasure. Moreover, formalism's once-extreme negative rigidity is now compelled to fit into the regime of the Kantian beauty object that produces the judgment of taste.

But what happened to the avant-garde's rhetoric? This is even more inconsistent. The historical avant-garde's openness toward life and politics happened to become the mainstream of critical but still institutionally commissioned art activity and resisting frameworks. This was motivated to a certain extent by the fact that the institutions themselves became self-critical, flexible, and often creative subjects of production – sometimes along with the artist or even instead of the artist.

We have to keep referring to the avant-garde because contemporary art continues to reproduce the belief in art's emancipatory and democratizing impact on social infrastructures. Meanwhile, according to Adorno or even Peter Bürger, if art's strategies of dissolution into life do not coincide with radical social transformation, then art's claim about its political engagement is not valid. Dissolution of art within life under the conditions of capitalist production is different from the same process occurring in the frame of a noncapitalist economy. Convergence with life forms without reinventing these forms in a really expanded social sphere means either creating autonomous

communities (we have seen many of these since the '60s), or expanding into the living forms of capitalist production. In other words, applying the avant-garde's rhetoric without expanded social change and the reconstruction of the economic machine (private property logic) just flattens and absorbs what John Roberts calls "art's infinite ideation."

Art thus claims that it expands into the sphere of social transformation and genuine democracy. Yet paradoxically, art's ambition for direct social engagement and its self-abandonment loops back to the very territory of contemporary art, its archive machine, and its self-referential rhetoric of historicizing. Hence the question is: Are we really witnessing the anticapitalist transformation that excuses art's self-sublation and its dissolution in newly transformed life? This was the case with the Russian avant-garde and its almost eschatological attitude toward reality. On the other hand, when observing the endless propagation of contemporary art pieces pretending to be challenging in their play with forms and contexts, one might well understand the decision to abandon art production in favor of social issues.

Another incoherence here is that while

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claiming extreme social openness and political commitment in the vein of the avant-garde's impact on society, contemporary art – de facto – in its economic disposition happens to be part and parcel of post-Fordist alienated production. In other words, in narratives it claims democratic and resisting values, but in reality it happens to be a nonsocialized, nondemocratic, i.e., quasi-modernist, realm in its means of production and sense. Resisting attitudes and constructed situations are often used in art as externalized, abstract, and formalized actualities rather than necessities stemming from the material and immanent bond with political constellations. Hito Steyerl approaches this condition from the other end. Considering the mutation that the avant-garde's aspirations of fusing with life have undergone in recent times, she observes the opposite effect of such a goal – life being occupied by art. It is that very art that pretends to be dissolved in life, but de facto absorbs life into its all-expanding but still self-referential territory. The system of art believes in its social microrevolutionary democratic engagement. But since the social and economic infrastructure is privatized and not at all a commonwealth, social-democratic values happen to be declared or represented while the ethics contemporary art



Theodor Adorno, *Self portrait*, 1963.

uses to deal with social space are rather based on the canons of modernism's negativity – which internalizes, absorbs, and neutralizes outer reality and its confusions, even though all this might be done quite involuntarily.

We all believe that contemporary art's new geographies and extended public impact make art venues truly public spaces. Nominally, this is definitely so. But while showing its openness and acceptability on the level of cultural event-making, the logic of inscribing into contemporary art's archive and history is far from being public and requires knowledge of the rules and regulations of such inscription. It doesn't mean that somebody is concealing such logic from social space, but that art functions in the above-mentioned two regimes: (1) open publicity and (2) the rigid rules of art's self-historicizing dating back to modernism.

One of the important symptoms of such a contradictory condition of contemporary art at present was the Berlin Biennale 2012. Its claim was that if the political and social ambitions of art happen to be socially futile, then the art territory – the art institution – should be occupied by efficient social practices not generated by art production. If the artist makes a political claim to social change, but artistic production is not able to accomplish it, then the decision is to find groups more efficient with social work and let them occupy the institution – thus attempting the collapse of the art institution in favor of its becoming a socially efficient tool. This was the standpoint of Artur Żmijewski, Polish artist and curator of the 7th Berlin Biennial.

However, even in this case, the resisting

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procedures were contained within the institution. And in the end, maybe involuntarily, a strategy such as Żmijewski's seems to be another strong gesture of classical modernist iconoclasm and reductionism rather than social expansion – not of an image, or of an art piece, but of an institution, internalized by that very institution. This happened with the modernist picture, which internalized the collapse of the image and its depth. Żmijewski's gesture is "anti-art" in terms of modernism's negativism, not the anti-art in terms of the avant-garde's productivism. Why? Because such a gesture represents an iconoclastic "revenge" on contemporary art as an institute and practice for being impotent in its transformative social potentialities, and therefore it is rather reminiscent of an anarchist, Dadaist act, than any kind of social engineering or engagement. At the same time, this standpoint of Żmijewski – namely, disclosing the inefficient references of contemporary art to its avant-garde heritage – might be more honest than an optimistic and positivist belief in the educational, political, or social efficacy of contemporary art at present.

Thus, maybe even against his will, Żmijewski in fact emphasized the thesis of Adorno according to which art's behaving as democracy is hypocritical in the conditions of a privatized economy. But he also tried to show that such a democracy unfolds in a hermetic, self-referential realm – self-referential because such is the logic according to which contemporary art history is being recorded. So, the life-constructing or even utilitarian act on art's behalf preserves its political and artistic impact only under the conditions of the politics



Rabih Mroué, *I, the Undersigned*, 2007. Video still

of the radically expanded commonwealth. In any other situation, to demand that an artist or art institution influence social conditions directly compels one to conform to mainstream policies of liberal democracy and its social design. For example, the recent urban projects of pro-Kremlin image-makers, such as Vladislav Surkov, call for the utilitarian practices of the historical avant-garde: fostering art's social efficacy and its participatory potentialities and uniting artists, architects, sociologists, and philosophers in the interdisciplinary project of constructing new urban and social networks. This represents quite an eloquent case for the appropriation of public and participatory art by the government – depoliticizing it and turning it into applied design.

## 2.

The discussion on reviving the dimension of aesthetics and aesthetic judgment in contemporary art was initiated by Rancière's *Aesthetics and its Discontents* and has since led to doubts over contemporary art's claims of direct participation and social or political efficacy. Thus we are constantly pressed between a false openness of democracy and the reestablishment of an outdated notion of aesthetics. The question is whether the category of aesthetics can be applied in reference to modern and contemporary practices that were not conceived as aesthetic experiences at all.

The principal incoherence here lies in the fact that aesthetics in Kant's third critique applies to the notion of the beautiful – albeit universal, transcendental, disinterested, and shared by society's *sensus communis*, but still the beautiful – the dimension residing in sensitivity and not compatible with the cognitive, with the noumena – the conceptual.

As early as Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, the regime of aesthetic contemplation and the judgment of taste, as well as the dimension of aesthetics altogether, had to desert the artwork, the modes of its production, and the modes of our reflection on it. Aesthetic judgments were incompatible with the languages of contemporary art, inherited from avant-garde practices. Why?

Because even in Kant's critique, the beautiful is a counterpoint to the sublime. Already in early romanticism, the beautiful was superseded by the sublime: the sublime is the dimension that goes beyond the aesthetic contemplation – toward the extra-sensory and cognitive search for the idea, for the unknown, ineffable, unimaginable, non-perceivable, and so forth. Adorno's argument in *Aesthetic Theory* is that the Kantian cluster consisting of disinterested pleasure, the beautiful, and the

judgment of taste does not stand for the universality of the artistic.

It is exactly for associating modernist and avant-garde practices with the sublime, for suspending the regime of the aesthetic, that Rancière rebukes Lyotard, Badiou, and Adorno. One might argue here whether the horizontal, life-constructing social practices of the avant-garde could be associated at all with the category of the sublime. The sublime is often taken metaphorically as a synonym for metaphysics in art or as the Wagnerian kind of sublimity so fiercely criticized in works by Adorno, Nancy, and Lacoue-Labarthe. But in fact, the sublime in Kant's logic is knowledge about infinity – or about the borderline between knowledge and infinity – haunting a thinker and an artist. On the other hand, the sublime is what Lacan meant by the real and Deleuze meant by the event. It is something that is happening in its irreversibility, and artistic repetition then deals with clearing up that very incomprehensible thing that happened.

While following Kant's critique, the sublime should be understood here as a logical category, presupposing the cognitive, extra-sensitive capacity of the mind and its power to envisage its own limit in reference to the incomprehensible. The Russian avant-garde, guided by the idea of a new world and presupposing revolutionary movements as the medium of its achievement, was definitely closer to the logical category of the sublime than to that of the aesthetic. But it is also important that the Russian avant-garde was the satellite of revolution, and therefore its goals were not confined to art's dissolution in the social field but were aimed at the invention of new social dispositions in accordance with what happened in the realm of real politics.

When referring today to the political efficacy of the practices of the Russian avant-garde, many interpretations overlook the works' eschatological dimension. It is generally believed that there were some esoteric themes developed predominantly by Malevich, but that other artists – such as Sergey Tretyakov or the LEF and Proletkult members – simply went public. This is a simplistic attitude toward the Russian avant-garde's social activism. Even for such figures from the Productivist circle as Alexander Gastev or Boris Arvatov, the artist's goal – while it might have been to converge with life or even shift art production toward utilitarian values – had to merge with life such that this life would be a new, non-utilitarian life. This demand is often forgotten in discussions of art's sublation by activist creative practices. It is true that the art of the Russian avant-garde aspired to reject itself for social experience. But the social

experience itself had to be aimed at something in some sense sublime – sublime, because the political aspiration for a new socialist order made life non-utilitarian.

Returning to the issue of aesthetics under conditions of contemporary post-aesthetic production: Why is Rancière so optimistic about aesthetics if contemporary art production is often so remote from aesthetic values? Rancière, relying on Kant, makes a convincing effort to prove that Kant's analysis of the extra-aesthetic, of the sublime, is not detached from the realm of the aesthetic and the judgment of taste. That's why he disagrees with Lyotard, for whom the sublime object is something that cannot be grasped by the mind: hence the ungraspability of the idea, of the sublime that can only be transposed into art via extremely negative, transgressive experiences.

According to Rancière, Kant's argument with respect to the sublime is the following: when confronting the sublime, the inability of imagination to represent for the mind what the mind, with its aspiration for sublimity, requires from imagination only confirms the power of the mind. It means that unlike imagination, the mind is still able to envisage and even incorporate the unimaginable and unthinkable, i.e., the sublime as its limit – as the mind's limit. As Rancière insists, for Kant, the mind still keeps itself as the supreme moral background for the development of the imagination, no matter how limited the imagination is. So the mind that knows about the negative and the unimaginable intersects with sensitive experience and compels the imagination to expand itself. For Rancière, this means that no matter what the divergences from aesthetics could be in the history of contemporary artistic production, aesthetic judgment is still the most politically viable tool to govern art, but also to account for art's universality. The proximity of the unknown or unimaginable does not annul the aesthetic dimension. In *The Aesthetic Unconscious*, Rancière extends this argument, insisting that Freud's interpretation of the unconscious did not presuppose any entropy of a Nietzschean type or any nihilist void "irreducible to logos." On the contrary, Freud's unconscious preserves the capacity of differentiating the "figured beneath the figurative and the visual beneath the represented." It keeps the repository for the work of fantasy. Rancière quotes Freud's statement from his "The Moses of Michelangelo," where Freud refuses to ascribe the power of art to the sublime:

Possibly indeed, some writer on aesthetics has discovered that this state of intellectual bewilderment is a necessary

condition when a great work of art is to achieve its greatest effects. It would only be with the greatest reluctance that I could bring myself to believe in any such necessity.

Thus for Rancière, art remains in the grip of the experience of the sensuous difference – no matter how strong the influences of the idea, the ethical, the ideological, the unconscious, or the catastrophic can be on it. In *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, he fiercely argues with *Inaesthetics*, in which Badiou posits that art is a procedure of truth that unfolds as the transmitting of the infinite into the finite, and where the goal is the infinite, the idea, the evental. Badiou's inaesthetics is really counter-aesthetics, not in the name of abandoning art, but in favor of bringing it to further intensity and precision.

An important point that Rancière emphasizes in his pro-aesthetic argument is that Schillerian "free play" characterizing a work of art can only be perceived via the immanence of an art piece. It is precisely such immanence of "free play" that constructs the dimension of the transcendental, connecting the empirical and the transcendent. The transcendental of aesthetics is universal because it is shared by the community through the judgment of taste.

In this argument, Rancière does justice to Kant when proving that Kant's concept of the mind (the inaesthetic category) rather draws the incomprehensible and the sublime to the territory of the sensuous, placing it on the imaginary "picture" contemplated, so that the sublime is comprised in the frame of what is meant by *Aussicht*.

But while extrapolating this Kantian disposition on contemporary art, Rancière abandons Adorno's "pessimistic" standpoint, which, though apologetic about the immanence of form in art, nevertheless separates the art piece from the aesthetic dimension. Adorno calls Kant's disinterested pleasure "castrated hedonism." For Adorno, the artwork's immanence is the extremity of artistic methodology that distills into form. But the form's immanence in Adorno's interpretation means the same as the spirit means for Hegel. Adorno's form is a reified idea – the idea that in capitalist society, the artwork dialectically sublates itself in favor of an artistic form or methodology that becomes its own idea. It is true that Kant's aesthetics does not make an incommensurable split between the aesthetic and the sublime. But what is clear is that art since then and especially since modernism had to question and doubt a *sensus communis* of society (the claim of aesthetics and of the judgment of taste to the common and universal) that was neither ethically nor

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Allan Kaprow, *Women Licking Jam Off a Car* from the happening "Household," 1964. Photo: Sol Goldberg

economically common. And it was precisely social alienation that brought about the inability to claim as valid the notion of aesthetics as the dimension of the common and the general. Whether alienation was aestheticized and brought to the extreme, as in modernism, or resisted via tools of de-alienation, as in the avant-garde, the dimension of aesthetics (which Kant described as neither cognition nor desire) was historically redundant for the art of modernity, compared to the many features constructing what the sublime could stand for: the idea, the uncanny, the transgressive, the subversive, the conceptual, and so on.

So what art has lost in the long run of its modernist, postmodern, and contemporary stages is not aesthetics at all. Nor is it the direct force of transformation. Such a force belonged to the political avant-garde, i.e., to revolution, for which the artistic avant-garde could only be a satellite. Moreover, it is a delusion that aesthetics has ever been art's chief value and can now "save" practices that are deprived of aesthetic specificity.

If we look back at art history, this self-rejection of aesthetics in favor of open eventualities and contingent intensities was always there. If anyone were to ask Adorno whether the classical Viennese music school was aesthetically more valid than the new Viennese music, he would never define pre-modernist music as more aesthetically viable. That is because for Adorno, any artwork was seen as a dialectical struggle with matter and the idea by the subject, whereas the aesthetic dimension is manifested instead in the perception of art or even its digestion, rather than conception and production. And if we refer back to aesthetics, we should have in mind that aesthetics is a discipline about perception. It does not unravel the genesis and genealogy of art production and the intentionalities of the creative process.

Probably it was Nietzsche who most articulately showed the correlation between the realm of the sublime (the tragic) and the artistic (aesthetic). And in this case, the sublime is not at all something elevated or pathetic, but rather the limit of human rational comprehensibility, of emotional endurance and social protection.

In his *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche gives interesting dimensions to the notion of "aesthetic play," a term which he borrows from Goethe but which initially comes from Schiller. Here, aesthetic play counteracts catharsis and physiological satisfaction for the audience, and is quite far from the Kantian understanding of aesthetics. Aesthetic play is the tragic event's performative paradox; it is not epistemologically different from the sublime, but is rather the paradoxical reaction to the tragic event's

sublimity. It is literally an artistic and maybe an absurd "play" being unexpectedly unfolded in the proximity of the tragic event. And that is actually what tragedy is – playing when playing would be most out of place or absurd, quite similar to Socrates's performative speech in Plato's *Phaedo*, when Socrates eloquently philosophizes with his disciples despite his inability to speak – half of his body is already paralyzed by poison. Among the few artists who have dealt with these issues recently are Rabih Mroué in art and Lars von Trier in film.

### 3.

If the avant-gardist sublation of art was in the name of something more important than art – something that therefore art should aspire to – today, this tradition has been transformed into the loosening of art in the name of its fusion with middle class creative activity – democratic, available, accessible. Art is as permissive as ever in its all-inclusive observations, comments, documents, experiences, forms of activism, and creativity. In this case, democracy becomes synonymous with reducing the artistic dimension to the very flow of mundane needs, as if those who happen to be detached from culture do not possess the capacity to experience the dimension of the non-mundane, non-utilitarian, or to grasp the dimension of the general, the category which is as artistic as it is ethical and political. But strangely, while contemporary art practices tend to simplify or flatten many experiences that constitute the conditions of the existential (which does not at all mean that they are dissolved into existence and identified with it empirically), the ethical, or the evental – contemporary art as institute – becomes on the contrary very complex, refined, and selective in terms of contextual, technological, and discursive packaging. In allowing any piece that involves practice, activity, or experience to be an artwork, contemporary art demonstrates utter democracy, but in its demands of "packaging" this material – without which it would be impossible to get into contemporary art's archive – it is surprisingly undemocratic and exclusive.

Contemporary art's impact becomes all the more contradictory when it simultaneously self-resigns as art and aims to educate the public. This kind of education often deals with demonstrating the tools of criticality in the open social sphere, which is a noble goal, unless such activity is in the end still framed as artistic per se and absorbed into exhibiting practice as an artwork. The problem of many art activist practices is that they claim two standpoints simultaneously – social work, and this social work being art; teaching the public to be critical, and identifying this didactic practice with

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teaching the public “art.” The logic here is as follows: I refuse to make art in favor of social activity, and since social activity is more important than artistic work, we should not care whether what we do is art. But since I am an artist, what I do, even though it is not art, goes into an art archive that sublated itself in the name of social work and then commemorated such sublation in an art institution as an art piece. And society understands this non-art as the art that is being socially active and democratic.

Such an approach rests on the premise that the majority of people who do not make art are better suited for loose, quasi-creative practices, and hence for them that art should not demonstrate complexity and intensities they are not able to grasp.

Complex art is considered bourgeois. It needs skills, connoisseurship, and culture that can only belong to the socially privileged. Therefore, when dealing with zones of the socially unprivileged, art should reject its artistic features: complexities, paradoxes, involvement. But it is here that the argument lies. If art is about refined aesthetic difference and taste, if it is reduced to skills needed for its perception, or skills acquired by long-term education to produce it, then such an argument has reasons. But if art is seen via existential, eventual, and ethical dimensions, then it is not coincident with education, or dependent on social advantages or taste. Art’s complexity turns out to be about those issues that are embedded in anyone’s personal or social life, in acting in it or reflecting on it.



List Ponger, “The Vanishing Middle Class,” Secession, Vienna, 2014. Installation detail showing different monopoly gameboards the artist has collected.

So when participatory or socially engaged projects denigrate art in the name of non-art – yet are looked upon as democratic art practice – they often ignore that those whom they integrate into education or participation might be able to

think and act in terms of ethical, artistic, and general dimensions no less than any artist or thinker. Ignoring this point, they underestimate many capacities of human life that are not reduced to skills and education.

Hence the paradox: the more democratic art tends to be, the less open it is to those who constitute the *demos*.

It is interesting to compare this situation to the Russian Productivists’ going public when they collaborated and communicated with the workers and peasants at the factories and collective farms. Sergey Tretyakov, who visited numerous collective farms to write reports, preferred instead to become educated and learn from the workers what labor under the new social conditions meant. He would partake of the proletarian culture rather than teach the workers or document their being deprived of certain privileges – cultural or political, since the proletarians were considered to be the subject of history, its eventual source. Therefore, the life and labor of proletarians could be associated with the revolution (the sublime?) and become a field of study and desire at the same time. Strangely, the disposition was the same with the Russian critical realism of nineteenth-century social democracy – to learn existential and ethical lessons from the socially unprivileged, rather than teach them, label them, and thrust them into the panopticon of social precariousness.

Today, the problem facing many contemporary art practices – also due to their very close proximity to institutions and their commissioned framework of production – is that they have fallen out of classical aesthetics, as well as what stood for non- or post-aesthetic extremities (the sphere of the sublime). I.e., they have fallen out of modernism’s canon of innovative rigidity as well as the avant-garde’s utopian horizon, but they have also failed to return to the practices of pre-modernist realisms, because contemporary art languages cannot help but decline the dimension of the event; they consider the anthropology of the event to be the outdated, almost anachronistic rudiment of art. Meanwhile, what has become so important in the highly institutionalized poetics of contemporary art are the languages of self-installing, self-instituting, self-historicizing in the frame of what constructs contemporary art as territory. The context in this case is not historical, aesthetical, artistic, or even political, but is rather institutionally biased. So that the subject of art is neither the artist, nor artistic methodology of any kind, nor the matter of reality, but the very momentum of institutional affiliation with contemporary art’s progressive geographies. This brings us to a strange condition.



Today, art is predominantly an institute, and contemporary art is the embodiment of this condition of hyper-institutionalization, in which art practice itself is subsequent to the institution, while some time ago art practice anticipated in its contingency the institutional tools of recording it. I say “institute” and not institution, because it is no longer a question of bureaucracy governing creative practice, but rather of creative practice. Or it is a piece of art not being possible without first internalizing contemporary art as institute, implicitly posited as its principal and primary motivation for production.

To put it in a simpler, even crude way: art withers away if it doesn’t take interest in what is beyond the limits of art. This “beyond” can be the sublime, the real, existence, or even “the signified,” once denounced by so many modernist and postmodernist practices. But paradoxically, to deal with non-artistic realms, with reality and existence, art needs extra-existential – specifically, *artistic* – means (which doesn’t imply that they should be aesthetic at all).

Yet the paradigmatic condition of today is that art’s real, or its Other, and its sublime is the contemporary art institute itself.

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John Roberts, "The Curator as Producer: Aesthetic Reason, Nonaesthetic Reason, and Infinite Ideation," *Manifesta Journal* 10 (2010): 51–57. "Now cognitively and epistemologically, this is true: artists have no special native attributes that distinguish their skills from non-artistic skills. Artists are not the possessors of inherent powers of creativity; ... And this, indeed, is the great liberatory thrust of the twentieth-century avant-garde and modernism, to which Benjamin's writing on the author as producer contributed. Art's possible meaning, function, and aesthetic value is necessarily bound up with its democratic distribution. But if these conditions of production and distribution have altered the intellectual landscape of art, this does not mean that what artists do is no different from what non-artists do. Artists may imitate and borrow from the skills and attributes of non-artists, but what artists might make of these skills and attributes is necessarily very different from non-artistic practices. For, if art is above all what opens itself up to infinite ideation (Friedrich Schlegel), artistic practices necessarily set out from a place very different from non-artistic reason."

2  
Hito Steyerl, "Art as Occupation: Claims for an Autonomy of Life," in *The Wretched of the Screen* (Berlin: Sternberg Press/e-flux journal, 2012), 110. "Nowadays, the invasion of life by art is not the exception, but the rule. Artistic autonomy was meant to separate art from the zone of daily routine – from mundane life, intentionality, utility, production, and instrumental reason – in order to distance it from rules of efficiency and social coercion. But this incompletely segregated area then incorporated all that it broke from in the first place, recasting the old order within its own aesthetic paradigms. The incorporation of art within life was once a political project, but the incorporation of life within art is now an aesthetic project."

3  
Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

4  
Ibid. See the section "Antinomies of Modernism," 61–107.

5  
Ibid. See the chapter "Lyotard and the Aesthetics of the sublime: A Counter-reading of Kant," 88–107; 93–94.

6  
As mentioned above, Adorno rejects art's universality.

7  
Jacques Rancière, *The Aesthetic Unconscious* (Cambridge, Polity

Press, 2009), 62.

8  
Ibid., 84, quoted from Sigmund Freud, "The Moses of Michelangelo," Standard Edition, 13: 211–12.

9  
Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Continuum, 2002), 11.

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