

# ART AS A FACTOR OF CREATIVE THINKING

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The paper traces the psychological mechanism of creative thinking in the field of art. Some mental processes underlying the phenomenon of *creativity* are considered as basic conditions. The artistic form and form-formation are analysed objectively and subjectively. With no pretension to be exhaustive, the process of creativity is highlighted, as are some varieties of creativity. The summarizing element of the article is the application of art as a determinant in a broad sense (author, spectator or participant-performer; as a social and cultural dialogue and psychological toolkit) for the formation of creative thinking and behaviour.

**Keywords:** art form, form-formation, creativity.

## *1. Distinctiveness of Art as One of the Mental Processes*

Among the rich variety of mental processes - sensations, perceptions, analytical *processing* and creative thinking, related to the process of creating art patterns, can be considered as one of the most complex of personality models. This psychological format can also justifiably be described as the broadest by scope process involving not only the consciousness, but also the preconsciousness and the unconsciousness. This claim is justified by the following circumstances:

- art implies the initiation of creative and reproductive imagination and *emotional intelligence* of man;

Without imagination, art can neither be understood nor created.

Imagination, in turn, requires the activation of a significant cognitive potential of the personality. It involves not only the pre-established cognitive structures of the I-self - objects and processes that are directly observable by the person in the environment, but also those who cannot find their real outer analogues. The mental constructs referred to (which we most

often call *imaginative ideas*) imply the use of the combinatorial capacities of the psyche in order to create new visual objects that can be defined as beyond the I-self models. These are namely the basic elements of imagination.

It should be noted that perceiving, processing, storing and the process of creation of visual products of art is accompanied by emotional experiences such as rejection, acceptance, surprise, delight, satisfaction, etc.

In particular, the levels of empathy (a subjective criterion) as an element of consciousness, or the degree of collaboration and empathy with another's emotion, are actively engaged. These functions of empathy significantly trigger off the imagination and enhance the creative thinking processes.

- art implies analysis of *form* and *form-formation*;

The creation of the art form mobilizes the knowledge possessed by the individual. These are joined by information from the *preconsciousness* (stores thoughts, feelings, experiences that are in the process of becoming aware and applied, through special retrieval techniques) and from the *unconscious* domain<sup>1</sup> (or *unawareness* - impulses, desires, emotions about which the individual has no clear definition, but which influence everyday emotions, reactions and behaviour).

The artistic *form and form-making* have two main aspects: objective and subjective.

The objective aspect of *form-formation* requires the pursuit of certain external norms, which can refer both to specific pictorial criteria and to those that to one extent or another have been imposed by various kinds of socially, culturally and artistically regulated mechanisms. It also creates the guiding framework within which art develops, *partially* or *entirely* shaping that form.

The subjective aspect of the visual products is a personalized process and is related to the individuality (including those mentioned above) of each author. The *form-formation* and perception of visual objects establish the creative direction of the individual, designing the

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<sup>1</sup> Zaidel, D. W. *Neuropsychology of art: neurological, cognitive and evolutionary perspectives*. East Sussex: Psychology Press, 2016.

conditions not only for *reflecting* what is perceived, but also for adding what exists individually, either in the form of personal experiences or in the form of authentic creativity, sometimes incompatible with generally acknowledged criteria in the field of art (for a specific time period).

- art in its *dialogue with users* operates with different sign systems;

These include the elements and subconscious symbols contained in the consciousness.

The conscious elements are determined by the culture dominant and perceived by the individual as one's own, as well as by the consciously accumulated knowledge and skills over the course of life.

In practice, every object of art not only provides a person with certain conscious information, but also prompts one to acquire additional information with a view to a better understanding of the respective piece of art.

The subconscious elements of the symbol systems are determined by two factors.

On the one hand, these are the neurophysiological properties, which predetermine the degree of perceptibility by the sensory systems: the reception of certain elements (e.g., the colour range) as positive (basically effective over a certain period of time), the degree of information processing, and the possibility to perceive the overall system of symbols within a particular object of art. To the above psychological processes are added: the individual subconscious, which is marked by significant to the individuality events based on his mental life; formed patterns of perception and the neural response caused by certain external influences, which provide the symbolic rhetoric. Thanks to the symbolic patterns, the art perceiver avails of the opportunity to synthesize an individual assessment of the specific objects or events, by ranking them reversibly in the direction from improvement to deterioration of their qualities.

- perceiving art as an integrated system;

Practically, every work of art, regardless of whether it belongs to the category of visual or other types of art, constitutes a complete and independent system. As one gains experience in perceiving art, one also acquires the ability to analyse individual objects not merely as existing *by themselves*, but as part of particular spheres which in turn constitute systems of higher rank.

This can be traced to the constructive analysis of a particular painting. It is perceived as a complete system of colours, shapes, objects, background, composition, perspective, main

and supplementary elements. However, the individual's preferences are determined by the overall combination of these characteristics, which reflexively enable the respective object of art to be related to one of the categories located between counter opposite positions (kind of antonyms) of the most commonly used for research 5- or 3-scale *Likert* scale: *like - dislike* (the choice of rating on the scale from 1 to 5 or from 1 to 3 is equally valid for both complementary professional comment when required, and for the absence of such).

### ***1. Concept of Creativity and Types of Creativity***

Creativity is the process by which an individual generates *new* ideas related to one's relevant areas of functioning.

The process of creative thinking is defined as the process of systematic generation of new ideas, which the individual *moves* from their indeterminacy, *abstractness* to their more specific and real form of expression.

Creativity cannot be regarded as an innate quality, but as a distinctiveness of thought that is acquired as a result of the formation of thinking habits and attitudes in the individual.

It is not a *defined* process (in terms of the content of mental elements and their constructiveness in individual aspect); within the general category some types of creativity can be distinguished depending on the goals. These include:

- *naïve* creativity, which supposedly involves the creation of new ideas within a more limited life *perimeter*, it can be attributed to children, as well as to adults wishing to overcome problems in their behaviour and thinking;

- *cultural and social* creativity, representing a conscious effort to overcome culturally significant stereotyped cultural patterns of thinking, attitudes and behaviour, which in most cases restrict the functioning of the relevant *novelty* during the time period of its existence;

- *verbal* creativity is a personal creativity, enabling the quest for alternative models for solving life problems facing the person; it can be expressed in original thoughts, texts, concepts or in finding new verbal associations;

- *non-verbal* creativity is a type of cognitive creativity whose products are non-standard images, drawings, schemes, etc.; it is often the foundation on which verbal creative solutions can consequentially be constructed;

- *creativity of the talent* is manifested in the production of meaningful and socially acknowledged products of the material or spiritual creativity (in the form of objects, ideas, theories and concepts); it can take on a variety of forms, where the presence of a finished, original and socially significant product is common for them;

- *the creativity of self-actualisation*, which is a process of seeking and realizing mental and behavioural patterns, aimed at highlighting the abilities and opportunities of the individual, in comparison with the representatives of the *significant* to the individual group, can manifest itself both as socially significant products and as the creativity which only emphasises the individual's further advantages, but does not have a universally significant character.

Other types of creativity are also possible, and are determined depending on social, scientific, professional, educational and technological activities, as well as the stage of evolution of society.

However, it should be pointed out that the main criterion for distinguishing types of creativity is related to the availability or lack of socially significant benefits from the manifestation of creativity<sup>2</sup>.

### ***3. Factors for the Development of Human Creativity Embedded in Art***

To summarise what has been said so far, we should consider the specific factors generated by the perception of art and the attempts of the individual to create one's own work, which have an impact on the progression of his creativity. Among these the factors include:

- setting up a personal style and perimeter in art, which can justifiably be defined as an *individual creative field*;

This *field* gives rise to the opportunity for the individual to reveal the content of the personal feelings, intuitions, definitions and reflexes in art, if the *externally marked requirements* provide a sufficiently tolerant range of what is socially and creatively acceptable.

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<sup>2</sup> Miller, A. I. *Insights of Genius: Imagery and Creativity in Science and Art*. Copernicus, 1996.

In this way, he gets the chance to incorporate his own *vision* on the solution of certain visual tasks without defying existing social standards, and in *certain* cases *influencing* their semantic incorporation into the sphere of art.

- the possibility of operation and transgression with forms and existing patterns, as well as transformation of existing patterns;

This process is important for the development of the creativity system, as it is namely this possibility that underlies the combinatorics, the presentation of the *ideal end result*, as well as a significant portion of the other approaches used by creativity.

The work on the form and its transformation depending on the *subjective* desires allows for unconventional (including preconscious and unconscious) disclosure of the individual's potential; directing it towards fields that have not previously been subjected to activities by others. Often the initiative is provoked and accompanied by a hedonistic stimulus and experiences in the process of realization.

An essential factor in the development of creativity is also the establishment of a hierarchy for the meaning of the different elements within the framework of the whole. This is essentially related to the progression of the qualities of the attention (concentration, switching, allocation, etc.) as a generalized mental process, ensuring that details are not missed in the intellectual process. The attention as a mental process has one basic quality - selectivity, or the ability to focus on one or more objects. It is known that all qualities of attention have their points of intersection, and in the case of creating visual objects we can talk about *selective concentration* - a basic tool for increasing the degree of creativity.

- active use of both *products* of the consciousness and *products* of the preconscious and unconscious spheres;

Using the human preconsciousness has possible variants. One is related to its involuntary involvement when in a stressful/surprising or extremely unpredictable situation (as a defence mechanism), and the other is assumed by the functions of the preconscious sphere for conscious (in process) thinking patterns (presence of a volitional act) to be used motivated by external stimuli.

The process of perceiving art serves as the basis of precisely the second option - of incorporating the preconscious and even the unconscious elements (intuitively) into the process of creativity.

Therefore, people who have more experience in perceiving art, or who have themselves made attempts to create patterns of art, transfer the acquired habits to a wider range of areas where creativity is needed.

- systematic work and inclusion of the individual element in a complete system<sup>3</sup>;

The perception of works of art is essentially the mastery of a given system, and the practice of one's own art activities allows one to create a similar format depending on the personal choices, desires and goals.

The *psychological model* formed, transferred to problem solving beyond the art-related activities, creates an opportunity to exploit the considerable potential of systemic characteristics of a particular object or process.

The person acquires the opportunity to design the boundaries for the development of his personality system as well as the separate elements that make it up.

In practice, this seriously expands the possibilities of producing unconventional solutions in various fields.

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert Anna. *The Pedagogy of Creativity*. Routledge, 2010.