



## End or death of art today

Alain Patrick Olivier

### ► To cite this version:

Alain Patrick Olivier. End or death of art today. Francesca Iannelli; Frédérique Malaval. With Hegel in the XXI century. A philosophical Exhibition, Artemide, pp.34-36, 2021, 978-88-7575-384-9. hal-03441925

**HAL Id: hal-03441925**

**<https://hal.science/hal-03441925>**

Submitted on 13 Dec 2021

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



# With Hegel in the XXI century A philosophical Exhibition

edited by  
Francesca Iannelli and Frédérique Malaval

in collaboration with  
Chiara Anastasia Moda and Maria Stadirani





# Contents

## Introduction and Acknowledgements

- 7 Much passion for a great challenge: The 250th anniversary of Hegel's birth one year later  
*Francesca Iannelli and Frédérique Malaval*

## Incipit

- 9 Verdopplung  
*Andrea Volo*
- 11 Duplications: Art and Philosophy in a pandemic Era  
*Francesca Iannelli*

## PART 1. PHILOSOPHIZING ABOUT HEGEL

- 15 Hegel, a rose in his teeth  
*Frédérique Malaval*
- 17 Hegel's life: an artistic life?  
*Stefania Achella, Giuseppe Cantillo, Francesca Iannelli, Paolo D'Angelo*
- 25 Hegel's Spirit as a Political Bond  
*Valerio Rocco Lozano*
- 27 Hegel's Dialectical Contemporaneity  
*Frank Ruda*
- 29 Recognition in Hegel as an artwork of freedom  
*Carlos Emel Rendón*
- 31 Hegel's Minerva's owl  
*Erzsébet Rózsa*
- 34 End or death of art today  
*Alain Patrick Olivier*

## PART 2. ARTISTRY WITH AND BEYOND HEGEL

### Toward the spirit

- 39 L'anima astratta dell'animale  
*Felice Cimatti*
- 40 Venedigs Geist-Die Geister Venedigs  
*Agostino Bonaventura*
- 41 Sensitive Seams of the Spirit  
*Maëva Gardenat*
- 42 Tentativo di Dubbio  
*Didymos and TDD Research Group*

### The heart of Hegelian philosophy: dialectics

- 46 Spazio Forma - 1, 2, 3  
*Tito Amodei*
- 50 Il combattimento n.1  
*Francesca Tulli*
- 52 The known and unknown  
*Bettie Elghanian*



	<b>Recognition: variations on master and slave figures</b>
54	Artemisia (Trepanation) <i>Magdalena Chicon</i>
	<b>Philosophy that always arrives late: the Minerva's owl</b>
56	Limina <i>Cendrine Rovini</i>
	<b>Death of Art</b>
58	Realtà e Morale <i>Manu Invisible</i>
	<b>Hegel revisited</b>
60	EXUVIE <i>Anastassia Tetrel</i>
62	The depopulation of the sky <i>Elodie Costa</i>
63	Hegel pop <i>Olivia Vieweg</i>
	<b>PART 3. PERFORMING HEGEL</b>
67	Who's right? <i>Joshua De Loa and Tayisyia Libokhorska</i>
69	I'm right! <i>Perfomed by Riccardo Malaspina</i>
70	Decolonizing Hegel's Aesthetics. A Philosophical Play <i>Francesca Iannelli</i>
76	On the historical impossibility of art in the mind of someone living in the XXI century <i>Marco Locatelli and Raffaele Moretti</i>
77	Contamination between Art and Philosophy. The vitality of art and Danto's aesthetic theory <i>Chiara Anastasia Moda and Maria Stadirani</i>
	<b>PART 4. VIRTUAL HEGEL</b>
81	"This is not an Instagram profile. Back to reality". Experimental artwork on Instagram <i>Francesca Iannelli, Chiara Anastasia Moda and Maria Stadirani</i>
	<b>PART 5. URBAN HEGEL</b>
89	Low pressure: Hegel's legacy and the spraycan <i>Stefano Antonelli</i>
	<b>Afterword</b>
91	The curator, the philosopher, the artist: rethinking roles today <i>Chiara Anastasia Moda and Maria Stadirani</i>
93	<b>References</b>



## End or death of art today

Alain Patrick Olivier - University of Nantes, France

In the period of world pandemic and general confinement, the end of art is not only a philosophical hypothesis; it is also a political option and an historical fact. Museums and theaters, cinemas, concert halls and bookstores are closing. People are not travelling anymore, are supposed to meet only in work situations, and not to entertain in public places. The physical presence of the works of art and the physical interaction with artists become rare. For the first time, the world of art and entertainment, whose existence always has been an evidence, disappears for a while from real life, surviving only in the virtual world. We are experiencing – even in a negative mode – how the aesthetic sphere, which Hegel has described as a sphere of “theoretical senses”, sights and hearing, is deeply connected with the touch – which he excluded. With the fact that artists and spectators can breathe in a same space, can be near to each other, while they are performing, while they are taking a bow, while they are leaving the art place. We are experiencing that modern societies do not necessarily need arts anymore, or not the physical presence of the artists and the spectators.

Is this what Hegel prophesied? The end of art was for him a problem not related first with politics and economics, but with truth and knowledge. It was about the possibility for art to be a presentation of the “absolute”, so that there wouldn’t be any higher principle than art in our enlightened modern society. The other option would be that art is now declining or completely disappearing in modern times; it could be condemned by Enlightenment and rationality, like it was previously condemned by Platonism or Reformation. In Hegel’s last lecture on aesthetics from Winter 1828-1829, we don’t find the idea that art could be “dead”, or that art is over. But Hegel himself spoke of the “Auflösung der Kunst” (“dissolution of art”) referring to the end of the romantic form and to classical comedy, and (in the introduction to his lecture) of a “Vernichtung der Kunst” (an “annihilation of art”). He also states that “Kunst hat auch ein Nach”, “art has also an after” which is the “Bewusstsein von Kunst”, the “consciousness of art” in modernity:



A rare ballet performance in the time of pandemic. *Etoiles de l'Opéra*, Paris Opera, Palais Garnier, October 19th 2020. The performance had to respect social distance for artists and spectators and end before the curfew at 9 pm. Photo Alain Patrick Olivier © 2020



The closed Opéra-Bastille, on the Bastille Square, during the second lockdown, in November 2020. Photo Alain Patrick Olivier © 2020



"On the other hand, the perfected art presents the content completely, where [the] soul is satisfied; but the spirit opposes it, and that is the after of art (*das Nach der Kunst*) and that is the position of art for our time, that we have the consciousness of art. Art will become more and more perfect, but it cannot reach this perfection where form is not the highest need for [the] representation. Our education is permeated by intellectual relations of categories of thought and reflection. This form of thought is the prosaic. The determination of force, reason and consequence are categories, ways of finite thinking, make up the soul of consciousness. For us, art is therefore not a necessity. For us, truth is to be sought in the content and form of the spirit. We no longer bend our knees before God the Father and Pallas, no matter how excellently they are portrayed. The poetic soul can now no longer be completely satisfied by it. The barrier of art lies not in it, but in us" (Hegel 2017, p. 25; my translation)<sup>18</sup>.

The lecture concludes:

"For us, the philosophy of art has become a necessity, since we are beyond art" (Hegel 2017, p. 207; my translation)<sup>19</sup>.

Accordingly, the End of Art Theory (EAT) doesn't imply that art is not possible in the present day. Hegel states that art is still in progress. There is no end to art history, but our relationship to art has changed. There is now a scientific consideration for works of art instead of a fetish or religious attitude toward objects. Not only does the EAT imply that art is possible in the present, but it makes possible the apprehension of art as art, the consideration of objects as works of art. This opens up the possibility of a new "*régime esthétique*", as Jacques Rancière would say, for an aesthetic relationship. This is the end of a heteronomous relationship toward art. Art is not a form of philosophy for Hegel, but I would consider that art is, in his system, the realization of a radical principle of freedom and living subjectivity.

The contemporary works of art – according to Hegel – are progressive forms; they are not less significant than the works of art of the previous times (Dante, Ariosto, Shakespeare). The work of art as such disappears to make place for a higher principle, which is the positive assertion of a new concept of subjectivity. The end of romantic art opens a period where subjectivity emancipates from the objectal and naive concept of the work of art. The subjectivity of the producing subject (the brilliant artist) and that of the spectator claim their rights: their superiority regarding the content and the materiality of the work of art. The death of art is only the death of the object: the *Zerfall* of the ontological conception, not the death of art as such. This principle of freedom and living subjectivity finds its modern concretization both in Goethe's final poetic works as well as in Rossini's vocal music. Hegel's enthusiasm for Italian music was not just private entertainment. The lectures of 1826 and 1828-29 show that his experience of Rossini's operas, and particularly the presence of singers performing and improvising in a theater in front of a living audience, is a speculative one and a key for his aesthetics.

We can distinguish at least three interpretations of the EAT. The first one is that art is dead because we don't have any need for art in our modern societies. We only need science to fulfill a spiritual need and to respond to the needs of a prosaic world in which we are living. The second interpretation is that we need art, but there are no more great works of art in the present; or the artistic productions of

<sup>18</sup> "Hingegen die vollendete Kunst stellt den Inhalt vollkommen dar, wo [das] Gemüth sich befriedigt; aber der Geist stellt sich ihr entgegen, und das ist das Nach der Kunst und das ist die Stellung der Kunst für unsere Zeit, daß wir das Bewußtsein von Kunst haben. Die Kunst wird immer vollkommener werden, aber diese Vollendung kann sie nicht erreichen, wo die Form nicht das höchste Bedürfniß für [die] Vorstellung ist. Unsere Bildung ist von verständigen Verhältnissen von Kategorien des Gedankens und Reflexion durchdrungen. Diese Form des Gedankens ist das Prosaische. Die Bestimmung von Kraft, Grund und Folge sind Kategorien, Weisen des endlichen Denkens, machen die Seele des Bewußtseins aus. Für uns ist die Kunst also nicht Bedürfniß. Die Wahrheit ist für uns zu suchen im Inhalt und Form des Geistes. Vor Gottvater und Pallas dargestellt beugen wir nicht mehr die Knie, sie mögen noch so vortrefflich dargestellt sein. Das poetische Gemüth kann jetzt nicht mehr ganz von ihr befriedigt werden. Die Schranke der Kunst liegt nicht in ihr, sondern in uns" (Hegel 2017, p. 25).

<sup>19</sup> "Für uns ist die Kunstphilosophie eine Nothwendigkeit geworden, da wir über die Kunst hinaus sind" (Hegel 2017, p. 207).



the present are lower than the productions of the past; or that there is no more innovation. This is not the fact by Hegel. The third interpretation is concerned with a more epistemological level. The end of art is the beginning of a free reflexive and a critical or philosophical relationship to works of art. There is no need for art, there is only a need for a philosophy of art. The EAT is therefore a structural thesis which makes the work of art and the discourse on art, or at least philosophy of art, possible. We thus have to understand dialectically that the EAT is the condition of possibility of art, the beginning of art as such. Art not only survives in philosophical or critical discourse, but it also survives in the exhibition of the creative and intellectual process of its living production. This process becomes the substantial element of art.

The present catalogue of the exhibition *With Hegel in the XXI century* includes several works that are related to the "end" or the "death" of art (Manu Invisible's Fresco; Riccardo Malaspina's performance curated by Joshua De Loa and Tayisyia Libokhorska; Marco Locatelli's and Raffaele Moretti's video installation). We can see that the philosophical discourse on the end of art is there in the material of the works themselves. This seems to verify on one side the thesis that art has fulfilled his process of becoming conceptual, the process of its dematerialization in modern times. Art has not any other content than art itself, in the shape of a philosophical discourse on itself. But on the other side the opposite also happens, namely that the philosophical discourse becomes the material of the work of art, it has been made sensible through performance, videos, pictures. Such is the sensitization of the philosophy through art. The concepts tend to collapse and dissolve into the single appearance of a visible surface. The EAT is diffracted as well, decomposed, in its different echoes, resonances, in a plurality of splinters. In these cases, it is the thesis of the death of art itself that seems to be dead.