

Essential Critique and Repealing Misconceptions on Doctoral Studies in Painting: A Context in Nigerian University Discourse

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Abstract: This study aims to deepen the ongoing discourse on doctoral studies in the studio area by introducing fresh, challenging perspectives from current debates and situations. It specifically explores the viewpoints of visual scholars in Africa and their narratives about the evolving culture of the studio doctoral degree. The survey focuses on dispelling the fear of understanding the foundational research elements in studio-based work, which differs from those in the physical and social sciences at the university level. It analyses two established research models from Nigeria and the United States, investigating how Nigerian professors have sought to decolonise these methodological approaches to foster more critical discourse in painting. The goal is to synthesise these differing styles into a cohesive concept of new scholarship relevant to Nigeria and the broader African context while assessing its viability. Additionally, this study addresses ongoing debates concerning originality in art, noting that art often lacks a definitive pattern. This perspective challenges the misappropriation of research techniques commonly used in science and the social sciences, emphasising that art can embody knowledge, whether explicit or tacit. The study also examines how artist-scholars have addressed the challenges of employing painting as a research method in a university setting, which is integral to higher education's mission.

Keywords: Doctorate in painting, current discourse, new ideas, Nigerian perspective, the Universities.

I. Introduction

A PhD in painting is relatively rare compared to other fine arts degrees. While a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in painting is the more common terminal degree for practising artists, a PhD in painting is usually undertaken by academics in fine art for research and perhaps an extensive study in curatorial studies. For over three decades, universities in the U.K., Australia, and other parts of the globe have offered PhD degrees in *Fine Art*. However, issues and challenges surrounding this young degree, particularly in Nigeria, remain largely unclear, particularly regarding its fundamental nature as a research degree. The other perspective in the discourse surrounding this degree is overflooded; it is still essential to return to it for greater clarity. Is it primarily an articulation of experiences in the studio, or is it more about addressing problems and finding solutions within and around that studio context?

Important questions arise about the basis of a doctoral degree in fine arts. Is its aim to show that art can create new knowledge through a different understanding, similar to other university subjects, or to showcase skilled work in the fine arts? What defines new expertise in the field of Fine Arts? Is it the professional creation of aesthetic objects, or is it more about developing theoretical discussions? Recreating situations outside our shared reality, as often seen in motion pictures, raises the question of whether certainty truly exists. This exploration of possibilities could inspire innovations and critical thinking. Might this idea form the foundation of a doctoral degree in fine arts, especially in drawing and painting? Compared to disciplines like the sciences and social sciences, what are the key terms for the fine arts? What is its academic coherence in the pursuit of scholarly work? According to Victor Papanek (1984:17), culture is a deliberate effort to impose meaning and order on people. If any culture is too vast to understand fully, it must be divided into smaller, manageable parts that align with the accepted framework of conscious learning. In this context, the ambiguity of fine arts must be redefined to fit within the culture of academic and knowledge pursuit.

This suggests that we break down the meaning of a PhD in the studio into smaller components, allowing us to deconstruct its essence and learning capacity in the fine arts to align with established modes of learning in formal education. One of the key characteristics of a research degree is *originality*. In the field of the

arts, "originality" can be a contentious term, as art is often tacit and challenging to quantify. Determining the extent to which originality contributes to knowledge production in this academic field can be a difficult evaluation. Whether art can serve as an effective means of knowing through painting or sculpture has been a central concern and has dominated academic discourse on the emergence and theories of the arts in recent times.

This discourse is ever-expanding, despite Kant's assertion that aesthetics can be subjective yet appear objective in perception. The struggle to position Art within the mainstream of knowledge production in higher education has become one of the most intense and ongoing debates among art scholars today. Since British polytechnic education evolved into a university model in 1992, one persistent issue has been the acceptance of visual arts as a legitimate form of knowledge production, a primary goal of university education. Professor Christopher Frayling (2006: xiv) argues that the idea is confused when people believe that art in academia can respond to the terms 'research' and 'new knowledge,' as sciences and social sciences do. However, since the British Arts and Humanities Research Council adopted the term Art-based Research, efforts have been made to align art with the demands of the university system, leading to debate and, at times, resistance. In particular, understanding research in the studio remains problematic for non-artist scholars. The faculty of the 2021 Environmental Design Conference at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, has prompted a renewed examination of this issue.

A critical comment from one of the lead speakers, a Professor, raised concerns about the validity of some dissertations in the Studio PhD programme at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria. This issue highlights that many scholars are unfamiliar with art as a form of scholarship, likely due to a lack of understanding of qualitative research philosophy. These factors emphasise the need to re-examine this topic at this time. What is the nature of investigation or research in the studio? Is it quite out of context to assume that studio research could have the same framework as science or social science?

The research skills used in social sciences or humanities are similar to those in the visual arts, but they differ in context. What research skills are available for engaging in this discourse? How does one ensure quality assurance in art-based research?

One of the main goals of this writing is to clarify these fundamental issues and offer a clear perspective on how to interpret the content and context of a PhD in painting or other visual arts. In this context, PhD dissertations in painting serve as a central point of this discussion. The aim of pursuing a research degree in fine arts is not always straightforward to define. However, it involves integrating two distinct areas of knowledge by engaging deeply with the researcher's own insights. In this process, the self becomes a tool for exploring unknown territory, and art evolves as a form of knowledge. Creating, thinking, and writing merge into a cohesive body of understanding.

To understand this concept, we can reflect on René Descartes' philosophy, which asserts, "I think, therefore I am." In this context, art serves as both the inquiry and the theoretical framework. The artistic journey is a personal exploration that connects with various aspects of creation in the artist's world. Its findings are often unpredictable, and its reliability differs from that of traditional qualitative and quantitative research methods.

According to Yusuf Grillo (in Irokanulo and Ndubuisi, 2013: 345), the aim is to cultivate fine arts scholars who possess creative energy, theoretical strength, and a philosophical mindset to articulate contemporary issues within fine arts studies. George Smith (2018) parallels this challenge by exploring the intersection of art and philosophy. He revisits a comprehensive list of artists and philosophers throughout history to propose potential new directions for artists who, after obtaining an MFA, may encounter new obstacles. These obstacles involve the practice of art and the capacity to theorise and philosophise about art—an endeavour that Smith regards as a crucial idea to reflect upon and challenge from his perspective.

II. The Research Framework

George Smith, a professor of philosophy, has gained recognition for teaching philosophy and related courses to MFA students. He found that art students can succeed in theoretical classes if they receive proper guidance in their programmes. Recognising the challenges studio artists face in academia, he developed a programme that allows MFA graduates to earn a PhD in philosophy after three years of intensive study. This programme is well-structured, requiring no studio work; instead, it immerses artists in rigorous philosophical studies, providing a solid theoretical foundation for understanding their practice. Among other progressive scholars in Nigerian studios, Jacob Jari, a professor of Fine Arts, sees the problem differently. He is specialised in painting and art history. Additionally, he practices painting for a living, which helps him understand the nature of practice as a career and establish himself as a well-defined scholar in art history.

He obtained research degrees in painting and sculpture from the Premier Institute, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. His philosophy regarding the programme is that practice should continue into the PhD rather than focusing solely on theory, and that serious scholarship arises from the materiality of works created in the studio by the student artist. In other words, practice in response to theories through practical engagement means

that, through practice, a theory emerges. This perhaps echoes the words of Merleau-Ponty (1908—1961): Artworks possess a compelling quality that invites interrogation, so that wonder, challenges to sensibilities, and ethical significance draw us repeatedly to stand before them.

In this context, the philosophy is formed from the body of works in the studio practice, not using theory as an appendix to explain the practice; the artworks become the theory in themselves to the viewer and the artist-researcher or curator. The theory needed for the doctoral dissertation should emerge from the body of work created by the artist-researcher during the six semesters of the PhD dissertation report. As we delve further into this topic, we will explore how this programme makes the much-needed new knowledge required by the University Senate, but in a subjective matter that might not be clear for any scholar who insists on using the scientific instruments of research, rather than the employment of qualitative reasoning, might shed light on understanding the art-based research.

Statement of the Problem

Dakyes Samaila, a professor of graphic design at Ahmadu Bello University, now at the Federal University of Lafia, expressed his confusion and frustration with the research approach to painting within the fine arts. He questioned the credibility of specific research contexts in various dissertations that rely on qualitative inferences. This paper seeks to address these concerns by examining two particular dissertations and providing a critique. The focus will be on what qualifies these dissertations to illustrate the confusion Professor Dakyes mentioned, as they deviate from his traditional understanding of research, which emphasises empirical logic.

The Objective of the Writing

The paper will explore the purpose of PhD dissertations in painting: does quantitative quality assurance drive them, or do they stem from the artist's personal experience in creating a body of work that contributes to knowledge creation? Furthermore, should such knowledge be recognised by the university senate as a legitimate production of knowledge, akin to disciplines within the university?

The first dissertation is by Irokanulo Emmanuel (2014). In this work, an attempt is made to integrate practical elements with philosophical concepts, presenting them as a cohesive whole. The research focuses on transforming a simple aesthetic element, shadow, into a driver of painting ideas as a philosophical issue, drawing on the theories of Langer, Heidegger, and Arnheim to support the argument for creating a body of artwork and theory. The body of works underpinned the saying of Paul Gauguin, who asserts that if one found a way of using shadow without its source, one has found an original starting point of using such an element in a creative inquiry. The central theme of the study is *transforming the aesthetics of shadow* into a body of discourse in painting. At the same time, the element becomes an object of inquiry and an expansive imaginative domain for the artist, a *subject* of discourse in painting and philosophical thought. The idea stems from imaginative thought and an extensive painting practice to create something new, not necessarily real in any context.

These two binary constructs are variables that continuously evolve into new forms, commanding a metaphysical presence or transfiguring an everyday object or space into something unimaginable. *Onyinyo* is an Igbo word that means an image or shadow that reflects the likeness of a source. This term embodies a philosophy and mythology of Igbo culture that explores the essence inherent in all things, much like Heidegger's theory of *earth and world*. Which stands for (tangible and intangible state of matter), the former refers to a proper noun, while the latter pertains to an abstract concept. The first concerns what the physical self can perceive and engage with, while the latter concerns the abstract understanding of the physical world.



Figure 1 Artist: Irokanulo Emmanuel, title: *Corridor of Power*, year of production: 2010, medium: Oil on canvas, Size: 120x120 cm Source: *unpublished dissertation*, postgraduate Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Among the paintings produced during one of the authors' studies, there is a reference to the contextual understanding of Igbo cosmology. The artist explores a self-constructive philosophy of the Igbo person and community, comparing it to the Ikenga, a personal deity of the Igbo man, in terms of self-preservation, akin to the Onyinyo, the individual's shadow that follows them everywhere. In this context, the artist identifies the shadow, known in Igbo as Onyinyo, as central to the painting's meaning. The background is that Onyinyo symbolises a shadow in mythology representing the spirit within us all. As a child, the author often contemplated the mysteries of being or shadow in Igbo mythology. From childhood, one of the authors observed that the shadow is always present with individuals, influenced by the light source, whether natural or artificial. Therefore, the painter began to question and examine Heidegger's theories of being and time, using Onyinyo or shadow as a tool for exploration in his painting. This fascination with Onyinyo, or shadow, has continued from the author's earliest years to the present. He has aimed to uncover the mystery of Igbo mythology through painting, capturing its essence in the vitality of space. This approach aligns with Langer's theory of the detachment of images from their sources, creating a new understanding of separate imagery within our perceptual reality.

The last dissertation to consider is John Oyedemi's 2015 work. Oyedemi's dissertation lays the groundwork for the reversal principle in Mondrian's neoplasticism, which embodies innovation, abstraction, and the rejection of traditional European artistic forms and techniques. Oyedemi appears in paintings to oppose Mondrian's notion of the end of art. Instead, he seems to align with Bernstein's 1993 discourse on the matter. Initially, I want to examine this idea separately from Hegel and Heidegger, adopting a neutral perspective. The discussion of the end of art refers to a moment when art becomes distant from us, which, in this context, signifies an ongoing and expanding understanding of truth, since we, as beings, are the living proof of that truth. Oyedemi challenges this idea and situates his painting within the plurality of art and its transcendental conceptuality. He aims to domesticate the aesthetics of his work, drawing inspiration from the artist-researcher environment in Jos, Plateau State, located in North Central Nigeria, reflecting art inspired by the people. The artist believes that inspiration comes from a mainly black atmosphere that can absorb other colours, causing them to lose their individuality. Various aspects of the charcoal market are discussed, focusing on the behaviour of the elements intrinsic to its different trends. The artist asserts that human consciousness will continue to influence what happens to the earth and its social interactions in constructive ways. The paintings exemplify research that involves processes of studio experimentation, perception, and the challenging of social phenomena. To capture the metaphor of the human spirit and the work of ordinary people in a daily setting, it examines the fundamental aesthetics of the charcoal market. A sequence of six pictorial design principles is developed from the works of Piet Mondrian, Rick Stevens, John Virtue, and Pablo Picasso to meet the set objectives. Neoplasticism is an abstract reduction of aesthetic experience into types of vertical and horizontal linear relationships, as well as a study of a minimal palette to achieve harmony. Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) discusses his own ideas and theories. Piet Mondrian (1872—1944) states that neo-plasticism creates harmony through two extremes: the Universal and the individual.

The former through revelation, the latter through deduction. Art provides a visible expression of the evolution of life: the development of the spirit and, in the opposite direction, what matters most. This forced Oyedemi to think creatively and led him to challenge the Neo-Plasticist theory, which claims that in the future there will be no more paintings—that the entire universe will be moving and expanding, meaning that painting, streets, and architecture would all transform into art. In this view, feelings would be removed from the creative force, implying that wall-hangings would no longer be necessary because the universe itself would become Art. Oyedemi, however, interpreted this differently; he reintroduced human figures into his work using linear, horizontal, and vertical approaches. His studies, with a limited palette, reflected the ongoing destruction of man's relationship with nature, reminiscent of the discourse surrounding the so-called charcoal market on the plateau. Oyedemi believes that humanity's destructive force towards the universe will ultimately end art, not the machine, as Mondrian's theory purports.



Figure II. Artist: John Oyedemi, title: **Selling the Future 1**, medium: Oil on Canvas, Size: 140x110cm, Date: 2011, source PhD Dissertation, unpublished dissertation, School of Postgraduate Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

I have closely examined the approach to knowledge production in the creative sector, whether from the philosophical-dissertation perspective of George Smith's doctoral institute or possibly Jacob Jari's ideas on what knowledge is and how it should be constructed in the fine or Creative arts sector. Before we can judge their ideas or perceptions of knowledge as right or wrong, we must try to understand what knowledge means in many different ways. Furthermore, we should explore how it could be understood or linked to practice in the fine arts. The debate about whether the fine arts can become or are part of the domain of knowledge is one of the most intense, with little or no evidence to support serious academic discussion when scientific investigation methods are employed in this context. Still, the fact remains that art can be a source of knowledge production.

This thought, however, is not welcomed by some scholars who, of course, must have their foundations in the scientific philosophy of knowing. For example, most of Africa's history is not documented in books but is preserved in artefacts that serve as cultural instruments. Through oral narratives, we can understand what African cultures stood for in the past and continue to stand for today, within the context of emerging Western culture or colonial influence on Africa.

So, what is knowledge itself? The contention that art is a means of knowledge production has been a fierce debate throughout history. Let's turn to Immanuel Kant on the issue of knowledge and art. There are two main faculties responsible for knowing: *sensibility and understanding*, and each can be broken down into properties of knowledge. He (Kant) distinguishes between the *receptive* faculty of *sensibility*, through which we have intuitions. The faculty of understanding brings forth concept and thought. At the same time, sensibility involves the object's emotions and sensations, which must be experienced or felt within space and time to relate to the concept and analysis.

III. Literature Critique

The literary and aesthetic theories within philosophy are interconnected elements related to the arts; the studio often serves as a physical intersection of both aspects of practice. To deepen one's scholarly understanding of art, one must grasp the two binaries effectively. The ideas presented by these scholars illustrate that knowledge can emerge from both theoretical and studio-based approaches, which serve as spaces for its creation. George Smith's 2018 excellent idea of fusing theoretical background into the life of the artist contrasts sharply with Jacob Jari's belief that the artist, mainly the painter, is a theorist who does not require any theory beyond those arising from the body of their practice (a point he often insists upon in most of his lectures with the postgraduate painting students). The processes of constructing theories and creating paintings are fundamentally the same and represent aspects of the Art Object; this is exemplified in Cezanne in Ponty, as he suggests that

In the pre-reflective primordial world, Cezanne employed the various artistic elements of colour, texture and composition so that the components were no longer visible in their own right, but rather contribute, as they do in natural vision, to the impression of an emerging order, of an object in the act of appearing, organising itself before our eyes.

Regardless of how one looks at these two binaries, each scholar has reasonable grounds to deepen their students' understanding and to explore what knowledge is in the University space.

I agree with Jari's idea that the studio develops theories from a body of work, which I can clarify in specific terms. Additionally, the philosophical background Smith incorporates into the life of the practising artist, along with the concept of the artist as a scholar, are excellent ideas for living as an artist-scholar. According to James Joyce (Karen, Morian 2006, 7), several factors influence an artist's personality; he further explains that these may depend on where they grew up, their social status, their place of study, and where they practice their art. More fundamentally, these elements point to an artist's stylistic approach. Reflecting on these thoughts, both Smith and Jari might share a common perspective: Smith believes in preparing the artist to understand theories and their functions. In contrast, Jari believes that theories emerge from the artist's body of work through careful reading and study. We are about to witness another quarter of modernism breaking away from the traditional definition of a fine artist and moving into a new paradigm to accommodate the evolving concept of knowledge, especially within the university environment. The artist should primarily respond to both visual and literary works, moving beyond one-sided effects in creating art objects. Understanding the full meaning of the art object has become central to current scholarship in drawing and painting. How studio education aims to address this wave of new modernism is the current challenge in the field of fine art. I have read elsewhere that this philosophy may only produce a reluctant artist who is neither a full artist nor a complete scholar, and they may find themselves lacking a strong foundation in either area. Neither do I subscribe to the argument that the artist's understanding is independent of societal influence. Instead, the artist responds to the elements of society, effectively voicing its concerns and issues. In this context, finding the purpose of art within the university setting is crucial. How do we perceive knowledge in the realm of the arts? According to Kantian aesthetics, knowledge has both objective and subjective components, depending on one's perspective. Beauty, art, and self-awareness exist within individual consciousness, allowing each person to develop certainty and understanding of a subject matter, which is key to understanding the place of art in knowledge. Consequently, one individual may relate to a subject differently than another who views it from the same standpoint. These two perspectives affirm that knowledge can emerge from different sides of a discussion. However, the central aim of this writing is to review and critique these two perspectives and propose a new approach to thinking about studio and university life, particularly regarding the meaning of scholarship and its impact on the studio.

The perspectives articulated by these scholars are both valuable and helpful in advancing the discussion of fine art as a means of knowledge creation. Our contribution focuses on the hybridity of these two viewpoints, examining fine arts as modes of knowledge generation within the university space. Since Plato controversially excluded poets and artists from his ideal city-state, the fine arts have had a complex philosophical history, sometimes viewed as divine and at other times regarded as mere crafts lacking any metaphysical significance. Our perspective begins by exploring theories of aesthetics, particularly Merleau-Ponty's insights, regarding a significant moment that has consistently influenced the history of artistic thought. This perspective provides a foundation for articulating an argument for doctoral theses in Fine Arts, employing Kantian judgment, which encompasses both subjective elements and a collective voice. It affirms that self-evidence is a form of knowledge acquired only through experience. Let us examine Merleau-Ponty's insights into the historical significance of reconfiguring aesthetic questions, which challenge traditional ontologies. Historically, scholars such as Schopenhauer, Hegel, and Nietzsche have interrogated the Platonic view. However, they have overlooked critical issues regarding the relationship between the artist and the university, akin to the artist's role within Plato's city-state.

In Plato's framework, there has been a tendency to regard the arts as either a corrupting influence or a mere exaggeration, secondary to the more serious concerns of epistemology, which forms the crux of our current discussion. It is at this juncture that Smith's 2018 position gains prominence for its attempt to unify the two binaries of the arts under a single contemporary body of thought. He and several other philosophers have long strived to bridge the gap between artists and philosophers. Notably, Nietzsche's work *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in 1875, along with the contributions of Hölderlin and Schelling, illustrates how art can stimulate new dimensions of philosophical thought.

Jari, on the other hand, continues to emphasise the artist's creative ability to visualise and to develop a strong understanding of literary and philosophical texts too. This understanding, George Smith 2018, opens up in his book, *the artist-philosopher and the Philosophy of the New Key 2018*. One can see the new direction of creating new knowledge in fine arts; One cannot also overlook the argument of James Elkins that art cannot construct new knowledge by following the traditional humanities or science procedure of advancing new

knowledge in the University setting instead he (Elkins) argues that until art finds its own path in relating to the University a new, art will continue to be dominated by other courses in the University landscape the studio might never be free to assume its footing.

However, this writing proposes that a hybrid of the two ideas from these two great scholars, such as Jacob Jari and George Smith, could forge new thinking and construct an Advanced good at looking at the new Research degree and ways forward. James Elkins says we should keep the words "new knowledge" and "research" away from the new degree and articulate a new or fresh academic culture for the degree. On the advice of avoiding these words, new knowledge and research in the fine arts by James Elkins would lead one to think critically about the following issues.

Does the art process define research? Can the objective and subjective modes of thinking reflect the making of art? If so, Jacob Jari's thinking exemplifies this idea, drawing on what he initiated during his PhD in Fine Arts at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. George Smith's thinking is brought to bear on art as the new key to contemporary metaphysics in philosophical texts. Whether we fashion new ways of looking at the arts as a mode of knowing in the University or continue to host the contemplation of art through the humanities research platform one obvious truth is that this degree as come to stay in that respect the thinking and readjustment would continue until we strike a balance and find new ideas and fresh academic culture to fit the degree; Just like the saying of Chinua Achebe (1930—2013) *until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter—1994*.

Our Critique of the Nature of Doctoral Studies in Drawing and Painting

The first step is to clarify Professor Dakyes Samaila's confusion about the distinctions between drawing and painting dissertations and their relevance to pursuing a doctorate in fine arts, as well as to other fields such as physical science, social sciences, and humanities. Considering Professor Christopher Fraying's 2009 view on whether the fine arts should be integrated into the university landscape, we see that evaluating art through the lens of the social or physical sciences—an approach Dakyes seems to adopt—complicates our understanding of art's value and its contribution to human knowledge. The challenges faced in fine arts, particularly in drawing and painting, differ fundamentally from those encountered in social or physical sciences. Fine arts primarily focus on self-exploration and discovery rather than on problem-solving through quantitative analysis. Issues in drawing and painting are often philosophical and self-reflective. Experts in the field, such as Jari and Smith, agree that the essence of art itself is an evolving theory, and equipping students to read and interpret their work for their audience should be the focus of a doctorate in fine arts.

Fraying illustrates in (Macleod and Holdridge 2006), the nature of research in fine arts by analysing Picasso's famous interview about *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*. This discussion raises doubts about whether works of art can play a role in the critical thinking required of academic researchers. Picasso often emphasised intuition, raw emotion, and breaking conventions rather than adhering to structured academic methods. His approach to art was deeply experimental and instinctive, in sharp contrast to the systematic and analytical methods typically employed in scholarly research.

Universities usually prioritise established frameworks for knowledge production that involve critical analysis, historical context, and theoretical discourse. While these approaches are invaluable for understanding and contextualising art, they may not fully accommodate the unpredictable, personal, and sometimes chaotic nature of artistic creation itself. Picasso's work, particularly *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, was revolutionary precisely because it defied academic norms and classical techniques. The first step is to clarify Professor Dakyes Samaila's confusion regarding the distinctions between drawing and painting dissertations and their relevance to pursuing a doctorate in fine arts. The professor's framework of knowledge arguably fell under the thinking of the scientific research method which fails to give a clear understanding of the true nature of the art as an experiential knowing especially the faculty of fine arts, however, Picasso's knowledge of the process of creation and the flexibility it brings to bear support the dissertation analysis of John Odeyemi (2015) and Irokanulo Emmanuel (2014) thesis in painting.

James Elkins argues that art struggles to endure rigorous academic scrutiny because it often stems from emotionally charged representations of ideas and thought processes. In the realm of fine arts, art theorists and historians commonly base their discussions on the unchallenged assumption that art is a representational practice, and that its products are representations. This assertion seems so self-evident that we rarely pause to question its validity or clarify its terms. This must have been the source of the professor's confusion, or the argument that challenged the capacity of doctoral knowledge in fine art within university discourse. In conclusion, human behaviour and the ability to understand it, or at best to explain it in specific ways, should not form the focus of discourse in fine art theses; we must follow its pattern as a unique process of creation. One should not seek logic or understanding within the field of the arts, only its connection. The essentials of fine art do not operate this way.

IV. In Conclusion

The initial questions posed in this discussion explore the role of painting within the context of doctoral studies. According to Jari and Smith, fine arts serve to capture and define art objects as symbols of modernity in popular culture and redefine artists as scholars who employ design elements to contextualise the purpose of knowledge and culture. Over time, art objects created through culture have significantly reshaped our understanding of the material world. The fundamental principle in fine art is transcendental experience, which aligns with post-Kantian or Heideggerian thought, particularly in Bernstein's (1993, 68) interpretation of post-Kantian philosophy. Heidegger's perspective is not based on empirical evidence but on categorical or transcendental truths. Fine art should continue to reflect legislative subjectivity rather than adopt a materialistic, empirical, or dialectical aesthetic approach. This paper proposes that knowledge resides in the perception of art objects, aligning with Kant's view that our understanding of the world is entirely subjective. This subjectivity involves synthesis, which creates identity from inherent differences while presenting perceptual data in a harmonious context. Within this synthesis, we can establish testable laws of nature. Kant suggests that our knowledge of the world is possible only through subjective perceptual appearances of the material world, which collectively shape our understanding of the earth's objective value. Furthermore, the truth that emerges from self-awareness collectively forms the structure of consciousness, which we interpret as truth.

Art objects, therefore, embody truth, as their quality derives from internal perception and subjective understanding. This notion reflects Jari's idea that the art object itself constitutes a substantial form of knowledge. Conversely, George Smith combines artistic practice with theoretical and philosophical texts, focusing on the interplay between explanation and understanding. This fusion is vital in the process of creating knowledge through studio work. Additionally, discourse can draw on James Elkins' ideas about the potential for a new academic culture grounded in design principles. Art cannot be systematised, meaning it should not conform to a single standard; instead, it should reflect a diversity of knowledge, recognising its particularities and presence. This approach should guide the university's acknowledgement of art's significance. Such a culture would play a crucial role in enhancing the university's value as we continue to develop our understanding in this area.

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