PUBLIC ART: A CRITICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I provide a philosophical analysis of public art. I focus on its "publicness," and draw implications at the level of public art's ontology, appreciation, and value. I uphold the view that an artwork is public when received within a public sphere rather than within artworld institutions. I further argue that, as a consequence of the peculiar nature of its reception, public art possesses an essential value that is distinctively non-aesthetic: to promote political participation and to encourage tolerance. By examining how public art and its value(s) relate to the public domain in the context of pluralistic democracies, this dissertation also contributes to a fuller understanding of an important aspect of our social world.

Chapter 1 introduces the scope and nature of the dissertation and emphasizes few important caveats. Chapter 2 develops a general characterization of public art's "publicness." It argues that what makes an artwork public is the context within which it is received: *public* artworks are received within a public sphere, that is, the *public-art sphere*, rather than within artworld institutions. Chapter 3 expands the account of the public-art sphere as developed in Chapter 2, and argues that public artworks address a multiplicity of publics and are received within a multiplicity of public-art spheres. Chapter 4 offers a sustained account of the pluralistic logic by means of which participants evaluate opinions expressed in discussions within public-art sphere. Chapter 5 explores the role that emotional reactions play in public-art spheres. It argues that warranted emotional reactions can function as premises of arguments proposed in public-art spheres. Chapter 6 discusses the ontology of public artworks. It suggests that some of the *real* properties that a public artwork has are a function of some features of the public-art sphere within which that artwork is received. Chapter 7 explains the value of public art. It holds that public art's value is a function of its capacity to promote political participation and to encourage tolerance.

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I was lucky to have Joseph Margolis as my mentor. Much of what I think about the arts is a result of his guidance. Joe has a gift to recognize what is valuable in his students' works. He nurtured my ideas even before I knew that I had them. The argument defended in this thesis owes much to his groundbreaking work in the philosophy of art and culture.

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impact on my thinking.

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To my late friend Paolo,

who first told me about the value of public art

Public art is the public transfigured:

it is us, in the medium of artistic transformation

– ARTHUR C. DANTO

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:
LIKE A TIGER IN A BARNYARD

On September 14 2013, the 13th Istanbul Biennial, entitled *Mom, Am I Barbarian?* opened its door to the public.[1] Curator Fulya Erdemci planned the exhibition as a forum where citizens could engage with public artworks designed to raise awareness about some of the most pressing issues afflicting Turkey. In particular, Erdemci aimed at stimulating a reflection and a discussion on the use of public space in Istanbul and, more generally, in Turkey. As the opening statement of the Biennial says:

> Mom, am I barbarian?, borrowing its title from poet Lale Müldür's book, focuses on the theme of public space as a political forum. The biennial exhibition aspires to open up a space to rethink the concept of 'publicness' through art and elicit imagination and innovative thought to contribute to social engagement and discussion.[2]

Originally, Erdemci intended to use a wide range of public places and locations as exhibition venues. Venues included, along the outdoor spaces of Taksim Square and Gezi Park, public buildings such as courthouses, schools, military structures

[1] See R. Donadio, "A Canvas of Turmoil During Istanbul Biennial," *The New York Times* (September 13, 2013) <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/14/arts/design/a-canvas-of-turmoil-during-istanbul-art-fair.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>.

[2] See the IKSV Biennial website at <http://bienal.iksv.org/en/archive/newsarchive/p/1/814>.

or post offices; abandoned transportation hubs such as train stations; ex-industrial sites such as warehouses, and dockyards; and, even commercial and residential buildings such as shopping malls, hotels, and condos.[3]

But then in May 2013, Taksim Square and Gezi Park became the theater of violent riots that broke out in the city and spread throughout the whole country.[4] The protests were set of by anger at how urban development was managed by public authorities. The violent repression of the protests by the Turkish government affected profoundly Erdemci and the other organizers of the Biennial. In a news post on the Biennial website, Erdemci described their reactions as follows:

> when we questioned what it meant to realize art projects with the permissions of the same authorities that do not allow the free expression of its citizens, we understood that the context was going through a radical shift that would sideline the reason d'etre of realising these projects. Accomplishing these projects that articulate the question of public domain in urban public spaces under these circumstances might contradict their essence and purpose ... .[5]

As a consequence of those considerations, Erdemci decided to move the exhibitions "inside": open spaces were substituted with more traditional artistic venues such as the art gallery *Arter*.[6]

Erdemci's words do not simply testifies to the existence of a complex relationship that connects public art with public spaces and the political life of contemporary societies. They also suggest difficult questions: questions whose importance is emphasized by the international echo that the story of the Istanbul Biennial has had. Did that sudden change from outdoor spaces to inside and more traditional

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[3]See <http://bienal.iksv.org/en/archive/newsarchive/p/1/622>.

[4]See, for instance, C. Dewey, "A Guide to What's Going on in Istanbul's Gezi Park," *The Washington Post* (May 31, 2013) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/05/31/a-guide-to-whats-going-on-in-istanbuls-gezi-park/>.

[5]"Fulya Erdemci's statement," *www.biennialfoundation.org* (August 22, 2013) <http://www.biennialfoundation.org/news/>.

[6]See <http://www.arter.org.tr>.

venues affect the nature of the artworks exhibited? By being moved inside of an art gallery, did the chosen objects in display become something other than public artworks? Did they transform into "regular" (non-public) artworks? Did the presentation in an art gallery affect the appropriate way of appreciating and responding to those artworks? Did it affect their properties and "meanings"? Did it have an impact on their value(s)? By being placed inside of an art gallery, did those artworks become less significant?

The difficulty of those questions stems from a series of distinctively philosophical puzzles that arise when we engage with public artworks. And, in particular, those puzzles seem all to gravitate around an issue that has traditionally been a major concern for scholars of public art, namely, "What does it mean for an artwork to be public?" In this dissertation, I concentrate on the public dimension of public art, that is, on its "publicness," placing it in the context of a general account of public art, and tracing important implications for what pertains public art's ontology, appreciation, and, more importantly, value. I should emphasize that this dissertation does not simply aim at solving aesthetic or artistic enigmas: by examining how public art and its value(s) relate to the public domain, this dissertation also contributes to a fuller understanding of an important aspect of the world wherein we live.

This dissertation is an exercise in philosophical aesthetics, as it develops a philosophical account of public art and its value(s). And, I should emphasize, it is the first attempt to develop a sustained philosophical account of public art.[7] In this sense, it is not an exercise in art criticism or history. Though discussing a selec-

[7] In the Anglo-American philosophical debate, public art is addressed only in few books and papers. Among those, see G. Graham, "Can There Be Public Architecture?," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 243-249; H. Hein, *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently* (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2006); H. Hein, G. Horowitz, and M. Kelly, "Symposium: Public Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (1996): 1-22; L. Zuidervaart, *Art in Public: Politics, Economics, and a Democratic Culture* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

tion of actual examples of public art to develop and to illustrate the philosophical points that I wish to make, this dissertation focuses on deeper issues about the nature of public art, its ontology, appreciation, and value.

It is more difficult to draw a distinction between the philosophical work that I do here and theories of public art.[8] And I do not see any strong reason to argue that there is a principled discontinuity between previous works on the theory of public art and this dissertation. Perhaps, it is possible to see a peculiarity of this thesis' approach in the focus and style of its argument. It introduces within the discussion of public art concerns, themes, and resources that conventionally belong to Anglo-American philosophy of art, whereas the theory of public art has been generally influenced by so-called Continental philosophy.[9]

Though rooted in philosophical aesthetics, the approach of this thesis is deeply interdisciplinary. It is true that often times aesthetics is interdisciplinary for its natural contiguity with other artistic disciplines such art theory, art history, and art criticism—disciplines from which this dissertation draws extensively. However, when connecting with disciplines outside the studies of the arts, aestheticians make generally use of insights from the "sciences of the mind," and in particular from cognitive-sciences, psychology, and neurosciences. On the contrary, this work draws consistently from a different set of theoretical and empirical disciplines that are more "socially oriented" such as political theory, social and political science, sociology, and communication studies.

[8]Among works in public art theory that have influenced my view, see, among others, D. Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2012); T. Finkelpearl (ed.), *Dialogues in Public Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); G. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004); C. K. Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice, and Populism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008); W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); A. Raven (ed.), *Art in the Public Interest* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989); H. F. Senie and S. Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1998).

[9]The works of French philosopher Jacques Rancière are quite popular among academic discussants of public art. Also, Marcuse's views on art inform the debate.

The fact that this dissertation discusses social scientific and political literature, and addresses issues that are closely related to cultural policy should not mislead the reader. Without a doubt, this work is particularly sensitive to real-life scenarios, and discusses for the most part puzzles that emerge in response to actual controversies of public art. However, its approach is theoretical and normative rather than merely empirical and descriptive. In effect, this dissertation is particularly concerned with developing a conceptual framework for understanding public art. By developing what one can call as an ideal-typical analysis of the reception of public art, this dissertation can be seen also as offering an utopian model that could help us optimize our practices of public art towards a full realization of their potential value.

This dissertation deals only with "official" public art realized after the 1960s and presented within the context of pluralistic democracies, with a focus on American and Italian art. In the category of "official" public art, one can find primarily works of visual art legally authorized: monuments, public sculptures, memorials, enduring and temporary installations, and so on. But there are also works that can be classified as (or include) performances. In this thesis I am particularly concerned with artworks and artists associated with the artistic movement(s) of "new genre public art" (also called as dialogue-based public art, dialogic art, relational art, contextual art, participatory art, community-based, activist art). Artists that I examine include Maya Lin, Suzanne Lacy, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Artur Silva, Maurizio Cattelan, Pino Castagna, and Oliviero Rainaldi.

There are good reasons for limiting my discussion to public art realized after the 1960s, and to put an emphasis on new genre public art. Since the late 1960s, the creation of local and national art programs in the US such as the first Percent for Public Art ordinance in Philadelphia (1959), the GSA's Art in Architecture Program (1963), and, the NEA's Art in Public Places program (1965) gave new impetus

and life to public art.[10] The creation of those programs did not simply promote the production of public artworks, but also encouraged further reflections on "philosophical precepts about the nature and function of public art".[11] The changes that followed those reflections provoked a "paradigm shift" in contemporary practices of public art and their theories. Such a shift found its groundbreaking expression in a famous collection of essays edited by Suzanne Lacy: *Mapping the Terrain*. In that collection, contributors formulate the principles of a new conception of public art, labelled as "new genre public art." What distinguishes new genre public art from more conventional forms of public art is its emphasis on public engagement, that is, on developing an "art that interacts with a large, diverse audience and concerns issues relevant to their lives."[12] By considering its peculiarities, it is prudent not to automatically extend what one can say about new genre public art to other forms of public art. Indeed, I would hope that some aspects of my analysis could pertinently inform further researches on different forms of public art or on arguably related genres.

I opt to focus on "official" public art since I believe that the complications that "unofficial" public art, that is, street art, introduces may very well require a significant theoretical adjustment and a separate treatment.[13] When talking about street

[10]The history of public art legislation in Italy is much more complicated and filled with grey areas. To address adequately this topic would require a work of its own. The first law for arts in public buildings, the law n. 717, was approved on July 29, 1949. It requires that the budget for all new publicly funded buildings set aside 2% for artworks. The law is often cited as an example of a law often overlooked, and that favors an anti-democratic use of artworks. See, for instance, U. Giuliani, "Legge 'del due percento': ipotesi di riforma," *Exibart* (January 22 2002) <http://www.exibart.com/notizia.asp?IDCategoria=205&IDNotizia=3748>; and, L. Gelsomino and P. Orlandi, *Legge sedici. Note a margine. Architettura, arte pubblica, paesaggio* (Bologna: Compositori, 2005).

[11]Knight, *Public Art*, 17.

[12]C. G. Calo, "From Theory to Practice: Review of the Literature on Dialogic Art," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012), 65.

[13]It is impossible not to mention Bansky's month-long residency in New York, which is taking place while I am reviewing this manuscript. As illegal works, some of Banksy's pieces have been already removed or altered ("vandalized" seems not to properly apply to street artworks). See, for instance, D. McDermon, "Second Banksy Work Appears in New York After First Is Painted Over," *The New York Times* (October 2, 2013).

art, I intend things like graffiti, stencil graffiti, sticker artworks, wheat-pasting artworks, video projections, art interventions, guerrilla artworks, and street installations. A general characteristic of street artworks is to be unsanctioned. Without denying the contiguity between public art and street art, I believe that, by being unsanctioned (and, in all likelihood, unlawful), street artworks enter the public space in more intrusive, disturbing, and violent ways than official public artworks. They thus acquire distinctive anti-establishment and anarchic "meanings" and functions that official public artworks generally lack.[14]

The choice to limit my discussion to artworks presented in the context of pluralistic democracies depends on important considerations. Such a choice does not have primarily to do with the empirical fact that new genre public art emerged within the political context of pluralistic democracy. It has to do with the possibilities that the interaction between public art and pluralistic democracy can unleash. First, the "inclusivist" tendencies that (should) characterize pluralistic democracies encourage the creation of a public art that not only reaches out to minorities, but also that gives them a voice "with the hopes of empowering ... marginalized peoples."[15] In other political contexts, public art does not appear as too preoccupied with those groups of people, and often functions as a tool used by elites to transmit their values.[16] Second, the tolerance that distinctively marks the public life of pluralistic democracies transforms the reception of public art into a site for contestation, where citizens can freely express their dissent, while challenging

[14]In a recent unpublished paper entitled "Bridging the Islands of Consciousness: On Street Art's potential to Affect our Perception of Public Space" and presented at the IVSA 2013 Annual Conference on July 8 2013, Peter Bengtsen argues for a similar thesis.

[15]Knight, *Public Art*, 93. Knight also adds that thanks to the public art programs of the 1960s "for the first time all citizens, regardless of their educational background, socio-economic class, or geographical region, were entitled to have art in their daily lives." See Knight, *Public Art*, 16.

[16]Kirk Savage investigates thoroughly how the elite used public sculptures to reaffirm their values and privileges during the Reconstruction in 19th century US. See K. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). Rodney Fitzsimons considers a similar issue in the context of Late Bronze Age Mycenae. See R. D. Fitzsimons, *Monuments of Power and the Power of Monuments: The Evolution of Elite Architectural Styles at Bronze Age Mycenae* (PhD Dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2006).

others' views and the status quo. In other words, pluralistic democracies' embedded tolerance releases public art's capacity to facilitate dialogue and discussions among diverse groups and individuals, and liberates its contesting possibilities.[17] Of course, less tolerant forms of governments tend to restrain significantly these prospects of public art in ways that require special attention.

This work examines a series of public art projects with a focus on Italian and American artworks. It was clear from the beginning that the contrast between those two artistic scenes would have provided additional originality and depth to this project. In effect, this dissertation introduces within the English-speaking discussion of public art some notable examples created in Italy, and offers the first systematic discussion of public art that takes into consideration such examples. Moreover, the striking differences in terms of historical heritage and patrimony between Italy and the US allowed me to address complications that might be easily overlooked when focusing only on one of those two artistic scenes. By bringing examples from heterogeneous contexts under the same umbrella, this dissertation then also provides a more comprehensive account of contemporary public art, which is taken since the beginning as a transnational and global artistic movement.

In order to gather a suitable amount of information for explaining the examples here examined, this dissertation examines an array of commentaries that appeared in notable news and cultural sources such as newspapers, magazines, periodicals, web portals, and blogs. The consultation of those sources was made necessary by public art's fleeting nature, and by the general lack both of a systematized canon of its still-developing history and of publications focusing on its criticism. The informality of those sources, I believe, well suits the livelihood and worldliness of contemporary practices of public art.

[17] For instance, Patricia Phillips describes public art as providing a "space of dissent." See P. Phillips, "Temporality and Public Art," in H. Senie and S. Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 298.

Before offering a chapter by chapter breakdown, I need to address one other preliminary. Throughout this dissertation, I use the expression "non-public artworks" for indicating those artworks that do not fall under my characterization of public artworks. There are important reasons for using "non-public" rather than "private," which might appear to some readers as the most natural choice. If we have learned anything from Jürgen Habermas' account of the public sphere, it is that public and private do not constitute a dichotomy. We cannot regard them as exactly opposing sides of human life. Private and public mingle and mix in complex ways, while penetrating one another. Moreover, it is not at all clear how exactly what I call as non-public artworks would be private in any straightforward sense of the term. Often, they are publicly owned, that is, they are properties of the state. Most of the time, they are also accessible to the general public.

Chapter 2 develops a general characterization of public art's publicness. In this sense, it provides the bedrock on which the more general account of public art that this dissertation develops rests. By drawing from a dominant trend in the studies of public art, this chapter rejects the view that the publicness of public art depends on its being placed outdoor or on its being publicly funded.[18] As Hilde Hein effectively puts it, "The sheer presence of art out-of-doors or in a bus terminal or a hotel reception area does not automatically make that art public – no more than placing a tiger in a barnyard would make it a domestic animal."[19] Moreover, there are clear examples of public art—most notably Christo and Jeane-Claude's projects such as *Running Fence* (1972-1976), *The Umbrellas* (1984-1991), and *The Gates* (1979-2005)—that have been privately funded.[20] I argue that what makes

[18]See J. Hunt and J. Vickery, "Public Art in the 21 st Century," in *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T2093917>.

[19]H. Hein, "What Is Public Art? Time, Place, and Meaning," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (1996), 4.

[20]One could find a detailed explanation of each project by visiting Christo and Jeane-Claude's website at <http://christojeanneclaude.net/>.

an artwork public is the context within which it is received: *public* artworks are received within a public sphere, that is, the *public-art sphere*, rather than within artworld institutions. I develop the first systematic defense of this claim, and I examine analytically how its peculiar context of reception affects our experience and discussion of public art.

Chapter 3 introduces a further qualification to the account of the public-art sphere as developed in Chapter 1. It discusses whether there is a single and united public-art sphere and only one public of public art, which I call *public-art public*, or a multiplicity of those. I argue that public artworks are experienced by a multiplicity of public-art publics and are received within a multiplicity of public-art spheres. By discussing few significant examples, I examine different categories of public-art publics. Public-art publics can be distinguished in the following categories: local, national, international, temporary, and enduring public-art publics.

In Chapter 4, I offer a sustained account of the logic by means of which participants evaluate opinions expressed in discussions within public-art sphere, which I define as *public-art debates*. It also suggests a model for understanding legitimacy of decisions in those circumstances. The nature of the context of discussion within which public-art debates develop, that is, a public-art sphere, have important consequences for what pertains the appropriate logic that should be at play. First, such a logic must well accord with the inclusiveness and the pluralism typical of public-art spheres. Second, it needs to be able to "rescue" the experiences and the opinions of non-experts. That is, it must well accord with the following view: in principle, all members of public-art publics (both experts and non-experts) can intelligently participate in public-art debates and enrich those discussions. Third, such a logic must be pluralistic in nature, and capable of dealing with a possibility that characterizes our experiences of actual democracies: persisting disagreement rooted in differences in value commitment. I offer an original "architectonical"

solution to the issue of legitimacy of decisions in public-art debates. I advocate in favor of the construction of "hybrid" forums of discussions. In those forums, members of the public authority interact directly with members of public-art publics, while looking for a compromise that can accommodate the diverging viewpoints.

Chapter 5 expands the discussion of the logic of evaluation in public-art spheres. I examine the role that emotions play in public-art debates. By drawing from recent scholarship in argumentation theory, I argue that appeals to different emotions can function as premises of those arguments that are used to support opinions in public-art debates. In other words, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally, emotional reactions can be generally translated into sentences that under peculiar circumstances might function as evidence in favor of an argument's conclusion. I identify those circumstances where an emotional reaction functions as evidence in favor of a conclusion with those cases where an emotional reaction is warranted. In order to identify those cases, I develop what I define as the *Pragmatic Test of Emotional Warrant* (TEW). In discussing emotional reactions to public artworks, I suggest that warranted emotional reactions that are relevant to the appreciation of public artworks can be grounded in properties other than aesthetically and artistically relevant properties. I propose that warranted emotional reactions to public artworks can also be grounded in (relational) non-artistic properties that express relationship between a public artwork, the socio-historical context, and sensitivities of the members of the public-art public who will experience it.

Chapter 6 addresses an issue that emerges while discussing emotional warrant: the ontology of public artworks. Here, I defend an hypothesis about an aspect of the ontology of public artworks. I call that hypothesis the public-related hypothesis (PRH). PRH argues that the properties that a public artwork has cannot be restricted to those depending on (the complex interaction between) the artist's intention, what can be sensorily discerned in its forms, and what bears on its style

and genre. Some of the *real* properties that a public artwork has are a function of some features of its context of reception, that is, features of the public-art sphere within which that artwork is discussed. When discussing PRH, I also suggest that changes in a public-art public's history may very well modify the features of a public artwork's context of reception. As a consequence of such changes, a public artwork may very well acquire new properties, thus introducing an ontological ambiguity in its identity. I defend this view against a pressing objection: the intentionalist objection.

Chapter 7 explains what I think to be the value of public art. It is a value, I suggest, that public art possesses in virtue of its "publicness," that is, in virtue of the peculiar nature of its reception. If Chapter 2 is the ground-rock of the dissertation, I take Chapter 7 to be its capstone. In short, public art's value is a function of its capacity to promote political participation and to encourage tolerance. Many empirical studies, such as the NEA 2006 survey *The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life*, bring evidence confirming a positive relationship between the appreciation of public art, political participation, and tolerance. By drawing on previous chapters, I explain how appreciating public art can have those outcomes. According to my view, one cannot appreciate a public artwork by *individually* contemplating some of its features or "meanings." In order to appreciate a public artwork as a *public* artwork, a viewer must *socially* interact with others by engaging them in a dialogue in which they all discuss about publicly relevant issues that relate to the presentation of that public artwork. In other words, in order to appreciate a public artwork as such, a viewer must participate in what I call public-art debates, that is, dialogues in public-art spheres. Through the social interactions that link those participating in a public-art debate, an individual can acquire politically relevant information (e.g., information about the social and environmental issues afflicting the area where a viewer lives, and information about how to con-

tribute in solving those issues). By acquiring that kind of information, she can cut the costs of participating politically. When political participation is less costly, an individual is more likely to become active. Moreover, by putting in contact different individuals thanks to the inclusive nature of public-art debates, public art creates heterogeneous social networks, and exposes appreciators to diversity. The experience of diversity makes people more open-minded, and is fundamental for developing more tolerant behavior.

As a whole, this dissertation responds with argument to those who are critical of public art: not only the philistines, but also those art lovers and professionals who dismiss public art as a failed artistic genre.[21] Of course, appreciating public art is not the only way to promote political participation or to encourage tolerance. Education, for instance, plays a fundamental role in those respects, too. However, by filling with "meaning" our daily interactions, public art can broaden significantly our possibilities to become more active and tolerant.

As some philosophers begin to see, perhaps not so clearly yet, public art can effectively be a means for reinventing contemporary forms of communal life, which has been eroded in our increasingly fragmented societies.[22] In effect, what public art has to offer is an experience of sharing. The encounter with a public artwork can stimulate in an informal, playful, and participatory manner a sharing of (probably diverging) ideas about values and about our conception of the public good. Public artworks can help us "celebrate" our problematic diversity in the most proper way: discussing it in the hope to find a common ground.

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[21] As examples of public art's detractors see, among others, J. Willett, "Back to the Dream City: The Current Interest in Public Art," in P. Townsend (ed.), *Art Within Reach* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 11; and, A. Brighton, "Is Architecture or Art the Enemy?," in N. de Ville and S. Foster (eds.), *Space Invaders* (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 1993), 43.

[22] I believe that both Arthur Danto and Gordon Graham consider this possibility. See A. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 187; G. Graham, *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Art versus Religion* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 188 and ff.

CHAPTER 2

WHEN ART GOES "PUBLIC": ON PUBLIC ART AND ITS PUBLICNESS

2.1 Monuments, Memorials, and Public Artworks

Monuments, outdoor statues, and memorials are constitutive parts of the spaces we live in. Virtually every city, town, or small village presents some kind of structure erected to commemorate a famous or notable person, an event of historical relevance, or a site of interest. In many cases, those structures become symbols of their spaces, and their respective identities and stories seem to ineluctably merge. It seems very difficult—if not impossible—to think about Paris without thinking about the *Eiffel Tower*, and vice versa. By imagining the *Statue of Liberty*, many would say that you are already imagining New York. Describe Rome to someone who never visited the city, and you will probably mention the *Trevi Fountain* or at least one among its most glorious monuments. Moreover, from the simple layman to the well-informed connoisseur, many different persons pay attention to those structures. For instance, the installation of a new monument is seldom left unnoticed. On the contrary, it often generates extreme reactions of either sincere love or unmitigated hatred in the majority of the people.[1]

[1] For a description of a selection of famous cases of controversial reactions to the installation of new monuments, see, among others, E. Doss, "Contemporary Public Art Controversy: An Introduction," in E. Doss (ed.), *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1995): 13-34.

Art scholars define things such as monuments, outdoor statues, memorials, and some other kinds of artworks as *public artworks*. What does it mean for an artwork to be *public*? When is an artwork public? I consider the answers to these questions as pivotal to the understanding of public art. Though many authors discuss issues related to public art's "publicness,"[2] a sustained account of that topic has yet to come. The aim of this chapter is to provide such an account. More precisely, this chapter aims at clarifying the philosophical complexities lying behind the publicness of *public* art. However, before starting, I want to make explicit two important caveats of the arguments presented in this chapter.

First, I do not claim that what distinguishes public artworks from other kinds of artworks is merely their being public—whatever that means. In other words, I do not claim that to understand their publicness is to understand public artworks' essential nature. As Chapter 7 shows, I rather think that we can better understand the peculiar kinds of "things" that public artworks are mainly by looking at the peculiar value(s) they bear. However, the clarification of their publicness can provide an intuitive framework justifying the *prima facie* plausibility of further reflections on deeper issues. As a consequence, my explanatory strategy will allow me to avoid many potential objections that may arise in the absence of such a preliminary understanding.

Second, though public art appears as a nearly universal human phenomenon (as "universal" as human phenomena can be), I am sympathetic to the idea that public art can be *public* in different ways. Thus, it is important to tie the discussion of public art's publicness to a specific cultural milieu that can be effectively managed, whose relative uniformity allows for meaningful generalization. As I have already said in Chapter 1, I concentrate on contemporary public art realized between the second half of the 20th century and the present moment in the con-

[2]Here, I opt for the term "publicness" despite its awkwardness because it has become the term of choice for a plurality of scholars in the studies of public art.

text of pluralistic democracies. Of course, such a limitation does not prohibit my argument from possibly contributing to the understanding of the same issue in different cultural milieus.

In section 2.2, I characterize the publicness of public art in terms of its being received within the "public sphere," whereas non-public art is received within the artworld. In section 2.3, I defend my characterization of public art's publicness against the traditional objection that the public sphere does not exist in contemporary societies. In section 2.4, by recognizing that public art constitutes its own public sphere (*the public-art sphere*), I explore more analytically the differences between the reception of public artworks and the reception of non-public ones.

2.2 Art and the Public Sphere

An important strand of research in the studies of public art understands its publicness in terms of its peculiar context of reception.[3] Within that strand, many theorists argue for the following thesis: public art is *public* when it is received within the "public sphere" rather than within "artworld" institutions.[4]

In effect, when we consider *non-public* artworks, their reception takes place within a specific context—the artworld—determined by a multitude of formal and informal institutions. Those institutions include particular groups of individuals, specific organizations, clubs, museums, dealers, collectors, auction houses, maga-

[3]See, for instance, C. K. Knight and H. F. Senie, "Editors' Statement: Audience Response," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012): 1-2.

[4]See, for instance, W. J. T. Mitchell, "Introduction: Utopia and Critique," in W. J. T. Mitchell (ed.), *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago, IL and London, UK: The University of Chicago Press, 1992): 1-5; W. J. T. Mitchell, "The Violence of Public Art: *Do the Right Thing*," in *Art and the Public Sphere*: 29-48; Doss, "Contemporary Public Art Controversy: An Introduction"; H. F. Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy: Dangerous Precedent*? (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 102-103; C. K. Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism* (Oxford, UK, and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008); L. Zuidervaart, *Art in Public: Politics, Economics, and Democratic Culture* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and, J. Hunt and J. Vickery, "Public Art in the 21st Century," in *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T2093917>.

zines, criticism, departments, schools, governmental and public agencies or programs administering grants, fellowships, and monetary contributions directed towards those mentioned above.[5] As a context of artistic reception, the artworld and its institutions also inform significantly the creative, appreciative, interpretative, and theoretical efforts of individuals engaging the artistic practices at all levels (e.g., as artists, critics, connoisseurs, appreciators, art theorists, aestheticians, etc.) in ways that are rather familiar to all art lovers.

On the contrary, *public* artworks are received primarily within a more general and unspecialized context. Public artworks are in fact received within the "public sphere." Public art scholarship borrows the notion of the public sphere from the work of German philosopher Jürgen Habermas. In his seminal work *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas discusses systematically such a notion, by providing both an ideal-typical model and a socio-historical analysis of its emergence in modern Western societies, in particular England, France, and Germany.[6] As an intermediate area between the private sphere and the sphere of state authority, the 18th century public sphere was an autonomous space where an emerging social class (the bourgeoisie) could publicly thematize and express its concerns through critical reflection.[7] That critical reflection was intended not as

[5]Though firstly introduced by Arthur Danto in his famous paper "The Artworld," the notion of the artworld as an institution is discussed systematically in the "Institutional Theory of Art" as developed by philosopher George Dickie. See A. Danto, "The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1964): 571-584; G. Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974); and, G. Dickie, "The New Institutional Theory of Art," in G. Dickie, R. Sclafani, and R. Roblin (eds.), *Aesthetics: A Critical Anthology* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1989): 196-205.

[6]See J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989). The original version, published in German, is an adaptation from Habermas' *Habilitationsschrifts* at the University of Marburg. See J. Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschafts* (Darmstad and Neuwied, Federal Republic of Germany: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962).

[7]For a discussion on the relevance of the private sphere for constituting the public sphere, see C. Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA, and London, UK: MIT Press, 1992), in particular 21-26; and, M. McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity. Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

a mere rhetorical exercise, but as a form of political action aimed at influencing public authority.[8]

By drawing on Habermas' view, we can characterize the public sphere as the discursive[9] space constituted by private individuals discussing rationally (or perhaps *reasonably*) issues related to the public good.[10] For purpose of clarity, let me add that throughout this thesis I refer to the set of those individuals as a "public," and to them individually as "members of a public."[11] For Habermas, there are no formal restrictions for participating in discussions within the public sphere. The public sphere is open to all private individuals potentially interested in the issue(s) under consideration.[12] In the public sphere, discussions are carried out in a sustained way, often through the use of different media. When discussing, members of a public "bracket" (i.e., "suppress") their statuses and personal interests. In this sense, when discussing, they evaluate arguments solely in terms of their rational force.[13] As an autonomous realm, the public sphere is not influenced by public authority. On the contrary, its debates—which are not mere rhetorical exercises, but a form of political action—aim at shaping decisions of public authority on par-

[8]For a detailed discussion of Habermas' notion of the public sphere, see Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere": 1-48.

[9]Here I intend "discursive" in a sense that captures (at least to some extent) what Charles Taylor calls "metatopical." He writes: "The public sphere, as we have been defining it ... knits a plurality of spaces into one larger space of nonassembly. The same public discussion is deemed to pass through our debate today, and someone else's earnest conversation tomorrow, and the newspaper interview Thursday, and so on. I want to call this larger kind of ... common space 'metatopical'. The public sphere that emerges in the eighteenth century is a metatopical common space." See C. Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," in *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 187. Though I am sympathetic with Taylor's view, I find the use of metatopical as potentially confusing. In fact, at least in my view, the public sphere has also a "topical" dimension, that is, it is also somewhat rooted in the assembling of individuals in a common space.

[10]As many theorists suggest, Habermas' conception of rationality is too narrow for capturing the logic of public discourse. In particular, it seems incapable of understanding persisting conflicts rooted in disagreement in value commitments and the role of emotions. I discuss this problem in Chapters 4 and 5.

[11]See *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 176. Habermas writes that the public sphere is "made up of *private people* gathered together as *a public* and articulating the needs of society with the state." [Emphasis added.]

[12]Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 37.

[13]Ibid., 54, 131.

ticular issues. The range of those issues is very broad. All sorts of topics are open to discussion as long as they relate to matters of public good.[14]

With this characterization of the public sphere in mind, we can describe more analytically when an artwork is received within the public sphere. One should notice that the following is the first systematic attempt at describing the general features that characterize the reception of artworks within the public sphere.[15] I should also emphasize that what I am proposing here is an ideal-typical analysis of public art's publicness. As Max Weber holds, "an ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view" in relation to which "concrete individual phenomena ... are arranged into a unified analytical construct" (*Gedankenbild*). As an idealized abstraction, an ideal type it is a methodological "utopia [that] cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality."[16] In this sense, my account does *not* want to exactly capture an aspect that one can find in all empirical cases of public art. It has a different twofold aim. It wants to provide an effective tool for analyzing actual phenomena of public art, while developing a normative (utopian) model for public art's publicness that can effectively guide our practices of public art.

I argue that an artwork is received within the public sphere (that is, it is a *public* artwork) when:

(a) its presentation (or just the proposal of its presentation) generates some kind of reaction in a significant number of private individuals;

(b) those reactions are not cursory, but they structure as a rational (or reasonable) and open discussion that is often carried out through the use of different

[14]Ibid., 36.

[15]Even Lambert Zuidervaart, who proposes a nuanced analysis of the role of the arts in the public sphere, does not discuss the reception of artworks in that same context. See Zuidervaart, *Art in Public*, 89-126.

[16]M. Weber, "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy," in E. A. Shils and H. A. Finch (eds. and trans.), *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1904/1949), 90.

media, such as newspapers, television, the Internet, etc.;[17]

(c) discussants argue for their opinions while bracketing their statutes and private interests;

(d) [a corollary of (c)] opinions are accepted or rejected solely in terms of their rational (or reasonable) force. Noticeably, opinions of experts (such as art critics, art historians, aestheticians, artists, etc.) do not receive special consideration. On the contrary, they are often regarded with suspicion as opinions of individuals whose views may depend on private interests;[18]

(e) within those public discussions, traditional "art or aesthetic concerns are ... irrelevant."[19] Political, social, and economic issues related to the public good are the focus of those discussions. In fact, public art debates build up around questions such as "How does the public artwork relate to the identity of its site and relative communities?", "Does it suit the identity of those communities?", "Was the monetary budget appropriate?", "Was the budget well administered?", "Does the public artwork have a negative environmental impact?", and other questions directly related to a relevant issue explicitly addressed by the content of the artwork;[20]

[17]It is somewhat surprising how quickly and effectively reactions to the presentation of an artwork can structure as public discourses. It would be impossible even to provide an incomplete list of some of those debates. For a discussion of few significant examples, see H. F. Senie, "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats. Public Art and Public Perception," in H. F. Senie and S. Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1992): 237-246.

[18]Public distrust of "expert opinion" is well captured by Senie in *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 49, 86; and, "Baboon, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats," 243. As a partial evidence in favor of the idea that sometimes experts may act on personal interests, Howard Becker seems to suggest that (at least sometimes) the opinions of art critics might be influenced by their personal economic interests. See H. S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angels, CA: The California University Press, 1982), 114.

[19]H. Senie, "Public Art and Public Response," in *Critical Issues in Public Art*, 173.

[20]For instance, questions of monetary budget were at the core of the debates generated respectively by Noguchi's *Landscape of Time* (1977) and Michael Heizer's *Adjacent, Against, Upon* (1977). Questions of identitarian appropriateness were fundamental in the debates generated by Pablo Picasso's *Untitled* (1967), also referred to as "Chicago Picasso," and Robert Graham's *Monument to Joe Louis* (1986). Questions of environmental sustainability are, among others, the critical focus of the still on-going debate generated by Pino Castagna's *In pietra alpestra e dura* (2009). Questions

(f) discussions are not intended for their own sake. They are directed instead towards influencing the decisions of public authority. For instance, many discussions aim at having public authority removing or relocating a public artwork.[21] Others ask for modifying an artwork.[22] Some want to change the status of a public artwork from temporary to enduring.[23] Others aim at changing the status quo.[24]

It must be emphasized that, by understanding public art's publicness in terms of its context of reception (that is, the public sphere), my account seems flexible enough to capture not only our precritical intuitions about this issue, but also the complexities of contemporary practices of public art. In particular, it avoids many fatal complications typical of those reductionist accounts that understand public art's publicness merely in terms of its being located in (outdoor) public spaces or being publicly funded. As W. J. T. Mitchell suggests, considerations of location and funding need not be irrelevant, but "cannot provide the theoretical or practical horizon of inquiry."[25] Public art "isn't [only] a hero on a horse anymore."[26] There

about the issues related to the Vietnam War and its consequences on veterans were and still are the very focus of the reception of Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* (VVMW) (1982). Other socially relevant issues that have been addressed explicitly by public artworks include women's and minorities' rights, HIV/AIDS research and care, and environmental awareness.

[21] See, for instance, the controversy on Serra's *Titled Arc* (1981-1986) and Maurizio Cattelan's *Busto di Craxi* (2010). On Serra's *Tilted Arc*, see, for instance, Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*. On Cattelan's *Busto di Craxi* see <http://www.newyorksocialdiary.com/node/1907585>>, and A. Vivoli, "Il mio Craxi ha perso," *Il Tirreno* (June 25, 2010) <http://iltirreno.gelocal.it/regione/2010/06/25/news/il-mio-craxi-ha-perso-1.1934055>.

[22] For instance, the public administration of Rome decided to remodel Oliviero Rainaldi's *Conversazioni* (2011) in response to the requests of the public. See C. E. Longhurst, "A Sculpture Spurned: When Modern Art Meets Religion," *America Magazine* (May 14, 2012) <http://www.americamagazine.org/content/culture.cfm?cultureid=271>.

[23] After consulting the public, the mayor of Milan recently decided to maintain Maurizio Cattelan's *L.O.V.E.* in its location for the next 40 years. See AA. VV., "Il Comune compra il dito medio di Cattelan: Festa in piazza Affari," *Il Giorno* (October 12, 2012) <http://www.ilgiorno.it/milano/cronaca/2012/10/10/784825-milano-dito-medio-maurizio-cattelan-piazza-affari-festa-comune.shtml>. For a discussion of temporary and enduring public artworks, see Chapter 3.

[24] One could arguably say that the discussion of VVMW aimed at changing significantly the status of veterans.

[25] Mitchell, "Introduction: Utopia and Critique," 2.

[26] A. Raven, "Introduction," in A. Raven (ed.), *Art in the Public Interest* (Ann Arbor, MI: The Uni-

is more to public art than being in a public space or paid for by the government.

For instance, as Gerald Silk and Jerry Allen independently argue, there are many artifacts (such as corporate logos, garbage cans, street lights, etc.) and architectural structures (such as private houses, hospitals, government buildings, street furniture, etc.) that are similar at last to a certain extent to artworks and occupy public spaces. However, often, we do not consider those objects as public artworks.[27] Moreover, many artworks installed in public spaces seem not to be public. For instance, Henry Moore's *Reclining Woman: Elbow 1981*, which is located in a public square, at the entrance of the Leeds City Gallery (UK), seems to be just an "artwork in a public space," rather than a *public* artwork. As Hilde Hein argues, "The sheer presence of art out-of-doors or in a bus terminal or a hotel reception area does not automatically make that art public – no more than placing a tiger in a barnyard would make it a domestic animal."[28]

As practices of public art show, it is also clear that public artworks need not be publicly funded. Let me just mention few relevant cases as evidence supporting my claim. Perhaps the most widely appreciated public artwork in the US, Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* was privately funded. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), a private organization founded by Jan C. Scruggs, received "$8.4 million entirely from private donations from more than 275,000 individuals, veterans and civic organizations, corporations, foundations, and unions.

versity of Michigan Press, 1989), 1.

[27]See G. Silk, "Away from a Theory of Public Art," in V. Anker and C. Ritscahrd (eds.), *art - public* (Geneva, Switzerland: *Acts* of the International Association of Art Critics, 1992), 176; and, J. Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," in J. L. Cruikshank (ed.), *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Spaces* (Amherst, MA: Arts Extension Service/Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, 1988), 246. Of course, I am not claiming that none of those things can be public artworks. On the contrary, as Gordon Graham argues, architectural structures can definitely be public artworks. See G. Graham, "Can There Be Public Architecture?," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 243-249. Moreover, architect and artist Alessandro Giorgi realized a series of street furniture that may very well be considered as public artworks. See, A. Giorgi, *La città è la mia casa. Un arredo – Un'emozione – Un Sentimento* (Rivara, Italy: Castello di Rivara – Centro d'Arte Contemporanea, 2012).

[28]H. Hein, "What Is Public Art? Time, Place, and Meaning," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (1996), 4.

No federal funds were used."[29] Also, Christo and Jean-Claude's famous public art projects (such as *Running Fence* and *The Gates*) were entirely funded by those artists' personal finances.[30]

Perhaps even more importantly, many theorists argue that some artworks exhibited in spaces that are *not* "public" (in the same sense of public in which a square *is* a public space) are nonetheless public artworks. For instance, Cher Knight argues that museums can be a "site for public art."[31] If true (as it seems to be), Knight's thesis would then make useless any effort to distinguish between public art and non-public art in terms of spatial location. Consider for instance the work of Philadelphian photographer Zoe Strauss. Between 2001 and 2011, Strauss exhibited her photographs in yearly shows called "Under I-95," which took place under the Interstate I-95 in South Philadelphia. Her photographs capture the lives of disenfranchised people and places in the Philadelphia area. She states that her ambition is "to create an epic narrative that reflects the beauty and struggle of everyday life."[32] Widely discussed by the local communities, Strauss' works are considered unanimously public artworks. Her work had such an impact on people living in the Philadelphia area that between March and April 2012, some of her photographs from the "Under I-95" series were showed in a retrospective at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. By being placed in a museum, did they stop being public artworks? Did they become non-public artworks just because placed

[29]See `http://www.vvmf.org/FAQs`. Noticeably, Zuidervaart emphasizes that Lin's work is now maintained and managed by the U.S. National Park Service. He then considers it as an example of an artwork publicly sponsored by the government. However, VVMW was considered a public artwork even before any governmental "sponsorship." Moreover, many private institutions—like private universities or other non-profit private organizations—receive many governmental benefits, such as tax exemptions. And yet, we hardly consider those institutions as publicly sponsored.

[30]See, for instance, J. Trescott, "Smithsonian takes a close look at Christo's seminal *Running Fence*," *The Washington Post* (March 31, 2010) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/30/AR2010033003850.html>; and, J. Lemisch, "Art for the People? Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates"," *New Politics* 10 (2005) <http://newpol.org/content/art-people-christo-and-jeanne-claudes-gates>.

[31]Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism*, 34

[32]See http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/745.html

in a museum? It seems to me that the transferral from an "outdoor" location to an "indoor" one did not change the general understanding of those photographs, which seem to remain public artworks. Here, I am not excluding that, sometimes, a change in the location of presentation can affect the nature of the discourse surrounding an artwork, thus transforming it in a non-public artwork—or vice versa. What I am suggesting is that a change in the location of presentation *need not* have such a consequence. As I have already said, being "outdoor" might very well facilitate an artwork becoming public. However, its being "outdoor" should *not* be considered as a necessary (or a sufficient) condition for an artwork to be public.

2.3 The Public Sphere in Contemporary Societies

When we consider the thesis that contemporary *public* art is a form of art that is received within the public sphere, a powerful objection immediately arises. How is it possible to explain contemporary public art's publicness in terms of the public sphere when, for Habermas, there is no public sphere in the contemporary world?

In effect, in his 1962 book, Habermas argues that the public sphere as a discursive space of rational confrontation is "a category that is typical of [the 18th and 19th century]. It cannot be ... transferred, ideal typically generalized, to any number of historical situations that represent formally similar constellations."[33] In effect, he argues that 18th century English, French, and German societies and the contemporary ones differ at least in two important ways, making impossible for an Habermasian public sphere to emerge within the latter.

First, late capitalist societies went through a process of "refeudalization," and public and private interests stopped being sharply separated. Within those societies, private groups (e.g., large corporations, lawyers, academics, etc.) came to acquire great political power, thus being capable of heavily influencing debates

[33] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, xvii.

on the public good. The bracketing of statuses and private interests became virtually impossible. Public debates acquired the character of negotiations between interested factions rather than rational discussions of the public good.[34]

Second, a deep shift occurred within bourgeois social practices since the beginning of the 20th century. Social gatherings withdrew from being politically oriented. Passive forms of cultural consumption progressively substituted critical public discourse, and a disinterest in argumentative capacities—which were at the core of 18th and 19th century social and political life—became thus widespread.[35] The public transformed from a "culture-debating to a culture-consuming public."[36]

Mass-media (such as radio, cinema, and television) substituted for the printed press as privileged vehicle of public communication and favored such a degenerative transformation.[37] In fact, Habermas considers the immediacy by means of which we experience those media as inhibiting the exercise of our critical and rational capacities.[38] Thanks to their immediacy of reception, contemporary mass-media are exceptional at manipulating the public. This quality of the media is well know to the industry of advertisement, which uses it systematically in the attempt to persuade consumers in buying commercial goods. The persuasion of consumers is a theme fundamental for Habermas. In his view, political campaigns and debates are now similar to the arena for advertising, and citizens are not different from consumers. In fact, even the state treats his citizens as consumers, by

[34]See Ibid., 176-178. Habermas supports this view by referring to the loss of formal universality to laws—aspect that would guarantee their "truth."

[35]See Ibid., 161-163. "Rational-critical debate had a tendency to be replaced by consumption. . . . In the course of our century, the bourgeois forms of sociability [abstain] from literary and political debate. On the new model the convivial discussion among individuals gave way to more or less noncommittal group activities."

[36]In this respect, see the revealing title of §18 of Habermas' work: "From a Culture-Debating (*kulturräsonierend*) to a Culture-Consuming Public."

[37]See Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Spere*, chaps. 5, 6, and 7.

[38]Importantly, some media scholars agree with Habermas on this point. See, among others, J. Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.)

seeking to cultivate an "uncommitted friendly disposition" rather than promoting the awakening of consciences.[39]

Some public art scholars recognize explicitly the difficulty emerging from using Habermas' model when discussing contemporary public art. For instance, Mitchell expresses serious doubts about the existence of a public sphere in late capitalists societies.[40] Erika Doss underlines that "his [Habermas'] model is practically impossible under the tenets of late capitalism."[41] However, only few attempt at solving it without rejecting Habermas' model.[42] Among those, Miwon Kwon holds that Habermas is mistaken in mismatching utopian idealization with the description of actual historical periods.[43] She argues that instead of the description of a particular moment in Western history, Habermas' model of the public sphere should be rather understood as an ideal construction capturing the utopian condition within which social differences are overcome in the rational pursuit of the public interest. As she puts it, the public sphere is "necessarily a work in abstraction . . . where one might bracket, temporarily, one's private, personal interest to imagine a collective identification."[44] In this sense, Kwon is suggesting that Habermas' model can be applied to the discussion of contemporary public art as a regulative and utopian ideal for understanding public art's publicness.

I am sympathetic with Kwon's proposal. However, her conclusion does not follow from her premises. Even if we accept that Habermas' model is just an ideal-model, why should it tell us something about a practice in late capitalist societies? If in those societies there is no genuine democratic life (as Habermas argues), a

[39] Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 195.

[40] See Mitchell, "Introduction: Utopia and Critique," 2.

[41] Doss, "Contemporary Public Art Controversy: An Introduction," 16.

[42] For instance, to avoid this problem, Zuidervaart turns to Cohen and Arato's model of the public sphere. (See *Art in Public*, 96-101.) Of course, Zuidervaart's choice is legitimate, though not necessary. As the remainder of the section shows, it is not impossible to rescue Habermas' model from its author's pessimism.

[43] See Miwon Know, "Public Art as Publicity," in S. Sheikh (ed.), *In the Place of the Public Sphere? On the Establishment of Publics and Counter-Publics* (Berlin, Germany: b_books, 2005): 22-33.

[44] See Kwon, "Public Art as Publicity," 33.

model such as Habermas' one would be a useless analytic tool for understanding public art's publicness.

It seems possible to defend in a sustained way the use of Habermas' model in the analysis of contemporary public art's publicness only if we can show that there is no unbridgeable gap between the public life of 18th and 19th century Europe, as Habermas analyzes it, and that of late capitalist societies. In this sense, by following a dominant trend in the studies of the public sphere, I argue for the following thesis: Habermas overestimates the degeneration of the public sphere in late capitalist societies.[45] In effect, the transformations of the public sphere in those societies were not as negative and drastic as he originally thought. Moreover, social, cultural, and technological changes introduced in late capitalist societies opened up new possibilities that invigorated the public sphere, rather than disintegrating it. In the remainder of this section, I provide evidence in favor of my thesis.

However, before entering the discussion, I need to add a caveat to the argument presented in below. Habermas' "pessimistic view"—that is, the view that admits the disintegration of the public sphere within late capitalist societies—is very much influenced by the analysis of mass-culture as developed by the older Frankfurt School, with particular reference to the work of Adorno.[46] Noticeably, Habermas recognized the limitations of such analysis, and his theory of communicative action

[45] See M. Rospocher, "Beyond the Public Sphere: A Historiographical Transition," in M. Rospocher (ed.), *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna: Il Mulino, and Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2012), 11.

[46] See H. Marcuse, "The Affirmative Character of Culture" (1937), in D. Kellner (ed.), *Art and Liberation* (London, England and New York, NY: Routledge, 2007): 82-112; W. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (London, England and New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2008): 1-50; and, T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1947/2002). Significantly, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* Habermas explicitly draws on Adorno's famous essay "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening." See Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* 166. For Adorno, in late capitalist societies, culture has been reduced to mere commodity, and is governed mainly by commercial interests. As such, culture has lost its autonomy, and—with that—its emancipatory and critical possibilities. See, for instance, T. W. Adorno, "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening" (1938), in A. Arato and E. Gebhardt, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader* (New York, NY: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1982): 270-299.

is an attempt to overcome them.[47]

It must be emphasized that I am not here concerned with those more recent developments of Habermas' views. I am unsure whether discussing the evolution of Habermas' philosophy would be decisive for the purpose of this section, and surely it would take us too far from it. By following a well established trend within public sphere scholarship, I rather discuss the applicability of Habermas' model to late capitalist societies focusing on internal criticisms of Habermas' 1962 work, without systematic reference to his later production. I am convinced that those criticisms, which are independent from any supplementary theoretical assumptions, are absolutely effective in highlighting Habermas' mistakes, and already suggest how to improve his model.

We can summarize the internal criticisms of Habermas' pessimistic view in the three following points. First, Habermas' view depends—at least in part—on an *asymmetry of treatment* that different historical periods received in his analysis. As Craig Calhoun argues, Habermas selects rather idiosyncratically the relevant sample of individuals that he is using to explain the degeneration and disintegration of the public sphere in late capitalist societies. In effect, he discusses the 18th century in terms of Locke and Kant, while preferring Marx and Mill for the 19th century. Surprisingly enough, the sample for the 20th century includes typical suburban television viewers, without any reference to a similar kind of intellectual history that oriented his discussing previous periods.[48]

Habermas is then here committing what is usually defined as the fallacy of biased generalization. Of course, this mistake in inductive reasoning has impor-

[47]In particular, Habermas' criticism of Adorno rests on the recognition that negative-dialectic collapses into a totalizing critique of reason itself, thus forbidding any possibility for residual rational discourse or critical praxis. See J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984); and, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno," in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990): 106-130.

[48]See Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," 33.

tant epistemological consequences. In fact, it seems to jeopardize the reliability of the empirical evidence that Habermas uses as justification for his pessimistic view, which now looks weaker. In fact, on the one hand, if he would have considered the work of leading thinkers of the 20th century, the public sphere of late capitalist societies would not have seemed so degenerated. On the other hand, if he would have paid more attention to scandals, crimes, and demagogic press, 18th and 19th century public sphere would not have appeared so adamantly rational.[49] The vibrant activity of a critical public of the last fifty years, which recently acquired a new global vigor, seems to point in favor of the thesis that Habermas overestimated the degeneration of the public sphere. If not healthy, it still seems to be surviving.[50]

Second, Habermas does not take into consideration how the *extension of public education and mass literacy* and the *increase of working class leisure time* facilitated for many previously excluded the access to the public sphere, thus stimulating it. Data seem to confirm that, since the first few decades after WWII, formal education has been favoring significantly the embracing of emancipative and democratic values in different sectors of the population.[51] Habermas explicitly admits that he underestimated the relevance of those improvements of late capitalist societies.[52] On his part, it is true that, at the time when he wrote *The Structural Transformation*, the so called "educational revolution" had yet to come, and studies collecting data about

[49]See also M. Schudson, "Was There Ever a Public Sphere? If So, When? Reflections on the American Case," in Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*: 143-163.

[50]Relevant moments where a critical public emerged as an active political actor include, for instance, the *Prague Spring* in 1968; the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the following disintegration of the Soviet Union. More recently, we could mention the *Arab Spring* in 2011 and the "Occupy Wall Street" movement in 2012, and the Gezi Park movement in 2013.

[51]See, for instance, the study in R. Inglehart, "The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies," in *The American Political Science Review* 65 (1971): 991-1017. Inglehart argues that "under present circumstances, the process of formal education assimilates the individual into an elite political culture which stresses expressive values." (1005) In his research, Inglehart also suggests that education plays a role in influencing our value preferences that is comparable to that one that is played by other aspects of our lives and upbringings such as occupation, religion, income levels, and age cohort.

[52]See Habermas, "Further Reflection on the Public Sphere," 438.

the social impact of mass education had not been published yet.[53]

Third, Habermas' pessimistic view is guilty of having overlooked the genuinely *democratic possibilities of mass-media*. On the one hand, when considering the public sphere of late capitalist societies, nobody should underestimate the risks and the problems commonly associated with the use of mass-media such as radio and, perhaps more importantly, television. For instance, as Calhoun argues in his article "Populist Politics," television seems incapable of constituting spatially concentrated publics, where spatial concentration is one "the bases for participatory democratic political movements."[54] Moreover, television programs tend to convey a very thin amount of information. For instance, scripts for evening news do not reach the equivalent of two columns in *The New York Times*.[55] Finally, television is not very well suited as a medium for transmitting abstract information and ideas. But it is strong in conveying emotionally charged impressions and in expressing unconscious experiences of feelings.[56] As a results of those faults, we cannot deny that mass-media—and television in particular—may very well foster uncritical and unreflective forming of opinions rather than critical understanding. Contemporary politicians have very well understood the manipulative potential of mass-media, and they have exploited it in many cases.[57]

However, on the other hand, we cannot forget that mass-media (including television) have also genuinely democratic qualities. They can have a positive impact

[53]The study by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, which is plausibly the first study of mass education's effects on social behaviors, was published only in 1963. See G. Almond and S. Verba (eds.), *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[54]C. Calhoun, "Populist Politics, Communications Media and Large Scale Societal Integration," *Sociological Theory* 6 (1988), 232. However, it must be emphasized that there are specific contexts in which television facilitates the constitution of spatially concentrated publics. For instance, as Maria Antonietta Marongiu argues, the general interest that television raised in the context of 1950s Italy "was high enough to trigger mechanisms of aggregation unfamiliar to Italian society." See M. A. Marongiu, *Language Maintenance and Shift in Sardinia: A case study of Sardinian and Italian in Cagliari* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2007), 98.

[55]Calhoun, "Populist Politics," 282.

[56]Ivi.

[57]Ibid., 234; and, T. Lowi, *Personal Presidency* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1987).

on the general availability of information, thus nurturing democratic discourse. Consider television. First, compared with printed media, television is, first, easier to access.[58] Second, it does not require any special skill or training (such as reading abilities) to be accessed. Third (a possibility that has been largely neglected by scholars of the public sphere), though not requiring special skills for being accessed, television may very well facilitate the acquisition of cultural capacities that are fundamental for participating in the democratic life of societies, such as the capacity to speak a particular language.[59] Fourth, accessing television is rather inexpensive, since broadcasting is largely funded by advertisements, which surely affect the experience of TV-viewer, though without preventing the possibility of accessing information.[60]

More importantly, if we consider the Internet, we might see even more clearly the democratic possibilities of mass-media and their relevance to the emergence of a public sphere in late capitalist societies. Because of the lack of systematic research, our understanding of the relationship between the Internet and the public sphere is only partial.[61] However, it is impossible to deny that the Internet—at a relatively inexpensive cost—facilitates both communication, access to information resources, and sharing of new content. Importantly, the Internet provides visibility to global and local social movements that would be otherwise hardly noticed. Moreover, web sharing of information might very well avoid—or, at least, limit—control and censorship by government agencies or other centralized providers

[58]See Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 74-81.

[59]During the 1950s, television surely played a fundamental role in improving Italians' competence in common Italian. See, for instance, Marongiu, *Language Maintenance and Shift in Sardinia*, 98. Moreover, empirical evidence seems to justify the hypotheses that watching television programs facilitates foreign-language acquisition. See, for instance, G. d'Ydewalle and M. Van de Poel, "Incidental Foreign-Language Acquisition by Children Watching Subtitled Television Programs," *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 28 (1999): 227-244.

[60]See Calhoun, "Populist Politics," 231.

[61]See C. Calhoun, "Information Technology and the International Public Sphere," in D. Schuler and P. Day, *Shaping the Network Society: The New Role of Civil Society in Cyberspace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 238.

thanks to practices of hacking.

Besides providing a space for communication and information exchange, the Internet performs a function that coffee houses as described in Habermas' model of the 18th century public sphere played.[62] Like the coffee house, in fact, the Internet provides a setting for interaction among strangers that do not share communal ties of family or friendship. By providing websites for enabling political organizations of strangers, the Internet enhances public discourse and contributes to the emergence of a public sphere. Recent social and political developments in different parts of the globe seem to testify that the Internet is a powerful democratic instrument, one that may very well facilitate the emergence of a public sphere. In particular, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (whose accessibility was guaranteed by a massive intervention of hackers) played a relevant role in the organization of protests such as those of the *Arab Spring* (2011) and of the *Occupy Wall Street Movement* (2012).[63]

By appreciating the preceding, we can reasonably admit that public life in late capitalist societies is not dramatically different from that one characterizing its 18th and 19th century counterparts. The contemporary world still seems to present a public sphere where genuine democratic discussion is still possible. The existence of such a sphere provides us with a justification for the (ideal-typical) account of public art's publicness here proposed.

[62]See Calhoun, "Information Technology and the International Public Sphere," 243. Calhoun draws on W. Mitchell, *City of Bits* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 7.

[63]For a further discussion of the role of social media in those respective protests, see P. N. Howard et alt., "Opening Closed Regimes What Was the Role of Social Media During the Arab Spring?" (available at: http://pitpi.org); and, J. Preston, "Protesters Look for Ways to Feed the Web," *The New York Times on the Web* (retrieved September 9, 2012, from http://www.nytimes.com).

2.4 The Public-Art Sphere and the Artworld

At this point, Ockhamite concerns might inspire someone in raising the following objections: "Why isn't the artworld part of the public sphere—or vice versa? Can you show how those two are distinct?"[64] I consider the answers to those objections as crucial for defending the plausibility of the account that explains public art's publicness in terms of its being received within the public-art sphere, rather than within the artworld.

In order to frame those objections more effectively, let me first introduce a further qualification to my account of the public sphere. In the last few decades, scholars almost unanimously agreed *contra* Habermas that the public sphere does not constitute a single and overarching unity of public discourse.[65] I agree with those theorists. In effect, when considering contemporary societies, the complexities of our public interactions can be better captured in terms of a multiplicity of public sphere*s*.

For instance, Nancy Fraser individuates in feminist women a "subaltern counterpublic" that constituted since the late 20th century its own public sphere.[66] The "feminist public sphere" functioned as an (at least partially) autonomous discursive space where its members could discuss and elucidate their needs and interests as marginalized group in the attempt to reduce their disadvantages within "official" spheres, that is, spheres more effective in terms of political action.[67] Of course,

[64]Mitchell raises concerns of this kind in his "Introduction: Utopia and Critique" where he writes: "The fundamental message of this book, then, is the forcing of a basic choice in the way we think about art and the public sphere: either there is no such thing as public art, or all art is public." (p. 4)

[65]See, for instance, Rospocher, "Beyond the Public Sphere," 10; M. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Press, 2002); E. Eager et al (eds.), *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and, J. B. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). Noticeably, Habermas recognizes this limitation of his account. In particular, see J. Habermas, "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, 427-430.

[66]See N. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*: 109-142.

[67]Noticeably, in *Art in the Public*, Zuidervaart criticizes Fraser and argues that a multiplicity of

workers and individuals belonging to ethnic minorities or to LGBT communities are other examples of counterpublics possibly constituting a peculiar public sphere.[68]

Noticeably, some argue that "public-making" does not interest solely members of subordinated social groups. Publics do not emerge only as a response to marginalization. Reasons other than being marginalized may very well motivate the constitution of politically oriented voluntary groupings of private individuals who are not related by family, social class, or vocation, and associate to discuss rationally (or reasonably) issues related to the public good.[69]

Researches from the interdisciplinary project *Making Public* discuss how different publics historically emerged.[70] For instance, "shared interests, tastes, commit-

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publics does not generate a multiplicity of public spheres. In particular, he argues that if communication is possible between different publics (as Fraser grants), then there has to be "one shared public sphere." (p. 107) Though worth mentioning, Zuidervaart's criticism does not sound convincing. First, by divorcing the notion of the public sphere from that of a public, we are left without a way to understand what is a public. If a public sphere can relate to more than one public, how should we define a public? Zuidervaart does not provide an answer to this question. Second, as I have already mentioned, Habermas explicitly defines the public sphere as "made up of private people gathered together as *a* public" (p. 276, emphasis added), and in a more recent essay, he seems willing to recognize the existence of multiple public spheres. (See Habermas, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 424-426.) Third, communication between different public spheres could be easily explained by admitting that (i) as John Keane argues in "Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere," though fractured, public spheres are not self-enclosed entities, but have a "networked, interconnected character" (*The Communication Review* 1 (1995), 8); and, (ii) a new public sphere emerges when a public engages in rational discussion another one. Perhaps, more than substantial, this is a terminological quibble.

[68]Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 123.

[69]See John Keane, "Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere," *Communication Review* 1 (1995): 1-22.

[70]See `http://www.makingpublics.org/`. See, also, B. Wilson and P. Yachnin (eds.), *Making Publics in Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); A. Vanhaelen and A. Ward (eds.), *The Association of Space: Relations and Geographies of Early Modern Publics* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). These projects discuss processes of public making during the Early Modern period (1450-1700). It is important to emphasize that, in the last few decades, historians (and in particular, historians of Classical Antiquity, of the Middle Ages, and of the Renaissance) have successfully argued for the adaptability of Habermas' model to historical eras and sociopolitical contexts other than those considered in his original work. For instance, historians have found that variations of the public sphere can be found in the Middle Ages, while the idea of public opinion seems to have originated in Greco-Roman antiquity. For further details on the public sphere as existing in the Middle Ages, see L. Melve, *Inventing the Public Sphere: The Public Debate during the Investiture Contest (c. 1030-1122)* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007); A. E. B. Coldiron, "Public Sphere/Contact Zone: Habermas, Early Print, and Verse Translation," *Criticism* 46 (2004): 207-222; and, W. Faulstich, *Medien und Öffentlichkeiten im Mittelalter 800-1400* (Göttingen:

ments, and desires of individuals" have often inspired the constitution of publics.[71] Recently, some art historians have been emphasizing that among those "shared interests," we should include interests directed towards material objects.[72] In fact, those historians argue that private individuals are not interested solely on epistemological or ethical questions—which have been the focus of most researches on the constitution of publics in the past.[73] Objects can be of interest, too. Some of those objects, researchers added, are capable of eliciting in private individuals widespread reactions that—sometimes—become more or less spontaneously objects of debates in structured public discourses. When a structured public discourse addressing issues of public good emerges in response to an object, we can say that a public coalesces around that particular object.

By recalling my characterization of public art's publicness as developed in section 2.2, we can say that public artworks certainly are among those objects around which a public can coalesce. I call then that public as *public-art public*.[74] Its members are *members of the public-art public*, whereas the structured discursive space within which those members discuss rationally is the *public-art sphere*.

Thanks to this further qualification, we can reformulate more perspicuously the objections of the Ockhamites as follows. Aren't the artworld and the public-art sphere the same thing? Or why isn't the artworld part of the public-art sphere? Can you show how those two are distinct?

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996). On the emergence of public opinion during Greco-Roman Antiquity, see the special issue "Pubblica opinione e intellettuali dall'antichità all'illuminismo," *Rivista storica italiana* 110 (1998).

[71] B. Wilson and P. Yachnin. "Introduction," in *Making Publics in Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, 1.

[72] See Wilson and P. Yachnin (eds.), *Making Publics in Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge.* Wilson characterizes friendship albums (*alba amicorum*) as objects around which a public coalesced.

[73] See Rospocher, "Beyond the Public Sphere," 7.

[74] I recognize that this claim is ambiguous. In a first sense, it can mean that public artworks as a whole invite the constitution of one single public-art public. In a second sense, it means that each public artwork invites the constitution of a specific and somewhat autonomous public-art public of individuals who have a particular interest in just one specific public artwork. I discuss this ambiguity in Chapter 3. As anticipation, I consider the second meaning as the correct one.

To reply effectively to those questions, I use a conceptual distinction between "public" and "audience." Sonia Livingstone argues, contrary to a widely held view in political science and communication studies, that we need not understand public and audience as a binary opposition. Those two share some common features.[75] For instance, audiences—like publics—are collectivities of individuals coalescing more or less spontaneously in response to one or more shared interests or as a consequence of independently existing social factors.[76] Moreover—at least sometimes—conversations among members of audiences may very well follow rational principles.

In spite of those possible similarities, audiences and publics also differ in important ways. First, audiences tend to be exclusive groups, where access is restricted, while publics are maximally inclusive (at least in principle). For instance, one might need to buy a ticket in order to join the audience of a Philadelphia Orchestra's performance. Or joining officially the audience of university class depends on receiving, among other things, approval from that same university in terms of an explicit admission. Those restrictions on membership do (should) not apply in cases of publics. Second, for audiences but not for publics, critical discourse is modest (though not completely absent). Third, members of an audience do not usually bracket their differences in terms of statuses or private interests while conversing. On the contrary, as I have already argued when discussing my ideal-model of the public sphere, members of a public must bracket their statuses and private interests while discussing. Fourth, a corollary of three, audiences' concerns need not be matters of public interest, whereas the public good is the primary interest of publics. Finally, the collective and consensual decisions of au-

[75]For a sustained discussion on the distinction between public and audience, and their respective relationship to media, see S. Livingstone, "On the Relation between Audiences and Publics," in S. Livingstone (ed.), *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere* (Bristol, UK: Intellect Books, 2005): 17-41.

[76]See D. McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (London, England: Sage, 1987), 215.

diences' members need not be directed towards political action, which is the aim of publics' discourses.

I argue that the group "the artworld" possesses those features that make a collectivity of individuals an audience rather than a public. That is, I argue that members of the artworld form what I define as the *artworld audience*, rather than the public-art public.[77] Let me discuss analytically those features. The group including the members of the artworld form an audience[78] (the artworld audience), and does not constitute a public since:

1. the artworld audience is not maximally inclusive, but membership is restricted to a particular set of individuals. Though criteria of membership might lead to controversy, virtually everyone would accept that members of the artworld audience are individuals "interested in the arts."[79] In this sense, "being interested in the arts" seems a necessary condition (perhaps not a sufficient one) for an individual p to be a member of the artworld audience. Such constraint does not apply for being a member of the public-art public. In effect, legitimate members of the public-art public need not be individuals generally interested in public art. Ideally, membership should be granted to everyone potentially affected by those issues related to the presentation of a public artwork.[80]

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[77]Senie seems to recognizes at least to some degree the distinction between the artworld audience and the public-art public when distinguishing between "voluntary audience" and "involuntary audience" (in Senie, "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats," 240), and between "art-informed audience" and "art-interested public" (in Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 55).

[78]This point needs qualification. Informally, "audience" often refers only to the group of regular viewers and spectators, generally excluding art critics, art historians, philosophers of art, artists, commercial art dealers, etc. In the technical sense I am here introducing, the artworld audience includes *all* the members of the artworld involved in appreciating artworks, independently of their institutional role.

[79]The expression "being interested in the arts" can be understood at least in two different senses. In a first sense, it may refer to a subjective psychological trait of individuals who tend to describe themselves as such. In a second sense, it may refer to the collectively recognized status of individuals that are artistically competent and actively engaging in some artistic practices. My argument is indifferent to the sense that the reader might prefer.

[80]Many scholars seem to support at least to some degree my view. Alan Ehrenhalt argues that

2. members of the artworld audience do not bracket statuses while discussing. In this sense, members of the artworld audience treat asymmetrically opinions of members with different statuses. In fact, within the artworld audience, critical discourse is limited to institutionally recognized groups of experts (e.g., the group of philosophers of art, the group of art historians, the group of art critics, etc.). Opinions of "regular members," that is, members that do not belong to any recognized group of experts, are in general disregarded. In particular, it seems that they are disregarded since members of the artworld audience typically deny that there is discursive equality between experts and regular members.[81] In this sense, regular members are usually considered as unable to participate pertinently in on-going debates among experts.[82] On the contrary, within the public-art sphere, one should consider all members as *equally* able to participate, in spite of social and cultural inequalities. Noticeably, within the public-art public, not only are all opinions *in principle* included, but they also deserve equal consideration;

3. members of the artworld audience do not always consider the public good as their primary concern. I do not exclude that some conversations among members of the artworld audience may very well be directed towards the achievement of the public good. For instance, academic discussions on strate-

public artworks may engage individuals having "no particular interest in the art." Along similar lines, John Beardsley adds that those individuals need not be predisposed to art appreciation. See A. Ehrenhalt, "When the Art Critic is the Taxpayer," *Governing Magazine* 7 (1994): 9-10; and, J. Beardsley, *Art in Public Spaces* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts/Partners for Livable Places, 1981), 9.

[81]For a discussion of discursive equality (and its distinction with formal inclusion), see L. Dahlberg, "The Habermasian Public Sphere: A Specification of the Idealized Conditions of Democratic Communication," *Studies in Social and Political Thought* 10 (2004), 9-10.

[82]The post-humean tradition in aesthetics well captures this aspect of the artworld critical practice. For Humeans, critics are the best judges of artistic worth. As Stephanie Ross argues in "Comparing and Sharing Taste: Reflections on Critical Advice": "It is part of his [Hume's] legacy that any present-day account of aesthetic appreciation must attend to the structure of critical advice." (*The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 70 (2012), 363.) Of course, there are exceptions to this way of understanding how criticism and appreciation (should) function in the artworld. See, for instance, S. Feagin, *Reading with Feeling* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 32-33.

gies for promoting arts education may very well considered as having the public good as primary concern. However, many discussions, for instance, in the philosophy of art or in art history address epistemological, ontological, critical, or historiographical issues that seem not to clearly relate to the promotion of the public good. On the contrary, when considering the public art-public, members should address only those issues that relate to the public good;

4. (a corally of 3) members of the artworld audience accept that (non-public) artworks are exchanged as commodities for monetary profit.[83] In this sense, by buying and selling artworks, members of the artworld audience can legitimately pursue their private interest. One must recognize that some members of the artworld criticize the commodification of art.[84] However, many of those actively involved in the art market aim at maximizing their profit, and, for members of the artworld audience, such goal seems perfectly legitimate.[85] On the contrary, members of the public art-public should never look at public artworks as commodities, and public artworks should never be exchanged for personal profit in the pursuit of private interest.[86] I should

[83]I thank Dr. Francesco Bogliacino, Professor of Economics at Universidad Konrad Lorentz (Colombia), and Dr. Pietro Ortoleva, Associate Professor of Economics at California Institute of Techonology (USA) for their suggestions on how to develop this paragraph.

[84]Dutch sociologist Olav Velthuis argues that, by preferring buyers whose purchases are motivated *not* by speculative reasons, but "by love of art," even some art dealers "attempt to preserve the sacred character of contemporary art". See O. Velthuius, *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 44, 29.

[85]Velthuis argue that those involved in the auction circuit aim at maximizing their profit. See Ibid., 85. As statistics show, in 2011 the auction circuit constituted half of the total art market. See R. Corbett, "How Big Is the Global Art Market?" *artnet.com* <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/news/artnetnews/china-the-worlds-top-art-and-antique-market.asp>.

[86]Here, I can present some evidence in favor of my view by considering an analogy with a case of street art. The announcement that a Banksy's graffiti was going on sale at a Miami auction generated "storm of protests." The piece was retired from the auction, and has been sold only recently at another auction for $1.1 million. One could understand those protests as an expression of how forcefully viewers were contrasting the commodification of Banksy's piece. It seems to me that something along those lines should happen in cases of public art. I would like to add the following point: among street artists, Banksy is an exception. Though illegal, his works are often welcomed by people and considered as community landmarks. See M. Ryzik, "Another Banksy

emphasize that the normative constraint on the pursuit of private interest affects in some important (though qualified) sense also artists involved in the production of public artworks and their compensation. Though one should grant that artists can receive monetary remuneration for their job, the sum to be awarded should not be established by market forces alone, but in terms of the principle of "just compensation."[87] Heuristically, one could intend just compensation for a public artist as the compensation that reasonably an established artist (though not a so called "super star artist") would accept for that job.[88] That constraint is intended to dissuade artists from realizing public artworks when motivated primarily by personal profit, rather than by a desire to promote the public good;[89]

Mural to Go From Wall to Auction," *The New York Times* (August 13, 2013) <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/14/arts/design/another-banksy-mural-to-go-from-wall-to-auction.html>.

[87]For instance, for a discussion of just compensation in American law, see M. Fegan, "Just Compensation Standards and Eminent Domain Injustices: An Underexamined Connection and Opportunity for Reform," *Connecticut Public Interest Law Journal* 6 (2007): 269-295. One could understand forms of just compensations as similar to forms of "reward" as discussed by Ugo Pagano and Maria Alessandra Rossi when considering Intellectual Property Rights. See, for instance, U. Pagano and M. A. Rossi, "Incomplete Contracts, Intellectual Property and Institutional Complementarities," *European Journal of Law and Economics* 18 (2004): 55-76.

[88]One should emphasize that many empirical cases show a tendency of determining artists' compensation that already follows to some degree my general indications. Sometimes, artists involved in projects of public art refuse compensation. Christo and Jean-Claude are perhaps the most extreme case, since they also cover the costs of realization of their works. Maurizio Cattelan donated for free his sculpture *L.O.V.E.* to the city of Milan. Pino Castagna refused to be compensated when he installed *In pietra alpestra e dura.* Often, artists receive compensation in terms of grants, whose amount is decided independently from considerations that could alter an artwork's market value, such as the reputation of the artist.

[89]I readily recognize that this point would require a much longer discussion. My aim here is just to signal the distinction between what one could call "the economics of public art" and "the economics of non-public art," and to possibly establish a topic of research in many disciplines, including social and economic sciences. One should emphasize that Senie seems to draw a somewhat similar distinction when she argues that public art's "economic function doesn't generate revenue within the art business." See, H. F. Senie, "Responsible Criticism: Evaluating Public Art," *Sculpture* 22 (2003), 45. My view resonates with Michael Sandel's recent work on the moral limits of the market. See M. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2012). By following Sandel's line of thinking, I believe that to value public artworks as commodities degrades their value as good of a particular kind. In particular, it changes the commonality that is an intrinsic aspect of public artworks' value. In Chapter 7, I say more on this point.

5. members of the artworld audience need not intend their discussions as primarily directed towards political action. Of course, there are conversations carried out by members of the artworld audience that can possibly have political consequences. For instance, academic discussions on promoting arts education mentioned in 3 are often connected to some kind of political agenda, whose aims often include influencing public authority. However, discussions, for instance, of philosophy of art or art history do not have those aspirations. Most of those discussions are in fact parts of the internal developments of those disciplines, and aim primarily at assessing epistemological, ontological, critical, or historiographical issues, while lacking of an explicit political purpose. Things are very different in the case of the public-art public. In fact, relevant debates among its members are always (at least ideally) intended as forms of political action influencing decisions of public authority in matters that are somehow related to the public good.

If you agree with 1.-5., then you clearly see how and why the artworld audience and the public-art public are distinct. First, 1. demonstrates that those two are *extensionally distinct*, that is, not all members of the public-art public are members of the artworld audience. Second, 2. shows how they are *praxially distinct*, that is, some conventions specifying rights and obligations of members do not coincide in the two cases. Third, 3., 4., and 5. establish that they are *teleologically distinct*, that is, their purposes and aims may very well differ. Perhaps, none of those distinctions is sufficient for justifying a robust enough differentiation between the artworld audience and the public-art public. However, their conjunction strongly supports the need for a conceptual distinction that can capture those asymmetries discussed above.

As I already made explicit, the distinction between artworld public and public-art public need (should) not be construed as a binary opposition. I am persuaded

that some continuity exists between the artworld audience and the public-art public. I do not deny that, in some grey areas of their intersection, (for instance, where artworld members are discussing strategies for promoting arts education) the artworld audience and the public-art public function in relatively similar ways.[90] We could call that "intermediate audience" where incipient forms of active, rational, and political engagement emerge as the *civic artworld audience*.[91]

However, even considering just the civic artworld audience, membership is still not open and statuses are not bracketed when discussing. For instance, debates discussing strategies for promoting arts education are still debates among individuals who are both generally interested in the arts and institutionally recognized as experts. But, such limitations do not apply when considering the public-art public.

Since those limitations do not apply to the public-art public, we can legitimately conclude that the artworld and the public-art sphere are distinct. By reducing one to the other, one will be missing some of their respective distinctive features that make our reception of an non-public artwork different from our reception of a public one.

It is important to emphasize that I do not consider the distinction between the public-art public and the artworld audience as having moral significance. In this sense, I am not trying to suggest that the members of the public-art public are morally "superior" to the members of the artworld audience, or that public art is more "ethical" than non-public art. What I am trying to suggest is that, at the level of reception, public art and non-public art function differently. And to acknowledge such a difference may very help us appreciate the distinctive value(s) characterizing, on the one hand, public artworks, and, on the other hand, non-public artworks. (I discuss the issue of the differences between public and non-public

[90] Becker seems to suggest something of this kind when he discusses particularly active artworld audiences. See Becker, *Art Worlds*, 67.

[91] For a discussion of "civic audiences" in general, see Livingstone, "On the Relation Between Audiences and Publics," 26.

artworks' value(s) in Chapter 7.)

When is an artwork public? An artwork is public when it is received within a peculiar public sphere, that is, the public-art sphere. The public-art sphere can be characterized as the discursive space where a relatively conspicuous set of private individuals bracketing statuses and private interests (the public-art public) discusses rationally (or perhaps *reasonably*) issues raised by the presentation of an artwork. Those issues do not relate to artistic or aesthetic concerns, but to political, social, and economic themes of public relevance. In the following chapter, I expand my analysis of the public-art sphere.

CHAPTER 3

THE PUBLIC-ART PUBLICS: AN ANALYSIS OF SOME STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES AMONG PUBLIC-ART SPHERES

In this chapter, I introduce a series of important qualifications to my account of the public-art sphere as developed in Chapter 2. In section 3.1, I argue for what I define as the *multiplicity thesis* (MT). According to MT, there is not a single public-art public and sphere, but a multiplicity of those. I defend MT both as a descriptive and a normative claim. In section 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 I explore different types of public-art publics and spheres that can be distinguished from one another in terms of their different sizes. In section 3.5 and 3.6, I expand my analysis of the differences among separate public-art publics and spheres by considering temporary and enduring ones.

3.1 The Multiplicity of Public-Art Publics

In Chapter 2, I have argued that public artworks are artifacts around which a public can coalesce. However, the claim is ambiguous. In a first sense, which I define as *the unity thesis* (UT), it means that individuals can coalesce around public artworks intended as a whole, thus constituting a single and united public-art public: *the* public-art public. Since in this view we have only one public-art public, only one single public-art sphere exists. In a second sense, which I define as *the multiplicity thesis* (MT), it means that different sets of individuals can coalesce around different public artworks, thus constituting a series of somewhat separate public-art publics. In this case, we do not have a single public-art public, but several—that is, a multiplicity of—public-art public*s* in the plural. As a consequence of having a multiplicity of public-art publics, a multiplicity of public-art spheres also obtains.

By following an important strand in public art scholarship, it is my view that MT should be preferred over UT for the following reasons.[1] First, MT seems to capture descriptively—whereas UT does not—an actual extensional discontinuity between different public-art publics. If the public-art public were a single public, we should legitimately expect at least a reasonable number of members showing interest in several public artworks. However, most individuals actively participating in the ongoing public debate on a specific public artwork do not play any role in debates related to other public artworks. For instance, Martha Louis—the widow of famous African American boxing heavyweight champion Joe Louis—actively participated in the discussion on Robert Graham's *Monument to Joe Louis*

[1] See, among others, J. Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," in J. L. Cruikshank (ed.), *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places* (Amherst, MA: Arts Extension Service/Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, 1988), 244-251; J. G. Mikulay, "Another Look at the *Grand Vitesse*," *Public Art Dialogue* 1 (2011): 5-23; C. A. Meehan, "Needs No Introduction: Some Thoughts on Public Engagement," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012): 4-14. Often, scholars endorsing this view draw on Michael Warner's theory of publics. See M. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).

(1986).[2] However, it seems that she only discussed Graham's work. Though impressively active in the discussion on Pino Castagna's *In pietra alpestra e dura* ("In Alpine and Hard Rock," 2009), Italian Congressman Fabio Evangelisti never participated in discussions of other public artworks.[3] Examples could be listed *ad libitum*. In this sense, MT seems to accord descriptively with actual practices of public art. Empirically, one might say, there seems to be a multiplicity of public-art publics.

Second (and perhaps more importantly), MT is very much compatible—and UT is not—with a widely endorsed normative ideal guiding artists in creating their public art projects. The foundation of such normative ideal can be found in the view of public art administrator Jerry Allen. In his article "How Art Becomes Public," Allen presents a series of points intended as possibly guiding our practices of public art toward a more consistent public success. Among other things, he argues that the presentation of an artwork has better chances to engage as a public-art public a set of individuals when "speaking to them" of things they do care about and in a language that they do understand.[4] But since our societies are pluralistic and diverse, it seems overtly ambitious to believe that such artistic "communication" can obtain between a public artwork and a universal public-art public of which *everyone* is a member, as UT suggests—or that such "communication" is the only one to aspire to.[5] By accepting the limitations of artistic communication in pluralistic societies, Allen argues that artists should produce public artworks with a more modest, but more reachable, goal in mind: to aim at engaging as their respective public-art publics specific sets of individuals, that is, as Allen puts it, "*to*

[2]See D. Graves, "Representing the Race: Detroit's *Monument to Joe Louis*," in H. Senie and S. Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1992), 222.

[3]See, for instance, F. Evangelisti, "Camera con vista," *La Parola* 4 (2009): 3.

[4]Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," 249.

[5]See Ibid., 250. See also J. F. Baca, "Whose Monument Where? Public Art in a Many-Cultured Society," in S. Lacy (ed.), *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1995): 131-138.

create a new public for each work."[6]

Allen's early view has found an ideal continuation in (one of) the dominant strand(s) in contemporary public art practices, that is, the so-called "new genre public art" or "dialogic art."[7] New genre public art emerged as a reaction against more traditional approaches to public art as epitomized exemplarily by Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* and his dismissive attitude towards the viewers. "If you are conceiving a piece for a public space," Serra once said in an interview, "a place and a space that people walk through, one has to consider traffic flow, but *not necessarily worry* about the indigenous community."[8] Since the late 80s/early 90s, artists, curators, critics, and theorists associated with new genre public art have been advocating for a form of public art that, on the contrary, "cares about, challenges, involves, and consults [the public] for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment."[9] In this sense, new genre public art is "based on engagement," that is, its essence lies in the "relationship" that obtains between an artwork and its specific public.[10]

If the relationship between an artwork and its public is the essence of public art, then—as art critic Patricia Phillips argues—public artists' primary aim "is not to create permanent objects for presentation in traditionally accepted public places but, instead, to assist in the construction of a public—to encourage, through actions, ideas, and interventions, a participatory [public] where none seemed to ex-

[6]Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," 250. [Original emphasis.] Of course, Allen's point does not exclude that many public-art publics can engage the same work. However, I believe that this possibility would require further discussion that I do not provide here.

[7]For an updated review of the literature on "new genre" or "dialogic art," see C. G. Calo, "From Theory to Practice: Review of the Literature on Dialogic Art," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012): 64-78.

[8]"Interview: Richard Serra and Liza Bear," in C. Weyergraf, *Richard Serra: Interviews, Etc.m 1970-1980* (Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum, 1980), 76. [Emphasis added.]

[9]L. Lippard, "Looking Around: Where We Are, When We Could Be," in *Mapping the Terrain*, 121. Figures traditionally associated with "new genre" public art include, among others, artists Judith Baca and Suzanne Lacy, curator Mary Jane Jacob, critics Jeff Kelly and Patricia Philips, theorists Suzi Gablick and Arlene Raven.

[10]See S. Lacy, "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys," in *Mapping the Terrain*, 19-20.

ist."[11] But such a construction must recognize those practical limitations that Allen underlines. Artistic communication is at peril whenever one wants to address an unspecified and "universal" public. It is only by examining "the changing conditions and uncertain destinies of [selected] local communities and cities," and by making those matter in one's work, that a public artist can hope to be successful.[12] In this sense, we should understand a public-art public as that set of individuals addressed by a public artwork. It must be emphasized that, in this respect, my view is distinctly sympathetic to Michael Warner's theory of publics when he argues that a public "exists *by virtue of being addressed*."[13] There is a multiplicity of public-art publics not only at an empirical level. Public-art publics are many also because, normatively, we want to construe them as being plural.

Of course, different public-art publics do not identify perfectly separated and self-sufficient sets of individuals. Moreover, public-art spheres should not be considered as isolated discursive spaces. As the pieces of a scattered collage, public-art publics and spheres are (at least potentially) overlapping, contiguous, and interconnected phenomena. They surely constitute a network. However, their individual peculiarities seem to separate different public-art publics and spheres in ways that no unifying trend can ultimately overcome.[14] In this sense, UT lacks the necessary conceptual resources needed to capture effectively the significant differences characterizing distinct and faraway public-art publics—a point that is fundamental for developing a successful public artwork. The lifestyle, customs,

[11] P. Phillips, "Public Constructions," in *Mapping the Terrain*, 67.

[12] Ibid., 64. As many theorists argue, engaging successfully as a public-art public a set of individuals requires an artist informing her creative choices with considerations pertaining the identities, histories, cultures, values, and preferences of those individuals, and the characteristics of the space they inhabit. See, among others, Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," 249; G. Silk, "Away from a Theory of Public Art," in V. Anker and C. Ritscahrd (eds.), *art - public* (Geneva, Switzerland: Acts of the International Association of Art Critics, 1992), 179; Lacy, "Introduction," 37-40 ; and, T. Finkelpearl, "Introduction: The City as Site," in T. Finkelpearl (ed.), *Dialogues in Public Art* (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: MIT Press, 2000): 2-51.

[13] M. Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14 (2002), 50.

[14] For a sympathetic view of public spheres, see J. Keane, "Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere," *The Communication Review* 1 (1995), 8.

traditions, heritage, habits, values, and interests can vary so dramatically across different public-art publics that any notion of a universal public-art public becomes either demonstrably false or, since too abstract, useless for purposes of public engagement.

It must be emphasized that artists do *not* construct their targeted public-art publics in a single and consistent way. On the contrary, when looking at contemporary examples of public art, we must acknowledge a plurality of approaches that artists have been endorsing in attempting to create their public-art publics. In particular, I suggest that we introduce the two following different kinds of ways of identifying public-art publics. A first way, which I adapt from John Keane's account of the public sphere, identifies different categories of public-art publics in terms of their sizes.[15] In effect, some artists, like Suzanne Lacy in *Full Circle* (1993), identify public-art publics with sets of individuals of limited extension, that is, with a particular urban or suburban population. Others, like Maya Lin in *Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* (1982), understand their public-art publics as larger, comprising the individuals constituting a national population. Finally, as in the case of Christo and Jean-Claude's *The Umbrellas: Joint Project for Japan and USA* (1984-91), there are artists who, by targeting individuals from different countries, aim at constructing public-art publics of a very large size. A second way of identifying public-art publics relates to an important debate that has been characterizing the studies of public art in the last few decades. Such debate has been examining the temporal dimension of public artworks. By drawing on those reflections, I distinguish between temporary and enduring approaches to the construction of public-art publics. That is, I want to discuss comparatively the view of those who aim at constructing *temporary* public-art publics, and the view of those who, on the contrary, conceive public-art publics as *enduring*.[16]

[15] Ibid., 9-16.

[16] Here, I should emphasize a point. In general, Western theories of the arts completely overlook

In section 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4, I examine the first distinction. In section 3.5 and 3.6, I discuss the second one. By developing explicitly those distinctions, I have a double aim. First, I want to gather evidence in favor of MT by providing the reader with a significant sample of how differently public-art publics can be construed (and how those differences can influence strategies of public engagement).[17] Second, I aim at developing an ideal-typical analysis of different kinds of public-art publics and spheres. I believe that the development of those ideal-types can both inform pertinently our understanding of public-art and help guide our practices.

3.2 Local Public-Art Publics

A morning in May 1993, what was on display on the sidewalks of the Loop in downtown Chicago left many walkers rather puzzled. One hundred half-ton limestone rocks have appeared overnight on those urban paths. Each one of those rocks—brought to Chicago from a woman-owned quarry in Oklahoma—was carrying a plate, where engraved one could read the name of a woman native of Chicago and her contribution to the city's public life. Ninety plates named women of the city's past, the other ten, women still living. This "invasion" of rocks was the beginning of Suzanne Lacy' *Full Circle*, one of the eight projects included in "Culture in Action," a temporary exhibition program conceived and directed by independent curator Mary Jane Jacob.[18] By literally plopping one hundred rocks

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the role of time, and cannot accommodate its significance for what pertains artistic appreciation. In making room for temporal considerations, my theory challenges the boundaries of canonical Western art theory.

[17] Of course, the sample is not mean to exhaust the possibilities of construing public-art publics.

[18] "Culture in Action" is widely considered as a turning point in the history of public art. The exhibition took place throughout the city of Chicago between early May and the end of September 1993. For a detailed description of the exhibition, see M. J. Jacob (ed.), *Culture in Action*: *A Public Program of Sculpture Chicago* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995). For favorable reviews of the exhibition see, among others, M. Brenson, "Healing in Time," in *Culture in Action*, 16–49; E. J. Sozanski, "A New Spin on What Art Can Be When It Goes Public," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 22, 1993; and S. Gablik, "Removing the Frame: An Interview with 'Culture in Action' Curator Mary Jane Jacob," *New Art Examiner* (January 1994): 14–18.

in the sidewalks of Chicago, Lacy did not intend just to signal the remarkable contributions to the city's public life of great women—women such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Jane Addams, the social activist who in the 19th century founded *Hull House*, a center for the disenfranchised and the poor of her community. More importantly, Lacy was denouncing Chicago's lack of recognition of such contributions, as testified to by the absence in the urban area of a major monument dedicated to anyone of those women. Lacy gave suddenly to the city one hundred of those monuments. Since early that morning and for months, a controversy spread among viewers and on the media. *Full Circle* ended on September 30, 1993, with a significant act. Fourteen notable women had dinner at Addam's *Hull House*, where the role of women in a changing society was the main topic of discussion.[19]

In *Full Circle*, Lacy was targeting the Chicago residents as her public-art public.[20] Thanks to the relatively limited size of such a set of individuals and their geographical concentration, the reception of *Full Circle* was facilitated by a series of small scale, face-to-face interactions among viewers, which were triggered thanks to the encounter with a set of unexpected objects occupying familiar spaces.[21] Also, Lacy was seeking public engagement by granting to members of her targeted public-art public the possibility to participate in creating the artwork. In particular, "several committees of women were established by the artist and Sculpture Chicago to oversee the nominating and selecting of one hundred local women who would eventually receive a boulder commemoration."[22] Also, *Full Circle* involved

[19]See `http://suzannelacy.com/1990scircle.htm`

[20]See M. Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: MIT Press), 118.

[21]Lucy R. Lippard proposes the most systematic discussion of face-to-face interactions' relevance in public art. See L. R. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York, NY: The New Press, 1997).

[22]Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 118. It must be emphasized that Kwon is critical of some aspects of Lacy' *Full Circle*. In particular, she criticizes that *Full Circle* limited the collaborative aspect to a mere delegation of decisions, and that the work tended to treat the celebrated women as a undistinguished unity. I am not here interested in discussing those critiques. I use Lacy's *Full Circle* just as a paradigmatic example of a larger trajectory of public art. Its potential limits as a public artwork are not the focus of my argument.

the participation of fourteen women in the conclusive act of the project.[23] It must be emphasized that Lacy's intended strategy of public engagement included addressing in *Full Circle* social concerns relating explicitly to the daily lives of Chicago residents. As we have seen, in that work, she addressed the issue of women's contributions to the city's social history. Her position was explicitly critical of those political and social forces that obscured such significant contributions. *Full Circle*'s aim—one might say—was to change the *status quo*, and to grant public recognition to those contributions. In this sense, *Full Circle* can be characterized as a form of political activism.

At this point, we can characterize Lacy's *Full Circle* and similarly conceived public artworks in the following way. Projects like *Full Circle*—call them "local projects"—identify their respective public-art publics, in terms of what I define as the *local criterion*: individuals living, working, operating, etc., within a urban (or suburban) space where an artwork is (intended to be) presented constitute its distinctive public-art public.[24] Let's call those public-art publics individuated in terms of the local criterion as *local public-art publics*.[25] Local public-art publics in-

[23]Daniel Martinez's *Consequences of a Gesture* (1993), another project from "Culture in Action," is a more extreme example of public participation in a public art project. As a "grass-roots parade in celebration of community," *Consequences* required the participation of one thousand Mexican Americans and African Americans, coming from thirty five different communities. See S. L. Steinman, "Compendium," in *Mapping the Terrain*, 262.

[24]Some local projects target as their respective public-art publics the set of individuals living in a neighborhood. For instance, John Ahearn's *Bronx Sculpture Park* (1986-91) aimed at engaging as its public-art public those living in that neighborhood of NYC. Ahearn's project consisted of three bronze casts of South Bronx residents. The sculptures were installed in a park next to a new police station in South Bronx that Ahearn (himself a resident of that neighborhood) designed as commissioned by the NYC Percent for Art Program. Ahearn selected as his subjects a heroin addict, a hustler, and a street child. Many within the local communities perceived Ahearn's artwork as glorifying morally questionable and uninspiring individuals, thus reinforcing the racial stereotypes linked with African Americans. As a consequence of the community's negative response to his sculptures, Ahearn removed them after only five days of public display. For a detailed analysis of the Ahearn's controversy, see J. Kramer, *Whose Art Is It?* (Durham, NC and London, England, 1994).

[25]It must be emphasized that, as recent scholarship in historiography shows, a criterion individuating publics in spatial terms tends to be maximally inclusive. See, M. Rospocher, "Beyond the Public Sphere: A Historiographical Transition," in M. Rospocher (ed.), *Beyond the Public Sphere: Opinions, Publics, Spaces in Early Modern Europe* (Bologna: Il Mulino, and Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2012), 9. Rospocher is following a major trend in the social and human sciences called "spatial

clude as their members from few dozens to hundreds of thousands of individuals. In the case of some metropolises, the members of a local public-art public can be millions.[26]

Strategies of public engagement at a local level generally rely on the possibility of face-to-face, small scale interactions between members of local public-art publics. In order to facilitate their participation, local projects guarantee to those members an active role in creating the artworks. Besides actively involving members in the creative process, it must be emphasized that local projects seek public engagement also by addressing directly issues that are of interests for the members of their targeted public-art publics. In effect, those projects address—in a politically active way—issues related to the living conditions of their targeted public-art publics.

I call *local public-art spheres* those spaces within which members of local public-art publics discuss. As a consequence of the nature of local projects, within those spheres individuals discuss rationally (or, more correctly, reasonably) issues of local interest. Here, discussions have an important oral component. However, they are also facilitated, reported, and expanded through the use of local mass media and social media.[27] Through those discussions, members of local public-art

turn." For a discussion of the "spatial turn," see, among others, H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, 1991); and, E. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989).

[26] Here a qualification is needed. I think that the kind of interactions that characterize local public-art publics are very difficult (if not impossible) to obtain in many metropolises around the globe. Those cities are often too extended. However, metropolises of limited extension and improved accessibility (such as New York) qualify as urban spaces, by allowing for small scale interactions, participation of members, and the possibility of individuating largely shared concerns. Olafur Eliasson's *Waterfalls* (2008) is an example of public artwork whose local public-art public includes millions of individuals. See M. J. Gross, "The Falls Guy," *New York Magazine* (June 6 2008) <http://nymag.com/arts/art/features/47554/>.

[27] For instance, as the final act of a discussion that started on Facebook, people of Milan met in Affari Square in order to discuss about the possible removal of Maurizio Cattelan's *L.O.V.E.* (2010) from that same square. See, S. Boeri, "Dito di Cattelan, decidiamo insieme," *Corriere della Sera* (September 15 2011) <http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/11_settembre_15/dito-cattelan-boeri-facebook-decidiamo-insieme-1901543907186.shtml>. Also, the public library of Massa hosted an animated debate on Pino Castagna's *In pietra alpestra e dura* (2009). See, for instance, "Marina è cambiata in meglio

publics are able to thematize disagreements about daily issues, while seeking for democratic solutions.[28] As part of the democratic processes concerned with examining local issues, the discussions carried out within local public-art spheres are also fundamental for construing local identities.

3.3 National Public-Art Publics

When she originally conceived the design of what was to become the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* (1982), artist Maya Lin was still a senior in college.[29] She designed it as a final project for an undergraduate course during her last semester at Yale, in 1980. At that time, Lin learned about the competition for choosing the design of a memorial honoring the veterans of the Vietnam War that was going to be installed at the Mall in Washington, DC. In March 1981, right before the deadline, Lin submitted officially her proposal. Later that year, the story of the competition ended as ironically and surprisingly as only real stories can do. Entry No. 1026, the project voted unanimously as the winner among the 2,573 registered submissions, was the work of Lin, an Asian American woman who just turned 21. Among the rejected ones, there was the proposal by F. Andrus Burr, the Yale professor who originally graded Lin's project. In his opinion, it was worth a mere B+.

The design of Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* (VVMW) is rather simple. It

o in peggio? Dibattito aperto sulle "Vele"," *La Nazione* (August 05, 2011) <`http://www.versiliaproduce.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6600:marina-e-cambiata-in-meglio-o-in-peggio-dibattito-aperto-sulle-vele-&catid=40:la-nazione&Itemid=72`>.

[28]Besides women's condition, identity, race, homosexuality, HIV/AIDS research and care, workers' rights, and ecology have been historically among the preferred themes. See Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 110.

[29]The literature on Lin's *Vietnam Veteran Memorial Wall* is huge. For a discussion of Lin's memorial, see, among others, C. Blair, M. S. Jeppeson, E. Pucci Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263–288; L. S. Carney, "Not Telling Us What to Think: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 8 (1993): 211–219; L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," in *Critical Issues in Public Art*: 71-100; N. Capasso, *The National Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Context: Commemorative Public Art in America, 1960–1997* (PhD Thesis, Rutgers University, 1998).

consists of a 220 foot long wall. The wall, shaped as a ‘V’, is carved on the ground. Its depth increases progressively towards the vertex, which is 10 feet below ground level. The surface of the wall is covered by a series of highly reflective panels in polished black granite from Bangalore, India. Engraved on those stones, one can read the names of the almost 60,000 soldiers (women and men) who lost their lives during the Vietnam War. The names are listed following a rigorous chronological order. One can find the names of those who died at the beginning of the conflict, in 1959, on the right-hand wall. The dates of the deaths progress from left to right, until one has to get to the other side of the ‘V’ to continue the journey through those names. The chronology concludes when reaching the panel on the left of the vertex, which reports the names of those who died at the end of the conflict, in 1975. In this sense, VVMW translates the chronology of those who fell in Vietnam into a circular visual pattern: the name of those who died first, in 1959, stand right next to the names of those who died last, in 1975. It is important to notice that, by following the chronology of those deaths, one’s eyes are drawn to look successively at the Washington and the Lincoln Memorials, which are found along the imagined extensions of respectively the right-hand and the left-hand wall.

Lin’s VVMW is not a “traditional” memorial. The structure presents no flags, horses, or swords of divine justice. In this sense, as many critics have observed, it surely appears as “anti-heroic.” It does not aim at glorifying war or its heroes. It rather aims at honoring individuals and their sacrifice. By listing the soldiers’ names in a purely chronological order, it provides an inclusive space, where differences of rank, age, race, gender, origin, and cause of death vanish. Moreover, because of that arrangement, the experience of searching for somebody on the wall becomes a ritual, where one wonders through the names of many others before finding what one was looking for. And through the silent evocative “power of a name” engraved in a wall, one can find “a sense of quiet, a reverence” that invites

mourning.[30]

However, as Charles L. Griswold argues, while honoring those who died in Vietnam, VVMW does not justify their sacrifice.[31] Did those individuals die in vain? And, was their cause worth their deaths? "The *interrogative* character of the Memorial," Griswold writes, "requires that it not commit itself overtly to answering these questions."[32] And yet, those questions enlarge and become more pressing as soon as one realizes how the historical past and the present merge in experiencing VVMW. On the one hand, the past is evoked by the near-by presence of the Washington and the Lincoln Memorials, and their inclusion within the visual field of the viewer. On the other hand, the present is sinisterly announced by one's reflection in the polished granite. VVMW is not a tomb, a seal that closes the past. It is not merely a tribute to those who are dead. It is also—and perhaps more importantly—a place where those that still live can reflect on difficult questions related to national values and their potential cost in terms of human lives. And, as Griswold correctly suggests, such reflection on those "overarching values" is "therapeutic," accomplishing "the goal of rekindling love of country and its ideals, as well as reconciliation with one's fellow citizens."[33]

Lin conceived her VVMW as aiming at engaging as (potential) members of its public-art public all of the American people. In effect, her intention was to create a project "that everyone [in the nation] would be able to respond to." In order to engage such a large and heterogeneous public-art public, Lin opted for an abstract design, whose openness of meaning and interpretation was intended as a way to maximize inclusiveness. By avoiding representationality, Lin believed (correctly, as the test of time seems to show) that she could engage a variety of individuals

[30] M. Lin, "Making the Memorial," *New York Review of Books* (November 2, 2000) <`http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/nov/02/making-the-memorial/`>.

[31] See Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall," 90 and ff.

[32] Ibid., 91.

[33] Ibid., 93.

with different ideas about what the Vietnam War was. "A realistic sculpture," Lin writes, "would be only one interpretation of that time." Her seeking for inclusiveness also translated into adopting what has been usually defined as an "apolitical approach." In this sense, in her VVMW, Lin refused the political activism typical of local projects. She addressed the national issue of the traumatic post-war condition with a "conciliatory" attitude, by favoring a design that could *not* be interpreted as making a statement about the significance of the war and its deaths.[34]

As predicted by Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci Jr., VVMW has built the foundations for a new trajectory in public memorializing.[35] Since its inauguration, many national monuments have been designed and realized by following the trajectory engendered by Lin's VVMW.[36] We can characterize those public artworks—call them "national projects"—as follows. Projects like VVMW identify their respective public-art publics in terms of what I define as the *national criterion*: individuals occupying a national space where an artwork is (intended to be) presented constitute its distinctive public-art public. I call those public-art publics individuated in terms of the national criterion as *national public-art publics*. National public-art publics include several millions of members interacting within a nation-state framework.

In terms of strategies of public engagement, national projects differ in a significant way from local projects. They seek public engagement by addressing issues of national relevance, such as memorializing important historical events or celebrating national values. It must be emphasized that national projects abstain from

[34]As Lin recognizes, the "choice to make an apolitical memorial was in itself political to those who felt only a positive statement about the war would make up for the earlier antiwar days, a past swing to the left now to be balanced. It was extremely naive of me [Lin] to think that I could produce a neutral statement that would not become politically controversial simply because it chose not to take sides." See Lin, "Making the Memorial."

[35]See Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci, "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity."

[36]Besides the series of replicas of Lin's VVMW, we can list among those other monuments Lin's *Civil Rights Memorial* (1988–89), and Michael Arad and Peter Walker's *National September 11 Memorial* (2011).

political activism. In effect, they are more "conciliatory" in spirit. In this sense, rather than providing a "statement" about the *status quo*, they aim at providing a space where individuals can reflect on the significant histories and identities characterizing their countries. It seems to me that the predominance of mediated communication over face-to-face, small scale interactions is what justifies the choice of engaging national public-art publics in a more "conciliatory" and less politically active way. Mediated communication can easily lead to escalating altercations. As the extensive literature on the "contact hypothesis" convincingly argues, individuals engaging in mediated exchanges are—whereas those involved in face-to-face conversations are not—more inclined to embrace prejudices and biases, thus evaluating others' opinions not according to reason. On the contrary, when discussing face-to-face, individuals are more likely to treat others as equals.[37] In this sense, I believe that a more politically active profile would make a national project a potential source of unproductive altercations generated by misunderstanding.

I call *national public-art spheres* those spaces within which members of national public-art publics discuss. As I have already mentioned, within those spheres, individuals discuss rationally (or, more correctly, reasonably) issues of national interest. It must be emphasized that, although oral communication is not absent, it is not at the core of interactions between members of national pubic-art spheres. Large-circulation newspapers, national TV and radio channels (such as *The New York Times*, RAI Italian National Channels, and BCC radio) are the usual means of communication.[38] By thematizing issues of national import, those discussions concur to the construction of national identities.

[37]The first systematic formulation of the contact hypothesis can be found in G. W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing, 1954). For a more recent discussion of the contact hypothesis, see, among others, R. Brown and M. Hewstone, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Contact," *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 37 (2005): 255-343.

[38]For instance, the early controversy on VVMW took place mostly within mass media, in particular within newspapers. For a reconstruction of the developments of the controversy within the national press, see E. J. Gallagher, *The Vietnam Wall Controversy* (2004) <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/vietnam>.

3.4 International Public-Art Publics

The Umbrellas: Joint Project for Japan and USA (1984-91) is one of the most ambitious projects by Christo and Jean-Claude. Firstly conceived in 1984, it took almost 7 years (mostly dedicated to patient negotiations for obtaining permits), the collaboration of circa 2,000 persons, and an overall budget of $26 million (entirely provided by the artists) to complete. *The Umbrellas* consisted of 3,100 oversized fabric aluminum and steel umbrellas, standing almost 20 feet high, 30 feet wide when opened, and weighting 440 pounds each. Of those 3,100 umbrellas, 1760 were yellow. The remainders were blue. The yellow ones have been installed on the hillsides at Tejon Pass along Interstate 5 northwest of Los Angeles, and they have been arranged along an 18 mile path. Christo and Jean-Claude decided to place the blue umbrellas thousands of miles away, in a Japanese valley located 70 miles north of Tokyo, in the Ibaraki Prefecture. There, the umbrellas occupied a stretch of 12 miles. Colors were chosen for their resemblance with the natural tones characterizing the two selected locations: yellow to resemble the sun-dried hills of Southern California, and blue to look like the damp, verdant valleys of Japan.

Christo and Jean-Claude decided to install umbrellas because, as Christo said in an interview, the "umbrella is a very dynamic object. It is very understandable, very old, very cheerful, very beautiful."[39] In some sense, their simple, familiar, but functional design makes umbrellas looking like "houses without walls," offering a space for sitting, resting, and reflecting.[40] By providing those "open houses" in two different locations, Christo and Jean-Claude wanted to play with the viewers' imagination, and to have them thinking about a space, thousands of miles away, populated by similar objects. By eliciting such thought, their aim was to invite a "comparison" between the "similarities and differences in the way life is lived

[39] C. Ford, "Blooming Umbrellas Won't Put Art in the Shade," *The Advertiser* (October 5, 1991)
[40] Ivi.

in these two places in the world [Japan and US]."[41] In particular, the different arrangements of the two sets of umbrellas were meant to help viewers capturing the contrasting sense of space that characterizes those two civilizations living at the opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean. In Japan, Christo said, "where space is so precious," umbrellas were placed in an "intimate" way, often "overlapping and touching." In California, where open spaces dominate the landscape, umbrellas were arranged "in freer configurations, more whimsical."[42]

The umbrellas firstly opened on October 9, 1991, when—in unison—they blossomed like gigantic, mechanical flowers. Their opening, which had been originally scheduled for October 8, was delayed because of inclement weather conditions: a typhoon was approaching the coast of Japan. Christo was present at the inauguration ceremony both in Japan and, later, in California, profiting from the difference in time-zones. The opening day became a media event: in the United States alone, it was covered by the major news agencies (that is, AP, UPI, Reuters), magazines such as *Time, Newsweek,* and *Life*, and all the most important TV networks at the time (CNN, NBC, ABC, CBS, Fox, PBS, and BBC). It also received attention from German television channels, and—of course—from Japanese media.[43] The umbrellas closed on October 27, 1991. The day before, around 5:00 pm, a tragedy occurred at the California location: Lori Rae Keevil-Matthews, a 33 year-old viewer, died after being hit by an umbrella dislodged from its mooring by the wind. Umbrellas were tested for resisting 65 miles/hour wind when open, and 110 miles/hour when closed. Unfortunately, that day, winds surpassed those structural limits. Immediately, Christo—in Japan at the moment of the accident—flew back to California, and ordered all the umbrellas closed, both in Japan and in

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[41] S. R. Weisman, "Christo's Intercontinental Umbrella Project," *The New York Times* (November 13, 1990) <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/13/arts/christo-s-intercontinental-umbrella-project.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.

[42] Ford, "Blooming Umbrellas Won't Put Art in the Shade."

[43] See R. Findlay and E. Walterscheid, "Christo's Umbrellas: Visual Art/Performance/Ritual/Real Life on a Grand Scale," *The Drama Review* 37 (1993), 78-79.

US, 4 days before the scheduled event. But, in the closing process, a second tragedy struck. A Japanese worker, 51 year-old Masaaki Nakamura, died of electrocution when the arm of the crane he was operating accidentally hit a high-tension line.

During the almost three weeks that the umbrellas remained open, it has been estimated that more than three millions people interacted with Christo and Jean-Claude's piece, and, plausibly, many more viewed the event through the media. Open 24/7, the umbrellas were used, for instance, as shelter for a picnic. In California, a couple got married under the shade of an umbrella. One night, another couple was chased by the police for attempting to have sex under the umbrellas. Before the tragedies changed the mood surrounding Christo and Jean-Claude's creation, as Robert Findlay and Ellen Walterscheid reported, "An atmosphere of joy and connection prevailed, not only among the crews who raised and monitored the umbrellas but also with those who observed them."[44]

Christo and Jean-Claude designed *The Umbrellas* as a public artwork whose public-art public included individuals in the US and Japan at the time. For that reason, this artwork occupies a special place in the history of both public art and art in general. "This is the first work of art and architecture in human civilization," Christo proudly affirmed (perhaps exaggerating a bit), "which is designed to be experienced in two places in the world at the same time."[45] The difficulties of engaging such a heterogeneous and vast multitude of individuals as public-art public required an elaborate strategy from the artists. First, they were very careful in selecting locations that were easily accessible. In California, they opted for a strip of land in the proximity of a highway. When considering the Japanese site, they decided that it should be close to a major international airport.[46] Second, they requested the collaboration of locals in completing the project. Many were hired to

[44]Findlay and Walterscheid, "Christo's Umbrellas," 79.
[45]Ford, "Blooming Umbrellas Won't Put Art in the Shade."
[46]Weisman, "Christo's Intercontinental Umbrella Project."

provide the necessary "manual force" for actually installing and opening the umbrellas. Others were used as supervisors, whose duty was to check on the viewers' behavior around the umbrellas. Third, in designing *The Umbrellas,* Christo and Jean-Claude opted for a "friendly" artistic code, which employed familiar forms in the attempt to attract a heterogeneous set of individuals who were not necessarily informed about recent developments in contemporary art.[47] The artists' "welcoming gesture" included leaving the interpretation of *The Umbrellas*' meaning(s) very much open: as Christo said, *The Umbrellas* "can trigger very different interpretations in the minds of people, and all are valid."[48] Finally, a sapient use of various types of international media surely helped the public success of Christo and Jean-Claude's international project.

By considering *The Umbrellas* (and possibly similar public artworks), we can identify a third kind of public art project, which I call "international projects."[49] International projects aim at engaging public-art publics that are individuated in terms of the following *international criterion*: individuals occupying the international spaces where an artwork is (intended to be) presented constitute its distinctive public-art public. I define as *international public-art publics* those public-art publics that are consistent with the above criterion. Public-art publics of that kind include from millions to perhaps even billions of members interacting at a supranational level.

At an international level, we notice that strategies of public engagement include an attentiveness to the location(s) of presentation, which are selected considering their accessibility. Also, the patient collaboration with locals, who can play a fundamental role in completing an artwork, is important for achieving public success.

[47] Knight discusses at large the possibilities of "populistic" choices in public art. See, in particular, C. K. Knight, *Public Art*: *Theory, Practice and Populism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 65.

[48] Ford, "Blooming Umbrellas Won't Put Art in the Shade."

[49] I am unsure whether, at the present moment, there are other public artworks that could be qualified as "international projects." Perhaps, some of the other works by Christo and Jean-Claude's (who passed away on November 18, 2009) could qualify as such.

In this kind of projects, the use of familiar artistic codes facilitate the interaction between viewers—even those who are not familiar with the latest stylistic trajectories in contemporary art—and the work. The familiarity of the artistic code can also be enhanced by a welcoming gesture towards viewers' diverging interpretations. Finally, considering the magnitude of international public-art publics, a methodical use of mass media is fundamental for promoting the reception of the work.

Let's call *international public-art spheres* those spaces within which members of international public-art publics discuss issues related to international projects. Discussions within those spheres are made available by global communications firms (such as News Corporation International, Reuters), TV channels reporting international events, major news papers, and the Internet. Within international public-art spheres, members of international public-art publics are exposed to issues and points of views that stretch beyond those discussed and presented within the habitual boundaries of smaller scale public-art spheres. In this sense, discussions within international public-art spheres have as their main focus the comparison between different ways of living. By thematizing those differences, they could very well challenge the national identities of those individuals participating in debates.

3.5 Temporary Public-Art Publics

By considering contemporary practices of public art, the multiplicity of public-art publics is not only testified by the different (types of) public-art publics that can be distinguished in terms of their size. A second distinction provides further evidence in favor of MT. Such distinction discriminates among public-art publics in terms of their temporal dimension. In the last few decades, the temporal dimension of pub-

lic artworks has been the object of a lively debate among scholars.[50] In particular, by considering the most recent trends in contemporary public art, some theorists have underlined the need to challenge—or, at least, reorient and enrich—the traditional view that sees public artworks as lasting installations aiming at engaging *permanently* their respective public-art publics. In effect, as Knight correctly suggests, it is common among artists and art administrators to believe that achieving success depends on being able to install a permanent work. And, we must admit, the idea that permanence is intrinsically positive has an intuitive appeal: if an artwork is made to last, one is drawn to think, it must possess something that is worth preserving.[51]

However, as Garry Apgar argues, artists' desire to create something permanent is potentially problematic. In effect, artists involved in longer-term projects usually try to translate into reality such a desire by opting for very unspecific strategies of public engagement, often aiming at capturing the attention of a "timeless" and "universal" public.[52] But we have already seen how problematic such strategies are in terms of public success: their "generality" puts at risk the very possibility of a successful artistic communication. In this sense, Adam Gopnik emphasizes that, because of their lack of specificity, traditional "permanent public artworks"—such as the many statues of heroes on horses that populate the parks of virtually every city in the Western world—often fail to engage their public-art publics. In effect, those artworks seem to easily disappear into their surroundings, as an "amiable bronze Pop art" invisible to our eyes and minds.[53] Moreover, as Knight adds, per-

[50]See, among others, G. Apgar, "Redrawing the Boundaries of Public Art," *Sculpture* 11 (1992): 24-29; E. Heartney, A. Gopnik, et al., *City Art: New York's Percent for Art Program* (London: Merrell/ New York: New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 2005); Knight, *Public Art*, 95-99; P. Phillips, "Out of Order: The Public Art Machine," *Artforum* 27 (1988): 92-97; P. Phillips, "Temporality and Public Art," in *Critical Issues in Public Art*: 295-304; and Silk, "Away from a Theory of Public Art," 177.

[51]Knight, *Public Art*, 97.

[52]Apgar, "Redrawing the Boundaries of Public Art," 24.

[53]A. Gopnik, "Introduction," in *City Art*, 9. On the lack of specificity in traditional public artworks see also Phillips, "Temporality and Public Art," 303.

manent artworks are "prone to play things too safely," in the attempt to avoid controversy now and in the future.[54] As a consequence, they tend to be uninteresting: too "cautious" for generating a widespread public response.

In suggesting a way to overcome some of the limitations of permanent forms of public art, some theorists argue in favor of a practice supporting the creation of *temporary* public art projects.[55] "Public art," Phillips writes, "requires a more passionate commitment to the temporary—to the information culled from the short-lived project."[56] Thanks to their fleeting nature, Phillips adds, temporary public artworks offer great opportunities for experimenting with "new ideas, new forms, new methods of production."[57] Also, the awareness of their imminent "fate" encourages artists involved in temporary projects to focus on the *hic et nunc* ("here and now"), that is, to address important and (perhaps) difficult issues that characterize the current lives of those selected as members of their respective public-art publics. In this sense, the temporariness of this kind of projects facilitates more specific strategies of public engagement—strategies that are distinctively developed to address specific sets of individuals as public-art publics. That same awareness of an artwork's imminent disappearing also stimulates the curiosity in viewers, whose attention is easily directed towards a temporary project as a consequence of its "fleeting" nature.[58] As Knight observes, "temporary works can deftly grab and maintain the public's attention with their "Hurry, hurry, see them now before they disappear!" urgency."[59] It must be emphasized that theorists arguing for promoting temporary public artworks do not intend their proposal "as indictment of or indifference to permanent public art, but rather as an endorsement of

[54]Knight, *Public Art*, 98.

[55]See, among others, Knight, *Public Art*, 97-99.

[56]Phillips, "Temporality and Public Art," 297.

[57]Ibid., 301.

[58]This point seems to suggest that public artworks' "meaning" or "significance" are not timeless, but are a function (among other things) of the duration of an artwork's "life." I believe that this implication cannot be captured in terms of canonical Western theories of art.

[59]Knight, *Public Art*, 98.

alternatives."[60] Temporary public artworks have surely some advantages when compared to permanent ones in terms of a capacity to engage successfully public-art publics. However, as I argue in the following section, there are distinct and incompatible advantages to long-term public artworks, too. In this sense, I think that Knight is correct when suggesting that "permanent and public artworks ought to be encouraged to coexist and reinforce one another."[61]

We have already seen public artworks that are temporary. In particular, Lacy's *Full Circle* and Christo and Jean-Claude's *The Umbrellas* possess those features that make them temporary public artworks. It must be emphasized that their ephemeral nature is (was) essential to their public success. If permanent, they would have raised so many concerns among the members of their public-art publics that it is unlikely that they would have ever been realized. By drawing on Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty, I want to characterize temporary public artworks as those public artworks whose time-span of presentation lasts around 100 days, a period of time that heuristically identifies the standard duration of a large-scale artistic exhibition.[62]

At this point let me introduce two further notions. I define the (intended) public-art publics of those projects as *temporary public-art publics*, and I call *temporary public-art spheres* the spaces within which members of temporary public-art publics discuss. It is my view that temporary public-art publics and spheres are fleeting phenomena. They quickly emerge in the immediate aftermath of the installation of (or the proposal of installing) particular public artworks. Then, briefly after the conclusion of the presentation of their respectively related public artworks, they dissolve. As a consequence of the confrontational quality of temporary pub-

[60] Phillips, "Temporality and Public Art," 297.

[61] Knight, *Public Art*, 98

[62] See P. O'Neill and C. Doherty, "Introduction. Locating the Producers: An End to the Beginning, the Beginning of the End," in P. O'Neill and C. Doherty (eds.), *Locating the Producers. Durational Approaches to Public Art* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2011), 5.

lic artworks, discussions within temporary public-art spheres are lively, and they often generate harsh controversies. However, very soon after the conclusion of the presentation, public interest in those discussions gradually dissipate. It is at that moment that temporary public-art spheres disappear.[63]

By understanding public-art publics and spheres as fleeting phenomena whose existence corresponds, with some tolerance, with the time-spans of presentation, I probably disagree with Knight's view. In fact, while discussing Christo and Jean-Claude's temporary works, Knight argues that:

> their projects are never really gone. While the physical objects may be dismantled after few weeks [almost three in the case of *The Umbrellas*], the art lives on through extensive visual documentation, and more importantly, throughout the memories of those who have seen it. In this way, Christo and Jean-Claude's works become the mental property of anyone who has experienced them, a thoroughly populist notion.[64]

I am skeptical about Knight's reconstruction of what happens once temporary public artworks such as Christo and Jean-Claude's *The Umbrellas* are dismantled or, more generals, their presentation ends. Of course, no one can deny that visual documentation and personal memories can testify to the existence of temporary public artworks from the past. However, such a testimony seems not to be enough for those artworks to keep existing as *public* artworks, once we understand their publicness in terms of them being received within a public-art sphere. In effect, first, visual documentation seems plausibly to attract the attention only of art enthusiasts. And, second, those personal memories hardly become the object of a

[63]Recent historiographical researches on the public sphere have been exploring the "temporary" or "contingent" nature of some public spheres. See, for instance, A. Briggs and P. Burke, *A Social History of the Media. From Gutenberg to the Internet*, (Cambridge and Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2001), 72-105; and, P. Lake and S. Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006): 270-292.

[64]Knight, *Public Art*, 98.

structured public discussion of the kind characterizing the reception of public artworks. In this sense, I believe that it is unlikely that *The Umbrellas'* public-art public survived the end of its presentation (I am persuaded that it did not), and that, more generally, temporary public-art publics and spheres persist after the presentation has ended. It seems to me that the public attention and interest that a (successful) public artwork generates decay rather quickly once it recedes from view. In the absence of such attention and interest, the conditions of possibility for a public-art public (or sphere) to emerge simply do not obtain.

3.6 Enduring Public-Art Publics

Though scholarship on public art emphasizes the ability of temporary public artworks to engage temporary public-art publics successfully, some theorists have recently underlined that longer-term projects should still have an important place in the practices of public art. In particular, in a recently edited volume *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art*, through a detailed analysis of a series of case-studies, O'Neill and Doherty explore the artistic possibilities of temporally extended projects. Their case-studies include public artworks that are representative of the recent so-called "durational turn" in public art, such as Jeanne van Heeswijk's *The Blue House* (2004-09), Grizedale's *Creative Egremont* (2005-present), Tom van Gestel's *Beyond* (1999-2009), Kerstin Bergendal's *Trekroner Art Plan* (2001-13), and the Serpentine Gallery's *On the Edgware Road* (2009-11).

Consider as an example *The Blue House*. Conceived by artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, *The Blue House* started in 2005. In her project, van Heeswijk redesigned a large villa in a newly constructed neighborhood of Amsterdam (IJburg) as "a space for community research, artistic production and cultural activities."[65] Over a period of 4 years, *The Blue House* functioned as a public forum where many different actors

[65] P. O'Neill, "The Blue House (Het Blauwe Huis)," in *Locating the Producers*, 20.

(residents, artists, architects, thinkers, activists, writers, and scholars from different disciplines) could meet and collaborate for the creation of different initiatives. Those initiatives (which included, among others, the construction of a library, the realization of an outdoor cinema, and the arrangement of a series of artistic exhibitions) were all responding "directly to the needs and difficulties of residents during the construction phase."[66] Through the realization of those initiatives, *The Blue House* provided those emerging communities with public spaces and forums within which thematizing and making explicit the issues related to living in a newly constructed neighborhood. In particular, as O'Neill suggests, thanks to its enduring quality, *The Blue House* provided what Bruno Latour defines as "cohabitational time," a time where individuals can ask themselves questions such as: "Is there a way for all of us to survive together while none of our contradictory claims, interests and passions can be eliminated?"[67] By pondering the answer to that question (and similar others), those same individuals can bring into being new forms of social interaction in which "certain differences . . . develop in dialogue with others."[68] In all likelihood, when considering *The Blue House,* a shorter time would not have allowed for such differences to come fully to light.

I define artworks such as *The Blue House* as *enduring*[69] *public artworks*, that is, artworks whose time-span of presentation lasts for more than 100 days (of course with some degree of approximation). As O'Neill argues, enduring public artworks facilitate the emergence of "a complex set of interactions" that cannot take place when considering shorter periods of time.[70] In effect, enduring artworks

[66]Ibid., 24.

[67]B. Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik," in B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds.), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: MIT Press, 2005), 40.

[68]Ibid., 34.

[69]I prefer "enduring" to "durational" since I believe that the word choice of O'Neill and Doherty is infelicitous. In English, "durational" simply refers to the quality of something to last for a given period of time. In this sense, temporary public artworks are "durational," in the sense that they have a duration. Enduring, on the contrary, conveys the idea of lasting for a significant amount of time and *not* being temporary.

[70]See Ibid., 50.

seem capable of creating and sustaining a deeper form of engagement—"a certain connectivity"—with the members of their respective public-art publics. I believe that O'Neill is correct when he adds that it is very difficult to obtain such deeper forms of engagement—what he defines as an "ethos of patience, perseverance and attentiveness"—when artworks come and go very quickly.[71] In this sense, enduring artworks are important since they provide the opportunity to engage members of public-art publics in a more sustained and intense way, thus promoting more structured forms of discussion.

I call the public-art publics that relate to enduring public artworks *enduring public-art publics.* I also define as *enduring public-art spheres* those spaces within which members of enduring public-art publics discuss. Enduring public-art publics are characterized by a long-term existence. By lasting a significant period of time, they allow their members to interact in a continuing and sustained way, which may result into the creation of deeper social bonds and exchanges. It must be emphasized that discussions within enduring public-art spheres require particular attention in order to be kept alive. In effect, in a way rather different from what happens in engaging temporary public-art publics, not only artists must engage their selected public-art publics: they must also be ready to renegotiate such relationships over time.

It must be emphasized that in providing my analysis of enduring artworks and their related public-art publics and spheres, I am explicitly avoiding the term "permanent" for philosophical reasons. First, "permanence" is often associated with "perpetuity." However, as Apgar argues, "nothing lasts forever," and those public artworks usually defined as permanent are "likely to last [only for a few] generations ... as an enduring bond."[72] In this sense "enduring" appears as a more

[71] Ibid., 55.

[72] Apgar, "Redrawing the Boundaries of Public Art," 27, 29n12, as quoted in Knight, *Public Art*, 98.

accurate term for describing long-term public artworks and their respective public-art publics. Second, by preferring enduring over permanent, I intend to emphasize terminologically the contrast between traditionally so-called permanent public artworks and more modern projects, such as *The Blue House*. So-called permanent public artworks have often been unfortunate examples of "plop art" or what has been called "turds in the plaza," that is, artworks that are mere "placeholders," incapable of engaging their respective public-art publics.[73] On the contrary, enduring public artworks share the specificity of temporary public artworks' strategies of public engagement, though in a temporally more extended framework.

My objective in this chapter has been to elucidate the multiplicity of public-art publics and spheres, and to provide an extended (though partial) analysis of their heterogeneity. There is a multiplicity of public-art publics since, as a matter of fact, not all individuals are interested in the same public artwork(s). Different individuals are interested in different public artworks. But we should also understand public-art publics as a plurality in order to secure the success of our practices of public art. In effect, those artworks that aim at engaging a specific and limited set of individuals as their respective public-art public are more likely to be successful as *public* artworks. By considering a series of case-studies, I have identified different (types of) public-art publics. By identifying different (types of) public-art publics, I have strengthened the case for MT. In particular, on the one hand, I have distinguished between three different conceptions of how extended a public-art public should be. For artists like Suzanne Lacy and her *Full Circle*, public-art publics include up to the residents of a city. For others, a public-art public can include the national population of a country. As an example of this trend, I have discussed Maya Lin's VVMW. Finally, I have found in Christo and Jean-Claude's

[73]The terms "plop art" and "turds in the plaza" have been introduced by architect James Wines in 1969. See, for instance, S. Womersley, *Site: Identity in Density* (Victoria, Australia: The Image Publishing Group, 2005), 21.

The Umbrellas an example of a public artwork that aims at engaging as its public-art public a very large set of individuals living in different countries and interacting at a global level. On the other hand, by discussing some recent scholarship, I have also distinguished among public-art publics in terms of their temporal duration. Some artists construe their public-art publics as temporary, whereas, others see their public-art publics as enduring.

CHAPTER 4

THE LOGIC OF PUBLIC-ART SPHERES: PLURALISM, JUSTIFICATION, AND LEGITIMACY

In the previous chapters, I have argued that public artworks are those artworks whose reception obtains within a particular kind of public spheres, that is, public-art spheres. A public-art sphere is a discursive space within which individuals that are members of a public-art public discuss publicly significant issues related to the presentation of a public artwork. Those discussions are not intended as mere rhetorical exercises, but as forms of political action aiming at influencing the decisions of public authority. The next step is to examine in detail the logic of justification of opinions and legitimacy of decisions in the context of public-art spheres.

In section 4.1, I discuss critically the logic of justification of opinions that Habermas proposes in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* I argue that, by lacking the conceptual resources for addressing any form of compromise, such a logic is fatally flawed. In section 4.2, I examine a later development in Habermas' view of justification, that is, discourse ethics. Though more sensitive to compromise, I argue that even discourse ethics is incapable of explaining processes of justification in cases of persistent conflict, with particular reference to those involving value disagreement. In section 4.3, I develop an alternative logic for justifying opinions, which I define as a logic of reasonable disagreement. Such a logic aims

at providing a set of evaluative standards that, while maintaining normative force, accords with our experience of public debates in actual democracies. I should emphasize that, contrary to Habermas' proposal, my account separates justification of opinions and legitimacy of decisions. And, in section 4.4, I briefly sketch a proposal of how to understand legitimacy of decisions in circumstances where, with respect to a single issue, a plurality of opinions is justified. I argue that a decision is legitimate when shaped (at least in part) by public opinion.

I hope that the reader will not be bored by my step-by-step defeat of Habermas' doctrines. Some of his views, when properly understood, appear rather clumsy. However, I feel the need to present a sustained discussion of Habermas' views since they have been often misunderstood by scholars of public art. I hope that my effort would pay-off by correcting those misunderstandings. Some could also read in my defeat of Habermas a prediction of the fate awaiting the "Kantian" approach in political philosophy. This might be a possibility. However, I leave this issue for future research.

4.1 Legitimating Compromise: the Limits of the Early Habermas

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* Habermas defines public discussions within the public sphere as rational (or rational-critical). By drawing on the Kantian tradition, he understands "being rational" as a property of those discussions taking place "without regard to all preexisting social and political rank and in accord with universal rules."[1] In his view, when applying those universal rules, discussants are justified in accepting the outcome of their public debate as "valid" or "true."[2] Though not providing a list of such universal rules, Habermas

[1] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 75.

[2] Though *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* does not develop this aspect of his theory systematically, it is clear that, in his first major work, Habermas already holds the view that "truth" and "validity" can be applied not only to empirical claims, but also to moral and practical

introduces a criterion for understanding whether those rules have been applied and, hence, whether discussants are justified in believing that the outcome of their debate is "true." He calls such a criterion "pragmatic test of truth."[3] The pragmatic test of truth, which he borrows explicitly from Kant, tells us that in discussions within the public sphere, if all discussants agree on the "truth" of a claim *c*, then the discussion must have followed the universal rules of rationality and *c* must be "true."[4] One should emphasize that, since discussions within the public sphere aim at promoting the public good, discussants not only achieve universal consensus about the truth of a claim. They also, at the same time, achieve an "agreement on the universal end of the public, namely: its welfare" (or public good).[5]

As Jane Mansbridge emphasizes, by understanding the justification of beliefs in terms of universal consensus about their truth, Habermas has a very specific aim: vindicating the democratic legitimacy of positive laws.[6] In direct opposition to legal positivism, he does not understand legitimate decisions (or laws) as those merely complying with an established set of formal procedures. On the contrary, he thinks that decisions are legitimate only when they accord with public opinion. For Habermas, decisions are legitimate only when they are justified, that is, when there is a universal consensus about them being rational and promoting the public good. Of course, in his ideal typical model, Habermas assumes that public debates influence the decisions of the public authority. In Habermas' model, public debates' postulated capacity to influence public authority guarantees that law and

ones. For a discussion of Habermas' later discussion on this issue, see J. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. I: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 8–23; and, J. Habermas, *Justification and Application: Remarks on Discourse Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), chap. 1.

[3]Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 107-8.

[4]It must be emphasized that in discussing the "pragmatic test of truth," Habermas seems already critical of Kant's solipsistic view of practical reason. In effect, his account seems already suggesting that practical reason requires actual discourse.

[5]Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 115.

[6]See J. Mansbridge, "Conflict and Commonality in Habermas's Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere," *Political Theory* 40 (2012), 790-795.

rational opinion converge. In effect, when discussing the bourgeois public sphere of the 18th century, Habermas writes:

> the public sphere was supposed to link politics and morality in a specific sense: it was the place where an intelligible unity of the empirical ends of everyone was to be brought about, where legality was to issue from morality.[7]

However, as Mansbridge argues, when considering actual public debates and processes of democratic legitimation within any real pluralistic democracy, the limitations of Habermas' view are clearly manifest. In effect, in his ideal-typical model, Habermas does not make any room for the many different kinds of compromise and accommodation that characterize the life of actually existing democracies. Contrary to his view, experiences of democracies show that, for instance, outcomes of public discussions are often the product of bargaining "among particular conflicting interests," rather than of a universal rational agreement among all parties.[8] And, perhaps more importantly, in general, we accept those compromises as democratically legitimate. Because of its disregarding the role of compromise, Habermas' ideal-typical model of the public sphere seems incapable of explaining convincingly when an opinion is justified and when a decision is legitimate in the context of pluralistic democracies, where different kinds of compromise play a major role.

I believe that Mansbridge's criticism against Habermas' early view of justification and legitimacy is correct. The following example clearly highlights the shortcomings of Habermas' ideal-typical model when considering public-art debates. Consider, for instance, the public debate that surrounded the installation of Oliviero Rainaldi's monument to John Paul II. Rainaldi's sculpture, installed in Cinquecento Square (a square in front of the Termini Station in Rome), was inau-

[7]Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 115.

[8]Mansbridge, "Conflict and Commonality in Habermas's Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere," 790.

gurated in May 2011. The monument is a 16 feet tall bronze statue. It represents the pope John Paul II. Though representing the head in a realistic style, Rainaldi reduces the pope's body to his cape, which becomes the principal structural element of the work. The cape is open in the front, and its shape seems to suggest a desire to reach and hug the viewers. The perception of the statue's desire of "reaching out" is reinforced by the original title of the work, that is, *Conversazioni* ("Conversations").

Mainly as a consequence of its prominent location (at one of the entrances of the very busy Termini Station), of its representing the beloved figure of John Paul II, and of the unorthodox stylistic choices of the artist, *Conversazioni* has been immediately capable of engaging its public-art public. However, many found inadequate Rainaldi's representation of John Paul II, and asked for the statue's removal. Those critical voices found the representation inadequate for two main reasons: first, the statue seemed to resemble more Benito Mussolini rather than the pope.[9] Second, its overall silhouette looked too similar to the forms of (alternatively) "a sentry box, a bell and a papal vespasiano, as Romans call a urinal."[10] It must be emphasized that others, including the head of the city's Cultural Heritage Department Umberto Broccoli, disagreed. Because of its "originality" and evocative quality in representing John Paul II, they found the statue as an appropriate tribute to John Pope II, and simply asked to give to Rainaldi's *Conversazioni* more time to be appreciated. "A work of art," Broccoli argued, "has to be looked at, meditated upon. Only then can it be appreciated."[11]

In response to the critical reactions and the popular request for removal, Rome's

[9] F. D'Emilio and A. Tobella, "Pope John Paul II Sculpture Panned As 'Ugly' In Rome," *The Huffington Post* (May 20, 2011) <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/20/pope-john-paul-ii-sculpture-ugly-_n_864947.html>.

[10] See E. Povoledo, "A Statue of Pope John Paul II Brings Out the Critic in Italians," *The New York Times* (May 25, 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/world/europe/26italy.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>.

[11] Ivi.

mayor Gianni Alemanno nominated a commission in order to decide how to proceed. The commission opted for a solution that one can surely define as an accommodation. Such a solution was in fact the outcome of a negotiation between competing views, rather than of a universal consensus. And yet, people have accepted that accommodation as democratically legitimate. In effect, the commission "invited" the artist to modify substantially the statue in those formal elements that some members of its public-art public found problematic. However, it was also decided not to remove or relocate the statue, which still remains in Cinquecento Square. About a year later, in September 2012, Rainaldi has unveiled a "revised" version of his *Conversazioni.* The new version presents an updated head, which resembles much more closely the actual face of John Paul II. Also, the cape has been adjusted in some of its visual features. Rainaldi changed its shape and color: he did that in order to prevent people from thinking about a sentry box, a bell or a papal vespasiano when looking at the sculpture. He also added a platform, where the sculpture now sits. Many, including the artist, have expressed their satisfaction with the revisited version. "Those criticisms," Rainaldi says, "were helpful."[12]

As Mansbridge underlines, Habermas himself recognizes the limits of his early formulation of the logic of justification and legitimacy within the public sphere. She emphasizes that Habermas' later work is much more sensitive to a particular kind of compromising, that is, bargaining of interests, and accounts for its legitimizing role in democratic discussions. In the next section, I discuss critically these later developments of Habermas' view on the logic of justification and legitimacy within the public sphere. I reject Habermas' later view by arguing that even that model does not successfully address issues of justification and legitimacy under circumstances of value disagreement.

[12] "La statua del Papa di Oliviero Rainaldi. Ecco com'è con la nuova faccia. Vi piace più ora o vi piaceva più prima, il Giovanni Paolo II alla stazione di Roma?," *Artribune.com* (September 18, 2012) <http://www.artribune.com/2012/09/>.

4.2 Value Disagreement and Habermas' Discourse Ethics

Many scholars interested in public art consider Grant Kester as one of the leading theorists in the field. For instance, in her recent review of the literature on new genre or dialogic (public) art, Carol Gold Calo argues that, in his two books *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art* (2004) and *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (2011), Kester "has made the definitive statement on dialogic art".[13] In developing his influential account of dialogic art, Kester explicitly draws on Habermas' discourse ethics.[14] He believes that Habermas' account of "discoursive" forms of communication—"in which," as Kester writes, "material and social differentials (of power, resources, and authority) are bracketed and speakers rely solely on the compelling force of superior argument"—can help us understand the justification of opinions within what I define as public-art spheres.[15] But is discourse ethics really helpful in explaining and understanding justification (and legitimacy) in public discourses? *Contra* Kester, I believe that it is not. By drawing on Thomas McCarthy, I argue that even discourse ethics places "too much emphasis on consensus and not enough on conflict."[16] As a consequence of its overlooking conflict, Habermas' discourse ethics still fails to provide us with a logic that can account for the justification of opinions and legitimacy of decisions in cases of irreducible disagreements, especially when those disagreements pertain to value commitments and judgments.

However, before presenting my criticisms to Habermas' discourse ethics and, *a fortiori*, to its use in a theory of public art, I need to add a caveat to my argument. Habermas uses discourse ethics (which he develops in continuity with his theory

[13] C. G. Calo, "From Theory to Practice: Review of the Literature on Dialogic Art," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012), 68.

[14] See, in particular, Grant H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 108-114.

[15] Ibid., 109.

[16] T. McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity: Dialectical Reflections on Analytical Distinctions," *Cardozo Law Review* 17 (1995), 1083.

of communicative action) both as a moral theory and as a political one. Here, I am not interested in addressing Habermas' discourse ethics from the moral point of view. I discuss it critically only as a political philosophy.

As McCarthy emphasizes, in his works after *The Structural Transformation*, Habermas develops a more nuanced account of democratic legitimacy of laws. By recognizing the complexities of legal systems in modern societies, he introduces a distinction between *direct (moral) justification* for a law, and *indirect justification*. We are already familiar with direct justification. In fact, direct justification echoes the "pragmatic test of truth" as discussed in *The Structural Transformation*. In this sense, a law is legitimated by direct justification when it is tested in a rational public discourse and it is evaluated by "the communication community [*Kommunikationsgemeinschaft*] of those affected" as expressing what "*all* [could] want."[17] For Habermas, a law that is not "based on rational consensus" must be "based on force," with one notable exception: those laws that are "indirectly justifiable."[18]

In Habermas' view, a law is legitimated by indirect justification when it is the outcome of a special form of bargaining, that is, *fair bargaining or compromise*. In effect, in his later works, Habermas recognizes that, when considering many public issues, it is often impossible for discussants to come to an agreement. "He allows, in fact," McCarthy writes, "that in complex, pluralistic societies, *most* political processes will involve bargaining of some sort."[19] For Habermas, bargaining is a "strategic form of social action." Strategic action contrasts with "communicative action."[20] Communicative action is the kind of action that is at play when consensus is reached, and is directed toward "reaching understanding." In this sense, in communicative action, as John Bohman and William Rehg describe it, "speakers

[17]J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1975), 178, 108. See also McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1085.

[18]Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, 111.

[19]McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1121.

[20]See J. Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1970), 91-92; and, J. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1973), chap. 1.

coordinate their action and pursuit of individual (or joint) goals on the basis of a shared understanding that the goals are inherently reasonable or merit-worthy."[21] On the contrary, strategic action does not aim at reaching understanding, but at achieving individuals' goals. Bohman and Rehg explain strategic action as follows:

> Actor A, for example, will thus appeal to B's desires and fears so as to motivate the behavior on B's part that is required for A's success. A's reasons motivating B's cooperation, B's desires and fears are only contingently related to A's goals. B cooperates with A, in other words, not because B finds A's project inherently interesting or worthy, but because of what B gets out of the bargain: avoiding some threat that A can make or obtaining something A has promised (which may be of inherent interest to B but for A is only a means of motivating B).[22]

By considering the distinction between communicative and strategic action, one could summarize Habermas' view of bargaining as follows: contrary to a rational agreement, which "rests on reasons that convince all the parties in the same way, a compromise [or bargain] can be accepted by the different parties each for its own different reasons."[23] In this sense, for Habermas, all the parties involved in the bargaining still reach generalized consensus on the solution of a public issue though the individual reasons why they agree might differ.

Consider now Kester's remark that "While [in Habermas' discourse ethics] there is no guarantee that ... interactions will result in a consensus, we nonetheless endow them with a provisional authority that influences us toward a mutual understanding and reconciliation."[24] Kester's remark sounds rather puzzling, and at

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[21] J. Bohman and W. Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas," in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), <`http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/habermas/`>.

[22] Ivi.

[23] J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 166. For a further discussion of bargaining in Habermas, see D. Ingram, *Habermas: Introduction and Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 195 and ff.

[24] Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 110.

odds with Habermas' view. For Habermas, at least in principle, consensus always obtains, even in the case of bargaining.

One should notice that, for Habermas, not all forms of bargaining provide indirect justification. As I already mentioned, a bargain providing indirect justification is a fair one. A bargain or compromise is fair when is "framed by regulations that somehow ensure an appropriate balance of power among the bargaining parties".[25] For Habermas, those regulations—which in pluralistic democracies correspond to those fundamental principles expressed in constitutions—provide "the legitimating grounds on which the validity of legitimation is based."[26] As McCarthy suggests, when Habermas argues that democratic constitutions are legitimating grounds, we should not interpret him as holding the view that decisions reached according to a constitutional framework are legitimate *because* the constitution is legitimate. Such a justification would be a procedural one, and Habermas rejects the idea that procedures have justificatory force. As McCarthy writes:

> [Constitutions] establish procedures and conditions under which "rational opinion-formation" and "rational will-formation" are likely to occur, that is, under which the formal correctness of legal-political decisions warrants the presumption that they express a general interest to which all could rationally agree.[27]

In this sense, for Habermas, constitutions provide a framework of regulations within which, even under non-ideal conditions of discussion (that is, when discussants fail to bracket their interests), resolutions of conflicts tend to match those that would be reached under ideal conditions. That is, indirect justification legitimizes laws on the grounds of *presumptive* substantive reasons, not on the grounds of procedural reasons.

[25]McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1122.
[26]J. Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1979), 185.
[27]McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1086.

One might regard Habermas' considerations about fair bargaining as enriching his account, which now seems capable of explaining cases of public discussion involving a certain kind of compromising, that is, fair bargaining. For what pertains to public-art spheres, one might find in discourse ethics the resources for understanding not only discussions resulting in universal consensus, but also those empirical and non-ideal cases where (at least some) members of a public-art public fail to bracket their interests while discussing, and turn to fair bargaining in order to reach a solution. For instance, we have cases of decisions reached through fair-bargaining when individuals accept the installation of a public artwork on the grounds of the economic benefits—in terms, perhaps, of enhancement of property value or of tax exemption—that they can receive from it.[28]

A bargain of the kind just discussed seems to have characterized (at least in part) the genesis of the South Philadelphia mural *St. Mary Magdalen De Pazzi* (2000) by artist Diane Keller. In effect, Anthony and Carol Spina offered the wall of their South Philadelphia row-home to the *Philadelphia Mural Art Program* and, thus, to Keller mainly because they thought that a mural could "enhance curb appeal and property values."[29] Before the mural was painted, the wall "had been a dumping ground for old refrigerators and mattresses".[30] In this case, the Spinas and the *Philadelphia Mural Art Program* agreed on the same proposal, but for different reasons. On the one hand, the Spinas accepted the proposal on the grounds of their particular economic interests. On the other hand, the *Philadelphia Mural Art Program* did it on the grounds of a desire to have a mural in that specific location—or something along these lines.

When compared to his earlier proposal, Habermas' discourse ethics seems to

[28]For an example of public art tax incentive scheme, see the dedicated section of the National Heritage Board website <`http://www.nhb.gov.sg`>.

[29]J. Golden, R. Rice, and N. Pompilio, *More Philadelphia Murals And the Stories They Tell* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 109.

[30]Ivi.

have the conceptual resources for capturing more effectively some of the complexities of our processes of justification and legitimacy in actual public debates. However, in spite of its introducing fair bargaining as a justificatory procedure, I still do not consider discourse ethics as a suitable candidate for understanding the logic of justification and legitimacy within public-art spheres. There are at least two problems that make discourse ethics unsuitable as a model for explaining justification of opinions and legitimacy of decisions, including those pertaining issues related to public artworks.

First, as Bent Flyvbjerg emphasizes, fair bargaining represents a contingent type of justification.[31] In effect, for Habermas, fair bargaining plays a role only when discussants fail to comply with the ideal conditions of public discourse, where participants should bracket their interests. In this sense, I argue that, by introducing the model of fair bargaining, Habermas does *not* modify his model at a normative level. He merely adds a conceptual tool that allows his theory to handle (at least to some degree) the many empirical cases where ideal conditions do not obtain. For instance, in Habermas' view, ideally the Spinas and the *Philadelphia Mural Art Program* should have reached consensus about the realization of Keller's *St. Mary Magdalen De Pazzi* not for different reasons and in terms of a strategic action. They should have agreed on realizing Keller's mural for the same reason (that is, because it promotes the public good) and in terms of a communicative action.

Second, as McCarthy suggests, Habermas' model of fair bargaining "is tailored to conflicts of *interest* and their resolution".[32] However, McCarthy reminds us that there is a more important form of disagreement characterizing the lives of pluralistic democracies: value disagreement. And, it "is not at all clear that [Haber-

[31] B. Flyvbjerg, "Ideal Theory, Real Rationality: Habermas versus Foucault and Nietsche," in *Proceeding of the Political Studies Association's 50th Annual Conference "The Challenges for Democracy in the 21st Century*," (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 2000), 3.

[32] McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1088.

mas' model] could accommodate ... disagreement in *value* commitments and judgments, especially when rooted in social, cultural, and ideological differences."[33]

McCarthy offers at least two reasons warranting his criticism of Habermas' model. As a first (empirical) reason, McCarthy argues that one should recognize that individuals tend to treat interests and value(s) in a very different way. In particular, as McCarthy writes: "individuals are often unwilling to treat values like interests and bargain with them".[34] Since individuals tend not to compromise in terms of values as they do with interests, it is implausible to expect that they will reach a general consensus on a "middle-ground" solution. In effect, when we consider issues involving value disagreement (such as the permissibility of abortion, capital punishment, or euthanasia), individuals seem often to consider every solution that clashes even just in part with their endorsed values as completely unacceptable in terms of substantive reasons.

As a second (normative) reason—perhaps a philosophically more compelling objection—McCarthy argues that it is widely accepted that our standards of justification depend importantly (though perhaps not exclusively) on the set of values we endorse—at least within certain limits that are usually determined by constitutions.[35] It is a foundational aspect of pluralistic democracies that different individuals can favor even competing systems of values, thus generating, as Habermas admits, a framework within which "general agreement on value is not always possible."[36] As a result, from a normative point of view, one should make room for the possibility that diverging opinions on the same issue are justified in light of different value systems. That is, there might very well be cases where a plurality of opinions appear as justified in the absence of universal consensus.

For instance, one should accept the possibility that initial value disagreement

[33]Ivi.
[34]Ibid., 1089.
[35]Even Habermas accepts this point. See Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 3
[36]Ibid., 42.

may result among other things (though perhaps more importantly than other things) in conflicting conceptions of what the public good is. McCarthy underlines that Habermas' confidence in the possibility of reaching in principle a consensus on the nature of the public good depends on his assumption that "general standards of evaluation . . . are widespread at least in our own culture."[37] However, that standards of evaluations are intra-culturally widespread is not only an empirical claim, which need not be normatively forceful, but also a false one. As everyone living in a pluralistic democracy well knows, even intra-cultural standards of evaluation may very well differ in important ways.

But if we should not expect standards of evaluation to be widespread as Habermas assumes, then, as McCarthy writes, "On what grounds . . . could we expect free and equal citizens with different and often incompatible value commitments to be able to regularly achieve consensus on what is in the common good?"[38] In other words, if we treat value disagreement seriously from a normative point of view, we cannot assume that, when facing a controversial issue, discussants would necessarily come to a consensus about what resolution would promote the public good, as Habermas holds. That is, controversies involving value disagreement may very well result in a state of persisting opposition or, as Joseph Margolis calls it, a "stalemate," where there seem to be no higher or overarching normative considerations that could favor one side or the other, or a compromise between the two.[39] In those cases, we must admit that public discussion need not resolve disagreement, and that a plurality of opinions might appear as justified.

Consider, for instance, the issue of the permissibility of abortion. McCarthy and, more recently, Michel Rosenfeld independently argue that, as the longstanding debate testifies, it is unlikely that those who seriously believe that the right

[37] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 92.
[38] McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1088.
[39] See, in particular, J. Margolis "A Reasonable Morality for Partisans and Ideologues," in *Moral Philosophy After 9/11* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004): 1-26.

to abortion is central to women's autonomy could come to any sort of agreement with those who sincerely believe that abortion is child-murder, and vice-versa.[40] And one should emphasize that we seem *not* to have any prima facie reason for preferring one view over the other. It is entirely possible to construe reasonable arguments in favor of each view. Moreover, the ethical beliefs about the permissibility of abortion are so central to the identities of groups and individuals that any compromise challenging (even just in part) those beliefs may very well be regarded as unacceptable for substantive reasons.[41] That is, any compromise may very well be perceived as detrimental to what each party understood as the public good. For instance, it sounds plausible to imagine a situation where a law that allows abortion only under particular circumstances, such as those where the fetus presents genetic disorders, is regarded by both sides as unacceptable in terms of *substantive reasons,* since it challenges their respective (and competing) views of the public good.

It is not difficult to see how controversies involving value disagreement can emerge within public-art spheres. For instance, the clearest cases where that kind of controversies can obtain are cases of public-art spheres related to public artworks representing or dealing directly with those controversial issues that I mention above (such as abortion, death penalty, euthanasia), or other sensitive themes such as religion, disability, and race. As an example, I find unlikely that competing parties can come to an agreement when discussing whether André Serrano should receive a publicly funded grant for his work *Immersion (Piss Christ)* (1987)—a public artwork that deals in a very graphic way with religious values.[42]

As it is well known, *Piss Christ* consist of a 60in x 40in Cibrachrome print pho-

[40]See McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1089, 1095; and M. Rosenfeld, *Just Interpretations: Law Between Ethics and Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 147.

[41]McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1107.

[42]*Piss Christ* was partly funded by a $15,000 NEA grant. The actual *Piss Christ* controversy mainly focuses on the issue whether a work dealing very graphically with religious themes should receive public funding.

tograph. The photograph presents as its main subject a small scale wooden and plastic statuette of Jesus on the cross. The longest arm of the crux constitutes a vertical axis dividing the picture almost perfectly in half. The shortest arm occupies the upper part of the picture, and—because of the off-centered perspectival angle where the camera was placed—gently descends, when following its forms from left to right. The photograph's palette consists of very saturated colors that could be found in the orange-reddish part of the spectrum. The statuette of Jesus—which is of a lighter color than the background—is surrounded by a somewhat mystical glowing. The foreground also includes a constellation of what appear as tiny bubbles. The nature of *Piss Christ*'s unorthodox visual elements (such as the glowing and the bubbles in the foreground) is clearly revealed by the work's title. Those elements are a consequence of the particular medium where the statuette was immersed when Serrano took the photograph. At that time, Serrano immersed the statuette in a jar filled with his own urine.[43] It is perhaps true (and surely often reported) that, with *Piss Christ*, Serrano did not intend to mock or disrespect the Christian religion. On the contrary, he was trying to denounce the commodification of Christian icons in contemporary societies. However, it is very plausible that some individuals, while acknowledging Serrano's aim, would still find his work too graphic for a representation of an important religious icon, and would thus consider it unsuitable for receiving a public grant.[44] It is also plausible that such a group of individuals would still find any compromise (such as a reduced grant) unacceptable. At the same time, some other individuals who sincerely believe in the non-negotiability of freedom of expression could also find that same compro-

[43]Kester argues that, in the absence of such an explicit reference, a viewer would not be necessarily able to identify the medium as urine. It could very well be thought of as being a more common substance with similar visual qualities, such as amber or polyurethane. G. Kester, *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 126.

[44]I want to emphasize that my discussion of Serrano's *Piss Christ* is in principle hypothetical. In this sense, I am not trying to justify or defend the actual opinions of its most renowned critics. Moreover, I want to emphasize that I find the episode of vandalism that damaged Serrano's work in 2011 as barbaric and incompatible with democratic practices.

mise unacceptable, though for opposite reasons.

But if not only Habermas' early model, but also his discourse ethics fails in providing us with a logic of justification within public-art spheres, how should such a logic look like? In the following section, I address this question.

4.3 A Reasonable Logic of Justification in Public-Art Spheres

This section develops a proposal for a logic of justification of opinions in public-art spheres. In developing my proposal, I have a twofold aim. First, by echoing Craig Calhoun, I intend to develop a pluralistic logic, that is, a logic "that does justice to societal complexity and provides adequately for contestation in public discourse," while having "faith in meaningful communication across lines of difference".[45] In other words, I intend to develop a logic that, while providing (heuristic) criteria for distinguishing between justified and unjustified opinions, makes room for the possibility that, at least in some cases, more than one opinion on the same public issue could be justifiable. In this sense, I aim at developing a truly pluralistic logic that can allow persistent reasonable disagreement, and does not entirely rely on rational universal consensus for understanding justification and, *a fortiori*, legitimacy. One should remember that, as I have already mentioned, *contra* Habermas I treat justification and legitimacy separately. I will address the issue of legitimacy under conditions of pluralism in the next section.

Second, I aim at developing a logic that "rescues" the experiences and the opinions of non-experts in public art matters. As I have suggested in Chapter 2, the discourse of public art is not (and should not be) restricted to individuals with prior artistic competences (of whatever kind), and the acceptable views cannot be limited to professionalized ones. Of course, my intention to "rescue" the opinions

[45] C. Calhoun, "The Public Good as a Social and Cultural Project," in W. W. Powell and E. S. Clemens (eds.), *Private Action and the Public Good* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 23, 32.

of non-experts rests on the assumption that, in principle, all members of public-art publics (both experts and non-experts) can have intelligent, sensible, and reasonable readings of public artworks that can pertinently inform public debates.[46]

In order to provide an account of such a logic, let me briefly clarify the nature of *public-art debates*, as I call public debates in public-art spheres. Typical public-art debates are communicative interactions in which two or more members of a public-art public defend two or more conflicting opinions about the course of action that should be preferred with respect to an issue related to a public artwork. In order to defend their positions, members make use of "premises," that is, various evidence in favor of their respective positions.

If my characterization is correct, then one can reasonably argue that public-art debates are what contemporary theory of argumentation defines as *dialectical arguments* (or argumentations). A dialectical argument is "a series of speech acts in which two (or more) speakers successively defend conflicting positions, each citing premises in support of their position."[47] Dialectical arguments are distinguished from *monolectical arguments*, which are the traditional arguments discussed by formal logic. In formal logic, in fact, an argument is a set of "abstract" propositions, where one is considered the conclusion and the remainder as premises, which are intended to support the conclusion.[48]

Consider, again, the public debate that surrounded the installation of Rainaldi's *Conversazioni*. As already mentioned, when looking at that debate we can detect at least two adopted positions. First, there were individuals arguing for the removal of the statue. By reconstructing their argument, one can individuate at least two kinds of evidence justifying the proposal to remove the statue. As a first kind of

[46]Here, my account is inspired by Susan Feagin's account of appreciation, which focuses on and finds great value in the experiences of first-time readers. See S. Feagin, *Reading with Feeling: The Aesthetic of Appreciation* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 33.

[47]A. Goldman, "Argumentation and Social Epistemology," *The Journal of Philosophy* 91 (1994), 27.

[48]For an introduction to the logic of monolectical arguments, see, for instance, R. Feldman, *Reason and Argument 2nd ed.* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 1999).

evidence, detractors argued that the statue seemed to resemble Benito Mussolini more than it resembled the pope. As a second kind of evidence, they added that its overall silhouette looked too similar to the forms of a urinal. As a consequence of those two kinds of evidence, detractors deemed the statue as inadequate, and, as a conclusion, asked for removal. Second, there were those who found the statue as an appropriate tribute to John Pope II, and they did not want the statue to be removed. In particular, they cited as evidence the two following reasons: the statue was "original," thus emphasizing analogically the originality of John Paul II as a pope, and evocative of his welcoming spirituality. As a conclusion, appreciators simply asked to give to Rainaldi's *Conversazioni* more time.

At a closer scrutiny, public-art debates are closer to a subspecies of dialectical arguments, namely, *dialectical discourses*.[49] In dialectical discourses, speaker(s) and hearer(s) often exchange roles. They engage one another in conversation, while trying to refute or express doubts about opposing view(s). In the majority of cases, however, the primary aim of discussants in dialectical discourses is not to refute opposing view(s), but to argue for their position. In effect, one can notice that in the controversy related to Rainaldi's *Conversazioni*, opposing parties were not merely trying to discredit the opposing view. That is, they were not focusing on emphasizing why the opposing view was wrong. On the contrary, as we have seen, they concentrated on providing actual evidence in order to defend their respective positive views.

Since they aim at determining the most advisable course of action with respect to public-art issues, public-art debates are also forms of *practical reasoning*.[50] Practical reasoning "arises in a situation that is a *practical conflict* [and] is oriented to choosing a course of action on the basis of goals and knowledge of one's situa-

[49]See, Goldman, "Argumentation and Social Epistemology," 31.

[50]See D. N. Walton, "What is Reasoning? What is an Argument?," *The Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990), 405-408.

tion."[51] That is, practical reasoning aims at deciding "whether an action is practically reasonable or prudent."[52] In this sense, practical reasoning diverges from theoretical (factual) reasoning, whose aim is not selecting a course of action, but "finding reasons for accepting a proposition as true or false."[53] Of course, in the *Conversazioni*'s controversy, the course of action under scrutiny was that one involving the removal of Rainaldi's sculpture. And the decision to be made was about whether, by considering the Romans' desire to appropriately celebrate John Paul II and the characteristics of the statue, it was reasonable (or prudent) to remove it.

But when, in a practical discourse, is an action reasonable or prudent? One can say that an action is reasonable or prudent when it is justified by a *good* argument. It must be emphasized that standards of goodness in practical dialectical discourses exceed the boundaries of those applied in traditional monoletical arguments, where—in general—principles of deductive or inductive reasoning only apply. As David Walton and Giovanni Sartor remind us, "deductive reasoning, even when complemented with probabilistic inference [that is, inductive], is insufficient to meet all cognitive needs of agents who think ... and interact with their fellows."[54] They add that, when reasoning in actual discourses, "Humans also need presumptive reasoning according to defeasible argumentation schemes."[55]

By following Walton and Sartor's remarks, we can say that there are three different standards that apply to practical dialectical discourses: (i) deductive standards; (ii) inductive standards; and, (iii) plausible (opinion-based) standards. By means of those standards, we can evaluate whether and to what degree (one or more) premises support a conclusion. If premises actually support the conclusion,

[51]Ibid., 406
[52]Ibid., 405.
[53]Ivi.
[54]D. Walton and G. Sartor, "Teleological Justification of Argumentation Schemes," *Argumentation* 26 (2012), 2.
[55]Ivi.

and are true or warranted, then we can say that an individual is justified to a particular degree in accepting that conclusion.

An individual is maximally justified in holding the conclusion of a deductively valid argument, that is, an argument that is valid according to deductive standards (e.g., disjunctive syllogism). In fact, when an argument is deductively valid, the conclusion must follow from its premises. In the case of an inductively good argument, that is, an argument that is good according to inductive standards (e.g., statistical syllogism), one is justified in admitting that the conclusion is likely to follow (with some approximate probability) from its premises.

The nature of plausible standards of justification is more controversial, and scholars disagree on their exact characterization. Some scholars describe plausible standards as those standards by means of which one can evaluate arguments that we recognize as somewhat reasonable, but that seem not to be either deductively valid or inductively good.[56] Traditionally, most of those arguments, which I define as plausible arguments, are considered as fallacious. However, I sympathize with those researchers who argue that plausible arguments possess some cognitive value when considering forms of practical reasoning.[57] One should emphasize that plausible arguments are defeasible arguments, which justify only tentatively the acceptance of a conclusion.[58]

In Walton's view, plausible arguments are essentially dialectical, that is, they require a dialogic structure including, in its simplest case, two individuals: a proponent and a respondent. And, for Walton, "its dependence on use in a context of dialogue [makes a plausible argument] different in nature from either deductive

[56]Historically, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca provided the first analysis of some forms of plausible argument. See C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971)

[57]Walton provides a (incomplete) list of plausible arguments, which he defines as "argumentation schemes," in *Argumentation Schemes for Presumptive Reasoning* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1996).

[58]For a further discussion of this tripartite distinction, see D. Walton, "Abductive, Presumptive and Plausible Arguments," *Informal Logic* 21 (2001): 141-169; and, "Defeasible Reasoning and Informal Fallacies," *Synthese* 179 (2011): 377-407.

or inductive inference."[59] In such dialogues, the proponent advances an argument A that appears as plausible to the respondent. A is tentatively accepted until the respondent challenges A by asking a question that is significant to provide further evidence in favor (or against) it. At that stage, the proponent is obliged to answer appropriately the question of the respondent, or to retreat the argument.[60]

A typical example of plausible argument is the *appeal to expert opinion*, often called "argument from authority." As Walton argues, it is *prima facie* reasonable to accept an argument whose conclusion depends on the opinion of an expert. However, that argument is not decisive, and is still subject to questioning. For instance, the respondent can ask whether the individual used as the expert source is personally reliable. If the proponent fails to show that the expert is personally reliable, then the argument is rejected—or (at least) its degree of plausibility is negatively affected in a significant way.[61]

One should emphasize that, because of their defeasible nature, debating in terms of plausible arguments may very well conduce to cases of stalemate where, as Margolis argues, we seem forced to "admit the *prima facie* validity of opposed claims".[62] In other words, at least in some cases, when using plausible standards for evaluating arguments, different discussants can be equally justified in holding opposed claims as conclusions of their respective (plausible) arguments, thus originating a persistent disagreement.

We have already seen paradigmatic cases where the use of plausible arguments may very well result into persistent disagreement. Those cases are controversies involving value disagreement. In those controversies, discussants often use what

[59] Walton, "Abductive, Presumptive and Plausible Arguments," 156.

[60] Ivi.

[61] Walton proposes six critical questions that should function as heuristic in accepting an appeal to expert. See, for instance, D. Walton, *Appeal to Expert Opinion* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

[62] Margolis, *Moral Philosophy After 9/11*, 3.

scholars define as *argument from value*.[63] An argument from value V is a plausible argument where one of the premises present the appeal to a value p as evidence justifying the conclusion—where sometimes p is considered as a non-negotiable principle. Individuals tend to accept V when they endorse p, whereas they tend to reject it when they do not endorse p. In standard cases of value disagreement, different discussants make use of two (or more) arguments from value in order to support two (or more) opposing conclusions. However, by admitting the possibility of value disagreement (within constitutional limits) and the non-negotiable nature of (at least some) value commitments, in those controversies, it seems *prima facie* impossible to prefer one conclusion over the other.

For instance, as we have seen when discussing the controversy about the permissibility of abortion, those who believe in the non-negotiable principle that life is sacred from its conception tend to reject the argument in favor of legalizing abortion that presents as one of its premises the appeal to the non-negotiable principle that the right to terminate a pregnancy is central to women's autonomy. Conversely, those who believe in the non-negotiable principle that the right to terminate a pregnancy is central to women's autonomy tend to reject the argument against legalizing abortion that presents as one of its premises the appeal to the non-negotiable principle that life is sacred from its conception. In this controversy, arguments from both sides seem equally justified, especially when considering the non-negotiable nature of the values at stake. And preferring one conclusion over the other seems *prima facie* impossible.

As I have already said, on issues related to public artworks, we can expect persistent disagreement to emerge when discussants hold conflicting systems of values. I have argued that persistent disagreement could arise when considering

[63]For a discussion of argument from value, see T. J. M. Bench-Capon, "Persuasion in Practical Argument Using Value-based Argumentation Frameworks," *Journal of Logic and Computation* 13 (2003): 429-448; and, F. Macagno and D. Walton, "The Argumentative Structure of Persuasive Definitions," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 11 (2008): 525-549.

whether we should grant public funds to Serrano for his *Piss Christ*. On the one hand, one can easily imagine a set of individuals that consider the inviolability of religious icons as a non-negotiable principle that functions as an overriding reason for denying *ipso facto* public funding to Serrano. On the other hand, one could also think of another set of individuals embracing a system of values where freedom of expression is taken as a non-negotiable principle, and reject the proposal to deny a grant to Serrano as a result of religious concerns. It seems unlikely that those two sets of individuals can come to an agreement. And, yet, their respective and opposing opinions both seem justified—a possibility that is excluded by Habermas' model. In particular, they are justified in terms of different systems of value that appear as *prima facie* compatible with constitutional limits within pluralistic democracies.

At this point, one may wonder how to solve such cases of impasse, and what makes decisions in public-art spheres legitimate when universal consensus does not obtain. I address these concerns in the following section.

4.4 Overcoming "Stalemate": Legitimacy in Public-Art Spheres

A logic of the reasonable disagreement—like the one that I propose above—faces a difficulty that requires attention. As I have already mentioned, Habermas understands legitimacy in terms of justification. In effect, he considers a decision as legitimate when complying with an opinion that is justified, that is, with an opinion that everyone sees as "valid."[64] But since I reject the idea that justification depends on universal consensus and I admit that a plurality of opinions can be justified, how should I understand legitimacy? At least in some cases of persistent disagreement within public-art debates, there seem to be many reasonably justified opinions about which course of action should be preferred. However, as a matter of fact, public authority cannot simultaneously enact all of them.

But before going further, I need to add a caveat to my argument. Political legitimacy is definitely a controversial issue in political philosophy.[65] A sustained discussion of political legitimacy would deserve an entirely separate work. My aim here is not to provide a systematic defense of a theory of political legitimacy. What follows should be intended merely as a manifesto of some sort for orienting the discussion in matters of legitimacy in public art issues. Of course, in spite of their preliminary character, I do not exclude that my reflections can have larger implications.

McCarthy emphasizes that, as everyone who is familiar with real democratic practices knows, cases of persistent disagreement do not constitute in principle an insurmountable obstacle.[66] When facing persistent disagreements, generally, democracies stop relying on rational consensus or bargaining, and turn to other

[64]In mainstream logic, "validity" is a property of arguments. It applies to those arguments where the conclusion follows from the premises, if the premises were true. Habermas defines as "valid" those claims that are justifiable.

[65]For an overview of the issue of political legitimacy, see P. Fabienne, "Political Legitimacy," in E. N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010 Edition) <`plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/legitimacy/`>.

[66]McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1122.

kinds of decision-making procedures. Those procedures are often identified with majority rule. And, as McCarthy suggests, individuals tend to accept decisions taken by majority rule as legitimate. But why are those decisions legitimate?

McCarthy argues that the reason why those decisions are considered as legitimate cannot be what Habermas indicates in his discussion of majority rule. In effect, by drawing on Julius Fröbel, Habermas understands majority rule as a "conditional agreement" where a minority that still regards its opinion as correct decides to conform to the opinion of a majority.[67] In those cases, a minority believes that, at least in the long run, it can rationally demonstrate that its opinion is the correct one, and persuade a majority to change its view. McCarthy underlines that Habermas' account seems to misrepresent the nature and the democratic significance of majority rule. It seems that individuals do not accept majority rule because they expect to persuade rationally their opponents of the correctness of their view. (How could they, when we acknowledge that there are cases where a plurality of views can be "correct," that is, justified?) They accept it primarily because they understand that procedure as in itself legitimate. Because they accept the procedure as legitimate, they agree to "abide by the rules," and to regard whatever is decided as legitimate.[68] But, of course, recognizing a decision as legitimate just because it is the outcome of a particular procedure is *not* a substantive reason, but a procedural one. In effect, *contra* Habermas, McCarthy argues that individuals can accept a decision (or a law) as legitimate for *procedural reasons* while still finding it as unacceptable for *substantive reasons*, and without anticipating "that what they consider to be the better argument will some day convince all."[69]

At this point, one could propose to explain legitimacy in matters of public art

[67] J. Habermas, "Volkssouveränität als Verfahren: Ein normativer Begriff von Öffentlichkeit," *Merkur* 43 (1989), 467-468. For a more detailed discussion, see McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1092 and ff.

[68] McCarthy, "Legitimacy and Diversity," 1097.

[69] Ivi.

in terms of an hybrid account that accepts both procedural and substantive reasons as legitimating ones. Such a proposal would not be unreasonable, but I am unsure whether it could be successful. Intuitively, no one denies that substantive consensus entails legitimacy. However, I am not as confident as McCarthy that mere procedural reasons are necessarily enough to guarantee the legitimacy of a decision. In effect, there seem to be many cases where the application of majority rule results into illegitimate decisions.[70] Think about those circumstances that political philosophers describe as cases of "majority tyranny." In such cases, a majority takes decisions while disregarding the well-being of a minority. Of course, intuitively, we tend to regard those decisions as illegitimate in spite of their procedural correctness. It seems that legitimacy requires something more than mere procedural adequacy. But what is it?

A plausible way to orient our answer is to look at how persistent disagreement is generally handled in actual public-art debates, with particular reference to those cases where decisions are regarded as legitimate. By considering the analysis of actual cases as a starting point, I sympathize with Nancy Fraser's meta-theoretical approach to a theory of legitimacy.[71] Fraser emphasizes that a normative approach to legitimacy—that is, an approach that disregards the historically determined ways in which legitimacy arises—"risks forfeiting critical traction."[72] However, she also underlines the potential limits of an empiricist approach—that is, an approach that merely derives the theory from existing realities and that may very well lack in "normative force."[73] Fraser suggests that the approach to be preferred is one that balances empirical and normative needs. Such an approach "seeks to locate normative standards and emancipatory political possibilities precisely within

[70]The most systematic critical discussion of majority rule can be found in M. Risse, "Arguing for Majority Rule," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 12 (2004): 41-64.

[71]N. Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24 (2007): 7–30.

[72]Ibid., 8.

[73]Ivi.

the historically unfolding constellation."[74] By drawing on Fraser, my intent is to understand legitimacy by identifying normative standards that characterize our contemporary practices of public art.

When I think about cases where persistent disagreement has been resolved in ways generally accepted as legitimate, two public-art debates come to my mind. I already discussed one. In that public-art debate, members of Rainaldi's *Conversazioni* were discussing whether to relocate the statue or not. As I mentioned, mayor Alemanno nominated a commission. The commission decided for a solution that accommodated most of the criticisms raised against Rainaldi's work, though ruling against relocation. It must be emphasized that *not* everyone agreed with that solution. Nonetheless, there seems to be a generalized belief that a such decision was legitimate.

A second example includes the public-art debate that surrounded the installation of *L.O.V.E.* by Maurizio Cattelan.[75] *L.O.V.E.* is a 40 feet tall sculpture in white Carrara marble representing a hand with all the fingers removed, except for the erected middle one. It was originally installed in Milan, right in front of the Stock Exchange, on September 24, 2010. Because of its visual similarity with the vulgar gesture of the "middle finger," many have criticized the proposal of changing the status of the statue from temporary—it was initially scheduled to be removed on October 4 2010, that is, 10 days after its installation—to enduring.[76] The mayor of Milan at that time, Letizia Moratti, promoted a series of public consultations and debates, where members of *L.O.V.E.*'s public-art public where able to discuss their

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[74] Ivi.

[75] A. Worth, "A Fine Italian Hand," *The New York Time Magazine Blogs* (October 11, 2010) <http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/11/a-fine-italian-hand/>.

[76] L. Delucchi, "Cattelan: ecco cosa pensano i milanesi del dito medio," *Milano Mentelocale* September 24, 2010 <http://milano.mentelocale.it/27927-cattelan-ecco-cosa-pensano-i-milanesi-del-dito-medio/>; A. Stella, "Cattelan: pronto a regalare il ńDitoż ma non spostatelo da piazza Affari," *Il Corriere della Sera* (October 4, 2010) <http://milano.corriere.it/milano/notizie/cronaca/10_ottobre_4/stella-cattelan-regala-dito-1703875300861.shtml>.

views with public administrators of the city of Milan. After those consultations, the administration of Milan deliberated that *L.O.V.E.* will not be removed from its location for the next forty years. Even in this case, though some still find Cattelan's piece inappropriate, protests dissolved after the decision, which was taken in June 2011, and one has the sense that many accepted it as legitimate. In effect, no further protests have been organized since then.

As I have made clear above in discussing the meta-theoretical approach that I endorse, the important point here is not the mere descriptive recognition that members of *Conversazioni*'s and *L.O.V.E.*'s respective public-art publics psychologically find those decisions legitimate.[77] What is important is the normative aspect of their belief. *Why* do they take such decisions as legitimate? There seems to be a plausible answer to that question. Those decisions appear legitimate *because* they have been taken in circumstances where public authority showed interest towards public opinion, and explicitly considered it as relevant. That is, I believe that the legitimacy of those decisions stems from the recognition of the following fact: the public interactions between members of public-art publics and exponents of the public authority significantly informed the final decision.

Let me develop more explicitly the normative cue that manifests in those two cases. I am suggesting here a different way to understand legitimacy. In my view, legitimacy need not derive from procedural correctness or substantive consensus. In this sense, I argue that, in matters of public art, legitimacy of decisions is a function of what Fraser calls "political efficacy." Political efficacy can be defined as the capacity of public opinion to inform effectively the decisions of public authority.[78] In other words, in matters of public art, legitimate decisions are those that have

[77]It must be clear that, here, I am not concerned with deciding whether, empirically, public interactions between public-art publics and public authority actually informed decisions of issues respectively related to Cattelan's *L.O.V.E.* and Rainaldi's *Conversazioni*. The verdict does not bear directly on the validity of my argument.

[78]Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere," 7-10.

been significantly influenced by the opinions of relevant public-art publics.

But how can we be sure that opinions defended within a public sphere can effectively influence the public authority? As Fraser suggests, most accounts of the public sphere—including Habermas', as we have already seen—take for granted that public opinion is politically efficacious. However, when looking at developments in contemporary democracies, such an assumption seems increasingly more problematic.[79] And, as she argues, an informative (and useful) theory of democratic legitimacy must address that question. By looking at the two examples discussed above, I suggest that public-art debates are more likely to influence public authority—that is, they are more likely to be politically efficacious—when forums of discussion between members of public-art publics and exponents of public authority are provided.

It seems that my proposal is, then, *architectonic* in nature. That is, it understands political efficacy and, *a fortiori*, democratic legitimacy as depending on the architectonic (or structural) relationship between the spheres of political authority and public-art spheres. In effect, it is my view that, in principle, the existence of practiced forums of interaction where members of public-art publics and exponents of the public authority can interact is a sufficient condition for a decision to be legitimate. Here, I should emphasize that I am sympathetic with Fraser's challenge to an unbridgeable distinction between the sphere of public authority and the public sphere as endorsed, among others, by Habermas.[80] In this sense, I am arguing that, though maintaining their distinction in principle, at a normative level a theory of the public sphere should account for the possibility of hybrid forums of discussion

[79] In some important sense, the growing anti-political sentiments—which often feed authoritarian and intolerant forces—that characterize the most recent political developments in the Southern periphery of the EU (noticeably, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Cyprus) originate as a response to the perceived disjunction between the exercise of public authority and the public sphere, that is, as a response to the perceived political *in*efficacy of public opinion.

[80] Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere," 13; and, N. Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in C. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), especially 129-132.

where public authority and public opinion can merge to some degree.

Rainaldi's *Conversazioni* and Cattelan's *L.O.V.E.* are not the only cases where decisions about public artworks involved the creation of a forum for public confrontation between members of a public-art public and exponents of the public authority. In effect, at least since the NEA established its Art in Public Spaces program in 1967, decisions in matters of public art have been often informed by the opinions that members of public-art publics expressed in dedicated forums of discussion. And, interestingly enough, when public authority has failed to provide such forums of interaction, as in the famous case of the *Tilted Arc*, decisions have (often) being regarded as politically illegitimate. (In the *Tilted Arc*'s case, the public authority was the GSA commission.) Along these lines, one could interpret Paul Goldstein's criticism against the decision to install *Tilted Arc* as denouncing the lack of legitimacy of that decision. In his criticism, he emphasized the absence of a forum of discussion where members of *Tilted Arc*'s public-art public could inform the public authority of their opinions. In effect, Goldstein, as a district leader of Community Board I, said: "We feel that the people who live and work in this community and wish to utilize this plaza deserve to be *heard* and to have their needs and *opinions respected*."[81]

I should emphasize that my account of political legitimacy as depending on the availability of practiced forums of discussion relates significantly to a theme that has been object of debate in the scholarship of public art. Among others, theorists such as Jerry Allen, Harriet Senie, and Cher Knight have long argued that the presentation of a public artwork should be supported by what is commonly defined as a "public art education program."[82] Those theorists see such programs

[81] As quoted in H. Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 48. (Emphasis added.)

[82] J. Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," in J. L. Cruikshank (ed.), *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places* (Amherst, MA: Arts Extension Service/Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, 1988), 250; C. K. Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice, and Populism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 61-62; Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 86-88.

as effective strategies for discouraging the presentation of examples of so called "plop-art," that is, of a form of art that is incapable of engaging its public-art public. In this sense, as Allen argues, "No public artwork should ever suddenly appear overnight, as if by some miraculous ... event."[83] On the contrary, as a general rule, a series of initiatives directed both at informing *and* reaching out to members of relevant public-art publics should precede, accompany, and (eventually) follow the presentation of a public artwork.[84] Senie suggests that such initiatives might very well include "[p]ublic discussions, news stories, local radio and television coverage, advertising, and permanent documentation in any form [as well as] outreach programs to local schools, libraries, and corporations."[85]

I see my suggestion to promote the creation of forums of interaction between the public authority and members of relevant public-art publics as in continuity with the reflections of theorists such as Allen, Cher, and Senie and their desire to promote public art education. However, I would like to add a small qualification. The expression "public art education" naturally conveys the idea that, in public art, there is someone who teaches and someone who needs to be taught. And, on the one hand, experts in artistic matters (e.g., artists, art historians, art critics, and philosophers of art) seem to be the best-suited candidate as "teachers," whereas, on the other hand, "regular" members of public-art publics seem to naturally fall under the category of "those in need to be taught." (I am not assuming that the theorists mentioned above are arguing for something of this kind.) At this point, I am sure that the attentive reader can already anticipate my objection to that view. I do not deny that art experts may very well enrich the conversation about issues related to a public artwork. (By being supposedly that kind of expert myself, I would

[83] Allen, "How Art Becomes Public," 250.

[84] Here, I am thinking that, in selected cases, the sudden appearance of a public artwork—as in Susanne Lacy's *Full Circle* (1993)—can actually function as a shocking element favoring rather than discouraging public engagement.

[85] Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy,* 87-88.

be a living paradox if I were not to believe that!) What I reject is the idea that art experts have special or definitive authority on those matters, and that their contributions legitimize decisions. In matters of public art, it is unclear who teaches and who learns. We must admit that all individuals—with their unique backgrounds of knowledge, skills, and abilities—can enrich the discussion with thoughtful insights. And those who are art experts should not oppose the idea that they (we) can also learn from non-experts. In some important sense, legitimacy of decisions does not depend on their complying with experts' opinions. On the contrary, as I said, legitimacy stems from the possibility of being in dialogue with one another and having our individual voices heard, especially by those who exercise the functions of public authority.

This chapter has discussed a specific aspect of public-art spheres, that is, the appropriate logic of justification of opinions. *Contra* Habermas, the logic of public-art spheres is not a rational logic, but a reasonable one. In a reasonable logic, universal consensus about an opinion's validity is *not* required for that opinion to be justified. On the contrary, by allowing as standards of goodness in public-art discourses not only deductive and inductive standards, but also plausible (opinion-based) ones, the logic that I propose tolerates that, when considering a single issue, a plurality of opinions may very well be justified. Thanks to its capacity to tolerate a plurality of claims as justified, my logic of reasonable disagreement accords very well with our experiences of actual democracies, while still providing an effective normative ideal for justification in pluralistic democracies. By explaining legitimacy of decisions in terms of the political efficacy of public opinion, my account also provides a model for practically overcoming persistent disagreement.

In Chapter 5, I expand my analysis of plausible standards of justification in the context of public-art debates. In particular, I discuss the role that emotional reactions to public artwork play in public-art debates.

CHAPTER 5

THE EMOTIONS IN PUBLIC-ART SPHERES: EMOTIONAL ARGUMENT, "LOOKS LIKE" APPROACH, AND PUBLIC-RELATED HYPOTHESIS (PRH)

In the previous chapter, I have argued that opinions in public-art spheres are evaluated in terms of what I defined as a logic of reasonable disagreement. That logic is pluralistic in nature, and allows for the possibility that, on a single issue, a range of opinions is justified. I have explained that in public-art debates, that is, public debates where issues related to public artworks are discussed, opinions can be justified in terms of three different standards, that is, (i) deductive standards; (ii) inductive standards; and, (iii) plausible (opinion-based) standards. Whereas theorists tend to agree about the nature of deductive and inductive standards of justification, the question "What are the plausible (opinion-based) standards?" is still an open one. This chapter examines preliminarily that question in the context of public-art debates.

In developing my analysis of plausible justificatory standards in public-art debates, I follow an approach that has been favored by a dominant trend in contemporary argumentation theory. In the last few decades, scholars in argumentation theory have been discussing plausible standards in practical reasoning by analyzing what they define as "argumentation schemes."[1] Those schemes are, in Douglas

[1]One should emphasize that, at least in its modern version, the study of plausible standards is

Walton's words, "forms of argument that capture stereotypical patterns of human reasoning."[2] Though traditionally considered as fallacious, those patterns seem to possess under particular circumstances some cognitive value when considering forms of practical reasoning.[3] A typical example is *appeal to expert opinion*, often called "argument from authority." In that argument, the opinion of an expert is used as evidence in favor of the conclusion. Argumentation theorists question the usual dismissal of examples of appeal to expert opinion as necessarily fallacious. On the contrary, they argue that, among other things, when the expert is a credible source and is personally reliable, some instances of that argument "can be justifiably held to hold tentatively."[4]

In the following sections, I discuss a controversial argumentation scheme that characterizes in an important way many (if not most) public-art debates. I define that argumentation scheme as emotional argument. This chapter argues that, under particular circumstances, emotional argument is a reasonable argumentation scheme that can be hold tentatively. Section 5.1 discusses in detail the structure of typical emotional argument. I argue that emotional argument includes an appeal to emotion among its premises. Section 5.2 examines the circumstances under which emotional argument can be hold tentatively. I contend that emotional argument holds tentatively when the emotional reaction that appears among its premises is warranted. Section 5.3 discusses what are the relevant properties that can ground a warranted emotional reactions. Section 5.4 explores a difficult kind of public artworks' properties that often seems to ground emotional reactions. I

relatively new. Of course, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* explores plausible standards in practical reasoning. However, as Christof Rapp argues, "it was not until the last few decades that the philosophically salient features of the Aristotelian rhetoric were rediscovered." See "Aristotle's Rhetoric," in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2010 Edition) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>.

[2] D. Walton, "Justification of Argument Schemes," *Australasian Journal of Logic* 3 (2005), 1.

[3] For a further discussion of argumentation schemes see the classic D. Walton, *Argumentation Schemes for Presumptive Reasoning* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1996).

[4] D. Walton and G. Sartor, "Teleological Justification of Argumentation Schemes," *Argumentation* 26 (2012), 6. For a recent discussion of appeal to expert opinion, see Ibid., 7.

define those properties as looks-like properties. Those properties identify visual similarity between a public artwork and some other entity, usually one of a common kind. Section 5.5 expands my account of looks-like properties. In order to understand how public artworks seem to acquire "looks properties," it introduces a preliminary discussion of an aspect of public artworks' ontology.

5.1 The Role of Emotional Reactions in Public-Art Debates

Recently, some post-Habermasian scholars of the public sphere have been reconsidering the role of emotional reactions in public debates. In particular, *contra* Habermas' view that emotional reactions "must be expunged in rational dialogues," Michael Gardiner emphasizes that an analysis of emotional reactions' role in public debates can contribute to the recognition of the actual heterogeneity of publics.[5] By drawing on Mikhail Baktin's view on dialogue, Gardiner argues that emotional reactions are intrinsically personal, and tend to be relative to individuals.[6] Different members of a public may very well react emotionally to the same stimulus in different—if not contradicting—ways. He argues that to consider the variety of such reactions may very well help us determining why members of a public hold different opinions about the same issue. In this sense, he adds that to recognize emotional differences is to recognize explicitly the diversities characterizing a public's members. He concludes that accepting emotional reactions as legitimate aspects of our public discourses is a step towards a theory of the public sphere that acknowledges and makes diversities relevant, rather than suppressing them.[7]

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[5] M. Gardiner, "Wild Publics and Grotesque Symposiums: Habermas and Bakhtin on Dialogue, Everyday Life and the Public Sphere," in N. Crossley and J. M. Roberts (eds.), *After Habermas: New Perspectives on the Public Sphere* (Oxford, UK, and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 33.

[6] See, for instance, M. Bakhtin, (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, M. Holquist (ed.) (Austin, TX: Texas University Press, 1981); M. Bakhtin, *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, M. Holquist and V. Liapunov (eds.) (Austin, TX: Texas University Press, 1990).

[7] Ibid., 35-39.

One could consider Gardiner's view of emotional reactions in the public sphere as a sufficient ground for rejecting a prospect that wants to exclude *ex hypothesis* emotional reactions as an important aspect of public life and discussion, especially when considering public-art spheres and debates. It is an easily observable fact that emotional reactions to public artworks widely vary among different individuals. In effect, members of a public-art public often react differently (even contrarily) to the same public artwork. If Gardiner is correct, accepting emotional reactions as relevant to public-art debates may very well help us thematize the diversities among different members of public-art publics. In this sense, a consideration of emotional reactions might facilitate the normative aim of maximal inclusiveness that should characterize public-art spheres.

There is also a second, perhaps philosophically more compelling, reason that should convince even the most skeptical that it is worthwhile to examine the role played by emotional reactions in public-art debates. When talking about art, philosophers as different as Jean-François Lyotard and Susan Feagin recognize that emotional responses are not only a fundamental aspect of appreciating artworks, but also an essential part of what we find valuable about those artifacts.[8] As a particular kind of artworks, public artworks are not exception to what Lyotard and Feagin suggest. For theorists such as John Beardsley and Cher Knight, a capacity to elicit widespread emotional reactions in what I define as members of public-art publics is an essential feature of public artworks.[9] I am sympathetic to that idea, and I believe that emotional reactions are constitutive elements of our experiences of public artworks. Since our experiences of public artworks inform our opinions in public art matters, it follows that we have a *prima facie* reason to investigate the role of emotional reactions in public-art debates.

[8]See J. F. Lyotard, *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971); and, S. Feagin, "Introduction," in *Reading with Feeling: The Aesthetics of Appreciation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996): 1-22.

[9]J. Beardsley, "Personal Sensibilities in Public Places," *Artforum* 19 (1981), 43; and, C. K. Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice, and Populism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 26.

I intend to frame my discussion in terms of the two following questions: (i) what is the role that emotional reactions play in public-art debates? (ii) When, if ever, are those reactions aspects of plausible arguments? I consider (i) and (ii) separately. In the remainder of this section, I consider (i). Section 5.2 discusses (ii).

In order to provide an answer to (i), consider the following example. Realized by Brazilian artist Artur Silva, *Rock Steady Gravity Sketch* is a sculpture that was installed outside The Avenue apartments building, near 10th Street and Indiana Avenue in Indianapolis, IN. It was inaugurated on Friday, August 24, 2012. By the size of 6′ 7″ x 6′ 2″, the sculpture is in aluminum and vinyl on steel with internal LED lights. It represents in full-scale an African American "b-boy"—that is, a male breakdancer—wearing blue pants and a bright yellow long sleeve shirt. The b-boy is represented in the act of performing a particular dance move called "handstand." When performing the handstand, a dancer stands on his hands with his feet in the air. With his piece, Silva intended to celebrate African-American culture. In particular, Silva's desire was to emphasize the connection between two fundamental moments in African-American history, that is, the Jazz Age and the hip-hop "revolution." Such a connection was made possible by the nature of the location where the piece was installed. In effect, during the Jazz Age (1920s), the area around Indiana Avenue was originally a center of African American night life.[10] Unfortunately, few days after its installation, on September 3, a tragic event occurred. A Purdue University freshman, Xavier Somerville, fell from a fifth-floor balcony at The Avenue, and died. In the aftermath of this event, some have started recognizing a close resemblance between the dancer represented in *Rock Steady Gravity Sketch* and a young man falling. This possible association is what elicited in many a feeling of discomfort. Some appealed to that discomfort and asked for

[10] See N. Taflinger, "Artur Silva Installs "Rock Steady Gravity Sketch" on the Avenue. Brazilian-Born Artist Pays Homage to Hip-Hop and Jazz," *The Indianapolis Star* (August 25, 2012) <http://www.indystar.com/article/20120824/THINGSTODO03/208250321/Artur-Silva-installs-Rock-Steady-Gravity-Sketch-Avenue>.

relocating Silva's work. To those, in effect, it felt inappropriate to have such a statue in that location.[11]

By drawing on recent scholarship of argumentation theory, one could understand the argument discussed above as an exemplar of *emotional argument*.[12] According to Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, an emotional argument is an argument where an appeal to an emotional reaction functions as a premise.[13] In other words, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally, emotional reactions can be generally translated into sentences that under peculiar circumstances provide evidence in favor of an (emotional) argument's conclusion. When considering forms of practical reasoning (such as those characterizing public-art discourses), the conclusion aims at favoring a particular course of action. In this sense, one could say that some members of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public appealed to their feeling of discomfort as evidence in favor of the course of action that could be expressed as follows: "The sculpture should be relocated."

The emotional argument presented in the public-art debate surrounding *Rock Steady* is hardly an exception. On the contrary, appeal to emotion is definitely a very common feature of arguments that one can find in actual public-art debates. As it is well known, some members of *Tilted Arc*'s public-art public appealed to the fear elicited in them by Serra's piece as a reason to remove it.[14] In the Italian con-

[11]The statue has been removed in early October 2012. See, for instance, See, for instance, D. Hoppe, "Public Art Erased Again," *Nuvo* (October 15, 2012) <`http://www.nuvo.net/Hoppe/archives/2012/10/15/public-art-erased-again`>. I want to thank Artur Silva for discussing with me his work and its controversial reception. In our exchange, he suggested that journalists at Fox news were instrumental in generating the controversy.

[12]For a discussion of emotional argument, see D. Walton, *The Place of Emotion in Argument* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); A. Ben-Ze'ev, "Emotions and Argumentation," *Informal Logic* 17 (1996): 189-200; M. A. Gilbert, *Coalescent Argumentation* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1997); C. Plantin, "Arguing Emotions," *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation* (1998): 631-638; and, L. Carrozza, "Dissent in the Midst of Emotional Territory," *Informal Logic* 27 (2007): 197-210. For a useful overview of the debate, see Carrozza, "Dissent in the Midst of Emotional Territory," 198-202.

[13]Ben-Ze'ev, "Emotions and Argumentation," 196.

[14]See H. Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 47, 88-89.

text, we can find an appeal to emotion when considering an argument defended by some members of the public-art public related to Maurizio Cattelan's *L.O.V.E.* (2011). As I mentioned in Chapter 4, *L.O.V.E.* is a monumental hand in Carrara marble with all but the middle finger cut. Some members of its public-art public appealed to the disgust elicited by the vulgar gesture that the statue resembles as evidence for rejecting its transformation from a temporary project into an enduring one.[15] Others, on the contrary, felt amused by what they perceived as an ironic gesture against the establishment.

By appreciating the preceding, I argue that, in the specific context of public-art debates, emotional reactions play the following role. Emotional reactions such as a reaction of fear, disgust, joy or amusement elicited by the presentation of a public artwork (or, more precisely, an appeal to those reactions) function as (partial) evidence for favoring a particular course of action in relation to a public art issue. In this sense, (appeals to) emotional reactions play the role of premises in arguments that are proposed within public-art debates.

It must be emphasized that most public-art debates—like the majority of general dialectical discourses—are *enthymemes*, that is, forms of argumentation where many premises are implicit or tacit.[16] It is not unlikely that the appeal to an emotion is left somewhat implicit in a public-art debate. In effect, an argument defended within a public-art debate can present an appeal to an emotion as an implicit premise that is expressed by what can be taken as non-verbal means of communicating propositions.[17] For instance, it is possible to understand the action of throwing coins at Cattelan's *Untitled* (2010)—a monument representing con-

[15]G. Di Pietrantonio, "Divieto di sosta," *Artribune* (January 21, 2013) <https://www.artribune.com/2013/01/divieto-di-sosta/>.

[16]See A. Goldman, "Argumentation and Social Epistemology," *The Journal of Philosophy* 91 (1994), 36; and D. Walton, "Classification of Fallacies of Relevance," *Informal Logic* 24 (2004), 83.

[17]See, for instance, Carrozza, "Dissent in the Midst of Emotional Territory," 208; and, L. Groarke, "Informal Logic," in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2012 Edition) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/logic-informal/>.

troversial Italian former Prime Minister Bettino Craxi—by some members of its public-art public as a non-verbal expression of the proposition: "This artwork outrages us." (The act is an obvious reference to the famous episode where, on March 20, 1993, a crowd of protesters threw coins at Craxi as an extreme act of accusation against his corrupted conduct.[18]) That proposition could be considered as a premise of an enthymematic argument where, on the basis of that premise, some members argue approximately for the following conclusion: "The artwork should be removed from Carrara."[19]

In this section, I have provided an answer to question (i). By answering it, I have argued that, in public-art debates, emotional reactions function as premises of arguments. Now, it is time to address question (ii), which now I can rephrase more accurately. In effect, if ever, emotional reactions can be aspects of plausible arguments when they function as legitimate premises. Thus, when are emotional reactions legitimate premises of plausible arguments?

5.2 Emotional Arguments as Plausible Arguments

The aim of this section is to specify the conditions under which emotional argument is a plausible argument. In other words, by considering the account of emotional argument discussed above, this section intends to show when the appeal to an emotional reaction functions as a legitimate premise of a plausible argument.

Of course, it cannot be the case that, when considering emotional arguments, *anything goes*. That is, it cannot be the case that any possible appeal to an emotion, elicited under every possible circumstance, is a legitimate premise of a plausible argument. Consider, for instance, the following example. After its inauguration on

[18]For an overview of Craxi's misconduct in his years as Italian Prime Minister, see A. Friedman, "Berlusconi Faces Trial with Craxi," *The New York Times* (July 13, 1996) <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/13/news/13iht-italy.t_2.html>

[19]See, A.V., "E la Biennale entra nel vivo," *Il Tirreno* (June 25, 2010) <http://iltirreno.gelocal.it/massa/cronaca/2010/06/25/news/e-la-biennale-entra-nel-vivo>.

July 15, 2009, Pino Castagna's *In pietra alpestra e dura* quickly became an object of harsh controversy. Many viewers reacted to the statue with outrage. Among other things, many viewers motivated their outrage as follows: the monumental statue was obstructing the view of the sea while driving down Roma Avenue.[20] Outraged members of *In pietra*'s public-art public created several groups in social media in the aftermath of the statue's inauguration. On Facebook, a group ironically named "The genius who preferred marble blocks to the view of the sea" counted 217 members before being closed. A discussion thread opened in another Facebook group, "Massa 0585," included some rather colorful and angry comments. For instance, someone wrote:

> Personally, I HATE to drive down Roma Avenue in the direction of the sea (and considering that I live there, I don't know how many times I have to do that) and instead of looking at the sea, I look at those marble blocks of unknown meaning.[21]

People's outrage was also reported by more traditional media such as local newspapers, magazines, and TV shows.[22] Finally, by using a reference to people's outrage as evidence in favor of their request, "Italia Nostra" (Our Italy), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect Italy's historical patrimony, and Congressman Fabio Evangelisti asked the local administration to remove or relocate the piece.

However, as I pointed out during a public symposium on Castagna's work, those reactions do not square (quite shockingly) with a very simple fact: *In pietra* does *not* block the view of the sea as allegedly assumed by detractors. While driv-

[20] According to an unofficial poll taken in 2009, 52% of people living in Massa did not like Castagna's statue. See <`http://sondaggi.quotidiano.net/?sondaggio=2502`>.

[21] Retrieved from `http://www.facebook.com`. The group now has been closed.

[22] See, for instance, S. Grassi, "Vele: "Un'opera formidabile" "No è una delusione,"" *La Nazione* (November 8, 2009) <`http://www.lanazione.it/massa_carrara/cronaca/2009/11/08/258278-vele_opera_formidabile.shtml`>.

ing down Roma Avenue, one cannot perceive the surface of the sea as a consequence of the topography of that area: no one ever saw the sea while driving in the direction of the beach even before Castagna's *In pietra* was there. It seems that, in this case, the reactions of those who felt outraged were elicited by inaccurate perceptions and "distorted collective memories."[23]

In the light of this last point, I am confident that most readers would intuitively agree that the appeal(s) to outrage described above cannot function as an acceptable evidence in favor of arguments for removal, like Italia Nostra's or Evangelisti's ones. In effect, those emotional reactions look intuitively arbitrary, and an appeal to them seems not to provide any justification for the conclusion. In this particular case, one could safely argue that the appeal to the emotion of outrage is *not* a legitimate premise of a plausible argument, and that arguments such as Italia Nostra's and Evangelisti's ones should not be held as plausible. But why are those arguments implausible?

Some scholars in argumentation theory discuss the conditions under which "emotional appeals can be reasonable arguments."[24] Among those scholars, Ben-Ze'ev provides us with a useful analysis that can help us understand, on the one hand, why, for instance, Evangelisti's argument is implausible, and, on the other hand, when appeals to emotions can function as legitimate premises of plausible arguments in public-art debates. Ben-Ze'ev suggests that appeals to emotions can function as premises of plausible arguments when the emotions they appeal to are "substantiated," that is, when—contrary to what happens, for instance, in Evangelisti's case—they "are not arbitrary, but often the most optimal given the circumstances."[25] By drawing on his view, we could then say that only when an emotion is *substantiated* an appeal to that emotion can function as a legitimate premise of a

[23]For a discussion of memory distortion, see D. L. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
[24]Walton, *The Place of Emotion in Argument*, 255.
[25]See Ben-Ze'ev, "Emotions and Argumentation," 196.

plausible argument in a public-art debate**.**

But when are emotional reactions to public artworks substantiated and not arbitrary? Unfortunately, Ben-Ze'ev's discussion does not provide an answer to that specific question. In fact, his account focuses on real-life emotions, and not on emotional reactions to artworks. By drawing on the work of neurologist Antonio Damasio, Ben-Ze'ev argues that real-life emotions are substantiated when they are functionally valuable, that is, when they function as "somatic markers" influencing pertinently our behavior or processes of decision-making.[26] As Ben-Ze'ev suggests, it does not seems implausible to treat substantiated real-life emotional reactions as reasonable reactions (if not strictly rational) to particular circumstances or events. And, in this sense, arguments containing as premises appeals to substantiated emotions appear (at least to some extent) as plausible in practical reasoning.[27] For instance, take the case of a person confronted by an aggressive man. The fear that this person might experience in front of that aggressive man is surely substantiated. Many would agree that such a fear could legitimately inform that person's behavior or processes of decision-making. Under those circumstances, many would regard as prudent or reasonable a decision to flee. In other words, in those circumstances, many would accept as plausible the argument that includes among its premises an appeal to fear and as its conclusion the proposition "I must flee."

However, as Feagin argues, emotional reactions to artworks need not be assimilated to real-life emotions.[28] In particular, as Joseph Margolis also suggests, reacting emotionally to artworks requires exercising some capacities of the imagination that are not involved in real-life reactions.[29] For instance, an artwork would

[26]Ibid., 195. See also A. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York, NY: Grosset/Putnam, 1994).

[27]Ben-Ze'ev, "Emotions and Argumentation," 193-196.

[28]Feagin, *Reading with Feeling*, 161 and ff.

[29]Ibid., 238-255. See also J. Margolis, *The Cultural Space of the Arts and the Infelicities of Reductionism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 134-137.

not scare us in the same way in which the aggressive person discussed in the previous example would. Thus, the substantiation of emotional reactions to artworks cannot be automatically equated to the substantiation of real-life emotional reactions.

In order to clarify when emotional reactions to public artworks are substantiated, let me introduce the notions of *appropriateness* and *warrant*, which I borrow from Feagin's account of art appreciation.[30] Though her account focuses on literary works, her remarks on the appropriateness and warrant of emotional reactions seem general enough to be extended to other categories of artworks, including public artworks.

In Feagin's view, appropriateness and warrant are notions on which our assessments of emotional reactions depend. They are analogous to truth and justification, which are the epistemological notions on which our assessments of belief rely on.[31] Of course, truth and justification are independent from one another. On the one hand, I can have a false belief, but I might be nevertheless justified in having that belief. For instance, I am justified in believing what weather forecast tells me, even if that does not guarantee the truth of my belief. For instance, as most people experienced with some frustration, rain may very well occur when not anticipated by weather forecast. On the other hand, I may have a true belief without being justified in believing it. For instance, what I read in a fortune cookie may turn out to be true, though reading something in a fortune cookie does not justify beliefs.

Feagin admits that it is very difficult to provide clear examples of *in*appropriate emotional reactions to artworks.[32] In effect, we seem inclined to accept as appropriate all those emotional reactions that look warranted. "Conceptually," Feagin writes, "we need to keep appropriateness and warrant distinct, but, psychologi-

[30]See, in particular, Feagin, *Reading with Feeling*, 163-170, 205-219.
[31]Feagin, *Reading with Feeling*, 162-164, and 167-170.
[32]Ibid., 163

cally, a defense of an emotion's appropriateness seems to depend on explaining what warrants that sort of response."[33] But, then, when should one consider an emotional reaction to a public artwork as warranted?

Before answering this specific question, let me emphasize a point. The question of emotional warrant ("When and how are emotions warranted?") is a complicated one. In the scholarship, there is much controversy, and a sustained answer to that question would require a work of its own.[34] In what follows, I discuss emotional warrant *only* for purposes of what to do with public artworks. My aim is to develop what I define as a *Pragmatic Test of Emotional Warrant* (TEW).[35] The aim of TEW is *not* to provide us with a general criterion of emotional warrant. Its aim is to stipulate a standard for distinguishing warranted emotional reaction from unwarranted ones in the context of public-art debates. In this sense, the test is designed as a tool for assessing emotional reactions within a specific category of public discourse.

Among contemporary philosophical theories of emotion, there is one plausible view usually labelled as "cognitivism."[36] Cognitivism assimilates emotions to evaluative judgments about how the world is. According to cognitivists, when we

[33] Ibid., 164.

[34] The literature on emotional warrant is vast. Some of the most prominent works include: P. Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification* (London, UK: Routledge, 1988); R. de Sousa, *The Rationality of the Emotions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987); B. Helm, *Emotional Reason: Deliberation, Motivation, and the Nature of Value* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a useful discussion of emotion and practical reasoning, see P. Greenspan, "Practical Reasoning and Emotion," in A. Mele and P. Rawling (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Rationality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 206-222.

[35] In developing this test, I draw primarily from P. Goldie, "Emotion, Feeling, and Knowledge of the World," in R. C. Solomon (ed.), *Thinking About Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions* (Oxford, UK, and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003): 91-106; M. Salmela, "How to Evaluate the Factual Basis of Emotional Appraisals," in L. C. Charland and P. Zachar, *Fact and Value in Emotion* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2008): 35-51; G. Taylor, "Justifying the Emotions," *Mind* 84 (1975): 390-402.

[36] See, among others, A. Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (New York, NY: The Humanities Press, 1963); J. Neu, *A Tear is an Intellectual Thing: The Meanings of Emotion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000); M. Nussbaum, *Upheaval of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge, UK and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001); R. Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," in A. Rorty (ed.), *Explaining Emotions* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980): 251–81.

feel a given emotion, we are evaluating in a particular way something that is affecting (or will affect) our well being or the well being of those that we care about.[37] Some define that "something" as the 'object' of the emotion.[38] For instance, the fear that I experience in front of a bull could be assimilated to a judgment that evaluates the object of my emotion (the bull) as dangerous.

So when an individual experiences an emotion, she will hold certain beliefs (or thoughts) about the object of the emotion. In this sense, for cognitivists emotions involve beliefs (or thoughts) about that situation, action, individual, etc., that is the object of the emotion. For instance, I have certain beliefs about the bull that I fear. It exists, it is close by and unleashed, and possesses other potentially harmful features. The object of my emotion (in this case the bull) is that "which is *believed* to have the relevant qualities."[39]

If asked, an individual reacting emotionally in front of something will motivate her reaction by referring to some of those beliefs that she holds about the object of the emotion.[40] And, arguably, it is in this area that one can find a basis for testing emotional warrant. In general, when justifying her emotional reaction, an individual will cite as primary justificatory reason the belief that there exists the object of the emotion. And she will also refer to her belief(s) that the object of emotion possesses certain properties or features that ground her reaction. For instance, in the case of the bull, I could justify my emotional reaction of fear by referring to the following beliefs: there is a bull in front of me, and that bull has some features (temperament, strength, size, pointy horns, etc.) making it a dangerous animal, which could easily do me much harm.

[37]Peter Goldie argues that cognitivists often neglect bodily feelings as important aspects of emotions. I agree with Goldie. However, I believe that a reference to feeling is unnecessary when considering the limited scope of this discussion. See Goldie, "Emotion, Feeling, and Knowledge of the World," especially 93-97.

[38]See, for instance, Taylor, "Justifying the Emotions," 391.

[39]Ivi. Emphasis added.

[40]Ibid., 392.

Appreciating the preceding, one could suggest this first point: an emotion is unwarranted if it rests on blatantly false or unjustified beliefs.[41] For instance, if it turns out that what I am facing is not a bull (perhaps it is a cow), or a bull lacking those features that would make it dangerous (perhaps it is very docile, or is very sick and weak), then my fear will be unwarranted.

One should add that even when beliefs are true or justified, my emotional reaction can still be unwarranted for being "unfit" to the situation as I see it.[42] In a first sense, my reaction can be "unfit" since disproportionate.[43] For instance, I am perfectly aware that a bee flying in my proximity constitutes only a minor threat (I'm not allergic to its sting), but (as many could testify) my fear is nonetheless very great. There is no doubt that my usual reaction to bees is definitely unwarranted.

But an emotional reaction can be also "unfit" to the situation in a second sense.[44] The use of a belief as a justification for experiencing a particular emotion might have no justificatory force. A belief has no justificatory force when it fails to show why one could plausibly evaluate the object of the emotion in that particular light. For instance, whereas the loss of a friend counts as a plausible reason for sadness, the loss of a regular rubber band does not. (Of course, the case where a rubber band possesses some deeper "meaning," perhaps by being a gift from someone loved, would be an exception.)

The discussion of emotional "fitness" suggests a further point that is pertinent to my account of emotional warrant. There are emotional reactions that appear as fitting a situation as a consequence of "biologically hard-wired concerns": virtually every human beings is disgusted by a maggot-infested piece of meat and

[41]Of course, justification of beliefs comes in degrees, and involves a lot of grey areas. For the sake of the argument, I intend unjustified in a robust sense: an unjustified belief is a belief with no plausible justification at all, even a tentative one.

[42]See Salmela, "How to Evaluate the Factual Basis of Emotional Appraisals," 39. See also J. D'Arms and D. Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the "Appropriateness" of Emotions," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61 (2000): 65-90.

[43]Taylor, "Justifying Emotions," 393.

[44]Salmela, "How to Evaluate the Factual Basis of Emotional Appraisals," 44 and ff.

frightened by a predator attacking.[45] Other situations are more difficult to assess, and individual persons would respond to them in significantly different ways that nonetheless appear as warranted. However, even in those cases, "the reasons for the emotions must be intelligible and plausible for other members of one's community."[46] Thus, standards of warrant are *not* purely subjective: they have a public dimension, though they "may differ quite radically … among different communities of sensibilities" and groups.[47]

I am now ready to present TEW. I propose to consider an emotional reaction e_1 warranted if it satisfies the two following conditions:

1. e_1 rests on evidently true or justified beliefs;

2. e_1 "fits" the situation in both senses as discussed above.

If an emotional reaction e_2, on the contrary, fails to satisfy one of those two condition is unwarranted. In other words, if e_2 rests on blatantly false or unjustified beliefs, or does not "fit" the situation by being disproportionate or by having no explanatory force, then e_2 is unwarranted.

I should emphasize that, as long as they play a role in public-art debates, emotional reactions are continuously subject to TEW, which operates on new information as it comes in. "One's emotions … *ought* to be open to be shown to be wrong by new evidence."[48] In this sense, TEW is *never* definitive, but only tentative. Passing that test does not provide an ultimate ground for emotional warrant.

I argue that an emotional reaction to a public artwork is substantiated (that is, non-arbitrary) when *warranted* in the sense explained above. Thus, we can say that an emotional reaction to a public artwork can function as a legitimate premise of an argument in a public-art debate when passing TEW. This proposal seems to

[45]Salmela, "How to Evaluate the Factual Basis of Emotional Appraisals," 36.
[46]Ibid., 44.
[47]Ibid., 45.
[48]Goldie, "Emotion, Feeling, and Knowledge of the World," 100.

explain what one would intuitively argue in Evangelisti's case—and in all those cases where members of *In pietra*'s public-art public felt outraged. That is, his emotional reaction is arbitrary, and, *a fortiori*, his argument is implausible. In effect, though his reaction would probably satisfy condition 2 (an object that disrupts the experience of the natural landscape can be generally considered as outrageous), it surely fails to satisfy 1. In effect, the belief that the statue blocks the view of the sea is simply false: the statue does not possess such a feature. As a consequence of its being unwarranted, Evangelisti's appeal to outrage cannot function as a legitimate premise of his argument. Thus, his opinion about removing the artwork is left without support.

5.3 Emotional Warrant and Relevant Properties

In the previous section, I have argued that an emotional reaction is warranted if it satisfies TEW. At this point, I need to add a qualification. In her account, Feagin introduces an important point that one could paraphrase as follows: according to canonical standards, only certain properties of an artwork can ground warranted reactions to a public artwork. Those properties are properties that are *relevant* to artistic appreciation and evaluation. Feagin identifies relevant properties with properties that are "artistically significant" or "aesthetically significant."[49] Artistically significant "is here meant," Feagin writes, "to include features that manifest talent" of the artist.[50] Aesthetically significant refers to those features of an artwork that an artist "may not have been aware of, or did not intend, or that did not arise out of [the artist's] knowledge base or talents."[51] In this sense, according to traditional views, the only responses that are relevant are those grounded in aesthetically and artistically significant properties. Responses to other types of

[49]Feagin, *Reading with Feeling*, 166-167.
[50]Ivi.
[51]Ivi.

properties, such as emotional responses to an artwork's price, are irrelevant to appreciation and evaluation.

Here, there seems to be a problem. I believe that the notion of relevance does not apply when considering warrant in cases of *public* art. (Or, if it does, it applies *sui generis*.) That is, when considering public artworks, it seems that properties other than artistically or aesthetically significant ones can provide some warrant for an emotional reaction.

Consider, for instance, *Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial* by Chinese artist Lei Yixin. The memorial is located in West Potomac Park in Washington, D.C., southwest of the National Mall. It was inaugurated on August 22, 2011. It consists of a monumental statue in white Chinese granite. The memorial represents in a somewhat realistic style King, who is emerging as a non-finished figure from the stone. The reception of the memorial has generated much controversy. Among the members of its public-art public, some felt outraged for the following reasons: (i) the statue was designed by a non African-American (that is, Chinese) artist; (ii) it was sculpted by unpaid Chinese workers; (iii) it was produced in China and only shipped to the US, where it was assembled by Chinese workers; and, (iv) it was realized in Chinese granite.[52] Properties such as "being designed by a Chinese artist," "being sculpted by unpaid Chinese workers," "being produced in China," and "being in Chinese granite" are obviously all properties of *King's Memorial*. However, they are not artistically or aesthetically significant—at least not as traditionally conceived. Nonetheless, in this case, (some of) those properties ground what I consider as a warranted emotional reaction, that is, the outrage, which is relevant to the appreciation and the evaluation of the memorial. In particular, such

[52]See C. Milloy, "Having a Black Sculptor for King Would Have Been Nice," *The Washington Post* (August 23, 2011) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/having-a-black-sculptor-for-king-would-have-been-nice/2011/08/23/gIQAFjWBaJ_story.html>; and, R. Simon, "A Monumental Insult to Dr. King," *politico.com* (August 25, 2011) <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0811/62091.html>.

an emotional reaction does not strike me as an irrelevant response when considering the following points: first, the significance of King for the African American communities and their respective identities; second, his role in the civil right movement. I do not find unreasonable that some would have preferred to see an African American artist celebrating King, and that they are outraged by the choice of a Chinese artist. Also, in light of King's progressive ideals, one should accept that the fact of unpaid workers supposedly realizing a monument to his memory may very well elicit outrage in some, and that such a fact has an impact on how one appreciates and evaluates the memorial. The reaction, in other words, does not simply rest on true beliefs, but also seems to "fit" the situation.

By appreciating the preceding, I propose the following: when considering emotional reactions to public artworks, warranted emotional reactions need not be exclusively grounded in aesthetically or artistically significant properties, but can also be grounded in all sorts of properties, such as properties identifying the ethnicity of the artist, the origin of the material, the conditions of its realization, its cost, and so on. I argue, in this sense, that the relationships between the work, the socio-historical context, and the sensitivities of the members of the public-art public who will experience a public artwork can be relevant *non-artistic* properties.

I do not believe that it is possible to determine *a priori* which non-artistic properties are relevant in each case of public art. Relevance is responsive to the context and the interests of public-art publics, and must be assessed case-by-case. And what appears as relevant today may turned out to be irrelevant tomorrow. As John Fiske argues, "relevance is time- and place- bound."[53] In order to capture relevance's responsiveness to historical and contextual conditions, I suggest the following heuristic criterion. The relevant properties of a public artwork are those properties providing good reasons for having a particular emotions: reasons that

[53] J. Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (Oxon, UK, and New York, NY: Routledge, 2010), 103.

appear at that moment as plausible to other members of a public-art public.

For what I just said, relevance should be considered not merely as a function of sociological circumstances, but as (also) confined by a normative requirement. Relevance, in other words, does not pertain to a property only because many people think so. Of course, relevant properties "resonate" with the sensibilities of the members of a public-art public. However, it is not just that sympathetic resonance that determines whether a property is relevant. Properties are relevant since they provide *reasonable* grounds for reacting emotionally in a particular way to a public artwork. It is not crucial how many people consider a property as relevant. If it provides a reasonable justification for reacting emotionally in a particular way, then such a property should be accepted by members of a public-art public as relevant.

It is true that relevant non-artistic properties are relational properties. To admit that some among a public artwork's relational properties are essential properties of that work rather than accidental ones raises concerns. Probably, the most pressing one is the metaphysical problem of a public artwork's identity. In effect, since the relationships that a public artwork has with other objects are constantly changing, according to Leibniz's Law the same public artwork would not continue to exist through time. For instance, the Chinese workers that assembled *King's Memorial* could receive at time t_1 compensation for their work, thus changing one among the memorial's (relational) relevant non-artistic properties. For the Leibniz's Law, *King's Memorial* would stop existing from t_1, if that property were essential.

The point expressed above is a legitimate metaphysical concern. Of course, a sustained discussion of that metaphysical issue would require a dedicated work. However, I want to offer few remarks that (I hope) will orient the reader, and will show that my view in not absurd. As a first point, I do not see any *prima facie* reason that would strongly suggest the use of Leibniz's Law when examining the

identity of so-called cultural entities, which include things like histories, sentences, actions, societies, persons, and, of course, artworks.[54] Cultural entities seem to continually change in their natures without generating irresolvable paradoxes in terms of individuation and re-identification.[55] We talk about things like "Chinese society" despite its constant changes. Pretending to force Leibniz's Law on cultural entities is, I suspect, putting the cart before the horse.

In any case, it seems to me that Margolis proposes an ontology of artworks that well accords with a public artwork's changes in its relational properties, and allows us to avoid lethal paradoxes in terms of identification. I suggest to understand the metaphysics of public artworks' identity in terms of Margolis' proposal. According to his view, artworks "have historied natures [which are] alterable as a result of the ongoing ... historically changing experience."[56] However, their natures change at a rate that is sufficiently slow to be easily captured by our cognitive resources. As a consequence of the possibility to "regularly recover ... the longitudinal unicity of a particular artwork's career ... we are able to assign a relatively stable" identity to such *denotatum*, without denying changes in its nature.[57]

At this point, one might wonder whether, on the light of the account developed above, the emotional argument asking for the removal of Silva's *Rock Steady* is plausible. I believe that the question is important and, by considering it, I intend to expand my account of emotional argument in terms of what follows. The discomfort that is used as evidence in that argument was grounded in *Rock Steady*'s resemblance with a young man falling. It is controversial whether one can admit that *Rock Steady* possesses such a feature—and whether a property of that kind can be considered as an actual property of public artworks in general. I address this

[54]For a sympathetic discussion of cultural entities, see Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?* (University Part, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1999).
[55]Ibid., 89-90.
[56]Ibid., 88
[57]Ibid., 90-91

issue in the following section. I argue that in *Rock Steady*'s case the discomfort is warranted: the argument in favor of removing *Rock Steady* is plausible.

5.4 Silva's *Rock Steady*: "Looks Like" Approach and Emotional Warrant

Earlier in this chapter, I have discussed the public-art debate related to Silva's *Rock Steady Gravity Sketch.* I mentioned that some members of its public-art public felt discomfort when considering the statue's resemblance to a young man falling—a resemblance that in some evoked an image of Xavier Somerville's tragic death. By appealing to their discomfort, some asked to remove *Rock Steady* from its original location. This section discusses whether that emotional argument is plausible.

According to my view, an emotional argument is plausible only if it includes the appeal to a warranted emotion among its premises. And an emotion is warranted if satisfying TEW. In this sense, the plausibility of the argument asking for the relocation of *Rock Steady* depends on whether the discomfort rests on true or well-justified beliefs, and fits the situation. It seems rather plausible to admit that, if the statue resembles a young man falling, the reaction will fit the situation. In effect, discomfort is a reaction that one could expect in front of an object that reminds inappropriately of a tragic event—as *Rock Steady* perhaps does. Thus, the plausibility of the argument depends on assessing whether the discomfort rests on a true or well-justified belief. Would be someone correct or well-justified in believing that the b-boy represented in *Rock Steady* resembles a young man falling? Do we have good reasons to believe that "resembling a young falling" is a property of *Rock Steady*?

In order to answer these questions, I want to discuss the nature of a particular kind of properties. "Resembling a young man falling" belongs to a kind of proper-

ties that I call *looks-like properties*. Looks-like properties are properties that depend on a perceived visual similarity between a public artwork and some other entity, usually one of a common kind. For instance, some have argued that Serra's *Titled Arc* looked like a side of a ship.[58] Others have compared Picasso's *Untitled* (1967) installed in Chicago (also known as "Chicago Picasso") to, among other things, a baboon.[59]

It is common for members of public-art publics to readily recognize possible visual similarity(-ies) between public artworks and entities of a common kind. In particular, as Harriet Senie argues, it is virtually inevitable that many "identify and understand" public artworks in terms of those perceived similarities, that is, in terms of what I define as looks-like properties. In particular, she believes that such a tendency to identify and to understand public artworks in terms of their looks-like properties—a tendency that she calls *"looks like" approach*—is very common among viewers, especially among those who do not have a prior artistic knowledge. In particular, she argues that its popularity depends on the capacity to make public artworks more accessible to them.[60]

Many are unwilling to consider looks-like properties as actual properties of public artworks, and, *a fortiori*, to consider the "looks like" approach as legitimate. I call the view that rejects the legitimacy of the "looks like" approach as *traditional view*. In particular, as Senie emphasizes, what I define as the traditional view is dominant among art experts.[61] And, in effect, Bryan Cahen, a retired art administrator living in Indianapolis and a member of Silva's *Rock Steady* public-art public, seems to favor that view. When asked about his opinion on the proposal of remov-

[58]One should emphasize that, few years after the sculpture was installed, even Serra acknowledged such a visual similarity. See Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 46.

[59]See H. Senie, "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats," in H. Senie and S. Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1992), 239.

[60]Ibid., 240; Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 46; and, H. Senie, "Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc": Art and Non-Art Issues," *Art Journal* 48 (1989), 299.

[61]Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 46.

ing the statue, he argued that its resembling a young man falling was an "idiotic reason to remove a piece of artwork."[62] In other words, it seems plausible to assume that Cahen did *not* consider "resembling a young man falling" as a property of *Rock Steady*.

However, one can raise at least two criticisms against Cahen's answer—and, more in general, against the traditional view. I take those criticisms as sufficient reasons for rejecting Cahen's answer, and for providing evidence in favor of the legitimacy of the "looks like" approach. If the "looks like" approach is legitimate, then "resembling a young man falling" could be considered as a property of *Rock Steady*. And the reaction of discomfort would be warranted. In the remainder of this section, I discuss the first criticism. I present the second criticism in the next section.

The first criticism argues that, by defining "resembling a young man falling" as an "idiotic reason to remove a piece of artwork," Cahen's answer has a very unfortunate consequence. It seems to deny legitimacy to the debate surrounding *Rock Steady*. In this sense, by rejecting "resembling a young man falling" as a property of Silva's statue, Cahen is also arguing that the emotional reaction of many members of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public is unwarranted and, thus, that their opinion is implausible. If my reading is correct, then Cahen's answer implies some form of exclusivism. Of course, exclusivism contrasts with the desideratum of maximal inclusiveness typical of public-art spheres.

One should emphasize that, more in general, this first criticism provides a *prima facie* justificatory reason for accepting the "looks like" approach as a legitimate approach for engaging public artworks. In effect, members of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public are hardly an exception in public art. As I have already said, it is common

[62] AA.VV. "Storm Over Statue Highlights Angst Over Indy Art," *courier-press.com* (October 6, 2012) <http://www.courierpress.com/news/2012/oct/06/storm-over-statue-highlights-angst-over-indy-art/>.

among members of public-art publics to adopt the "looks like" approach. In this sense, such an approach informs many opinions defended in public-art debates. By dismissing the "looks like" approach as in principle legitimate, one would then exclude *a fortiori* many individuals from public-art debates. Plausibly, one can easily imagine a case where, by rejecting the "looks like" approach, one would then dismiss the majority of opinions. And, as I have already pointed out, such an exclusivist tendency is far from the desideratum of maximal inclusiveness typical of public-art spheres.

Though not a conclusive reason for rejecting it, its implied exclusivism raises important concerns about the traditional view's adequacy when considering contemporary practices of public art. In this sense, the general point I am making here relies on an empirical fact, though interpreted in light of the normative constraint of maximal inclusiveness that characterizes my theory of public-art spheres. In brief, I believe that the widespread use of the "looks like" approach provides some kind of evidence in favor of its being legitimate within public-art debates. (Nonetheless, I also believe that the application of the "looks like" approach has some limits. I discuss those limits in Chapter 6.)

The second criticism, surely a philosophically more controversial and perhaps more interesting point, suggests that Cahen's answer seems to disregard what I consider as an essential feature that characterizes not only *Rock Steady*, but public artworks in general. As said in Chapter 3, that essential feature is the constitutive link that connects public artworks' identity and their respective public-art publics. I develop this criticism in the following section.

5.5 Context and Emotions: the Public-Related Hypothesis (PRH)

My second criticism against Cahen's opinion and, more in general, against the traditional view, rests on the recognition that there is an essential link that connects

the identity of a public artwork and its related public-art public. Many theorists argue in favor of the relevance of such a link when considering public artworks.[63] However, none seems to have made explicit what is its nature. I intend that link in ontological terms.[64] In effect, I take the idea of an essential link connecting a public artwork and its public-art public as meaning something along the following lines: the properties that a public artwork has depend significantly (though not completely) on some features of its public-art public. In this sense, one might say that the second objection presents an ontological reason for accepting that the "looks like" approach is legitimate, and, *a fortiori*, that warranted emotional reactions can rest on beliefs about looks-like properties.

But before continuing my discussion, I need to add a caveat to my argument. The ontology of artworks is a very controversial issue that goes beyond the scope not only of this section, but of this thesis as a whole. In this sense, I do not provide a systematic defense of public artworks' ontology. Here, my discussion is limited in scope, and has a modest aim: to offer a preliminary discussion of the hypothesis that public artworks' identity depends on some features of their respective public-art publics. (In Chapter 6, I expand my discussion of public artworks' ontology.)

In her article "Tossed Salad: Ontology and Identity," Feagin develops an ontology of artworks that may very well help us clarify the claim that the properties that a public artwork has depend (at least in part) on some features of its public-art

[63]The view that there is a constitutive link connecting public artworks' identity and their respective public-art publics is often associated with "new genre public art." See, for instance, S. Lacy, "Introduction: Cultural Pilgrimages and Metaphoric Journeys," in S. Lacy (ed.), *Mapping the Terrain* (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1995), 19-20; P. Phillips, "Public Constructions," in *Mapping the Terrain*, 67; G. H. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community + Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2004); and, C. A. Meehan, "Needs No Introduction: Some Thoughts on Public Engagement," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012): 4-14. Art theorist Nicolas Bourriad seems to argue for a similar idea. See N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002). In her discussion of site-specificity, Miwon Kwon provides a well-know historical account of the emergence of the conception that public artworks' identity depends somewhat on what I define as their public-art publics. See, in particular, chapter 4 in M. Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002).

[64]As far as I know, this is the first attempt to cash out that link in ontological terms.

public.[65] By drawing on Ajume H. Wingo, Feagin discusses the case of an African religious mask that, at some point, was exhibited in a Berkeley art gallery.[66] Originally, the mask was intended as a sacred object with the power to inflict harm to everyone coming into contact with it, except its few "custodians." In the art gallery, on the contrary, the mask became an artwork, and everyone felt free not only to look at it, but also to touch it—with the ironic consequence that the mask was then in danger to be harmed by those engaging it, and not vice versa. Feagin argues that, by being "incorporated" within an new cultural context where it plays a quite different function, the mask's identity acquired "ontological tensions and ambiguities."[67] In effect, from being a menacing sacred object, it became (also) an artwork. More in general, one can gloss Feagin's view as follows: significant changes in an artwork's context of reception might introduce persistent ontological tensions and ambiguities in its identity.[68]

One should emphasize that, rather than resolving those tensions and ambiguities, Feagin holds that we should acknowledge them. For instance, in the case of the African mask, one should acknowledge that the mask exists both as a sacred object *and* as an artwork. Here, Feagin seems to suggest something similar to Margolis' view.[69] That is, the number and nature of cultural entities are relatively (though not completely) independent.[70] For instance, when a person talks about the African mask as a sacred object and another one talks about it as an artwork, they are both talking about one and the same object. However, at the same time, one should also admit that the mask as a sacred object has properties that the mask as an artwork does not have, and vice versa. For instance, as an artwork, the mask

[65] S. Feagin, "Tossed Salad: Ontology and Identity," in M. Krausz (ed.), *Is There a Single Right Interpretation?* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002): 360-380.
[66] A. H. Wingo, "African Art and the Aesthetics of Hiding and Revealing," *British Journal of Aesthetic* 28 (1998): 251-264.
[67] Ibid., 261.
[68] Ibid., 361.
[69] One should emphasize that, in her paper, Feagin discusses sympathetically Margolis' view.
[70] See, in particular, Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?*, 39, 90-97.

is an object of artistic appreciation, whereas as a sacred object is not. On the contrary, as a sacred object, it participates in the spiritual life and rituals of a given society—a function that, as an artwork, it does not play.[71]

It seems to me that *Rock Steady* underwent a "transformation" from representation of a b-boy to a statue resembling a young man falling that, *mutatis mutandis*, is similar to that one, as discussed by Feagin, from sacred object to artwork that interested the African mask. As I argue in Chapter 2, I identify a public-artwork's context of reception with its public-art sphere, which I define as the discursive space within which members of that artwork's public-art public discuss. It is then plausible to admit that at least some features of a public-art sphere are determined by the history of its related public-art public.[72] Thus, one can reasonably argue that the features of *Rock Steady*'s context of reception depend (at least in part) on considerations of its public-art public's history. In this sense, one might also say that the event of Somerville's death modified significantly the history of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public. That modification changed some features of the statue's context of reception. Such a change introduced, on its part, an ontological ambiguity in Silva's statue. In effect, *Rock Steady* became able to evoke visually in someone's (though not everyone's) mind Somerville's death. Silva's statue stopped being just a representation of a b-boy performing the handstand. In other words, as a consequence of the change caused by Somerville's death, *Rock Steady* acquired the property "resembling a young man falling," thus creating an ontological ambiguity in the work.

It is not a case, one should emphasize, that some members of *Rock Steady*'s

[71] Gordon Graham agrees on the idea that, when removed from their original context and turned into artworks, sacred objects (such as religious paintings or sacred musical compositions) are transformed in their nature. See, in particular, G. Graham, *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics* 3rd edition (Oxon, UK, and New York, NY: Routledge, 2005), 158-160.

[72] Here, one should remember that I have introduced spatial criteria for individuating public-art publics. In this sense, one might add that the history of a public-art public relates significantly (to some degree) also to the history of the space by means of which that public-art public is identified.

public-art public started recognizing the visual similarity between Silva's statue and a young man falling only after Somerville's death. In effect, I do not believe that the looks-like properties that a public artwork has are merely a function of its reception. That is, I do not believe that a public artwork has necessarily all the "looks like" properties that one or more members of a public-art public might impute to it. Of course, as in the case of relevance, the role that reception plays in these matters is a very important one, and partly determines which looks-like properties a public artwork has. But something more is needed: something that has to do with the context of reception, like the tragic death of Somerville, that justifies the ascription of a "look like" property by making it germane. I will further discuss this point in Chapter 6.

Now, I can imagine that even some among those who are sympathetic with Feagin's view (as I am) might raise the following objection: "Somerville's death," a critic might say, "is not an event as remarkable as removing a traditional African from its original context in order to exhibit it into a modern art gallery. Sommerville's death cannot introduce a notable discontinuity leading to a significant change in the context of reception, that is, a change that may result into the introduction of an ontological tension or ambiguity in *Rock Steady*'s identity. Thus, the reaction of discomfort is not warranted as you claim, and, more in general, the conditions for warranting an emotion are stricter than you suggest." The objection is not unreasonable, and points towards an interesting direction.

However, this objection seems to rely on a conception of significant change that appears too strict. Of course, at a "global" level, the death of a young man may very well be regarded as negligible—as sadly as this sounds. However, public artworks need not function at a "global" level. They can also function at a smaller-scale level, even at a local one as it is plausibly the case for *Rock Steady*.[73] And

[73] I believe that *Rock Steady* is a local project. In effect, as far as I understand it, Silva aimed at engaging those living in Indianapolis as *Rock Steady*'s local public-art public. I discuss the nature

when we consider the local nature of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public, then it does not sound absurd that an episode such as the death of a young man under those unfortunate circumstances can introduce a discontinuity leading to a particular change in the context of reception. That change was capable of introducing an ambiguity in the statue's identity, that now resembles (at least to some) a young man falling.

On this respect, I could also add the following point, which better qualifies the transformation that *Rock Steady* underwent. In the case of the mask, the substantial change in context of reception and function transformed the mask into a different *kind* of thing: a sacred object and an artwork are in effect two different "sortals."[74] But, in the case of *Rock Steady*, a change in its context of reception that was not as substantial as that one in the mask's case did not transform it into another sort of thing: it is still an artwork. Only some of its relational (though relevant) properties changed. In this sense, the ontological transformation is not exactly the same, but there is a significant analogy between those two.

By appreciating the preceding, what I am suggesting in my second criticism to Cahen's opinion and, more in general, to the traditional view can be expressed more rigorously as follows: the identity of a public artwork depends in part on considerations concerning its context of reception, that is, its public-art sphere.[75] The features of a public-art sphere are determined (at least in part) by the evolving history of its public-art public.[76] I call this assumption as the *public-related hypoth-*

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of local projects in Chapter 3.

[74]For a discussion of sortals as a philosophical category, see R. E. Grandy, "Sortals," in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/sortals/>.

[75]Of course, my view suggests some form of contextualism. For a detailed discussion of various forms of contextualism, see R. Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction: Art, Speech, and the Law* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 95-152. In particular, one might regard my view as a form of what Theodore Gracyk defines as "constructivism." See T. Gracyk, *The Philosophy of Art: An Introduction* (Cambridge, UK, and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011), 83-87.

[76]By linking the features of a public-art sphere to the history of its related public-art public, my view suggest something important, that is, the connection between public-art spheres and wider historical events.

esis (PRH). According to PRH, significant changes that affect the public-art public that relates to the public-art sphere within which a public artwork is received may very well introduce tensions and ambiguities in the identity of that artwork as a piece of public art.

I should emphasize that PRH seems to extend to public artworks in general what James Young writes about monuments and memorials—a possible extension that he already suggests.[77] In particular, he argues that a monument's interactions with what I define as its public-art public "constitute" (at least in part, one might add) what that monument is. On this respect, he writes:

> [Memorials] encompasses not just [their] aesthetic contours or their places in contemporary artistic discourse. [They also include] the constant give and take between memorials and viewers and, finally, *the responses of viewer of their own world in light of a memorialized past* [that is, their history-ies].[78]

As Feagin suggests in her ontology of artworks, I also argue that ontological ambiguities and tensions need not be resolved. That is, PRH is a form of ontological pluralism allowing for the possibility that one and the same artwork can have a somewhat unsettled nature or, by using Margolis' idiom, a nature that is *not* fully determinate, but determinable in a plurality of ways.[79] A nature that, one might say, allows for diversified and even conflicting construals of the properties of the same public artwork, without creating any irresolvable paradox.[80] In the case of *Rock Steady*, PRH simply wants to open up the possibility for including "resem-

[77]See J. E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory: Toward a Social Aesthetics of Holocaust Memorials," in F. C. DeCoste and B. Schwartz, *The Holocaust's Ghost: Writings on Art, Politics, Law and Education* (Edmonton, Canada: The University of Alberta Press, 2000): 165-178. In particular, Young suggests that his view could be applied to public artworks in general by briefly discussing Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc.* See Ibid., 171-172.

[78]Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory," 166.

[79]See, for instance, Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?*, 58-65, 134-136.

[80]Here, one might see some link with the issue of the relationship between interpretation and ontology. I am not interested in airing that issue. For a further analysis of the relationship between interpretation and ontology, see also J. Margolis, "The Social Space of Interpretation," *Philosophical Inquiries* 1 (2013): 39-62; and, for an contrasting view, Stecker, *Interpretation and Construction*.

bling a young man falling" among the statue's properties, but does *not* prevent construals that do not acknowledge it. According to PRH, both construals may very well be acceptable.

Here I need to emphasize a point. In section 5.2, I have emphasized that often, as a consequence of personal differences, individuals respond differently to the same object of emotion. I have added that those different reactions are warranted if they rest on true or justified beliefs and if the reasons for the emotions sound plausible to other members of one's group—in this case, the other members of one's public-art public. In this section, I have discussed a second way in which different responses to the same public artwork can be warranted. In effect, I have suggested that PRH allows for construing the properties of the same public artwork in a plurality of ways. And different properties may very well ground diverging emotional reactions.

Before concluding, then, let me add one last consideration about the larger significance of my analysis of emotional argument. By capturing the diversity of emotional reactions to a public artwork, my account of emotional argument seems to well accord with Gardiner's motivation for including a discussion of emotions in a theory of the public sphere as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: to thematize the heterogeneity of publics. Moreover, since diverging emotional reactions might plausibly function as premises of conflicting arguments, my account also throws further light on the pluralism that characterizes the logic of public-art spheres.

In this chapter, I have expanded my discussion of the logic of justification in public-art spheres. In particular, *contra* standard views of the logic of the public sphere, I have argued that we have intuitive reasons for considering emotional reactions as playing a legitimate role in arguments proposed in public-art debates. I have clarified that, in some cases, appeals to emotional reactions func-

tion as premises of plausible emotional arguments. In this sense, those reactions provide evidence in favor of particular conclusions. Then, I have proposed that emotional arguments are plausible when the appeal to emotion is not arbitrary, but warranted. I have proposed a test, TEW, by means of which one can determine whether an emotional reaction is warranted. While exploring which properties can ground a warranted reaction, I have discussed looks-like properties. *Contra* a mainstream view among art experts, which I have defined as the "traditional view," I have maintained that, in some cases, looks-like properties are actual properties of public artworks, and can ground warranted emotional reactions.

In the following chapter, I expand my discussion of PRH. In order provide further evidence in its favor, I discuss some of its positive consequences. Then, I defend it from a relevant objection.

CHAPTER 6

A PRELIMINARY DEFENSE OF PRH: ONTOLOGY, ARTIST'S INTENTION, AND THE LIMITS OF THE "LOOKS LIKE" APPROACH

In the previous chapter, I have discussed emotional argument. I have argued that emotional argument is an argument that includes an appeal to emotion among its premises. I have also proposed that an emotional argument is plausible when it appeals to an emotion that is warranted. In order to determine whether an emotional reaction is warranted, I have developed a test, TEW. According to TEW, an emotional reaction is warranted if: (i) it rests on true or well-justified beliefs; and, (ii) it "fits" the situation. While examining what are the features of a public artwork that can ground a warranted emotional reaction, I have discussed a particularly controversial kind of properties, that is, looks-like properties. Looks-like properties are those properties that depend on a perceived visual similarity between a public artwork and some other entity, often of a common kind. I have argued that, sometimes, public artworks acquire looks-like properties as a consequence of a change in their respective contexts of reception. In this sense, I have suggested that the possibility for public artworks to acquire new properties depends on an more general hypothesis about an aspect of their ontology. I have called that hypothesis as public-related hypothesis (PRH). According to PRH, the properties that a public artwork has cannot be restricted to those depending on (the complex interaction

between) the artist's intention, what can be sensorily discerned in its forms, and what bears on its style and genre. The *real* properties that a public artwork has depend in part on larger (non-artistic) considerations about its context of reception. Since a public artwork's context of reception is its public-art sphere, and the features of a public-art sphere are determined (at least in part) by the history of its related public-art public, I have thus added that PRH entails what follows: the properties that a public artwork has depend (in part) on considerations about the history of its public-art public.

This chapter discusses more in details PRH. As I have already recognized in the previous chapter, PRH is unusual and requires more discussion than what I have provided there. Here, by discussing further positive consequences of PRH, and by defending it against a relevant objection, I gather further evidence in favor of the following thesis. PRH offers very promising grounds for an ontology of public artworks. In this sense, I believe that an ontology that can successfully capture our practices of contemporary public art should include (in some way) PRH.

But before continuing, I need to introduce a caveat. First, as most philosophical disciplines, ontology has fuzzy borders, and broadly construed addresses different kinds (though related) questions. Roughly, ontology is mainly interested in the two following questions: (i) What is "the stuff" that reality is made out off?; and, (ii) What are the most general features and relations of those "things" that exist?[1] In the philosophy of art, those questions have been adapted as follows: (a) What kind(s) of things are artworks?[2] (b) What are the properties and features of art-

[1]For an instructive introduction to ontology as a philosophical discipline, see T. Hofweber, "Logic and Ontology," in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 Edition) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/logic-ontology/>.

[2]This is probably the standard understanding of what is the question addressed by the ontology of artworks. For a useful introduction, see N. Wolterstorff, "Ontology of Artworks," in S. Davies, K. M. Higgins, R. Hopkins, R. Stecker, and D. E. Cooper (eds.), *A Companion to Aesthetics: Second Edition* (Blackwell Reference Online: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), <http://www.blackwellreference.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405169226_chunk_g978140516922617_ss1-3>.

works and how do they come to have the features that they have?[3] Of course, (a) and (b) are related questions, and the answer to one may very influence how we understand the other.[4] However, as David Davies suggests, answers to (b) have no obvious implications in terms of how to answer (a).[5] That is, the fact that an artwork W_1 possesses a property p and came to possess p for reason r need not entail that W_1 is of a specific ontological kind. And one could add that, vice-versa, answers to (a) have no obvious implications in terms of how to answer (b). That is, the fact that artwork W_2 is an entity of a specific kind need not entail that W_2 possesses p and that it came to posses it for reason r. PRH discusses aspects of public artworks' ontology that are related only to question (b). In this sense, I am bracketing question (a). I do not exclude that some of what I say might have consequences in terms of how to answer (a).

Section 6.1 discusses an application of PRH. In particular, by throwing new light on the *Tilted Arc*'s controversy, it shows that some emotional reactions and opinions traditionally deemed as unreasonable were respectively warranted and justified. In this sense, I show that PHR has the conceptual resources for addressing effectively even difficult cases of public art. Section 6.2 expands my account of PRH, and argues that this ontological hypothesis can provide us with a heuris-

[3]Among those who have addressed this question, see, among others, S. Feagin, "Tossed Salad: Ontology and Identity," in M. Krausz (ed.), *Is There a Single Right Interpretation?* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002): 360-380; and, R. Kraut, "Interpretation and the Ontology of Art," in R. Kraut, *Artworld Metaphysics* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2007): 98-121. More in general, the debate on ontological contextualism addresses this kind of concerns. For a useful introduction to ontological contextualism, see T. Gracyk, "Ontological Contextualism," in Davies, at al., *A Companion to Aesthetics* <http://www.blackwellreference.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405169226_chunk_g978140516922617_ss1-2>.

[4]For instance, it seems to me that Joseph Margolis' ontology of artworks as culturally emergent entities depends importantly on his conception of artworks' Intentional properties and how artworks acquire those properties. See, among others, J. Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); and the subentry "Historical Ontology" in J. Margolis, et al., "Ontology of Art," in M. Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford Art Online: Oxford University Press, 1998) <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0380>.

[5]D. Davies, "Artistic Intentions and the Ontology of Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 39 (1999), 151.

tic criterion for determining when a looks-like property is an actual property of a public artwork. According to that criterion, a looks-like property is a property of a public artwork when one can relate it to the history of that artwork's public-art public. Section 6.3 and 6.4 discuss a possible objection to PRH. According to that objection, PRH should be rejected since it suggests that a public artwork could have properties that the artist did not intend it to have. I argue against that objection. Section 6.5 examines an example of a public artwork where the artist seems to accept PRH's anti-intentionalist consequences. I recognize that there is a certain irony in consulting artists about the anti-intentionalist consequences of my view. Of course, artists' reactions cannot determine by themselves whether my view is correct. However, I think that artists' acceptance of my view provides not only further evidence in favor of my reply to the intentionalist objection. It also shows that PRH effectively captures an aspect of our actual practices of public art.

6.1 Another Go at *Tilted Arc*: PRH and "Looks Like" Approach

Installed in 1981 and removed in 1989, after five years of public hearings, lawsuits, and controversies, Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* is probably the most discussed example of 20th century public art.[6] The sculpture was a slightly curved wall in Corten steel, by the monumental size of 120 ft long, 12 ft high, and 2.5 in thick. *Tilted Arc* was installed in Federal Plaza in New York, in front of Federal Building. By following Serra's instructions, *Tilted Arc* was placed in the middle of the square, cutting the way of general walkers crossing Federal Plaza. As Miwon Kwon argues, Serra opted for aggressive forms and a confrontational placement with the following aims in mind: "to interrogate rather than accommodate the given architecture, [and to disrupt] the spatial conditions of the art work's site at Federal

[6]The most comprehensive analysis of *Tilted Arc* and its controversy can be found in H. Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Plaza in New York City".[7] Kwon is correct, and in 1989, Serra described his project in a way that well accords with her reading. He wrote:

> As I pointed out, *Tilted Arc* was conceived from the start as a site-specific sculpture and was not meant to be "site-adjusted" or ... "relocated." Site-specific works deal with the environmental components of given places. The scale, size, and location of site-specific works are determined by the topography of the site, whether it be urban or landscape or architectural enclosure. The works become part of the site and restructure both conceptually and perceptually the organization of the site.[8]

Many members of *Tilted Arc*'s public-art public reacted with hostility to the presentation of Serra's sculpture. As I have already mentioned in Chapter 5, among those hostile members, some found the *Arc* frightening, though for different reasons. For instance, Margo Jacobs feared that *Tilted Arc* could make Federal Plaza "a dangerous place to be when a large number of people congregate at once, as they do in the political demonstrations we have all seen on the seven o'clock news."[9] Vickie O'Dougherty, a physical security specialist for the Federal Protection and Safety Division of GSA, feared *Tilted Arc* because its design could possibly causes a blast-loading effect, thus increasing the damages produced in case of a terrorist attack against Federal Building (the largest federal building after the Pentagon). Paul Goldstein, a representative of Manhattan Community Board #1, denounced that "the piece constitutes both a safety and a fire hazard."[10] He had probably in mind something similar to what one employee at Federal Plaza wrote: "The Arc promotes crimes such as muggings, rapes, etc. because it blocks the view

[7]M. Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: The MIT Press), 5.

[8]R. Serra, "*Tilted Arc* Destroyed," *Art in America* 77 (1989): 34–47. As quoted in Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 12.

[9]As quoted in G. Horowitz, "Public Art/Public Space: The Spectacle of the Tilted Arc Controversy," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (1996), 11-12.

[10]Ibid., 12

of the plaza."[11] By mentioning the fear elicited in them by the sculpture, Jacobs, O'Dougherty, and Goldstein were among those members of *Tilted Arc*'s public-art public who asked for the removal of Serra's sculpture.

Many commentators found those emotional reactions senseless, and some even ridicule them. For instance, Gregg Horowitz describes the reaction of Jacobs, whom he ironically identifies as a "horse-breeder" and an "TV watcher," as a "phantasmic exaggeration."[12] He then defines O'Dougherty's fear as a paranoid "fantasy of political danger crystallizing around the arc."[13] Though being less harsh, Horowitz also dismisses Goldstein's reaction as an expression of his "regressive" desire—conditioned by the "ideological transformation of the city characteristic of the 1980s"—to reduce a public space to "a space of private pleasure that happens in the middle of the city."[14]

By looking at his discussion of those emotional reactions of fear, one could safely assume that Horowitz (and those sympathetic to his views) would also dismiss as implausible those arguments that mentioned the fear elicited by *Tilted Arc* as a reason for removing the sculpture. One could explain such a dismissal as follows. As I have argued in Chapter 5, by drawing on contemporary argumentation theory, one could understand arguments such as Jacobs', O'Dougherty's, and Goldstein's ones as examples of emotional argument.[15] As Aron Ben-Ze'ev suggests, emotional arguments are those arguments where one appeals to an emotion as support for the conclusion, that is, where one cites as a premise an appeal to an emotion.[16] In his view, emotional argument is plausible when the following

[11] As quoted in Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 95.

[12] Horowitz, "Public Art/Public Space," 11.

[13] Ibid., 12.

[14] Ivi. I must admit that I cannot avoid thinking that, for some feminist theorists, Horowitz's more sympathetic attitude towards Goldstein's reaction may very well look like gender biased. Goldstein is the only man whose opinion is discussed by Horowitz.

[15] For an introductory discussion of emotional argument in argumentation theory, see D. Walton, *The Place of Emotion in Argument* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

[16] A. Ben-Ze'ev, "Emotions and Argumentation," *Informal Logic* 17 (1996): 189-200

condition is met: the emotion to which the argument appeals is warranted. I have argued that an emotional reaction to a public artwork is warranted when passing what I have labeled as the *Pragmatic Test of Emotional Warrant* (TEW). In order to pass TEW, an emotional reaction must rest on true or well-justified beliefs, and "fit" the situation.

At this point, Horowitz (or someone sympathetic to his view) could point out that those reactions of fear to the *Arc* rested on false beliefs: the sculpture was not a blast-effect wall or a place promoting crimes. Then, those reactions were unwarranted. By being unwarranted, they could not provide support in favor of the conclusion advocating for the removal of the *Arc*.

I must admit that, though not unreasonable, I find Horowitz's discussion of the fear that *Tilted Arc* elicited in some members of its public-art public as problematic for the following reason: it is completely insensitive to the historical context at the time when *Tilted Arc* was installed. In the remainder of this section, I explain why Horowitz's reading is insensitive to the historical context. By drawing on some of the conceptual resources that I have developed in Chapter 5, I oppose his view and propose a competing reading. My reading is more contextually sensitive, and argues for the opposite conclusion, that is, the fear elicited by *Tilted Arc* (at least in some of the cases discussed above) was warranted. In order to develop my reading, I rely on the *public-relate hypothesis* (PRH) and on what Harriet Senie defines as the *"looks like" approach*.

Before continuing with my discussion, let me briefly summarize one more time my understanding of PRH and of Senie's "looks like" approach. PRH is a hypothesis about the ontology of public artworks. It argues that the properties that a public artwork has depend not only on the artist's intention, what can be sensorily discerned in its forms, and what bears on its style and genre, but also (in part) on considerations of its context of reception. Since a public artwork's con-

text of reception is its public-art sphere, according with PRH, the properties that a public artwork has depend in part on the features of its public-art sphere. Since a public-art sphere is the discursive space within which members of a public-art public discuss issues related to a public artwork, then (at least) some features of a public-art sphere are determined by the history of its related public-art public. Moreover, PRH also suggests that changes in a public artwork's context of reception might introduce ontological tensions and ambiguities in that public artwork's identity: because of those changes, a public artwork may very well acquire new properties.

Senie's "looks like" approach is the thesis that what I define as members of public-art publics often identify and understand public artworks in terms of perceived visual similarities between those artworks and objects of a common kind. I call a public artwork's capacity to resemble visually an object of a common kind as *looks-like property*. For instance, as Serra admitted, *Tilted Arc* resembled a ship. Thus, "resembling a ship" is a looks-like property of that sculpture. One should emphasize that, by combining PRH and the "looks like" approach, public artworks can acquire looks-like properties as a consequence of a change in their respective contexts of reception.

Let me go back to the fear elicited by *Tilted Arc*. As Senie argues, by drawing on historian Casey Blake, one could reasonably explain that fear by taking into account the two following considerations about the historical context within which members of the *Arc*'s public-art public were living at that time: on the one hand, the "pervasive Cold War rhetoric of the time" and, on the other hand, the perceived "worsening conditions of the urban environment of the 1980s," which resulted in the "visceral unease that New Yorkers experience when they cannot immediately see where they are going."[17] By appreciating the relevance of those historical con-

[17]Senie, *The* Tilted Arc *Controversy*, 88, 95-96.

siderations for members of *Tilted Arc*'s public-art public, one could argue what follows: the *Arc*'s forms evoked disturbing images in the minds of some members of its public-art public such as the image of a blast wall and of a dangerous visual barrier. Those images elicited in (at least some of) those members an emotional reaction of fear. In this sense, it was not its being an actual threat, one might say, but its resembling threats occupying the public imaginary during the 1980s that enabled *Tilted Arc* to elicit fear in some members of its public-art public.

By following PRH, one could paraphrase what I have just said as follows: because of some features of its context of reception, *Tilted Arc* acquired "resembling threats" as one of its looks-like properties. Then, one could propose a reading according to which the fear felt by some of its viewers rested on a well-justified belief, that is, "The *Arc* possesses "resembling threats" as one of its features." Moreover, it seems rather uncontroversial that fear "fits" a situation when one confronts an object that resembles a threat—as Clinton Boisvert's guerrila project 'Boxes of Fear' unequivocally shows.[18] Thus, according to this reading, the reaction of fear was warranted. Let me express this point also in a language that is closer to Horowitz's.

Horowitz argues that *Tilted Arc* became an object of controversy not by being "the cause of the deathliness of Federal Plaza" or by being "itself an impediment." It became an object of controversy since "it prevent[ed] viewers of it from using the plaza ... to imagine the existence of an alternative public space," that is, it

[18]According to *The New York Times*, on December 11 2002, art student Clinton Boisvert "taped 37 black cardboard boxes inscribed with the word "Fear" in the Union Square subway station". In the turmoil of the post-September 11 era, reactions escalated: commuters panicked and transit workers feared a terrorist attack. The bomb squad intervened. The station was shut down for five hours. It is interesting to notice that Mr Boisvert's lawyer tried to defend his client by appealing to his lack of contextual knowledge: "he's only been in New York three months; I've been trying to explain to him what 9/11 was like here. He feels terrible. He wants to say sorry to New Yorkers, with a capital S." See O. Burkeman, "Artist Held After 'Boxes of Fear' Spread Chaos on New York Subway System," *The Guardian* (December 18, 2002) <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/dec/18/arts.usa>; K. Flynn, "Art Student's Project On 'Fear' Becomes A Lesson in the Law," *The New York Times* (December 17, 2002) <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/17/nyregion/art-student-s-project-on-fear-becomes-a-lesson-in-the-law.html>;

"deprived people of the privilege of their illusions".[19] I must admit that, here, I perfectly agree with Horowitz. *Tilted Arc* surely deprived people of the privilege of their illusions. Our disagreement begins when considering the answer to the following question: what did *Tilted Arc* give back to his viewers? Horowitz believes that *Tilted Arc* gave back a space "for criticism of [corporate and financial] tendencies," which want to transform urban areas in "an imaginary city, secured, mall-like, and heavily surveilled."[20] Even if Horowitz were correct, his answer is incomplete. By destroying viewer's imaginary (though illusory) space, *Titled Arc* did not merely provided a space for criticism. It also substituted that original imaginary space inhabited by mall-like fantasies with another one. But this time, the space was one populated by the worst fears that were present at that time in the viewers' mind: terrorism and crime. One should also remember that employers working in the Federal Building, like Vickie O'Dougherty, were dealing daily with issues of terrorism and (plausibly enough) were feeling at risk because of that. It should come as no surprise if some of those viewers were disturbed by the "imaginary space" evoked by the *Arc*, and reacted with fear when coming into contact with Serra's sculpture.

I ought to quickly add that I am *not* claiming that the emotional reaction of fear was the uniquely appropriate reaction to the *Arc*. By the same token, I also do *not* necessarily sympathize with the decision to remove it from Federal Plaza. My discussion is neutral with respect to the issue whether *Tilted Arc* should have been removed. As I have already said, my aim here is simply to reconsider an emotional reaction that played a prominent role in the *Tilted Arc*'s controversy. By reconsidering such a reaction, I have shown that it was warranted, and that the argument where it appeared as evidence was plausible. In this sense, I have shown the explanatory power of PRH, which is capable to expand our capacity

[19]Horowitz, "Public Art/Public Space," 10.
[20]Ibid., 13.

of understanding and making sense of our experiences of public art. I consider the more comprehensive explanatory possibilities of PRH as further evidence in favor of its acceptance as the best alternative for understanding an aspect of public artworks' ontology.

In the following section, I discuss another positive consequence of PRH. In particular, I show that PRH can introduce some degree of intersubjectivity in applying the "looks like" approach. I argue that PRH can provide us with a very much-needed criterion for identifying when a looks-like property is an actual property of a public artwork. One should emphasize that this is the first analysis of the limitations of the "looks like" approach. Of course, this is just the beginning of what would need to be a more extended discussion of what limitations should apply, and I am not claiming to have settled the entire issue here.

6.2 PRH and the Limits of the "Looks Like" Approach,

By looking at my discussion of *Tilted Arc* (and of Artur Silva's *Rock Steady Gravity Sketch* in Chapter 5), one could ask the following questions: "Does a public artwork possess every property that viewers attribute to it? Or, is there any limitation to the attribution of looks-like properties?" In this section, I argue that a public artwork need not possess all the looks-like properties that viewers attribute to it. I believe that PRH suggests an intersubjective criterion for identifying cases where looks-like properties are actual properties of a public artwork. In this sense, PRH indicates that looks-like properties do not arbitrarily depend on whatever any one of us supposes they are, but respond to some kind of publicly recognized criterion. In other words, one could say that PRH can help us identify arbitrary applications of the "looks like" approach.[21]

[21]One should emphasize that, in the literature, theorists never discuss the limits of the "looks like" approach. Senie briefly touches on this issue, but she never provides a sustained discussion of what should be those limits. See Senie, "Baboons, Pet Rocks, and Bomb Threats," 240.

I should emphasize that I take its capacity to introduce non-arbitrary limitations to the "looks like" approach as gathering further evidence in favor of PRH and, more in general, for my account of public art. In particular, such a capacity shows that my discussion of the logic and the ontology of public art, though accommodating our actual practices, is not merely descriptive. My account has some critical traction, and can help us not only understand our practices of public art, but also evaluating and orienting them.

But, when is an application of the "looks like" approach arbitrary? By considering PRH, I define arbitrary applications of the "looks like" approach all the applications where a viewer attributes to a public artwork one or more looks-like properties that disregard in some important ways that public artwork's context of reception, whose features are (partly) determined by considerations of its public-art public's history. Let me explain this point more analytically.

One can see PRH as implying the following heuristic criterion for identifying those looks-like properties that are actual properties of a public artwork. Call that criterion *public-related criterion* (PRC): looks-like properties that are properties of a public artwork are those properties that one can relate to the history of that artwork's public-art public.[22] One can relate a looks-like property to the history of a public-art public only if one can provide a relatively coherent narrative explaining how that looks-like property connects to some significant past events related to the members of its corresponding public-art public. In this sense, if one cannot relate the looks-like property l to the history of a public-art public P, which is the public-art public related to public artwork W_1, then l is not a property of W_1. An example will help me clarify PRC.

Consider, for instance, Pino Castagna's *In pietra alpestra e dura.* Inaugurated in

[22]Here, I would like to remind the reader that I am focusing on looks-like properties, and PRC only applies to those properties. Of course, public artworks have many other kinds of properties that do not depend on the history of a public-art public, and that can ground warranted emotional reactions.

July 2009, the sculpture dominates the center of Bad Kissingen Square—a newly renovated plaza right next to the beach of Marina di Massa. Marina is a small center in Tuscany, close to Carrara, a city in the province of Massa-Carrara where the famous white marble is extracted. *In pietra* is a massive complex of marble blocks: it measures 19 x 58 x 29 ft, and is almost 350 tons of weight. Fourteen Carrara marble monoliths of different shapes and sizes constitute the work. The monoliths are arranged in a disordered pattern, and intersect with one another following multiple axes.

Now, imagine that, because of its vertical development and color, someone perceives a visual similarity between *In pietra* and Miami's skyline. And, because of the association between Miami's skyline and drug trafficking, she then feels disturbed.[23] Let us also assume that this person uses an appeal to such an emotional reaction as evidence in favor of the conclusion that Castagna's *In pietra* should be removed. Should we consider that argument as plausible? In other words, can "resembling Miami's skyline" be considered as a property of *In pietra* that can ground a warranted emotional reaction?

It is my view that, by following PRC, one has a good reason to maintain that "resembling Miami's skyline" is not a property of *In pietra*, and to conclude that it cannot ground a warranted emotional reaction. As a consequence, I would suggest that the argument is implausible. Moreover, a decision about whether to remove or relocate Castagna's work should not consider that person's opinion as relevant.

I should emphasize that the reason for resisting the inclusion of "resembling Miami's skyline" among *In pietra*'s looks-like properties does not depend on an *a priori* impossibility of recognizing in mere visual terms such a similarity. As we all know, the relationship of visual similarity is so informal and malleable to be

[23]This possible similarity between Castagna's *In pietra* and Miami's skyline and the consequent emotional reaction depending on it were brought to my attention during Dr. Silk's graduate seminar in Contemporary Art, which I attended in the Spring '11. Ideally, this section is a reply to that question.

applied to the most disparate things: clouds and horses, beanstalks and phalluses, and, as in the Rorschach test, meaningless inkblots and dancers. And, of course, it can be also applied to *In pietra* and Miami's skyline.

I resist the idea that "resembling Miami's skyline" should be counted among *In pietra*'s looks-like properties for the following reason: Miami and its skyline do not relate significantly (at least at the present time) to the history of *In pietra*'s (local) public-art public, which one can reasonably identify with those living in the area of Massa-Carrara.[24] That is, it does not seem possible to construe a relatively reasonable historical narrative that connects in some significant way the history of *In pietra*'s public-art public to Miami's skyline. (Put somewhat brutally, in general, Miami's skyline means nothing for people living in Massa-Carrara.) By considering the impossibility to provide that narrative, an emotional reaction that is grounded on the recognition of such a visual similarity would disregard *In Pietra*' nature with particular reference to its constitutive link with its public-art public, and should not be considered as warranted.

I want to emphasize that PRC merely introduces rather loose limitations in my view of looks-like properties. Those limitations prevent my approach from turning into an anarchic (*"anything goes"*) view, without suggesting exclusivist implications. In effect, PRC is a very modest constraint, which seems consistent with the normative requirement of maximal inclusiveness as introduced in Chapter 2. Of course, PRC does not discriminate in terms of class, gender, or race. And it does not do that even in terms of prior artistic (or other specialistic) knowledge.

It seems to me that PRC simply requires from participants in a public-art debate to act *not* as private individuals, but *as* members of a public-public art. Intuitively, one could suggest that to act as member of a public-art public requires considering

[24]For a discussion of local public-art publics, see Chapter 3. Pino Castagna explicitly created his statue as a homage to Carrara marble and its people, that is, those that, for centuries, worked as quarrymen extracting the precious stone from the Apuan Alps.

as relevant that public-art public's "collective history." By "collective history," I intend what scholars in *social memory studies* also call "collective memory," "collective consciousness," and, by employing an awkward and yet insightful term, "mnemohistory."[25] Collective history "unlike proper history ... is concerned not with the past as such, but only with the past as remembered."[26] In an important sense, a group's collective history is an interpreted record of past events that actively shape the identities of the members of that group. A collective history can be scattered, inharmonious, and conflicting, but is still intersubjectively shared and recognized as publicly significant. PRC merely suggests, then, that attributions of looks-like properties should sound germane when considering the collective history of a public-art public.

In the next two sections, I consider a possible objection against PRH. By rebutting this objection, I intend to offer a more nuanced account of my view. As a result, I show that, though still at a preliminary stage, PRH can withstand some of the most basic concerns that one can raise against it. This objection contends that PRH should be avoided when its outcomes conflict with the artist's intentions.

6.3 PRH, Looks-Like Properties, and Artist's Intention

When discussing Serra's *Tilted Arc*, I have argued that the fear that the sculpture elicited in some members of its public-art public was grounded on one among the sculpture's looks-like properties: I have called that property "resembling threats."

[25]See J. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York, NY: Free Press 1984/1893); E. Hobsbawm and T. Rangers (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992); J. K. Olick and J. Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From Collective Memory to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–140; J. Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006). For a useful overview, see J. K. Olick, "Collective Memory," in W. A. Darity (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 2* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008): 7-8.

[26]Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*, 9.

In fact, by drawing on Senie, I have suggested that the *Arc* resembled both a blast-wall effect and a place where criminals could easily attack their victims. However, I can imagine someone raising against my explanation the following objection: "Serra did not intend the *Arc* to have the property that you are talking about. Thus, *Tilted Arc* does possess the property "resembling threats," your clever explanation is incorrect!"

I am unsure whether Serra intended *Tilted Arc* to have the looks-like property that I attribute to it. (Perhaps he did, at least to some extent.) However, there are surely cases when PRH introduces as a property of a public artwork one that surely disregards or even contradicts (explicitly) the artist's intentions.[27] Consider again, for instance, Artur Silva's *Rock Steady Gravity Sketch*, a public artwork that I have already discussed in Chapter 5. *Rock Steady* was a sculpture installed in Indianapolis (IN). It represented a b-boy—that is, a male break-dancer—performing "handstand," a move where the dancer stands on his hands while his legs are up in the air. After Xavier Sommervile died falling from a five story building in the proximity of the statue, some members of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public asked for relocating Silva's piece because of the discomfort elicited in them by its resemblance with a young man falling. (The request was satisfied, and the sculpture was removed.) I have argued that such a discomfort was warranted since Sommerville's death changed *Rock Steady*'s context of reception. Such a change introduced an ontological ambiguity and tension in the statue's identity, which, according to PRH, consequently acquired the property "resembling a young man falling." As some actually pointed out, when Silva realized it, he did *not* intend *Rock Steady* to resemble a young man falling.[28] In this sense, is a consideration of Silva's intentions

[27]Here, when I talk about "intentions," I am referring to actual intentions, rather than to hypothetical ones. In discussing actual intentions, I agree with Noël Carroll's criticism against Hypothetical Intentionalism. If Hypothetical Intentionalism is a form of intentionalism, its aim is to track the artist's actual intentions. See N. Carroll, "Interpretation and Intention: The Debate between Hypothetical and Actual Intentionalism," *Metaphilosophy* 31 (2000): 75-95.

[28]See AA.VV. "Storm Over Statue Highlights Angst Over Indy Art,"

enough to exclude "resembling a young man falling" from *Rock Steady*'s properties? Are the artist's intentions enough to limit the scope of PRH? I believe that it is not the case.

In this section, I argue that a public artwork may very well possess properties that the artist did not intend it to have as a consequence of contextual considerations as suggested by PRH. In the remainder of this section, I propose two answers to the intentionalist objection. One answer is more conservative. The second answer is more radical, and questions more forcefully the view that the artist's intention should constrain what properties a public artwork can have, and our interpretation of it. Even if this second answer is more radical, it does not argue for the principled dismissal of a possible relevance of intentions in determining a public artwork's properties. It rather argues that intentionalist construals of a public artwork's properties are often incomplete.

The first conservative answer to the intentionalist objection emphasizes that PRH does not dismiss construals of a public artwork's properties that well accord with the artist's intentions. On the contrary, since it allows for construing the properties of the same public artwork in a plurality of ways, PRH is compatible (at least to some degree) with intentionalism. In this sense, as I have already suggested, according to PRH there is no need to reject an interpretation of *Rock Steady* that is closer to Silva's intentions, and that does not consider it as possessing "resembling a young man falling" among its properties. In other words, according to PRH, an interpretation that considers *Rock Steady* just as a representation of a b-boy performing hand-stand is definitely acceptable.[29]

(October 6, 2012) <http://www.courierpress.com/news/2012/oct/06/storm-over-statue-highlights-angst-over-indy-art/>.

[29]This answer mirrors Noël Carroll's conservative reply to an anti-intentionalist objection to intentionalism. See N. Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," in G. Iseminger (ed.), *Intention and Interpretation* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992), 115-116. Carroll seems to agree with this proposal also in "Anglo-American Aesthetics and Contemporary Criticism: Intention and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (1993): 245-252.

Of course, I can imagine a scenario where Franco, the unshakable intentionalist, is not willing to accept the accommodation proposed above, and presses the point by arguing that, in this case, *only* a reading that accords with artist's intentions is acceptable. Franco could motivate his refusal to accept the accommodation proposed above by appealing to what one could call as the "conversationalist model" of interpretation—a model that is often adopted by intentionalists.[30] According to the conversationalist model, when engaging an artwork, we enter a relationship with the artist that is "roughly analogous" to a conversation.[31] In a conversation, according to that model, speaker's intentions determine the meaning of utterances. Thus, to understand an utterance is to understand the intention of the speaker. Analogically, the conversationalist model maintains that to understand the meaning of an artwork is (primarily) to understand the artist's intention. In this view, thus, the artist's intention determines importantly (though perhaps not exclusively) what properties an artwork has (that is, its identity), and constrains its interpretation.[32]

According to the conversational model, a reason to reject interpretations of *Rock Steady* claiming that it resembles a young man falling is that all the evidence we have indicates that Artur Silva did not have the intention to make his statue as resembling a young man falling. In this sense, one should reject that "resembling a young man falling" is a property of *Rock Steady*, and, consequently, those interpretations (wrongly) attributing that property to Silva' sculpture.

[30]The most influential figures among intentionalists endorsing the conversationalist model are Robert Stecker and Noël Carroll. See R. Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); and Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation." Here, I concentrate on Carroll's view.

[31]Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," 117.

[32]For instance, on the relationship between properties and intention, Carroll writes that the "*real* properties" of an artworks are those that accord with the artist's intention. See N. Carroll, "Danto, Style, and Intention," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 53 (1995), 257n13. On the relationship between interpretation and intention, he writes: "interpretations of artworks should be constrained by our knowledge of the biography of the historical artist and our best hypotheses about the artist's actual intentions concerning the artworks in question." See N. Carroll, "The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Myself," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997), 305.

Franco's further objection requires a more elaborated and radical answer. This second answer accepts the conversational model as instructive.[33] But it proposes an original challenge to the adequacy of the intentionalist account of meaning, identity and interpretation when considering actual conversations, and, analogically, when considering artworks.[34] In particular, by drawing on recent developments in linguistic anthropology and, more accurately, in conversational analysis, I argue that the intentionalist account of conversation falls short when considering perlocutionary acts and their effects. Analogically, intentionalism does not have the resources to explain what I call as public artworks' perlocutionary aspects and effects. Thus, one need not reject properties like *Rock Steady*'s "resembling resembling a young man falling" and, more in general, properties that conflict with the artist's intention as real properties of an artwork. Moreover, interpretation need not constrain public artworks' interpretation. In the following section, I justify my reply to Franco.

[33]Some philosophers challenge intentionalism on the basis, among other things, of the inadequacy of the conversational model. See K. Wilson, "Confession of a Weak Anti-intentionalist: Exposing Myself," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997): 309-311; G. Dickie, "Intentions: Conversations and Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 46 (2006), 79-81; and, partially, J. Margolis, *The Cultural Space of the Arts*, 65.

[34]Some philosophers, including some of those challenging the adequacy of the conversational analogy, question the intentionalist's accounts of conversation, in particular that one proposed by Carroll, which is the most widely discussed.

6.4 Intentions, Conversations, and Perlocutions

In *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin argues that a fundamental aspect of the "meaning" of an expression is what it is used to do, that is, what kind of act(ion) one performs when one says something.[35] What kind of act(ion) one performs when one says something is the speech act aspect of language. Austin distinguishes between three kinds (or levels) of speech acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts. First, a locutionary act is the performance of a basic linguistic action of uttering sounds that have meaning or definite reference.[36] Second, an illocutionary act is the act of determining "in what way we are using" a locutionary act.[37] In other words, the illocutionary act specifies the act that one is performing *in* saying something such as asking or answering a question, giving an assurance or a warning, making an appeal or a criticism. (Those are only a few examples of this kind of speech acts.)[38] Third, a perlocutionary act is the act of bringing about specific effects on the feelings, thoughts, or behavior of the hearers, for example, persuading or convincing someone to do something. Call perlocutionary effect as the effect of generating particular effects on the feelings, attitudes, and subsequent behavior of the hearers such as "being convinced that," "being persuaded that," "being surprised that," or "being mislead that."

Intentionalists believe that illocutionary acts "consist characteristically in uttering words in sentences ... with certain intentions," and their illocutionary force is always a consequence of those particular intentions.[39] In this sense, they argue that

[35]See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[36]Austin further distinguishes between three kinds of locutionary acts: phonetic acts, which are mere emissions of noises; phatic acts, which are utterances of grammatical sentences; and rhetic acts, which utterances of a sentence with a definite sense and reference. Austin writes that the "pheme is a unit of language [but] the rheme is a unit of speech". (Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 98.)

[37]Ibid., 98

[38]Ibid., 102.

[39]J. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 24. Traditional intentional theories of meaning are those developed in H. P. Grice, "Meaning," *Philosophical Review* 66 (1957): 377-388; and, J. Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in*

the meaning of an illocutionary act depends on and can be interpreted by means of the speaker's intention.[40]

Without necessarily agreeing, let us assume for the sake of the argument that intentionalists are correct about illocutionary acts.[41] However, normal (and perhaps one could say meaningful) conversations include also perlocutionary acts. (I start a conversation with you because I want to convince you not to ask for a divorce.) But, as Alessandro Duranti suggests, intentionalism's shortcomings clearly appear when trying to explain the perlocutionary dimension that normally characterizes conversations.[42]

For instance, I can promise you that *p* by merely saying "I am promising you that *p*," and, plausibly, the meaning of my utterance is determined by my intention to promise you that *p*. But I cannot convince you that *p* by merely telling you: "I am convincing you that *p*." (After our conversation, you could still want a divorce.) Whether my attempt to convince you that *p* is successful depends on how you respond to my words, not on my intention to do so. And, plausibly, by trying to convince you that *p*, my words may very well have the unintentional effect of convincing you that *non-p*. (Perhaps, my words convinced you even more that you

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the Philosophy of Mind (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[40]Recent developments in linguistic anthropology and conversational analysis strongly suggest that intentionalist accounts of linguistic appear limited and ethnocentric when considering actual conversations. For an overview of recent developments in linguistic anthropology and conversation analysis, see E. Keating and M. Egbert, "Conversation as a Cultural Activity," in A. Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (Blackwell Publishing, Blackwell Reference Online, 2005) <http://www.blackwellreference.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405144308_chunk_g978140514430811>. In "Intentions, Language, and Social Action in a Samoan Context," Alessandro Duranti discusses the example of a conversation at a Samoan meeting where the speaker's intentions seem largely irrelevant for determining the meaning of the speaker's utterances. See A. Duranti, "Intentions, Language, and Social Action in a Samoan Context," *Journal of Pragmatics* 12 (1988), 17-20.

[41]Duranti presses the point and challenges the view that a distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects can be applied to utterances in real-life conversations. He suggests that, in many cases, whether an utterance *p* is an illocutionary act of a particular type is partly determined by how the audience reacts. However, here I do not discuss this possibility. See, for instance, A. Duranti, "Intentions, Self, and Responsibility: An Essay in Samoan Ethnopragmatics," in J. J. Hill (ed.), *Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse* (Cambridge, UK and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 26.

[42]Duranti, "Intentions, Language, and Social Action in a Samoan Context," 14.

want a divorce!)

Then, if not in terms of the speaker's intention, how should we explain perlocutionary acts and effects? By drawing on linguistic anthropology,[43] interactionist approaches to the study of language,[44] and empirical researches in the social sciences,[45] I propose an answer that echoes "hermeneutic" approaches to interpretation as one can find in thinkers such as Bakhtin, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein.[46] Rather than in terms of the speaker's intention, one could better explain perlocutionary effects in terms of socially available criteria, which one might also call as "grammatical rules" or "local norms."[47]

One cannot determine *a priori* which criteria apply in interpreting the perlocutionary aspects of a given conversation.[48] Criteria are implicitly negotiated by those conversing *while conversing*. As in Wittgenstein's discussion of games, in a conversation we "make up the rules as we go along."[49] Such a selection is signifi-

[43]For a introduction to Linguistic Anthropology, see Duranti (ed.), *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. For a useful overview of the field and its debates, see A. Duranti (ed.), *Linguistic Anthropology: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). I should also refer to these further works authored by Duranti: "Anthropology and Linguistics," in R. Fandon, O. Harris, T. H. J. Marchand, M. Nuttall, C. Shore, V. Strang, and R. A. Wilson (eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Social Anthropology* (Los Angeles, CA and London, UK: SAGE 2012): 12-23; "Ethnopragmatics and Beyond: Intentionality and Agency Across Languages and Cultures," in C. Baraldi, A. Borsari, and A. Carli (eds.), *Hybrids, Differences, Visions: On the Study of Culture* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 2011): 151-168; "The Social Ontology of Intentions," *Discourse Studies* 8 (2006): 31-40; and, "The audience as Co-Author: An Introduction," *Text* 6 (1986): 239-247.

[44]See, among others, C. Goodwin, *Conversational Organization: Interaction Between Speakers and Hearers* (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1981); P. Griffin and H. Mehan, "Sense and Ritual in Classroom Discourse," in F. Coulmas (ed.), *Conversational Routine: Explorations in Standardized Communication Situations and Prepatterned Speech* (The Hague: Mouton, 1983); J. Gumperz, *Discourse Strategies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983); G. Psathas (ed.), *Everyday Language: Studies in Ethnomethodology* (New York: Irvington, 1979); and, J. Schenkein (ed.), *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction* (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1978).

[45]P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977); T. Kochman, "The Boundary Between Play and Nonplay in Black Verbal Dueling," *Language in Society* 12 (1983): 329-337; E. A. Schegloff and H. Sacks, "Opening Up Closings," *Semiotica* 8 (1973): 289-327; J. Streek, "Speech Acts in Interaction: A Critique of Searle," *Discourse Processes* 3 (1980): 133-154.

[46]M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin, TX: Texas University Press, 1981); H.-G. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1976); and, L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1953).

[47]Duranti, "Intentions, Language, and Social Action in a Samoan Context," 14.

[48]Duranti, "The Audience as Co-Author," 241.

[49]In §83 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein writes: "And is there not also the case

cantly influenced by "the dynamics between the speaker's words and the ensuing circumstances (audience's response included)".[50] As Duranti puts it:

> interpretations [of perlocutionary acts are] defined *by the kind of norms and social world that the participants in the interaction are able to evoke at a given time and place*. Furthermore, there are many cases in daily life in which the meaning of a given act is not defined until the recipient of that act has replied.[51]

In order to clarify this point, I should add few remarks. I am arguing that perlocutionary acts and effects of conversations and their interpretations cannot be explained solely in terms of the speaker's intention. They are primarily explained in terms of contextual considerations about the larger socio-historical setting within which the conversation is taking place, the relations between the speaker and the audience, and the psychological dispositions of the interlocutors.[52] Those considerations concur significantly to determine what kind of perlocutionary acts a speaker has performed, and their resulting perlocutionary effects.

By appreciating the preceding, I should also emphasize the following crucial point. The context of a conversation is not a "static container" for utterances. It is dynamic and receptive, and cannot be determined and known by interlocutors before the conversation starts, neither under idealized conditions. Moreover, context is continually produced through the same conversational interactions.[53] It is influ-

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where we play and—make up the rules as we go along? And there is one where we alter them—as we go along."

[50]Duranti, "The Audience as Co-Author," 241.

[51]Ivi. Emphasis added.

[52]Here, I want to emphasize a point. I have a sense that both Gadamer's and Wittgenstein's theory of interpretation generally focus on "intersubjective" (e.g., socio-historical and interactional) aspects, while often overlooking the importance of psychological dispositions as important contextual elements. I find Bakhtin's view more accurate in this respect. He writes: "In the actual life of speech, every concrete act of understanding . . . assimilates the word to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions . . . [P]*rimacy belongs to the response* as the activating principle: it creates the ground for understanding." (Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 282. Emphasis in the original.)

[53]This thesis is also at the core of Paul Dourish's work on information theory. See P. Dourish, *Where the Action Is: The Foundations* of *Embodied Interaction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

enced by what is uttered *when uttered*, and conversational interactions continually redefines it.[54]

Since, speakers cannot determine exactly the context of a conversation, one cannot understand the perlocutionary aspects of a conversation in terms of the speaker's intention. In effect, uttering in different contexts—where different criteria are at play—the very same words with the same intention (that is, the same locutionary and illocutionary acts) may very well result into performing very different, even opposite, kinds of perlocutionary acts with different perlocutionary effects. As a consequence, when considering conversations, their interpretation cannot be constrained by the speaker's intention.

Consider the following example. My friend Gino used to tell a (supposedly) true story of a poorly performed "party trick" at a wedding ceremony. According to the story, a wedding guest opens a bottle of champagne with a saber. The guest does not control the just broken neck of the bottle, which flies across the room and hits the bride on her left eye. The story, and the way Gino was able to tell it, used to generate humorous laughs among those who heard it. (I must admit that I found it somewhat cruel, but nonetheless funny.) With the same intention of generating laugh, Gino told the story one more time. However, he told the story to a man whose bride underwent a similar accident. Of course, this man reacted with visible distress rather than with laughter.

One could interpret that conversation as follows. The context within which the interaction between Gino and this man took place changed, in a way that cannot be explained in terms of Gino's intention, some properties of his utterances. In particular, it changed the nature of some of its perlocutionary acts, which became acts of mocking, disrespecting, and insulting rather than of bantering. Those per-

[54]Duranti, "Anthropology and Linguistics," 14. Context has been re-examined along these lines in A. Duranti and C. Goodwin (eds.), *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1992).

locutionary acts had the (unintended) perlocutionary effect of distress in Gino's interlocutor. (That night, Gino felt as embarrassed as one could imagine, and apologized sincerely to the man and his wife. He never told that story again.)[55]

By appreciating the preceding, I argue that public artworks are analogous to conversations, but to conversations that include perlocutionary acts—as virtually every real-life conversation does. In this sense, like utterances, public artworks possess (sometimes intentionally) what some theorists call "perlocutionary properties," that is, "potentials for performing acts and achieving effects".[56] In suggesting that public artworks have perlocutionary properties, I am drawing on David Goldblatt and Arthur Danto. Goldblatt argues that what I define as an artwork's perlocutionary properties are sometimes "integral to the meaning of the work."[57] On his part, Danto writes that public "artworks ... perlocutionary [since they] do more than convey information."[58]

As I have argued in the case of perlocutionary speech acts, the perlocutionary properties that a public artwork has cannot be explained in terms of the artist's intention. In effect, perlocutionary properties and, *a fortiori*, a public artwork's identity are determined significantly by considerations of the context within which the metaphorical conversation between an artist and members of a public-art public

[55]One cannot dismiss this example by suggesting that this is a case of "failed communication," and that in cases of successful communication perlocutionary effects comply with those intended. In effect, if one would be willing to define all those cases where unintended perlocutionary effects obtain as cases of failed communication, one should also maintain that most cases (perhaps virtually all cases) of human communication are cases of failed communication. It seems to me obvious that, most of the times, our words generate unintended reactions. For instance, since in virtually every philosophical conversation not all the participants are convinced by the same claims, then philosophical conversations would be examples of failed communication. I take this consequence as *a reductio ad absurdum* of this objection.

[56]M. Richard, *When Truth Gives Out* (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12. David Davies uses the term "perlocutionary property" when discussing artworks. See D. Davies, *Art as Performance* (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2004), 91.

[57]D. Goldblatt, "Taking Art Personally: Austin, Performatives and Art," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 9 (2011) <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=612&searchstr=goldblatt>.

[58]A. Danto, "Tilted Arc and Public Art," in *The State of the Art* (New York: Prentice-Hall Press, 1987), 90-91.

obtains. The context of that conversation is a public-art sphere, whose features are determined by a number of factors, including the interaction among members of a public-art public, their collective history, and so on. Changes in those factors may very well modify the perlocutionary aspects of an artist's "utterances," that is, of her artwork. Thus, if a public artwork can have properties that do not comply with the artist's intention, then a public artwork's interpretation cannot be constrained by that intention.

Let us reconsider by means of the conceptual resources developed in this section *Rock Steady*'s case. One could assume that the original context within which the metaphorical conversation between Silva and members of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public evoked a social world and local norms such that the perlocutionary acts and effects that the sculpture engendered matched those intended by the author. However, a relevant change in that context, that is, Somerville's tragic death, modified the social world and the norms that the conversation between Silva and the members of *Rock Steady*'s public-art public could evoke. As a consequence of that change, Silva's "utterance," that is, *Rock Steady*, acquired the perlocutionary property of "bringing to mind the forms of someone's falling," which is what I defined as the looks-like property "resembling a young man falling."[59] According to the local norms that the context evoked, some found the likeness suggested by the image as inappropriate and, as a perlocutionary effect, experienced a feeling of discomfort.

[59]In this sense, one could say that looks-like properties are perlocutionary properties. One could justify this claim by drawing attention to the analogy between metaphors and visual similarities. As an important theory of metaphor that draws on Donald Davidson's influential account argues, metaphors are essentially perlocutionary acts whose function is to make "us attend to some likeness, often a novel or surprising likeness, between two or more things." (D. Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," *Critical Inquiry* 5 (1978), 33). Whether one can produce unintentionally a metaphor is controversial. However, it seems more than obvious than one can produce a design that unintentionally resembles something. By following the idea that looks-like properties are perlocutionary, one could contrast those properties with representational properties, which one may concede are analogous to illocutions. However, art historian Ernst H. Gombrich seems to suggest that representation is essentially perlocutionary. See E. H. Gombrich, "The Visual Image," *Scientific American* 227 (1972): 82-97.

I should emphasize that the above discussion of how *Rock Steady* acquired the new property "resembling a young man falling" follows analogically the rather uncontroversial idea that the same words uttered in different contexts may very well mean different things, and may very well generate justified diverging reactions in those participating in the conversation. Of course, intentionalists might object that one should "freeze" the context within which the conversation between an artist and members of a public-art public takes place, while maintaining that only contextual considerations relative to the moment when the artwork was firstly presented are acceptable. One could answer intentionalists that what they are describing, then, is not a conversation. In this sense, they can*not* defend their views in terms of a conversationalist model. The burden of the proof is theirs.

In discussing Franco's objection, I have suggested that there is no supreme authority in public art, not even artists themselves—or their intentions. Of course, the claim that the artists' intentions have no supreme authority in determining the properties of a public artwork should not be taken as implying that they have no role whatsoever in those matters. Simply, the artist's intentions are not overriding reasons for deciding whether a property belongs to a public artwork, and, *a fortiori,* cannot constrain interpretation. Sometimes, a more comprehensive interpretation of a public artwork may very well exceed the boundaries set by intentional readings.

In the following section, I want to discuss an example. This example shows that, when considering public artworks, even artists need not be reluctant in accepting the possibility that, *in the absence of an explicit authorization*,[60] their artworks might have properties that they did not intend, and might be interpreted in ways that they did not envision. I take this example as providing further evidence in

[60]Many intentionalists, including Carroll, allow for reading that exceed the artist's intention when conceded by the artist. (We have seen an example of this kind of cases when discussing Christo's and Jean-Claude's *The Umbrellas*.)

favor of my answer to Franco's objection. It also suggests that (at least some) public artists are somewhat aware of the possibilities of PRH, and welcome them. I already briefly mentioned the public artwork that I have in mind: *Untitled* (2010) by Cattelan.

6.5 Cattelan's *Untitled* (2010) and the Artist's Intention

Cattelan's *Untitled* is an Art Nouveau funerary monument. Cattelan sculpted it out of a block of white Carrara marble. The figures emerge from the material as high relief. Two 3 feet tall kneeling angels function as the main structural element. They are represented in profile, while facing one another, with their heads slightly tilted forward, almost dissolving into one other. One angel is holding the hands of the other in order to create the shape of a bowl, in the act of holding what appears as water. The angels function as a framework for three other main visual elements. Two of those elements are *putti*, which are represented frontally while kneeling on the ideal ground of the sculpture in the space left between the two angels. The *putti* are holding the last visual element: a medallion where, at its very center, it is represented the profile of controversial Italian former Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, in a way that closely reminds of another political leader, Mao Tse Tung.

Invited to participate in the 2010 edition of the International Sculpture Biennial of Carrara, Catellan opted for realizing the following project. He wanted to remove the monument of one the greatest heroes of Italian Risorgimento, Giuseppe Mazzini, and to substitute it with his untitled monument to Craxi, who was a key figure in what is often called the "Tangentopoli" scandal.[61] Cattelan's intent was,

[61] "Tangentopoli" refers to the scandal exposed by the "Mani pulite" ("*Clean hands*") 1992-6 investigation. As a result of that investigation, judges revealed to the public opinion the pervasive corruption that characterized the Italian political system in the 1980s. Craxi was found guilty of corruption crimes and sentenced to 27 years in jail. After being sentenced, Craxi fleed to Hammamet, Tunisia, where he found protection under the government of his friend Ben Ali. There, Craxi died in January 2000, while still in exile.

of course, ironic. He did not intend to celebrate Craxi: he wanted to shake people's minds in order to suggest that Craxi was not the only person guilty of Italy's state of corruption, which still endures decades after. It was (and is) everyone's responsibility.

Many among the members of *Untitled*'s public-art public find the monument inappropriate, and reacted with outrage to the project envisioned by Cattelan. In particular, what mainly motivated their reaction of outrage was Cattelan's proposal to remove Mazzini's monument in order to place *Untitled*. I should emphasize that, historically, people from Carrara were actively involved in the revolutionary developments in late 19th century Italy, and the city had been headquarter of Mazzini's activities.[62] In this sense, the peculiar history of its public-art public transformed (at least for some viewers) *Untitled* from something simply ironic into something (also) overtly inappropriate.

Many among the citizens of Carrara saw Cattelan's proposal as disrespecting their identities, which are still shaped by Mazzini's legacy. Surprisingly enough, the most vehement protests were coordinated by young citizens of Carrara. Some of those created a Facebook group called "Salviamo il monumento di Mazzini" (*"Let's Save the Monument to Mazzini"*). In just few hours, the group reached thousands of members.[63] The most radical among protesters declared that they would have chained themselves to the monument in order to prevent its (temporary) removal. The protesters' argument won, and Cattelan never received the authorization to remove Mazzini's statue. He had to choose another location for installing his monument.[64] With one of his witty and theatrical gestures, Cattelan declared

[62]For a detailed history of Carrara during those years, see A. Bernieri, *Cento anni di storia sociale a Carrara, 1815-1921* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1961).

[63]The group is now closed. However, it still possible to find traces on the web at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/116638975035943/. On May 21, 2010, the group had 3,014 registered member. The population of Carrara amounts to circa 65,000 units.

[64]See, "Statua di Mazzini, è rivolta dopo il "sì" alla rimozione," *La Nazione* (May 15 2010) <http://www.lanazione.it//massa_carrara/cronaca/2010/05/15/332217-statua_mazzini_rivolta_dopo_alla_rimozione.shtml>.

the "death" of his monument and decided to celebrate its funeral at a local cemetery where the monument was then placed.

In spite of his disappointment for not completing his original project, Cattelan accepted rather openly the controversy surrounding *Untitled*. By embracing an honest and receptive attitude, which is often difficult to find among super-star artists (just think about Serra!), he expressed some appreciation for the criticisms that his work received, and still judged his work as successful, though only in part. What interests me here is how he motivated his judgment. In an interview to a local newspaper, when asked about his monument and the controversy that it generated, Cattelan answered:

> [T]his land, so harsh, stunned me. It's like time traveling. I was struck by the vigor of ideologies, which are still so strong here. Compared to Carrara, Milan is much more conformist: people from Carrara could eat people from Milan alive. People from Carrara are genuine people . . . . [My monument] was only partly successful. It was so at an ideological level. *Here, I have learnt that history does not exist only in textbooks, but also in the heart of people, who appeared so passionate about the story of Mazzini.*[65]

I do not want to read Cattelan's word too opportunistically. However, he seems to accept that the history of the relevant public-art public plays a relevant role in the appreciation of a public artwork. He also seems to concede (at least to some extent) that the reaction of outrage elicited by *Untitled* was not unreasonable, in spite of his intention to create an ironic rather than an offensive work. If my reading is correct, then one could read in Cattelan's words as consistent with the following

[65] "[Q]uesto territorio, così duro, mi ha colpito. Sembra di entrare nella macchina del tempo. Mi ha colpito la forza delle ideologie che qui è ancora così viva. Milano, al confronto, è molto più conformista, i carraresi se li mangiano in un boccone i milanesi. Carrara sono le persone vere . . . . [La mia opera è] riuscita solo in parte. A livello ideologico sì. *Qui ho imparato che la storia non esiste solo sui libri. Ma anche nel cuore della gente che si è così appassionata per la vicenda di Mazzini*." See A. Vivoli, "Il mio Craxi ha perso," *Il Tirreno* (June 10, 2010) <http://iltirreno.gelocal.it/regione/2010/06/25/news/il-mio-craxi-ha-perso-1.1934055>. [Emphasis added.]

point: public artwork's properties need not accord with the artist's intention, but can depend on considerations of a public-art public's history. An ironic public artwork might still be offensive, even if the artist did not intend it to be that way. In this sense, I read Cattelan's words as compatible with PRH and PRC, thus showing that such a view and its related criterion capture well the dynamics of actual practices of contemporary public art.

In this chapter, I have suggested that PRH has larger positive consequences than one can expect at a first glance. First, I have shown that PRH can expand our understanding of relevant historical cases of public art, and help us explain why members of public-art publics react the way they do. Second, PRH introduces some limitations in attributing looks-like properties to public artworks. In particular, I have maintained that PRH clarifies those cases where a look-like property is a property of a public artwork. In order to identify those cases, I have introduced a criterion that depends on PRH. I have called that criterion PRC. PRC says that the looks-like property l is a property of a public artwork W_1 only if one can construe a narrative relating l and the history of P, which is W_1's public-art public. Then, I have defended PRH from the intentionalist objection. I have developed two replies to that objection. First, I have argued that PRH is compatible with intentionalism, and does not reject in principle intentionalist readings. Second, I have shown that, sometimes, a public artwork's perlocutionary properties and effects cannot be explained in terms of the artist's intention. Thus, in those cases, intentionalist readings seem incomplete. As a consequence, the identity and interpretation of public artworks need not be constrained by intentionalist concerns. Finally, I have concluded this chapter by discussing an example. In this example, the artist Maurizio Cattelan seems to accept at some point that the identity and the interpretation of his work *Untitled* are not constrained by his intentions.

CHAPTER 7

THE VALUE OF PUBLIC ART: PARTICIPATION, TOLERANCE, AND THE SOCIAL NATURE OF PUBLIC ART'S APPRECIATION

In Chapter 1, I promised to clarify, in light of my analysis of public art's publicness, the value that characterizes essentially public artworks. It's time to settle up.

By appreciating, for instance, a sculpture as a *public* artwork, one does not only attend to some features or "meanings" of that sculpture, but one also, and primarily, engages in a dialogue (or enters an ongoing one) with others. As I have argued in Chapter 2, that dialogue is one of a particular variety. It is a dialogue that takes place within the boundaries of a specific type of public sphere, which I have called public-art sphere. I have labeled dialogues in public-art spheres as public-art debates. In a public-art debate, members of a public-art public, which is the public relating to a public-art sphere, respond to the presentation of a public artwork by discussing reasonably issues that relate to the public good.

In this chapter, I argue that there is a value in participating in a public-art debate. I suggest that one can reasonably think of that value as a non-aesthetic value. Such a value is the capacity to promote political participation and to encourage tolerance. Political participation and tolerance are valuable in themselves, since they are essential to a healthy democracy.

The thesis that engaging public artworks can promote political participation

and encourage tolerance is not entirely new. However, my defense of that thesis is original for the following reason: when considering public artworks, promoting political participation and encouraging tolerance are *not* primarily and distinctively consequences of a personal enrichment that someone obtains when experiencing *as an individual* a public artwork. They are by-products respectively of those *social interactions* that connect the members of a public-art public involved in a public-art debate, and of the *inclusive nature* of that setting of discussion.

Section 7.1 argues that the essential value of public art is *not* aesthetic value. Sections 7.2 provides a positive account of public art's value. It argues that public art's value is a function of the social activity that it essentially sanctions and encourages, that is, dialogue. Sections 7.3 and 7.4 explore the nature of that value. Section 7.3 argues that the appreciation of public art can promote political participation. Section 7.4 shows that it can also encourage tolerance.

7.1 Public Art, Real Metaphor, and Aesthetic Value

To appreciate an artwork is to "get the value out of" it.[1] But what is the value that one gets out of an artwork when appreciating it as a *public* artwork?

When asking that same question about non-public artworks, a common answer among philosophers of art is to say that the value that one gets out when appreciating an artwork is *aesthetic* value. In effect, many among contemporary Anglo-American philosophers of art defend some version of "aestheticism," that is, the view that aesthetic value is the essential value of art.[2] Probably, the best-

[1]See S. Feagin, *Reading With Feeling: The Aesthetic of Appreciation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 24.

[2]A concern with aesthetic value is not alien to scholarly discussions that relate to the studies of public art. In a series of exchanges, art historians Grant Kester and Claire Bishop discuss whether some collaborative and socially engaged projects such as those by Austrian artist collective WochenKlausur possess aesthetic value. See G. Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Communication + Community in Modern Art* (Berkley and Los Angeles, CA: California University Press, 2004), in particular chaps 1 and 3; C. Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (2004): 51–79; and, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," *Artforum International* 44 (2006): 178-183.

known form of aestheticism by an English speaking philosopher is Monroe Beardsley's theory of art.[3] More recently, philosophers such as Alan Goldman, Gary Iseminger, and Nick Zangwill have also developed variants of aestheticism.[4]

The characterization of aesthetic value is controversial.[5] However, many would accept the following general account: the aesthetic value of an object of some kind (e.g., a natural phenomenon or an artwork) is a function of its capacity to provide an intrinsically valuable experience.[6] In this sense, for instance, viewers do *not* appreciate aesthetically a sculpture when they admire one or more of its *instrumental values* such as its economic worth and its capacity either to teach a biblical story or to enhance one's moral awareness. Viewers "get out" the aesthetic value of that sculpture when they enjoy, for its own sake or as an end, the particular kind of pleasurable experience that some of its features are capable of engendering. And by depending on an experience that one enjoys for its own sake, aesthetic value is generally considered as an *intrinsic* value.[7]

The properties of an artwork that are *appropriately related* to that particular kind

Kester's and Bishop's discussion of aesthetic value in the context of collaborative and socially engaged art is particularly significant since most art historians dismiss the notion of aesthetic value as too narrow for capturing art's complexities. I will not directly address Kester's and Bishop's respective views. Their discussion of aesthetic value is rather confusing, and I doubt that to consider their views could help my project.

[3]See, for instance, M. C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1958); "Aesthetic Experience Regained," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 28 (1969): 3-11; *The Aesthetic Point of View* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

[4]See A. H. Goldman, *Aesthetic Value* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995); G. Iseminger, *The Aesthetic Function of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); N. Zangwill, *Aesthetic Creation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[5]See B. H. Smith, "Value," in M. Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford Art Online, 1998).

[6]See R. Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art: An Introduction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), in particular chaps 3 and 4; J. C. Anderson, "Aesthetics Concepts of Art," in N. Carroll (ed.), *Theories of Art Today* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000): 65-92; and, K. L. Walton, "How Marvelous! Toward a Theory of Aesthetic Value," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 51 (1993): 499-510; and, D. McIver Lopes, "The Myth of (Non-Aesthetic) Artistic Value," *Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (2011): 518-36. See, also, M. Budd, "Value of Art," in E. Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 1998); and, J. Levinson, "Aesthetic Pleasure," in S. Davies, K. M. Higgins, R. Hopkins, R. Stecker, and D. E. Cooper (eds.), *A Companion to Aesthetics: Second Edition* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009).

[7]For a sustained discussion of aesthetic value as an intrinsic value, see N. Carroll, "Aesthetic Experience Revisited," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 42 (2002): 145-168.

of pleasurable experience, that is, aesthetic experience, are generally called aesthetic properties.[8] In all likelihood, Goldman proposes the most nuanced classification of aesthetic properties.[9] His classification is useful in giving us a sense of what aesthetic properties are, and how they differ. Among the most common ones, there are (i) *pure value properties* such as being beautiful, sublime, ugly; (ii) *formal qualities* such as being balanced, tightly knit, graceful; (iii) *emotion properties* such as being sad, joyful, angry; (iv) *behavioral properties* such as being bouncy, daring, sluggish; (v) *evocative qualities* such as being powerful, boring, amusing; (vi) *representational qualities* such as being true-to-life, distorted, realistic; (vii) and, *second-order perceptual properties* such as being vivid or pure (said of colors or tones).[10]

It seems reasonable to argue that when appreciating aesthetically an artwork, viewers' focus of attention should be those properties. In other words, if viewers desire to get the aesthetic value out of an artwork, they should "key into" its aesthetic properties. That is, their attention, both in a perceptual and in a cognitive sense, should be directed towards those properties. In effect, it is only by attending attentively to those properties that one can have an aesthetic experience. They are what "cause in" the appreciator that pleasurable experience.[11]

One could also add that, according to aestheticism, artworks are *objects of contemplation*. Artworks as objects of contemplation seem to function as props for

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[8]See Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, 69-70.

[9]See Ibid., 67; and, A. N. Goldman, "Aesthetic Properties," in Davies at al., *A Companion to Aesthetics* <`http://www.blackwellreference.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/tocnode.html`>. For a discussion of aesthetic properties, see also M. Budd, "Aesthetic Judgments, Aesthetic Principles and Aesthetic Properties," *European Journal of Philosophy* 7 (1999): 295–311; R. De Clercq, "The Concept of an Aesthetic Property," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 60 (2002): 167–76; D. Matravers and J. Levinson, "Aesthetic Properties," 79 *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* (2005): 191-210. For an instructive summary of the debate, see R. De Clercq, "The Structure of Aesthetic Properties," *Philosophy Compass* 3 (2008): 894-909.

[10]In his account, Goldman lists also historically related properties, such as being original, bold, or derivative. Of course, the inclusion of historically related properties among the set of aesthetic properties is very controversial, and many would not accept it. For this reason, I omit it from my list. It is also controversial whether representational qualities are aesthetic properties. See Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, 67.

[11]Stecker, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, 70.

aesthetic experience: when engaged properly, they provide appreciators with an aesthetic experience. In other words, when appreciators engage with an artwork as an object of contemplation, they use it to engender an aesthetic experience. And to appreciate aesthetically an object of contemplation does not require anything but to engage perceptually and cognitively with that object.

Whether or not it captures the value of non-public artworks, the notion of aesthetic value seems too reductive when considering public art and the multifarious nature of its value(s). Arguing in this direction, philosopher Charles L. Griswold says that it would be "a mistake to try to view [public artworks] merely "aesthetically"".[12] In a similar vein, art historian Cher Knight writes that public art "encompass[es] much more than aesthetics."[13]

In order to justify the claim that the notion of aesthetic value seems too reductive for fully capturing the value(s) of public art, I want to start by suggesting that public artworks are not objects of contemplation, but "real metaphors."[14] As David Summer writes:

> Real metaphor is the consequence of putting something available in place of something else, something else that is absent or not present, or not actually present—that is, not present in a way that allows it to be treated or addressed.[15]

When being a real metaphor, thus, an artwork functions as a substitute for something or someone that is absent or not readily available. Summers mentions pub-

[12]C. L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1986), 689.

[13]C. K. Knight, *Public Art: Theory, Practice and Populism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 7.

[14]S. Feagin, "Paintings and Their Places," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1995): 260-268; D. Summers, "Real Metaphor" in N. Bryson, M. A. Holly, and K. Moxey (eds.), *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1991): 231-259; D. Summers, "Metaphor and Art History," in Johnson, Mark, et al., "Metaphor," in M. Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford Art Online: Oxford University Press, 1998) <`http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t234/e0351`>.

[15]Summers, "Metaphor and Art History."

lic statues and monuments as paradigmatic examples of real metaphors.[16] But I would add that public artworks in general are good examples, too.

In effect, it seems rather uncontroversial to say that public artworks can make available what is not present. Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* (VVMW), for instance, makes present the thousands of soldiers who died in Vietnam and their tragedies. As Pino Castagna explicitly admits, *In pietra alpestra e dura* aims at bringing the Apuan Alps right next to the Tyrrhenian Sea, from where—since the ancient times of the Roman Empire—blocks of the precious white marble taken from the sides of those mountains were shipped all over the world.[17] Recently, artist Christo Wodiczko exploited public artworks' possibilities of making available what is not present in his project *Abraham Lincoln: War Veteran Projection*. The project took place in Union Square, NYC, from November 8 to December 9, 2012. It consisted of some videos showing fourteen veterans and their families talking about their experiences of war. Phoebe Hogan effectively describes the work as follows:

> The videos of each veteran are projected onto the [Lincoln's] statue, their faces artfully replacing Lincoln's, their hands, superimposed on his frozen ones, gesturing expressively as they tell their stories. The medium is surprisingly effective, with the veterans' various personae convincingly inhabiting the statue.[18]

In this sense, Christo's work made those veterans and their trauma present.

By making available what is not present, real metaphors create "subjunctive spaces." Susan Feagin describes those as spaces where "desires are fulfilled, cre-

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[16] Ivi. See also B. Pejić, "Yugoslav Monuments: Art and the Rhetoric of Power," in D. Brumund and M. Radulović, *Monumenti: The Changing Face of Remembrance* (Belgrade: *forum*ZFD, 2012): 12-13.

[17] See, for instance, AA. VV., ""....in pietra alpestra e dura", 2001-2008" (July 13, 2009) <`http://www.comune.massa.ms.it/pagina/pietra-alpestra-e-dura-2001-2008`>.

[18] See, for instance, P. Hogan, "Emancipation from War Trauma," *The Wall Street Journal* (November 12 2012) <`http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324894104578105151602946238.html`>.

ated and sustained".[19] By being so transformed, those spaces become spaces "where it is appropriate to do things, and not merely to look and contemplate visual forms."[20] In this sense, metaphors are intrinsically "social objects."[21] As such, real metaphors are not merely collectively available, but also, and more importantly, they are integral parts of "culturally specific behavior."[22] By creating the appropriate conditions within which one can perform such a behavior, they also invite its execution.[23] For instance, the *Madonna del Cavatore*, a statue of the Holy Virgin Mary in Casette-Cagliela (MS), transforms the cave where one can find it in a space wherein certain religious rituals are appropriate, and invite their execution.

Public artworks can definitely create subjunctive spaces, thus sanctioning various types of culturally significant activities and rituals. For instance, scholars almost universally accept that Lin's VVMW transformed the area of the National Mall into a place of national mourning. Robin Cembalest writes something similar about Chisto's *Abram Lincoln*: "the artwork creates a vehicle for the speakers to relive the trauma, but also to potentially find other ways to process it."[24] Castagna's *In pietra e dura* created a space where individuals can participate in identitarian processes which involve a reference to marble extraction and its relationship with the histories of local communities in Massa-Carrara.[25]

When considering how differently objects of contemplation and real metaphors function, and how distinctively viewers use them, it is easy to see why aesthetic value is not a suitable candidate for understanding the value of public art. In effect, what seems valuable about public artworks as *public* artworks—and more in

[19] Feagin, "Paintings and Their Places," 265.
[20] Ivi.
[21] Summers, "Metaphor and Art History."
[22] Ivi.
[23] Feagin, "Painting at Their Places," 265.
[24] R. Cembalest, "The Military is Present," *ARTnews* (December 3, 2012) <`http://www.artnews.com/2012/12/03/veterans-in-the-art-world/`>.
[25] For instance, a theater company has recently requested to use Castagna's statue as stage for the performance of a play dealing directly with the history of those communities.

general as real metaphors—depends on their (non-aesthetic) capacity to sanction and encourage specific social activities and rituals. It is a function of their being "fit" for those practical purposes.[26] It is a value depending on being means to an end. It is not a value that depends on the intrinsically pleasurable experience that their aesthetic properties can provide. For instance, VVMW is almost universally considered as a public artwork of distinctive value, but *not essentially* for the experience that the perception of its visual forms engenders in viewers. It is considered of distinctive value mainly for its (non-aesthetic) capacity to sanction cultural activities and rituals that promote mourning and reconciliation.[27] Christo's *Abraham Lincoln* possesses a similar value, which depends on its capacity to sanction social activities that help veterans and their families (not only those interviewed, but also those among the members of its public-art public) processing their trauma. The value of Castagna's *In pietra* is a function of its capacity to encourage identitarian processes.

Moreover, to get the value out of a real metaphor requires more than mere contemplation. That is, it requires more than simply engaging perceptually (and cognitively) with an artifact, as an appreciator does in the case of aesthetic value. Appreciating a real metaphor involves action. That is, it involves participating in a social activity or ritual that such an artifact sanctions: it requires to "appropriate" its social function(s).[28] "Those ... who know what to do in the space in which the real metaphor has its *value* and meanings," Summers writes, "are not so much "observers" of works of art as they are "observant" of rite and custom."[29] It involves, one might add, to shift the focus of attention from aesthetic properties to

[26]See G. Graham, "Can There Be Public Architecture?," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 243-249.

[27]Griswold writes that to consider this capacity is "a point absolutely essential for an adequate understanding of" VVMW. See Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall," 712.

[28]Graham, "Can There Be Public Architecture?," 246 and ff.

[29]Summers, "Metaphor and Art History." Emphasis added.

the activity(-ies) that a real metaphor sanctions. For instance, if VVMW's value depends primarily on its capacity to sanction rituals that promote mourning and reconciliation, then to fully appreciate VVMW as a *public* artwork requires that one turns her attention towards those rituals, and participates in them. If one fails to do so, then one fails to appreciate it as a *public* artwork.

I can imagine that many may very well find puzzling that the appreciation of a public artwork requires to participate in the social activity that it sanctions. In effect, this point challenges some of the most common presuppositions in terms of art's value and appreciation—common at least among those in academia who write about the arts.[30] But, if we look, for instance, at how we appreciate religious artworks, perhaps that sense of puzzlement will disappear. In effect, it seems straightforward that to appreciate properly an artwork as a *religious* artwork requires that the viewer participates in the rituals and ceremonies that the artwork sanctions and invites. For instance, to appreciate the value of the *Madonna del Cavatore* requires to participate in the various ceremonies that the statue sanctions and invite—ceremonies such as the yearly procession that ends in front of it. As Gordon Graham suggests, non-believers (or non-participants) "can 'appreciate' [religious artworks] too, but only in an attenuated sense, because they cannot *appropriate them to their use*."[31] In this sense, I suggest the reader to think about how public artworks function in analogy with how religious artworks do it.

Let me briefly summarize why public art's value and its appreciation cannot be reduced to their aesthetic counterparts. First, as a function of its capacity to sanction specific activities and rituals, the value of public art is *instrumental*, and

[30]In my anecdotal experience, I found that non-academic appreciators of public art are very sympathetic to this view, and already engage with public artworks along these lines. In *Empathy and the Novel*, Suzanne Keen emphasizes the differences between academic readers and non-academic readers, and the limits connected with considering as worthy of considerations only the former. See S. Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (Oxford, UK, and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), especially chap. 3.

[31]G. Graham, *The Re-enchantment of the World: Art Versus Religion* (Oxford, UK, and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 139.

not intrinsic like aesthetic value. Second, aesthetic value is fundamentally based on personal experience. On the contrary, public art's value has a social element, and it is based on *social* interactions.[32] Third, the appreciation of a public artwork's value requires to *act* rather than to contemplate.

Up to this point, I have said that public art's value is *not* aesthetic value, but is a function of the social activity that public artworks can sanction and invite. In the following section, I suggest that the social activity that public art essentially sanctions and invites is *dialogue*.

7.2 Dialogue: The Ritual of Public Art

In the previous section, I have argued that public artworks are real metaphors. Real metaphors are artifacts whose distinctive feature is to make available something that is absent. By making available something that is absent, real metaphors are also capable of sanctioning different rituals and social activities, while inviting, at the same time, their execution or performance. As such, the value of a real metaphor is a function of its capacity to sanction one (or more) peculiar activity(-ies).

When considering the activities that they inspire and their related values, one can distinguish between different categories of real metaphors. For instance, devotional artifacts such as the *Madonna del Cavatore* sanction specific sacred rituals and, as a consequence of that capacity, promote religious worship. In this sense, one might say that they possess a religious value. On their part, objects of propaganda are used in particular societies "to evoke images of power and superiority and to

[32]Here, I am suggesting something similar to what Nicolas Bourriad's "relational aesthetics" argues for. "It is up to us to judge [relational] artworks in terms of the relations they produce in the specific contexts they inhabit." In N. Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), 94. See also N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les presses du réel, 2002).

dispel the fear from their warrior class or instil fear into the enemy."[33] They thus engender dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, which are fundamental to identity construction. By considering the social activities that they sanction and invite, one might say that objects of propaganda have an identitarian value.

At this point, one might wonder whether public artworks sanction a peculiar type of activity, thus constituting a particular category of real metaphors. The issue is not irrelevant. On the contrary, I believe that its discussion can illuminate pertinently my account of contemporary public art. In particular, since the value of a real metaphor is a function of its capacity to sanction a peculiar social activity, a clarification of the social activity that public artworks essentially sanction seems fundamental to fulfill the aim of this chapter, that is, to understand what is the value of public art. I intend to frame the issue in terms of the two following question: (i) Do public artworks sanction a particular type of social activity? (ii) What is the value that depends on that activity? Let me begin with (i). I address (ii) in 7.3 and 7.4.

I believe that, without ignoring the multiplicity of functions and purposes that they can serve, public artworks essentially sanction a particular type of social activity, and invite its execution. That is, there is a social activity that is fundamentally (more fundamentally than others) connected to public artworks as such, and that, at an ideal-typical level, they all sanction. Attentive readers can probably imagine what is the activity that I have in mind. That activity is *dialogue*. That public artworks sanction and invite dialogue is already embedded in my characterization of public art's publicness. Public artworks are artworks that are received within a public-art sphere rather than within artworld institutions. The distinctive nature of their reception is an essential feature of public artworks *qua* public artworks. In

[33] K. Taylor, "Propaganda," in *Grove Art Online* (Oxford Art Online: Oxford University Press, 2007) <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libproxy.temple.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T069819>.

this sense, public artworks would not be *public* if unable to generate dialogue. (I have suggested something along this lines when discussing public art's publicness in Chapter 2). Of course, they (should) invite a special variety of dialogue, whose features have been discussed in the previous chapters. Such a dialogue is (should be): (a) maximally inclusive; (b) carried out by following a reasonable logic that is pluralistic; and, (c) practically oriented and aiming at the promotion of the public good. I have called public-art debates those dialogues conforming with (a)-(c) .

Many scholars agree that public artworks invite and generate dialogue. Different theorists associated with "new genre public art" or "dialogic art" argue for similar theses.[34] For instance, Grant Kester understands dialogic art in terms of those practices that revolve "around the facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities."[35] However, my position is closer to those defended, quite independently, by Thomas Finkelpearl, and Pam Korza and Barbara Schaffer Bacon. In effect, Kester is concerned with projects where dialogue is generated and invited during the creative process. On the contrary, Finkelpearl and, on their part, Korza and Schaffer Bacon have more inclusive views.[36] They argue, as I do, that public artworks can invite and generate dialogue not only at the time of their creation, but *also* as a consequence of their presentation, which "provides a key focus, catalyst, forum or form for public dialogue on an issue."[37]

[34]See, for instance, S. Lacy (ed.), *Mapping the Terrain* (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1995); T. Finkelpearl, *Dialogues in Public Art* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); and, *What We Made: Conversations On Art and Social Cooperation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013); Kester, *Conversation Pieces*; and, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); P. Korza, B. Schaffer Bacon, and A. Assaf (eds.), *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture: Findings from Animating Democracy* (Washington, DC: Americans for the Arts, 2005). Though often critical against the views of theorists just listed, Bishop is often associated with them. See C. Bishop (ed.), *Participation* (London: Whitechapel Gallery and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006); and, "The Social Turn." For an instructive review of the literature on dialogic art, see C. G. Calo, "From Theory to Practice: Review of the Literature on Dialogic Art," *Public Art Dialogue* 2 (2012): 64-78.

[35]Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 1

[36]See, in particular, Finkelpearl, *Dialogues in Public Art*, 45; and Korza, Schaffer Bacon, and Assaf (eds.), *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture*, 48.

[37]Korza, Schaffer Bacon, and Assaf (eds.), *Civic Dialogue, Arts & Culture*, 48.

I believe that there is a plurality of reasons explaining why public artworks are capable of inviting and sanctioning dialogue. Among those reasons, the most common include size, location, content, source of funding, and cost. Sometimes, public artworks sparkle discussion for their capacity to engage sympathetically with the history of their targeted public-art public, sometimes for how shockingly they do that. But, in general, public artworks' capacity to invite dialogue does not supervene on a set of specific properties. More likely, it emerges as a result of a peculiar mix between some of the features listed above (or others) and the socio-historical context of presentation. It seems impossible to determine the nature of successful mixes *a priori*. It is up to the creativity of artists to find the right mix for each singular case. And it is the job of empirical research to investigate those. Thus, I will not pursue this issue any further in this thesis.

Here, I need to add a qualification. To say that public artworks generate and invite dialogue does *not* imply that they sanction only that social activity. In effect, some public artworks are memorials like Lin's VVMW, and sanction rituals that invite mourning. Whereas others are monuments like Castagna' *In pietra*, and favor identification with a particular group or history.[38] However, what all of them have ideal-typically in common is a capacity to sanction and invite dialogue.[39] In this sense, it is legitimate that a general account of public art brackets those further activities, and focuses on that one which is generally shared.

Moreover, a point worth emphasizing, those further activities that public art-

[38]Here, I am considering monuments and memorials as sub-categories of public art. Indeed, monuments or memorials need not be public artworks. As rule of the thumb, when not sanctioning dialogue, a memorial or a monument are not public artworks.

[39]Of course, I am aware that some artifacts that we may want to call public artworks do *not* invite dialogue. I see no problem for my account in admitting that. Here, I am focusing on what I consider as "core cases" of public art, that is, cases that possess that distinctive value that I believe makes public artworks worth. And in my selection of "core cases," all public artworks sanction and invite dialogue. I am not interested in providing classification criteria for public artworks. For a sympathetic discussion of this issue, see J. Margolis, *What, After All, Is a Work of Art?* (University Park, PennState University Press: 1999); J. Margolis, "The Importance of Being Earnest about the Definition and Metaphysics of Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68 (2010): 215-23; Zangwill, *Aesthetic Creation*, 27-29.

works can sanction are based on dialogue. They are structured by it, and they are among its higher-order consequences. Those further functionalities that a public artwork can have, one might add, are "enhancements" of the dialogue that it sanctions. In the absence of that dialogue, those functionalities would not emerge—at least not in the same way. Few examples will help me clarify this last point.

First, consider VVMW. As I have already said, VVMW sanctions and invites mourning. However, VVMW does not invite mourning in the same way in which tombs and graveyards of our beloved ones or monumental propaganda do it: VVMW does not invite the same rituals. Visitors of VVMW are not *not* simply invited to pay their respects to those who died in the Vietnam War in the attempt to cope with their (the visitors') losses, and to overcome "psychologically" grief and pain, as in the case of private tombs and graveyards.[40] Neither are visitors invited to celebrate uncritically the history of (and those who died for) one's country, as in cases of monumental propaganda. Visitors are primarily invited "to contemplate the difficult questions raised by America's involvement in the Vietnam War."[41] In other words, they are encouraged to enter a debate that examines, in the first place, where and when one should (or could) die for its country. By entering such a debate (i.e., a dialogue), visitors are willing to embrace a reflective and interrogative attitude. Thanks to that attitude, visitors are able "to confront the sorrow of so many lost lives," even of those who were total strangers, while still acknowledging the problematic nature of the Vietnam war and "without succumbing to the false muses of intoxicating propaganda and nihilism."[42] The dialogue promoted by VVMW helps visitors separate one's honoring the sacrifice of those who served their countries—including both the veterans who died and those who are still alive—from condemning the political decision of the US Government to

[40]See Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall," 713.
[41]Ibid., 712.
[42]Ibid., 713.

go to war. In this sense, the reconciliation that VVMW promotes is not merely a personal reconciliation with a loss, or a uncritical celebration of those who died for one's endorsed ideology. It is a reconciliation between a group of individuals who evaluate the Vietnam War differently, but can ultimately find a common ground in sharing a commitment to some fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, and so on. Thanks to that shared commitment, which is highlighted and strengthened through dialogue, they can find new unity without suppressing their disagreement(s) about the war.[43]

Second, consider again Castagna's *In pietra*. Since its installation in July 2009, this monumental sculpture became a symbol of Massa-Carrara, the urban settlement enclosed between the Tyrrhenian sea and the Apuan Alps, from where the famous white marble is extracted. It is no surprise that Castagna's work sanctions identification. In effect, Castagna's effective use of that precious white stone evokes the long standing and pervasive (at an economic, social, and political level) relationship between the history of the communities living in that area and marble extraction. By evoking that relationship, *In pietra* encourages members of its public-part public to identify themselves with that history, or at least to recognize its relevance. However, that process of identification emerges as a possibility unleashed by the dialogue that the sculpture essentially sanctions—a dialogue that affect the nature of that process. In effect, because of its monumental quality and location (it is installed along the beach in Marina di Massa), *In pietra* invites viewers to question, for instance, the use of the natural resources in that area.[44] In partic-

[43]Empirical studies seem to confirm the dialogic ground of VVMW's capacity to invite mourning and reconciliation even in clinical cases of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. See N. Watkins, F. Cole, and S. Weidemann, "The War Memorial as Healing Environment: The Psychological Effect of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Vietnam War Combat Veterans' Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms," *Environment and Behavior* 42 (2010): 351-375. The study suggests that part of the therapeutic power of the memorial seems to depend on the possibility for the visitors "to talk about the VVM with buddies." Unfortunately, the study does not fully capture the significance of this possibility, and does not examine its consequences in depth.

[44]As I have already said, this issue is still at the center of the ongoing public-art debate related to *In pietra*. See, for instance, F. Evangelisti, "Camera con vista," *La Parola* 3 (2009): 3.

ular, it encourages them to consider, first, the consequences of marble excavation activity, which is deeply affecting the delicate ecosystem of the Apuan Alps, and, second, the results of speculative overbuilding of beach resorts, which in the last few decades replaced almost completely the original pine forest with an endless "wall" of cabins. By raising these questions, the dialogue that *In pietra* encourages puts viewers in a reflective state of mind, which allows them to engage critically with the history that the statue evokes. In this sense, Castagna's work does not invite viewers to identify immediately and totally with an history or an ideology, as one can see in monumental propaganda. It helps them confront originally their history(-ies), and reshape in inventive ways their identity(-ies), which may very well involve a new and more sustainable relationship with the environment.

7.3 Public Art and Political Participation

In the previous section, I have argued that public artworks essentially sanction and encourage a peculiar variety of social activity, that is, dialogue. As for other categories of real metaphors, public artworks' value is a function of the activity that they sanction and encourage. From what I just said, it follows that public artworks possess a distinctive value, a value that is a function of the dialogue that they sanction. Then, to appreciate a public artwork, that is, to "get out of" a public artwork its value, does not simply require attending to its aesthetic features. It involves also essentially and primarily engaging other members of a public-art public in a dialogue, that is, in a public-art debate. But what is the value that depend on that dialogue? What is the essential value of public art?

I argue that, when appreciating a public artwork as a *public* artwork, that is, when engaging others in a public-art debate, one "gets out" of it a value which one can reasonably think of as a non-aesthetic value: it promotes political par-

ticipation and encourages tolerance.[45] Political participation and tolerance are in themselves valuable for the life of democratic societies. In effect, on the one hand, "political participation," as Jeffrey Green writes, "is so fundamental to the practice of democracy that it is impossible to conceive of democracy without it."[46] On the other hand, tolerance is important in pluralistic democracies since it helps us "appreciate the legitimacy of conflicting political perspectives."[47]

Of course, as the discussion in the previous section already suggests, I am not claiming that public arts' capacity of promoting political participation and encouraging tolerance is the only value that a public artwork can possibly have. Public artworks may very well have other values. However, the one value that interests me here is public art's essential value: it is the value that ideal-typically all public artworks share, and the primary reason why we should find worth in engaging with those artifacts.

Empirical researches show evidence that seems to confirm a positive correlation between, on the one hand, experiencing public art and, on the other hand, political participation and tolerance. In particular, according to a 2007 survey promoted by the *National Endowment for the Arts* (NEA), data contradicts the commonly held assumption that "art participants are passive, isolated or self absorbed."[48] On the contrary, as a 2006 NEA survey suggests, "Americans who experience art ... are demonstrably more active in their communities than ... non participants."[49] As

[45]By following Robert Putnam, I understand "political participation" broadly as to include not just engagement with government but associational life in civil society. See R. Putnam (ed.), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000). For a useful summary of the literature on public participation, see J. E. Green, "Political Participation," in M. Bevir (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Political Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2010): 1069-74.

[46]Green, "Political Participation," 1069-1070.

[47]D. Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 81.

[48]National Endowment for the Arts, *To Read or Not To Read* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2007), 90 <http://arts.gov/file/2667>.

[49]National Endowment for the Arts, *The Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2006), 5 <http://www.arts.gov/pub/CivicEngagement.pdf>.

Kelly Leroux argues, a 1997 study by Mary Petty finds evidence suggesting that individuals who appreciate public artworks also adopt more tolerant behaviors.[50]

I should emphasize that other theorists argue that public art is capable of promoting political participation and encouraging tolerance. For instance, in her recent book *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century*, political scientist Diana Boros maintains that the experience of public art can have those social outcomes.[51] However, her account differs from mine in an important respect, that is, *how* the experience of public art can do that. She claims that an increase in political participation and tolerance is a consequence of the personal transformation that one can undergo when engaging as an individual with a public artwork.[52] In effect, Boros argues that public artworks can both promote political participation and encourage tolerance thanks to their capacity of stimulating one's imagination.[53] By exercising the viewer's imagination, Boros maintains, a public artwork invites her to rethink "the way that [she perceives] the world around [her]."[54] In rethinking her world, she can "imagine [it] as [she] would like it to be."[55] When imagining

[50]See K. LeRoux and A. Bernadska, *Impact of the Arts on Individual Contributions to U.S Civil Society* (2012) (Manuscript under review by the NEA.) <http://cuppa-pa.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Impact-of-the-Arts-on-Civil-Society-FINAL.pdf>; M. Petty, "Art and Social Change: AIDS Activism in Philadelphia" (working paper #13, Social Impact of the Arts Project, Philadelphia: School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1997) <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/culture_builds_community/art_and_social_change.pdf>. See also M. Stern and S. Seifert, "Cultural Participation and Communities: The Role of Individual and Neighborhood Effects" (working paper, Social Impact of the Arts Project, Philadelphia: School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2000) <http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/siap/docs/culture_builds_community/cultural_participation_and_communities.pdf>.

[51]D. Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Public and Interactive Art to Political Life in America* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2012).

[52]Boros' view is close to that one expressed by Dana Gioia, Chairman of the NEA, as expressed in *The Arts and Civic Engagement*, 2. Boros, *Creative Rebellion*, 16.

[53]Boros, *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty-First Century*, 9, and 14-15. Boros' view draws explicitly on Marcuse's works. It also echoes Martha Nussbaum's well-known theory of art. See M. C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). I should emphasize that Boros tends to confuse promoting political participation and encouraging tolerance. As I discuss later in this chapter, though this confusion is common, recent empirical researches strongly suggest that they are at best independent.

[54]Boros, *Creative Rebellion*, 9.

[55]Ivi.

new possibilities that escape the status quo and meet her desires, a viewer can become more aware and inclined to political participation.[56] In imagining new possibilities, one can also become more "open-minded" and, one could reasonably add, more tolerant.[57]

I propose an alternative explanation. As it should be already clear, I do not explain how public artworks can promote political participation and encourage tolerance in terms of a personal experience that one can have when engaging with a public artwork. I explain it in terms of that social activity, that is, the dialogue, that a public artwork essentially sanctions and encourages. By drawing on recent scholarship on social interactions, social networks, and political participation, I argue that an increase in political participation and tolerance are by-products respectively of the information that one can acquire from those social interactions that connect the members of a public-art public involved in a public-art debate, and of the heterogeneity that one can encounter in that social network.

Of course, this is *not* to say that Boros' view is unreasonable, and that it does not capture at all how public art can promote political participation and encourage tolerance. Public artworks definitely stimulate viewers' imagination, and such a stimulation might cause (at least to some extent) those outcomes. However, even if correct, her account is incomplete and too generic. In effect, by overlooking the social dimension that essentially characterizes public art's appreciation, it fails to capture how *public* artworks can distinctively promote political participation and encourage tolerance. Her explanation could apply to any art form, irrespectively of whether it is public or not.[58] But I see good reasons for considering public art

[56]Ibid., 15

[57]Ibid., 14.

[58]Boros explicitly admits that there is nothing distinctive about public art's value. In her view, the distinction between public art and non-public art is only a matter of degree: public artworks are more effective than non-public artworks in promoting political participation and encouraging tolerance. See, in particular, Boros' discussion of Carol Duncan's view in *Creative Rebellion*, 78-81. See also C. Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London, UK, and New York, NY: Routledge, 1995).

independently.

I intend to address how public art's appreciation can promote political participation and how it can encourage tolerance separately. I opt for this strategy for two reasons. First, promoting political participation and encouraging tolerance respectively have sources that can be in principle distinguished. Second, possibly, there is a tension between those two outcomes of appreciating public artworks. A separate discussion will help me address this last issue properly.

By following the insights from Anthony Downs' rational choice theory, a dominant strand in political science understands political participation as primarily depending on access to information.[59] But to access information has a cost. In effect, "[p]olitical activity cannot be meaningful unless it is informed, and the cost of information is a primary cost of political participation."[60]

In order to participate politically, one needs to know the answer to several question. Participation, in fact, depends on knowing how to answer questions such as questions "about the mechanics of ... involvement," (How should I vote?, Where should I vote? For whom should I vote? How else should I participate to the political life of my community?), and questions "about the reasons for participating" (For what purposes should I become politically involved? What are the problems that afflict my community? How can I become politically active? What are likely to be the consequences of my actions?).[61] By following Scott McClurg, I define the knowledge required to answer those questions as a knowledge of "politically-

[59]A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper, 1957).

[60]R. La Due and R. Huckfeldt, "Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation," *Political Psychology* 19 (1998), 569. See also M. Fiorina, "Information and Rationality in Elections," in J. A. Ferejohn and J. H. Kuklinski (eds.), *Information and Democratic Processes* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990); R. Huckfeldt, "The Social Communication of Political Expertise," *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (2001): 425-39; R. Huckfeldt and J. Sprague, *Citizens, Politics, and Social Communication: Information and Influence in an Election Campaign* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995); S. McClurg, "Social Networks and Political Participation: The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation," *Political Research Quarterly* 56 (2003): 449-464; W. McPhee, *Formal Theories of Mass Behavior* (New York, NY: MacMillan 1963).

[61]McClurg, "Social Networks and Political Participation," 450.

relevant information."[62] In other words, the possibility of political participation depends on knowing a suitable amount of politically-relevant information.

However, obtaining a suitable level of politically-relevant information is not necessarily inexpensive. In order to obtain (enough) politically-relevant information, one needs to invest resources, both from an economic and from a cognitive point of view, and to consume time and effort in such a pursuit. "Indeed, left to their own devices, individuals may quickly find that the costs of information swamp the realistic expectation of any significant benefit arising from participation."[63] That is, in order to obtain the politically-relevant information needed for participating politically, an isolated individual needs to spend so much resources that she may very well think that such a cost overwhelms the benefit of political participation, and she might prefer not to participate.

Yet, individuals need not acquire information in isolation from others. Of course, they can acquire information by themselves from impersonal sources such as books, articles, journals, newspapers, and so on. But they can also acquire information by socially interacting with a network of other individuals.[64] Social interactions, in fact, expose individuals to various knowledge. Other individuals can tell us a good deal of information about the most disparate subjects. Some of those information are politically-relevant. The acquisition of politically-relevant information from others is relatively easy and inexpensive in terms of resources invested. And by obtaining that information, one finds political activity less costly and, therefore, is more likely to participate politically.

In other words, as McClurg argues, social interactions promote political partic-

[62] Ibid., 451.

[63] La Due and Huckfeldt, "Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation," 570.

[64] I focus on face-to-face interactions. However, web-based forms of interaction should not be excluded, though they require a more nuanced argument that I will not pursue here. For a discussion of the relationship between web-based interactions and political participation, see S. Valenzuela, Y. Kim, and H. de Zúñiga, "Social Networks that Matter: Exploring the Role of Political Discussion for Online Political Participation," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 24 (2012): 163-184.

ipation because of their "substance," that is, the content that they convey, rather than their "form," that is, the type of relation linking discussants.[65] When carrying "political substance," that is, when enriched by politically-relevant information, social interactions influence positively political participation. In this sense, the politically-relevant information that circulates within a social network is responsible for promoting political participation.

Scholars emphasize that one cannot fully understand how social interactions influence political participation in terms of personal resources and abilities.[66] In fact, social interactions make available a set of politically-relevant information that differs from that one that is available to an individual, whose resources are necessarily limited. In this sense, social interactions constitute an additional way to acquire politically-relevant knowledge—a way that supplements rather than supplanting personal resources and abilities that promote political participation.[67]

I argue that public-art debates include social interactions that carry politically-relevant information, and that involve social networks of discussants possessing politically-relevant knowledge. In effect, when appreciating public artworks, members of public-art publics socially interact by participating in public-art debates. Interactions in public-art debates expose, in all likelihood, members of public-art publics to social stocks of information that broaden their knowledge and understanding of politics. When acquiring that kind of information, members of public-art publics find political activity less costly and, therefore, are more inclined to participate politically.

That social interactions involved in public-art debates expose members to politically-relevant knowledge should be guaranteed by the nature of public-art debates. In

[65]See McClurg, "Social Networks and Political Participation," 453 and ff.

[66]See McClurg, "Social Networks and Political Participation"; D. Mutz, "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* 4 (2002): 838-55; and, D. Mutz, "Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice," *American Political Science Review* 96 (2002): 111-26.

[67]McClurg, "Social Networks and Political Participation," 450.

effect, I have argued that public-art debates do not address traditional artistic or aesthetic concerns. They focus on issues related to the public good. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that, in discussing those issues, members of a public-art public would exchange, among other things, politically-relevant information. In effect, one must acknowledge that some issues related to the public good are intrinsically political.[68]

For instance, it seems plausible to understand what appears as an increased level of political activism following the presentation of Lin's VVMW as a direct result of politically-relevant information that its related public-art debate made available. Through that debate, participants learned, among other things, about the tragedy that veterans lived while at war; the mistreatment that they received when they came home; and, the public indifference towards their social rehabilitation.[69] Moreover, they learned from the words (and actions) of Jan Scruggs, the Vietnam veteran who conceived the idea of building VVMW, something about the reasons of why participation is desirable and how one can effectively participate.[70]

I should emphasize that a suitable level of politically-relevant expertise in the social network relating to a public-art debate should be guaranteed by the architectonic relationship between the sphere of political authority and the public-art sphere as I explained in Chapter 4. There, when discussing legitimacy of decisions, I have argued for the construction of hybrid forums of discussion where members of the public authority and members of public-art publics can interact. But the construction of such discussion forums should plausibly influence positively the level

[68]See, for instance, D. Snidal, "Public Good, Property Rights, and Political Organizations," *International Studies Quarterly* 23 (1979): 532-566.

[69]For instance, Vietnam veteran Tom Carhart conveyed information about those issues during the Committee of Fine Arts meeting in October 1981, where the future of the VVMW was discussed. For a detailed chronology of the political controversy surrounding VVMW, see <http://www.lehigh.edu/~ejg1/vietnam/content/round3.htm>.

[70]In all likelihood, it was something that he learned during the 1982 dedication ceremonies that encouraged Vietnam veteran John Devitt of Stockton, California, to become politically active, and that taught him how to do it. Stockton built a transportable version of VVMW in 1984. By 2006, estimated visitors are in the tens of millions. See <http://www.themovingwall.org>.

of political expertise in the social network related to a public-art debate. At least at a normative level, it seems obvious that members of the public authority possess an adequate knowledge of politically-relevant information. (Of course, this is not to say that members of public-art publics cannot possess politically-relevant knowledge. They may very well do, too.)

In this section, I have argued that to engage others in a public-art debate can promote political participation thanks to the politically-relevant information that participants can acquire from that discussion. In the following section, I turn to the discussion of how the appreciation of public artworks can encourage tolerance.

7.4 Public Art and Tolerance

In the previous section, I have argued that social interactions in public-art debates can promote political participation for the following reason. Those social interactions make available politically-relevant information to discussants. The access to a larger stock of information makes political participation less costly for members of a public-art public, who are then more likely to become politically active. In this section, I argue that being a member of a public-art public exposes individuals to diversity. Exposure to diversity engenders two mechanisms, one cognitive and the other affective, that encourage tolerance.

Social relationships come in different types, or forms, "ranging from marriage to friendship to membership in formal organizations."[71] Among different types of social relationships, there are some that are more likely to build what I call "cross-cutting social networks." Cross-cutting social networks are those networks presenting a significant heterogeneity among its members. That is, the nature of the relationship in those networks is such that tends to connect a diverse population of individuals. And, when being a part of cross-cutting social networks, individuals

[71] McClurg, "Social Networks and Political Participation," 451.

are likely to be exposed to "differing political viewpoints" or, simply, to *diversity*.[72]

As Diana Mutz convincingly argues, "cross-cutting exposure ... should lead to greater political tolerance."[73] Though empirical studies did not address directly the relationship between cross-cutting exposure and an increase in tolerance, data on closely related issues support the likelihood of such an impact. For instance, cross-cutting exposure is believed to develop a psychological capacity called *openness to experience*, which it seems positively related to tolerance.[74] Moreover, on the other side of the spectrum, authoritarians tend to live in isolation from diverse ways of living and thinking.[75]

According to Mutz, there seems to be two distinct possible "mechanisms" by means of which exposure to diversity can encourage tolerance.[76] First, it can encourage tolerance via a "cognitive mechanism." According to this mechanism, when coming into contact with individuals endorsing different political viewpoints, "people learn that their norms, customs, and lifestyles are not the only ones."[77] In this sense, this mechanism is a part of a process that psychologists call "deprovincialization." Moreover, thanks to that exposure, people can also learn that others may very well have good reasons, though unpersuasive ones, for holding their views. Such an increased awareness of rationales for holding opposing views often leads to a greater tolerance. As Mutz emphasizes, this positive correlation between increased awareness of rationales and tolerance finds support also in the work of theorists such as Mead and Piaget.[78] According to those theorists, a capacity to

[72] Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side*, 2.

[73] Ibid., 64. See also J. Barabas, "How Deliberation Affects Policy Opinions," *American Political Science Review* 98 (2004): 687–701.

[74] E. Theiss-Morse, G. E. Marcus, and J. L. Sullivan, "Passion and Reason in Political Life: The Organization of Affect and Cognition and Political Tolerance," in G. E. Marcus and R. L. Hanson (eds.), *Reconsidering the Democratic Public* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993): 249–272.

[75] B. Altemeyer, *The Authoritarian Specter* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[76] Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side*, especially chap. 3.

[77] Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side*, 68. See also T. F. Pettigrew, "Generalized Intergroup Contact Effects on Prejudice," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23 (1997): 173-185.

[78] G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); J. Piaget, *The*

understand others' point of view and rationale is fundamental for developing "attitudes and behaviors that subordinate the self's perspective to the larger society – as political tolerance clearly does."[79]

Second, exposure to diversity can also engender an "affective mechanism" that can encourage tolerance. According to this mechanism, by being exposed to diverse individuals, people learn from personal experience that "those different from one's self are not necessarily bad people."[80] Here, it is largely irrelevant the content of the interactions. That is, the mechanism does not depend on the information that one obtains by interacting with others. It largely depends on the possibility of being exposed to diverse individuals and of building relationships with them. In this sense, individuals participating in a heterogeneous network are more likely to develop more intimate cross-cutting relationships, which reasonably lead to a greater tolerance.

I want to suggest that the type of relationship that links members of a public-art public is likely to favor the creation of a heterogeneous social network. Its probable heterogeneity leads plausibly to cross-cutting social interactions, that is, to exposure to diversity. Of course, that public-art publics are likely to be heterogeneous depends on how one should identify public-art publics. In Chapter 3, I have proposed a series of spatial criteria for identifying public-art publics. I have favored those criteria for their embedded inclusiveness. In this sense, the way in which I identify a public-art public should guarantee its heterogeneity, and favor those cross-cutting social interactions that, through the mechanisms discussed above, plausibly encourage tolerance.

For instance, as Kelly Leroux and Anna Berdnaska argue, Mary Petty's study suggests that a series of public art projects organized in Philadelphia as a response

Moral Judgment of the Child (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932).

[79]Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side*, 68.

[80]Ibid., 68. Here, Mutz is drawing on S. A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1955).

to the HIV/AIDS epidemic promoted more tolerant behaviors towards sexual minorities and, more in general, people with HIV and AIDS (PWHAs).[81] One could explain how those projects encouraged more tolerant behaviors towards PWHAs in terms of the two mechanisms that Mutz discusses. In particular, Taller Puertorriqueno, an arts center working with the North Philadelphia Latino/Puerto Rican communities, coordinated a quilt-making project that was inspired by the more famous *NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt* in Washington, DC.[82] During the quilt-making sessions, activists could raise awareness of AIDS, showing the misleading characterization of AIDS that portrayed it as a "social disease" caused by corrupted behavior. The increased awareness enacted the cognitive mechanism that allowed members of that public-art public to become more tolerant. Moreover, the project included some public meetings. The fact that people that were somehow affected by the disease and people that were not touched by it were able to "get together" enacted the affective one.[83]

As I have already anticipated, I treat political participation and tolerance separately not just because they are by-products of different aspects of a public-art debate. There is another important reason. A popular view in social and political theory says that exposure to diversity influences positively not only tolerance, but also political participation.[84] In effect, some believe that exposure to diversity stimulates one's desire to exchange views, and encourages intrapersonal reflection. However, empirical research casts doubt on that view. Though evidence is

[81] LeRoux and Bernadska, Impact *of the Arts on Individual Contributions to U.S Civil Society*, 8; Petty, "Art and Social Change," 11-18.

[82] Petty, "Art and Social Change," 16-17.

[83] Petty refers explicitly to a woman whose son had recently died from an AIDS-related illness.

[84] See, for instance, J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). Communitarians often stress the importance of engaging in political discourse with diverse individuals. See, among others, B. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984); R. N. Bellah, R. Madsen, W. M. Sullivan, A. Swidler, and S. M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985). John Stuart Mill famously connects the possibility of a public sphere with exposure to diversity. See J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956/1859).

still mixed, some researchers suggest that exposure to diversity decreases political participation.[85] Such a decrease is explained in terms of a widespread inclination to avoid conflict, which is likely to arise in cross-cutting interactions. That is, rather than entering in conflict with others while interacting politically, many individuals prefer to abstain from it. Other researchers find that interactions with a heterogeneous network may not always diminish participation, but do not seem to increase it.[86]

It is then important to acknowledge the possible tension that may arise between the two social outcomes of public art. However, I nonetheless believe that, according to my characterization, public-art debates have the resources to solve that tension or, at least, to counterbalance it. In effect, empirical studies suggest that the possible detrimental effects of cross-cutting interactions on political participation are overridden by an increased amount of circulating information.[87] That is, the (positive) influence that newly available politically-relevant information has on participation is greater than the (possibly negative) influence that a network's heterogeneity has on it. In this sense, when a large stock of politically-relevant information is available, political participation increases even in cases where networks are heterogeneous.

Thanks to the high volume of information that should be available in public-art debates because of their architectonic structure, it seems reasonable to suggest that public-art publics may very well be among those networks that "can encourage

[85] Mutz, *Hearing the Other Side*, especially chap. 4; Mutz, "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation,"; and, Mutz, "Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory In Practice."

[86] R. Huckfeldt, J. Morehouse Mendez, and T. Osborn, "Disagreement, Ambivalence, and Engagement: The Political Consequences of Heterogeneous Networks," *Political Psychology* 25 (2004): 65-95.

[87] S. D. McClurg, "The Electoral Relevance of Political Talk: Examining Disagreement and Expertise Effects in Social Networks on Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2006): 737-754; D. A. Scheufele, B. W. Hardy, D. Brossard, I. S. Waismel-Manor and E. Nisbet, "Democracy Based on Difference: Examining the Links Between Structural Heterogeneity, Heterogeneity of Discussion Networks, and Democratic Citizenship," *Journal of Communication* 56 (2006): 728-753.

both higher levels of involvement and increased consideration of differing viewpoints."[88] In this sense, it is plausible to see social-interactions embedded in the appreciation of public artworks as leading towards two separate and sometimes conflicting social goals: promoting political participation *and* encouraging tolerance.

Throughout this thesis, I have characterized public art as a form of art that is based on dialogue, which is an essential aspect of effective practices of public art. Dialogue structures public art's context of reception. In effect, I have suggested that public art is received within a discursive space that is essentially dialogic in nature, that is, a public-art sphere. There, individuals that are members of a public-art public meet in order to discuss issues related to the presentation of a public artwork in the attempt to promote the public good—issues that, of course, transcend the boundaries of traditional artistic or aesthetic concerns.

I have also emphasized that the dialogue of public art lacks of centralization. In effect, it does not develop as a unified phenomenon. On the contrary, it comprises a set of dispersed and scattered dialogic interactions, that is, the public-art debates, which can be only loosely recapture under a common discourse. Those interactions tend to occur within distinct groups of individuals, which I have called as public-art public*s*, and *not* within a single and unified public. They also develop in a plurality of public-art spheres. Moreover, the issues that are addressed by a public-art public are responsive to its peculiar interests and needs. Thus, public-art debates tend to deal with questions that need not converge towards generalized themes, but that have a distinct "localized" scope, both in a spatial and in a temporal sense.

The dialogic nature of public-art spheres makes them spaces aspiring to be inclusive forums of democratic confrontation. There, discussants share and chal-

[88] McClurg, "The Electoral Relevance of Political Talk," 737.

lenge each others' opinion, in the attempt to negotiate non-violently their differences, and to find a common core of shared values in which recognizing themselves. The inclusive nature of those spaces of discussion requires that opinions are judged solely in terms of their own merit, irrespectively of a speaker's identity. In this sense, the discourse of public art develops along lines that diverge sensibly from those followed by the more traditional discourse of non-public art. In public art, one should recognize to each participant the capacity to contribute pertinently and significantly to the discussion. The opinions of art experts, then, do no possess a special status or authority. They are subjected to the same scrutiny as opinions of other "ordinary" participants.

I have also suggested that a proper consideration of the importance of dialogue and discussion in our experience of public art should have an impact on how we understand the identity of public artworks as objects of appreciation, that is, an impact on how we understand their ontology. In effect, rather than a stable object whose features are determined by the intentional activity of an artist, a public artwork is better described as an emerging entity whose identity is responsive to the historically determined contextual conditions where its reception obtains. In this sense, ontologically, a public artwork could be understood as a nexus of interactions between one (or more) artist(s), an object, and the members of a public-art public: its properties are a function (determinable in terms) of those interactions and the socio-historical conditions within which those interactions obtain.

In this last chapter, I have argued for what one could perhaps regard as the most important consequence of my account: its capstone, if one concedes it. Dialogue does not only structure public art's context of reception and influence its ontology. It also constitutes the primary source of its value. In effect, I have argued that what we find valuable in experiencing a public artwork is not related to the pleasurable perception of its aesthetic properties. It is rather a function of the dialogue that es-

sentially characterizes its appreciation. I have said that participants in a public-art debate have easier access to politically-relevant information. Thus, they are more likely to become politically active. I have also added that interactions in public-art debates expose discussants to diversity. Exposure to diversity allows individuals to discover other ways of living. It also strengthens the network(s) of their social world, promoting the creation of heterogeneous ones. As a consequence of being exposed to diversity, participants in a public-art debate can develop more tolerant behaviors.

The picture that emerges from this thesis is one that rejects a gap between public art and life. It is one that challenges the idea that the experience of public art is a "liminal" experience, as many understand aesthetic experience. It is not, in this sense, an experience that requires "withdrawal from the day-to-day world, a passage into a time or space in which the normal business of life is suspended."[89] On the contrary, the experience of public art brings us right in the middle of our mundane existence and its preoccupations: it requires no suspension from our "normal businesses." With works such as Lin's VVMW, Christo's *Abram Lincoln* and Castagna's *In pietra*, public art makes visible, metaphorically and metonymically, the crucial issues of the day, and helps us face them. By generating discussion on those issues, it fills our daily social interactions with "meanings" and values, and makes us concerned with the public good. Thanks to its capacity to engage all sorts of viewers, public art builds and strengthens our social networks. It creates a public space within which we are exposed to that same diversity that characterizes our multicultural societies: diverse individuals and groups. Within that space, public art forces us to confront our differences, but also encourages us to overcome them by sanctioning, like a devotional artifact of some secular religion, democracy's most important ritual: dialogue.

[89] Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 14.

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