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## Variations on Artification

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## Variations in Artification

Ossi Naukkarinen

### Abstract

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the most important aspects of the concept of artification. I will proceed through five main questions: (1) What does *artification* mean? (2) What can become artified? (3) Why does artification take place? (4) How can it manifest itself? (5) What kinds of things are accentuated in artification processes? The answers to these questions have a direct influence on how we understand artification's real effects and those desired but not necessarily actual on both the things that become artified and on art itself. At the end of the article, I will put special emphasis on the question of what impact artification might have on art. My aim is to introduce and clarify conceptual tools for making sense of contemporary artification phenomena but I will also discuss some real-life cases that I think can be well understood by using the proposed concept.

### Key Words

art practices, artification, arts and business, concept of art, institutions of art, mixing

### 1. What does *artification* mean?

The neologism "artification" refers to situations and processes in which something that is not regarded as art in the traditional sense of the word is changed into something art-like or into something that takes influences from artistic ways of thinking and acting. It refers to processes where art becomes mixed with something else that adopts some features of art.

This is a stipulative definition of the concept. Whether it will be of use in many contexts, and also be clearly and differently enough defined compared to other concepts, remains to be seen.

To the best of my knowledge, the concept (originally *taiteistuminen* in Finnish) was first coined and used in this sense by a group of Finnish scholars, Yrjänä Levanto, Susann Vihma, and myself, in an anthology named *Taiteistuminen* published in 2005.<sup>[1]</sup> There are scholars who used the same term even earlier but in a slightly different way, actually referring to a different concept. This usage may first have been introduced by Ellen Dissanayake in 2001.<sup>[2]</sup> For Dissanayake, artification means transforming things into art proper by making or producing art. The equivalent French term was used by Roberta Shapiro independently of Dissanayake in her presentation "Qu'est-ce que l'artification?" at the XVIIth Congress of AISLF (Association internationale des sociologues de langue française) in 2004. From my point of view, it might be clearer, in both of these cases, to simply talk about making or producing art. My interest lies in processes where something that is not art is affected by art but does not turn into art in the traditional sense of the word. Moreover, in Dissanayake's evolutionary sense, artification has always taken place as long as the human species has existed, whereas in the sense I wish to emphasize it is clearly a contemporary phenomenon.

Conceptually, mixing art with non-art presupposes an idea about art as something special or distinctly different from everything else. This might seem trivial but is not. On the contrary, it is the point of departure that makes the whole issue comprehensible and, in fact, possible.

I agree with Paul Oskar Kristeller and Larry Shiner that before the conceptual and institutional differentiation started by Charles Batteux and others that began to evolve in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe, there was no art in the modern Western sense of the word.<sup>[3]</sup> Before that period there was no conceptual tool to group such things as poems, paintings, songs, dances, novels, theater plays, and so on under one and same heading and, at the same time, separate them from mathematics, crafts, science, cooking, and everything else. And conceptually, before art came into existence, nothing could have been artified, either. Artification cannot take place without art; it needs art as its point of reference and source of ideas and practices. It also needs to have things that are not art so that these two can be mixed and affect each other.

Of course, many things that now are often related to art, such as creativity, visual, and auditive skills and strong emotional engagement, had their place in crafts, science, rituals, architecture, children's plays, and elsewhere much earlier than in the seventeenth century. According to Dissanayake's studies, human beings have made certain things in special, extraordinary ways as long as the species has existed. Even very young children can take part in such "making special" processes where formalization, elaboration, repetition, exaggeration, and manipulation of expectation are typical strategies; ordinary walking turns into art or dance when artified through such operations. Seen from this angle, making art is possible and even normal at the very early stages of human evolution, both for the species and for each individual. Dissanayake describes all the different versions of this "making special" with the word artification.<sup>[4]</sup> One must note, however, that everything that falls under Dissanayake's description of extra-ordinary, artified behavior is not necessarily conceived of as art by other scholars.

When one talks about artification one must necessarily have *some* conception of art; it can be seen as creative, beautiful, extraordinary, or something else. One may try to conceive of it from various different perspectives, from that of the producer, the work, the receiver, and the institution. In all these variations, some things are classified as art, some as non-art, and some as somehow close to art or resembling it. Following Kendall L. Walton's well-known terminology, one could say that different people don't have to agree on what features or properties are standard, variable, and contra-standard for categories of art and non-art but they still need to have *some* idea of what defines this difference. If they artify, they are willing to mix categories and their features, and by doing so to create a new category of artified things. Even in Dissanayake's system, one could, in principle, differentiate two ways of talking about artification: artification as making things extraordinary and thus art proper, and artification as using strategies of this extraordinary-making on occasions where they are not really taken to their full potential but only approaching it.

In artification discourses, the common attitude is that art as its own cultural entity still exists. The point is not to get rid of art altogether or, on the other hand, to claim that everything should be art, as has been the case in some interpretations of the avant-garde.<sup>[5]</sup> The idea is not to blend art into something else so totally that art as an independent social and cultural phenomenon would become totally obsolete. Rather, the point is to make use of art and adopt something from it. In this sense, artification does not come close to the pre-modern artless state. It is necessarily related to the modern and Western idea of art, even if it questions modern art's most rigorously autonomy-oriented forms, as presented by artists and thinkers such as Joseph Kosuth and Ad Reinhardt.<sup>[6]</sup> One can perhaps say that artification is one indicator of the much more general change from the modern to the post-modern world-view, which allows or even requires the mixing of cultural spheres that were customarily kept more or less separate in modern thinking. Still, as Wolfgang Iser points out, post-modernism does not mean leaving the modern behind but rather radicalizing it, developing its tendencies and, thus, keeping close, critical contact with it.<sup>[7]</sup>

The process of artification might eventually progress to the point where art gets so mixed up with something else that it will start to vanish as an independent cultural formation. But if this should happen *in toto*, one could not talk about artification any longer. What would be left is only something that has adopted some features of what *used to be* typical for independent art before. This is why artifiers need some version of art that is more or less autonomous and independent. Also, if everything turned into art proper, then nothing could be art-like any longer. Neither of these extreme situations is likely to develop, but they draw the conceptual limits for the existence of artification.

Those who talk of phenomena that can be called artification *consciously* reflect on the relation of art and non-art. This, too, is different from Dissanayake's artification. In her system, it seems that people can very well produce art without conceptualizing and calling it as such. It might be that other individuals than the actors themselves make this conceptualization, but that is not essential at all; it is the action (dancing, drawing), itself, that is. But contemporary artification comes about only when there is a conscious comparison between art and non-art. Contemporary artification is not only a conceptual exercise but also an institutional and practical phenomenon, as I will try to show shortly, yet it is still necessarily *also* a conceptual one and often even verbally expressed phenomenon. In my understanding, it cannot be just practices like the making of certain kind of pictures, because it calls for a conscious reflection upon the relations between art and non-art.

Artification also borders on another culturally topical concept, aestheticization. As I understand these terms, artification *can* be a special case of aestheticization, which is nevertheless a differently organized concept. Aestheticization in its different versions is not necessarily related to art at all.

Aestheticization refers to processes where some sort of aesthetic point of view is intentionally and actively used, typically in areas where it had not been in use before. It means strengthening the role of the aesthetic as compared to some other situations. To claim that something like this is happening became typical during the 1980-1990's, especially in European discussions. Many started to see that politics, science, marketing, philosophy, and many other areas had become aestheticized. But this could mean several things. In some instances, aestheticization meant visualization, such as Mike Featherstone's interpretation of the pivotal role of pictures and other images in contemporary consumer culture; in others it meant accentuating the importance of corporeality or sensuality in philosophy, like Wolfgang Iser's "aesthetic thinking." A third group stressed the importance of beauty or elegance in various every-day life contexts, like the less academic discussions around aesthetic surgery and other phenomena related to human appearance by Naomi Wolf and others. Still others emphasized the life-directing role of rewarding experiences, such as Gerhard Schulze's *Erlebnisgesellschaft*. Some, of course, connected it closely with art, too, like the late Michel Foucault's idea about life as analogous to a literary work of art.<sup>[8]</sup>

Aestheticization was also normally seen as typical for the post-modern attitude, where previously differentiated cultural and conceptual areas started to become mixed. The reasons for specifically accentuating the aesthetic approach varied from pointing out that religious and political values had lost something of their weight and thus people needed new guiding principles for their choices, to the more down-to-earth notions that people have more spare time and money than ever before and thus need to have ideas about what to do with them.

If one thinks that art is some sort of home base for the aesthetic, then artification might mean aestheticization. But I would claim that this narrows the concept of art too much. One can adopt other things from art, not only its aesthetic features or values, and the following chapters will give some ideas about what these other things can be. So artification is not only aestheticization, nor is aestheticization only artification, even if they seem to overlap in some cases.<sup>[9]</sup>

## 2. What can become artified?

Of the five questions presented above, "What can become artified?" is probably the easiest to answer: in principle, anything that is not art. In practice, however, some parts of Western culture have been more interested in this option than others. There are at least three large sectors where the phenomenon can be seen very clearly. These are business, well-being and health-care services, and academic education and research, sometimes intertwined with each other. In this article, I will deal mainly with the first sector and use it as my primary prism for making sense of the larger phenomenon, whereas the health-care aspect will be covered by Susann Vihma, and academic education and research, through the design perspective, by Stephen A. R. Scrivener and Su Zheng. However, in section 4, I will briefly analyze a case where business and education aspects are combined.

One may claim that business, for example, *can* be artified but it is much more interesting if it can be shown that business really has been artified, if not through-and-through, at least in many instances. Is this the case?

In recent years there has emerged a trend of talking about hiring artists in business. Canadian management professor and consultant Nancy J. Adler offered an overview of the current discussion. She analyzed the mainstreams of this current and summarized the core point: "The time is right for cross-fertilization of the arts and leadership."<sup>[10]</sup> She also listed several concrete examples of making use of artists' skills in companies, corporations, business conferences, management societies, business-schools, and elsewhere. The most telling point about this contemporary discourse is that her literature list includes nearly one hundred publications dealing with the theme, most of them published after the year 2000. The idea of cross-fertilization is clearly widespread.

There are a number of other examples of this same attitude from several countries. The Danish scholar and consultant Lotte Darsø analyzes many of them in her book, *Artful Creation*, covering different cases from Unilever via Volvo to Xerox PARC (Palo Alto Research Center).<sup>[11]</sup> Recently (October 19, 2010), I myself heard a presentation by Jarkko Jokinen, a director at the second-largest medicine company in the world, ClaxoSmithKline, in which he said that the company had hired professional actors for training their sales personnel to present their products more effectively to their customers.

A good example of a more general-level discussion is the Finnish government's proposal for the country's arts and artist policy in 2003. In it, one finds rather abstract ideas about using art in several different contexts: in education and in health-care, but also in business. Some sort of autonomy and self-value of art is by no means totally denied but the stress is clearly on the instrumental conception of it. Even the titles of the proposal's chapters reveal this attitude: "Art is social capital," "Art is creative capital," "Art creates economic capital," and so on. In any case, the ideas remain very general, and few concrete cases or evidence for the usefulness of art are presented. It is openly stated, for example, that producing water-proof evidence about the economic impacts of art is impossible.<sup>[12]</sup> Still, it is repeated again and again that art has something to do specifically with creativity and innovation and that this creativity should be made use of elsewhere.

Often, similar general ideas are presented under the title "creative economy" or "creative industries," and sometimes they are formulated in a rather expressive way. John Hartley offers an example of this:

'Art' needs to be understood as something *intrinsic*, not *opposed*, to the productive capacities of a contemporary global, mediated, technology-supported economy. /... / The idea of the CREATIVE INDUSTRIES seeks to describe the *conceptual and practical convergence* of the CREATIVE ARTS (individual talent) with Cultural Industries (mass scale), in the context of NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES (ICTs) within a NEW KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY, for the use of newly INTERACTIVE CITIZEN-CONSUMERS.<sup>[13]</sup>

Whatever the arts are, they are seen as something creative and must be incorporated into business of, for example, advertising, fashion, and design.

It is also rather common in this discourse to use "aesthetic" as a synonym for "art." Or, at least, the idea is that business people need aesthetic skills but art is the best way to achieve them. When seen from this perspective, it is typical to emphasize the importance of sensitivity and one's physical body as the primal "interface" to everything around us, thus approaching the classical Greek meaning of the term *aisthesis*. Steven S. Taylor and Donna Ladkin wrote: "*Aesthetics* is the study of this sensuous knowing, and the arts work from and with this sort of knowing rather than with knowing based in logic and rational thinking."<sup>[14]</sup>

In another paper, Taylor and Barbara A. Karanian wrote about the "art of leadership." This does not

loosely mean something like the skill of leadership but rather a direct link to the art world proper. They used, for example, ideas taken from Nicolas Bourriaud's so-called relational aesthetics, which seeks to make sense of contemporary art world and its practices. Leadership, to them, should be an art form and create special kinds of context-sensitive relationships between individuals and within groups in the same way community artists strive to do.[\[15\]](#)

In addition to such articles and books on the subject, there are also national and international events such as the conference *Creative Economy and Beyond* and the whole *Art of Management and Organization Conference* series, as well as networks and organizations aiming at combining art with business such as AACORN (Arts, Aesthetics, Creativity, & Organization Research Network,) and *Arts & Business*.[\[16\]](#)

### 3. Why does artification take place?

In discussions that can be related to artification, art is seen to provide something other than what there already is in the area or activity to be artified. Some business writers think that the whole business culture needs to be changed and that art is useful or even necessary for this change. But why must business, and perhaps other fields as well, change with the help of art?

Adler gives a list of factors that affect any business and that must be "mastered" by anyone who wants to be successful.[\[17\]](#) These same factors also comprise conditions of operation for artists. The interesting thing is that such conditions seem to have been commonplace in the art world for a long time; artists have been forced to learn how to manage with them and now they can teach these skills to others.

The first of these factors is the rapidly increasing global interconnectedness of basically everything but especially things that have an effect on business, such as information services, markets, material resources, and employees. The point here is that everything that is potentially global matters. That is, one cannot know what things are interconnected and might cause radical changes, where and when, and one must be sensitive to this. This is something to be learned from artists, as artists are sensitive and ready to react to everything around them and able to see connections between seemingly distant matters, so should businessmen be.

On the other hand, as we are witnessing increasing domination of market forces in all sectors of culture, and large international companies are partly taking on the role of nation-states as ruling players in the global economy, and sometimes also assuming responsibility for such formerly state-run issues like health care or education. Artists encounter more and more situations where the co-operating partner is a private company, not a state-funded organization, non-profit-seeking NGO, religious community, or the like. The force behind the mixing of art with business comes not only from the fact that business wants to learn something from the arts but also from the fact that business is simply a more common partner for the arts than before.

Adler also claims that companies have to operate in an increasingly turbulent, complex, and chaotic environment, which is easy to believe after recent developments in the global market. Where before it was the art world that called for networking with surprising partners, the business world is now doing the same and is also learning to act without water-proof evidence and accept sudden changes and situational improvisation. No one has certain knowledge what might happen next but one should still be able to make good decisions. According to Adler, artists can teach us how this happens, and art is thus seen as a mode of operation where no "methodological rigor" can be expected.

Furthermore, advances in technology have decreased the cost of experimentation. With computer aided design (CAD), it is much easier and cheaper to test a number of different solutions than before. However, in this situation one must have lots of ideas to experiment with. This, again, is something Adler thinks artists are particularly good at: coming up with fresh, new ideas.

The final reason for mixing art with business is something Adler calls the shift from success to significance. This means that it is not enough for employees, owners, and customers that a business should be profitable in terms of money; it should also be meaningful and important and even emotionally rewarding. Traditionally, it has been art, and also religion, sports, and maybe some other fields, of course, that have provided these things. Therefore, business could learn from the arts how to work better in this respect.

Although there may be other background reasons for artification to occur in other situations, those mentioned by Adler seem to be more commonly recognized, at least in business discourse. One may have different opinions on details but the big picture is clear. Globalization has changed the (business) world and traditional means of operation must thus be re-examined. Artification represents one tool for accomplishing this.

Yet, it is very difficult on the general level to provide evidence that art really accomplishes its instrumental job in the way described by Adler. It is fairly easy to show that incorporating art into something-else really changes this something-else in one way or another. But is the change necessarily for the better, as Adler seems to believe, and in what sense? Does it result in more income or a better atmosphere? Furthermore, it is extremely hard to show that nothing else, such as sports or the sciences, could not help

achieve similar results, and that art does its instrumental job better than anything else.

The claim that artists in general are more creative, sensitive, and better at offering meaning for our lives than other people is not a self-evident fact, either. Quite often being an artist means learning rather conservative techniques, assuming ossified ways of displaying works, using age-old themes again and again, talking of one's work with ancient concepts, and so on. There's nothing wrong with this conservative aspect of art as such, but its existence simply underlines the fact that art is not necessarily any more creative than many other walks of life. Of course, it is clear that art is largely *different* from normal business practices and thus may look fresh from that perspective. But the same would be true of using the practices of some religious group, such as the Amish, in business settings, even if the religion as such should be rather conservative. Thus, the potential innovation comes from the mix itself, not from art as such.

This is why it was wise of Adler to provide some examples of concrete cases and not to settle for presenting only abstract ideas. One of the most interesting of these cases has to do with the training of medical doctors, although this is not directly a business context but is closely related. The point is to show that by learning how to look at and discuss the visual arts, the students became better in their medical practices: "After only one year, the art-trained student-doctors' [at Yale Medical School] improvement in their diagnostic skills was more than 25% greater than that of their non-art trained colleagues."<sup>[18]</sup> So, at least there are encouraging examples. However, Adler's work mostly remains on the level of generally describing the things people in business *wish* to get from the arts and artists and doesn't go into detail in describing how business contexts should be changed so that incorporating art into them would be possible in practice.

Other writers go a bit further in this direction. One of them is Lotte Darsø, mentioned above. In her book she showed what happens when artists are actually hired by companies. As Adler does, Darsø emphasizes things like energy, imagination, sensitivity, and expression "which can all be learned from the arts."<sup>[19]</sup> These capacities can help both individual employees and companies at large to conceptualize things in new ways, through novel metaphors, to express their ideas better, to get people emotionally engaged in their jobs, and to strengthen group coherence. For example, by using theater metaphors, Bang and Olufsen managed to re-conceptualize their understanding of how their retail stores and operations should be organized. Also, at Xerox PARC, where many now-common inventions related to computers like Windows and the mouse were developed, artists played an important role through their artist-in-residence program. They helped to create "demos" that made the ideas of the scientists more understandable to others, especially to engineers. Their artworks also communicated ideas between scientists and marketing people and thus kept them alive within the technology center. They embodied ideas with the help of their skill in handling forms, sounds, colors, and other materials. However, for a greater understanding of what all this could mean in the context of artification, we also need to look at a single case a bit more closely, one that not only provides a picture of why artification is promoted but also of how it is done.

#### 4. How does artification manifest itself?

One way of making a difference between different aspects of artification is to focus on its conceptual, institutional and practical levels. Here, I illuminate these levels through an example I know fairly well: my own academic organization at Aalto University.

Aalto University, named after the renowned architect Alvar Aalto, is a new institution formed when three formerly independent universities merged: the University of Art and Design Helsinki, the Helsinki University of Technology, and the Helsinki School of Economics. Interestingly, the goal of this merger is not only about mixing art with business, but about mixing art, technology, business, and education together, which might give a more realistic picture of how things are often done.

In the bylaw documents of the university, one of the first things stated is that its mission is to promote the success of the country of Finland by means of research and education. It is quite clear that art is also understood as something that can be harnessed for such purposes, even if some parts of it may still be "free"—whatever that may mean. In the non-public strategic plans, (mainly visual) art is seen as something creative, innovative, human, value-laden, and holistic but also as something that can be combined with the other fields of the university.

In this context, at least two different artification processes are proceeding side by side, and they both have their conceptual, institutional, and practical strands. The first process is linked with the art and business discussion described above, that is, that technology and business (education) need a new twist that can supposedly be given by the (visual) arts and by design practices closely related to these arts. Secondly, something that has been called artistic or art-based research is a topical issue in the academic world and now has a place at Aalto University. According to its proponents, academic research should adopt some features of art, and one of the aims is to find ways to use artistic skills, practices, and ideas in formulating new scientific or academic knowledge.<sup>[20]</sup> Opinions vary on whether these two lines support or oppose each other but, again, some kind of change is aimed at in both lines.

At its early stage, combining art with the other fields of the university started as a conceptual exercise. In

its simplest form, conceptual artification only refers to ways in which people think and talk about mixing art with something else, and this is how it began at Aalto, too, through meetings, discussions, and writings.<sup>[21]</sup> This seems a fairly easy process, often involving simply using somewhat different terminology than before. Business or research is analyzed and dealt with by using ideas and concepts developed in the arts; they are seen as something where one needs, for instance, improvisation, taste, emotional engagement, creativity, and other characteristics mentioned earlier.

However, conceptual exercises can naturally have fundamental effects on how people see the world. Discussion can change our views on what kind of role art should play in our lives and on what art actually is, that is, what the intension and the extension of the concept actually is. In the first place, it is not self-evident at all that art should be seen as something that can be mixed with something else. It all depends on our understanding of the concept, and there is no general agreement on this within the university, even if the official documents stress a certain interpretation.

In any case, artification is not only conceptual pondering but also institutional and practical acting. Aalto University is actually one of the few institutional realizations of the attitude shown, for example, in the publication of the Finnish government cited above. It is an institution that has its bylaw rules, legal status, president, councils, committees, funding structures, physical settings, and other more or less fixed characteristics.

When taken to this even more practical level, mixing art with something else has almost endless potential routes to explore. In a university, the normal contexts to do this are probably courses, research projects, and publications. At Aalto, art-oriented students and teachers, even if they are not a very big part of the institution's population, are urged to co-operate with business experts and engineers and the other way round. There are joint courses for students coming from different programs, and even courses organized by a single program can include parts, some of which are close to the arts, some closer to other fields. On the research side there is, for instance, a project called *aivoAalto* that uses modern neuroimaging methods to examine social interaction, decision-making, and the effect of cinema on the human mind.<sup>[22]</sup>

Essentially, artification can be seen everywhere throughout this new university. It could even have an impact on the physical setting, and make rooms and buildings look and feel different. It could change the ways people behave, dress, and discuss, and it could result in different products (objects and services) being planned by designers and engineers. It could change the ways events like conferences and anniversary festivals are organized, and it should have some effect on the organizational structure of the whole. Whether this will *actually* happen remains to be seen.

##### **5. What kinds of things are being accentuated in artification processes?**

There are naturally several different ways to see what is accentuated in artification in business and elsewhere. For example, Taylor and Ladkin, in the article cited above, offer one summary of what purposes art can serve in a company. First, art can function as "skills transferring means," that is, skills learned through arts can be used elsewhere like in the case of GlaxoSmithKline. Second, it provides "projective techniques," or it helps people make sense of and express their own inner thoughts and feelings. Third, in the form of a poem, novel, painting, and so on, it can help illustrate the "essence" of a situation, concept, or the like in a different way from a formal definition, like comparing Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* with a law book. And fourth, it can provide possibilities for physical, hands-on "making" that fosters deep experience and a sense of presence in another way than, say, philosophical discussion.<sup>[23]</sup>

However, probably most often the intention seems to be making companies more *creative* and, especially for their employees, *more rewarding emotionally*. These points were mentioned above, and they can also be found in Taylor's and Ladkin's article and in many other publications on the theme. Artists are seen to be specialists in such issues, and as the skills of the artist are made use of in companies and corporations, it is hoped that these will become more productive. But what do these points entail if looked at somewhat more deeply?

First of all, creativity or innovation often seem to be understood in a fairly simplistic way. The point is not to shake the fundamental foundations and question, for example, whether economic profit is a primary value. At the same time, the fundamentals should be accompanied by some other values, and companies should not be seen as ice-cold money makers. Yet a completely creative overhaul of the thinking related to business is not an option. And so, the solution that is hoped for would not stress the importance of revolutionary, critical, or oppositional art but would strive for co-operative, "affirmative," or, in the worst case, even co-optative solutions, as Arnold Berleant pointed out in a discussion (June 20, 2011).

This resembles all the former ideas of art that have seen art as something that should serve the goals of something superior to itself: the state, the church, or some particular political ideology. Art redeems its place in a society if it helps achieve the commonly accepted or otherwise authorized goals of the society. Thus, if politics is understood in an Aristotelian way as taking care of common tasks and goals, art assumes its political role by taking part in building the society. Nowadays, many seem to believe that this is only possible by taking part in business. This is naturally very different, for example, from the conflict-

based understanding of politics as represented by Jacques Rancière and from the idea of art developed by Theodor W. Adorno. From their point of view, artification could mean radical questioning of dominant values and practices that, in the case of Adorno, is only possible if art preserves its autonomic status and does not become mixed with anything else in a way that would endanger this autonomy.

Somewhat paradoxically, the emphasis on creativity still seems to be related to the modernistic idea of art as representing the potential for a completely new start or radical break. What makes it strange is this conflicts with the post-modern aspect of mixing things, often old and new. Modernistic thinking can be characterized as one that wants to keep different areas of culture separate and that hopes to find ways for radical new beginnings within them. Postmodernists, in contrast, often question both the possibility of radically new beginnings and of keeping cultural areas clean and pure; instead they accept making use of history again and again and mixing different areas. So, if business or other artifiers accept mixing, why not recycling and making use of old things, too, especially when very radical change is really not what is hoped for?

Moreover, business artification seems to value emotional sides of art that are affirmative and simply positive. Emotions of happiness, energy, strength, engagement, and enthusiasm are favored. In contrast, the agonistic, shocking, aggressive, melancholic, insecure, and painful emotions that are common in contemporary art are not welcome.

If such hopes are taken seriously, they could have very practical consequences on the education and practices of artists. According to this view, artists should learn to be *somewhat* innovative but not too radically so. Moreover, by using their material and other skills, they should learn to evoke positive, engaging feelings, not uncertainty or anguish. Sometimes it seems that this should even be done by non-verbal, non-logical, non-propositional, non-intellectual, or non-rational ways, as suggested by Taylor and Ladkin: "Propositional methods and forms filter out the feeling and emotion in pursuit of precision, clarity, and objectivity."[\[24\]](#) Does this mean that emphatically conceptual artists do not need to bother?

One does not have to be very cynical for this to begin to seem a very tame and simplistic understanding of art. There is a risk of turning art into some kind of kitschy, entertaining tinkering that would make art studies quite different from present-day practices, where art studies and works often include a considerable amount of very theoretical and intellectual development, in addition to radical criticality and negative feelings.

Still, perhaps the most interesting consequences of (business) artification come from the mixing principle itself. In artification discussions, the idea of art is necessarily non-autonomous. Art might have value in and for itself, in some contexts, but there are also ways of using art or some of its features for extra-artistic purposes. Art might be its own kind of thing but it is not isolated from other things, and if art is a home-base for creativity, for example, this same creativity can still be used elsewhere.

Understood in this way, it seems that something can be more or less art, and art is not an either/or concept. Its ontological status is not that of a truly independent entity (object, piece, area) but closer to that of a quality (hue, taste, tone, shade). Or, rather that art proper might have a different ontological status than art in artification processes. The result of all this is that the "art" of artification becomes some kind of adjective, not a noun.

Thus, it could be thought that some people are more or less artists, objects can have more or less art within them, receivers can concentrate on more or less artistic aspects of things they encounter, and institutions can be more or less art-centered. In general, one should probably not ask whether this or that *is* art here and now but whether something *has* more or less art, in a given situation. This, of course, is quite easy to relate to very different conceptions of art, from Dissanayake's essential ideas to the ones presented by business writers above. From the business point of view, whenever something is highly creative and emotionally engaging, it has lots of art in it or is strongly artified.

If artists operate in their studios, workshops, concert halls, theaters, museums, galleries, and other art-specific surroundings, artifiers work somewhere else: at companies, hospitals, shops, offices, academic research groups, and the like. And if artists produce works of art, artifiers take part in producing discussions, design processes, health care services, and so on. Furthermore, if artists typically use certain techniques and materials, such as specific brush maneuvers on oil and canvas, artifying is not restricted in such a way but may make use of any materials and techniques available. And again, traditional art typically has an audience but if there is anything comparable to that in artification, its role is different, often probably closer to the one of the user or participator than of the on-looker (listener). All this has a bearing on both the intension and extension of the concept of art as used.

Artification might come close to some contemporary forms of art proper, such as co-operative community art. But in the case of community art, it is normally pretty clear that someone is working quite emphatically as an artist, and projects are typically documented and presented to the art world, which does not have to be the case in artification processes. The common factor is that both artists and artifiers may help people in different contexts in articulating things with the help of colors, sounds, words, acting, and so on, without actually producing works that should be exhibited and looked at as individual objects.



They may also help people be more emotional and innovative, as business writers hope. Traditionally, art as a mode of operation has been liberal and tolerant as regards experimentation and failures; it might offer a secure context for acting in an experimental way. However, this kind of action often requires an artist to be some sort of moderator who, in turn, should be able to create an atmosphere of openness, trust, and innovation and also give help with materials and techniques.

If taken seriously, educating people as artificers, not artists, would teach skills that make this kind of atmosphere-creation and communication moderation possible. The process would perhaps include not so many traditional painting and drawing workshops but put more emphasis on (social) psychology, verbal and non-verbal situational communication abilities, and on the means with which to handle (ethical) problems that artfied situations might cause, as these can touch upon highly emotional personal issues. For example, how would one deal with the situation if someone, during an artfied personnel training workshop, produced a picture that evoked acute anguish and fear in someone? Art school curricula would look very different, indeed, when compared to traditional systems if such issues were to be emphasized more strongly.

Artification would not need art-specific institutions, objects, techniques, audiences, materials, and, indeed, not even artists to exist as a process and produce results. It should be enough if a company or some other entity has *some* art in it and in its processes, objects, and persons. However, while this may be enough to satisfy the needs of individual companies and in the actual artification processes, clearly art-specific art is still needed: schools, persons, and objects that emphatically focus on art and carry on the tradition of autonomy. This is because, as we saw above, artification cannot exist without art proper as its point of reference. However, it is a different matter to consider which aspects of this point of reference will be accentuated in artification processes; business discourse has its own choices such as (tame) creativity, positive emotions, and non-propositional acting but other contexts may choose differently.

## 6. Conclusion

What have we learned? First, artification means mixing art with something else that presupposes both art and something else. Second, almost anything can become artfied but there are some sectors of contemporary culture that have developed this option more actively than others. Third, the reasons for artification may vary but often they seem to be connected to larger cultural changes. The world changes and these changes presuppose changes in people's thinking and acting, and art is believed to be helpful in this. Fourth, artification can occur in many ways and on many levels, from conceptual exercises through institutions to quite physical and practical accomplishments. And, lastly, the decision about which of the things that were originally developed within the art world proper will in turn be favored in artification processes varies on a case-by-case basis.

If one wants to understand this phenomenon in its various forms, these five issues should not be analyzed separately but must be combined. The artification process has an effect on the conceptualization of art: which aspects of it are emphasized, how it is accomplished, and the perception of why the whole process is deemed necessary in the first place.

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### Endnotes

[1] *Taiteistuminen*, eds. Yrjänä Levanto, Ossi Naukkari and Susann Vihma (Helsinki: Taideteollinen korkeakoulu, 2005).

[2] Ellen Dissanayake, "An Ethological View of Music and its Relevance to Music Therapy," *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy* 10: 2 (2001), 159-175. See also Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus. Where Art Comes From and Why* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992).

[3] Paul-Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," in *Essays on the History of Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1992), pp. 3-64. Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art. A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

[4] Ellen Dissanayake, "What Art Is and What Art Does: An Overview of Contemporary Evolutionary Hypotheses," in *Evolutionary and Neurocognitive Approaches to Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, eds. Colin Martindale, Paul Locher and Vladimir M. Petrov (Amityville: Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., 2007), pp. 1-14.

[5] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), especially pp. 47-54; translation from the German by Michael Shaw.

[6] Joseph Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy," in *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, eds. Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 840-850; Ad Reinhardt, "Art-as-Art," in *Art as Art: The Selected Writings of Ad Reinhardt*, ed. Barbara Rose (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), pp. 53-56.

[7] Wolfgang Iser, *Unsere postmoderne Moderne*. Dritte Auflage (Weinheim: VCH, 1991).

[8] Of these variations, see Ossi Naukkarinen, *Aesthetics of the Unavoidable. Aesthetic Variations in Human Appearance* (Lahti: International Institute of Applied Aesthetics, 1998; on the Internet: [http://www.helsinki.fi/ksei/julkaisut/publication%20pdfs/Naukkarinen\\_Aesthetics\\_of\\_the\\_Unavoidable.pdf](http://www.helsinki.fi/ksei/julkaisut/publication%20pdfs/Naukkarinen_Aesthetics_of_the_Unavoidable.pdf), pp. 203-207 and *passim*; Wolfgang Iser, *Undoing Aesthetics*, especially chapter 1 (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1997).

[9] I tend to understand the aesthetic as something that refers to emotionally rewarding, personal sense perceptions that are typically dealt with the help of a certain, historically developed terminology. What this means in more detail calls for a longer analysis than is possible in this essay. See my article "Why Beauty Still Cannot Be Measured," *Contemporary Aesthetics* (Vol. 8, 2010).

[10] Nancy J. Adler, "The Arts & Leadership: Now That We Can Do Anything, What Will We Do?" *Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal*, vol. 5 (no. 4) 2006, 486-499, ref. on 488. Although I now concentrate on the contemporary art and business discourse, it has its historical predecessors. One could follow this strand backwards, for example, via Bauhaus design tradition to the British arts-and-crafts movement but this would require a separate study.

[11] Lotte Darsø, *Artful Creation. Learning-Tales of Arts-in-Business* (Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur, 2004).

[12] *Government Decision-in-Principle on Arts and Artist Policy*. Publications of the Ministry of Education 2003:23 (Helsinki: Ministry of Education, 2003), p. 44.

[13] John Hartley, "Introduction," in *Creative Industries*, ed. John Hartley (Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), ref. on p. 5. All the italics and capitals from the original text.

[14] Steven S. Taylor and Donna Ladkin, "Understanding Art-Based Methods in Managerial Development," *Academy of Management Learning & Education* (Vol. 8(1), 2009), 55-69, ref. on 56.

[15] Steven S. Taylor and Barbara A. Karanian, "Working Connection: The Relational Art of Leadership," *Aesthesis: International Journal of Art and Aesthetics in Management and Organizational Life* (Vol. 2(2), 2009), 15-22. They write from the perspective of management and leadership studies, which is close to organization studies. There, perhaps the best known spokesperson for aesthetics is Antonio Strati. However, he makes a clear distinction between aesthetics and art: "Aesthetic understanding should not be confused with artistic understanding." Antonio Strati, "The Aesthetic Approach in Organizational Studies," in *The Aesthetics of Organizations*, eds. Stephen Linstead & Heather Höpfl (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2000), pp. 13-32, ref. on p. 17.

[16] For their websites, see:

[http://www.york.ac.uk/management/research/research-areas/organisation-theory/art\\_of\\_management/](http://www.york.ac.uk/management/research/research-areas/organisation-theory/art_of_management/).  
[www.aacorn.net/](http://www.aacorn.net/).

[artsandbusiness.org.uk](http://www.artsandbusiness.org.uk).

[17] Adler, pp. 488-493.

[18] Adler, p. 495.

[19] Darsø, p. 149.

[20] On this discussion, see *The Art of Research. Research Practices in Art and Design*, eds. Maarit Mäkelä & Sara Routarinne (Helsinki: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2006), Scrivener and Zheng's article in this volume, as well as the web-based *Journal for Artistic Research*.

[21] In fact, the attitude of combining art with business and other fields was not new for the former University of Art and Design but had been incorporated in its basic point of departure since its early history starting in late-nineteenth century. The idea was and still is much more innovative and radical for the two other schools.

[22] See <http://www.aalto.fi/en/research/multidisciplinary/aivoaalto/>.

[23] Taylor & Ladkin, p. 56 and *passim*.



[24] Taylor & Ladkin, pp. 56-57.