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Is it the form or the function that makes something art?

In the domains of art and architecture, it is a common debate that is the form of a piece of art more significant in lending it the artistic features or is it the function? Most of the time, it is believed that form follows the function of art. Here, the function would entail its architectural design, the purpose it serves, and the extent to which it disseminates its message. Everyday common objects that are utilitarian in their true essence but also have aesthetic features can be classified as functional art. This variety of art is highly remarkable as it can encompass a wide variety of objects and things. Pieces of art that have a form and also serve some basic functions are considered as highly artistic creations and are appreciated but the debate whether it is the form or, the function that categorizes something as art remains to invoke feelings of curiosity and wonder.

The ideal scenario entails that when a person looks at a piece of art, he might wonder, “What might be the artist going through when he was sketching a design for this piece of art?” or, “How is this piece of art affecting me?”, “Am I moved by it?”, “Is it communicating with me, or persuading me to do something?”

Philosophy advocates that an individual piece of art cannot be assigned a specific function but the artist may have a pre-determined purpose or intention in mind, according to which he has curated that art. The form can mean different things for different people, but primarily it indicates the physical aspects and nature of an artwork. The two major types of form are geometric and organic. However, the meaning of this element goes beyond superficial implications.

At its core, this paper asks that is it the form or function which classifies something as art? This question is also prescribed in the lecture video and the supporting images corroborate the basic query (Titus).

Many artists who believe that form should follow function propound that the design of any piece of art must be a reflection of its activities and basic purposes. A form is generally regarded as an outer facade and it identifies the basic attributes of an artistic piece. A form can lend a specific character to art and distinguishes it from other things which it is not. In any architectural manifestation, the form expresses what is inside something classified as art and also gives it an expression of the inner life. For example, if there are statues of spiritual and national heroes planted in the middle of a road and tend to have a powerful effect on the passersby, the underlying purpose is to commemorate the spirit and ideals of the heroes. In this example, the effect that those huge statues are creating can be described as the form and the intended commemoration is the function of these pieces of art.

According to me, it is the form which assists our perception to classify something as art. The form can deliver the message behind a work of art and if it is a building, it can illuminate people about the concept behind its existence even if someone does not enter it. Take the example of a chair and if you look at things from a historical perspective, its form was designed before. The function of a chair was then determined from its form. Apart from other elements, form significantly stands out as it harmoniously aligns with the style and texture among other things and designates the particular purpose or function of a piece of art.

# Works Cited

*The Philosophy of Art*. Perf. Craig Titus. 2019. YouTube.