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Art and reality

– one possible “dialogue” between the (engaged) artist and the philosopher or is the artist also “engaged” to speak about reality –

Abstract

Aesthetics raises the question - Is the relationship between art and reality based on the relationship between the imaginary world in the works of art and the "real" world? In the relationship between art and reality, the engaged artist is tasked with witnessing the truth in the language of art. The avant-garde/engaged artists test the foundations of their own existence. The question/s of the relationship between art and reality is/are reduced to the dimension of freedom. The artist does not hesitate to turn his "primary engagement" into his own "self-selection". Engaged artists of the 20th century do not stop at basing their works of art on primarily aesthetic and artistic values, but regard political, cultural and existential values as primary. Their rebellion and demand for revaluation of the existing values had a wide echo. Engaged artists of the 20th and 21st century, in their broad artistic expression, seemed to be guided by the idea, "I rebel therefore I exist".

Key words: Art, reality, engaged and avant-garde artist, truth, being, freedom.

Introduction

To think of art as a phenomenon that is the only certain “product” of a man, is impossible without mentioning a modest analysis of the complexity of the relationship between art and reality. The artist here seems to be “engaged” to speak in the language of art about the Truth (in) reality. In his act of artistic creation, he is engaged to penetrate the very foundations of existence

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and possible answers to the questions of the structure of the human being. Genius is aware of exactly what the (mere) mortal (un)consciously escapes (he neither escapes nor denies the fact), namely, he is aware that “a person becomes an existence when the life of honor is presupposed by mere life, life in a situation in which he experiences his suppression and in which he primarily no longer cares for his reputation and what is essentially behind his *name*.”² “In the field of art, avant-garde artists clearly and undoubtedly showed their attitude in their works and life, and they did not shy away from feeling the “experiences of the fundamental crisis - either personal or common”³. A pop artist like Warhol tempts “death” directly through television and no longer sees it as one of the fundamental issues of his own existence, because death implies: “I’d been thrilled about having Kennedy as president, he was handsome, young and smart - but it didn’t bother me that much that he was dead. What bothered me was the way the television and radio were programming everybody to feel sad.”⁴ The fundamental questions of existence thus become the common questions for these artists. With this they raised a seemingly innocuous question (although it was by no means intended), and the question is - does art have to become trivial in order to unmask trivia. They solved this problem not by theorizing how philosophers do it, but they tried with their personal experience of everyday life to solve it in the (pop) work itself. The interest of art for the “trivial” was expressed in pop art, where artists, primarily, oppose a culture of appreciating and subordinating reality to artistic interests. The aim of the pop-art of the artist, and of the avant-garde artist in general, was to present the opposites and absurdity of the real world in (artistic) harmony, that is, to presuppose the nonhierarchical reality of the subject world, not to the emancipation of art, but above all of the artist himself.

Art still has the power to speak of the mystery of the world and of the man in it; what is still unproven in science, in art it is very “real”. This further raises the question of the essence of art which philosophers seek more than artists care for. The engaged artists are aware that the world of art is neither a stable nor a certain place, and for this reason in their artistic creation they search for alternatives to the existing state. In essence, this is manifested as a kind of engagement for freedom. Engagement for freedom requires from such artists to become rebels demanding the reevaluation of all existing values. This directly touches upon the phenomenon of freedom.

It is legitimate to ask ourselves how freedom manifests itself in art, and how the phenomenon of freedom is revealed through art in reality. In other

² Časlav D. Koprivica, *Filosofija angažovanja*. Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2014, p. 41.

³ Časlav D. Koprivica, *Ibid*, pp. 41-42.

⁴ Tilman Osterworld, *Pop Art*, Koln: Taschen, 2011, p. 85.

words, what does freedom mean to the artist and his work? Artists such as Dali believe that freedom manifests itself in the act of artistic work and that the Spirit is deprived of all existential fears and worries in those moments. He, as an artist, does not escape reality, but seeks to demystify it.

In general, engaged artists show us that Plato was wrong when he said that artists did not know what they were doing in the creative act. Engaged and avant-garde artists oppose the view that there are clear boundaries between art and reality, but there are no clear boundaries between art and life either.

The similarity of philosophical and artistic conception and interpretation of reality is much closer than one might see at first glance. Da Vinci believed that man had a natural aspiration for Truth, and that the artist should not only “paint” or compose, but must also reason. In his works, Da Vinci reveals the cause-and-effect relationships of the cosmos that are mapped into reality. In this (artist’s) penetration, the Spirit goes through a terrifying struggle with reality as well as with its own position at the same time.

Plato thinks that art cannot lead to truth, while Aristotle thinks that art is by no means close to a craft skill, because the artist is the creator of a somewhat new. Schopenhauer believes that through art the artist has the ability to make possible and certain what seems to be impossible.

What comes close to the philosophical, as well as the artistic understanding of art, is that the artistic creation is a copy of cosmic creation, and that the philosopher, as well as the artist, is invited to bring in, and the other to carry a torch of light into the human race.

In the twentieth century, Van Gogh says that “nature has told me something and I have recorded it shorthand”⁵, while Dali believes that experience is a kind of paradox because reality and art directly confront in experience. Engaged artists of Warhol pop do not run away from public engagement in the spirit of what at the beginning of the 21st century philosophers such as Koprivica say, “By speaking in public, I increase my chances of authenticity, if appearing in public is not an end in itself, or worse, if it is driven by some heteronomous motives - if it is related to personal self-engagement for truth, if, therefore, it is related to personal search for truth and personal authenticity.”⁶ Certainly, as far as the experience of reality in engaging is concerned, it always brings a genius/an artist the joy of richness in the Spirit who chooses and selects what is worth realizing, only for one purpose - to overcome transience and death, and to glorify the Spirit and immortality.

⁵ Vincent Van Gogh, *Pisma bratu*, Beograd: Stoper book, 2002, p. 53.

⁶ Časlav D. Koprivica, *Filosofija angažovanja*, Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2014, p. 197.

Imaginary and real in the work of art

Aesthetics poses a question - Is the relationship between art and reality based on the relationship between the imaginary world in works of art and the "real" world? Art in the world of science (especially contemporary) still testifies to "miracles", that is, miracles are present in every act of creation, including that of art. "In the field of cosmology, there are a number of theoretical results that cannot be experimentally verified."⁷ Being "experimentally" unverifiable does not mean that they do not exist. Miracles are revealed through (cosmic) faith in one personal relationship. "But then, is faith just as paradoxical as paradox? ... Faith is a miracle and everything that is relevant to the paradox is true of faith: that no one can give faith to anyone else. But within that miracle, however, everything again behaves Socratically, but in the way that the miracle is never abolished - namely, that the miracle is the eternal condition given in time."⁸ On the contrary, "miracles" are always there in our "spiritual" world.⁹ The artist has always been looking for a way to make a miracle in real time. It happens in the world of the work of art, its spiritual vibrancy and inexorability before the fact of the eternal splendor of Truth, which can and must be perceived in art. Philosophy teaches us to go from knowledge to idea, but art reverses that view, so one might ask himself like Schopenhauer did, "What is knowledge? - It is primarily and essentially an idea. What is an idea? ... This is perhaps the simplest and the most comprehensible way of disclosing the deep gulfs between the ideal and the real."¹⁰ The artist bridges the ideal and the real (world) with the power of his will in the created (work). In this way, the art itself receives a gnoseological and ontological dimension because "the will does not evolve nor change; it is always the same from beginning to end."¹¹

No less important is the question, from the point of view of aesthetics, how does the work of art contain reality? This becomes an essential question of the specific relationship between art and reality contained in the question

⁷ Aleksandar Zečević, *Istina i Lepota i granice znanja. Put od nauke do religije*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2017, p. 233.

⁸ Seren Kjerkegor, *Filozofske mrvice*. Beograd: Grafos, 1982, p. 69.

⁹ A miracle that is not really a miracle for an artist like Warhol is death. "That (death) is a sad topic. I thought it was some magic and it couldn't really happen. I do not believe in it, because then we are no longer there and we are not aware that it happened. I have nothing more to say on the subject because I am not ready for it." In: Andy Warhol, *Die Philosophie des Andy Warhol von A bis B und zuruck*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuck Verlag, 2006, p. 115.

¹⁰ Artur Šopenhauer, *Svet kao volja i predstava*. Beograd: Grafos, 1981, p. 226.

¹¹ Artur Šopenhauer, *Ibid*, p. 274.

- what is, in general, the essence of the art sought after by philosophers, more than by the artists. The relationship between art and reality is multilayered and complex, and as such it is “set from a gnoseological and ontological standpoint - as a relation of illusion, the so-called aesthetic illusion as a way of existence of the work of art, or as a relation of fiction to fact. Only from this tension that exists between these two members of the relationship, from their incommensurability, the question of that relationship becomes understandable. In this consideration, one must take into account the structure of the work of art in different epochs, the difference between the organic or autonomous classical work of art and the avant-garde work.”¹² The avant-garde itself has shown that the world of art is not a “stable” place, but that it is the (avant-garde) artist who demands that the role of the creative subject and the creative will be rethought, which is ultimately the artist’s search for new paths, not only in art, but in society as well.

In their works avant-garde artists show aspirations for open structures, fragmentation, as well as for the increasing introduction of “non-artistic” content into art.¹³ Many will say that avant-garde artists were eternal rebels in the present reality. Interestingly, they do not aspire to change reality, but to experiment in reality and with reality. The avant-garde artist sets himself the task of finding essential alternatives to the existing condition. He does not run away from his artistic engagement through the art for freedom, from present for present (not from the past for the future, but now and here “for” now and here). “That present, secondary engagement for freedom - as an assumption of the possibility of engaging in a “real” engagement, the engagement that can truly be considered as their own, what an individual wants to make of himself and the world - is an assumption of the possibility of engaging in a primary engagement, in individual self-selection - for himself as he wants to be and in the world as he wants it to be.”¹⁴ An engaged artist does not shy away from turning his “primary engagement” into his own “self-selection”. This is reflected in their rebellion against the existing state of the society which they live in, which, from a philosophical point of view, could be seen as a kind of rebellion

¹² Nataša Vilić, *Filosofija (djela) umjetnosti*, Banja Luka: Kasper, 2009, p. 109.

¹³ The most prominent example of avant-garde art can be found in the twentieth century; more precisely as early as 1905 when new trends emerged in art, such as Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, and among them, the most specific in its redefined content of art was the Dada movement, whose artists (Dadaists) reject bourgeois values and they place in the foreground the ideas of anarchism and hypermodern newness, where the boundaries of reality widen, aiming to attain freedom of mind and to reach the very idea of endlessness. This is evidenced by the works of great avant-garde painters such as Monet, Repin, Picasso, Duchamp, Warhol, Le Corbusier, Geria, Barroso, Corso, Hemigway, Brecht, Mana, Borges, Mayakovsky, etc.

¹⁴ Časlav D. Koprivica, *Filosofija angažovanja*, Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2014, pp. 36-37.

against the position of the subject and his social role. The artist becomes a rebel. "We can say that these ideological and psychological characteristics, contrary to the classical tradition and more strongly than in the Romantic movement, make a unique and permanent basis for poetics and aesthetics which, from an analytical point of view, would create such a chaotic set that could not be reduced to the lowest common denominator... The avant-garde is the ultimate anti-classical reaction of the modern age..."¹⁵ Considering the need to reevaluate existing social, but above all cultural values, avant-garde, (self) engaged artists make the essential "formation of the European cultural circle"¹⁶. The avant-garde (self) engaged artists express the need for reevaluation in different art movements and tendencies in the artistic work. "The avant-garde does not create fully structured texts, therefore it does not strive to create a complete stylistic formation as a structure of structures, it is anti-formative, and, as soon as its actions enter larger structured entities - they cease to be avant-garde."¹⁷ Flaker states that this is actually a request for reevaluation, first and foremost, in terms of aesthetics. "Aesthetic reevaluation as the primary function of the avant-garde text is manifested in the opposition to all that was traditionally regarded as beautiful."¹⁸ "Old" values like symmetry, proportion, harmony no longer find their expression nor application in this kind of art.

The phenomenon of freedom realized in the (avant-garde) art

The question/s of the relationship between art and reality, not only in the aesthetic sphere, but in the broader philosophy as well, could be reduced to the very dimension of freedom. "Freedom is the highest provision of the spirit. First of all, viewed from a purely formal point of view, it lies in the fact that the subject finds nothing strange in what stands opposite to him, no limit, no disturbance, but only himself. According to this formal provision, all troubles and every misfortune disappear, the subject reconciles to the world, finds peace and resolves every opposition and every contradiction... A man then seeks in the element of the spiritual life the pleasure and freedom in knowledge and desire, in knowledge and actions... The thirst for knowledge, the pursuit of knowledge, starting from the lowest level to the highest level

¹⁵ Renato Podoli, *Teorija avangardne umetnosti*, Beograd: Nolit, 1975, pp. 43 and 248.

¹⁶ Aleksandar Flaker, *Poetika osporavanja. Avangarda i književna levica*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1984, p. 22.

¹⁷ Aleksandar Flaker, *Stilske formacije u avangardnoj književnosti*, Zagreb: SNL, 1976, p. 199.

¹⁸ Aleksandar Flaker, *Poetika osporavanja. Avangarda i književna levica*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1984, p. 23.

of philosophical understanding, originate only from the need to abolish that state of non-freedom and to master the world in the idea and thought.”¹⁹ Freedom and non-freedom are the same as knowledge and ignorance. Can this relationship be clearly perceived in the real world as well? It seems not, because in the real world, as Hegel himself observes, there are both the knower the ignorant, and consequently they have no need to fight for freedom. The knower, that is, those who care about freedom, and there is no freedom without Truth, and there is no Truth without Spirit (nor can it be at all!), turn their search to what is hidden in the works of a man, which are the “products” of the mind, and those are philosophy and art! When we talk about freedom from the point of view of philosophy, it gives us perspectives that will not be directly the subject of our interest here. We are interested primarily in how freedom is manifested in art, and how the phenomenon of freedom is disclosed in reality through art. What does freedom mean to the artist and his creation? Aestheticians and philosophers have also told us about it, but what do artists say about it? For Dali, freedom is the act of creation in which he feels his whole being with all the fears, worries that reality carries, which, on the one hand, restrain him in the act of non-freedom, but on the other hand, it is a flight into the world of art where such and similar (restraining) feelings of disturbed (not to say frightened) Spirit disappear. “As an inspired musician, I could feel I was full of the ideas. I added sixty watercolors of ink feathers, which I painted on small pieces of paper and hung with wire above the bread. I watched in ecstasy the absurd and terribly realistic appearance of my subject, and then, at about two o’clock after midnight, I laid down and sank into a peaceful sleep. At five o’clock I woke up like a demon. The biggest worry I had ever felt was pinning me to bed. With a slight movement of my head, I barely managed to throw away the covers that choked me. Dawn was being born; the frenetic bird song finally woke me up completely.”²⁰ An artist like Dali coexists with reality, but also his Spirit is above that reality, and it is this very Spirit in him that cries out when Dali comes to a realization in his internal dialogues in which he opens the deepest philosophical questions, not through philosophy, but through artistic expression. These internal philosophical dialogues in the genius (artist) are stimulated in the moments of creation, for example, of a single portrait. “In order to see a drawing on a darkened surface which appeared to be a mirror as well, and since I noticed that in places where the glare was brighter I could see the details of the drawing better, I worked with a piece of white paper of three square centimeters, glued to the top of my nose... Forgetting to remove the piece of paper from the top of my nose for

¹⁹ G. V. F. Hegel, *Estetika 1*, Beograd: Kultura, 1970, pp. 98-100.

²⁰ Salvador Dali, *Ja sam genije*. Novi Sad: SOLARIS, 2008, pp. 19-20.

two hours, I spoke with the utmost seriousness about transcendental issues, in a tone at the same time objective and solemn, not doubting anything about the ridiculous look of my nose! What mystifier could play such a role until the end?"²¹ The answer from Dali's words might be clear, and it is the artist he refers to as a "mystifier", who, in philosophy (not in art), is actually "(de) mystifier", not of the non-real, but of the real. Why? This could be understood as a pure act of freedom, because, as Schelling says, Plato "does not place hell opposite to heaven, but earth... This play is not a natural consequence of teaching which states that freedom consists of the mere rule of the intelligent principle over the sensual lust and the sensory inclinations, according to which the good comes from the mind, and therefore, conceptually, there is no freedom for evil (if sensory inclinations prevail here)."²²

Engaged artists and their attitude towards the phenomenon of freedom

The attitude of the engaged artist towards freedom shows us that Plato was wrong when he said that artists did not know what they were doing while creating. They are in rapture, they are in ecstasy, but the ecstasy of Truth in reality. Artists are also philosophers, but philosophers who do not use words, they "speak" in their works. However, there are those among them who do not suffice to express the Truth through brush strokes or when composing notes in the score in the sign and order of the cosmological eternal order that is revealed to them in the very act of "ecstasy" of creation. Through the idea of the Beautiful, artists reach the (artistic) idea of Truth, the realization of the very idea of freedom. There is no *fatum* in artistic creation, neither in freedom. "Randomness, however, is impossible, and contradicts the mind as a necessary unity of the whole; and if freedom cannot be saved other than by mere coincidence of action, then it cannot be saved at all."²³ However, it might be sensed here that Plato was close to discovering that the task of the artist was to teach us how to actually distinguish truth from illusion. The engaged artist does this through the "language" of art, and this "language" speaks of two "types" of beauty - true and apparent beauty. "It is not that each of us notices and understands beauty in our own way, but each of us must know what is beautiful. Therefore, Plato thinks that beautiful is only an idea which is at the same time a measure and a realization of beauty (its truth and value), only the idea in itself is perfectly beautiful, incomparable with anything, it is

²¹ Salvador Dali, *Ibid*, pp. 16-18.

²² F. V. J. Šeling, *O suštini ljudske slobode*, Nova Pazova: Bonart, 2001, p. 45.

²³ F. V. J. Šeling, *Ibid*, Nova Pazova: Bonart, p. 57.

without space and time, as such it exists forever, and as such he sets it as the measure of everything transient, sensual and individual.”²⁴ Here we will look again at avant-garde artists who oppose the view that in art and in reality we have clear boundaries between art and life in general, because they feel that their call is not “just” to be artists, but their “call” is to be engaged. We find a similarity to this view with Schelling, who states that “only idealism has risen the teaching of freedom to the level where it is only understandable. The intelligent essence of every thing, primarily human, is precisely for the sake of these outside causality determinations, as well as beyond or above any time. Hence, this essence can never be determined by something prior, because, on the contrary, it does not precede anything else that exists or arises in it - certainly not in relation to time - by the term as an absolute unity, as a unity, which, in order to make possible individual action or determination, must always and completely be present.”²⁵

Possible similarity of the philosophical and artistic conception of reality

The similarity of philosophical and artistic understanding and interpretation of the world and reality is much closer than it seems at first. We are used to looking at the world of art and the world of philosophy wrong as separate entities. These two “worlds” are very close, like two circles that intersect (infinitely), and in that common cross-section there is their aim - (cognition) Truth! Leonardo da Vinci says in the *Predictions*: “The natural desire of good men is knowledge.”²⁶ Here it is as if we meet two thinkers in work, the afore-

²⁴ Nataša Vilić, *Uvod u estetiku. Sa kratkim pregledom istorije estetike: Antika i Srednji vek*, Banja Luka: Udruženje za filozofiju i društvenu misao, 2016, pp. 94-95.

Here, with Plato, we must pay attention to the way he truly understands the relation of art to reality, which he does not explicitly speak of, but it is an indisputable fact that he binds the idea of the Beautiful to the idea of the Good. When talking about beauty ancient Greeks will always use the term kalon. They use this term when they want to highlight any individual beauty (human, plants, artwork, landscape, etc.) as well as human character. Also, the ancient Greeks often use another term when talking about beauty, which is the term agathon. The term agathon meant for them the very ideal of nobility and true spiritual depth and goodness of a man. Author N. Vilić has set out an interesting thesis in her book *Uvod u estetiku. Sa kratkim pregledom istorije estetike: Antika i Srednji vek* when she says “this is where the ancient Greeks make a mistake because they overlap the terms kalon and agathon.” See in: Nataša Vilić, *Uvod u estetiku. Sa kratkim pregledom istorije estetike: Antika i Srednji vek*, Banja Luka: Udruženje za filozofiju i društvenu misao, 2016, p. 97 (footnote 135)

²⁵ F. V. J. Šeling, *O suštini ljudske slobode*, Nova Pazova: Bonart, 2001, p. 57.

²⁶ Leonardo Da Vinči, *Predskazanja & filozofija i aforizmi*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 62.

mentioned Hegel with his words about the needs of “knowers” as he calls them, and, an artist like Da Vinci who talks about the needs of the “good men” - and that is the same need - the need for Truth (which the Spirit of both longs for)! “The truth, according to M. Heidegger, is unconcealment, a way of coming out of concealment, and it is the being that is uncovered in this or that way. What is hidden, what escapes the uncovering of special beings, and what the truth itself is, is the being as a whole. It is the hiding of the being, which is hidden in everything. As such, it is a secret, untruth, which precedes any uncovering of this or that kind of being. For this reason, all that is hidden is the condition of uncovering the parts. M. Heidegger thinks that the being is hiding while uncovering himself in the being. The being is always in-the-world; it is both multitude and individual. The being is uncovered as a secret.”²⁷ Here, though, we see this subtle seductive play that art plays toward reality. In attempting to seduce reality, art actually seeks to unravel the Truth of Being and, as such, to convey it to ordinary mortals (the audience in the act of reception) in an artistic language. However, even reality does not easily fall for the seductive charms of art. This is also evidenced by Plato, who constantly assures us that reality is deceptive because we perceive it with the senses, and so is art. We use the word “perceivment” here because reality resembles an eternal shadow of shadows that is close to Plato’s understanding of art. If we perceive the play of art and reality in this way, then it is clear why Plato degrades art, lowering it to the realm of the sensual and not allowing it to rise above the senses. He sees art as inextricably linked to the beauty manifested in reality. When talking about true beauty, which is the idea of beautiful, Plato places it in the rank of the metaphysics of beauty. “In his metaphysics of the beautiful, Plato shows us that the metaphysics of the beautiful cannot have any direct contact with art...”²⁸ And then what about reality? Is there beauty?! Following the principles of Pythagorean philosophical thought about cosmic origin and the power of beauty, Plato admits that “beautiful is not artistically beautiful, it is much broader.”²⁹ Why such views of the great philosopher? Why is he doing this? It seems that the great philosopher (Plato) here does not intend to deal too much with the phenomenon of art, but actually realizes, though he does not want to admit it, the significance of the influence of art on a man who lives in reality, but is also shaped through and from art. Man does not live (that is, does not exist) in the past, he only possesses the present, which as such gives him the opportunity to shape for the (possible) future to

²⁷ Nataša Vilić, *Filosofija (djela) umjetnosti*, Banja Luka: Kasper, 2009, p. 81.

²⁸ Nataša Vilić, *Uvod u estetiku. Sa kratkim pregledom istorije estetike: Antika i Srednji vek*, Banja Luka: Udruženje za filozofiju i društvenu misao, 2016, p. 93

²⁹ Nataša Vilić, *Ibid*, p. 93.

come. Plato constantly refers to an ideally constructed state community that cannot be formed or survive without an ideally educated man, and such ideal education requires art. Here the great philosopher commends it, of course not directly, but by introducing it into the system of compulsory education, though refined or, what we would say today, censured for the needs of such state, it is nevertheless necessary! He also uses it to encourage warriors in battles. And this is all that the great philosopher pays attention to when he modestly talks about art. Here we will not talk about his understanding of art as mimesis³⁰, with which he degrades it and places it even below reality. Why is it so? The reason for this may be, as we have already mentioned, that Plato thinks the artist is not aware of what he is doing while creating, and that in his opinion, no reasoning is needed for the creation and reception of art. And it is precisely here that Plato falls into contradiction because he loses sight of the phenomenon of freedom which according to him can only be realized in the philosophical mind.

Plato's and Aristotle's understanding of the relationship between art and reality

There is a multi-layered and specific relationship between art and reality in Plato. Plato primarily sees a mimetic function in art, and the way he interprets the origin of art leaves many controversies. Plato derives the origin of art from the myth of Prometheus. It would be superficial to think that the myth of Prometheus, who steals fire from his own people and hands it over to a man, actually means that the man is given the opportunity to facilitate his existence. Fire of Prometheus is actually a symbol of bringing light into the soul of a man, that is, Prometheus imparts (divine) knowledge to the (mortal) man. Knowledge makes the man immortal. Exactly as art later proved, because works of art testify that the Spirit of the man, who they originate from and who they also address to through works of art, is eternal. Art is a testament to the victory over mortality, transience.

³⁰ "In order to avoid relativizing cognition, Plato speaks of the world of ideas that is a substantive world of supersensitive ideas. Therefore, ideas are the only being of the world, they express what is general, lasting and identical in all individual things. The true being of things that is contained in ideas can only be perceived with reason, and as such it is necessary to distinguish it from the phenomenon perceived with the senses. However, for Plato, the real and ideal spheres are ontically detached. The idea of Beauty for Plato has nothing to do with art." See in: Nataša Vilić, *Uvod u estetiku. Sa kratkim pregledom istorije estetike: Antika i Srednji vek*, Banja Luka: Udruženje za filozofiju i društvenu misao, 2016, pp. 108-109.

Still, Plato thinks that “art is only possible through the real world, which in itself is an imitation of the world of ideas, and this real world is imitated by the artist himself. Therefore, the real world is the world of shadows, and art is the shadow of the shadow. For this reason, Plato puts poets and painters on the third level, because they are only imitators of the real world... In any case, imitation of artists as a whole tends to be fantastic, not true, and that is why artists entertain people in their distorted fantasies, distancing them from the truth.”³¹ The poet himself, according to Plato, is not inclined to the better (divine) part of the soul, but he is directed to the multitude of different natures which he seeks, above all, to appeal to. Affection is not about cognition, but rather can be related to sensory pleasures. For this reason, Plato is very strict with art because senses stand in the man’s way of true cognition. Entertaining people and seeking the truth according to him do not have the same purpose. Entertainment is for those who are not worthy of the highest truth. Art, if it turns to entertainment, if it turns to mere reality, then it has nothing to say about true cognition. The “truths” of such art are lies and illusions.

Plato and Aristotle differently understand the place of art in relation to its purpose, as well as the place of art understood in ontological ranking. Aristotle notes in his *Physics* that Plato’s view is not entirely correct, because the idea, when it comes in contact with matter, becomes a finite, sensual matter, but as such it can never fulfill the ideality which the idea has given it.³² It is for this reason that the task of the artist, in Aristotle’s view, is to “partly imitate and partly complete”³³, because the artist in his act of action aims to imitate the inner essence of things, while Plato wondered about multitudes and individual things, and according to him the artist creates as well, but in a way more similar to illusion than to the being. In fact, Aristotle is much closer to the aesthetic understanding of art through his views. For the first time, he clearly states that the origin of art should not be sought anywhere but in the man. According to him, the artist was “engaged” by nature to complete what nature was unable to do. The artist completes nature, spiritualizes it, gives it a new dimension, thus giving it both gnoseological and ontological value. For Aristotle, art is not close to a craft skill, because the artist is not an imitator the way Plato saw him, but for the first time he is seen as the creator of a something new.

³¹ Nataša Vilić, *Uvod u estetiku. Sa kratkim pregledom istorije estetike: Antika i Srednji vek*, Banja Luka: Udruženje za filozofiju i društvenu misao, 2016, p. 108.

³² Aristotel, *Fizika*, Beograd: Paideia, 2008, p. 72.

³³ Aristotel, *Ibid*, p. 72.

The artist's inheritance of the past in the present for the foreseeable future

The relation of the artist to the reality has a completely different dimension than it is the case with philosophy. Why? The artist is aware that he is also a human being who exists in reality, but that his creativity is based largely on the inheritance of the past, which, in the act of creation (in reality), is a signpost for the future. For such understanding of art and reality, an artist like Da Vinci says: "Our reasoning does not evaluate things that happened in different periods, by their exact and proper beginning; many events, namely, took place many years ago, and they seem to us as if they were close to the present moment, while many recent things seem to be very old and belong to the distant time of our youth. And the same is with the eye: very distant objects look close to us when the sun shines on them, while objects close to us seem to be far away."³⁴ He is aware that things are different with the spiritual "eyes". Spiritual "sight" "penetrates" reality, goes deep into the essence of reality, into what reality is, because reality is not just a matter of ordered things. Reality is essentially a (perfect) image of the cosmos. The task of the artist is to recognize that copy of the cosmos and to uncover it in the form of the work of art. Da Vinci as an artist talks about the artist's need to reason, not just paint. Why? Continuing on this Da Vinci's thought, we can also refer here to Schopenhauer, who in his work the *Metaphysics of Beauty* says that the artist in his creation "surprises us at every step, what is otherwise impossible, hard has become easy, easy has become hard, what seems to be nothing makes the whole world, and what is immense disappears into nothing."³⁵ The act of the artist does not stop only at the created, nor is it the goal, but the goal is the receptive act of the audience/observer, because from the revealed it is "penetrated" into the "unexpected" and "sudden". Da Vinci is aware that the cosmos is "made" of causal relationships, which appear in nature itself. "In nature, there are no consequences without cause; understand the cause and then you will only have to gain experience... Experience never cheats; only your judgments make mistakes when they promise results different from our person-

³⁴ Leonardo Da Vinči, *Predskazanja & filozofija i aforizmi*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 9.

Also, here we will mention the words of the great genius Da Vinci, who speaks not as an artist but more as a philosopher when he says: "Experience, the mediator between imaginative nature and human species, teaches us that what the nature does among mortals pressed with necessity cannot be done otherwise than as taught by reason that governs it." See in: Leonardo Da Vinči, *Predskazanja & filozofija i aforizmi*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 12.

³⁵ Artur Šopenhauer, *Metafizika lepog*, Beograd: Partenon, 2011, p. 84.

al experiential knowledge. Since a principle is given, its consequence should naturally result from it, without any disturbance... Experience is never at a loss. It is only our reasoning, which expects things different from its power.³⁶ Yet, like many other artistic geniuses after him, Da Vinci knows that the artist is going through a terrifying internal (spiritual) struggle in the act of creation. Artistic creation is a copy of cosmic creation; such creation is not learned, for neither art is craft, nor the cosmos knows repetition. About the inner struggle of imagination and reason, as well as the spiritual turmoil, the artist of the 20th century, painter Van Gogh says: "In a sense, I am pleased that I did not learn to paint. I might *learn* to miss the unnoticed effects of that kind, now, I say no – that's exactly what I have to have, if it's not possible, it's not possible, I want to try, though I do not know how to do it. *I do not even know how* I paint, I sit before a white panel in front of the place that has left a strong impression on me, I look at what is in front of my eyes, I tell myself, that white panel has to become something – I return dissatisfied - I put it aside, and after resting, I look at it with a certain anxiety - I am still dissatisfied, because that wonderful nature is too much on my mind to be pleased with - but still I see in my work the echo of what attracted me, I see that nature told me something, spoke, and I recorded it shorthand. There may be unsolved words in my shorthand - errors or blanks, and yet some of what the forest or the coast or the figure have said is left, and it is not an expressionless or conventional language that is not born out of nature itself, but of a particular way of working or of a scientific system... To do studies in my opinion means to sow, and to make images means to reap."³⁷ On the other hand, an artist like Dali thinks the experience is a kind of paradox; in experience, reality and art are directly confronted, and the breakage of this "meeting" is only evident in the Spirit of the artist. "In my head, glory shone like open scissors. Work, work, Salvador! You have a talent for cruelty but also for work. This ability has earned everyone's respect. I got up at seven in the morning and all day long my brain did not know for rest. Even my walks with the girls went into the program: into the business of seduction. The parents kept saying, "He never has fun. He is not restful even

³⁶ Leonardo Da Vinči, *Predskazanja & filozofija i aforizmi*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, pp. 13-14.

Here we will add another thought of great genius to understand more clearly how Da Vinci feels that without reality (experience of reality) there can be no supreme artistic creation. He states, in fact, what the misconception of people about the experience is. "People complain about the experience unfairly and blame it for lying. Leave the experience alone and rather turn your complaints against your own ignorance, which makes your desolate and foolish desires seduce you to expect things that are beyond its power. People mistakenly complain about the innocent experience and accuse it of deception and misrepresentation!" See in: Leonardo Da Vinči, *Predskazanja & filozofija i aforizmi*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 14.

³⁷ Vinsent Van Gog, *Pisma bratu*, Beograd: Stoper book, 2002, pp. 52-53.

for a moment. You are young, Salvador. You should use your youth.“ At the time, I thought the opposite: “Hurry to grow old. You are terribly green and bitter. How to get rid of youth, which is really just a useless flaw.”³⁸ An artist, especially an engaged artist, must experience reality, feel it and live it, he feels engagement as his vocation, Dali was well aware of that.

Engaged artists like Warhol do not run away from public engagement. They are in the lines of what Koprivica says: “By speaking in public, I increase my chances of authenticity if public appearance is not a purpose in itself, or worse, if it is driven by some heteronomous motives - if it is related to personal self-engagement for the truth, if it is related to the personal search for truth and personal authenticity.”³⁹ An experience of reality in engagement brings a genius wealth in the Spirit who chooses and selects what is worthy of accomplishment that must have only one task - to overcome transience and death, and to glorify the Spirit and immortality. How is it possible?

The temptation of reality by the engaged artist

The temptation of reality by the engaged artist is possible in such a way that the Artist penetrates with his Spirit into reality, into its essence, and the knowledge he comes to in this controversy of the Spirit, he gives birth to in agony of the realization of Truth into (artistic) work, that is, into what the ultimate goal is - created (artistic) work that interacts with the audience! What kind of interaction, what language is it?! The language of art is specific and easily elusive. It is not the language of everyday human speech. It is above it. Regarding the relationship between the language of art and the language used in everyday speech we can refer to Gordon Graham, who himself refers to Derida when he states this: “Derida wants to emphasize here that majority of theorists thought of human language and the outside world as two different entities that correspond mutually, while structuralism recognizes that the underlying reality is not a fixed world, but the reality of the structures of thought and language itself.”⁴⁰ Guided by these views we could give ourselves the right to say that artistic speech is always speech from the past about the future, but speech is only existant in the present. The language spoken by the artist is always an afterword of the artist’s vision of what is coming. And it happens in the very word, as Heidegger thinks, because the saying of the thinker“ comes in - it - the illuminated realm.”⁴¹ Artists are visionaries, prophets of the

³⁸ Salvador, *Dali Ja sam genije*, Novi Sad: СОЛАРИС, 2008, p. 49.

³⁹ Časlav D. Koprivica, *Filosofija angažovanja*, Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2014, p. 197.

⁴⁰ Gordon Grejam, *Filozofija umetnosti. Uvod u estetiku*, Beograd: Clio, 2000, pp. 218-219.

⁴¹ Martin Hajdeger, *Putni znakovi*, Beograd: Plato, 2003, p. 277.

coming; their intuition is perhaps the most powerful weapon in the artist's creation. Still, there is something important not only for the artist but also for the philosopher, as warned by the artist, rather than the philosopher. That is why the artist warns: "But one thing is important: that the man does not deceive the lie of his epoch, not to the extent that he does not record in it the unhealthy and depressing hours that precede the storm... See, what is encouraging, is that one does not always have to chase alone with one's feelings and thoughts... Then one is also *capable* of much more, and is infinitely happier... because times are not very happy, unless one finds happiness in their work."⁴² The work of a man would be futile, even art, without the connection of words and opinions, as Heidegger says: "The thought of the being keeps the word."⁴³

The peculiarity of the encounter of art with reality reveals the obvious, namely that reality as such is revealed to the genius/artist, in such a way that reality creates Being and Truth, which as such glitter in the light of works of art so much that they can dazzle the observer, and not only observers, but also those who make a philosophical effort to understand this eternal mysterious phenomenon of art, which constantly entices, seduces, introduces to dialogue or quarrel, but never leaves anyone indifferent. For this reason Heidegger is certainly right in saying, "The poet names what is holy."⁴⁴ And it is precisely this "holy" as Heidegger calls it that is placed not only in philosophy but also in art. Aestheticists like Zurovac regard art as the very code of being, which can only be decoded in reality. "What is real in the true sense of the word is available to existence only in codes. Existence is capable of reading codes: it understands the language of transcendence and by listening to it, it acquires awareness of transient similarity and the parse of all life forms from one common root... Therefore, every truth remains the truth of one particular point of view."⁴⁵

Conclusion

Philosophy, art and reality, each in turn, show that time and space are relative facts for the Spirit of a man, because the man speaks of the same essential issues and problems throughout his history in different forms. Dialogue between an artist (specially engaged artist) and a philosopher is possible. Gavela says of ancient art that "its beauty and value are imperishable, because the

⁴² Vinsent Van Gog, *Pisma bratu*, Beograd: Stoper book, 2002, p. 101.

⁴³ Martin Hajdeger, *Putni znakovi*, Beograd: Plato, 2003, p. 277.

⁴⁴ Martin Hajdeger, *Ibid*, p. 273.

⁴⁵ Mirko Zurovac, *Umjetnost kao istina i laž bića. Jaspers, Hajdeger, Sartr, Merlo-Ponti*, Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1986, p. 43.

motives, feelings and ideas it was inspired by and which it is dedicated to are general and common to all people...⁴⁶ This thought could refer to the arts of all epochs, for it is precisely “what” is common to them that Hegel reveals in his *Aesthetics* when he says: “What a man, involved from all sides in finality, seeks in this respect, is the region of some more, substantive truth, in which all the opposites and contradictions of the final can find their final solution, and freedom can find its full satisfaction.”⁴⁷ The (engaged) artist as well as the philosopher has one true task, which is the pursuit of knowledge. Without genuine cognition there can be no true art. “The essence of every knowledge lies in the deepest connection with the nonconcealment of being.”⁴⁸ The task the cosmos assigns to the artist is to speak about Truth in the artistic language, to be constantly engaged, and a genius like Da Vinci is aware of this when he says: “Truth is in relation to lie just as light is in relation to darkness; and the truth is such an excellence that even when dealing with some humble and down-to-earth low matter, it immeasurably takes it away from the sophism and falsehood which bask in big and deafening words; because, even though our spirit has made the fifth element out of lies, it is not present less than the truth of things is essential food for refined minds - but, no, it is true, lies in turn nourish the wandering spirits.”⁴⁹

The artist, like the philosopher, never gives up on the realization of causal relations. The artist reveals even what is still unproven and experimentally unverifiable as his artistic Truth. In this way, it might seem that artists even before the philosophers enter a spiritual struggle making the unknown possibly known. The artist is aware that nothing is safe nor certain. But that insecurity and uncertainty become the birthplace precisely of the arts of the 20th and 21st century. The avant-garde and engaged artists actually direct

⁴⁶ Branko Gavela, *Fidija. Klasična epoha helenske umetnosti*, Beograd: Naučna KMD, 2006, p. 9.

⁴⁷ G. V. F. Hegel, *Estetika I*, Beograd: Kultura, 1970, p. 101.

⁴⁸ Mirko Zurovac, *Umjetnost kao istina i laž bića. Jaspers, Hajdeger, Sartr, Merlo-Ponti*, Novi Sad: Matica srpske, 1986, p. 143.

To this we must add: “The splendor of truth in the work is its beauty. Therefore, the work can take a beautiful form only if there is truth in it... The work is before us as one extraordinary and unusual fact: the fact of the being uncovered... The work becomes the work only if we are drawn into the sphere of its unique exceptionality. The exceptional nature of the work requires to be preserved as exceptional. Therefore, it is not enough for the work to be created only, because the created work requires to be preserved. In this sense, the being of the work is two-fold: the work has a created and guarded being. The created and guarded being of the work go together, for there is no work before the moment of creation, nor can the created work exist without preservation.” See in: Mirko Zurovac, *Umjetnost kao istina i laž bića. Jaspers, Hajdeger, Sartr, Merlo-Ponti*, Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1986, p. 147.

⁴⁹ Leonardo Da Vinči, *Predskazanja & filozofija i aforizmi*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2011, p. 57.

their artistic expression towards an engagement for freedom, and in order to achieve this in the (artistic) work, they become rebels seeking to reconsider everything. Thus, Dali believes that freedom is manifested in the very act of creation, where the Spirit is deprived of all existential fears and worries. He does not flee from reality, but makes an effort to demystify it in his works.

Engaged artists showed that Plato was mistaken when he reduced art to a mimetic function. They certainly insist that there are no clear boundaries between art and reality, as well as that there are no clear boundaries between art and philosophy. The similarity of philosophical and artistic understanding and interpretation of the world, but also of reality is much closer to them than it seems at first glance. Warhol approaches reality in a way that he dissolves it in his own works of art and does not remain only a "passive" genius, but also engages in public life. He understands the importance of his own public engagement. Similar to this we might find in the opinion of philosophers such as Heidegger, who says that "The thought of the being keeps the word..."⁵⁰. And the importance of engagement could also be understood in the way Koprivica believes that "... present, ... engagement for freedom - as a prerequisite for the possibility of engaging in "real" engagement, the engagement that he will truly be able to regard as his own, what an individual wants to make of himself and of the world... into individual self-selection - for himself as he wants to be and in the world as he wants." Engaged artist does not hesitate to turn his "primary engagement" into his own "self-selection". This is reflected in their rebellion against the existing state of the society which they live in, and this could be seen from a philosophical point of view as a kind of rebellion against the position of the subject and his social role.

Engaged artists of the 20th century insisted not to be at the margins of the culture of their time, but they strive to make their voices heard. They do not stop at the fact that their works of art are based on primary aesthetic and artistic values, so they consciously place them in the spirit of their engagement on the secondary place, and they put political, cultural, existential values as primary. Their rebellion and demand for the reevaluation of existing values had a wide echo. Engaged artists of the 20th century are still guided by the attitude: "And so, from the first 'I rebel, therefore I exist,' we have come to 'I rebel, therefore we exist,' which is not a small step in dealing with the alienation of the world, since the connection with others, not only can be a strong defense to the experience of alienation, but that experience is reversed in the very field where it is first experienced - and that is alienation of me from others."⁵¹ The engaged artists of the 20th century and the first half of

⁵⁰ Martin Hajdeger, *Putni znakovi*, Beograd: Plato, 2003, p. 277.

⁵¹ Časlav D. Koprivica, *Ibid*, p. 285.

the 21st century, in their broad artistic expression, seemed to be driven by the idea that only by the act of rebellion did they become noticeable in society. In a such industrial world, later in the information and digital society today, rebellion itself becomes a way not only of existence but of survival in the broadest sense.

In any case, whether it is about the philosophical thinking of art or the approach to the world and reality from the spiritual vision of the artist, one thing is certain, which is that art and reality correspond in such a way that "The splendor of truth in a work is its beauty... The created and guarded being of the work go together, for there is no work before the moment of creation, nor can the created work exist without preservation."⁵² Philosophy keeps thinking of art from oblivion, while the artist challenges the philosopher to encounter in reality. Both the philosopher and the artist are tasked with keeping the Spirit (of a man) awake with the torch of the light of Prometheus.

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