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## ARTICLE

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# Cognitive Progress in Artistic Research\*

**Gerard Vilar**

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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**Abstract**

Traditionally, it has been understood that art is not a form of knowledge of the same kind as empirical, scientific or technological knowledge. For this reason, one cannot speak of the progress of art in any sense except in the progress of certain techniques. Nonetheless, artists who defend the idea of "artistic research" are dismantling these traditional ideas since they understand that at least some types of art projects do produce knowledge in a strong sense. So, at least of some art research projects it is possible to affirm that they represent a cognitive progress of the same sort as we find in the sciences. I propose three examples: *Duty-free Art*, by the German artist Hito Steyerl; a research on the *chekas* of Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39 by the Spanish artist Pedro G. Romero; and finally, in his participatory work *El Camp de la Bota* by the Catalan artist Francesc Abad. These projects result in contributions to knowledge in a very literal sense. They are works of art that generate propositional knowledge susceptible to being debated and refuted, like that of the social sciences or the humanities, and experiencing similar cognitive progresses. But this type of progress of art is, in any case, a minority. Progress in artistic research practices in general, excepting those stronger, resembles, from the cognitive point of view, the cognitive progress of philosophy. My thesis is that the concept of cognitive progress that we use in philosophy as an endless reflection and proliferation of perspectives and new concepts can be applied, therefore, to the practices of artistic research in general. Such progress cannot be visualized by a linear metaphor, but by a succession of concentric circles expanding in every direction.

**Keywords**

progress, artistic research, artistic knowledge, knowledge in constellations, philosophical knowledge

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## Progreso cognitivo en la investigación artística

### Resumen

*Tradicionalmente, se ha entendido que el arte no es una forma de conocimiento del mismo tipo que el conocimiento empírico, científico o tecnológico. Por esta razón, no se puede hablar del progreso del arte en ningún sentido a excepción del progreso en ciertas técnicas. No obstante, los artistas que defienden la idea de «investigación artística» están rompiendo estas ideas tradicionales, ya que entienden que al menos algunos tipos de proyectos artísticos sí que producen conocimiento en un sentido fuerte. Por lo tanto, al menos respecto a algunos proyectos de investigación artística, es posible afirmar que representan un progreso cognitivo del mismo tipo al que encontramos en las ciencias. Propongo tres ejemplos: Duty-free Art, de la artista alemana Hito Steyerl; una investigación de las checas de Barcelona durante la Guerra Civil Española desde 1936 hasta 1939 del artista español Pedro G. Romero; y por último, el trabajo participativo El Camp de la Bota del artista catalán Francesc Abad. Estos proyectos contribuyen al conocimiento en un sentido muy literal. Son obras de arte que generan conocimiento proposicional susceptible a ser debatido y refutado, como el de las ciencias sociales o las humanidades, y experimentan procesos cognitivos similares. Sin embargo, este tipo de progreso del arte es, en cualquier caso, minoritario. En general, el progreso en las prácticas de investigación artística tiene, a excepción de aquellas más fuertes, semejanzas, desde el punto de vista cognitivo, con el progreso cognitivo de la filosofía. Mi tesis aborda el hecho de que el concepto de progreso cognitivo que se usa en filosofía como una interminable reflexión y como proliferación de perspectivas y nuevos conceptos puede ser aplicado a las prácticas de investigación artística en general. Tal proceso no se puede visualizar como una metáfora lineal, sino como una sucesión de círculos concéntricos que se expanden en cualquier dirección.*

### Palabras clave

*progreso, investigación artística, conocimiento artístico, conocimiento en constelaciones, conocimiento filosófico*

Controversies about cognitivism in aesthetics are being fuelled by recent developments in contemporary art. So is the fall with the evolution of those tendencies in recent art that fall under the concept of “artistic research”, which allows us to point to a “cognitive turn” in arts.<sup>1</sup> Such artistic practices are pushing us to rethink some old problems of the philosophy of art, especially those related to the assumption that art is a form of knowledge. But, if artistic research is a kind of knowledge production, then maybe it would be possible to state an accumulation and perfecting of knowledge in the same, more-or-less linear sense that we find in experimental, social and human sciences. Traditionally, however, it has been understood that art is not a form of knowledge of the same kind as empirical, scientific or technological knowledge. For this reason, one rarely speak of the progress of art in any sense except in the progress

of certain techniques.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, artists who defend the idea of “artistic research” are dismantling these traditional ideas since they understand that at least some types of art projects do produce knowledge in a strong sense. Therefore, the question that arises is as follows: Is it possible to affirm, at least of some art research projects, that they represent a contribution to knowledge and in consequence a cognitive progress of the same sort as we find in sciences? I am going to defend that this is in fact so, and I will propose several examples. But insofar as these kinds of artistic practices are rather a minority in the broad spectrum of contemporary art, the question of progress in art remains unanswered. Finally, I am going to propose a concept of progress in the arts analogous to the progress of philosophy: namely, by generating a multiplicity of visions and interpretations that enrich our understanding of the subjects and problems under consideration.

1. See Vilar (2017, p.77-108).

2. See Bertinetto (2015, p. 79-92).

## 1

Anyone familiar with the latest evolutions in the art world will have realized that the word “research” and the expression “artistic research” have been proliferating in artists’ “statements” and exposition catalogues or in the titles of master’s theses and the doctoral programs of art schools in the most developed countries. This would have greatly surprised the Heidegger of *The Age of the World-Picture*,<sup>3</sup> which characterized research as the opposite of art and understood it as the essence of science. Art had always been *presentation* and *representation* of the accumulated wisdom and beliefs of peoples. But in the middle of the 19th century artists began to *experiment* with the contents and tools of their art. And, as a kind of natural evolution of this stage on the way toward the rationalisation of artistic experimentation, since the beginning of the new millennium, more and more artists are *investigating* all sorts of themes with the objective of *producing knowledge*. Of course, there continue to be many artists that only want to represent the world as they see it or in the name of others, as well as many artists that only want to experiment freely, without the constraints of a research methodology or the obligation to produce knowledge. But those who find themselves in this latter situation: What do they understand by producing knowledge via or in art?

Common assessments about artistic research as a mode of knowledge production in contemporary art have raised many questions that have been being answered and discussed over the last few years.<sup>4</sup> There is no consensus about what kind of “knowledge” artistic research generates; most probably, because we are confronted by a rich variety of different forms of knowledge and thinking. Whatever the case may be, a controversial tendency is now becoming evident-- the blurring of the differences between art and the sciences and the argument that art is an equally legitimate path to knowledge production as the traditional sciences. This tendency is especially evident in academic programs and among artists dealing with academia and some funding institutions. But does this represent a good strategy in the struggle to gain greater legitimacy in the space of academic institutions and access to funding? And is it true that artistic research is something comparable or homologous to scientific research, whether in the natural or social sciences or in the humanities, and that the cognitive value of art lies therein? Or could it be rather that “artistic research” is a sign of submission to the new cognitive capitalism: part of the new neoliberal order of productivity?<sup>5</sup>

3. Heidegger (2002, pp. 57-85).

4. Elkins (ed.) 2014; Holert (2011, p. 38-63); Biggs and Karlsson (eds.) (2011); Borgdorff (2012); Ambrozic and Vetesse (2013); Wilson and van Ruiten (2013). The most recent accounts are: Schiesser, in Bast *et al.* (eds.) (2015, p. 197-209); Badura *et al.* (eds.) (2015); and a report by Lilja for the Swedish Government: *Art, Research, Empowerment. On the Artist as Researcher* (2015). Finally, it is very useful the handbook of Mersch *et al.* (2015).

5. Moulrier-Butang (2012).

6. According to the global reference work, the *Frascati Manual 2002: Proposed Standard Practice for Surveys on Research and Experimental Development* (2002).

Among the many philosophical problems raised by the practices gathered under the heading of “artistic research,” we inevitably encounter that of the progress of knowledge. This is to say: If certain forms of contemporary art generate a kind of knowledge, it is logical to pose the question of whether there is some kind of accumulation of this knowledge and a process of correcting of the latter that would allow us to say that that there is progress in some sense analogous to the progress of knowledge in the sciences, even if its nature remains distinct. If this is the case – if, in contrast to what art has done throughout its history, we would be confronted by forms of generating knowledge that allow, in a way, for advancement in the comprehension of certain phenomena – then we would be faced by a transcendent fact in the history of art, since we would have to speak of progress in art in a stronger and more literal sense than could have been employed up until now.

Numerous artists are conducting *research* in quite a literal sense of the term. According to contemporary international standards, the so-called *Frascati Manual*: “Research and experimental development (R&D) comprise creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications”.<sup>6</sup> In order for us to be able to speak of research in the literal sense, there has to be a move from a state of non-knowledge to one of knowledge or from a certain degree of knowledge to a higher degree of knowledge. And this is exactly what numerous artists are doing today. In this sense, a not insignificant number of artists are producing knowledge that enriches our comprehension of certain aspects of the world. I am going to propose three examples.

## 2

My first example is by the German artist Hito Steyerl, who is producing works of art that, as a result of his research, illuminate for us the transformations of social space and time that follow from the use of new visual technologies. In autumn of 2015, the National Museum of Art Reina Sofía in Madrid presented an important retrospective of Hito Steyerl. The exhibition was titled *Duty-Free Art*, which was one of the projects that were included in the retrospective and, in fact, the most recent of them all. This project is defined as an investigation into the important deposits of works of art found in off-shore territories (or free zones) within some international airports, such as the Geneva, Singapore or Luxembourg airports. Collectors, dealers, traffickers,

investors, corporations and other people and institutions from all over the world deposit works of art in these free zones - for example, thousands of Picassos - for which their owners do not want to pay taxes in Customs of their countries or by having to pay the fees on equity. These extra-state spaces are creating a new “no man’s land of luxury”, new “secret museums”, which in fact form part of this extensive network of new tax havens, deep internet, etc., which are redesigning sovereignty spaces throughout the world. This project of complaint of Hito Steyerl consists of an article, originally published in the e-flux digital magazine (Steyerl, 2015a), also reproduced in the catalog of the retrospective (Steyerl, 2015b), where these facts are explained and, which is very important, are framed in a broader reflection on how contemporary art shows us the transformations of space and time in a globalized world.

My second example is the big *Archivo F.X.* project by Spanish artist Pedro G. Romero (Huelva, 1964). This project is long-term research initiated by Romero in 2000 on iconoclasm.<sup>7</sup> In the course of this project, Romero recovered much information about another forgotten fact: the history of *Preventori G*, the cheka of the Military Intelligence Service of the Republic during the Spanish Civil War, located in the Sanjuanistas convent of Zaragoza Street, in Barcelona, in 1937.<sup>8</sup> The word ‘Cheka’ comes from the Russian Cheká, ЧК - acronym of *Чрезвычайная Комиссия, ЧК* - *Chrezvycháinaya Komissiya*, ‘Extraordinary Commission’. This was the first Soviet political and military intelligence service, created on 20 December 1917 by Feliks Dzerzhinsky. The Soviet cheka was the successor of the former Tsarist Okhrana, and emulated its internal organisation. Its mission was to “suppress and liquidate”, with sweeping power and almost no legal limit, all “counter-revolutionary” or “deviant” acts. By extension, “cheka” was used to name various secret political policies that emerged later in other countries. In the Republican Spain, the name “cheka” was also used to name the premises that were used during the Civil War by similar meta-police bodies, to detain, interrogate, torture and judge summarily. The cheka of Zaragoza Street of Barcelona, along with that of Vallmajor Street, however, were different because their detention and torture cell was designed based on elements taken from avant-garde art: inclined and expressionist spaces, pictorial geometries in the style of Kandinsky and Mondrian, optical effects... After the war, Agustín de Foxa, a fascist intellectual, described the cheka in an article titled *Crímenes con pedantería freudiana* (*Crimes with Freudian Pedantry*):

Inside, a scientific system of colours, stripes and volumes rips your eyes apart; it breaks down the nervous system and dismounts its parts like

a clock. Red, black, white circles, in different sizes; green ellipses and diagonal stripes cutting a series of orange parallels; the entire wall is of a changing green hue. A source of bright light illuminating a chessboard painted on the background wall. At the door, a pile of ash-coloured cubes with long shadows and yellow spirals. The whole system was aimed at producing delirium. These colours (a quick look makes them look like simple cubist decorations) act according to the time of the day, until the yellow flame of madness is finally lit. What diabolical mind, what half-bred Mongolian-Russian, what abnormal pervert with the darkest unconscious ever, imagined those pictures, those combinations of colours by calculating the anxieties of the retina, the frame of light, the loss of balance of the broken lines? All the unclean oriental decadence, fuelled by Moscow, is in it, conspiring against Western art: books about opium, the surrealist films of Buñuel, Dadaist poetry, Dali’s paintings... all have been used, ultimately, as tortures in the ‘chekas’. The prisoner finds himself inside a Picasso painting, martyred by lights, lines and abnormal colours.

This cheka was visited in 1940 by some Nazi bigwigs, particularly by Heinrich Himmler, during his trip to Catalonia in search for the Holy Grail in Montserrat (*sic*), a mountain close to Barcelona. In any case, it is a particularly disturbing fact that findings of abstract art and expressionism were used as an instrument of repression and torture by our leftist grandparents. Maybe a new history of Avant-gardes should include a chapter about this kind of facts.<sup>9</sup>

My last example is *El Camp de la Bota*, by the Catalan artist Francesc Abad, a project started in 2004. It is a participatory project and progressed in time motivated by the large real estate operation carried out in the northern area of Barcelona known as the Forum of Cultures and which consisted of covering a whole area with cement and buildings - the Camp de la Bota, a large sandy beach - which in times of Franco was used as a place of execution of detainees who suffered reprisals of the new totalitarian regime. Abad pushed a movement of recovery of the memory of those persecuted to recover the names and information on the executed ones. The result was the documentation of 1734 names of republicans, communists, anarchists and others persecuted and executed by the Franco regime especially between 1939 and 1953. his testimonial project involved thousands of people contributing data and documentation with which a website and an itinerant exhibition were created. So, Abad contributed to our knowledge of the Franco regime’s use of one part of Barcelona’s northern beach as a camp for executing regime opponents, documenting the death by firing squad of some 1734 persons.

All these projects result in contributions to knowledge in a very literal sense: this is to say, in a sense not far removed from what the

7. Visit: <<http://fxysudoble.com/es/archivo-f-x>>..

8. Visit: <<http://fxysudoble.com/es/tesauro/notes-on-sculpture/>> as well as the cultural supplement of *the newspaper La Vanguardia*: <<http://fxysudoble.com/es/cronologia/documental-en-el-suplemento-culturas-de-la-vanguardia/>>.

9. Combalia (2003).

research of a media sociologist or a historian could produce. They are works of art that generate propositional knowledge susceptible to being debated and refuted, similar to that of the social sciences or the humanities, and that is, above all, differentiated by the final format in which it gets presented: the scientific article or book, in the case of science; the display of an artistic exposition, in the case of art. In this sense, it seems undeniable that we would have to accept that at least some of the projects of Steyerl, Romero and Abad have contributed to the advancement of our knowledge of the new economy of art, of the Spanish Civil War or of the repression of the Spanish post-war period.

### 3

But artistic research is not often developed in these terms, but rather in forms of knowledge that are less objective and falsifiable as is common in the arts. Artistic knowledge is often knowledge of the real, but with equal frequency is modal knowledge, as in fiction and sci-fi. Sometimes it is practical (know-how), concrete, subjective knowledge, which is not propositional and cannot be reduced to a mere discourse or a few propositions and which only gets generated in the experience of the artwork and its production. Artistic knowledge can be phenomenal, moral in values, proprioceptive or kinaesthetic, concept learning, and there probably are some other kinds.<sup>10</sup>

It is impossible here to present a whole cartography of all the highly-varied ways in which artistic research is generating knowledge today – among other reasons, because such a cartography remains to be made. Thus, I will limit myself to giving a few examples of one of the forms of generation of knowledge that are employed most frequently by contemporary research artists – and also by many that do not do artistic research: namely, knowledge by montage or the generation of knowledge by constellations.<sup>11</sup> Many contemporary artists work with archives, series or collections of images or objects<sup>12</sup>: for example, the sort of projects inaugurated by the conceptual artists and photographers Bernd and Hilda Becher with their archive of unused industrial architecture that is condemned to disappear; or the series done by Hans-Peter Feldmann, from his montages of images of knees or lips to the impressive *One hundred Years* series, a collection from 2001 consisting of 101 photographs of persons from eight-months-old to one hundred. These kinds of projects are often being transformed nowadays into genuine research on all sorts of subjects. I will give only two examples, *The Atlas Group* and the archive of archives of Montserrat Soto. The former is a group that

was created in 1999 by the Lebanese artist Walid Raad (1967). Its archives can be found in the immaterial space of the web and at two sites, in Beirut and New York. They conserve and analyse all sorts of documents – photographs, videos, films, and notebooks – that have been discovered or produced via a meticulous process of research on the contemporary history of Lebanon and, especially, the country's civil war of 1975-1990. These materials can be seen having been organized into constellations in the expositions put on by the project, so that the public can read the materials, which seek to rewrite history in a way that is non-conventional, neither chronological nor endogamous, but represented rather in its complexity and continuous interactivity.

The “archive of archives” or meta-archive of the Catalan artist Montserrat Soto is the last example I want to present here. Since the end of the 1990s, Soto has been investigating the forms of constitution and functioning of all sorts of archives, including those connected to technological media like photography and video as well as those related to writing and oral history, archives of obituaries and objects and even biological archives. In her expositions, we learn by way of concrete cases that every archive is a selection apparatus that determines what should be saved and what should not be, that it must be understood as a referenced index more than the content to which the archive itself refers.

The projects that I have just given as examples do not function like the above-mentioned projects of Hito Steyerl, Pedro G. Romero and Francesc Abad; the latter were clearly of a propositional character. Of course, they contain information and put forth knowledge of certain facts. But what is important is not so much to transmit this information as to provoke a kind of thinking in constellations that sets out from fragments, residues, ruins, the detritus of history. These artists work like junkmen and junkwomen that recover and collect the remains of history for the purpose of questioning the inherited historical memory, of rewriting the stories that constitute us, and even recycling them into a force that looks toward a possible and desirable future. Walter Benjamin wanted to reconvert the historian into a junk collector. His great project the *Passagen-Werk* – the Arcades Project – employed literary montage as its methodology: it did not claim to say anything, just to show.<sup>13</sup> Well, this is what many artist-junkmen and artist-junkwomen are doing today<sup>14</sup>: They display constellations that allow us to have a better knowledge of whence we come, who we are and where we are going.

Knowledge in the form of constellations is related to a mode of thought by way of associative chains, combinations, didascalie, and analogies. Undoubtedly inaugurated by Aby Warburg and his *Atlas*

10. Gaut (2003 p. 437-438). See also the “Seminar 4” in Elkins (ed.) (2012, p. 39-46).

11. On this mode of knowledge, see Mersch (2015, p. 115-163); Didi-Huberman (2007, pp. 17-22).

12. For an account of this procedure in contemporary art, see Guasch (2011).

13. Benjamin (2002, p. 460).

14. As Bourriaud has justly observed in his last book: *The Exform* (2016, chapter 2).

*Mnemosyne*,<sup>15</sup> this form of thought has been growing in importance to the extent that during the last century, but especially since the revolution provoked by the internet and new digital technologies, individuals are increasingly navigating in the midst of a nearly infinite ocean of data, images, information, values, and ideas that are radically altering our ways of perceiving, reasoning, understanding, and communicating. Thinking in constellations, knowledge through montage, is one of the forms that young people – and especially today's very young people – are using the most. From early infancy, they are accustomed to looking at screens and even at various screens simultaneously displaying multiple static or moving elements. The montages of the artist-junkmen and artist-junkwomen belongs entirely to this same line.

Artistic research accumulates fragments, and this accumulation translates into the possibility of gaining access to multiple perspectives: to a prism that decomposes what appeared unified, to constellations with which to interpret what appeared solid and whole. They invite us to deconstruct appearances by way of the detection of indexes in the contemplated artwork, and, starting from said indexes, to unveil a web of relations that reveal a previously unobserved constellation. It is in this movement from the mere viewing of some elements to the sudden illumination of a constellation that knowledge is produced. Consequently, this cognitive process involves two moments. A first moment consists of the questioning of preconceived ideas, of “vacillations of knowledge,” “voyages in skepticism,” disruptions of language and of the system of disciplines, twists in the rules of the game and dislocations of assumptions: in short, disturbances of reason. The second moment is that which opens up to continuity, that of being able to see what was invisible, that of bringing to our languages what was not expressible, since it was not in them. For this second moment, artworks can be transformed into mechanisms for the emergence of the unthought and the unsaid, for the generation of new knowledge, even for the exploration of the “Great Outside” of which Foucault and other philosophers have spoken.

#### 4

Having arrived at this point, we can finally pose the question of progress in contemporary artistic research. As a résumé, we could state that there have been two main types of progress in artistic research to the date: a) progress as in the sciences, b) progress as in philosophy, being the latter the most common. Let me explain.

In the first sort of example that we considered, there would be a genuine progress in knowledge in a similar sense to that of the sciences. Nonetheless, this type of artistic project is relatively rare

in contemporary art, where other more concrete, subjective and experiential forms of knowledge overwhelmingly predominate, such as those seen in the second set of examples discussed above. In this latter case, we are not confronted by objective, propositional knowledge, but rather by prismatic thoughts, which are arrayed into constellations that do not have what it takes to generate consensus in a community, but whose value consists precisely in the plurality of potential interpretations that can be produced. In this case, then: What would we call “progress” on the cognitive level? We would not be confronted here by knowledge that has an accumulative character and that advances in a linear fashion, deepening our understanding on the path to a truth that gets postulated at the end of the investigation, but rather by the proliferation and multiplication of ways of seeing and experiencing, of different interpretations, by the plurality of ‘truths’. Instead of the line on which one goes forward, we need here a different metaphor: namely, that of progress in concentric circles. Just as when throwing a stone into a pond, the waves from the impact move in all directions, forming expanding circles, contemporary artistic research likewise moves in all directions, indefinitely broadening our ways of thinking about aspects of the world without advancing toward an ultimate and singular truth. Artistic research, like the art of the last hundred years, is polytheistic, not monotheistic like the sciences. The sciences presuppose that the world is one and they pursue its correct explanation or interpretation. The arts are the necessary antidote to this monotheism, which is itself just as necessary. The arts show us that there are innumerable modes of seeing and thinking about the world, they make us perceive it as richer and with more nuances, they facilitate our approaching it in new and surprising ways. And that is progress. Without the arts, our understanding of the world would be poorer for lack of nuance. Progress is obtaining greater richness and complexity and an improved ability to appreciate the nuances of our view of the world.

This concept of progress is very similar to that which we can employ in philosophy. Philosophy, as a form of knowledge, does not progress in the same way as the sciences. Thus, just as the artworks of the past are still alive for us today, we continue admiring and reading classical philosophical works, in order to look for responses to the big questions by which we are preoccupied. However admirable they may be, classical scientific works remain dead: objects of archaeology, which we can read out of curiosity, in order to get an idea of the errors committed by scientists in the past, but not in order to look for knowledge pertinent to the problems of the present. Philosophy is, nonetheless, a form of knowledge, even if distinct from the sciences, since, in contrast to scientific problems, philosophical problems, as has often been said, have no real solution. So, in what does the progress of philosophical knowledge consist? If we consider, for example, the question “What is justice?”, we will see that over the

15. Didi-Huberman (2011).

course of history philosophers have given highly distinct and varied answers, but that this series of responses cannot really be understood as a progressive accumulation of knowledge about justice, such that our contemporary theories would really be superior to those of Plato or Hobbes. Thus, for example, in his *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), Bertrand Russell says: "Philosophy is to be studied not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves".<sup>16</sup> Kant mistakenly held that "Mathematics... alone of all the sciences (a priori) arising from reason, can be learned; philosophy can never be learned, save only in historical fashion; as regards what concerns reason, we can at most learn to philosophise".<sup>17</sup> Hegel replied in a Jena aphorism, "Kant is admiringly cited for having said that he did not teach philosophy, but rather how to philosophise; as if one could teach carpentry, but not how to build a table, a chair, a door, an armoire, etc".<sup>18</sup> This controversy reminds us that, despite the fact that philosophical problems do not have solutions, the fundamental instrument of philosophy has always been discussion: a dialogue among distinct points of view that can never be considered as settled, other than provisionally. But these distinct points of view, this proliferation of perspectives and new concepts that constitutes the history of philosophical thought, greatly resembles the history of art, especially since one has begun to speak of "artistic research." In contrast to the rather stable knowledge that the sciences provide us, philosophy and the arts are ensconced in a state of an epistemic precariousness that unites them.

It was, of course, Hegel who foresaw that both the internal and external self-reflectivity of art, along with its accidental nature and some other aspects, would progressively become one of the defining characteristics of art. This tendency led him to predict the end of art. But it is clear that art has not come to an end – not even the old concept of art, which lives on with newer definitions in a present that is de facto plural – but it has indeed become ever more reflexive, more intellectual and more dependent on discourse. Hegel claimed that art had been superseded by philosophy as the form most apt to respond to the great needs and puzzlements of spirit. He was also wrong about this. Philosophy has likewise survived so many announcements of its own death since the time of Marx. Thus, it has matched art. Both find themselves today at the same level. What is more, the points of contact between the two disciplines are multiplying: those moments when the collaboration between philosophy and art lead to instants of fusion. Art collaborates with philosophy, not because it always needs it, but rather because, as Adorno would write, "art requires philosophy, which interprets it in order to say what it is unable to say, whereas art

is only able to say it by not saying it".<sup>19</sup> In this sense, however much they collaborate, artistic knowledge and philosophical knowledge will always be different. Philosophy is tied to concepts and argument: it is a way of saying; art is usually tied to rhetoric and tropes: to showing rather than saying. But when they are authentic, both are devoted to the search for truth: this truth without which it is impossible to live or even just to imagine human existence. But this truth for which art and philosophy progress is not in itself transcendent, it cannot be written in capital letters.

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16. Russell (1980 edition, p. 93-94).

17. Kant (1781, p. A837, B865).

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## CV

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**Gerard Vilar**

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

gerard.vilar@uab.cat

Facultat de Lletres

Departament de Filosofia

Carrer de la Fortuna, 08193

Cerdanyola del Vallès, Barcelona

He studied Philosophy in Barcelona, Frankfurt and Constance. He also was a DAAD and Humboldt scholarship holder. His first faculty position was in the Department of Theory and Composition of the ETS of Architecture of Barcelona and now is Full Professor in Aesthetics and Art Theory in the Philosophy Department of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He is author of several books such as *El desorden estético* (2000), *Las razones del arte* (2005), *Desartización* (2010) and *Precariedad, estética y política* (2017). He is leader of a research group (GRETA) on Artistic Research.