The Concept of Art as Archaeologically Applicable

Ylva Sjöstrand

In this article I review arguments in favour of the need and possibility of importing a revitalized concept of art in archaeological reasoning. By comprehending the concept of art as a function, rather than as a property inherent within particular kinds of objects or events, I offer a way of understanding art as the mode in which a phenomenon operates when its ontological multiplicity, its variety of equally real modes of being, becomes exposed. Seen in this vein, art emerges as an entity both created and experienced when several potential versions of a thing or event are laid bare. I emphasize that an element's capacity to communicate such factual intersectionality requires effort in order to endure; and argue that it is the formats for such 'practices of maintenance' that constitute art-worlds situated in culture. I also assert that these strategies, like all formalized engagements with material culture, generate traces, and accordingly can be grasped by analyses of an archaeological record. To illustrate this idea, I discuss the red ochre rock paintings from Neolithic northern Sweden made between approximately 6000 and 4000 BP by hunter-gatherer communities that were also producing petroglyphs.

Introduction

This essay attempts to contribute to the current debate about how to revitalize the concept of art in order to make it analytically applicable to archaeological materials from the distant past. In what follows, I am offering a preliminary suggestion as to how radically to expand this over-burdened term, to push its intension beyond the realm of metropolitan taste, yet constrain its boundaries before it gets so watered down as to connote nothing more than momentary and idiosyncratic experience of an object or event as 'aesthetically thick'. I aim to set out how how art can be thought of as potentially applicable all kinds of objects or events, regardless of their cultural origin, yet, at the same time, hold on to the intuitive awareness of that art as something illustrious, exceptional, or at least not simply a synonym for material culture. To anticipate my argument, my suggestion rests on the idea of art being a highly fruitful concept for archaeologists, given that it is conceived of as a *function*, a mode of an object's appearance, rather than some immanent property emitted from objects or events of a certain kind. From this axiomatic position, I suggest that the function of art is signalled by a particular form of temporal-spatial relationship in which the interpretant experiences a radical illumination, an exposure, of the foundational intersectionality of the element comprising the sign vehicle itself. As a condensed version is necessary at this introductory stage, I argue that the art function is set into operation when an object of experience reveals its multiple possibilities of existence and thus offers an agent multiple latent possibilities for creative choices.

In line with my central aim—making the art concept applicable—I emphasize that the art function, the relation that permits a phenomenon's multimodality to shine through, requires practices in order to be *maintained*, which leads to the closing idea: that these strategies of maintenance, if analysed in a wide social sense, are of considerable importance for executing art-worlds situated in culture. These strategies, like all practices, generate traces, meaning that they can be grasped by analyses of the archaeological material. This last point is exemplified with a case study of the emplacement and non-synchronic dialogue key to north Swedish rock paintings, made roughly between 6000 and 4000 BP by hunter-gatherer groups that were also producing petroglyphs. I thus begin by

Cambridge Archaeological Journal 27:2, 371–388 © 2017 McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research
doi:10.1017/S0959774317000026 Received 2 December 2014; Accepted 10 January 2017; Revised 1 November 2016

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Figure 1. *(Colour online) The rock painting of Hovden, Liden Parish, Härjedalen County. (Photograph: Ylva Sjöstrand.)*

introducing this material, demonstrating what a concept of art, which at this initial stage is grasped in a pre-theoretical sense, can do for studies of parietal imagery.

Elk and red ochre

The paintings in question are distributed over approximately 35 spatially distinctive localities running in an east–west belt across the north Swedish boreal forest (for an overview of rock paintings from the wider region of Fennoscandia, see Andreassen 2008; Bakka 1976; Bjerk 2012; Cocq *et al.* 2014; Gjerde 2010; Hallström 1960; Lahelma 2008; Lindgren 2004; Lødøen & Mandt 2010; Sognnes 1984; 2009). Unlike the prehistoric rock carvings in this region, which have hitherto only been found in direct proximity to water, the paintings appear in a wide range of geophysical settings (Aronsson & Ljungdal 2000, 90f; Lindgren 2004; Ramqvist 2002). While some panels, such as Hovden, are located on high altitudes prominently visible from the area's main river (Fig. 1), other panels, such as Lillklippen, are significantly less detectable from large distances, hidden as it is in a natural cave-like structure of large boulders (Fig. 2). These dissimilarities are further amplified by the fact that painting localities were involved with multiple practices, both in and over time. On the topic of synchronic formats of usage, one might consider the multiple affordances that operate through an individual site's physical setting. For example, paintings made in connection to main waterways on large boulders with exposed quartz ores must have accompanied people engaged in tool production whilst concurrently serving as a reference point for travellers, looking out for the 'red elk' as a landmark. Regarding the paintings' changed significance over time, one gets an idea of the temporal particularity of their officially ascribed significance by considering that an iconoclastic tradition, centred on shooting arrowheads towards the painted animals, can be determined to have been initiated during the Late Stone Age, which is a window too small to encompass the entire period of active painting practice (Hansson 2006; Olofsson 2012).

Turning to the figures displayed, just as on carved panels, elk are the dominant motif. Elk are depicted in the same style as at the petroglyph sites in Norrland, and the four-phase chronology, originally outlined for carved elk figures at the monumental rock-art site of Nämforsen in Ångermanland (Forsberg 1993), has recently been proved valid for the painted panels as well (Sjöstrand 2015; see also below). The elk's pivotal place in the fauna represented is by no means surprising. The importance of this animal is hard to exaggerate, and is shown best in the way the reliance upon elk constituted the common denominator between the main types of sites built by these hunter-gatherer communities. Besides short-term activity sites with hearths and tool-production debris, social life from this time and region is

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Figure 2. *(Colour online) Lillklippen, Ramsele Parish, Ångermanland County. (Photograph: Ylva Sjöstrand.)*

traceable as pitfalls, mounds of burnt stone and rock art, and it is easy to demonstrate that all three of these construction types have an appearance that is conditioned by the elk's evasive but essential role. The pitfalls are placed and designed entirely for the purpose of elk hunting, and these traps, arranged in long systems, have recently been shown to be located along the same animal trails used by today's elk populations (Larsson *et al*. 2012). The mounds of burnt stone are bases for circular huts at the proto-sedentary dwelling sites created by a successive build-up of waste from butchering and consuming elk. If we presume that the house foundations were covered with elk skins, entering one of these huts meant literally stepping into an elk body made of innumerable individuals of both human and non-human kinds. The elk is also by far the most commonly employed motif in the parietal imagery; the material culture that moulded social life in Neolithic northern Sweden would have looked radically different if the elk had been considered just one of many species of dietary importance.

Considering the degree to which the elk conditioned the physical appearance of the stationary elements in the hunter-gatherer landscape, it is seems unlikely that its cultural meaning was of such a nature that it could be simply reduced to a general mytheme or cosmological panoramagram. From a practical perspective, this animal was as much the reason for the need to watch one's step when crossing areas with recently prepared pit traps as it was the physical material employed for erecting the architectural structures for winter dwelling sites. That an animal with such a range of implications was surrounded with a meshwork of myths, stories, anecdotes, figures of speech and jokes is unquestionable, and this rich texture of significances must have been powered by the elk's foundational intersectionality, rather than by some univocal conception of what this animal 'meant'. Elsewhere, I have suggested that it might be helpful to grasp the elk as a key symbol, in Sherry Ortner's sense; that is, a symbol employed for metonymic conceptions such as gender, age, or danger, which made the elk motif able to serve as a tool for making pictures of that which eludes naturalistic representation (Ortner 1973; Sjöstrand 2012). The elk, to put it simply, was not what people thought of so much as what they thought with.

That the elk had such an ambiguous role in social life explains why this animal was so constantly elaborated on in visual culture and why these variations show such a complicated fabric of interwoven yet discernable patterns. Depictions of elk with

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

bent legs are frequently placed next to older exemplars with vertical legs in such a way that it is obvious that these two ways of depicting the animal refer to different strata of significance. It is also this semiotic flexibility and metapragmatic versatility that elucidates why elk are depicted by way of two radically different media, i.e. carvings and paintings. Given the elk's importance, two elk, of which one is made of the type of void management that constitutes carving, and the other is painted on the rock face with a mixture of body fluids and red pigment, cannot be seen as connoting, or referring to, exactly the same sense. Yet this fact remains vastly overlooked in north Swedish rock-art research. For example, the basic observation that carved and painted elk figures (or other motifs) *never occur at the same panels*, and this despite the fact that images casted in these two material formats are stylistically coherent, still remains thoroughly under-theorized within this body of research. Efforts directed towards investigating the symbolic pregnancy of the elk motif have been put aside in favour of the task of matching compositional elements involving elk with ethnographic data, a perspective from which the metapragmatic elaborations and semantic flexibility of this motif become hard to reach analytically.

This paradigmatic emphasis on mimetic iconicity—what I have called the 'paradigm of identification' and which John Robb names 'the idea of images as tokens' (1998, 333)—means that the search for the picture's original has orchestrated the very questions addressed to this material (Cruz Berrocal 2011; Rosengren 2012; Sapwell 2016; Sjöstrand 2012; Tilley 2008). Furthermore, debate on the paintings has been centred around topics such as whether the mammals are to be classified as elk or reindeer, if the anthropomorphic figures are to be identified as shamans or masked hunters, or whether the panels generally should be seen as a realistic narrative or as depicting an imagined cosmological order. Although there is no reason to reject these concerns as unimportant, it must be noted that this search for essential iconic references constitutes a disproportionately dominant focus within Fennoscandian rock-art research. It is misguided to seek and substantiate a thick description of the elk motif's significance solely by reporting what cosmological programme can be supported by analogy, not because informed methods are deceptive *per se*, but because such pursuit of pictorial meaning is constructed on a too narrow idea of how visual culture operates when conceived as meaningful by a receptor.

In general, rock-art scholarship's rather naïve version of Panofskian iconology is incapable of accounting for the complexity that is empirically displayed by this imagery. As noted in this brief introduction, these paintings form such a complex and intricate imagery that different panels, although featuring the same motif, must have referred to radically different clusters of significance. Some panels are found in settings that make them viewable for only one or two visitors at a time, whereas others can be seen from long distances. Similarly, some paintings are highly elaborated, whereas others contain only one or two figures. Most panels have also been created by a non-synchronic artistic dialogue, where new figures were added to pre-existing compositions, which stands as evidence that oscillating social practices permeated the use of this imagery. This kind of instability also saturates the paintings' medium, as their red ochre pigment not only highlights the paintings' contrast in a way fundamentally different from rock carvings (adding something to a cliff as compared to creating by removal), but also makes the panels represent an entity of both blood and stone, impossible to frame within any singular and binary category.

In sum, these paintings show us an imagery that refuses univocal descriptions of 'typical' locations or practices, that comprises depictions of the elk, the animal which cannot be conceptually tamed, and, perhaps most importantly, is carried out in a medium that consists of a mixture of body fluids and geological matter and that thus physically transgresses dichotomies. Keeping this in mind, the concept of art may comprise a versatile analytical device for grasping the paintings. The very term artwork (art-as-work, art-at-work) entertains exactly that hybridity between product and process, reception and creation, object and subject, living stationary stone and changing bodies, that comprises the characteristics of the paintings perceptible when viewing them archaeologically. In its most vague and intuitive outline, the concept of art refers to tangible expressions that mediate meaning that is presented, expressed, rather than denoted. Accordingly, a revitalized concept of art can liberate us from the intellectual horizon within which mimetic analyses of imagery operate. Claiming these paintings as art is an important step towards bringing forward an awareness that these images are more than instantiations of a temporally and geographically cohesive cosmological scheme, that they are more than shadowy simulacra of a constrained realm of the social, that they are more than images *of something else*. Indeed, the thought experiment of approaching rock-art panels *as if* they were art (that is, 'thinking through art', as suggested by Holdridge & Macleod 2006) makes it possible to recognize them as socially

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

multimodal and categorically ambiguous (Gheorghiu 2012, 179; Hansen 2008; Wickstead 2008). Experiencing this art provides us with powerful evidence that there are forms of being that are not reality or representation, not only mind or only matter, and that do not have a meaning that is totally analogous with the motif (Bolt 2004, 29; Elkins 1988). To borrow the words of Didi-Huberman (1989, 161), art is 'not aware of contradiction'. Art makes us aware of what frightens and fascinates the most. It underlines that all things are in a muddle, that everything is entangled and transformable, regardless of our efforts to see the world as divided into classifiable entities.

Unpacking archaeological scepticism about art

Asserting that art is a promising analytical entry into the semiotic multimodality of visual culture is not especially radical. Rather, it is in broad correspondence with the growing body of post-Gellian scholarship centred on developing theoretical means for studying the intuitive and existential dimensions of aesthetic experience (Coote & Shelton 1992; Corbey *et al.* 2004; DeMarrais & Robb 2013; Gosden 2002; Layton 1991; 2003; Morphy 2007; Morphy & Perkins 2005; Renfrew 2003). Despite the richness of these contributions, the discipline of archaeology is nevertheless still permeated by a persistent resistance against art and aesthetics. This paper, therefore, requires some defence of the concept against the most commonly posed criticisms. This scepticism, which goes back to controversies around Susan Vogel's exhibition 'Art/Artifact' at the Center for African Art in New York in 1988, and the Manchester key debate in anthropology (see Sansi 2014 for overview), is varied and complex. Synoptically, however, on one hand, it has been charged that the art concept is too vague to facilitate analysis of scientific standard, and on the other hand, art is said to be a Western construct hard to reconcile with indigenous discourses of pictorial practice (Bednarik 1994; Corbey *et al.* 2004, 358; Danto 1992; Dean 2006, 27f; Errington 1994; Scott 2006, 628; Tomaskova 1997; White 1992). As Heyd also points out (2003, 40), the critical voices in current debate mainly encompass the latter strand; it is constructionism, mostly as framed by Paul Kristeller (1951) and Larry Shiner (2003), that brings together the most frequently posed reservations.

Amongst these art sceptics, a commonly articulated anxiety is that an archaeologically applied art concept might elevate modern and Western aesthetics to a universal constant, something that in turn would engender the teleological idea of artistic capacity as a skill historically developed from a simple into a more complex form (Dean 2006, 27f; Scott 2006, 628). Unfortunately, this fear is justified indeed, and as shown in several deconstructionist studies of exhibition practices and art-historical textbooks, it is clear that the concept of art has powered the use of archaeology in projects directed towards fabricating historical validity for neo-liberal master narratives (Blocker 2001; Corbey *et al.* 2004, 358; Errington 1998; Overing 1996, 260; Whitehead 2009). In the constrained context of parietal art research, critical scholarship directs attention to the problematic aspects of imagining Franco-Cantabrian caves to be the 'genesis of fine art'. Within this perspective (perpetuated by the oddly tenacious discourse framing caves as 'salons' or 'galleries' and figurines as 'Venuses'), scholars have pursued the 'origin of creativity' and of formalized symbolism, implying that the supposed inception of a uniform Western catalogue of arts during the Upper Palaeolithic was interwoven with, and even inseparable from, the development of a general human neurological faculty necessary for creative expressions (see Halverson 1987, with comments; and criticism of neuroaesthetics in Conkey 2010; Davies 2012; Ingold 2000; Jones & Bonaventura 2011; Malafouris 2007; Soffer & Conkey 1997; Tomaskova 1997). Drawing such a straight line between Lascaux and the Louvre, to borrow Thomas Dowson's appealing way of putting it (2007, 50ff), is obviously not only deeply obstructive for achieving deeper contextual understanding of what took place in these caves; it also grounds an offensive ethnocentric bioaesthetics that frames contemporary aesthetic ideals by framing them as not just universally valid, but also originating from a 'modern Western mind'.

Although I respect and sympathize with scholars investigating how the art has shaped the mentalities of modernity, I nevertheless follow those who seek to retain the term. It would be highly unfortunate if archaeologists who oppose this misuse of the art concept gave it up passively, ceding it to social Darwinist narratives. In destabilizing the idea that traditional connoisseurship rests upon a universal aesthetics, it is preferable to explore the fact that art is a philosophically open concept, subject to many conditions and not reducible to a class of objects coincident with the ideals of bourgeois cultivation. Archaeologists also risk misleading public opinion if we repeatedly claim that art cannot be used for addressing non-Western artefacts. Stating that the concept of art denotes a cultural singularity might easily give the impression that the wealth of positive connotations adduced by the pre-theoretical and evaluative use of the word are elements exclusive to a modern and Western doxa, and to initiate such an erroneous patent

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

on such things as creativity, institutional critique, formal complexity and communication of complex meanings (cf. Abell's 2012, 13ff outline of the folk understanding of the 'art' concept) would obviously be as proportionately ethnocentric as assuming that modernist aesthetics possess global cogency. This is also why neologisms, even when solidly grounded theoretically, may be counter-productive when it comes to seriously confronting and criticizing the West's historical prerogative of making aesthetic judgements. It gives a strange impression when anthropologists and archaeologists decide which cultures cannot be seen to have artworks, but rather 'performances eliciting aesthetic response' or 'technologies of enchantment', which is why these terms are better used complementarily to an acknowledgement that the concept of art is more complex and widely applicable than simply a Western construct.

Furthermore, even as anthropological observations have shown how works produced and displayed in small-scale societies are impossible to merge with aesthetics in the traditional sense, artists working in contemporary aesthetic venues have demonstrated that art can be art even when it is not made simply for disinterested viewing. As anthropologist Roger Sansi has recently discussed in detail, artists do typically take a deliberate interest in making works that transgress established notions of what art is supposed to be about, and this constant exceeding of the art concept's original post-Renaissance connotations and the accompanying expectations of the art world suggests that the art concept makes a much more flexible intellectual tool than both constructivists and bioaestheticians assume (Heyd 2012, 257; Ingold 1996; Sansi 2014, 20ff). It is worth drawing attention to the peculiar fashion in which the art concept is dismissed as appropriate for indigenous works for reasons that are sometimes strikingly comparable to those granting 'artworkness' to pieces produced by Westerners. For example, anthropologists and archaeologists routinely dismiss the art concept as applicable to indigenous societies on the basis that their crafted objects are displayed in a 'religious context', just as if Western art, with its monumental museums and white cubes, is stripped of sacral connotations (O'Dorothy 1976, 15; see also Brennan 2007). Similarly, objects may be considered not to be art if they were perceived as a fetish or an incarnation of an ancestor; but if ideas of distributed personhood were grounds for denying a work the status of art, most works at grand museums would need to be reconsidered. Moreover, when anthropologists dismiss the existence of art in the societies they study because their informants treat mundane objects without any particular design or decoration as animated and aesthetically thick, it raises the question of whether found objects or ready-mades really are something typically modern and Western. As Gell (1996) points out, Hirst's formaldehyde-soaked shark addresses similar lines of inquiries as the Zande hunting net he discusses. Both objects evoke questions regarding the border between human, animal, thing and the unsayable which, as conceptual art typically does, challenges the tool/artefact divide. It is reasonable to construe Zande hunting nets as found objects because of their 'evocation of complex intentionalities in the Zande community' (Gell 1996, 29f). A society that addresses art as activities entangled in everyday doings perhaps resembles the Western art scene of today much more than we might think. As a final example, performance art appears in a somewhat less 'original' and 'typically Western' light when we recall how many works in recent rock-art research see not the images themselves, but the process of making images, as the main purpose of rock art. Aspects such as communal decisions about how to incorporate new figures into existing compositions, and how to understand the ambiguous sensorial experiences from such things as the sound of cutting into the rock surface, can be as significant as the actual petroglyphs created (cf. Fowles & Arterberry 2013, 70f; Ling & Cornell 2010, 74; Ouzman 2001; Sjöstrand 2010, 257). Why is making rock carvings a practice entirely different from Pollock's action painting, where the act was of utmost importance, even if the resulting painting was also of interest for the public, and for us 40 years later? Cannot both of these events be categorized as examples of art? Is 'culturally specific' really equivalent to 'historically unique', or is this a way of thinking that actually fortifies (and exemplifies) Western academics' perennial prerogative to judge what should be art and non-art, respectively?

There are, of course, many points made by constructivist critics not discussed here. One could address the acceptance of linguistic reality immanent in the concept's dependent theses (are people who lack a word translatable to 'art' necessarily without the conception of art or a capacity to discuss the word 'art'?), or one might deconstruct the commonly argued claim that a culture's capacity to make a picture does not prove it capable of making art, particularly conceptual art (see Davies 2012; Dutton 2006; or Lopes 2014, for discussion). In any case, I hope that the reader remains open to the argument that 'art' is not merely a Western construct, and that we should distinguish between one traditional Western conception of art and the potential development and use of the instrumental and analytically versatile concepts of art. This, however, raises questions of definition.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Too vague to be defined?

The remarks just posed do not aim to stress some essential indifference between art-worlds across time and space, nor is it my intention to advocate some general terminological corrective within the cultural heritage sector. Rather, I want to contour the way a hard constructivism might result in a further powering of just that dichotomization between modernity and indigenousness that caused the term to be treated with scepticism in the first place. If this is so, and the constructivist view of art is insufficient for describing other attitudes than market-driven aestheticism, one further criticism remains. Favouring the art concept's pre-theoretical intention leads to such a fungible idea of art that the term's range becomes expanded to the border of relativism (Abell 2012, 673). This is because art-sceptics could rightly claim that it is exactly *because* art is a concept denoting something universally human, one of many possible words for how an object or event mediates meaning beyond the scope of representation and thus fit for describing such an ungraspable range of performatives and objects, that it is useful only for the contextually insensitive and culturally biased judgments of taste. If left undefined, the word 'art' thus becomes nothing but a linguistic gesture for announcing the interpreter's view that something has provoked a fungible sensation of sublimity. Thus, construing art as 'too vague to be defined' leads to contradictions in constructivist approaches. Such critics charge that art can potentially be anything, and simultaneously claim it to be a concept of restricted use.

This is a sophisticated criticism indeed. In fact, it is the archaeological version of the so-called anti-essentialism, the position holding the art concept to be thoroughly non-definable. This thesis is generally attributed to the philosopher Morris Weitz, whose seminal paper (1956) became so influential that it is standard procedure to describe it as a starting point for modern analytical aesthetics. Weitz's analysis revolves around one indisputably accurate observation: why art cannot be defined, and, by extension, nor can it be archaeologically utilized with the necessary stringency, has to do with the impossibility of stating any commonality between works broadly recognized as art that is non-trivial enough to carry the burden of supporting a definition. In a typical Wittgensteinian approach of 'looking and seeing', Weitz demonstrates that within the class of artworks there are pieces carried out in every scale, medium and style thinkable. We have works untouched by the person declared to be the artist, and not even artefactuality seems to be a tie that binds. Zen gardens, for example, tend to have natural boulders as key items, and we could easily imagine a beautifully shaped piece of driftwood eliciting the same sensation as an abstract sculpture. From Weitz's very empirical observation, it seems delusional to try to define art by identifying some physically recognizable element. This casts significant doubt on the prospect of referring to some 'aesthetic intuition' to support claims of our ability to identify an artwork in the archaeological record. Ironically, Weitz leaves us with an art concept that uses ostensive definitions to emphasize how many and variable artefacts it could cover, but the cost of this breadth is giving up the idea of that 'artworkness' as something empirically recognizable, which of course makes using the concept archaeologically a hazardous venture.

Weitz is surely one of the most important art theorists of the twentieth century, yet he did not prove an absolute non-essentialism for the concept of art (Davies 1991, 20ff; Lopes 2014, 35ff). Well aware that the remarks against Weitz's paper are not possible to comprehend as a uniform strand, I concentrate here on the remarks made in alignment with Maurice Mandelbaum (1965, 219, 226), who was one of the first to point out that Weitz's proposal is only valid in relation to the formalist position that he was criticizing. In other words, the thesis of art's non-definability can only be logically authorized if one assumes artworkness to be a materially nested property that inheres in certain objects and allows them to be correctly described as members of the class 'artworks'. Weitz's argument for the art concept's proper elusiveness would be less secure if he had focused on the way artworks typically operate, rather than only accounting for what he could observe by viewing them as physical things (Davies 1991, 21; Khatchadourian 1958, 89). If one 'looks and sees' how objects are functioning in contexts in which they are regarded *as art*, one might perhaps obtain not a solid definition, but at least some recognizable patterns of commonalities.

This turn to pragmatism, that art needs to be grasped as a function of objects, gave rise to many lines of thought, of which the intentionalist and institutionalist strands are the most widely known and discussed (Davies 1991, 27ff; Lopes 2008, 38). Without going into the controversies over hard cases that have caused the gulf between these two perspectives, their shared and axiomatic point that made these discussions possible from the outset is enough for me to build on. As I proceed to the task of framing an archaeologically applicable suggestion of what the art concept can be said to denote, the idea of art as function comprises the point of departure. In the next section, I will examine what *it takes* for an object to fill the function of art. For the sake of clarity, we begin

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

with the question of function (what allows anything to function as something). We then turn to how the problem can also be outlined with respect to its parts. What I will ask is by virtue of what anything could possibly function as something; how the art function differs from other modes in which a thing might operate; and lastly, if this art function is traceable in the archaeological record.

The function of art as exposed multimodality

Regarding the first question, 'by virtue of what anything could possibly function as something', or, 'what it takes, at the most basic level, to fulfil a function', semiotics provides an unexpectedly lucid answer. Most thinkers working in this tradition broadly agree that function is really nothing other than situated meaning, e.g. the outcome of a relation comprised of at least three different components. For anything to function as something, it simply takes that this something stands in relation to something else as well as to something third. In the context of art, it seems sound to state that at least one of these somethings has to be a perceiving human mind (whether art should be taken as multispecies is a question I pass over here, but see this topic elaborated in Grosz's 2008 readings on art and sexual selection), but it is important to mark that human perception is not a required condition for functionality as such. It takes no intelligent mind for water to function as an erosional force for the cliff; the cliff's and the water's shared relation to that third 'something else' that is the constrictions of a riverbed is perfectly capable of completing the triangle.

In employing a word in a specific sense, it is generally observed that it is the temporal-spatially constrained function of a thing, not its essence, that we generally need to ascertain. For example one can, with full syntagmatic accuracy, refer to the same chemical substance, petrol, as 'a hazard' or 'fuel', depending on whether one finds oneself related to this matter as well as to a fire or to a normally running car engine. Moreover, the effortlessness, and communicative inevitability that mark our constantly on-going substitution of one conceptual way of framing of an object with another is an indication that we, as semantically capable creatures, talk about the world in terms of functions, not kinds (see Bergson 1998, 160, 306, for elaborations of this point). This statement, that we think in terms of potentialities, invitations to actions, rather than 'things' or comprehensive objects, is not in itself radical, and has been put forth within various philosophical strands, presumably due to the ease with which everyday experience demonstrates it. At my desk while writing this, I am surrounded by objects which, in Heideggerian terms, truly stand in reserve for multiple, and equally suitable, means to an end. For instance, in case of someone attacking me, I could employ the object that I currently frame as coffee cup so that its function would correspond to the concept of 'weapon'. When I regard it as a coffee cup, I thus do so by taking advantage of its capacity to contain hot fluids rather than, for example, its potential hardness in relation to a human head. What I would like to emphasize as central in all of this is that this commitment, this relation that grants the functionality I grasp with the term coffee cup, is made durable by way of my particular choice of relation towards it. Taking advantage of one of the vessel's many affordances by regarding it as a coffee cup equals a commitment, an obligation to an array of practices which this function demands. If I want this object to function as a coffee cup, I must not just wash it up after every usage, but also avoid placing it on sloping planes, be attentive to my arm movements when sitting at my desk, protect it from substances that might soil it, and much more. These sorts of obligations seem so ordinary that we seldom give them a thought; nonetheless, when we examine them, we see that a decision to relate this item to ourselves so that its becomes what Gibson (1979) would call 'drink coffee from-able' involves choreographing actions, movements and structures for thought. In a larger scale, these sorts of responses, the obedience to the demands that are being put forward by the thing as a result of a selection of its conceptual being, have a surprising capacity to orchestrate formalized action. Imagine, for example, just how much is required from a community that has chosen to relate a source of H_2O to their bodies in such a way that the function of this matter can be conceptualized as 'drinking water'. In such case, the community is obligated to keep the reservoir clean and protected, duties that involve several forms of organizational, economic and technological strategies that run across multiple fields of the social. Similarly, consider how much is demanded if we choose that a thing should remain in a version that makes it accurately denotable with the concept of 'secret'. To decide that something should remain hidden, forgotten or supressed demand a meshwork of exhausting efforts. For things to stay what we want them to be, to hold on to a version of them, we have to struggle against the very nature of vitality, the essential transformability of which is that of the world's constant escape from stability.

I will talk more about the concept of 'maintenance' in the last two sections of this essay. Here I would like to view the discussion from another angle

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

by turning our attention to the statement that underlies the proposal of our ability, and need, to choose. As it is impossible to talk about agreed courses of action without presuming options, the agent's choosing the being of a thing inevitably implies that the thing itself possesses an essential multi-potentiality which it is possible to inscribe in various equally real, versions (see discussion in Mol 1999). Accordingly, things do not function differently only because people read or interpret them differently, but also because many choices of usage correspond to different facets in the object's essential constitution. As Karen Barad (2007, 379–80) puts it, intelligibility of an object's being is an 'ontological performance'. Things are able to appear in certain versions because one aspect of their multidimensional factuality has been embraced and deliberately (but not always consciously) wrestled with in order to be kept stable.

This proposal, that when we decide what function we wish to maintain we are choosing from an array of possible beings, is crucial for my suggestion of how to approach art archaeologically. Why? *Because the ability to make unconventional choices by seizing an object in such a way that it presents itself in a usually overlooked version constitutes a good, if so basic, description of creativity*. Children are creative when they build sheds of stuff found in the woods or make dolls out of potato skins. Marcel Duchamp was creative when he decided to relate a bottle rack to the white cube and therefore recognized a previously unseen—but not less real—invitation to provoke thoughts about the lack of a shared property for artworks. Creativity, no matter who instantiates it, can be thought of as acts that, regardless of purpose, take advantage of an unconventional possibility that a thing or an act affords.

If we admit that creativity, in the way just described, is not a Western innovation, we can proceed towards an understanding of art that is suitable for archaeological analyses. If the act of creativity can be said to expose the variety of possible choices that this thing or performance invites us to make, and if it is also taken as given that art is by necessity an outcome of creativity (although it can be questioned whether all outcomes of creative acts are art; I will come to that later), it might be stressed that art, used as a descriptive concept with wide cultural validity, specifies situations *in which object and events disclose their substratum of essential categorical multimodality.* The function of art—the thing's relation to the world of other human and non-human entities that is set into operation when it becomes the subject of creativity—is, in this respect, all about revealing. For an object to function as art, it must illuminate its pure potentiality, revealing its conceptual substitutions and making the choices transparent by allowing the choices not taken to shine through in their absence.

Following this description, the concept of art would point towards the mode in which a phenomenon appears, when its various possibilities, latent invitations and hidden affordances become amplified, revealed and communicated. For example, when a series of movements are referred to as 'dance', the term underlines how the performance has illuminated just how wide a range of postures a body is capable of. When practising or looking at dance, we become aware of the latent possibilities that exist in acts such as walking, sitting, running and rolling. Dance reveals that our limbs can be related to each other in more ways than we usually recall. The 'artworkness' of a performed dance lies in the exposure of just how much more we have to choose from. Dance, as Merleau-Ponty (1993, 129) puts it, is 'illustrating and amplifying the metaphysical structure of our flesh'. Similarly, musical performances, at least in a general sense, provide forms of exposing the endless ways in which an instrument can be applied (see Amgamben 1999, 62, for a similar line of thought). Jimmy Hendrix reveals new possibilities with a guitar. His music introduces unnoticed potentials immanent in the six strings and the four gaps between his fingers. Music shows us what we have to choose from when it comes to combinations of tones and rhythms. It reveals hidden affordances of instruments and vocal cords. We could similarly examine pictures, asking if a picture functions at least approximately as art when we are attentive to the way it presents the outcome of an endless series of choices, when we see in it the constant and deliberate reframing and reconsideration of how lines should be related to each other, when we are transfixed with wonder at how it could possibly exist as it does and not in any of the innumerable other versions that paint, surface and movement by hand and mind are capable of creating.

Red ochre paintings such as the panel at Flatruet (Fig. 3) correspond to the art concept because of the way *they illuminate a creative response to the potentialities embedded in their very physical composition.* This painting fulfils the function of art when it is involved in a relation in which a living mind attends to the fleeting and non-dyadic factuality that comprises the painting's very matter. Standing in front of this painting, one realizes that one is facing a fossil, an image made of entities once alive that have now been turned into stone. One finds oneself entangled in an astonishment, a bewildered perplexedness, at the utterly concrete fact that this painting demonstrates the possibility of being a being-in-between; this experience is to take part in that relation that give birth to Flatruet's

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Figure 3. *(Colour online) The rock painting at Flatruet, Storsjö Parish, Härjedalen County. (Photograph: Ylva Sjöstrand.)*

functionality as art. Deleuze and Guattari (1994, 204) put it well when they propose that 'art indeed struggles with chaos, but it does so in order to bring forth a vision that illuminates it for an instant'. The function of art is to give visibility, or rather sensibility, to chaos, the multiple and non-contradictory categorical affiliations that constitute the essence of matter itself. This, by all means, is something that the rock paintings are capable of.

Strategies of maintenance

The function of art is all about exposure. Something is art, or rather something emerges in the version of an artwork, when an array of its latent possible beings are laid bare. This is my key point so far, but it needs further development to provide an archaeologically applicable concept of art. The reason is that the term art is still not constrained enough to resist the criticism rooted in Weitz's charge that the sensation of encountering an exposure of an object's essential multiplicity is far from exclusive to artistic experience. As pointed out by ecological psychologists, we cannot be in the world without embracing fluidity. Only occasionally do we stand in such fixed postures that we are able to perceive bricks in a wall as fixed rectangles: as soon as we move our heads, these shapes will transgress the framework of Euclidian geometry and become forms in motion, shapes that fall into many classes (cf. Greeno 1994, 348). On a less abstract level, our ability to process things as existing in several, simultaneously present, versions is also a necessity for the conceptual choice described earlier. Mundane experience is grounded in moments in which we realize that petrol is fuel *and* hazard, that this matter is not one coherent entity, but comprised of several functional facets. My argument that art functions as relations in which hybridity and flux are grasped could only separate art and non-art under the condition that our intuitive frames for perception were normally monistic, something that is obviously incorrect.

In order to establish a balance between, on one hand, some restriction on the possible situations we might designate as art and, on the other, an acceptance that art is not an essential property, but an act of exposure applicable to any form of action or object, I would like to elaborate on the notion of maintenance mentioned above. I argue that it is the employment of strategies to amplify, communicate, preserve and adjust the perception of something as coherent yet ambiguous that separates art from the vague experiences of the ontological abyss that constitutes the world. Such strategies lie behind cultural differences regarding conceptions of what art is about. I suggest, therefore, that we may understand an art-world different from our own by analysing the strategies for maintaining a thing's status as a work of art. We should analyse what we must do for making epiphany persistent, what I, as I ponder the complexity of my coffee cup, must do in order to communicate how this item allows such a variety of conceptual enframing, to show how it is so ontologically multifaceted that it can be regarded as equally suitable to several classes of that which I consider the world to be dividable.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Here and now, with it before my eyes, realizing that it is made of clay mixed with water, of substances predating the creation of earth itself, pondering the texture of social symbolism entangled in its printed university logo, it gives me an experience comparable to what I feel when standing in front of the most priceless painting or respected installation. I am nevertheless aware that my insights will not stay (now, when editing this, they are long gone). The relation to the cup that allowed it to function as art is something that I need to hold on to, and I need a strategy for doing so. After choosing to perceive my cup in the version as an artwork, after choosing to embrace the fact that this object is frameable as real in many simultaneous versions, I must do many things. What would the coffee cup demand in order not just to reveal itself as existent in multiple versions, but also make this awareness amplified, communicated and maintained? Would it want me to drink from it? Probably not, or more correctly, probably not without accompanying statements communicated in text, speech, attention from media, and so forth. In order to let a thing function as art, the awareness of its intersectionality has to be amplified and methodologically managed in order to be sustained. It is the framework for this struggle for duration, the statements, practices and scenery for display, the institutional conventions, that constitute an art-world, situated in a particular culture. All cultures have art, all cultures have an interest in creating and appropriating experiences that strike one with wonder regarding the multimodality of that which is. But different societies employ different strategies for amplifying, communicating and maintaining a given element's capacity of mediating this insight on a regular basis.

To understand an object as art therefore requires an analysis of what was required from the community in order for its complexity to endure. For example, we could begin to understand the role of fine art in Western culture by observing that the most priceless paintings are constantly reproduced in affordable items; the more expensive the artwork, the cheaper are the replicas. Thus, one of our strategies for maintaining pictures as works of fine art involves making them available for consumption via a structure of merchandising. This can be seen as a strategy highly symptomatic of our particular art-world. Similarly, iconic conceptual artworks seem to require iconoclastic acts on an almost regular basis. More than one art student has urinated in Duchamp's fountain, and (as one columnist in *The Guardian* described it) the famous kissing of Twombly's plain canvas was rather unoriginal. It is not far-fetched to suggest that works which function as art by way of unfolding the many dimensions of the white cube itself 'require' or 'want' these kinds of actions. If Duchamp's fountain were not urinated in once in a while, it would most likely become a fetish to keep us in touch with some ideal avant-garde. For this object to reveal the facets of itself as a white cube feature, for it to generate institutional criticism, its original tool-being must be kept in living memory.

These sketchy examples are not intended as summative propositions about the contemporary art scene. They simply illustrate what kind of path opens up when we embrace the idea that an art-world, situated in a particular culture, can be mapped out by paying attention to the strategies used for maintaining an object's ability to expose its own polychromic constitution. When facing an image from the past, it is unexpectedly useful to ask what was needed from the community in order to allow it continuously to expose its own openness. By observing it with the deliberate intention of seeing traces of such strategies, such formalized practices for maintaining the picture's ability to operate as semiotically multimodal, we may get a glimpse of the culturally specific role of art.

As a last step in this argument, I will elaborate on this point with an empirically grounded demonstration, returning to the rock paintings in northern Sweden and highlighting evidence for a strategic maintenance of these images' ability to expose their ontological multiplicity. I will emphasize the practice of non-synchronic artistic dialogue, the constant alteration of the palimpsest that allowed them to change without ceasing to be what they were before. I will also discuss how the paintings were kept exclusive, kept from losing their capacity of generating astonishment, by being placed so that their visibility was tied to seasonality.

Tracing art in culture

Red ochre pictures function as art when their factual categorical indeterminacy becomes exposed. In these situations, to face red ochre on an anthropomorphic cliff such as the panel of Finnforsberget (Fig. 4) means standing in front of a work that reveals itself as a material articulation of physical in-betweenness. This painting physically refuses the founding presumptions of dualism. The painting stands out as a nexus of potentialities and exposes them, revealing that soil affords the possibility of being employed for making elk, exemplifying how blood can escape the individual body and demonstrating that a face can be comprised of stone. When it does so, art is happening, is put to work, gets worked out.

It is particularly important from an archaeological perspective that the art function needs to be

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Figure 4. *(Colour online) The anthropomorphic cliff featuring the paintings of Finnforsberget, Lycksele Parish, Lappland County. (Photograph: Anders Olofsson.)*

strategically maintained in order to persist. These strategies involved formalized practices, and hence generate traces that it is possible to discern archaeologically. The first feature of these paintings to be noted is how they have been generally placed in order to be protected from unconditioned visibility. Clearly, a picture seen all the time, able to be constantly and effortlessly viewed, tends to be less effective in terms of provoking a non-mundane feeling of astonishment. To preserve its aesthetic functionality, societies keep artworks alive by restricting and conditioning public access. In Western society, this restriction is very much effected by way of the idea of authenticity; we may have a poster of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* on our wall, but standing in front of what we have learned is the real thing makes us approach the image with the attentiveness that is a prerequisite for it to expand in our minds. In Neolithic northern Sweden, this preservation of wonder was done by a specific means, that is, regulating access by tying the picture's visibility to seasonal changes.

As mentioned briefly in my introduction, the traditional opinion that these rock paintings shared a strict coastal setting has been proven false. What we can say, however, is that the rock paintings, without exception, are localized in spots that are untouchable by falling snow. Despite their diverse settings, they all have a vertical placement on cliffs, meaning that their colour and general appearance become significantly amplified during winter. Recalling the lack of panels which mix media, it is also interesting to note that carvings and paintings are obviously designed to deal differently with visibility. Whilst snow literally erases carvings by filling the void that constitutes these pictures, paintings are amplified, standing out as one of the few examples of colour in an otherwise white landscape.

Placing paintings at spots that makes them visible only sometimes, that makes experiencing them conditioned by forces beyond human control, should be understood as a culturally specific strategy for maintaining their capacity to strike one with wonder, even if one has encountered them many times before. Encountering red ochre paintings during the winter is to experience an enclave of colour, of summerness, that demands winterness in order to show itself rightly. The paintings' placement makes them hybridize with seasonality; this aspect of their art function is thus entwined with the culturally particular strategy by which these images were managed in order to remain captivating and special. To make an image that has seasonal changes facilitating its visibility, to make an image in blood on such a place that it survives winter after winter, and thus physically attesting that the cold and snow cannot defeat it, is truly a way of making this image expose life and death as congruent and entangled and, simultaneously, to restrict the image to give experiences in this astonishing way only occasionally.

Another aspect of the paintings that can be seen as indexical of the way their functionality as art gained duration can be seen in the manner in which

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

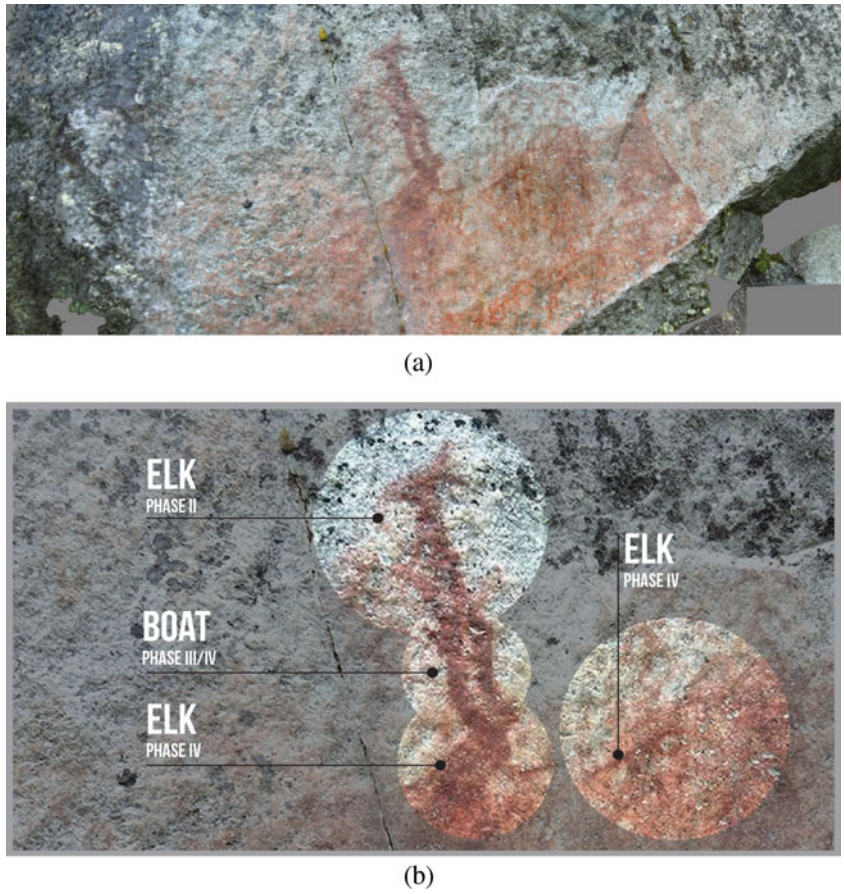


Figure 5a & b. *(Colour online) The rock painting of Långliden, sometimes also referred to as 'Höglin's stone' with the pictorial stratigraphy explained. (Photograph: Ylva Sjöstrand.)*

the panels were subject to transformative pictorial additions. As mentioned above, the images on painted panels can be chronologically placed on the basis of their stylistic appearance, since their characteristics follow the four phases outlined for carvings (Forsberg 1993); ^{14}C datings from four excavated surfaces in direct proximity to painted panels place motifs in the same temporal horizon as does their visual style (see Hansson 2006; Lindgren 2004; 2005a,b; Olofsson 2012; see also Sjöstrand 2015 and Goldhahn in prep., for an overview of these results). This validation of stylistic dating allows one to analyse which phases of imagery coexist on a given panel. In turn, dissecting the palimpsest's layers illuminates to what extent the image has been created by successive alterations of the composition, and, at a larger scale, how the attitude towards repainting changed over time.

The site of Långliden in Medelpad County offers one example of how the practices of repainting were pursued. The panel can be seen in Figure 5a, and, unpacking the figural stratigraphy (Fig. 5b), it becomes clear that the panel originally comprised one typically Early Neolithic elk, which was later repainted so that the entire composition became a therianthropic creature. The Långliden panel epitomizes a general pattern in the repainting practice: painting practices during the latest phase (the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age) were, more than during previous periods, focused upon returning to previously painted localities to add new figures to pre-existing compositions. This pattern is visible in the way that characteristically late-style elk and humans usually occur together with earlier-style figures; they do so on a more regular basis than in any of the preceding phases, implying that the painters during the last phase preferred to add figures to older panels rather than painting at new cliffs. This practice of repainting during phase IV can be taken as a period-specific strategy of maintaining the red ochre pictures' operability as art. The trace we see is the remains of formalized efforts undertaken in order to prevent the older rock paintings from turning into static monuments merely reflecting history. What is being

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Figure 6. *Collage illustrating the simultaneously archaic and schematic style of the phase IV elk motif, made during the period bridging the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, by a comparison with a typical polished Mesolithic elk figure. Left: an elk figure of Mesolithic Nordland type from Landverk, Jämtland County. Right: an elk from Norrfors, Västerbotten County, carried out in phase IV style and dated to 4200* BP. *Note that the figures are not to scale.*

indexed by the repainting practices of phase IV is formalized efforts to make the paintings expose themselves as both archaic and socially up to date. The almost iconoclastic engagement during the last phase attempts to draw attention to, and render durable, the fact that the palimpsests are both ancient and contemporary with the living mind that perceives them, something that the paintings have always expressed but which, for complex reasons, it now becomes important to emphasize. During the final phase of active contributions to the palimpsests, the paintings were surrounded by a practice of maintenance intended to make the paintings reveal indeterminacy regarding their antiquity. During this period, it seems to have been important to make the rock paintings disclose themselves as both old and new, both modernized and eternal. Indeed, making images that express both continuity and renewal saturates the very stylistic format that is diagnostic for this phase, the last within the elk-image tradition. The elk motif's appearance during this period is schematized, naïve, perhaps even minimalistic, but concurrently, it has stylistic elements that refer to earlier depictions of this animal (Fig. 6). At a larger scale, these facts can be related to recent environmental research, which has shown that the transitional centuries between the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age were characterized by an increasingly wetter and colder climate with a clear impact on the elk population (Larsson *et al.* 2012; Ojala *et al.* 2008; Tallavaara & Seppä 2012). This is generally held to have contributed significantly to the slow, complex economic modification of the hunter-gatherer communities, which are archaeologically visible as traces of increased mobility among an inland population shifting from elk hunting using a stationary pitfall system to seasonal movements conditioned by reindeer, accompanied by an intensified sedentism in coastal regions (Damm 2010; Forsberg 1993; 2000; Hallgren 2010). These differences between economic modes of production become more visible from the Late Neolithic onwards. Although this process is simplified here, it is reasonable to argue that the role of the paintings, the role of art during this particular period, was linked to the establishment of places for bridging communities with increasingly different ways of life. It is also in this context, rather than that of sympathetic hunting magic, that the practice of shooting arrows towards the painted panels should be understood, as these activities took place when the elk had become a rare sight in the forest landscape.

A comprehensive analysis of the role of art in the hunter-gatherer societies of Neolithic northern Sweden must await other contributions. My aim here has simply been to explore the analytical bedrock for such a venture, by asking how an art concept could be outlined and demonstrated as practically applicable to this body of imagery. To sum up my argument; I began by pointing out several problematic consequences of approaching art as a concept exclusively derived from Western doxa. Such an approach not only gives Western culture a delusional monopoly on human creativity, but also leads to the view that art is a concept with an effortlessly graspable and unchanging intension; this renders archaeological thought incompatible with both analytical aesthetics and artistic practice. I then argued that art is a function that is set in operation when an object is related to the world in such a way that its physical multimodality, its nested potentialities, become unfolded or exposed. Art is created and experienced when we choose to embrace alternative affordances of an object, thus revealing the possibility of its many parallel forms for being. As with all functions, a thing's status as art has to be maintained, and it is the strategies for this maintenance that create art-worlds situated in a specific culture. Since maintenance is a practice and practices

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

always leave traces, we can study an art-world separate from our own by mapping what the community did in order to make an item function as art. Through this perspective, art becomes more than a Western construction. Grasped as a function, a relation that is chosen and maintained, art becomes a force in social life, a force that plays a role in need of thorough archaeological scrutiny for every particular context.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Swedish research council and carried out at the Columbia Center for Archaeology as a part of a post-doctoral project. I want to express my great gratitude to the faculty and students at CCA who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted me in the articulation of the thoughts here presented. I also want to thank the editorial board and the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments, which helped me develop my argument on several crucial points.

Ylva Sjöstrand
Department of Archaeology and Ancient History
Uppsala University
Box 626
751 26 Uppsala
Sweden
Email: ylva.sjostrand@arkeologi.uu.se

References

Abell, C., 2012. Art—what it is and why it matters. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 85(3), 671–91.

Amgamben, G., 1999. *The Man Without a Content. Meridians crossing aesthetics*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.

Andreassen, R.L., 2008. Rock art in northern Fennoscandia and Eurasia—painted and engraved, geometric, abstract and anthropomorphic figures. *Adoranten* 2008, 85–97.

Aronsson, K.Å & E. Ljungdal, 2000. Nyupptäckta hällmålningar i Jämtland och Härjedalen. Bevarande, dokumentation och tillgänglighet [Newly discovered rock paintings in Jämtland and Härjedalen. Preservation, documentation and public acess]. *Fornvännen* 95(1), 89–90.

Bakka, E., 1976. Bergkunst i Barskogbeltet i Sovjetsamveldet [Rock Art in the boreal forest belt across the USSR]. *Viking* 1976, 95–124.

Barad, K., 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. London: Durham University Press.

Bednarik, R., 1994. Art origins. *Anthropos* 89, 169–85.

Bergson, H., 1998 [1911]. *Creative Evolution* (trans A. Mitchell). New York (NY): Dover.

Bjerck, H.B., 2012. In the outer fringe of the human world: phenomenological perspectives on anthropomorphic cave paintings in Norway, in *Caves in Context: The cultural significance of caves and rockshelters in Europe*, eds. K.A. Bergsvik & R. Skeates. Oxford: Oxbow, 48–64.

Blocker, G., 2001. Non western aesthetics as a colonial invention. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 35(4), 3–13.

Bolt, B., 2004. *Art Beyond Representation*. London/New York: I.B Tauris.

Brennan, M., 2007. Illuminating the void, displaying the vision. On the Romanesque church, the modern museum, and Pierre Soulages' abstract art. *Anthropology and Aesthetics* 52(1), 116–27.

Cocq, C., J. Heinerud, T.B. Larsson & B. Lindgren-Hyvönen, 2014. *Rock Art in Sápmi: Images and stories*. Umeå: Västerbottens Museum.

Conkey, M., 1987. New approaches in the search for meaning? A review of research in 'Paleolithic art'. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 14(4), 413–30.

Conkey, M., 2010. Images without words. The construction of prehistoric imaginaries for definitions of 'us'. *Journal of Visual Culture* 9(3), 272–83.

Coote, J., & A. Shelton (eds.), 1992. *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Corbey, R., R. Layton & J. Tanner, 2004. Archaeology and art, in *Companion to Archaeology*, ed. J. Bintliff. Malden (MA): Blackwell, 357–79.

Cruz Berrocal, M., 2011. Analogical evidence and shamanism in archaeological interpretation. South African and European Palaeolithic rock art. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 44(1), 1–20.

Damm, C., 2010. Ethnicity and collective identities in the Fennoscandian Stone Age, in Uniting Sea II. Stone Age Societies in the Baltic Sea Region, eds. Å.M. Larsson & L. Papmehl-Dufay. (OPIA 51.) Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 11–30.

Danto, A., 1992. *Beyond the Brillo Box. The visual arts in post historical perspective*. New York (NY): Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Davies, S., 1991. *Definitions of Art*. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press.

Davies, S., 2012. *The Artful Species: Aesthetics, art, and evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dean, C., 2006. The trouble with (the term) art. *Art Journal* 65(2), 24–32.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F., 1994. *What Is Philosophy?* London/New York: Verso.

DeMarrais, E. & J. Robb, 2013. Art makes society—an introductory visual essay. *World Art* 3(1), 3–22.

Didi-Huberman, G., 1989. The art of not describing. Vermeer—the detail and the patch. *History of the Human Sciences* 1(2), 135–69.

Dowson, T., 2007. Debating shamanism in southern African rock art. Time to move on ... *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 62(185), 49–61.

Dutton, D., 2006. Naturalist definition of art. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64(3), 367–77.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Elkins, J., 1988. *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*. New York (NY): Cambridge University Press.

Errington, S., 1994. What became authentic primitive art? *Cultural Anthropology* 9(2), 201–26.

Errington, S., 1998. *The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress*. Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.

Fahlander, F., 2013. Articulating relations: a non-representational view of Scandinavian rock-art, in *Archaeology after Interpretation. Returning materials to archaeological theory*, eds. A. Jones & J. Pollard. Walnut Creek (CA): Left Coast Press, 305–25.

Forsberg, L., 1993. En kronologisk analys av ristningarna vid Nämforsen [A chronological analysis of the carvings at Nämforsen], in *Ekonomi och näringsformer i nordisk bronsålder* [Economy and production in northen Europe during the Bronze Age], eds. L. Forsberg & T.B. Larsson. Umeå: Umeå University, 195–246.

Forsberg, L., 2000. The social context of the rock art in middle Scandinavia during the Neolithic, in *Myanndash: Rock art in the ancient Arctic*, ed. K. Antero. Rovaniemi: Arctic Centre Foundation, 50–87.

Fowles, S. & J. Arterberry, 2013. Gesture and performance in Comanche rock art. *World Art* 3(1), 67–82.

Gell, A., 1996. Vogel's net: traps as artworks and artworks as traps. *Journal of Material Culture* 1(1), 15–38.

Gheorghiu, D., 2012. Metaphors and allegories as augmented reality. The use of art to evoke material and immaterial subjects, in *Encountering Imagery. Materialities, perceptions, relations*, eds. I.-M. Back Danielsson, F. Fahlander & Y. Sjöstrand. (Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 57.) Stockholm: Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, Stockholm University, 177–85.

Gibson, J.J., 1979. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston (MA): Houghton Mifflin.

Gjerde, J.M., 2010. Rock Art and Landscapes. Studies of Stone Age Rock Art From Northern Fennoscandia. Doctoral thesis, University of Tromsø.

Goldhahn, J., in prep. On the chronology and use of rock painting sites in northernmost Europe.

Gosden, C. 2002. Making sense: archaeology and aesthetics. *World Archaeology* 33(2), 163–7.

Greeno, J., 1994. Gibson's affordances. *Psychological Review* 101(2), 336–42.

Grosz, E., 2008. *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the framing of the earth*. New York (NY): Columbia University Press.

Hallgren, F., 2010. A short note about Stone Age farmers who did not adopt elk hunting, and elk hunters who did not adopt farming, in *Transference. Interdisciplinary communications 2008/2009*, ed. W. Østreng. Oslo: Centre for Advanced Study.

Hallström, G., 1960. *Monumental Art of Northern Sweden from the Stone Age. Nämforsen and other localities*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell.

Halverson, J., 1987. Art for art's sake in the palaeolithic. *Current Anthropology* 28(1), 63–89.

Hansen, C., 2008. Art and Archaeology: The Function of the Artist in Interpreting Material Culture. Unpublished PhD thesis, Waterford Institute of Technology.

Hansson, A., 2006. The rock art at Flatruet, an archaeological survey. *Adoranten* 1(1), 109–15.

Helskog, K., 2010. From the tyranny of the figures to the interrelationship between myths, rock art and their surfaces, in *Seeing and Knowing Rock Art with and without Ethnography*, eds. B. Smith, C. Chippindale & G. Blundell. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Heyd, T., 2003. Rock art aesthetics and cultural appropriation. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 61(1), 37–46.

Heyd, T., 2012. Rock art and art: why aesthetics should matter, in *Companion to Rock Art*, eds. J. McDonald & P. Veth. (Wiley-Blackwell Companions to Anthropology 13.) Somerset (NJ): John Wiley & Sons, 276–304.

Holdridge, L. & K. Mcleod, 2006. *Thinking Through Art: Reflections on art as research*. London/New York: Routledge.

Ingold, T., 1996. Aesthetics is a cross-cultural category, in *Key Debates in Anthropology*, ed. T. Ingold. London: Routledge, 201–23.

Ingold, T., 2000. 'People like us'. The concept of the anatomically modern human, in *The Perception of the Environment. Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill*, ed. T. Ingold. London: Routledge, 373–91.

Jones, A. & P. Bonaventura, 2011. Shaping the past: sculpture and archaeology, in *Sculpture and Archaeology*, eds. P. Bonaventura & A. Jones. Farnham: Ashgate, 1–18.

Khatchadourian, H., 1958. Common names and family resemblances. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 18(3), 341–58.

Kristeller, P.-O., 1951. The modern system of the arts: a study in the history of aesthetics. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12(4), 498–527.

Lahelma, A., 2008. *A Touch of Red. Archaeological and ethnographic approaches to interpreting Finnish rock paintings*. (Iskos 15.) Helsinki: Finnish Antiquarian Society.

Larsson, T.B., G. Rosqvist, G. Ericsson & J. Heinerud, 2012. Climate change, moose and humans in northern Sweden 4000 cal. yr BP. *Journal of Northern Studies* 6(1), 9–30.

Layton, R., 1991. *The Anthropology of Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Layton, R., 2003. Art and agency: a reassessment. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9(1), 447–64.

Lindgren, B., 2004. *Hällbilder i norr. Forskningsläget i Jämtlands,Västerbottens och Västernorrlands län* [Rock art in northern Sweden; an overview of the current research in Jämtland, Västerbotten and Västernorrland]. (Umark 36.) Umeå: Umeå Universitet.

Lindgren, B., 2005a. *Rapport över arkeologisk undersökning av Högberget III, Ramsele sn Ångermanland, 2003* [Report of archaeological investigation of Högberget III, Ramsele parish, Ångermanland 2003]. Umeå: Umeå University.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Lindgren, B., 2005b. *Rapport över arkeologisk undersökning av markyta framför hällmålningslokal 160, Ramsele sn, Ångermanland, 2001* [Report on archaeological investigation of surface in front of rock art locality 160, Ramsele parish, Ångermanland 2001]. (Umark 38.) Umeå: Umeå Universitet.

Ling, J. & P. Cornell, 2010. Rock art as a social format, in *Changing Pictures: Rock art traditions and visions in northen Europe*, eds. J. Goldhahn, I. Fuglestvedt & A. Jones. Oxford; Oxbow, 73–88.

Lødøen, T. & G. Mandt, 2010. *The Rock Art of Norway*. Oxford: Windgather Press.

Lopes, D., 2008. Nobody needs a theory of art. *Journal of Philosophy* 105(3), 109–27.

Lopes, D., 2014. *Beyond Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Malafouris, L., 2007. Before and beyond representation: towards an enactive conception of the Palaeolithic image, in *Image and Imagination: A global prehistory of figurative representation*, eds. C. Renfrew & I. Morley. Cambridge: McDonald Institute, 287–300.

Mandelbaum, M., 1965. Family resemblances and generalization concerning the arts. *American Philosophical Quarterly* 2(3), 219–28.

Merleau-Ponty, M., 1993. Eye and Mind, in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and painting*, eds. G. Johnson & M.B. Smith. Evanston (IL): Northwestern University Press, 121–51.

Mol, A.M., 1999. Ontological politics. A word and some questions. *Sociological Review* 47(1), 74–89.

Morphy, H., 2007. *Becoming Art: Exploring cross-cultural categories*. Oxford: Berg.

Morphy, H. & M. Perkins, 2005. The anthropology of art: a reflection of its history and contemporary practice, in *The Anthropology of Art: A reader*, eds. H. Morphy & M. Perkins. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 12–28.

O'Dorothy, B. 1976. *Inside the White Cube*. Santa Monica (CA): Lapis Press.

Ojala, A.E.K., T. Alenius, H. Seppä & T. Giesecke, 2008. Integrated varve and pollen-based temperature reconstruction from Finland: evidence for Holocene seasonal temperature patterns at high latitudes. *The Holocene* 18(4), 529–38.

Olofsson, A., 2012. Rapport över arkeologisk delundersökning av hällmålningslokal och kvartsitbrott Finnforsberget, Raä nr 118 och 123, Skellefteå socken och kommun, Västerbottens län [Report of archaeological survey of rock painting locality and quartz quarry Finnforsberget, Raä no 118 and 123, Skellefteå parish and municipality, Västerbotten county]. Skellefteå: Skellefteå Museum.

Ortner, S., 1973. On key symbols. *American Anthropologist* 75(5),1338–46.

Ouzman, S., 2001. Seeing is deceiving: rock art and the non-visual. *World Archaeology* 33(2), 237–56.

Overing, J., 1996. Aesthetics is a cross-cultural category: Against the motion, in *Key Debates in Anthropological Theory*, ed. T. Ingold. London: Routledge, 260–65, 276–93.

Ramqvist, P.H., 2002. Rock art and settlements. Issues of spatial order in the prehistoric rock art of Fennoscandia, in *European Landscapes of Rock-art*, eds. G. Nash & C. Chippindale. Routledge: London/New York, 144–57.

Renfrew, C., 2003. *Figuring It Out: What are we? Where do we come from?The parallel visions of artists and archaeologists*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Robb, J., 1998. The archaeology of symbols. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27(1), 329–46.

Rosengren, M., 2012. *Cave Art, Perception and Knowledge*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Sansi, R., 2014. *Art, Anthropology and the Gift*. London: Bloomsbury.

Sapwell, M., 2014. 'Think tanks' in prehistory: problem solving and subjectivity at Nämforsen, northern Sweden, in *Exploring Prehistoric Identity in Europe: Our construct or theirs?*, eds. V. Ginn, R. Enlander & R. Crozer. Oxford: Oxbow, 139–54.

Sapwell, M., 2016. Understanding palimpsest rock art with the art as agency approach: Gell, Morphy, and Laxön, Nämforsen. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*. doi:10.1007/s10816-015-9270-y

Scott, S., 2006. Art and the archaeologist. *World Archaeology* 38(4), 628–43.

Shiner, L., 2003. *The Invention of Art: A cultural history*. Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press.

Sjöstrand, Y., 2010. Product or production. On the accumulative aspect of rock art. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 18(1), 251–69.

Sjöstrand, Y., 2012. On the paradigm of identification within rock art research, in *Encountering Imagery. Materialities, perceptions, relations*, eds. I.-M. Back Danielsson, F. Fahlander & Y. Sjöstrand. (Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 57.) Stockholm: Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies, Stockholm University, 161–75.

Sjöstrand, Y., 2015. Memory and destruction. Pictorial practices surrounding red ochre paintings in Late Neolithic Sweden, in *Ritual Landscapes and Borders within Rock Art Research. Papers in honour of Professor Kalle Sognnes*, eds. H. Stebergløkken, B. Ragnhild, E. Lindgaard & H. Vangen Stuedal. Oxford: Archaeopress, 167–80.

Soffer, O., & M. W. Conkey, 1997. Studying ancient visual cultures, in *Beyond Art: Pleistocene image and symbol*, eds. M.W. Conkey, O. Soffer, D. Stratmann & N.G. Jablonski. San Francisco (CA): California Academy of Sciences, 1–16.

Sognnes, K., 1984. Prehistoric cave paintings in Norway. *Acta Archaeologica* 53, 101–18.

Sognnes, K., 2009. Art and humans in confined space: revisiting Solsem Cave, Norway. *Rock Art Research* 26, 83–94.

Tallavaara, M. & H. Seppä, 2012. Did the mid-Holocene environmental changes cause the boom and bust

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of hunter-gatherer population size in eastern Fennoscandia? *The Holocene* 22(2), 215–25.

Tillley, C., 2008. *Body and Image: Explorations in landscape phenomenology 2*. Walnut Creek (CA): Left Coast Press.

Tomaskova, S., 1997. Places of art: art and archaeology, in *Beyond Art: Pleistocene image and symbol*, eds. M.W. Conkey, O. Soffer, D. Stratmann & N.G. Jablonski. San Francisco (CA): California Academy of Sciences, 265–87.

Weitz, M., 1956. The role of theory in aesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 5 (1), 27–35.

White, R., 1992. Beyond art: toward an understanding of the origins of material representation in Europe. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21, 537–64.

Whitehead, C., 2009. *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines: Art and archaeology in nineteenth-century Britain*. London/New York: Bloomsbury.

Wickstead, H., 2008. Drawing time. *British Archaeology* 101, 44–9.

Author biography

Ylva Sjöstrand gained a PhD in archaeology from Stockholm University, Sweden, in 2012. She is currently appointed as a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Uppsala University, Sweden, and as a visiting scholar at the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University, USA.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774317000026 Published online by Cambridge University Press