

Define what art is



Definition of Art Introduction The word “ art” is not a simple term. It cannot be defined as a word symbolizing aesthetics. Neither the meaning of the word can be equalized with the thousand other words found in a dictionary, nor does the depth of this word consisting just three letters of English alphabet is petty as its length. With unfathomable depth and magnitude this small word encompasses an entire realm, a different paradigm of perceptions altogether. It connotes majesty of a civilization or development of an age. At the same time, it can also measure the potential and capabilities of mighty individuals. It is a weapon, a massive protest and a huge platform for revelation and revolution. Exploring the meaning of art as it appeals to a connoisseur is difficult but not always beyond comprehension. The essay attempts to identify, examine and explore few such intricate subtleties associated with the mighty term called “ art”.

Definition of “ Art”: A Relative Perspective

In determining various approaches regarding the definition of art, first it is essential to judge the general view about the term. Generally, the term ‘ art’ stands for a process or it can be denoted as a product which is intentionally arranged in an order with specific elements that will appeal and affect human senses or emotions. Art encompasses a diversified and a wide range of human activities pertaining to myriad creations and mode of expression. The canon of art includes many activities included in various spheres of artistry such as music, literature, film, sculpture and paintings among others.

The definition of art has become considerably critical during the 20th century. Traditionally, art had been considered as a medium to make money or a device for amusement. Another traditional aspect of art is that the term

exclusively refers to any “ skill or mastery”. The concept of art transformed during the romantic period. During this period the perspective towards art completely changed and the term was viewed as “ a special faculty of the human mind to be classified with religion and science” (The Gombrich Archive, “ Press statement on The Story of Art”)

The critical evaluation of art came into being during the Twentieth century. Scholar and artist, Richard Wollheim, envisaged three different approaches regarding the concept of art. Wollheim envisioned that art can be posited in three different paradigms namely ‘ Realist Position’, ‘ Objectivist Position’ and ‘ Relativist Position’. These perspectives and distinguishing connotation undoubtedly helps in better understanding of the term. Realist perspective of art says that the qualities which are aesthetic in nature are totally independent from any kind of human view. It is an absolute vision of art. The objectivist position of art also views it as an absolute form but despite of being an absolute value it is dependent on general human experience. The last one is relativist position of art which is not at all viewed as an absolute value. The relativist position of art perceives that art is not dependent on human experiences and varies respectively from person to person (Wollheim, “ Essays and Lectures”).

Conclusion

The term “ art” cannot be actually captivated within a frame of language. It is a matter of perception. However, various scholars view it from their respective perspectives and enriched the understanding of the tern which always benefited the coming generations and shall continue enlightening people throughout ages.

Bibliography

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