

Contemporary Aesthetics

Special Volume 4 (2012) ARTIFICATION

2012

Artification, Fine Art, and the Myth of "the Artist"

Larry Shiner

University of Illinois at Springfield, lshiner1@aol.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics



Part of the [Esthetics Commons](#)

This I. Theoretical Analyses is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@RISD. It has been accepted for inclusion in Contemporary Aesthetics by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@RISD. For more information, please contact mpompeli@risd.edu.

[About CA](#)

[Journal](#)

[Contact CA](#)

[Links](#)

[Submissions](#)

[Search Journal](#)

[Editorial Board](#)

[Permission to Reprint](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Publisher](#)

[Webmaster](#)

Artification, Fine Art, and the Myth of "the Artist"

Larry Shiner

Abstract

I begin by examining three concepts of "artification:" the decoration, transformation, and modification. I argue that the typical business argument for artification claims that since businesses must be constantly innovating and since art and artists are the principal locus of creativity in our society, businesses must be "artified." I argue that these claims about artists and creativity are based on widely accepted conventional views about art and artists that are false. I illustrate my general argument by examining one of the best statements of the case for business artification, Austin's and Devin's book, *Artful Making*, showing that artful making is closer to the idea of craftsmanship than to the modern, post-romantic image of "the artist," that seems to enthrall so many people. I conclude that when it comes to finding models and metaphors for innovation, businesses and other organizations could better draw on such fields as science, engineering, design, or craft than on the world of high art.

Key Words

Nancy J. Adler, *Artful Making*, artification, artist, Rob Austin, craft, creativity, engineering, science

1. The term "artification"

In thinking critically about artification I will consider three aspects, the *term*, the *concept*, and the *practices* that the concept is supposed to identify. As a neologism, the *term* "artification" is a nominative form of the verb "to artify" which implies that the "art" in question is a kind of quality or characteristic, similar to the "beauty" in beautification. Consequently, "artification" suggests that the quality of "art-ness," can be applied to or infused into some object, action, institution or situation. I find this a somewhat strained way of using the term "art," e.g. it seems quite natural in English to speak of "making" or "crafting" something, but not "arting" or "artifying" it. Moreover, "to artify" is often used in a mocking or satirical sense, e.g. "my son's girlfriend decided to "artify" his drab apartment." But whatever concerns one may have about the connotations of the *term* "artification," the philosopher's primary job is to ask whether the *concept* of artification as developed by social scientists and philosophers is coherent and usefully illuminates the phenomena it is intended to describe.

2. Three concepts of artification

The term artification covers several concepts. Leaving aside casual cases, such as the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art calling its teen night "Artification," I believe there are three main concepts of

artification, which I will call the decoration, transformation, and modification versions. The decoration version is seldom explicitly formulated as part of a scholarly theory, whereas the transformation and modification concepts have recently been worked out by philosophers and social scientists. The decoration version of artification lies behind such things as the city of New Orleans calling a project to have artists adorn bus shelters, "artification," or a writer on architecture criticizing what he calls the "artification of design."^[1]

The transformation version of the concept of artification, on the other hand, refers to a process in which something not initially understood to be art is subsequently recognized as belonging to the realm of art. This usage takes two different forms, an evolutionary approach according to which humans have an "instinct" for turning all sorts of things into "art," and a sociological approach which describes the ways in which contemporary society bestows art status on such things as graffiti, hip-hop, vernacular architecture, etc. Artification in the sense of transforming non-art into art, however, is clearly not what Saito and Naukkarinen have in mind as the main focus of this special volume. Following a more recent usage, first developed in Finland over the last decade, they envisage artification as a situation in which some object, activity, or organization, which we do not normally classify as art, is "affected by art" or "becomes art-like" or at least uses "artistic ways of thinking and activity," and yet does not turn into "art proper."^[2]

In contrast to the transformation view, we might call this more recent scholarly concept of "artification" the modification view. Although the decoration version of artification suggests a certain the modification of whatever is decorated, such decoration does not change the nature of the thing decorated, whereas the modification view that Saito and Naukkarinen describe implies a deeper or more pervasive alteration such as businesses hiring artists or adopting processes associated with the arts in hopes of becoming more innovative.

3. Artification as decoration

Although the remainder of this paper will focus on the explicitly formulated versions of artification as transformation and modification, it will help us clarify those explicit concepts by first briefly discussing the general idea of artification as decoration. Among the varied phenomena embraced by the idea of artification as decoration are the traditional notions of "beautification" and "applied art," especially as these have been pursued within the fields of architecture and design. In decoration, the "art" is a supplement to something already existing. But would it also make sense to use "artification" for such things as architects' concern with formal appearance *as* they design buildings? The writer mentioned above who complained of the current "artification of design" was not concerned about the "beautification" of existing buildings, but about the tendency of some architects, such as Frank Gehry or Zaha Hadid, to make the structure itself into a giant work of sculpture. If it were possible to completely ignore practical functions in favor of aesthetic appearance, we could say that such a building would be totally "artified." But such a work would no longer fit the decoration concept of artification; it would instead come under the transformation concept of artification, to which we must now turn.

4. The "art" in "art-ification"

My first step in the analysis of both the transformation and

modification concepts of artification will be to clarify the implicit assumptions about the nature of the "art" that is involved in "artification." Whereas the decoration version of artification seems to assume something like a formalist or an aesthetic definition of art, the two versions of the transformation concept of artification assume either a cluster concept definition of art or an institutional definition and the modification version of artification seems to imply something like an historical definition. Yet, as I have shown in *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, underlying all such contemporary definitions of art is the deeper historical reality of a division in the older and broader pre-modern notion of art that occurred over the course of the eighteenth century and continues to shape our thinking.[3] That division separated out a new category of "fine arts" (painting, sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, etc.), along with new fine art institutions like art museums and secular concert halls. By the mid-nineteenth century people began to recognize "Art" as a distinct realm within the larger society alongside science, politics, religion, etc. Of course, we still use something like the older and broader notion of art when we speak of something as "an art," or use a phrase like "the art of . . ." medicine, motorcycle maintenance, cooking, "the deal," etc.[4] Another evidence of this continuing division is the typical initial response of the public to many of the avant-garde gestures of the art world, whether to Duchamp's notorious *Fountain* (1917), John Cage's *4' 33"* (1954), Chris Burden's *Shoot* (1971) or Martin Creed's *The Lights Going On and Off* (2001): "is it really art?"[5] Such a question would hardly make sense asked of the ordinary objects and activities that are the product of "an art." This historical division between the fine arts and ordinary arts or crafts has important implications for evaluating the different versions of the concept of artification.

5. The evolutionary version of the transformation concept

For example, failure to attend to the historical division in the Western concept of art has led to seriously defective claims on behalf of the evolutionary version of the transformational concept of "artification." Ellen Dissanayake has long written about "art" as a universal process of "making special" going back to the earliest humans. Dissanayake now prefers to call "making special" a process of "artification," but what she describes under that term is in fact very close to the older and broader concept of "an art." [6] Similarly, in *The Art Instinct*, Denis Dutton argues for an evolutionary "art instinct," using a concept of "art" drawn from Berys Gaut's "cluster concept" definition of art.[7] In Dutton's adaptation of the cluster concept, something is "art" if it satisfies any of twelve broad criteria such as pleasure, skill, style, creativity, representation, form, expression, challenge, etc. Thus, both Dissanayake and Dutton, employ a concept of art similar to the older more comprehensive notion of art, but ignore the historical division of the eighteenth century in order to emphasize the elevated connotations associated with the modern notion of high art. [See Addendum.] The conceptual mischief to which this leads becomes clear in the later parts of *The Art Instinct* where Dutton attempts to marginalize entire swaths of contemporary art deriving from Duchamp as not really art and at the same time embraces Collingwood's caricature of craft as the opposite of art, thereby contradicting parts of Dutton's own criteria for defining art.[8] It does little to illuminate the contemporary world of the arts or even the transformational sense of artification to mash together things that are in fact distinct.

6. Advantages of the sociological version of the

transformation concept

Nathalie Heinich's and Roberta Shapiro's sociological version of the transformational concept of artification, on the other hand, does not suffer from the kind of conceptual confusion encouraged by Dissanayake and Dutton. Their main concern is to trace the processes by which something moves directly from a non-art category into the category of art.^[9] Since a main criterion for the success of such "artifications" is whether some genre or medium is accepted by one of the social institutions of art (art museums, concert halls, literary or musical criticism and canons, etc.), the implicit concept of art most compatible with their work is an "institutional definition" similar to George Dickie's.^[10] I also believe Heinich and Shapiro are giving an account of a contemporary phenomenon similar to what I describe in the later parts of *The Invention of Art* as the historical dialectic of "assimilation and resistance." What Heinich and Shapiro have added to this historical account is a more detailed look at the various elements and steps by which what I called "assimilation" and what they call "artification" takes place.^[11] Heinich's and Shapiro's project of exploring the modalities and processes by which practices, media, genres and activities of all sorts are taken up into the (fine) art world is to my mind the most straightforward and defensible use of the concept of "artification."

7. The modification concept of artification

The modification concept of artification described by Saito and Naukkarinen is also clearly based on the modern idea of art as a distinct domain within society, a domain that has its own institutions, practices and ideals. Consequently, the definition of art that would seem most compatible with the modification concept of artification would be some kind of an historical definition such as that of Jerrold Levinson or Robert Stecker.^[12] In contrast to the transformation approaches, the modification concept of artification does not involve a direct movement from the category of non-art to the category of art, but a more circuitous movement in the opposite direction, from the art world to the non-art world. And, unlike the decoration approaches to artification, it involves injecting "artistic ways of thinking and activity" into non-art institutions so that they become "affected by art" or even become "art-like."^[13] Obviously, it would make no sense to speak of the artification of a business, medical practice or social service if one understood "art" in the ordinary sense of "an art" since the practices of business, medicine, social work, education, etc. are *already* "art" in the small "a" sense. Rather, as Saito and Naukkarinen themselves indicate, the artification that concerns the modification concept is about the way a business or other institution is affected by some aspect of what they call "art proper," by art as a distinct and prestigious social realm within modern Western society.

8. The typical business argument for drawing on art and artists

Since the concept of "artification," as Saito and Naukkarinen describe it, is a relatively new usage meant especially to capture recent trends in the world of business, it may be most fruitful to turn our attention directly to the kinds of *practices* that the modification version of "artification" is supposed to capture. Nancy J. Adler, a McGill University management professor, describes these practices as "corporate leaders . . . bringing artists and artistic processes into their companies."^[14] Rob Austin of the Harvard Business school and

his co-author, Lee Devin, a former theater professor at Swarthmore, declare that “successful business processes are becoming more like art,” and that business innovation requires “an artist-like attitude from managers.”^[15] The business writings of Adler, Austin and Devin, and others, that call for a greater rapprochement between art and business, seem to be based on the following argument:

(1) Today, businesses must respond to an ever more rapid tempo of social and technological change in which consumers expect constant innovation in products and services.

(2) If a company cannot match or exceed the appeal of the new products and services offered by its competitors, it will fail.

(3) Therefore, finding a path to ever expanding innovation and creativity is essential to survival and success.

(4) Traditionally, it is the art world and artists who know the most about innovation and creativity.

(5) Therefore, businesses need to draw upon the art world, especially on artists, in order to become more innovative and competitive.

Although the first three of these propositions seem intuitively true, they are empirical questions about social and economic trends beyond the scope of this paper. The fourth proposition – that art and artists are the primary locus of creativity – is the key to the conclusion that businesses must turn to art and artists if they are to remain competitive, and it is clearly based on conventional assumptions about the nature of art and the figure of the artist.

Although there is no doubt that the concepts of creativity and originality, for example, have been key elements in the modern ideas of (fine) art and the artist, I believe there are three crucial errors in the conventional assumptions at work here. The first error consists of a skewed understanding of artists as creators; the second error is the assumption that it is solely or even primarily from artists that one can learn about creativity; the third error is a one-sided concept of creativity as solely a matter of innovation or novelty.

9. An erroneous idea of “the artist”

With respect to the error concerning the figure of the artist, it will again be helpful to remind ourselves of the historical contingency of the main features of the post-romantic ideal of art and the artist. Just as the older and broader idea of art was divided in the eighteenth century, so the older idea of what I have called the “artisan-artist” was split apart, with all the more elevated aspects of the older image – genius, imagination, creativity, freedom – reserved for those now termed “artists” whereas those called artisans (later craftsmen) were said to be merely skilled workers who followed rules, imitated models, and were motivated by pay rather than by a higher spiritual calling. By the early nineteenth century, this modern idea of the artist reached its near religious apotheosis in the Romantic movement.^[16]

Along with the ideal of the artist as spontaneous creative genius, no aspect of the new image of “the artist” was more important than the belief in the artist’s absolute freedom and independence, an ideal that developed in response to artists’ actual dependence on the market economy and the glut of people drawn into fine art by the exalted image of the artist. The new complex of characteristics that made up

the image of the artist played itself out over the course of the nineteenth century in a variety of optional and variously combinable social poses: the bohemian, the dandy, the neglected sufferer, the persecuted rebel, the obsessive creator, the prophetic critic, the utopian visionary.^[17] As Sarah Burns has shown in *Inventing the Modern Artist*, by the end of the nineteenth century, various combinations of these poses could be found in Britain and America and, I would add, most of these optional artist's stances have continued to be exploited down to the present.^[18]

Nothing points up how ambiguous the meanings of "artist" can be than references to outstanding businessmen or political figures as "artists." Nancy Adler, for example, cites approvingly Warren Buffet's statement, "I am not a businessman, I am an artist."^[19] Is this just hyperbole or do Buffet and Adler seriously believe that his success as an investor is due more to poetic leaps of imagination than to shrewd analysis? In the late nineteenth century a prominent publisher wrote that if department store founder, John Wanamaker, had not been "a great artist, he could never have founded this unique thing. . . it is the expression of a great human soul."^[20] But the idea of the businessman or politician as creative artist need not always be so benign. One recent business writer quotes Joseph Gobbels' claim of 1933 that he and his fellow Nazis "feel ourselves to be artists . . . transforming the raw masses into a nation," and "sweeping away anything diseased."^[21] Although all three of these writers seem to assume that anyone who invents or shapes something is an artist, at the same time these writers also seem to want us to associate the businessmen's and politicians' name with the elevated overtones attaching to the post-romantic image of the artist as free creator. That kind of ambiguity also seems implicit in Josef Beuys' famous declaration that "every human being is an artist," a statement that, on the older and broader definition of art (an art), is a truism, but that gets its provocative edge from the romantic associations of the term "artist."^[22]

Given the multiple and often conflicting meanings of "artist," one always needs to ask which idea of "the artist" is intended when someone calls for businesses to turn to artists as a means of becoming more innovative. Sometimes, it seems that business writers are merely looking for somewhat more adventuresome designers. Nancy Adler writes: "Creating the next great thing demands constant innovation; it's a design task, not merely an analytical or administrative function."^[23] Obviously, bringing artists into a business might stimulate a firm's existing design staff who have grown stale from dealing with project deadlines, but that is still primarily a design function. In such cases, should we perhaps speak of "designification" rather than "artification?" In fact, there is a recent collection of essays by several distinguished management professors, *Managing as Designing*, which contains just such a call for treating business management as "a design discipline" modeled on the way architecture and design firms approach their work.^[24]

But, as Naukkarinen points out, businesses that hire artists as consultants are not just looking for help with design; they are often more broadly concerned to create an "atmosphere" of creativity.^[25] This aim seems to reflect some vague notion that having "creative" people around might cause some of the creativity to rub off, e.g. "hearing an artist talk about how he creates can help you create."^[26] Certainly, part of the socialization of people into the role of "artist" involves imbibing the ideal of the artist's absolute freedom, and perhaps the presence of such people within business, health, or

social service organizations where work is much more structured, might be liberating in a way. But does the fact that a business arranges a few sessions with artists or art groups mean that it has been “artified?” I think Naukkarinen is right to point out that for artists to be effective in helping a business develop a more open atmosphere, the artists would probably have to have special training in social psychology and communication – in fact, it might be just as effective to hire some social psychologists.

10. The error that artists are the primary locus of creativity in society

These considerations bring us to the second error at work here: that artists are the prime locus of creativity in society. Sometimes these claims are merely extended metaphors. A typical recent book that uses artistic creativity as a metaphor is John Kao’s *Jamming: The Art and Discipline of Business Creativity*, drawing on improvisation in jazz.^[27] But Adler seems to go beyond using art merely as a metaphor when she claims that “historically, such creativity has been the primary competence of artists, not managers.” Similarly Austin and Devin’s book, *Artful Making: What Managers Need to Know About How Artists Work*, declares that managers who understand “how artists work” will have a competitive advantage in the future.^[28] No doubt the popular image of the artist does associate artists with being creative. But Adler’s statement suggests that creativity is some kind of specialty like piano tuning or knee surgery, or that it is something one picks up in art school. But I doubt if having an art degree or even a successful career in the art world is any guarantee of spontaneous “creativity” or the ability to impart it. Moreover, psychological studies of creativity have shown that the popular picture of the artist constantly making “creative leaps” does not match the actual procedures of most professional artists, including some famous names such as Alexander Calder or Picasso. Gradual development and constant revision are more likely than occasional moments of sudden inspiration.^[29] In fact, as Philip Alperson has remarked, there is a “vast spectrum of ways in which artists work,” a spectrum, I would add, that largely overlaps the approaches of makers and discoverers in many other fields.^[30]

The general claim that artists are the preeminent specialists in creativity is not only refuted by empirical studies of artistic creativity itself, but by the obvious fact that the great mathematical and scientific discoveries of the past and present have been as much the result of creative thinking as have great artistic discoveries, and the same is true of high achievements in design, crafts and engineering. Surely, Gustave Eiffel was as creative in his designs as his contemporary, the painter, Gustave Moreau, and arguably Eiffel’s work was more creative than many of the scores of now forgotten artists of his time. Even a cursory glance at the empirical literature dealing with creativity will show that the social scientists who study creativity do not privilege artists over scientists, engineers, physicians, or workers in other fields. Even a good mechanic or cabinetmaker, who possess what Karl Polanyi called “tacit knowledge,” exercises creative thinking and action much of the time. In short, there are both creative and routine aspects to the working processes of every field of endeavor and the idea that one has to go to artists and the art world to find creativity is a romantic myth.

11. An erroneous concept of creativity

The third error made by business writers proposing the artification of business concerns the concept of creativity itself. Few words have

been as widely abused in Western culture as the terms "creative" and "creativity." By now the market has been flooded not only with self-help books on how to become a more "creative" person, but innumerable works on how to inject "creativity" into organizations, and many consulting firms specializing in "creativity" have emerged. No wonder one writer has remarked, "stripped of any special significance by a generation of bureaucrats, civil servants, managers and politicians . . . the word 'creative' has become almost unusable."^[31] Just as those who claim businesses ought to draw on artists need to specify just which aspects of the idea/image of "the artist," they have in mind, so the intended meaning of "creativity" need to be carefully thought through. It will not be an easy task. For example, the 2010 *Cambridge Handbook on Creativity* surveys hundreds of scholarly books and more than 10,000 papers published since 1999 alone, reflecting the fact that creativity is an elusive and highly complex phenomenon that has generated at least ten major types of theories purporting to explain it.^[32]

A few writers in the management field have drawn on some of this theoretical and empirical work and attempted to be more critical and specific in their conceptions of creativity. One of them is Chris Bilton, whose book, *Management and Creativity*, rejects the typical identification of creativity with spontaneous invention and individual freedom, ideas typically associated with the romanticized idea of the artist.^[33] Instead, he argues that, although innovation and individuality are *part* of creativity, genuinely creative processes also involve a context of restraints, application, and collaboration that turn "original ideas into creative acts."^[34] Bilton's position is corroborated by the definitions of creativity in most of the serious philosophical and psychological literature today, which reject the popular equation: creativity = innovation or novelty.^[35] On the contrary, unless something new or original is appropriate, useful or significant within a relevant social context, it may be next to meaningless. Kant long ago noted the difference between genuine originality and what he called original "nonsense."^[36]

12. A case study of claims for art and artists as models for management

So far, I have been examining the overly general and highly ambiguous ways the terms "art," "artist," and "creativity," are used by many business educators and leaders in search of paths to innovation. Now I want to show that even when some of these writers do become more specific, it may not justify making art the preferred interlocutor at the expense of things to be learned from other domains. For a particularly clear example of the misleading impression left by focusing solely on art and artists, I want to look more closely at one of the better books that make the "art" claim, Rob Austin and Lee Devin's *Artful Making: What Managers Need to Know About How Artists Work*. Despite the broad implications of its title, the book is not about how artists *in general* work, but only about a few similarities between how some theater directors manage actors in play rehearsals are similar to how some successful business executives manage "knowledge workers" in software development. Thus, not only is the "art" involved in "artful making" metaphor limited to one specific performance art, but even the approach to rehearsals followed by the particular theater company involved is admitted by the authors to not be followed by all theater directors.^[37]

But most tellingly, there are also some serious *disanalogies* between

directing a play rehearsal and guiding new software development since theater people normally perform the *existing* scripts of playwrights rather than themselves creating new works as software developers must do.^[38] Moreover, although it is customary to call theater performances “art” and those who perform in them “artists,” the terms “art” and “artist” in this usage have a very different scope and sense than when we speak of playwrights as artists and their plays as works of art. To imply that the rehearsal procedures of certain types of theater companies tell us “how artists” in general “work,” or to call managers who give their workers freedom to explore new ideas, “artist-like,” is unjustified hyperbole. Certainly, Austin and Devin are right to claim that managing talented and independent “knowledge workers” is more like managing sensitive and independent actors than it is like managing assembly line workers. But one could draw similar contrasts between managing assembly line workers and managing talented and independent athletes, teachers, or scientists.

13. Craftsmanship as an alternative model for management

Moreover, if we examine the main features of Austin and Devin’s key concept, “artful making,” the characteristics turn out to be much closer to the idea of “an art” or a craft than to the meanings we associate with fine art or “the artist.” After all, the common dictionary meaning of “artful” is: “performed with art or skill,” “clever,” “adroit.”^[39] Consider the key component of “artful making,” according to Austin and Devin: “Release.”^[40] By “release” they mean that managers should facilitate a freely recursive cycle of work that Austin and Devin name “iteration” in contrast to the highly controlled “*sequential*” approach of traditional industrial processes.^[41] But the “release” involved in this freer way of managing workers, turns out to be less like “the way artists work” (after all, many leading visual artists today simply hire others to make their works) than the way the best craftspeople work. For example, in explaining what they mean by “release,” Austin and Devin draw their initial examples from things like a baseball pitcher’s throw or a golfer’s swing, whose freedom and fluidity come from long practice.^[42]

But these are precisely the characteristics of good craftsmanship as described by Richard Sennett in *The Craftsman*. Sennett even uses the same term, “release,” to describe the craftsman’s “minimum force,” e.g. a concert pianist’s release of a key at the right instant, a master chef’s light handling of a boning knife, a Zen archer’s tranquility at the moment of releasing an arrow.^[43] Moreover, Sennett applies his account of the craftsman’s freedom in “release” to such things as the community of Linux software programmers, precisely the sort of case that concerns Austin and Devin.^[44] Sennett’s work suggests that one could just as easily say that what managers need is to become “craftsman-like” as to become “artist-like.” In fact, theater performance and directing are themselves called crafts by many of those who practice them, e.g., John Caird’s *Theater Craft: A Director’s Practical Companion* (2010), or Anatoly Efros’s *The Craft of Rehearsal* (2007).^[45]

Of course, since the terms “craft” and “craftsman” do not carry the high prestige and lofty associations of “art” and “artist,” Austin and Devin’s book would have seemed less startling, if its sub-title had been “What Managers Can Learn from the Way Craftsmen Work.”^[46]

And since theater performance is “an art,” Austin and Devin are not wrong to call theater directing “artful.” The problem is that, although

they are actually using "art" and "artist" in the older more everyday sense that is closer to "craft" and "craftsman," their most general claims suggest the elevated and honorific connotations of (fine) art and artist. My critique of their language is not meant to depreciate their important insights into the management of knowledge workers or even to dispute the lessons they draw from the theater rehearsal analogy, but to emphasize again how ambiguous the terms "art" and "artist" become when used as metaphors or analogies for how to manage businesses.[47] Once we press many of these "art" metaphors, they turn out to be much more limited in their actual scope than the enthusiastic rhetoric of those like Nancy J. Adler and some others suggests.

14. Conclusion

Since I have devoted most of the last few pages to a critique of the *practices* that the modification version of the "artification" concept purports to describe, I need to return, in closing, to the question of the value of the artification *concept* itself. Given that one can draw good metaphors, analogies and models for business innovation from domains as various as science, engineering, design, and crafts, the focus on "art-ification" as the primary path to innovation, is surely exaggerated. Not only is artification in the modification sense only *one* of many possible avenues toward innovation, we have seen that many of the business writings calling for the modification of businesses through the arts use the terms "art," "artist," and "creativity" in highly ambiguous and misleading ways.

I believe that the usefulness of the modification versions of "artification" will depend on whether its scope as a concept is also carefully specified and limited. But if the practices that the modification version of the "artification" concept is meant to describe are themselves so varied and ambiguous, the modification version of the concept of artification, which is supposed to articulate them, may turn out to be very difficult to clarify. In the case of the sociological version of the transformation idea of artification, the criteria for whether something has been successfully "artified" are relatively clear (recognition by art world institutions) even if judgments about particular cases may vary. But in the case of the modification version of the artification concept, the criteria for determining whether a business or other organization has been "artified" seem much harder to specify. Given the ambiguities attaching to the underlying processes that the modification version of artification is meant to describe, the modification version is likely to remain more of a metaphor than a coherent concept.

Larry Shiner
Lshiner1@aol.com

Larry Shiner is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Illinois at Springfield. He is the author of *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago, 2001) and articles on the relation of aesthetics and function in craft, design and architecture.

Published on April 5, 2012.

Addendum: Dissanayake on Artification

Just before publication of my essay, "Artification, Fine Art, and the

Myth of 'The Artist,' " as part of *Contemporary Aesthetic's* Special Volume 4 on Artification, I submitted changes intended to correct its serious mischaracterization of Ellen Dissanayake's position on artification. Inadvertently, the changes were not included in the Special Volume version of the essay, so I would like to set the record straight in this addendum. The mistake I made occurs in Section 5 of my essay (The evolutionary version of the transformation concept), where I treat Dissanayake's and the late Dennis Dutton's approaches to the origins of art as equivalent, claiming that "both Dissanayake and Dutton employ a concept of art similar to the older more comprehensive notion of art, but ignore the historical division of the eighteenth century in order to emphasize the elevated connotations associated with the modern notion of high art." I believe this statement fairly characterizes Dutton's work, but I now know that it is not true of Dissanayake's work, which *does* recognize the historical division of art into fine art vs. craft that underlies modern, Western concepts of art.

Some time after submitting my essay I had the good fortune to hear Dissanayake's contribution to a symposium honoring the memory of Dutton and to discuss the issue of artification with her afterward. (Her presentation will appear in a future issue of *Philosophy and Literature*.) She made clear her differences with Dutton and emphasized her agreement with me that the modern difference between art and craft and is neither an ancient or universal one but only became established in the Western world after the eighteenth century. Dissanayake's position on artification, therefore, does not suffer from the conceptual confusions of Dutton's evolutionary account of the concept of art. Along with Roberta Shapiro and Nathalie Heinich's sociological approach to the transformation concept of artification, it is among the most intelligible and defensible uses of the artification idea.

Published April 17, 2012.

Endnotes

[1] The last mentioned is a blog entitled "The Artification of Design" by Edo Smitshuijzen of January 28, 2010, at www.a-g-i.org.

[2] Ossi Naukkarinen and Yuriko Saito, "Introduction" to this volume.

[3] Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[4] I could have used any of hundreds of activities but included phrases from two best selling books in their time, one toward the sublime end of the spectrum, Robert Pirsig's, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (New York: William Morrow, 1974), the other, toward the ridiculous, Donald Trump's *The Art of the Deal* (New York: Random House, 1987)

[5] I assume most readers will be familiar with *Fountain* and *4'33"*; Burden's work, *Shoot*, consisted in Burden having himself shot in the arm by a friend, whereas Creed's *The Lights going On and Off*, which won Britain's Turner Prize in 2001, consisted of an empty room with the lights going on and off.

[6] Ellen Dissanayake, "The Artification Hypothesis and Its Relevance to Cognitive Science, Evolutionary Aesthetics, and Neuroaesthetics,"

Cognitive Semiotics, 5 (2009), 148-173.

[7] Dennis Dutton, *The Art Instinct* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).

[8] Dutton, *The Art Instinct*, pp. 193-203, 226-229.

[9] See the summary of their paper for the Ninth Conference of the European Sociology Association in 2009, "When is Artification?" At <http://esa.abstractbook.net/abstract.php?aID=2706>.

[10] One reason their approach is most compatible with Dickie's is that his view has often been characterized as a more "sociological" approach, whereas Danto's version of the institutional theory of art is more conceptual.

[11] It should be noted that the "resistance" I described as dialectically related to "assimilation" is not the "resistance" which they explore (the obvious reluctance of conservatives to accept new media and approaches). I was more interested in the fact that the more insidious class, gender, and economic aspects of the division between the fine arts and ordinary arts was resisted by many thinkers, e.g. Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Emerson, Morris, Dewey, etc. *Invention of Art*, Chapters 8 and 13.

[12] Jerrold Levinson, "Refining Art, Historically," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48:231-35. Robert Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1997).

[13] Saito and Naukarinen, "Introduction" to this volume.

[14] Nancy J. Adler, "The Arts & Leadership: Now That We Can Do Anything, What Will We Do?" *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 5:4 (2006), 487.

[15] Robert Austin & Lee Devin, *Artful Making: What Managers Need to Know About How Artists Work* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003, pp. xvi, xxii.

[16] As I show in the chapters on the Renaissance and Seventeenth century, not only were the terms "artisan" and "artist" interchangeable at the time (Vasari calls Michelangelo a great "artifice"), but that we tend to project later post-romantic ideas of "the artist" onto figures like Michelangelo, Shakespeare, or Bach, who were all admired as much for their exceptional craftsmanship ability to meet practical demands of patrons and public as for what later came to be called "creativity" and "originality." The latter were ideals that only took on their modern form in the eighteenth century. Shiner, *Invention of Art*, Chapters 3-5.

[17] Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, Chapter 11.

[18] Sarah Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist: Art & Culture in Gilded Age America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996). See especially her discussion of how Whistler combined several of these poses, pp. 221-237.

[19] Nancy J. Adler cited in *The McGill Reporter*, September 2, 2010, at <http://publications.mcgill.ca/reporter/2020/09/nancy-adler-s-bronfman-chair-in-managem>.

[20] Burns, *Inventing the Modern Artist*, p. 161.

[21] Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, *The Art Firm: Aesthetic Management and Metaphysical Marketing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 81.

[22] From Joseph Beuy's, "I Am Searching for Field Character," in Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

[23] Adler, "The Arts and Leadership," p. 490.

[24] Richard J. Boland Jr. and Fred Collopy, eds., *Managing as Designing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[25] See Ossi Naukkarinen's essay, "Variations in Artification," in this volume.

[26] The statement is from Melinda Hart who at the time she made it (1991) was running an arts program for Southwestern Bell Corporation in St. Louis. Quoted by Claudia H. Deutsch, "What Art Can Teach Business," *New York Times* (Sunday, September 8, 1991), p. 23.

[27] John Kao, *Jamming: The Art and Discipline of Business Creativity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1996).

[28] Austin and Devin, *Artful Making*, pp. 1, 27.

[29] An early study is Robert W. Weisberg, *Creativity: Genius and Other Myths* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1986). Paul J. Lochner, "How Does a Visual Artist Create an Artwork?" in James C. Kaufman & Robert J. Sternberg, eds., *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 131- 144, summarizes recent studies. The biographer Andrew Robinson has drawn on some of this material along with much anecdotal evidence for his recent *Sudden Genius? The Gradual Path to Creative Breakthroughs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[30] Philip Alperson, "Creativity in Art," in Jerrold Levinson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 249-50.

[31] J. Tusa, *On Creativity: Interviews Exploring the Process* (London: Metheuen, 2003), pp. 5-6.

[32] Kaufman & Sternberg, eds., *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, p.xiii. The essay by Aaron Kozbelt, Ronald A. Beghetto, and Mark A. Runco on "Theories of Creativity," for example, identifies ten major types of theories on the nature of creativity, some emphasizing the study of personality traits, others the process of creation, others the nature of creative works, other the contexts that support creativity, pp. 20-47.

[33] Chris Bilton, *Management and Creativity: From Creative Industries to Creative Management* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

[34] Bilton, *Management and Creativity*, p. 7. A similar point is made by Robinson in *Sudden Genius? The Gradual Path to Creative Breakthroughs*, pp. 316-27.

[35] For a summary see Robert J. Sternberg and James C. Kaufman, "Constraints on Creativity: Obvious and Not So Obvious," in their *Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, pp. 467-68.

[36] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987), p. 188. This is from paragraph 50 "On the Combination of Taste with Genius in Products of Fine Art." While the nature of the contextual constraints that make one art work "creative" and another work "ordinary," different from those in science, engineering or design, the historical constraints of what counts for "innovative" in the "Artworld" at any one time are obviously very real.

[37] Austin and Devin, *Artful Making*, p. 21.

[38] Austin and Devin too easily dismiss this as irrelevant by arguing that all performances are interpretations. *Artful Making*, pp. 36-37. Obviously, there are also improvisational theater or comedy companies that take themes from audiences and make up sketches as they go along, but this is not the primary example actually used by Austin and Devin.

[39] One can't help thinking of Dicken's pickpocket character in *Oliver Twist*, nicknamed "the Artful Dodger."

[40] The principal components of "Artful Making" are: Release, Collaboration, Ensemble, Play. The name of the last of the stages is obviously drawn from their theater analogy, "play" being the equivalent of what we would normally call in business, the "product;" in this case, a product which results from a Collaboration that leads to a group of workers becoming an Ensemble. Austin and Devin, *Artful Making*, pp. 15-17.

[41] In the traditional production of something like automobiles, the start up costs for new models are so high that managers cannot afford the free experimentation characteristic of the iterative process; but in the "knowledge industries" like software production, the material costs of trying out new models are so low that many things can be tried and cast aside. Thus, the iterative process of "artful making" is a matter of constant "reconceiving," whereas the sequential process of "industrial making" aims at "replicating" a pre-specified outcome. In "artful making," therefore, the manager's role is that of a facilitator. Austin & Devin, *Artful Making*, p. 98.

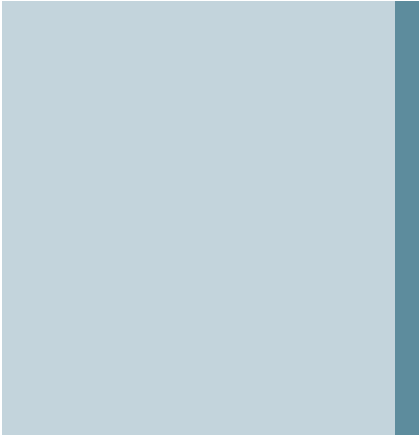
[42] Austin and Devin, *Artful Making*, pp. 86-88.

[43] Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 165-167.

[44] Sennett, *The Craftsman*, pp. 21-28. In fact, when it comes to an appropriate analogy for developing software, one should note that Malcolm MuCullough, Professor of Information Design at the University of Michigan, has devoted an entire book to computer craftsmanship, *Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

[45] John Caird, *Theater Craft: A Director's Practical Companion from A to Z* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), and Anatoly Efros, *The Craft of Rehearsal: Further Reflections on Interpretation and Practice* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

[46] It is interesting to note that R. G. Collingwood, whose narrow and prejudiced concept of "craft" has offered intellectual justification for its low status among artists and philosophers, did not describe what the most accomplished craftspeople do, but attributed to all craftspeople precisely the kind of rigid, planned in advance approach that Austin and Devin call the "replication" model of "industrial



making.” Collingwood and those who follow him, like Dutton, treat all craft as a matter of routine artisanal work or industrial operations.

[47] One of the things that makes Austin and Devin’s book stand out among the many vague and ill formulated calls for transforming business through art and artists, is that it is much more specific and nuanced in its presentation. For example, they recognize that what they call “artful making” is not appropriate to all business and industries, that many businesses combine iterative and industrial processes, and that “artful making” is not always the best approach even for achieving innovation. (*Artful Making*, pp. 50-52).