



FRAMING ARTIFICATION

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The article seeks to explain what it means to say that an object has the status of being made art-like. I have reconstructed and analysed Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito's definition of artification and flagged up its methodological limitations. My conclusions serve as a starting point for describing the nature of artified objects, the way they are individuated, and how they persist. I consider the question of what can and what cannot be artified. Finally, I propose that artification be redefined in such a way as to render it informative on the grounds of the largest number of existing aesthetic theories of art.

I. INTRODUCTION

This article attempts a philosophical analysis of the problem of artification and sketches out a broadly neutral and informative account of it. It begins with an analysis of the existing account of artification authored by Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito, and seeks to show that their view, despite its indubitable value, does not fully grasp the phenomenon of artification. Here, artification is understood as the process of an object's transformation from being non-art into being art-like. I then propose a new account of artification.

Let me first make some preliminary observations on artification. Artification can be reduced to the assertion:

(1) Some objects¹ are made art-like.

Firstly, it might be noted that all analyses of artified objects *should refer* (at least implicitly) to existing theories concerning works of art.² This happens whenever we assume that certain objects are not artworks but 'merely' retain the status of art-like objects.³ The distinction is possible only if we are cognizant, however

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¹ The term 'object' denotes entities such as tangible things, events, and processes.

² This is a methodological remark. It means that, at least, we should take into account the theoretical context in this type of analysis. An example of such analysis is Simon Fokt, 'Pornographic Art – A Case from Definitions', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 52 (2012): 287–300.

³ Artification and aestheticization have much in common of course, but the two processes are not the same. That's because not all aesthetic objects are art (for example, nature) and not all artworks exemplify aesthetic qualities (for example, conceptual art).





intuitively, of some art theory.⁴ Generally speaking, the theory of artification assumes, indirectly, the existence of some theory describing the relations between art objects and non-art objects. It would appear that we can distinguish two positions within this theory. The first comes down to the following:

(2) Artworks are in some important way different from non-art objects.

In other words, artworks can, in some meaningful way, be 'distinguished' from non-art objects. Let us refer to this position as Separation Theories. This position encompasses all those theories of art which state that art objects are 'separated' from non-art objects. Supporters of this type of theory seek this 'distinction' on a number of levels. For example, Arthur Danto and Peter Lamarque point to ontological differences (such as different persistence conditions) between works of art and ordinary objects,⁵ while Yuriko Saito argues that artworks exist in a different conceptual framework from that in which non-art objects exist.⁶

The second position claims the opposite, that is:

(3) Artworks are not in any important way different from non-art objects.

Let us refer to this position by reference to a set of theories that meet its description: we will call this the set of Continuum Theories. Also in this case, the position includes all those theories of art which do not maintain that there is a significant difference between objects of art and non-art objects. Supporters of this type of theory maintain that the line between artworks and life is blurred, and that there are no structurally (or institutionally, essentially, and so on) important distinguishing features that separate artworks from non-art objects. For example, Wolfgang Iser speaks of art lacking autonomy, since the worlds of art objects and non-art objects constantly overlap,⁷ Arnold Berleant argues in favour of active engagement and lack of separation in experiencing and understanding works of art from non-art,⁸ and Dan Eugen Ratiu claims that

⁴ By 'theories of art' I mean classification theories, that is, those that point out that a given object belongs to a certain category (here, the category of 'artworks'). See George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 26–27.

⁵ Arthur C. Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1–18; Peter Lamarque, 'On Bringing a Work into Existence', in *Work and Object: Explorations in the Metaphysics of Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 56–78.

⁶ Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10–52.

⁷ Wolfgang Iser, *Aesthetics and Beyond*, trans. Andrew Inkpin (London: Sage, 1997), 123–27.

⁸ Arnold Berleant, 'Beyond Disinterestedness', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 34 (1994): 242–54.



experiencing art (or art objects) cannot be taken in isolation since the concept of art is open.⁹

As we have seen, the artification theory is always viewed through the prism of the existing theories about works of art. The same applies to the Separation and Continuum Theories. If we choose to pursue the artification theory by reference to the theories about works of art consistent with the former, the question that arises is 'How do artified objects exist?' If there is an important difference (for example, institutional, contextual, or ontological) between artworks and ordinary objects, this question is about the possibility of artified objects existing. The condition 'being-an-artwork' seems to be a zero-one type of condition, that is, either an object is what it is claimed to be or it isn't. Consequently, the theory of artification must be able to answer the question of how an object that is not an artwork can be art-like.

A similar difficulty arises if we set out to build a theory of artification by reference to a theory of art which embraces the Continuum Theories. Since the line between artworks and all other objects is blurred, the question is why not classify artified objects as some (special) sort of works of art.¹⁰ In other words, can they be artworks which enjoy a separate status in everyday life (existing outside the boundaries laid down by the world of art, including galleries, museums, and archives)? This would obviate the need for bringing into the theory of aesthetics the new category of artification.

Of course, all these questions in no way prevent us from asserting the existence of artification. Rather, they represent a range of difficulties that must be overcome by the theory of art-like objects against the backdrop of the existing theories about works of art. The process of artification, that is, the process by which artified objects are constituted, strictly depends on what type of theory (Separation or Continuum) of art we first choose to go with. This is clearly because any given theory of art (in its specific type of theory) presents us with an array of questions we must deal with before we can postulate the existence of the artification process at all. Thus, each potential artification theory 'inherits' in a way the perspective of the theory of art it is based on. For example, a theory of art based on historicism, the view proposed and defended by Jerrold Levinson,

⁹ Dan E. Ratiu, 'Remapping the Realm of Aesthetics: On Recent Controversies about the Aesthetic and Aesthetic Experience in Everyday Life,' *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 50 (2013): 3–27.

¹⁰ One might protest and say that, if so, then this theory of art de facto belongs to the group of Separation Theories which assume that there is a division into art and non-art. This statement can be refuted by saying that Continuum Theories still postulate that there is no significant division into art and non-art. But the postulate of the existence of artified objects that are new 'artworks' does not create this division.

should state that artified objects are created with the intention of treating an object the way past art was treated.¹¹ What is more, artification theory following Monroe C. Beardsley's functionalism might consider artified objects as objects eliciting aesthetic experiences.¹² It is worth noting that no theory of art within the Separation Theories is compatible with a theory governed by the Continuum Theories. The reason is simple. The incompatibility between Separation Theories and Continuum Theories consists in their 'constant disagreement' about whether there is or is not a categorical break between art and non-art. As a result, the artification theory that embraces a theory within the Separation Theories does not explain well (or sufficiently) observations captured by a theory governed by the Continuum Theories and vice versa. For methodological and purely epistemic reasons it would be interesting to propose a theory of artification which is maximally neutral with respect to the existing art theories (where neutrality is seen as the minimal impact that particular theories of art have on the scope and understanding of artification).

In this article, I set out to propose a broadly neutral and informative theory of artification which is consistent with both of the above types of theory. Before I do that, however, I wish to demonstrate that the concept of artification proposed by Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito does not meet the neutrality requirement when set against the existing theories of art. In particular, their understanding of artification seems to be in accord only with those art theories that are based on the Continuum Theories, and out of line with those that are grounded in the Separation Theories. Later, I modify the theory of artification to make it compatible with the largest possible number of (often mutually exclusive) theories about art.

II. NAUKKARINEN AND SAITO'S CONCEPT OF ARTIFICATION

First, let us recall the definition of artification currently in use. I quote Naukkarinen and Saito, whose explication of the idea seems most successful to me: 'The neologism [artification] refers to situations and processes in which something that is not regarded as art in the traditional sense of the word is changed into something art-like or into something that takes influences from artistic ways of thinking and practicing.'¹³ Stated this way, Naukkarinen and Saito say, the concept of artification can be understood in at least two ways.

¹¹ Jerrold Levinson, 'Defining Art Historically', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): 240.

¹² Monroe C. Beardsley, 'Redefining Art', in *The Aesthetic Point of View*, ed. Michael J. Wreen and Donald M. Callen (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 299.

¹³ Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito, 'Introduction', in 'Artification', ed. Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito, special volume, *Contemporary Aesthetics* 54 (2012), <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=634>.

Firstly, it can mean transformation of non-art objects into art objects.¹⁴ This process is likely to be spread over time (for example, a group has to gain practice in creating/perceiving certain works of art), so artification will in fact mean gradual acquisition of the status of a work of art by non-art objects.¹⁵ An example of this type of artification is street art, which gradually evolved from graffiti practices until it eventually became aesthetically and artistically independent.¹⁶ Secondly, a view advocated by Naukkarinen and Saito, artification can be understood as a process of modification of non-art objects by art. (Later in the article, I shall distinguish two types of such modification: by 'conjunction' with an artwork and by art practices.) The modification can involve, for example, acquisition of certain aesthetic attributes by everyday objects (for example, decoration) or a change in how an object is perceived by a group (for example, endowing an object with cultural significance or copyright).¹⁷ Examples of artification by modification include fashion reviews¹⁸ or aestheticization of food and drink.¹⁹ I seek not to determine which of these interpretations of the artification concept is correct, only to propose a broadly informative theory of artification and describe the relation in which it stands to the theories of art.²⁰

The definition of artification, however, needs some clarification if it is to be useful in our further study of artified objects. In saying that artified objects are not artworks we are merely responding in the negative to the question of the relation in which they stand to the theories of art. In my view, based on the definition of artification quoted above, we are able to work out some general definition of artified objects, which Naukkarinen and Saito implicitly adopt. In his other writings, however, Naukkarinen rightly points out two considerations:

¹⁴ In this sense, the term 'artification' was first introduced by Ellen Dissanayake. See her 'An Ethological View of Music and its Relevance to Music Therapy', *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 10 (2001): 159–75.

¹⁵ Nathalie Heinich and Roberta Shapiro, 'When Is Artification?', in Naukkarinen and Saito, 'Artification', <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=639>.

¹⁶ See Nicholas Riggle, 'Street Art: The Transfiguration of the Commonplaces', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68 (2010): 243–57. Here, it means that the objects of a certain practice (street art) have been transformed into an art form.

¹⁷ Ossi Naukkarinen, 'Variations in Artification', in Naukkarinen and Saito, 'Artification', <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=635>.

¹⁸ Nickolas Pappas, 'Fashion Seen as Something Imitative and Foreign', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 48 (2008): 1–19.

¹⁹ Eileen John, 'Meals, Art, and Artistic Value', *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics* 51 (2014): 254–68.

²⁰ The two ways in which artification can be understood are not mutually exclusive. An object can be first modified by art, and then (after some time or a paradigm shift in the theory of art) be transformed into (classified as) a work of art.

(1) in order to be able to artify, we must have a certain idea (conception) of art;
 (2) the concept of artification should be constructed independently of any particular ideas about art (artification presupposes, at least conceptually, that we have some idea about art, but this idea or conception does not affect our judgement about how to define art).²¹ Following Naukkarinen's hunch, I would conclude that any definition of an artified object must remain *neutral* when considered in the light of the different theories of art. Let us call this the Neutrality Requirement. Moreover, it would appear to be possible to formulate such a non-trivial informative definition of artification only if art itself was defined. It is only when we know what conditions must be met by object x to be an artwork that we can attempt to determine the conditions that make object y (not being an artwork) an art-like object.

At this point I find it instructive to take a closer look at the study by Christy Mag Uidhir where he faced a similar task trying to come up with a broadly informative theory of failed artworks, that is, a theory that retains its neutral character when tested against different definitions of a work of art. Mag Uidhir noted that a number of aestheticians have formulated definitions of the concept of art,²² that is, formulated the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be considered art. Let us refer to those conditions as (predicate) ' F ' conditions, after Mag Uidhir. For our purposes we shall also adopt his minimal definition of (a work of) art:

(4) An object is art if and only if w is a product of a successful F -attempt.²³

In other words, an artwork is an object which results from a successful attempt and satisfies the conditions set by ' F '. I propose to go further and establish that:

(5) w is an artwork if and only if w is F ;

(6) F is a set of conditions $\{a, b, c, \dots, n\}$ where each of the conditions a, b, c, \dots, n is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for w to be an artwork.

(7) F is both a necessary and sufficient condition for w to be an artwork.

²¹ Naukkarinen, 'Variations in Artification'.

²² See Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*; George Dickie, *The Art Circle: A Theory of Art* (Chicago: Spectrum, 1997); Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art, and Metaphysics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Robert Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1997); Nick Zangwill, *Aesthetic Creation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²³ Christopher Mag Uidhir, 'Failed-Art and Failed-Art Theory', *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 88 (2010): 388.

With this most neutral description of an artwork we should be able to explain what it means, according to Naukkarinen and Saito, for an object to be artified:

(8) x is artified if and only if: (i) it is not the result of an F -attempt, (ii) x satisfies some (but not all) of the conditions $\{a, b, c, \dots, n\}$ contained in set F .

Object x satisfies (ii) in view of its relationship with a given definition of art a , thanks to which the satisfaction of F makes the object an artwork. This means, roughly, that in order to artify an object we have to intend to modify it so as to make the object fit the concept of art we subscribe to. Apart from not being an F -attempt, x satisfies only some of the necessary conditions for art (these conditions are determined by a given definition of art a) but not all, and consequently does not satisfy the sufficient condition (for being an artwork). It is therefore precisely by reference to (8) that I propose to explain Naukkarinen and Saito's intuitions that non-art objects are in some way modified by art, that is, become artified.²⁴ It is worth noting that F is a set of only those properties that are relevant for the object to be art. These could, depending on the theory of art, include being beautiful, being intentional, being a subject of aesthetic judgements, and standing out from other objects. One might say that the proposed explication, that is (8), is very broad and covers many objects, and not necessarily those that would be the first to be thought of as artified.²⁵ But I treat this as the natural cost of the requirement (which is, in my opinion, nonetheless reasonable) that the theory of artification should be *neutral* with respect to particular definitions of art.

If my reconstruction of Naukkarinen and Saito's definition of artification and the artified object is correct, then it would seem to be based on the theory of art within the Continuum Theories. This means that definition (8) assumes the existence of objects that are something 'between' artworks and non-art objects. Such a definition of artification seems to be at odds with the Separation Theories. This is mainly because there seem to exist objects that contain 'some' art²⁶ and

²⁴ Naukkarinen, 'Variations in Artification'.

²⁵ Some of the existing definitions of art also face this problem. For example, Danto's definition of art (x is an artwork if (i) x is about something and (ii) x embodies its meaning) is criticized by Carroll for being too broad. See Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 195; Noël Carroll, 'Danto's New Definition of Art and the Problem of Art Theories', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 37 (1997): 387.

²⁶ Obviously, Naukkarinen and Saito could argue that there are certain objects that exemplify some aesthetic properties (and are therefore art-like), but are not artworks *sensu stricto*. This would make it possible to maintain some neutrality with respect to Separation Theories. The reason why they did not adopt this strategy is, I believe, that their thesis is that 'art' is something more than just a 'set of artworks'. In their opinion, 'art' also refers to various practices and processes.

therefore negate the existence of a strict division into art and non-art. The words of Naukkarinen himself suggest this interpretation: 'It should be enough [for being artified] if a company or some other entity has *some* art in it and in its processes, objects, and persons.'²⁷ This is, roughly, why Naukkarinen and Saito's theory of artification does not satisfy the Neutrality Requirement when it comes to particular ideas about art in that it favours (presupposes) a theory of art which does not assert a significant difference between works of art and non-art. Later in this essay I propose a different definition of artification (artified object) – one which is neutral with respect to the Separation Theories and the Continuum Theories.

III. ARTIFIED OBJECTS

Let us now turn to artified objects. Suppose that Naukkarinen and Saito are right in claiming that artification happens by the modification of non-art by art. If this is indeed the case, then I propose to distinguish two basic *types* of artified object. The first type is represented by objects which undergo modification upon 'contact' with artworks. The second type comprises objects modified regardless of particular artworks.

To my knowledge, objects that can be found in urban spaces are the most paradigmatic examples of the former type. Consider an object, a mural, created by the famous street artist Swoon in 2010.²⁸ The mural depicts a woman wearing a long floral-print dress. (The work is on a brick wall of an abandoned building in a New York suburb.)²⁹

It is common knowledge that street art is in constant flux and interacts with the urban space that surrounds it. This imparts to it a 'fragility' and the resulting temporal character.³⁰ This interaction, in a broad sense of the word, is best exemplified by the fact that Swoon's mural became overgrown with ivy in the spring of 2011. Clearly, ivy is not part of Swoon's work of street art. In this situation, two scenarios would have been equally likely: (1) the viewers (conservators, and so forth) recognize that ivy ruins the artwork (by growing over it) and should be removed; or (2) the viewers disregard the ivy and don't mind it interfering with the fabric of the work. Here, the latter was the case.

Why did the viewers react this way? It would appear that they had ceased to treat ivy as an ordinary weed, which had instead become a visual part of

²⁷ Naukkarinen, 'Variations in Artification'. Emphasis in the original.

²⁸ The artist's real name is Caledonia Curry.

²⁹ For obvious reasons the applicability of this example is limited. I believe, however, that analysing it would shed light on certain general processes that characterize artified objects.

³⁰ Riggle, 'Street Art', 243–46.

the artwork.³¹ Note that, for obvious reasons, we can't see through the ivy, we can't remove it without destroying parts of the painting, we can't even experience the artwork without experiencing the presence of ivy, and so forth. Moreover, the ivy does a good job of complementing the floral motif in the work itself. Such acceptance of the ivy was possible because the plant had been artified – it was intentionally recognized as a non-art object dating back to the time the work was created, and classified as art-like because of its being an integral part of the work, physically and aesthetically.³² Of course, an analysis of the 'incorporation' of the ivy into the fabric of the artwork is possible only if the recipients have good reason to do so.³³ In this case, we are dealing with a certain aesthetic and thematic relationship between a non-art object and an object which is art. Broadly speaking, in performing this 'incorporation' (being in fact artification of a non-art object) the viewers are guided by a familiar concept of art, for example, a concept which assumes that works of art exemplify certain aesthetic properties, have some sort of meaning, or bring about a certain aesthetic experience.

Let me analyse the above situation in a somewhat modified form. Suppose Swoon, having observed the bafflement of some viewers as to the role of the ivy itself (Is it part of the work of art or not?) while appreciating the aesthetic qualities of the plant (for example, the 'composition' formed by the ivy with the original

³¹ I take the term 'visual part of the artwork' to have two meanings. The first denotes the perceptible parts of an artwork. The second meaning conveys the realization that every element that is necessary for us to perceive the work is its visual part. Such elements do not of course have to be a 'real' part of the artwork. They do, however, constitute a visual part of the work in the sense that the work cannot be experienced without them.

³² This assertion might seem to be a little problematic since one of the widely accepted theses about the nature of art is that an artwork is an artefact, that is, it has been created by a human being. In the light of this opinion, natural objects, such as the sun, stars, (unmodified) stones, and (unmodified) plants, cannot be art. I agree with this statement and can only add that if something is art-like, the requirement of 'being an artefact' can be waived since art-like objects are not art *sensu stricto*. It seems possible to think in artistic terms (here, in terms of painting) about a natural landscape that has not been modified in any way. See Donald W. Crawford, 'Scenery and the Aesthetics of Nature', in *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments*, ed. Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2004), 253–68.

³³ Customarily we do not artify things like, for example, a glass pane that protects a painting. In some cases, however, we do artify, for instance, the frame of a painting (especially where the frame is somehow an 'integral' part of the painting). Medieval religious paintings that were painted on a single piece of wood are a good example. Frames for these paintings had been carved out and made before a painter began working on the painting proper. Such frames often have important aesthetic and artistic properties, and are referred to as 'integral frames'. Among them are frames of works such as *The Crucifixion* (c. 1400/1410) by the Master of Saint Veronica or *Madonna and Child* (c. 1490) by Carlo Crivelli. See John Oliver Hand, Catherine A. Metzger, and Ron Spronk, *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 15–28.

work), decided to bring the ivy into her work.³⁴ In doing so, she turned it into a meaningful part of her work of art.³⁵ From now on, a holistic interpretation of the work must include the ivy.³⁶ It would appear that, in this case, artification of the ivy is not possible since, from the moment of Swoon's decision, the ivy is not just art-like, it is part of the artwork, it is *art*. Its artification, however, was possible *until* Swoon made her decision.

Let me throw in another modification. Suppose the artist had planted the ivy sometime earlier, and had planned for the ivy to grow over the painting after some time.³⁷ Let us also assume that Swoon had meant it to be part of the painting all along. We can now imagine the following scenarios: (1) the viewers know that the ivy is part of the work, and (2) the viewers do not know that the ivy is part of the work. In (1), it is hard to say that the viewers can artify the ivy. The situation is analogous to the one discussed in the preceding paragraph. The ivy is recognized as part of the artwork; it can therefore not be art-like. It is in fact art. In (2), artification seems to be possible. Some viewers (for example, those who do not explore the historical background of the work and those who experience it *en passant*) may continue to perceive the ivy to be an artfied object. The situation will persist until they have acquired knowledge about the nature of the ivy.

The ivy is an example of an object that has acquired its art-like status by virtue of its relationship with an existing artwork. The existence of objects that have become artfied in this way, that is, their art-like status has become permanent, depends on a number of factors. Some last only a short time (the ivy in our example); others enjoy longevity (for example, some graffiti that is a 'visual

³⁴ I assume that the artist can sometimes modify her or his own (completed) works of art. The assumption, especially where it concerns street art, does not seem far-fetched.

³⁵ Practices of this kind are characteristic of street artworks. This is because such works are 'immersed' in a city's fabric – they are subject to constant changes that can be caused by viewers' reactions. They can be modified by artists (and sometimes also by viewers). See Alison Young, *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime and the Urban Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 8–9, 26–28. This situation can be explained, and this time in purely philosophical terms. For example, Irvin states that artists can impose certain 'parameters' on their artworks, that is, ways in which a given artwork is to be received. The possibility of freely modifying an artwork (after it has been created and displayed) can be one of these parameters, which seems to be quite uncontroversial for urban art. See Sherri Irvin, 'The Ontological Diversity of Visual Artworks', in *New Waves in Aesthetics*, ed. Katherine Thomson-Jones and Kathleen Stock (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 11–14.

³⁶ Bear in mind that for an artwork to be interpreted correctly the prevailing intuition at least is to look at the whole of the work and not just its parts. See Robert Kraut, *Artworld Metaphysics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 98–120.

³⁷ This is quite possible. For example, the structure of Tony May's work entitled *Remembering Agriculture* (San Jose, CA) contains ivy, which was designed to be a part of this work from the very beginning.

commentary' on prior street art).³⁸ There is little doubt, however, that such artfied objects reach the limit of their existence when the related artworks cease to exist. If Swoon's work ceased to exist, the ivy would no longer be artfied; there would be no object to impart the art-like status to.³⁹

The other type of artfied object comprises objects that acquire their status regardless of particular artworks.⁴⁰ Naukkarinen suggests that such artfication takes place when some area of non-art stands to gain from taking on certain properties characteristic of art. Such areas include business, health care, and education.⁴¹ Thus, certain areas of business (for example, management) benefit by appropriating qualities such as spontaneity or intuition in decision-making, creativity (innovation) in the creative process (problem solving and strategy planning in business development).⁴²

Sport is another area where artfication is in evidence. As an example, Matti Tainio speaks of long-distance running, a sport that increasingly displays all the signs of an artistic activity, provided the running is done for recreational rather than competitive purposes.⁴³ The purpose of recreational running is not to take a particular place in a race but to have a certain kind of aesthetic experience which is measured in the distance covered and the time spent indulging in the activity. Recreational running provides an opportunity to aesthetically experience the space we are moving through (urban or woodland) and makes it aesthetically satisfying when we have reached the goals we have set for ourselves (for example, completing the run over a certain distance).⁴⁴ An important part of the experience of running is the runner's fitness and physique, which are increasingly viewed in aesthetic terms.⁴⁵ Running can thus be one of the tools of the aesthetic and artistic modification of our bodies.

³⁸ An example of such a work is *Mermaid* (2010) by Swoon. See Swoon's interview, 'Walrus TV Artist Feature: Swoon Interview from "The Run Up"', YouTube video, 10:02, from the documentary film *The Run Up* (2006), posted by 'Walrus TV', May 27, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtEDSQbIGVo>.

³⁹ Of course, another artwork could be created in the meantime, which under some circumstances could serve as the basis for further artfication of the ivy.

⁴⁰ They are of course related to the broadly understood artistic practices that are employed in making art.

⁴¹ Naukkarinen, 'Variations in Artfication'.

⁴² Nancy J. Adler, 'The Arts and Leadership: Now That We Can Do Anything, What Will We Do?', *Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal* 5 (2006): 486–99.

⁴³ Matti Tainio, 'Artfication of Sport: The Case of Distance Running', in Naukkarinen and Saito, 'Artfication', <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=641>.

⁴⁴ Richard Shusterman, 'Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57 (1999): 299–313.

⁴⁵ Wolfgang Welsch, 'Sport Viewed Aesthetically, and Even as Art?', in *Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, ed. Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 135–55.

The fact that these objects are not related to artworks makes them appear to be more permanent than the objects that have 'contact with' artworks. Their longevity depends of course on how long the processes or properties which make such non-art objects approximate to art objects remain in force. For example, as long as business imitates the creative processes of art it will remain artfied. Artfied objects can indeed become natural candidates for being artworks. The artification of sport (or at least some sport disciplines), to continue with the example, may in time cause sport to be regarded as a proper art form.

IV. INDIVIDUATION OF ARTIFIED OBJECTS

Having identified two main types of artfied object, we can now turn to their individuation, that is, differentiating them from other objects. Individuation is governed by its own criteria or necessary conditions for the differentiation (conjunction, which is a sufficient condition).⁴⁶ Let us conduct the following thought experiment.⁴⁷

Suppose there are two aestheticians, Jessica and Gerard, who have set themselves the task of artfying an object, say, a chair. Let us also assume that Jessica and Gerard promote different concepts of art: Jessica is an adherent of aestheticism (the idea that the object's aesthetic properties determine its membership of the category of artworks), while Gerard favours contextualism (the idea that certain external properties of an object, for example, its presentation or evaluation, determine its status as an artwork). Of course, despite their different views on what constitutes art, Jessica and Gerard agree that by either's definition certain objects are works of art. For example, both claim that *First Communion* by Pablo Picasso is a work of art. Jessica bases her view on the formal and stylistic aspects of the work (for example, a style reminiscent of Velázquez, the choice of colours), while to Gerard the painting is a work of art by virtue of its contextual properties (for example, the painting belongs to the art collection of the Picasso Museum in Barcelona, is a subject of art criticism). There are objects, however, on whose status Jessica and Gerard are not in agreement. For example, Jessica believes that the dishes prepared by Ferran Adrià in the *elBulli* restaurant⁴⁸ were artworks (for example, because of their aesthetic properties),

⁴⁶ See E. J. Lowe, 'Individuation', in *Oxford Handbook of Metaphysics*, ed. Michael J. Loux and Dean W. Zimmerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 95.

⁴⁷ It is a thought experiment analogical to one used by Dilworth to differentiate works of art from designs. See John Dilworth, 'Artworks versus Designs', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 42 (2001): 165–70. In this article, however, I cite Dilworth's experiment only in so far as it is relevant to my analysis of the nature of artfied objects. In particular, I do not share Dilworth's views on the nature of art and design.

⁴⁸ A Michelin three-star restaurant specializing in molecular cuisine, which closed in 2011, and reopened in 2014 as a centre for studies in creativity.

while Gerard denies them this distinction (for example, because they lack the contextual and historical aspects that artworks must exhibit). In other words, the various classes of objects which both Jessica and Gerard count as artworks overlap to a large extent, but they do not overlap completely.

Jessica and Gerard have decided to artify a chair in an unconventional way. While one of them is modifying the chair (in line with the concept of art he or she professes), the other is helping (as an 'assistant') in the process: Gerard is helping Jessica impart certain aesthetic properties to the chair (for example, they are sculpting and painting the chair to Jessica's taste) and Jessica is helping Gerard impart some contextual properties to the chair (for example, a suitable place of presentation chosen by Gerard). Jessica and Gerard enjoy total freedom of expression in making their respective modifications and the modifications are a reflection of each person's artistic vision (that is, the 'assistants' do not interfere with each other's modification process). The result of the whole exercise is artification of a chair. Next, the aestheticians decide to present the chair to their students. Jessica and her students believe that the chair is art-like only on account of the modifications that bring it closer to works of art acceptable to aestheticism, while Gerard and his students claim that the chair is art-like thanks to the modifications that align it with works of art as understood by contextualists.

This thought experiment seems to shed some light on the relationship between the intention to artify and the object of artification. Firstly, it would appear that Jessica and Gerard agree that, despite their differences, the modification process each has undertaken has resulted in just *one* artified object. There cannot be two artified objects because Jessica rejects the artification of the chair by Gerard's modifications, while Gerard rejects the artification of the chair as modified in line with Jessica's intentions. If both accepted the same concept of art (or at least both agreed that the chair could be artified in the realm of aestheticism and contextualism at the same time, just as the *First Communion* is a work of art on the grounds of both concepts of art), it would seem that a modification by only one of the aestheticians was enough to artify the chair. We would then be dealing with a classic example of overdetermination, that is, a situation where two actions which are independent of each other lead to the same result.⁴⁹ Where this is the case, no particular intention to artify an object is responsible for its individuation, that is, the status of being art-like can be achieved by any number of different intentions.

⁴⁹ By analogy Dilworth suggests that intention is an individuating factor for works of art (since every realized artistic intention leads to the creation of a different work of art) but not for design objects (since a given physical manifestation can be achieved with very different intentions). Dilworth, 'Artworks versus Designs', 168–69.

One might say that the procedure described as part of this thought experiment is de facto the process of creating art par excellence. In support of this opinion, one can put forward an argument that many contemporary artworks were created in a similar manner, that is, artists modify a given object, arrange to present it in a way they find convenient, and finally subject it to evaluation by viewers.⁵⁰ This object is an artwork. (I do not attempt to decide here which of these factors, and in what order, clearly determine that a given object has the status of 'being an artwork'). I believe that, despite being quite intuitive, this reasoning is not valid.

Let us imagine that there is a third aesthete, Max, who decides to work together with Jessica and Gerard. He also intends to modify a chair. The fact that Max *wants* to create an artwork is the only thing that makes him different from the other aestheticians. Let us use Mag Uidhir's terminology: Max is creating object x such that (1) x is the result of an F -attempt (that is, an attempt to make art) and (2) x satisfies all the conditions contained in F (that is, Max's definition of art). Jessica and Gerard are creating object z which does satisfy some of the conditions contained in F (according to their concepts of art), but which is not the result of an F -attempt. Therefore, what makes Max different from Jessica and Gerard is that the two aestheticians *purposely* do not want to create artworks; ergo, they are not creating artworks.⁵¹

Certainly, their chair may be recognized by viewers as an artwork (because, for example, it was presented together with Max's chair, which was displayed *as* an artwork). It is also possible that this mistake will, over time, lead to their chair becoming a true artwork (as a result of a strange course of events). However, Jessica and Gerard will not be the authors of this work, but someone else will, for example, the viewers, critics, or other artists.⁵² Therefore, it cannot be stated that the artification process effected by Jessica and Gerard was an act of creating art.

There is also another possible way of conceptualizing this question. One might say that every artwork is an artified object. This would mean that a certain object first acquires certain (but not all) properties that are ascribed to artworks (and then it is an artified object), and then, over time (after acquiring all of the properties that are characteristic of an artwork as determined by a given

⁵⁰ What I mean here is a certain general practice that concerns most artworks.

⁵¹ Here I assume that *intention* is the key aspect of creating art. See Mag Uidhir, 'Failed-Art', 384–85; Lamarque, 'Bringing a Work into Existence'. Some might charge that an intention to create art is not necessary for creating art itself, that is, one can create art without the concept of 'art'. See Dominic McIver Lopes, 'Art Without "Art"', *British Journal of Aesthetics* 47 (2007): 1–15. Yet a certain kind of *intention* is needed when creating certain objects.

⁵² Here I tacitly assume that Jessica and Gerard do not want to change the chair into fully fledged art at any stage of its existence.

concept of art), it becomes a fully fledged artwork. This view, despite its appeal and intuitiveness, is wrong. Again, the difference between an artwork and an artfied object is that the former is an object created in order to implement an *F*-attempt, whereas the latter was not created as a result of an *F*-attempt. Certainly, artfied objects can be very similar to artworks. They can, in some cases, even be physically indistinguishable from artworks. But the relationship between certain objects and artworks is the same. For example, Andy Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* are indistinguishable from ordinary Brillo boxes, but one can hardly say that ordinary Brillo boxes are contained in *Brillo Boxes*. *Brillo Boxes* ceased to be ordinary boxes with soap-impregnated scouring pads and became artworks. Analogously, I think that we cannot say that an artwork is always an artfied object because (according to Naukkarinen and Saito's definition) artfied objects are not art. (Otherwise, we would have to claim that artworks contain certain elements of non-art.)

What individuates artfied objects is the concept of art by reference to which objects acquire their art-like status. In our thought experiment the chair becomes an artfied object by reference to a particular concept of art. For Gerard and his students the chair is artfied only by reference to contextualism, for Jessica and her students, only by reference to aestheticism. It is instructive to note here that works of art are not individuated by reference to concepts of art (or at least not individuated in the same way).

To illustrate the point, let us consider the following example. In his book *Transfiguration of the Commonplace* Arthur Danto sets up a thought experiment involving a sequence of identical red squares: one, described by Kierkegaard, of Israelites crossing the Red Sea, another, by a Danish portraitist, entitled *Kierkegaard's Mood*, *Red Square* (realist), *Red Square* (minimalist version), *Nirvana*, *Red Table Cloth*, a canvas grounded in red lead prepared by Giorgione (not an artwork), a surface painted, but not grounded, in red lead (not an artwork, just a thing with paint on it).⁵³ The collection includes artworks and non-art objects. The group of artworks (which are ostensibly indistinguishable from one other) comprises works with different titles, content, and historical properties. The reason that a particular square is *Kierkegaard's Mood* rather than *Nirvana* is not merely that this red square belongs to the world of art (which itself may be due to a number of factors) but, crucially, that the author has willed it to be so, by choosing the title and endowing it with meaning. Belonging to the world of art, that is, being an object recognized by the particular concept of art as an artwork, may indicate the object's membership of a different ontological category, but does not individuate it (the artist's intention does).

⁵³ Danto, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 1–18.

It is noteworthy that as a result of the artist's intention (and likely a whole array of other factors) some red squares (for example, *Kierkegaard's Mood* or *Red Table Cloth*) become works of art. Figuratively speaking, these red squares cease to be *only* red squares.⁵⁴ This means that from now on *Red Table Cloth* (or other paintings) should be recognized first of all as an artwork. Things are different when it comes to artfied objects. The artfied exhibits in the museum of natural history remain at all times and above all else exhibits representing the fauna and flora of the Baltic Sea.⁵⁵ Likewise, the artfied ivy and chair are always objects: one a product of nature, the other valued for its utility. Suppose, for a change, we take a sequence of identical green squares. We shall ignore the fact that some of them are artfied by reference to aestheticism, others by reference to an institutionalized concept of art, while the rest are not artfied at all. What individuates particular artfied objects is a given concept of art. In other words, what makes an artfied object unique, that is, imparts art-like status to it, is a particular concept of art. It is clear that in order for something to be artfied it must be preceded by the intention to artify. Intention alone, however, is not a sufficient condition (only a necessary one) for an object to be regarded as art-like.

V. LIMITS OF ARTIFICATION

Let us look at the conceptual limits of artification. Naukkarinen states that everything can be artfied but art itself.⁵⁶ It is hard to argue with this, since something that is art cannot become art-like.

The artification-of-ivy example shows, however, that things are somewhat more complicated. In one of the scenarios I have proposed, Swoon planted the ivy intentionally, making it a bona fide art object (or a part of one). Viewers who didn't know about it might have continued to artify the ivy until they learnt about its true nature (that is, 'imposed' by the artist).⁵⁷ In other words, it would appear that a person can artify only those objects he or she is convinced are not art. By the same token, however, it is possible for a person ignorant of the art status of an object to artify it anyway. The opposite is equally true. Suppose someone falsely believes an object is an artwork. In this case, despite his or her intentions, they cannot artify the object having first attributed to it the status of 'being a work of art'. In both cases the limit of artification is determined by the

⁵⁴ Of course, they still *look* like the other red squares (for example, the one prepared by Giorgione).

⁵⁵ An illuminating example of such a situation is given in Kaisa Mäki-Petäjä, 'Artification in Natural History Museum', in Naukkarinen and Saito, 'Artification', <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=648>.

⁵⁶ Naukkarinen, 'Variations in Artification'.

⁵⁷ See Irvin, 'Ontological Diversity', 11–14.

beliefs of the person artifying the object. This leads to the conclusion that the artifying person cannot be wrong about the artified object, that is, they can artify or refrain from artifying depending on their particular beliefs about certain objects. Their ability or inability to artify can, however, be 'curtailed' the moment the person learns something relevant about the object.

Let us now turn to failed art. Mag Uidhir defines failed art as objects that are *almost* artworks but for some reason (for example, the artist's error) are denied the status of art.⁵⁸ Such objects are often the result of the artist's attempt at making art of the wrong sort, that is, the artist's intention to create art is not fulfilled. Mag Uidhir claims that the resulting objects are not artworks *simpliciter*.⁵⁹ Such objects would seem to be perfect examples of artification. Failed artworks are not de facto artworks, but they are maximally 'close to' being artworks proper. In short, failed artworks seem to be art-like objects. The conclusion, however, despite being intuitively sound, is false.

Consider the fact that artification as such is a positive thing to happen – an object (process, event, and so forth) is artified as a result of a successful modification of its features (inherent or external). This is especially evident in artification that happens regardless of the type of artwork. As we have seen, Naukkarinen claims that such artification typically takes place where some area of non-art benefits from certain attributes it has borrowed from art. Artification is thus a positive change in the sense that it is a successful change. On the other hand, when we say that an object is a failed artwork, we imply that the artist has failed in her attempt to create a work of art. All her preparations, intentions, and attempts to produce the object were aimed at making a proper artwork. For some reason, however, the attempts have been unsuccessful – the artist's intentions were unfulfilled and the result is not a work of art. It is entirely possible, however, that in the course of this failure the object itself has acquired some positive qualities – for example, it may be beautiful. But when we speak of a failed artwork as being art-like we imply something negative – the object should have been an artwork but is *only* art-like. The artist's intention therefore is the deciding factor in how the object should be perceived. Thus, if we know about the intended purpose of the object, namely, that it should have been an artwork but due to an unsuccessful attempt it isn't, we cannot artify it. It would appear that failed

⁵⁸ Mag Uidhir, 'Failed-Art', 388–95.

⁵⁹ This view is essentially neutral with respect to the Separation Theories and the Continuum Theories. Mag Uidhir does not assert that there is a clear (for example, ontic) line between artworks and non-art objects. There may be borderline cases. The point he makes is that failed artworks are not artworks for the same reason that would-have-been lawyers (for example, those who failed their bar exams) are not lawyers *simpliciter*. *Ibid.*, 382–84.

artworks (even though they are not artworks *simpliciter*) cannot be artified because they have been branded with a certain negativity, that is, they cannot be art-like in the same sense as artified objects.

To sum up, artification does not apply to objects we are convinced are artworks and objects we are convinced ought to be artworks.

VI. ARTIFICATION REVISED

In view of this analysis, I think it might be helpful to further qualify the term artification. First of all, as we have seen, a key element of artification is the intention of the artifying person. She must be convinced that the object which is being artified is not an artwork. The artifying person may, of course, *by mistake* artify an artwork. The conclusion that suggests itself is that artification is a far more subjective and non-institutionalized response than the traditional reception of art.⁶⁰ The art-like status of an object can be not only a public status (as with artworks) but also a private one. It seems that a person artifying object *x* cannot be wrong as to whether it is artifiable or not (they can at most be artifying for the wrong reasons, objectively speaking).⁶¹

Another point to be made is that artification does not make any ontic addition to the artified object. To grasp this more fully, let us go back briefly to artworks. Thus, to say that an object is an artwork means, among other things, that a complete understanding (and experience) of the object is possible only on the grounds of a particular aesthetic theory. For example, *Brillo Box* by Andy Warhol must be experienced *as* an artwork, not just as an ordinary box of Brillo pads. Aesthetic theory adds 'something' to an ordinary Brillo box. The artified ivy is *still* (first and foremost) ivy. The same goes for sport and for business. Artification does not change anything in the ontological nature of these objects. It 'only' changes the way they are perceived; it allows us to see features we have not noticed before or taken full advantage of. For example, artification of a nursery school may make us take better care of it, artification of business adds an element of spontaneity, and so on. In view of this, I propose the following definition of an artified object:

(9) Object *x* is artified if and only if (i) *x* is regarded by person *A* at time *t* as if *x* were an artwork on the grounds of theory *a*; (ii) *A* is convinced that at

⁶⁰ This does not rule out artification by some other groups of people, for example, the artification of a business or of the exhibition space in a natural history museum. The only condition for this type of artification seems to be a shared conception of art.

⁶¹ This is a point analogical to the one made by Dickie. He claims: 'a mistake cannot be made *in* conferring the status of art, a mistake can be made *by* conferring it.' Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic*, 50. Emphasis in the original.

time t x is not a real artwork (or should not be an artwork) on the grounds of theory α .⁶²

My definition emphasizes the relation in which the artifying person stands to the artified object. The 'as if' suggests that the viewer finds in the artified object properties which pertain to artworks. To put it another way, the artified object is a modification of an object regarded as non-art. What matters is A 's reasons for artifying x , not some objective properties of x .⁶³ Note that artworks are objects perceived inter-subjectively – they exist undeniably in our social space. Artified objects can exist on such terms if, for example, a relatively large group of people decides that the illegal graffiti in Berlin is artified; but they can also take on a private dimension, when, for example, we artify objects we are fond of.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this essay I have sought to explain what it means for some objects to be art-like. I have proposed that, if we are to take the problem seriously rather than just as a rhetorical manoeuvre, we must refer to the existing views on the relationship between art and non-art, that is, to the Separation Theories and the Continuum Theories. The interpretation of artification, first described by Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito, is compatible only with those theories of art which are captured by the Continuum Theories. (Thus, it does not fulfil the Neutrality Requirement imposed by Naukkarinen and Saito themselves.) In my view, the broadly informative and neutral interpretation of artification requires for objects that are not regarded as art par excellence to be given the 'as if' treatment. This approach

⁶² Here I would dispel potential doubts about the complete neutrality of this definition – one might say that definition (9) is not neutral with respect to the institutional theory of art because, according to this theory, an object that has been recognized as art (by the art world) is an artwork. Let us translate this into definition (9): if condition (i) were satisfied, then it would be impossible also to satisfy condition (ii). This doubt is justified, but I think that it can be effectively overcome. In order to do this, it is worth noting that in the case of the institutional theory of art, person A who is confirming a given object's status as an artwork is doing this fully engaged and aware of all the consequences of this act. In other words, A wants to create art. (This person must also fulfil the relevant conditions concerning the object that is to become art, which include (1) acting on behalf of an institution; (2) conferring of status; (3) being a candidate; and (4) appreciation. See Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic*, 34.) All of this means that person A is convinced that her actions, and especially the fulfilment of condition (i), are changing object x 's actual status, that is, x is becoming a true artwork. Then, after satisfying (i), A really cannot satisfy (ii). But this is different for artification. Person A only treats x as if it were an artwork, that is, the person does not believe in the transforming power of her actions (or at least does not believe that these *specific* actions carried out with respect to x can change it into art par excellence). It therefore seems that with artification, person A can meet (i) while at the same time also satisfying (ii).

⁶³ Naturally, A can artify x by reason of the properties which A ascribes to x .



enables us to reconcile artification with theories of art based on both the Separation Theories and the Continuum Theories. It also sheds light on what we do when we find that an object has been made art-like.

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