

## 02 Definition of Aesthetics

Tuesday, January 12, 2016 8:17 PM

### Today: Admin stuff, Aesthetics definition, Workshops and tours

#### ITLL tours:

you may take an orientation tour Monday - Friday at 5:15pm or Sunday at 1:15pm, meeting in the ITL lobby. Don't forget to bring your BuffCard.

From <[http://itll.colorado.edu/about\\_us/building\\_tours/access\\_orientation\\_tour/](http://itll.colorado.edu/about_us/building_tours/access_orientation_tour/)>

#### Idea Forge Tours

Stop in for a tour of the Idea Forge on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday at 5pm. Meet at the student reception desk near the east entrance on the bottom floor.

From <<http://www.colorado.edu/ideaforge/facilities/tours>>

Idea Forge workshops: <http://www.colorado.edu/ideaforge/workshops>

Sewing, welding, Raspberry Pi and more

#### Movie Night (weds?)

Do you know a movie that features design, engineering etc? Like

Apollo 13

A Faster Horse

World's Fastest Indian

Steve Jobs

Hidden Figures

Imitation Game (Turing)

Beautiful Mind

Objectified (industrial design)

Flash of Genius

Three Idiots (enr students)

# History of Aesthetics

- Science once was Art
  - All human endeavors were 'arts'
- Early university structure: liberal arts
  - Grammar, rhetoric, **logic, arithmetic, geometry**, music, and **astronomy**
- 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Fine Arts (and art criticism) were invented
  - painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry
  - Other endeavors (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) were excluded from 'art'
  - Some 'arts' were demoted to 'crafts'

Objects with function as a primary goal

## ar·ti·fice

/ˈɑːrtɪfɪs/

**noun**

noun: artifice; plural noun: artifices

clever or cunning devices or expedients, especially as used to trick or deceive others.

"artifice and outright fakery"

**synonyms:** trickery, deceit, deception, duplicity, guile, cunning, artfulness, williness, craftiness, slyness, chicanery. [More](#)

Origin

LATIN

ars

art-

art

LATIN

artificium

OLD FRENCH

artifice

workmanship

late Middle English

LATIN

facere

make

late Middle English (in the sense 'workmanship'): from Old French, from Latin *artificium*, based on *ars*, 'art-' 'art' + *facere* 'make.'

<https://www.google.com/search?q=artifice&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8#q=artificial>

## ar·ti·fi·cial

/ˈɑːrtɪˈfiʃəl/

**adjective**

adjective: artificial

1. made or produced by human beings rather than occurring naturally, typically as a copy of something natural.

"Their skin glowed in the artificial light"

• (of a situation or concept) not existing naturally, contrived or false.

"the artificial division of people into age groups"

**synonyms:** synthetic, fake, imitation, mock, ersatz, faux, substitute, replica, reproduction. [More](#)

• **man-made**

man-made, manufactured, fabricated, inorganic.

• **artificial**

(of a bid) conventional as opposed to natural.

2. (of a person or a person's behavior) insincere or affected.

"an artificial smile"

**synonyms:** insincere, feigned, false, unnatural, contrived, put-on, exaggerated, forced, labored, strained, hollow. [More](#)

• **informal**

pretend, phony, bogus

"an artificial smile"

**antonyms:** genuine

Origin

OLD FRENCH

artificial

LATIN

artificium

handicraft

LATIN

artificialis

late Middle English

ENGLISH

artifice

late Middle English: from Old French *artificial* or Latin *artificialis*, from *artificium* 'handicraft' (see *artifice*).



# Since Then

## Arts

- Photography (1839) freed art for Expressionism
- Emotion became prized
- 'Art' is now mostly 'Fine Art', created for aesthetic purposes;

## Science/ STEM

- Objectivity is prized
- Emotions are dangerous, may bias, invalidate, work

Forsey, pg 23:  
Formalism (Clive Bell's) is response to the 'demise of mimetic definitions of art'

# Definitions of Aesthetics

- Study of beauty
- Psychological measure of affect

*"Oh yuck!  
That's awful!  
I hate it!"*



*Oh wow!  
That's  
wonderful! I  
love it!"*

Palmer, Stephen E, Karen B Schloss, and Jonathan Sammartino. "Visual Aesthetics and Human Preference." *Annual Review of Psychology* 64 (January 3, 2013): 77–107. doi:10.1146/annurev-psych-120710-100504.

- Branch of philosophy. Aesthetics and ethics deal with moral issues of ontology (nature of things), epistemology (nature of knowledge), etc.
- Metric for art: is it art? Is it good art?
- Synonym: philosophy of art or art theory. "What is art? What good is art? What is the purpose and nature of art?"

Student discussion on 'what is aesthetics?'

What makes things cool. Familiar enough to be comfortable, novel enough to be interesting. Goal of aesthetics.  
How it makes you feel; subjective. Dutch word for warm response to furniture: Gezelligheid or Danish: Hygge

Sales aspect, tied to ergonomics, look pretty too.  
Aesthetics as a set of beliefs, response to PT Cruiser  
Artist trying to invoke a specific response subtly in the audience  
Combination of color and shape (form) and function and beauty  
Aspect of design that humanizes it, creates emotion  
Gets at all senses  
Evokes a way of thinking  
As a visual appeal, and other senses. Not good or bad, can invoke + or - emotions  
Nonverbal communications

# Major Art Theories

## What is art, what good is art = art theory

- Realism
  - Plato: Representations should be truthful. Beauty = truth. Human perceptions are fallible, invisible true world has ideal 'Forms'.
  - Aristotle: Beauty = both appearance (order, harmony, symmetry) and functionality.
- Expressionism (1850's)
  - Art is to embody and stimulate emotion, often through metaphor.
  - Cognitivism: Art can teach. Dewey's 'aesthetic experience' gives meaning and value.
- Formalism (1900's):
  - Only the form is important. Emotion, narrative, functionality are irrelevant.
  - Abstract art context
- Postmodernism (1968)
  - Art and aesthetics cannot be separated from the social, ethical and political world.
  - Pluralism. No theory is absolute; context is essential.

Barrett, Terry. *Why Is That Art?: Aesthetics and Criticism of Contemporary Art*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011.

Aristotle: form is inseparable from the purpose of art: to represent.

Andy Goldsworthy = example of Formalism  
Clive Bell, 1881-1964: to be art, must have 'significant form', and trigger an 'aesthetic emotion' = an emotion separate from all others. Barrett pg125. Evokes the 'yum'. Art is defined by this reaction.  
Forsey says defining art as possessing a (this) characteristic is too narrow. Don't confuse definition with evaluation. Pg26

# Hertzberg's Theory of Art

- Art is the embodiment, the instantiation, the execution of a vision.
- Any endeavor can be raised to the level of art: Mathematics, physics, cooking, sports.
- Routine, uncaring work is not art.
- "Aesthetics of XYZ" describes a non-unique scale for evaluation of art. Once a vision or an intent has been defined, an artifact can be compared to it, measured by it.
- An aesthetic can be defined by an individual artist, or collectively by a culture.