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### “The True Context for Art”

The purpose of this essay is to argue that true context for art is an object of embodiment and transmission for integral experiences. I look to accomplish that by weighing John Dewey's thoughts on mistaken conceptions of what art is, the characteristics of integral experiences, and the process of these experiences becoming art. When one arrives at this conclusion through evidence, it is easier to appreciate art for what it truly is.

To understand art; its purpose, its emergence, and relation to human experience, one should clarify what it is not. This is done by starting off where art is misunderstood and building up a correct conception. Art is most commonly perceived and appreciated solely as an object. A painting is only seen as the shapes and colors on a canvas, music dumbed down to notes separated by spaces of silence, and film as dialogue between people who are good at playing make-believe. Craft is important in the final product, but what gives art its purpose is impulse. This impulse is some raw emotion that is beckoning to be pushed outward of an artist into the world. Every artist at one point or another feels a deep unsettling inside of them that can only be resolved by putting pen or brush to paper. Without art or the ability to work it out, the raw emotion never gets context that it finds in the object. The purpose of art in this sense for the artist is so that they can better understand what is going on inside them. After realizing the purpose of the art, this impulse must meet resistance. Dewey's opinion is that without resistance, the art will never emerge and bring about joy or fulfillment to the artist. Without finding a wall to overcome, the artist is not conscious of the impulsion either. This means that the marriage of impulse and resistance happens simultaneously for the artist. An artist works

out the impulse through resistance till he is satisfied and hopefully placed that emotion in an object. When finished, the art now speaks what happened to the artist to the perceiver.

These concepts of impulse, resistance, and satisfaction go deeper than just art though. Dewey believes that they are a type of filter for experience. Specifically he categorizes "experience" into two main groups: ordinary experiences and integral experiences. These two are distinct in characteristic, making only one viable to be embodied and transmitted in art. The reason is that ordinary experiences are distinguished for being fast paced, filled with momentary pleasure whilst integral experiences are fully formed over time. The integral experience forms because of the resistance that is overcome, giving a long time for a long lasting result of happiness. The integral experience has a beginning and an end held together by a pervasive quality. This quality is the impulse that is later recognized as an emotion. This same emotion is the pervasive quality that moves an art to its final form, leading the artist. However, ordinary experiences are cut off from this type of fulfillment because they are distracted and lacking a pervasive quality. And finally the integral experience has rhythm, the going and undergoing. On the road from tension of the impulse to the resolution of satisfaction, each action slowly but surely moves the person one step closer to the fulfillment of the integral experience. In this case, the rhythm is found in the constant appearance of tension and harmony pulling. There is never a moment of empty space because one or the other fills it. That is contrasted by an ordinary experience that ends all of a sudden and can not continue with no pervasive emotion and no resistance. These qualities make integral experiences stand out from ordinary ones and in Dewey's mind, vitally important. If we are distracted from these moments, we lose the value and happiness in life we all desire. We lose the chance of harmony when we let our impulses die and do not strive to overcome when there is resistance. The pull of resistance to fulfillment is what makes life worthwhile. The importance of integral experience is found in what they produce

in us. Without our experiences of sadness, despair, and pain we can not appreciate nor identify happiness, hope, and love.

Now that we see how the impulse, resistance and satisfaction play a role in our integral experience, we can trace it back to be applied in the world practically. Integral experiences are best subdivided between aesthetic and intellectual experiences. Both have the same processes of impulse, resistance and satisfaction but what sets them apart is substance and form.

Substance is the very thing being used to express emotion, an expressive object. Form is how it is being said. With this distinction one can conclude that both artists and thinkers go through the same experiences making their work. What sets them apart however is the expressive object and form. In an aesthetic experience an artist uses the expressive objects of a canvas and brushes and colors to find satisfaction from his impulse. The substance finds form as the artist relates colors, shapes, and patterns on the canvas with his tools. As he brushes he is making more clear the emotion and in a sense, giving more form to the substance. In this process, what is determining all his actions is the impulse. The very emotion is controlling and dictating the moving parts and unifying them to satisfaction. For the intellectual, a problem confuses him and makes him conscious of the impulse to solve. This is the resistance and impulse being married. The propositions of an argument that lead to a conclusion are interconnected by the emotion. And in this sense, substance is the answer to the intellectual's problem and the form is given and spoken by symbols, diagrams, or charts.

When one defines the issues with current perceptions of art, one can see that there are many underlying pieces that give much more meaning to the object than when isolated. The context of impulse, resistance and satisfaction give not just art, but experience greater definition with moving parts. And when reassembled, these parts of integral experience are the very nature of art and intellectual expression. With that understanding, it is hard not to find that the

true context for art is an expressive object used to embody and transmit integral experiences. In this context, art connects people by telling stories of self-discovery through integral experience.