Many teachers of aesthetics have the feeling that the topic of their lectures is not indeed aesthetics, but the history of aesthetics: the aesthetic views of Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Hume and Burke, British philosophers of taste and German romanticists. Does that mean that aesthetics breeds on its own past, is fed with re-interpretations of its classics, defends notions and categories that do not inspire anyone anymore? Does that mean that aesthetics is dead today, like Latin or Sanskrit, and its vision of art and beauty is prescribed, outdated and totally useless?

Is today’s aesthetics different from the historical one? Before we try to answer this question, let us first specify the idea of aesthetics, which is not as obvious as it may seem. Let us take such notions like ‘French aesthetics’, ‘Russian aesthetics’, ‘Scandinavian aesthetics’, ‘Latin-America aesthetics’, which can be found in the four-volume Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics published at the end of the past millennium. These terms are ambiguous. They may stand for a way of perceiving and living the world, specific for a given community, in other words, taste, expressed in works of art valued by a given culture and in the organization of everyday life – but they may also stand for a contribution of particular countries or regions to aesthetic thinking, to aesthetic self-knowledge of humans. Therefore, they have practical-cultural and philosophical dimensions. The first of those dimensions was proposed by Władysław Tatarkiewicz to be called implicite aesthetics (contained in something); the latter – explicite aesthetics (expressed directly). Stefan Morawski, on the other hand, talked about various degrees of aesthetic awareness: from simple predilections and aesthetic choices to manifestations, concepts, treaties and more or less extended aesthetic theories – so from undeveloped, not deepened aesthetic awareness – to full self-awareness.
Also, terms like ‘Japanese aesthetics’, ‘Chinese aesthetics’ or ‘Indian aesthetics’ appear to be equivocal. In that case, equivocality comes from uncertainty whether we have in mind the traditional aesthetics of those regions, or civilizations, or of today? And what about terms like ‘the aesthetics of symbolism’, ‘the aesthetics of cubism’, ‘the aesthetics of surrealism’, ‘the aesthetics of situationism’, so the aesthetics of artistic streams and styles. Each new artistic stream proposes a new way of looking at the world and wants to see and describe the world in a new way. And what about the aesthetics of happenings, performance, installation? The aesthetics of new genres or types of art? What about the aesthetics of concept art, that in the opinion of some aestheticians was to be deprived of all aesthetic value, was to have a minimal form, and even have no aesthetic value? Can there exist a piece of art without any aesthetic value? What about notions like fashion, cartoon, rock music, sports, TV, videogames, culture, democracy, that were also included in the Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics? Last but not least, what about the aesthetics of everyday life, the aesthetics of landscape, the aesthetics of outfits, interior design, food?

Aesthetics, as we can see in that short review, has multiple meanings, and has never been precisely specified, or – in other words – it is a protean, multidimensional term. No wonder then that researchers more and more often reach back to the 18th century beginnings of aesthetics when the name of the new discipline was born and terms constituting it were created and when first proposals of its cultivation appeared, when the practice of aesthetics studies was shaped, as well as relations between aesthetics and other disciplines, the history of art, psychology, sociology, anthropology.

History of aesthetics was described in many more books than contemporary aesthetics. And it is no different in Poland. We have two short introductions to contemporary aesthetics which, by the
way, are outdated, judging at least by the titles themselves: a brochure by Stefan Morawski *Główne nurty estetyki XX wieku* (1992) [*Main streams of 20th century aesthetics*] which originally was to be an encyclopaedia entry and a collective work of Cracow aestheticians edited by Krystyna Wilkoszewska *Estetyki filozoficzne XX wieku* (2000) [*The philosophical aesthetics of the 20th century*]. Some texts on ecological aesthetics (Maria Gołaszewska, Teresa Pękala, Krystyna Wilkoszewska), post-modernist aesthetics (Grzegorz Dziamski, Anna Jamroziakowa, Roman Kubicki, Tadeusz Szkolut, Krystyna Wilkoszewska, Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska), feminist aesthetics (Monika Bokiniec, Grzegorz Dziamski, Stefan Morawski), new media aesthetics (Wojciech Chyła, Wiesław Godzic, Andrzej Gwóźdź, Ryszard Kluszczyński, Michał Ostrowicki), on transcultural aesthetics – and that is practically it. Aesthetics stands today in front of new challenges that it has to face and its main tasks – once again referring to Bohdan Dziemidok – include defending popular art, working out the concept of aesthetic experience, aesthetization of everyday life and de-aesthetization of art, transcultural aesthetics and its attitude to national cultures.

Traditional aesthetics devoted little attention to popular art, its attitude towards it was *disrespectful or even disparaging*. At the end of the 20th century the situation started to change. Two famous American aestheticians got involved in defending popular art, namely Noel Carroll and Richard Shusterman. Let us, however, draw our attention to the fact that Carroll titled his book on mass art *A Philosophy of Mass Art* (1998) – and not aesthetics of mass art. The title represents the content of the book well, as today’s art is closer to philosophy than to aesthetics. Carroll thinks that we live in the era of mass culture when the meaning of mass culture will grow and therefore art should find its permanent place among the interests of today’s researchers of art, therefore, also aestheticians.
In the 19th and 20th century there was a rapid development of means of art production and distribution, writes Carroll in the introduction to *A Philosophy of Mass Art* – there occurred photography, later film, the radio, the tape recorder, the TV or the Internet. The term of art significantly broadened. Not all technical means listed by Carroll were used only for art. Not every photograph was art and not every film was an artistic film, considered art. On the other hand, not all technical inventions had such a strong impact on art as a cassette did. John Cage was totally right when he claimed that history of music may be divided into periods before and after a cassette was invented. Mass art guarantees the first contact with art to many people, their first aesthetic experiences, thus, it should become a subject of serious consideration of aestheticians, but this is, as we know, not happening, as the majority of professional aestheticians have kept a very critical attitude to mass art and popular art. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, R. G. Collingwood, Dwight MacDonald, Clement Greenberg, Guy Debord, Jean Baudrillard are just the names that appeared in Carroll’s book.

Dziemidok accuses Shusterman of not using, in his considerations about art Stanisław Ossowski’s division into artistic and aesthetic values: the first ones are objective, that is, objectively verifiable and regard such values as innovativeness, authenticity, artistry; they require going beyond the analysed piece of art and comparing it with other pieces of art; the latter are subjective, as they refer to individual experience of art. The first are aristocratic, available only to those who have certain knowledge of history and theory of art (even if only about when and how a piece of art was created), the latter are democratic, and their only test is aesthetic experience. This division corresponds, quite unexpectedly, with the division running through the whole contemporary aesthetics, especially American aesthetics, into institutional and aesthetic concept of art. Shusterman supports
the latter approach, therefore he defends aesthetic experience. He is in fact the author of one of the most interesting texts in the last dozen or so years regarding aesthetic experience\textsuperscript{14}.

Dziemidok claims that all attempts to define aesthetic experience, including also Dewey’s studies, turned out to be unsuccessful and he assigns such view to Shusterman\textsuperscript{15}. That is not right. Dewey was not trying to differentiate aesthetic experience from another type of experience, in aesthetic experience he saw an integral part of human experiences; something that combines art with non-artistic phenomena, with life. Dewey stopped at valuating, phenomenological and transforming understanding of aesthetic experience. Only his successors, the analytical philosophers, in search of formulating a neutral, purely descriptive notion of aesthetic experience, tried to separate it from everything that aesthetic experience is not. One may thus say that they were the ones who effectively annihilated the idea of aesthetic experience, trying to figure it out, namely to decompose it, and at the same time combine it with contemporary art.

Contemporary American aesthetics does not seek aesthetic experience anymore. Nelson Goodman sees in it a part of cognitive experience which restores epistemological function to art and aesthetics, and Arthur Danto replaces aesthetic experience with interpretation. Interpretation seems to be a more proper term, as it does not reduce art to sensual pleasure and does not disregard the truth contained in a piece of art\textsuperscript{16}.

Bohdan Dziemidok starts the polemics with Wolfgang Welsch, accusing his German colleague that he overestimates the role of aesthetics and aestheticians in contemporary art when he writes that \textit{contemporary art seems to be infected by philosophy}\textsuperscript{17}. I think that this part of the discussion of the Polish aesthetician with his German partner is based to a large extent on misunderstanding. Welsch thinks – and here he is supported by many aestheticians, especially
those who are close to the institutional theory of art by Arthur Danto or George Dickie – that the 20th century vanguard changed art into a kind of reflection on art, into theory or philosophy of art. It is hard to imagine today’s art which would not grow from a philosophy of art. Contemporary art has become its own comment, its own philosophy, which was mocked by Tom Wolfe years ago. Wolfe wrote that in the future the American art of 1945–1975 will be only represented by three critics, Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg and Leo Steinberg, and the works of Pollock, de Kooning, Newman, Rothko, Jones and other painters will only illustrate their texts18.

The last problem, the problem of transculturalism of aesthetics, is connected with identity and globalization19. Is art, in the globalized world, getting rid of its national identity and becomes cosmopolitan? Do today’s artists still want to create national art, like their romanticist predecessors? How does globalization change the idea of universalism? Romanticists wanted to create art for everyone and only in the modern era art splits into elitist, addressed to connoisseurs, to the artistically developed audience, and to popular art, mass entertainment for the whole rest of the society.

Stefan Morawski in the introduction to the anthology Zmierzch estetyki – rzekomy czy autentyczny? wrote that he does not know such history of aesthetic thought which would not start in the 18th century from Baumgarten20. Today more and more often we can see such approach. Many authors assume that in the second half of the 18th century modern aesthetics was born. In the beginning that was to be science of the senses and more precise – sensuous cognition, of how our senses, higher (sight, hearing) and lower (touch, smell, taste), participate in getting to know the world. For David Hume it was science of taste, although the philosopher wondered whether it is possible to learn to have an opinion. Is having an opinion a practical skill acquired and developed through experience? Hume favoured more
the latter, which changed science of taste into sociology of taste. Sociology of taste understood this way was referred to by Pierre Bourdieu in *Dystynkcja* (1979). Herbert Marcuse, in turn, described how the 18th century philosophy discovered the meaning of aesthetic, so subjective-sensuous dimension of reality (*aesthetic dimension*)\(^{21}\). Modern aesthetics appeared as science of sensuous cognition, but it transformed fast into a sub-domain of philosophy – aesthetics understood as theory of art and beauty. What was previously referred to senses, started to be referred to beauty and art\(^{22}\).

Let us add two remarks here. Philosophy of art, as the very name suggests, could have developed only when the general idea of art appeared. Previously each of the arts separately could be considered and at most theories of particular arts could be developed, painting theory, architecture, poetry, music\(^{23}\). Secondly, each philosophy of art should pose at least three types of questions; ontological, phenomenological and axiological questions. How do works of art exist? How do we perceive them? According to which criteria do we judge them?\(^{24}\) The term ‘modern aesthetics’ is because of many reasons more operative than the general term of aesthetics; as it seems to suggest that what we can observe today is not the end of aesthetics, but the end of a certain way of thinking about aesthetics, and maybe a certain paradigm of aesthetics. Robert Stecker shows the sources of such way of thinking. Reaching to his didactic experiences, he describes how he tested students with magazine of William Kennick. In the beginning of the course students received a list of several dozens of objects and were to define which of them are categorized as art. Results of the test appeared to be interesting. Students had no problems with categorizing as art those subjects which fell under the 18\(^{th}\) century *The Modern System of the Arts* (1951). They did not have problems either with later artistic forms: photography and film. They had issues only with arts and crafts, furniture, carpets, jewellery,
those usually divided the group of students in halves – half categories them as art, and half not. Something similar happened also with the art of vanguard which also divided students – half accepted it as art, the other half rejected.

Our thinking about art, concludes Stecker, is enrooted in the 18th century tradition of beaux arts. Although the artistic practice is far away from that Enlightenment understanding of art, but our awareness has still not freed from it. It is still deeply rooted in our minds. We still use it in our thinking about art. We are still talking about fine arts and many of us still think that beauty should be the attribute or purpose of art.

In the book *Aesthetics; the Big Questions* (1998) Carolyn Korsmeyer brings key problems of contemporary aesthetics to six questions. The first question, old, however, still valid, is the question about definition of art. What is art? Art can be everything today, as art freed itself from any limitations, even from limitations of its own definition and gained absolute freedom. It became absolute, as says Boris Groys. It became absolute as it made anti-art a full part of art and since then art cannot be undermined anymore or negated, as even negation of art is art and even art legitimizing with long, more than 100 years tradition, reaching back the first *ready made* by Marcel Duchamp from 1913 – a bicycle wheel mounted at a kitchen chair. Today doing art may be art and not doing art may be art; *art is art and anti-art is art*.

Art became absolute, that means that it designated itself the areas and forms of activity. It does not need any self-proclaimed defenders, trying to define it, and that is because each definition in a way would limit art and deprive it from its absolute nature. In that case the old question ‘What is art?’ loses its sense, similarly as the question reformulated by Nelson Goodman ‘When art?’ When does something become art? These questions are replaced by a new question:
'What is art for you?', 'What do you expect from art?' There may be many answers as defining art is of performative nature. Even better was the performative nature of defining art encompassed by Louise Bourgeois: 'Art is what we believe art is'. And because of some, not fully known reasons, we want to convince others to our beliefs.

The second of the big questions of aesthetics regards recognition and experiencing the value of art: what do meetings with art give us? Korsmeyer emphasizes here the difference between aesthetics and earlier poetics. Aesthetics has never been the modern version of poetics, on the contrary, it was significantly different. Poetics was addressed to authors, it wanted to define the rules of good taste, indicate what a successful piece of art should look like. On the other hand, aesthetics was from the very beginning focused on the audience, it wanted to describe how we should experience art and what we should expect from those experiences. (What is interesting is that Shusterman writes about poetics, not aesthetics of hip hop.) The divide between poetics and aesthetics was further deepened by Immanuel Kant, combining fine arts with the idea of a genius, not bound by rules of taste, as by nature he sets up his own rights. Korsmeyer asks: how art is presented today, how it gets to the audience, and invokes evolution of museums. In the past museums were a place of storing valuable objects, pieces of art – today they became providers of experiences. The third question regards valuation: who decides what is valuable in art? Artists, critics, curators, collectors, and maybe audience? Are aesthetic values still a measure to value art? Did artistic vanguard bring new aesthetic values? Can’t we assign to the most controversial piece of art of the 20th century vanguard, *Fontanna* by Marcel Duchamp, such aesthetic values like inventiveness, courage, dismissive attitude to artistic conventions, intelligence, wit, sense of humour? Roman Ingarden includes those values to intellectual aesthetic values, therefore, does not refuse them the status of aesthetic values.
Robert Stecker wonders why *Fontanna* still remains the most known *ready-made* of Duchamp? And suggests that it has to have a hidden message getting to our subconsciousness. Korsmeyer returns there to the contradiction between selflessness of art, defended by many aestheticians, and engagement of art, so close to some male and female artists. Fourth: what does art teach us? What can we learn from it about us, about others and about the world? Why did Plato want to remove poets from its ideal country? What did he accuse them of? What are the consequences of separation of form and context, philosophy and literature? Fifth: tragedy, nobility, horror – why is it pleasant to watch pain in art? What were the social function of the tragedy supposed to be? Korsmeyer reminds the term of nobility by Edmund Burke and shows two aesthetics left by Kant: aesthetics of beauty and aesthetics of nobility. Beauty was expressed in sensual forms, nobility – in what was not expressible, what cannot be closed in sensual forms. Beauty was referred by the German philosopher to art, nobility – to nature, but Romanticists already tried to break that division and find the means that allowed to express nobility in art. And last, sixth question: where is the artist in a piece of art? Who is the artist today? Does he have to die so that the piece of art can be alive and start to live its own life? Can today’s artist be brought to copyright?

Modern aesthetics was born under the sign of crisis and the pursuit for its overcoming, although, to be true, aesthetics was criticised practically from the very beginning, when is separated itself as an independent science. A British psychologist and ethicist Edward Bullough in his lecture *The Modern Conception of Aesthetics*, made in Cambridge in 1907, collected and for the first time presented the most repeated accusations towards aesthetics. They may be brought to one crucial and some less crucial. The most crucial says that knowledge delivered by aesthetics is useless, does not help understand
better or better experiment pieces of art, and everything that can be
meaningfully said about art and experiences coming from art may be
done by other disciplines: history of art, psychology, sociology, an-
thropology, cultural studies. We do not need a new discipline for that.

Aesthetics is useless, as it wants to talk about the whole art, and
competences of aestheticians regard usually one or two fields of art.
Rarely found honesty regarding this among aestheticians can be
found in what wrote Herbert Marcuse: [...] although this essay speaks
of ‘art’ in general, my discussion is essentially focused on literature, pri-
marily the literature of the eighteen and nineteenth centuries. I do not feel
qualified to talk about music and the visual arts, though I believe that
what holds true for literature, mutatis mutandis, may also apply to these
arts. Writing about aesthetics of the end of the twentieth century
based on the eighteenth and nineteenth century literature is more
than courage!

Aesthetics commits the sin of quick generalization or – as some
time ago pointed Schelling – prefers to deal with the art itself, the
essence of art than with empirical manifestations of art. Secondly,
aesthetics is as subjective as taste of a lay person, although it seems
to consistently fight the rule that de gustibus non disputantum est.
Thirdly, it is pedantic and schooling, unlike the subject of its studies,
which by nature changeable, chaotic, unpredictable, as it involves
creativity, creating something new. Fourthly, the subject of aesthet-
ics studies is not defined, does not cover the whole art, only its se-
lected part – the high part – omitting large areas of mass art, popu-
lar, media, market, useful art. Fifthly, art and beauty may be experi-
cenced, but these experiences cannot be rationalized or explained. And
last but not least, sixthly, aesthetics leans towards a closed idea of art,
suggesting this way that art belongs to the past and has already had
its biggest achievements. This assumption, silently accepted by major-
ity of aestheticians (Hegel is an exception here because he formulated
them directly), and intuitively felt by artists, was the reason for their aversion to aesthetics.

Still in the beginning of the 1970s Stefan Morawski defended aesthetics from attacks of artists and critics. A decade later he joined the critics issuing anthology *Zmierzch estetyki – rzekomy czy autentyczny?* (1987). The anthology included several lectures presented at the 7th Aesthetics Congress in Bucharest in 1972 whose one of main topics was death of art and its consequences for aesthetics. The question posed in the title of Morawski’s anthology appeared to be surprisingly valid today. Years later Jan Hudzik referred to it. His answer was unambiguous – in the 1960s and the 1970s aesthetics was in crisis it has never gotten out of, and in the 1980s it fulfilled its cultural mission, stopped inspiring the humanities, and its function was taken over by the so-called theory.

Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska, arguing with Hudziak, talked not about the dawn, end of aesthetics, but about dispersion of aesthetic studies in cultural studies – aesthetics discovers artistic nature of our whole culture and in that sense, becomes the first philosophy. Morawski himself in the 1990s changes his position and shifted to the position of a critic of culture. In his discussion with Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska and Andrzej Szahaj he called his attitude ‘philosophy in the scope of culture’. It is a very accurate self-definition. Morawski valued neo-vanguard of the 1960s and the 1970s mainly for its critical attitude to his contemporary culture, he saw a philosophical reflection in it over crisis culture (*Kulturkritik*) and he himself wanted to deal with such reflection, as proven by his last book *Niewdzięczne rysowanie mapy…* (1999), and in particular its final chapter – *O tak zwanym kryzysie kultury [EN: On so-called crisis of culture]*.

Morawski briefs here, as always, his last readings, he does it in a hurry, not avoiding small mishaps – Zygmunt Baran is not writing about ‘a tourist, a nomad’, ‘adiaphorization’ at Bauman’s does
not stand for ‘moral indifference’, freedom does not turn into playfulness⁴⁰, and the known aphorism by Rorty does not say that one ‘should fight for happiness and the truth will come itself’⁴¹ but one should fight for freedom and the truth will take care of itself. Morawski compares politically engaged contra-culture with apolitical post-modernism, Roszak with Lyotard, the era of Pieces with Aquarius, dogmatic fundamentalism opposing quantitative fundamentalism (!), warns against mistaking globalization for universalism, to later accuse globalization of not being universalism. The meaning of the whole text is clear and leaves no doubts. Morawski shares post-modernistic diagnoses of contemporary culture, with particularly close opinions by Jean Baudrillard but he uses modernist criteria, which already at the starting point puts him in opposition to any possible variants of post-modernism⁴².

The subject of criticism in accusations gathered by Bullough was aesthetics, and more precisely, as aesthetics was understood back then. In practice it was philosophical aesthetics which did not cumulate, did not sum up, did not develop, as every ambitious author presented a designed of own comprehensive aesthetics, rarely reaching to and referring to other authors⁴³. Jan Hudzik is right that authors representing that aesthetic formation, Adorno, Lukacs, Heidegger, Ingarden, Sartre, were leaving in the 1960s and the 1970s the stage. They were replaced with authors who linked the end of aesthetics with the collapse of modernist vision of art, and renaissance of aesthetics with development of post-modern aesthetization.
3. Aesthetics expressed (explicitly) and aesthetics included in the taste and works of art expressing that taste (implicitly). W. Tatarkiewicz, Wstęp, [in:] Historia estetyki. v. 1 Estetyka starożytna, Warsaw 1985, p. 17.
5. B. Dziemidok, Główne kontrowersje estetyki współczesnej, Warsaw 2002, p. 287. Such view was assigned by Dziemidok to Dickie – W koncepcji Dickiego dla sztuki konceptualnej nie było miejsca, p. 140. In my opinion Dickie created institutional theory of art in order to explain art of the newest vanguard which could not be interpreted by traditional aesthetics other than as anti-art.
15. B. Dziemidok, Główne tendencje estetyki współczesnej, op.cit. p. 29.
17. B. Dziemidok, Główne tendencje estetyki współczesnej, op.cit. p. 54.
20. S. Morawski, Czy zmierzch estetyki? [in:] Żmierzch estetyki – rzekomy czy


22 German language does not have the differentiation as in English into ‘sensuousness’ referring to senses and ‘sensuality, with a certain sexual context. In German both those meanings are expressed by one word ‘Sinnlichkeit.’ Ibid, p. 149 and p. 185.


26 Term ‘fine arts’ is used also by Shusterman: O końcu i celu doświadczenia estetycznego, op.cit. p. 198. See also D. Kuspit, Koniec sztuki, transl. J. Borowski, Gdańsk 2006.


30 R. Stecker, Aesthetic Creation, op.cit., p. 50.


33 See G. Dziamski, Kryzys estetyki, [in:] Postmodernizm wobec kryzysu estetyki współczesnej, Poznań 1996.


37 J. Hudzik, Pożegnanie z estetyką, [in:]
Grzegorz Dziamski

Performative nature of aesthetics

Many lecturers of aesthetics feel that the subject of their lectures is not necessarily aesthetics, but history of aesthetics, the aesthetic views of Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Hume and Burke, the British philosophers of taste and German romanticists. Does that mean that aesthetics feeds on its own past, is nurtured by reinterpretations of its classics, defends concepts and categories that inspire no one and do not open new cognitive perspectives?

Does it mean that aesthetics is dead today, like Latin or Sanskrit, while its vision of art and beauty is outdated, invalid and totally useless?

Aesthetics is a polysemous concept, which has never been sufficiently defined. It can determine a way of perceiving and experiencing the world that is specific for a given community, in other words, taste, yet it can also mean certain countries’ or regions’ contribution to aesthetic thought, to the aesthetic self-knowledge of man. Thus its dimension is practical, cultural and philosophical.

Today aesthetics faces new challenges that it has to live up to; its major tasks include the defence of popular art, polishing the concept of aesthetic experience, aestheticization of everyday life and de-aestheticization of art, transcultural aesthetics and its approach to national cultures.

In the book “Aesthetics: the Big Questions” (1998) Carolyn Korsmeyer reduces the main issues of contemporary aesthetics to six questions. The first question, old but valid, is a question about the definition of art. What is art? Nowadays everything can be art because art has shed all limitations, even the limitations of its own definition, and has gained absolute freedom.

It has become absolute, as Boris Groys says. It has become absolute, because it has made anti-art a full-fledged part of art, and it has not been possible either to question or negate art since, as even the negation of art is art, legitimized by a more than 100 year long tradition, going back
to the first ready-made by Marcel Duchamp in 1913. Today making art can be art and not making art can be art, as well, art is art and anti-art is art.

The old question: “What is art?” loses its sense, and so does Nelson Goodman’s question: “When art?”. When does something become art? These questions are substituted by new ones: “What is art for you?”, “What do you expect from art?”. There can be a lot of answers, because defining art has a performative character. Louise Bourgeois has expressed the performative character of defining art in an even better way: “Art is whatever we believe to be art”. And for some reasons, which we do not fully realize ourselves, we want to make others share our belief.

The text in an introduction to a new book on contemporary aesthetics by Grzegorz Dziamski.

KEYWORDS:
AESTHETICS, AESTHETICS OF POPULAR ART, AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, ARTISTIC VALUES, AESTHETIC VALUES, FINE ARTS, INSTITUTIONAL ART, AESTHETIC ART, DEFINING ART, ABSOLUTE ART, ANTI-ART

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