

Art-Language:

A reaction to the dematerialization of Art.

Content

1. Introduction	4.
2. Art & Language: background and development	11.
2.1 Precursors	13.
2.2 From studio to study	17.
2.3 Indexing	21.
2.4 From oligarchy to triumvirate	23.
3. Art & Language's Critique	27.
3.1 Against formalism	28.
3.2 Theoretical choices	33.
3.3 Discourse and Art	34.
3.4 Poststructuralist interpretation	37.
3.5 The Painted Word	39.
3.6 Lonely Images	41.
3.7 Against conceptual art	43.
4. Arthur Danto and 'the end of art'	49.
4.1 Danto's Philosophy	50.
4.2 The Artworld	51.
4.3 The End of Art	53.
4.4 Recurring subjects: Duchamp & Greenberg	56.
5. The End of Art (&Language)	59.
5.1 Art and Language's distinction	60.
5.2 Art after Art and Language	62.
5.3 Agency	65.
6. Conclusion	67.
7. Bibliography	71.

1. Introduction

In the early twentieth century, the French artist Marcel Duchamp created a stir with a series of artworks, which consisted of household objects displayed out of their usual context. His most famous 'ready-made' artwork is his 1917 *Fountain*, a urinal placed upside down with the artist's pseudonym written on it. Duchamp stated that 'the choice of these 'readymades' was never dictated by aesthetic delectation. This choice was based on a reaction of visual indifference with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste."¹ He was thus not led by aesthetic considerations but by 'visual indifference' and 'a total absence of good or bad taste'.

Duchamp is often regarded as the inventor of conceptual art, meaning that the concept or idea of an artwork is more important than its aesthetics. The American author David Galenson stated that 'With the *Fountain* incident, Duchamp (...) not only provided future conceptual artists with an agenda of challenging the boundaries of art, but also gave them a powerful stance from which to pursue it'.² With Duchamp as godfather, one would expect conceptual art to remain popular throughout the course of the twentieth century. However, it remained fairly marginal until the early 1960's.

In the 1960's, the emphasis was entirely on aesthetics. The main theorist of the aesthetic valuation of art in these years was art historian and art critic Clement Greenberg. Greenberg first attracted attention in the artworld through his 1939 essay 'Avant Garde and Kitsch', an attack on the decay of true art due to consumerism. According to him, the Avant-Garde was the sole protector of true aesthetic virtues. Greenberg based his ideas on 19th century theories of formalism, which advocated form over content. In this respect, Greenberg directly opposed Duchamp, who advocated 'visual indifference'.

However, from the mid-1960's onwards, conceptual artists become more important. They poignantly addressed the role of theory within the art-world. The most striking example was the American-English collaboration Art and

¹ M. Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York 1989) 141.

² D. Galenson, *Conceptual Revolutions in Twentieth Century Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 2009) 163.

Language.³ In 1966 the English section of this collective consisted of Coventry-based conceptual artists such as Terry Atkinson (b. 1939), Michael Baldwin (b. 1945), Harold Hurrell (b. 1940) and David Brainbridge (b.1941). In the following years, several international artists, such as the Americans Michael Corris, Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), Sol LeWitt (1928-2007), Dan Graham (b. 1942), and the Australian artists Ian Burn (1939-1993) and Terry Smith (b. 1944), joined the Art and Language collective.⁴ These artists criticized Greenberg's theory, and the power of art critics in general. They maintained that Greenberg's formalist ideas did not merely discuss, but actively created artistic values.⁵ Greenberg's theory stood in sharp contrast to Art and Language's idea of theoretical art, in which the object is of secondary importance.

Art and Language's aversion against Greenberg's aesthetic theory and his power as an art critic leads me to the following research question: *How did Art and Language criticize Greenberg's dominant discourse of art, and to what extent did it, perhaps unconsciously, contribute to the conservation of this discourse?*

To explain my point I will contextualize Greenberg's position as an art critic, and Art and Language as his main criticizer. One could express the relation between both actors in terms of discourse. Greenberg's theory can be seen as the dominant art discourse until the 1960's, defining the standard for the valuation of art, whereas Art and Language's reaction against Greenberg can be seen as a counter-discourse, creating a new set of rules for the valuation of art based on a conceptual standard.

The first part of this research question invokes several other questions that define the impact of Art and Language's critical stance: *how did this critical stance influence their recognition as artists within the artworld? And what motives can be found for their critical stance?* Both questions will be tackled through an analysis of a different aspect of Art and Language's critique: the critique on fellow conceptual artists. These artists were dismissed for a lack of theory. It is therefore interesting to see this critical contradiction on the part of Art and Language. Why did they criticize likeminded artists?

³ When referring to 'Art and Language', I mean the art collective and its members, this in contrast to 'Art-Language' which is the title of Art and Language's journal.

⁴ M. Archer, *Art Since 1960* (London 1997) 81,84.

⁵ Archer, *Art Since 1960*, 82-83.

The second part of the question, the possible contribution to the conservation of Greenberg's discourse, is more fundamental. Here I question whether Art and Language is actually able to subtract itself from the dominant discourse and whether the critique on Greenberg and other conceptual artists isn't turning Art and Language into the same form of dominant discourse on its own.

The historiographical context of this research is blurred by the fact that nearly every post-1970s account of Art and Language was written by members of the Art and Language collective. The only comprehensive account from an outsider is by the Dutch art historian Margriet Schavemaker. However, her research focuses on the content of its artworks, whereas this research focuses on its writings and critique. Where Schavemaker's account offers a comprehensive overview of the work of Art and Language, this research analyzes its basic assumptions. By focusing on writings instead of artworks, we can arrive at a different conclusion: a distinction between two uses of theory by the members of Art and Language. On the one hand they use of theory as content of their artworks, on the other hand, they use theory to criticize fellow artists and critics through their journal. Margriet Schavemaker analyzed the first aspect, while the latter is the subject of this research.

The authors Arthur Danto and Tom Wolfe both take issue with the post-war power-relations within the artworld. Danto criticizes Greenberg's discourse on the grounds that a pure aesthetic valuation of art became obsolete and was replaced by theory and philosophy, whereas in Greenberg's view the content of an artwork was to be strictly visual. Danto maintained that art's content was to be theoretical or philosophical in the first place.

Although also criticizing Greenberg's power, Wolfe's critique stands in strict contrast to Danto's. The relation between these views on art can be best explained when picturing Clement Greenberg's theory as the equator. In that case, Danto on the one hand and Wolfe on the other form the opposite poles. Where Danto argues for a more theoretical form of art, Wolfe suggests a return to pure visual art grounded on aesthetics, for Greenberg's formalist ideas are still too theoretical for him.

As indicated, Schavemaker's research analyzes the use of theory in Art and Language's artworks. The other authors, Danto and Wolfe, all take different positions within this research. Arthur Danto can be seen as a theorization of the transition within the artworld, thus functioning as a possible alternative to Art and Language's view on the artworld. Wolfe's work, although in essence describing the same trend as Danto, takes on a different role within my thesis. Because of his satirical account of the dominant discourse in the post-war artworld, for me Wolfe is more interesting in the context of Art and Language's critique.

In this research, Art and Language's critique is placed within a philosophical context of power and discourse provided by French theorists Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau. Both analyzed the concepts of discourse and practice respectively. While the dominant discourse is already described as Clement Greenberg's theories, Michel de Certeau's ideas on practice are in need of further explanation. De Certeau's theory of practice consists of two different concepts: tactic and strategy. They describe a way in which an individual, or in this case a collective, is capable of subverting a dominant discourse, whether it is within the set boundaries of discourse (tactic) or beyond, by defying these boundaries (strategy).

I will analyze the relation between the Art and Language collective and its adherent, Clement Greenberg, in terms of discourse. This makes it possible to analyze the power relation as criticized by Art and Language. Through their critique, the collective itself becomes an integral part of this power relation, perhaps becoming accessible to the same form of critique as directed against Greenberg's position within the artworld. Here one has to ask what the difference, apart from its content, between Greenberg's dominant discourse and Art and Language's counter-discourse was.

Art and Language criticizes Greenberg's discourse along Foucauldian lines. However, it is remarkable that they do so in 1968, at a moment when his formalist discourse is already heavily under siege from within the artworld. This fact strengthens the need for a clear explanation of their critique. At the same time, Art and Language's criticism of other conceptual artists, including Marcel Duchamp can be interpreted as an act of distinction, to set themselves apart from

all other forms of, in their eyes, inferior art. They distinguish themselves from other artists through a critical analysis of their work. In their journal they review several conceptual artists, which do not work according to the same theoretical standard as members of the collective. By doing so, they emphasize their theoretical supremacy, and thus promote their own work as the one true form of conceptual art.

The *Art-Language* journal functions in this research as my primary source. The nine issues, ranging from 1967 to 1977, provide an excellent insight into the ideas of its members. It can be argued that Art & Language is the most interesting expression of the resistance of conceptual artists against an alleged oppressive discourse in this decade. Their journal stood as an independent force within the artworld of this decade. Art and Language published the journal, which enables me not only to reflect on the artworld from their perspective, but also to analyze their own position within the criticized discourse. Apart from the actual publications by this collective, several of its members have become prominent art historians and critics, most notably Michael Corris, Charles Harrison and Terry Smith, who continued to publish well into the twenty-first century. These former members continue to reflect on the issues raised in the journal through their more recent publications, therefore, these statements shall be considered as primary sources as well.

In the following four chapters I will present several aspects that will contribute to a deeper understanding of the position of Art and Language within the artworld. First of all, a short introduction of the subject is required. I will introduce the key figures within the Art and Language collective and the decisive moments in the development of its journal. This short overview of the history of Art and Language functions as the basis for the third chapter, which will focus on Art and Language's criticism. These ideas will be analyzed in the poststructuralist context of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau. In this chapter, Tom Wolfe's critique on the artworld's discourse shall receive further attention. His satiric view on the power of critics serves as an interesting comparison to the ideas of Art and Language. Although Wolfe is anything but theoretic, his basic view on the working of a dominant discourse is the same.

In the fourth chapter, a comparison between the ideas of Arthur Danto and Art and Language's ideas on the role of the critic shall be made. This chapter serves as the background to the fifth chapter. There I will critically analyze the ideas of Art and Language within the context of Danto's idea of the end of art and poststructuralist theory. I will explore the possibilities of using the critique of Art and Language as expressed in its journal to analyze their own contributions. The main question here will be: In which ways do the artists affiliated with the journal actually differ from artists they criticize as part of the oppressing discourse, and are they really able to subtract themselves from this discourse?

This research is located within the transition in the twentieth century world of art: the transition from a Greenbergian valuation of art to a growing importance of theory as the basis of artworks. By focusing on the most extreme representatives (Art and Language), and philosophers (Arthur Danto) of this shift, combined with the theoretical ideas on power relations (Michel Foucault), the shift itself can be analyzed. At the same time, by leaving out the artworks themselves, it becomes possible to focus on the workings of Art and Language within a broader discourse. By doing so, the practical implications of a critique on discourse can be analyzed along de Certeau's concepts of practice and tactic.

This indicates the relevance of this research, apart from being situated in one of the most interesting periods in the history of twentieth century art; this research analyzes the Art and Language collective in an entirely new manner. As indicated, Schavemaker refrains from an analysis of Art and Language's critique while a great part of the other histories have been written from an Art and Language point of view. My goal is thus to further elaborate the transition from aesthetics to theory while at the same time provide new insights into the workings of Art and Language's practice of distinction.

2. Art & Language: background and development

Before turning the attention to the theoretical aspect of the journal, it is necessary to provide a short overview of the journal's origins, its contributors and its content. Here I will situate the journal within the greater context of conceptual art as a subversive movement. Several aspects of the development of Art & Language as an influential facet in the art-world can be singled out and by doing so, it is possible to distinguish different phases in this development. Firstly, I will discuss Art & Language's precursors and its founding members before turning to the early years of the journal as an Anglo-American collective. Then, I will address the later years of the journal in which the number of contributors and members dramatically plunged due to disagreement concerning the journal's subversive stance and the widening focus of several members. After this loss of members, an interesting development occurred. Although theory remained a central part of the journal's content, its members seemingly returned to a more visual portrayal of their ideas.

The work of Art & Language from the mid-1960's to the late 1970's demonstrated one way by which the social limits of art might be tested; it offered an alternative model for the politicization of conceptual art that had nothing in common with art that aimed to represent or narrate contemporary political events.⁶

Nearly three decades after Michael Corris' first contribution to the journal, ambiguously titled 'The fine structure of collaboration', he edited a comprehensive overview treating the various aspects of conceptual art. His entry to this overview, 'An Invisible College in an Anglo-American World', can be seen as a reminiscence of past events in which, interestingly, he evades his own contribution to the journal. When discussing the 'gathering crisis' and the 'dialogical setting of the collaborative situation of Art & Language'⁷, among fellow contributors to the journal in the early 1970's, Corris avoids the inclusion of one of his own essays, printed in the fall of 1973. In this essay he faces 'the problem of locating the space in which the community of Art & Language operates' and

⁶ M. Corris, *Conceptual Art* (Cambridge 2004) 8.

⁷ Corris, *Conceptual Art*, 6-7.

poses the question whether there is 'a way of maximizing all possible compatible concepts with respect to the Art & Language community as a whole?'.⁸ Whether Corris refrains from self-promotion in order to uphold a sense of objectivity or simply finds his own writings unsuited for further elaboration of the subject remains debatable.

Another example of a former Art & Language affiliate is Charles Harrison. In 1970, Harrison published his 'Notes towards art work', in which he argued for the continuing idea of conceptual art as a form of art since 'art is the only sure means of judging art' and in order to remain in direct opposition to modernism.⁹ Through this essay he positioned himself within the world of conceptual art. Twenty years later, he returned to the subject of Art & Language 'at the close of a historical era'.¹⁰ In 1991 Charles Harrison wrote the theoretical history of Art & Language only to return to this subject in 2001, with a continuation on a more practical note. Where Corris' lack of self-inclusion leads me to question his motives, Harrison faces these problems through acknowledging the possible errors; 'I have also attempted to silence in myself that voice which would speak of artistic culture both as a priceless heritage and as an enduring and unquestionable presence. This latter is not the professional voice of Modernism criticism. It is the persuasive but unreflective manifestation of bourgeois spirit.'¹¹ He thus attempted to silence his own subjective perspective on the phenomenon of Art & Language to provide a more objective account.

On a second account, when discussing the conceptual art movement, Harrison states; 'that I write largely from within an intellectual framework associated with Art & Language may be taken as damaging to the credibility of my observations', however, he feels that this damage will be limited since the 'framework in question furnishes a case-study'. Thus using the inevitable subjectivity to his advantage.¹² So where Corris refrains from any statement on his own involvement, Harrison can be seen to incorporate his persisting involvement into his argument, thus evading a possibility of critique.

⁸ M. Corris, 'The fine structure of Collaboration', *Art-Language* vol. 2 (Oxford 1973) 34-37, 34.

⁹ C. Harrison, 'Notes towards art work', *Studio International* 179 (1970) 42-43.

¹⁰ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language* (Oxford 1991) xvii.

¹¹ Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language*, xv.

¹² C. Harrison, *Conceptual Art and Painting* (Cambridge, Mass 2001) 40-41.

Both authors are examples of (former) members of the Art & Language collective reflecting on the journal. This persisting involvement of former members indicates the need for a well-structured overview of the different authors related to the journal, their differences and similarities. This involvement also raises the problem of objectivity in relation to present-day views on the journal's implications. The histories and new insights provided by former members shall be discussed in the same fashion as their original contributions to- and reflecting about the Art & Language journal.

Precursors

When discussing Art & Language's precursors, one has to make choices: the choice whether to focus predominantly on Art & Language or on conceptual art as a whole, and the choice whether or not to include the earliest twentieth-century conceptual works. These works, such as Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades and Kazimir Malevich' *Black Square* and *White on White* paintings,¹³ are certainly important for the development of Art & Language in the late-1960's and early-1970's, as we shall see with Art & Language's theoretical preoccupation with Duchamp in the next chapter, but cannot be concerned as a direct influence on the ideas of the artists. Therefore, in this chapter, the focus will lie on the direct precursors in the decade preceding the establishment of Art & Language. The origins of conceptual art shall be omitted from this overview for practical reasons.

From the mid-1960's onwards, Art-Language, as a journal, but more interestingly perhaps, as an art-collective, contributed to, and criticized the artworld in its own manner. Both Michael Corris and Charles Harrison acknowledge Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin as the founding fathers of Art & Language. According to Corris, Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin formulated one of the key ideas of conceptual art as early as 1966. This idea 'that conceptual art has shifted the emphasis in art production from single iconic

¹³ 'The invention of non-objective art was a striking moment in the intellectual history of Europe because it marked the abandonment of several hundred years of aesthetic theory that defined art as representation. The non-objective artist dissolved conventional distinctions between "art," an object created to represent something outside itself, and "artifact," an object created to exist as itself.' A. Cohen, *Imagining the unimaginable* (Lincoln 2008) 115-116.

elements to a whole continuum of these elements in a sign process (semiosis)¹⁴ captured the essence of Art & Language's theoretical stance and its ideas on the content of art. Like Corris, Harrison indicates the 1966 collaboration as a key moment in the realization of Art & Language as a collective; 'contributing members of Art & Language did hypothesize various forms of 'theoretical object'-objects which were not built or which could not be built. But from the start of the collaboration between Terry Atkinson and Michael Baldwin in 1966, such theoretical objects were explicitly accorded an essayistic aspect.'¹⁵ Here both key aspects of Art & Language are mentioned; the semiotics as well as the 'essayistic aspect' of their early works, which also translated into their first collection of essays in May 1969.¹⁶ The semiotics and the 'essayistic aspect' are both markers of the difference between Art and Language and other artists. The semiotic aspect distinguishes conceptual artists from the rest of the artworld, while the essayistic aspect adds an extra layer of distinction between conceptual artists and Art and Language.

Although Art & Language started with Atkinson and Baldwin, the idea of language or text as an essential part of art can be traced back to earlier expressions during the 1960's or even the early 1950's, when taking into account John Cage's (1912-1992) scores from his soundless composition *4'33"*. As Liz Kotz argues; 'the crucial relationship between *4'33"* as a durational structure and the fact that it can be notated entirely in language will take some work to tease out.'¹⁷ This process of teasing out takes place through the tracing of the development from the idea in 1948 and the actual performance in 1952, 'by a pianist sitting at a piano and not playing it for four minutes and 33 seconds – the random, ambient noises of the auditorium making up the music of the composition',¹⁸ to the realization of the typewritten score in 1960. This score,

¹⁴ M. Corris, *Conceptual Art* (Cambridge 2004) 5. Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden, *Notes on Analyses*, 1970.

¹⁵ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art & Language* (Oxford 1991) 53-54.

¹⁶ The first volume of Art-Language was published in May 1969, entailing essays by its editors (Atkinson, Baldwin, David Bainbridge and Harrol Hurrell) and cooperating artists (Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham and Lawrence Weiner). The first three parts of the first volume used an editorial setup, made up of the former editors, completed in the second and third part by the presence of an American editor, the artist Joseph Kosuth. The remaining volumes lacked an editorial board, turning its editors into 'merely' contributors.

¹⁷ L. Kotz, *Words to be Looked at* (Cambridge, Mass 2007) 14.

¹⁸ E. Doss, *Twentieth Century American Art* (Oxford 2002) 140-141.

because of its detailed instructions for a non-performance, lends itself perfectly for comparison to other conceptual works of art such as the early works by Atkinson and Baldwin and the essays published in the first volume of *Art & Language*.

When reflecting on John Cage in a larger perspective, his ideas on composition fit within the ideas of two leading minimalist painters, Donald Judd and Frank Stella. Judd used the blankness of his art to draw the spectator's attention towards specific elements such as corners and horizontal lines: by refraining from a traditional composition his goal was to make the beholder aware of the presence of these 'specific elements'.¹⁹ American art historian and critic David Joselit emphasizes this idea of minimalism; 'Minimal Art's objects, as simple as they are, exhort their viewers to see more, or at least to see beyond the prevailing conventions of art.'²⁰

Apart from Cage and the minimalists, other artists preceding *Art & Language* can be singled out. Influenced by John Cage, artists such as George Brecht developed his ideas, 'bringing the form of the score from music into the visual arts'.²¹ A great example of this form is brecht's famous *Flute Solo*, which consist of nothing more than a piece of paper instructing the artist to disassemble and reassemble his flute. The sounds released during this action made up the music. The same process took place among early members of *Art & Language*. Entirely scriptural works of art, containing instructions for the creation of certain installations, are in essence comparable to Brecht's or even Cage's instructions.

There is however a difference; the use of theory. George Brecht and his fellow Fluxus²² artist such as Dick Higgins (b. 1938), Nam June Paik (b. 1932), Yoko Ono (b. 1933) and LaMonte Young (b. 1935) refrained from a use of theory in their work. The difference here lies in the use theory as an explanatory factor or as an integral aspect of the artwork itself (as is the case with artists affiliated

¹⁹ M. Archer, *Art since 1960* (London 1997) 46-47.

²⁰ D. Joselit, *American art since 1945* (London 2003) 107.

²¹ Kotz, *Words to be Looked at*, 59.

²² 'An international mix of artists influenced by John Cage (...). Fluxus embodied a neo-dada sensibility. Critiquing the culture industry and generating an impersonal, 'monostructural' aesthetic, Fluxus was an important precedent for conceptual and Video art.' Erika Doss, *Twentieth Century American Art* (Oxford 2002) 142.

with Art & Language). Ina Blom indicates Higgins' use of theory as an explanatory factor: 'Describing his own work as well as that of a number of artists in and around the Fluxus group, he attempts to formulate the terms according to which the cognitive boundaries dividing self and work or work and surroundings might, temporarily, fade out or be displaced.'²³ Here the 'describing' and the relation between the 'self and work' indicate the use of theory as an explanatory factor. So although theoretically discussing their own work of art, they do not directly include these theories in their work.

Charles Harrison clearly indicates the difference between minimalist artists, such as Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt, who would become the first American to become affiliated with Art & Language through the publication of his essay 'Sentences on conceptual art' in the first issue of the journal, and the conceptual ideas of the founding members of Art & Language. Although Judd and LeWitt offered 'a form of opposition against the constitutive power of the Modernist account', they did not resort to an 'explicit opposition to the criticism of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried'.²⁴ This criticism, which I will further discuss in the next chapter, can be seen as a theoretical defense of an aesthetic valuation of art. The gap of theoretical opposition was filled by the founders of Art & Language in the second half of the 1960's.

Thus the common distinguishing factor between John Cage, Minimalism and Fluxus on the one hand and the conceptual art of Atkinson and Baldwin on the other is theory. While using to theory as a direct part of their artworks distinguishing them from Fluxus, they use theory as well as a manner of critique on the modernist account and in the process distinguishing themselves from Minimalism's opposition against Modernism. Instead of the use of theory as a mere exemplifier, the use of theory as a method of distinction and critique becomes an important aspect of conceptual art in the late 1960's.

Although this tendency towards theory seems to make the difference, the simple lack of it in the practice of Cage, Fluxus and Minimalism is by no means an explanation for Art & Language's focal point. In 1999, the three remaining members of the collective, Charles Harrison, Mel Ramsden and Michael Baldwin,

²³ I. Blom, 'Boredom and Oblivion introduction: Changing Cage' in: Ken Friedman (ed.) *The Fluxus Reader* (1998) 63-90, 63.

²⁴ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language* (Oxford 1991) 17-18.

reflected upon the context that drove them towards their theoretical means of expression. According to them, the '*undifferentiated* solidarity of the late 1960's' was one of the main instigators of their longing for theory. In this sphere, 'there existed a moral/practical pressure to theorize and substantiate, a desire to replace merely unhistorical refusal, insolence or mischief-making in the face of market protocols, with a theorized dissent – practical and even organized.' Regarding this development, the three remnants of Art & Language refer to themselves as the 'professionalized avant-garde who traded management skills for politics'.²⁵ Although getting ahead of myself, it is necessary to state that these 'politics' were expressed through their Marxist objections against Greenberg's modernism. Which is, situated in the turbulent late 1960's, a fairly common stance in the world beyond art. In a sense, Art and Language's stance against Greenberg's Modernism fits perfectly within the political preoccupations of the new-left movement, in Britain mostly associated with historians such as E.P. Thompson, Rafael Samuel and Eric Hobsbawm.

From studio to study

What distinguishes (some) Conceptualists is a focus upon the linguistic and semiological conditions and presuppositions that underlie our understanding of art. During the 1970s, as the implications of post-Saussurean linguistics penetrated the academy, affecting most of the humanities disciplines, Conceptual artists adopted the interpretive frameworks of semiotics and Post-Structuralism, reading the work of art as a sign competing for recognition in the cultural and ideological codes of a society.²⁶

The period between 1966 and 1969 has been characterized by Terry Atkinson as a time in which 'a number of artists have developed projects and theses, the earliest of which were initially housed pretty solidly within the established constructs of visual art. Many of these projects etc. have evolved in such a manner that their relationship to visual art conventions has become increasingly tenuous.'²⁷ This tenuous relationship can be found in the later discussed *Air-*

²⁵ M. Baldwin, C. Harrison and M. Ramsden, 'Making Meaningless' in: C. Harrison (ed.), *Art & Language in Practice Vol. 2: Critical Symposium* (Barcelona 1999) 225-247, 227.

²⁶ J. Bird and M. Newman, *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (London 1999)

²⁷ T. Atkinson, 'introduction' in: *Art-Language* vol. 1(1969) 1-10, 1.

Show, which is an artwork entirely separated from the earlier aesthetic values of conceptual art to be found in, for instance, Sol LeWitt's more minimalist works.

As discussed before, Atkinson and Baldwin can be regarded as the founding fathers of Art & Language. After meeting at Coventry College in 1966, they started working together, before founding their own publishing company *Art & Language Press* in 1968. Between 1966 and 1968, Atkinson and Baldwin produced several artworks together, most noticeably their series of 'empty maps', inspired by the 1874 Lewis Carroll poem, *The Hunting of the Snark*. This nonsense poem, which was grammatically correct but stood out due to its use of nonexistent words, was accompanied by several images including a map of an ocean, which was, despite fulfilling all the conditions a map required, completely empty.²⁸

The 1967 maps bore titles such as *Map of the Sahara Desert after Lewis Carroll*, *Map of a thirty-six square mile surface area of the Pacific Ocean west of Oahu* and *Map to not indicate*. The latter one is perhaps the most interesting; where the former two merely depict an 'empty map', *Map to not indicate* consists of a drawn indication of two states, Iowa and Kentucky, seemingly in their 'right' place when considering their shape and relation to each other. This image is subtitled by the words 'Map to not indicate:' followed by an enumeration of the remaining 48 states and geographical details. The remarkable aspect of this picture is the fact that 'language supersedes the traditional mode of cartography, the drawn line'.²⁹ The main idea of these artworks is that language superseded form in its importance. The reduction of form to an aid of language can, retrospectively, be seen as a presage on the use of language as the main component of art in the first three volumes of *Art & Language*.³⁰

Apart from the maps, two other works by Atkinson and Baldwin which originated in this transitional period are worth mentioning: *Air-Show* and *Hot-*

²⁸ Apart from the 'empty map', the grammatical correctness of this poem was another source of influence for later Art & Language members. The influence of this poem is inextricably bound up with a later, linguistic influence. Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* addresses the same problems of the relation between grammatical correctness and nonsense. This becoming evident in the sentence; 'Colorless green ideas sleep furiously', which is the perfect example of a correct, but meaningless, array of words. N. Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (The Hague 1957) 15.

²⁹ P. Osborne (ed.), *Conceptual Art* (London 2002) 120.

³⁰ For further information on the 1966/67 mappings see; C. Harrison, M. Baldwin & M. Ramsden, *Art & Language in Practice Vol. 1* (Barcelona 1999) 128-131.

Cold. Both consist of text on paper with variable dimensions. *Air Show* consists of theoretical reasoning on the subject of the gallery as the 'physical, traditionally defined premises for art', in this case substituted by the 'nomination of a quantity of air as art'.³¹ *Hot-Cold* can be seen as a similar display of theory; this work of art consists of two separate columns, the first one theoretically describing the conditions and interrelation of the second's content. Terry Atkinson described the method used in the production of these works as a form of 'content isolation'; Both works would be well-known for their direct inclusion of theory in art, which was, then, unheard of.

In late 1967, Lucy Lippard (b. 1937) and John Chandler wrote an essay titled 'The Dematerialization of Art' which elaborated on the, then, ongoing development in which 'more and more work is designed in the studio but executed elsewhere by professional craftsmen, as the object becomes merely the end product, a number of artists are losing interest in the physical evolution of the work of art.'³² Here, 'designed in the studio but executed elsewhere' can be seen as a definition of, for instance, Andy Warhol's work while the result, the 'losing interest in the physical evolution of the work of art' can be seen as a development ascribed to Art and Language.

Lippard and Chandler divide art into five separate zones, as introduced by the American Cubist Joseph Schillinger in his 1948 work *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts*,³³ of which the last two zones roughly make up the development of the twentieth century. The fourth zone, the 'rational aesthetic', is characterized by new and experimental art, can, according to Lippard, be seen transgressing into the fifth in the second half of the 1960's. The fifth zone, the 'scientific, post-aesthetic', is characterized by a 'fusion of the art forms and materials' and eventually a 'disintegration of art' and the 'abstraction and liberation of the idea'.³⁴ Lippard continues on the relation between this fifth zone and dematerialized art. Although dematerialized art can be seen as post-aesthetic

³¹ Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, 119.

³² L. Lippard and J. Chandler, 'The Dematerialization of Art', *Art International*, 12 (1968) 31-36, 31.

³³ J. Schillinger, *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts* (New York 1948) 17.

³⁴ Lippard and Chandler, 'The Dematerialization of Art', 31-36, 32.

due to its 'increasingly non-visual emphases', the 'aesthetic of principle is still an aesthetic', according to Lippard.³⁵

Towards the end of the 1960's the members of Art & Language tried to distinguish themselves from other forms of conceptual art by opposing this concept of 'dematerialization'. A month after the publication of Lippard and Chandler's article, Art & Language reacted in the form of a direct letter addressed at Lucy Lippard. Atkinson, the sole writer of this letter, although signing with 'considerable confidence' for his unaware fellow members,³⁶ responded vigorously to what he understood as a direct accusation. In a highly theoretical manner, he deconstructs their definition of the word 'dematerialization': 'all the examples of art-works (ideas) you refer to in your article are, with few exceptions, art-objects. They may not be an art-object as we know it in its traditional matter-state, but they are nevertheless matter in one of its forms, either solid-state, gas-state, liquid state. And it is on this question of matter-state that my caution with regard to the metaphorical usage of dematerialization is centered upon'. Although recognizing the basic argument of the article, he criticizes the elaboration of their argument. According to him, the authors are in need of a 'far more stringent terminology and dialectic than that traditionally used to describe the acts and resultant objects of an embroilment in what are called art making procedures', thus accusing the authors of a lack of theoretical insight to address this issue properly.³⁷

Interestingly enough, Atkinson uses this article for the benefit of making a larger statement; his lack of belief in the entire 'philosophy of aesthetics'. He argues that this article, and its accompanying theoretical shortcomings, is an example of the ongoing failure of the philosophy of aesthetics.³⁸ Through this display of theoretical one-upmanship, Atkinson disconnects himself and his fellow Art & Language members from any possibility of traditional critique on their form of conceptual art. Knowing that he deconstructed the idea of 'dematerialization' and made his point clear, his cockiness leads him to invite

³⁵Lippard and Chandler, 'The Dematerialization of Art', 31-36, 33.

³⁶ T. Atkinson, 'Concerning the article "the dematerialization of art" in: A. Alberro and B. Stimson (ed.), *Conceptual art: a critical anthology* (Cambridge, Mass 1999) 52-58, 57.

³⁷ T. Atkinson, 'Concerning the article "the dematerialization of art" in: A. Alberro and B. Stimson (ed.), *Conceptual art: a critical anthology* (Cambridge, Mass 1999) 52-58, 53.

³⁸Atkinson, 'Concerning the article "the dematerialization of art"', 54.

both authors to a theoretical discussion; 'I will be in New York over Easter. I would welcome an exchange of views with you. Yours in good faith. Terry Atkinson.'³⁹

Indexing

It is in the nature of Art and Language both that its own representative activities spread across habitual demarcations between 'artists' and 'writers', and that it tends to encourage a practical disregard for such demarcations in those to whom its production is of interest. While the character of Art and Language has always been decided in large part by those at the core of its activities, the outer limits of its output have never coincided with a simple roster of names.⁴⁰

Roughly a year after Atkinson's reaction, the first issue of *Art-Language* was published in Great Britain, followed by a second issue, several months later, including the American editor Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945). This was the start of a short decade of Art & Language as a growing international collective. By the late-1970's the collective was falling apart, only to leave its co-founding Baldwin along with Harrison and Ramsden to continue in the name of Art & Language. To characterize the years between 1969 and 1976 in the words of Mary Hopkin: 'Those were the days'.

In this section I will focus on the publication of *Art-Language* between 1969 and 1974, the period in which the journal can be seen as a collection of Anglo-American thoughts on art and theory. In this period, two volumes consisting of eight issues were published, containing contributions of over 20 different authors and artists. In these two volumes the editors published, apart from theoretical essays which in most cases form the base for hypothetical artworks (such as LeWitt's 'sentences on conceptual art' and Weiner's 'statements'), several essays containing their views on the present day art-world to distinguish themselves from earlier ideas and critique on their practice. In essence, the same type of argument, which has been made by Atkinson in reaction to Lippard and Chandler's article, can be recognized throughout the eight issues.

³⁹ 'Ibidem' 57.

⁴⁰ C. Harrison, *Art & Language in Practice Vol. 2: Critical Symposium* (Barcelona 1999) 157.

In the second publication, Kosuth, like Atkinson, positions himself, and his fellow members securely within the art-world. Kosuth for example, gives a new definition of the contemporary stalemate in the world of art by making a rough division between 'aesthetic, reactive and conceptual forms of art', conceptual being the highest form. In this essay Kosuth is especially negative towards reactive art, which is often placed within the same category as conceptual art. Reactive art, such as earthworks, process art and performance art, were considered to be 'the scrapheap of 20th century art ideas – cross-referenced, 'evolutionary', pseudo-historical, 'cult of personality', and so forth'.⁴¹

Atkinson's essay in that issue, 'from an Art & Language point of view' had the same positioning character as Kosuth's. In this essay, Atkinson, tired of being associated with the 'vastly over-rated' Duchamp, addresses the shortcomings of his theoretical ideas. On the other hand, he positions Art & Language through a review of recent conceptual works of art including artists such as Robert Morris, Carl Andre, Hans Haacke, Dan Flavin and most notably, his former contributor LeWitt, whose review gets an alarming introduction, stating that after publication 'one would obviously not be surprised if Sol LeWitt would no longer be prepared to lend any support at all to the Art and Language view'.⁴² In the next chapter, dealing with the more theoretical aspects of Art & Language, these critiques will be further analyzed.

Apart from the publication of eight issues of their journal, another key moment in the development of Art & Language in the early-1970's was the exhibition of their *Index 001* at the documenta V in the north-German town of Kassel. *Their Index 001* was the answer to the question of possibilities to exhibit. Through this installation of filing cabinets filled with their usual texts, they were able to conform to the traditional standards of exhibition. Retrospectively, the three remaining members refer to this work of art as a representation of the 'implosion', which drew in contributors as well as 'anyone who took the trouble to exert themselves in working with or on them'.⁴³ This newfound manner of presenting a theoretical index opened their practice to questions of

⁴¹ J. Kosuth, 'Introductory note by the American editor', *Art-Language Vol. 1 no. 2* (1970) 1-4, 1-2.

⁴² T. Atkinson, 'From an Art & Language point of view', *Art-Language Vol. 1 no. 2* (1970) 25-61, 25-35.

⁴³ C. Harrison, M. Baldwin & M. Ramsden, 'Making Meaningless' in: C. Harrison (ed.), *Art & Language in Practice Vol. 2: Critical Symposium* (Barcelona 1999) 225-247, 236-237.

representation; was it possible to represent theoretical ideas through, for instance, painting?

The first number of *Art-Language* included, apart from essays by two of the four founding members, essays by three American artists. These artists, Sol LeWitt (1928-2007), Dan Graham (b. 1942) and Lawrence Weiner (b. 1942), would form, together with Joseph Kosuth, an important part of the American half of the journal. Although stressing the points of similarity in the introduction, the British editors create a clear line between them and the other (American) contributors to the journal.⁴⁴ Even in this first issue, theoretical differences between the Brits and Americans can be singled out. In late-1974, the American half of *Art & Language* took the matter into their own hands with the publication of a third volume, titled 'draft for an anti-textbook', thus distinguishing themselves from the former more theoretical volumes.

From Oligarchy to Triumvirate

It has become a commonplace in our age of therapy (perhaps this should be the title of Eric Hobsbawm's next book) that the means to healthy recovery from a breakdown is not to repress the traumatic event, but rather to find a new synthesis for it within the context of a life.⁴⁵

From the publication of 'draft for an anti-textbook' onwards, the British and American members of *Art and Language* started to depart in different directions. Most notably, the split occurred in New York through the publication of decisive articles by, among others, Kosuth and Sarah Charlesworth (b. 1947). These articles formed the base for further discussion between both parts of the transatlantic collective.⁴⁶ Kosuth, in his article '1975', identifies the root of the problems of their collective in the unevenness of collaboration. He uses a letter by Ramsden to underline his argument. According to Ramsden the problem was

⁴⁴ T. Atkinson, 'Introduction', *Art-Language Vol. 1* (1969) 1-11.

⁴⁵ S. Edwards, 'Art & Language's Doubt' in: C. Harrison (ed.) *Art & Language in Practice Vol. 2: Critical Symposium* (Barcelona 1999) 249-255, 249.

⁴⁶ In 1975, Charlesworth wrote an article titled 'A declaration of dependence' which was published in the first issue of *The Fox* magazine. This article has been reprinted in Alberro and Stimson's *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*. The title was a sarcastic remark on the dependent position the American part of the collective was supposed to take.

entirely social. According to him the origins of the breakup must be sought in the development from an art theorizing to an art-exhibiting collective, which made most of the contributors obsolete.⁴⁷ *The Fox*, the American reaction to *Art-Language* as a journal was a more practical magazine, focused on the 'specificity of their New York lives and the larger artists' community here'. According to Kosuth, *Art and Language* can be seen as a prototype for the 'artistic ideological collective', which has manifested itself through *The Fox*.⁴⁸

From the other side of the Atlantic, a somewhat different perspective emerges. Charles Harrison acknowledges the 'differences in economic opportunity and differences in geographic and cultural location as a main reason for the fragmentation of *Art & Language*. He seems to indicate the establishment of *The Fox* as the root of their divergence, in contrast to Kosuth, who indicates *The Fox* as a result of the divergence.⁴⁹ This difference derives from the fact that Harrison acknowledges two different situations, a schism and a rupture. According to him, the schism was the result of the publication of the 'anti-textbook' while the rupture would not occur until after the publication of *The Fox*. When discussing the content of *The Fox* specifically, Harrison moves even further when arguing that it was 'Kosuth's initiative, apparently intended to establish a position of pre-eminence not available to him within the *Art & Language* community'.⁵⁰

Christopher Gilbert presents another interesting view on the American 'draft for an anti-textbook'. He indicates this issue as a more practical continuation of former *Art & Language* practice. According to him, it 'elevated all readers of these projects to the level of full discussants (...) which left no stable position as an outside (Greenbergian) beholder'. Therefore it changes the possibilities of critique, while upholding *Art & Language*'s early skepticism towards modernist art criticism.⁵¹ However, as Gilbert notes, *The Fox* was no substitute for *Art-Language*, where soon the same reasons for division started to

⁴⁷ J. Kosuth, '1975' in: A. Alberro and B. Stimson (ed.), *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (Cambridge, Mass 1999) 334-349, 343.

⁴⁸ Kosuth, '1975', 344.

⁴⁹ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language* (Oxford 1991) 114-115.

⁵⁰ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language* (Oxford 1991) 116

⁵¹ C. Gilbert, 'Art & Language, New York, Discusses Its Social Relations in "The Lumpen-Headache"' in: M. Corris (ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth and Practice* (Cambridge 2004) 326-341, 330-331.

occur. *The Fox*, having existed from late-1974 to the spring of 1976, died a silent death at the hands of Kosuth and Charlesworth, who were, retrospectively, the least cooperative members of this new initiative.

After the split between the British and American parts, and the following rupture within the Fox collective, the Art & Language group consisted of no more than three members, apart from the occasional contribution of a fourth. Charles Harrison, who was made general editor of the journal in 1971, continued alongside Mel Ramsden and founding member Michael Baldwin. These three members would continue their practice, although embracing a different method of representation, which was already instigated at the Documenta V exhibition with their *Index 001*. In 1980 the three remaining members continued on an aesthetic note with their series of paintings *A portrait of V.I. Lenin in the Style of Jackson Pollock*. The idea for these paintings originated in the same manner as early Art & Language theoretical concepts for works of art. This visual depiction of their theoretical, conceptual ideas drew on the possibility of a different relation between spectator and interpretation. From this series onwards, which was first exhibited in Eindhoven's Van Abbe Museum, the group turned to a more visual depiction of their ideas with their series of *Hostages* and *Incidents*. These series were a combination of text and visual art (*Hostages*) or even almost surrealist Escher-like paintings of objects (*Incidents*). Through these artworks, Art and Language returned to a less subversive portrayal of their ideas without, however, refraining from their original stance on their position within the artworld. In Harrison's reflections on the early days of Art and Language, he seems to make no amends with regards to their first, turbulent years of existence.

In the next chapter, I will focus on the practice of distinction in the first decade of Art & Language's existence. The question whether both forms of theory, that is, theory as an integral aspect of their work and as a method of critique, can be separated will necessarily be posed. The problems raised in this chapter shall function as a point of departure for further analysis of Art & Language's practice. The practice of distinction, as I will set out in the next chapter, can be characterized by their critique on several influential individuals such as Marcel Duchamp, Clement Greenberg and Sol LeWitt. The illustration of

this practice in the next chapter shall function as a point of departure for further analysis of Art and Language in the greater context of the artworld of the 1960's.

3. Art & Language's Critique: inquiry into the practice of distinction

It is a fact that over the last few years a certain change has taken place (or is taking place) in our conception of language and, consequently, of the (literary) work, which owes at least its phenomenal existence to this same language. (...) What is new and which affects the idea of the work comes not necessarily from the internal recasting of each of these disciplines, but rather from their encounter in relation to an object which traditionally is the province of none of them.⁵²

These words were written in 1971 by the French semiotic Roland Barthes. Although he clearly refers to literary work in this citation, it could apply to the development outlined in the former chapter as well. This same change occurred in the world of art through, among others, the likes of the British and American contributors to *Art-Language*. We can see art changing in the second half of the twentieth century, not because of, as Barthes calls it 'internal recasting' but from 'encounter in relation to an object which traditionally is the province of none of them'. Art's object in this case is theory. This chapter therefore deals with the use of theory by members of Art and Language in order to distinguish themselves from- and criticize other artists. Before presenting an overview of this chapter, one important distinction must be emphasized: the difference between the use of theory as an integral aspect of a work of art, as in *Hot-Cold* and *Air-Show*, and the use of theory by the artists to distinguish themselves from other artists through deconstruction and critique.

Several important aspects of the use of theory by Art and Language can be indicated. First of all, the use of theory as a form of critique can be divided into two separate sections; firstly, their theoretical ideas on the position and influence of certain art critics, such as Clement Greenberg, and secondly, their use of theory to criticize other conceptual artists. The first part of this division shall be placed within a greater poststructuralist⁵³ context, while the latter section can once again be divided into two sections; Marcel Duchamp on the one hand and contemporary conceptualist artists on the other. This divide can be justified because of their great emphasis on Duchamp, who was, generally

⁵² R. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (New York 1977) 155.

⁵³ By poststructuralist I am referring to the, mainly French, development in sociology and philosophy of the 1970's and 80's. In this case the ideas of Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau.

accepted as one of the first true conceptual artists by many art critics. This view urged members of Art and Language to subject his theoretical ideas to a thorough analysis.⁵⁴

Apart from an analysis of the different uses of theory as a method of critique by Art and Language, the journal, and its members' ideas will be situated in a greater theoretical context through the work of the Dutch art historian Margriet Schavemaker. But first, I will present my own inquiry into Art and Language's practice of distinction.

Against formalism

True pluralism has its virtues, nevertheless. For all his insistence on the need for openness in the approach to art, Greenberg was certainly no pluralist. Yet the example of his discrimination remains indispensable. The era in which we find ourselves is one that has seen a massive increase in the amount and variety of published writing on art. But this era has still to produce a critic who does not appear indecisive and inarticulate in comparison with Clement Greenberg.⁵⁵

This is the concluding paragraph to the introduction of a 1999 essay collection by Clement Greenberg. However unlikely, the author was one of the three remaining members of Art and Language, Charles Harrison. Before proceeding to an analysis of Art and Language's objections towards Greenberg, it is necessary to provide a short context on Greenberg's ideas.

Clement Greenberg situated himself in the American art-world in 1939 with the publication of his essay 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch'. In this essay he set himself up as the protector of high art against its contamination by popular culture. According to him, 'A society, as it becomes less and less able, in the course of its development, to justify the inevitability of its particular forms, breaks up the accepted notions upon which artists and writers must depend in

⁵⁴ This problem was briefly raised in the former chapter, while discussing the choice of precursors. In the next chapter a greater emphasis shall lay on Marcel Duchamp and the philosophical view on his presence within the twentieth century art-world. This philosophical view originated in 1964 through the ideas of the American art critic Arthur C. Danto.

⁵⁵ C. Harrison, 'Introduction' in: C. Greenberg, *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (Oxford 1999) xxx.

large part for communication with their audiences'.⁵⁶ In his crusade against the degradation of high art he raises certain avant-garde artists as the answer to this degradation. In the early 1950's this answer would consist of abstract expressionists such as Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and Barnett Newman. An important aspect of Greenberg's theory is his belief in the infallibility of aesthetics. He believed that one was able to judge a work of art, without knowledge of its context and creator.

This preference of pure form over context and artistic intention can be attributed to the movement in art critique called formalism. Although formalism already existed in the nineteenth century, under Greenberg, and especially his successor Michael Fried, it underwent a revival in the 1950's and early 1960's. Formalism as a theory of art is characterized by Frances Colpitt as 'generally limited to issues raised by the appearance of a work of visual art, at the expense of extra-artistic references and literary content, which, in any case, were seldom pertinent to prevailing styles of art'.⁵⁷ So, formalism can be described as a manner of art-valuation through appearance instead of 'extra-artistic references'.

Another interesting Greenbergian idea is that of continuity. According to him, 'Art is, among many other things, continuity. Without the past of art, and without the need and compulsion to maintain past standards of excellence, such a thing as Modernist art would be impossible'.⁵⁸ This idea of continuity illustrates the importance of the following post-modern rupture. When, according to Greenberg's Whig interpretation, every new development within the art-world is a reaction to and elaboration of the former, then post-modern art could be seen to fit perfectly into this development. However, as Art and Language's objections towards formalism will indicate, Greenberg's idea of progress seems to have come to a standstill in the second part of the 1960's. This idea of progress shall be further elaborated in the next chapter when discussing Arthur Danto's idea of 'the end of art'.

Throughout the first years of publication, Art and Language has made its aversion to Greenberg's formalist, aesthetic theory very clear. Harrison's

⁵⁶ C. Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' in: *Partisan Review* 6:5 (1939) 34-49, 34.

⁵⁷ F. Colpitt, 'The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art' in: M. Corris (ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (Cambridge 2004) 28-49, 28.

⁵⁸ C. Greenberg, 'Modernist Painting' in: F. Francina (ed.), *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York 1987) 5-10, 10.

introduction to Greenberg's essay-collection can be seen as a perfect summary of that aversion. Apart from this more recent objection, it is interesting to trace early Art and Language critique on Greenberg's modernist theory. In 1969 Joseph Kosuth published his essay 'Art after Philosophy'. Through citations of early conceptual artists such as Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt, and departing from the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea that 'the meaning is the use', Kosuth argues for a necessary separation of aesthetics and art.

In Kosuth's sense, Wittgenstein's theory, which argues for a replacement of the explanatory factor by a description of its use when referring to its meaning, can be utilized to argue against the traditional ideas of modernism. When situating this idea in the artworld, one could argue for a higher philosophical status of conceptual art of modernist art such as abstract expressionism for the reason found above; a pre-set explanatory narrative accompanies Abstract expressionism, while conceptual art remains free to let its meaning dictate the use.

Others went even further than Kosuth by declaring conceptual art as the ultimate form of anti-art, since 'its noncommodity status deprives it of any commercial value', thus being the perfect opposition to Greenberg's preference.⁵⁹ Commodity art, which is made to appeal a certain audience excluding the artists own ideas and interpretations, was here treated equal to Greenberg's modernist preferences such as Abstract expressionism. This negative perspective thus diminishes earlier forms of art to mere commodities.

Through his argument, Kosuth places himself in direct opposition to Greenberg's formalism.⁶⁰ Interestingly enough, as Colpitt argues, Kosuth's direct link between formalism and aesthetics 'appears to be derived more from Greenberg's modus operandi than from engagement with the philosophical discipline'.⁶¹ This observation suggests a certain lack of philosophical expertise on the part of Kosuth's interpretation of Wittgenstein.

Colpitt's remark on Kosuth's objection against formalism goes neatly together with another remark on Art and Language's critique. In 1972, Lizzie

⁵⁹ Colpitt, 'The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art', 30.

⁶⁰ J. Kosuth, 'Art after Philosophy' in: A. Alberro and B. Stimson (ed.), *Conceptual art: a critical anthology* (Cambridge, Mass 1999) 158-177, 160-162.

⁶¹ F. Colpitt, 'The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art' in: M. Corris (ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (Cambridge 2004) 28-48, 29.

Borden stated in her essay 'Three modes of conceptual art' that 'although the paradigms of formalist art and aesthetics have been renounced, *Art-Language* has still adopted many conventions of traditional philosophical thinking, the foremost being a Kantian self-criticism of the kind central to the modernist account of the 1960s'.⁶² This self-criticism was indicated by Clement Greenberg as one of the main theoretical aspects of modernism, interestingly enough, Borden locates this modernist practice at the heart of Art and Language's practice of distinction. These remarks indicate the problems that arise when declaring ones independence from a certain development.

Apart from an attack on formalism, Kosuth's article could serve as an indication of Art and Language's preoccupation with Duchamp's status as the first conceptualist. According to Kosuth, 'it is Marcel Duchamp whom we can credit with giving art its own identity'. To further illustrate Kosuth's recognition of Duchamp's preoccupation with concepts, he uses him as a standard measure by referring to 'artists after Duchamp', and when discussing the works of French Impressionists such as Manet and Cézanne describing them as 'timid and ambiguous by comparison with Duchamp's'.⁶³ As indicated, after the elaboration of the relation between Greenberg and Art and Language, Duchamp's status will receive further attention.

When contributing to the second issue of *Art-Language*, Joseph Kosuth raised one of the problems of Greenberg's idea of aesthetic judgement. This idea, that 'aesthetic judgements are given and contained in the immediate experience of art (and) are not arrived at afterwards through reflection or thought', reduces the art-work, according to Kosuth, to a mere 'dumb subject matter to critical discourse'. The objection to be found here is that this interpretation of art valuation degrades the artist to a point where he is 'omitted from the art activity in that he is merely the carpenter of the predicate, and does not take part in the conceptual engagement'.⁶⁴ This ruling idea of modernist art thus left little room for conceptual artists.

Harrison once again, summarizes another example of Art and Language's critique towards Greenberg. When discussing Greenberg's idea of modernism, he

⁶² L. Borden, 'Three modes of conceptual art' in: *Artforum* 10 no. 10 (1972) 71.

⁶³ Kosuth, 'Art after Philosophy', 164.

⁶⁴ J. Kosuth, 'Introductory note by the American editor' in: *Art-Language* vol. 1 no. 2 (1970) 1-4, 1.

states that 'according to this account (Greenberg's) the condition of modernism imposes a demand of specialization; the virtue of each art form is secure to the extent that it is entrenched within its own area of competence.'⁶⁵ In essence, as long as artists adhere to the rules set by their 'own area of competence' it will be accepted by the dominant discourse. According to Harrison, this Greenbergian account excludes other movements simply for not fitting within the proposed theory. Among these movements are art forms deviating from the modernist rules of aesthetic such as Dadaism, Constructivism, Futurism and Surrealism. Harrison thus marginalizes modernism to a 'purified canon'.⁶⁶ The problem here is the fact that Greenberg positions himself as an authority deciding what acceptable forms of art are. Instead of suggesting a broader theory Greenberg is setting the boundaries of visual art. This can also be seen in Greenberg's Flatness theory, which was heavily ridiculed by the author Tom Wolfe in the 1970's. This theory was only concerned with the visual aspect of art, more specific painting, and excluded all other forms not adhering to these rules.⁶⁷

Concluding, Harrison presents his own definition of modernism; 'I mean modernism as substantial history and theory that has been close to practice and informative to practice; not just the standard conflation and caricature of Greenberg and Fried'.⁶⁸ In contrast to Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, Harrison argues for a wider concept of modernism, including all aspects and processes of artworks, not just the artworks themselves. Through this view, Harrison distances himself from a direct objection against modernist painting, leaving only his critique of Greenberg as a point of discussion.

In his *Essays on Art and Language* Harrison further elaborates his critique on Greenberg's formalism. He describes Greenberg's practice as 'not in fact the complete annihilation of an alternative critical tradition, but rather a complex process of cultural domination'.⁶⁹ This interpretation forms the perfect example of a point of view suitable for the following poststructuralist interpretation. By stating that 'in recent years much historical work has been done to connect the

⁶⁵ C. Harrison, *Conceptual Art and Painting* (Cambridge, Mass. 2001) 12.

⁶⁶ Harrison, *Conceptual Art and Painting*, 13.

⁶⁷ T. Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York 1975) 55.

⁶⁸ C. Harrison, *Conceptual Art and Painting* (Cambridge, Mass. 2001) 39-40.

⁶⁹ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language* (Oxford 1991) 11.

cultural exportation of abstract expressionism with the aims of American foreign policy (...) it has become easier to understand the ways in which the actual conditions of political, intellectual and moral production of American 'first generation' art were misrepresented, sanitized in the process of its distribution'.⁷⁰ Here Harrison refers to the international promotion of American abstract expressionists contributing to a western cultural hegemony during the Cold War. Harrison's suggested relation between art, art critics and power forms the perfect preface to the following poststructuralist context in which to situate the discussed practice of distinction.

Theoretical choices

A work of art has meaning and Interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. The conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture, is the hidden condition for recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and, more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes.⁷¹

Before the actual analysis of Art and Language's stance against Greenberg it is necessary to make a short, theoretical, detour. Concepts such as discourse, agency and deconstruction shall function as another layer of interpretation of Art and Language's practice of distinction. Although members of Art and Language did not explicitly employ these concepts,⁷² their ideas can be interpreted along poststructuralist lines. When discussing Art and Language's practice of distinction in a poststructuralist context, the first work that springs to mind has to be Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction*. Although Clement Greenberg can be regarded as the determinant of the 'code' in the above quotation, so if I were to focus solely on Clement Greenberg's dominant discourse and his effort to set modern art's standards, Bourdieu's theories would provide insight.

However, in this essay I have situated Art and Language's practice of distinction as part of a larger sub-discourse and therefore in the context of

⁷⁰ Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language*, 11-12.

⁷¹ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Cambridge 1984) 2-3.

Foucault's notion of discourse. This notion of discourse, supplemented by Michel de Certeau's ideas of strategies and tactics, enables me to focus on the interaction between the sub- and dominant discourse. Bourdieu's focus on the manner in which authorities set certain standards, in contrast to Foucault's focus on the workings of an entire discourse and the practical implications of its dominance, thus leads me to focus on the latter in order to analyse Art and Language's relation to its counterparts.

This however, does not imply that Bourdieu's theory is completely wasted on Art and Language's practice of distinction. His ideas of *field* and *habitus* for instance could, from a theoretically different point of view provide a comparable insight into the relation between the Artworld, its critics and its agents, such as Art and Language. If the destination is the analysis of Art and Language and its relation to the dominant discourse, several roads could be taken, the two illustrated being Foucault and de Certeau on the one hand and Bourdieu on the other. It is thus a matter of choice, or perhaps preference, not a question of right or wrong.

Discourse and Art

I shall resort to a short overview of the Foucauldian notion of discourse and Michel de Certeau's idea of agency. An example of the use of both concepts can be noticed in the work of the American artist Douglas Huebler. When Huebler used his camera in a quasi-amateurish manner, he explained this by the statement that a camera is merely a copying device and that there are no aesthetic choices possible. So why were his pictures considered art? The reason is simple; the surrounding narrative provided these average pictures with the value needed to be considered art; 'embracing the flat look of amateur, snapshot and industrial photography, these conceptual uses of photography implicitly posed themselves against the canon of modernist "art photography" that was being institutionally codified at the same moment'.⁷³ This idea of posing oneself against a canon can be interpreted as the acknowledgement of the canon's status

⁷³ L. Kotz, *Wordstobelookedat; Language in 1960's Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 2007) 213-216.

as ruling discourse which, one could argue, makes the photography of Huebler and its surrounding narrative a form of agency.

From another point of view, one could argue that although Huebler can be seen as rebelling against the ruling discourse within photography, in a sense, at the same time he remains a contributor to this discourse considering the creation of a discourse surrounding his work. This possibility of multiple interpretations emphasizes the difficulties one could encounter when employing concepts such as discourse and agency. In the end it remains a matter of whether it seems plausible that an artist can withdraw himself from a ruling discourse. This problem will receive further attention in the fifth chapter when analyzing Art and Language's position within the artworld.

Michel Foucault's notion of discourse can be described as a "group of statements that belong to a single system of formation".⁷⁴ This short definition is in need of further explanation, especially when we take into consideration Foucault's own elaboration of this concept in his *History of Sexuality*. The 'statements' could be explained as all-encompassing in the form of linguistic expressions, whether written, spoken or portrayed. 'System of formation' on the other hand, can be regarded as the accumulation of the rules and regulations to which people in everyday life adhere. Foucault himself described the workings of the concept of discourse extensively in his first volume of the history of sexuality, *The Will to Knowledge* (1976). In this work he emphasizes the all-encompassing functioning of the discourse of sexuality. The discourse of sexuality, so he explains, does not just work as a 'repressive hypothesis', but functions as a broader method of institutionalizing the way sexuality is discussed.⁷⁵ By doing this, he questions the analysis of early-modern sexuality by regarding it as a discourse with certain economic and political goals. Foucault thus enlarges the scope of the discourse of sexuality.

Discourse might single-handedly be the most ubiquitous theoretical concept in cultural studies today. It offers, for instance, possibilities for the emancipation of subaltern-groups, through the revelation of oppressing mechanisms, which allows us to change the rules of discourse, and thus

⁷⁴ S. Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (Harlow 2006) 18.

⁷⁵ M. Foucault, *De Geschiedenis van de Seksualiteit Vol. 1: De Wil tot Weten* (Nijmegen 1984) 12-16.

contribute to the power of counter-discourses. This leads us to the other end of the spectrum, Michel de Certeau's notion of practice and agency. De Certeau described his view on practice and its relation to Foucault's discourse in his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). Here he focuses on the ways in which individuals are able to subtract themselves from the ruling discourse on, for instance, the way in which the city is supposed to be experienced. De Certeau explains the relation of practice to Foucault's discourse as; 'what popular procedures manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally, what "ways of operating" form the counterpart.'⁷⁶

He thus states that certain mechanisms are capable of working, on a more individual level within a ruling discourse. Within this mechanism of practice, two different modes of operation can be distinguished. Firstly, de Certeau introduces the concept of strategy. He describes this as becoming possible 'when a subject of will and power can be isolated from an environment', such as the city or an enterprise. In this case, the city or enterprise is in the position to create new rules independent from the ruling discourse. Secondly, there is the concept of tactic. A tactic can be described as the way we handle choice making in everyday life. According to de Certeau 'a tactic depends on time (...) it must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into opportunities'.⁷⁷ Tactics can thus be seen as a form of appropriation, where for instance an individual can be subjected to the discourse of a city through signposts, he is not compelled to adhere to the suggested route. The individual remains capable of making choices within the structure of the discourse. So appropriating the ruling discourse to one's own use is an important aspect of De Certeau's agency.

The theories of both Michel de Certeau and Michel Foucault could serve as a theoretical context in which Art and Language will be analyzed. As argued earlier, discourse can indicate the structures of power related to the use of critique by artists and art critics' interpretations. When supplemented with, for instance De Certeau's notion of agency, one can not only analyze the functioning of the ruling discourse, such as Greenberg's modernism, but also focus on the

⁷⁶ M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley 1984) 14.

⁷⁷ M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 19.

critique itself and Art and Language's possibilities to subtract themselves from this discourse. In the next part I will present a practical interpretation of the idea of discourse within art. I will return to the idea of discourse and agency in relation to Art and Language and Clement Greenberg in the fifth chapter when analyzing Art and Language's position within the 1960's artworld.

Poststructuralist interpretation

The introduction of the concept of discourse might have predicted the coming interpretation of Art and Language's critique. It is necessary to further explain the relation between Art and Language's practice of distinction and the Foucauldian notion of discourse. When translating the concept of discourse and, to a lesser account, the concept of agency into Art and Language vocabulary, one has to position Greenberg as a contributor, or even instigator, of the modernist discourse. On the other hand, the members of Art and Language can be seen as the (self-proclaimed) holders of agency, because of their ability to subtract themselves from this ruling discourse and create their own sub-discourse.

This idea of discourse and agency within the art-world is clearly illustrated by the British art historian Michael Archer. Baldwin and Atkinson were, according to Archer, 'much more intimately bound up within a discourse carried by a collective whose individual members sought not to be the authors of their work so much as agents in a practice which produced it'.⁷⁸ Here he indicates both the aspects of discourse and agency. First of all he indicates Art and Language as a sub-discourse, but more importantly, in the second place he illustrates the practice of distinction in relation to the concept of agency. The members of Art and Language can be seen as the agents of their own practice of distinction.

⁷⁸ M. Archer, *Art Since 1960* (London 1997) 82.

Understanding discursive variation involves understanding at least two things: one, what produces discursive variation - which is not the same as describing where it occurs in discourse - and two, what it is that discursive variation produces in its turn. The latter perspective appears necessary because of the emphasis on discourse and social change.⁷⁹

When situating Art and Language's ideas on Greenberg's theory in a poststructuralist account an interesting development can be presented. As indicated in the citation above, apart from merely indicating the possible existence of a Foucauldian discourse, the actual 'discursive variation' between old, ruling, discourse and the new, subversive, one is an important aspect of analysis. The aspect of production, how and why a new discourse came into being, is seemingly less interesting than the aspect of reproduction, in this case; did Art and Language uphold their critique to the point of change in the ruling discourse? This question, however, will be addressed in the last chapter, when focussing on the influence of Art and Language within the artworld of the last decades of the twentieth century.

As a further illustration of the discursive relation between Art and Language and formalism I will now continue on the path of Harrison's *Essays on Art and Language*. On an introductory note, Harrison rhetorically questions whether it could be that 'the denizens of a dominant culture generate and sustain an illusion of challenge, thereby appearing to demonstrate their capacity for self-criticism while remaining actually unthreatened and unchanged?'. He amplifies this question as follows; 'in this account of modern art, for example, the enthusiastic authority is wont to speak of each major 'movement' as a 'break with the past'. Yet his relationship with his own past - and with his authority - remains untransformed.'⁸⁰ In this argument, the 'enthusiastic authority' referred to can be no other than Clement Greenberg, the main focus of Art and Language's critique.

As I will indicate later in this chapter, Art and Language's negative stance is remarkable, especially when considering their further critique on fellow conceptual artists. Their objections against Greenberg's theory are, in a sense,

⁷⁹ R. Hasan, 'Analysing discursive variation' in: L. Young and C. Harrison (ed.), *Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis* (London 2004) 15-51, 15.

⁸⁰ C. Harrison, *Essays on Art-Language* (Oxford 1991) 6-7.

completely in line with conceptual art's ethos. However, when taking in account their ongoing critique towards non-modern and even post-modern artists (the best example here is the contributing Sol LeWitt who, within a year found himself in disfavour), their objections against Greenberg could be seen as part of a larger practice of critique. In this practice, Art and Language resists every other form of art or critique not meeting their required standards, they thus form a larger practice in which not the criticised, but the critic is at the centre.

The Painted Word

Before turning to Art and Language's critique within conceptual art, it is useful to remain within the sphere of discourse through Tom Wolfe's account of the art-world in the 1950s and 60s of the twentieth century. In his 1975 work *The Painted Word* he criticizes the art-world and specifically influential figures like Clement Greenberg. To a certain extent Wolfe can be seen using the same argument against Greenberg's modernist theory, there are however several important differences. One of the main differences is the fact that, although Wolfe starts out with an objection against Greenberg, his critique applies to Art and Language's works of art as well. This distinction shall be further explained after a short overview of Wolfe's stance against 'cultureburg'.⁸¹

In his work, Wolfe is not merely criticizing the art critics of the time, although they played an important part in the establishment of the dreaded status quo of the 1950s, he also focuses on the entire process of establishing artists, promoting them, the influence of collectors and museums and the role of the public in creating a certain sphere within the world of art.⁸² However, art critics receive most attention in this work. Basically, *The Painted Word* can be seen as an accusation at critics throughout the twentieth century and their practice of introducing theory to the world of the visual arts. Wolfe locates the beginning of the use of theory as a complementary factor at the hands of the French critic Louis Vauxcelles who coined Georges Braque's new style 'cubism' in

⁸¹ 'Cultureburg' refers to three of the most important post-war art critics; Clement Greenberg, Harold Rosenberg and Leo Steinberg. His critique at the address of (coincidentally) three prominent Jewish art critics has often led to the accusation of anti-Semitism. T. Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York 1975) 43-44.

⁸² T. Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York 1975) 10-14, 23-26.

1908.⁸³ However, Vauxcelles objected to cubism, so although providing this form of art with its well-known name, this does not necessarily imply an acceptance of its qualities by the critic in question.

His main argument is thus that the attribution of a theoretical narrative to a work of art, or artist's oeuvre for that matter, by an influential critic becomes a necessary aspect of art during the first decades of the twentieth century. The evidence is located in Clement Greenberg's boost of Jackson Pollock's work in the 1950s. Together with Harold Rosenberg, who coined the term 'action painting' for Pollock's form of painting, Greenberg built his reputation; 'with each new article Greenberg edged Pollock's status a little higher, from "among the strongest" American abstract artists ever to "the strongest painter of his generation" in America to "the most powerful painter in contemporary America"'. Eventually this elevation of Pollock's status led him to be put forward as 'the greatest American painter of the twentieth century'.⁸⁴

Up to this point Wolfe's critique against Greenberg is not necessarily in contrast with Art and Language's objections, and certainly not with the idea of discourse, Wolfe's account can even be seen as a more practical expression of the same argument. However, when focussing on Wolfe's aversion to the use of theory as a necessary element of art one can not but translate this into a direct critique on Art and Language's theoretical practice. In his final chapter, 'Up the fundamental aperture', Wolfe turns his attention to the new conceptual development in the 1960s. Reflecting on this development, Wolfe notes that 'Greenberg had started it all with his demands for purity, for flatness (...) now, in the mid-1960s, Greenberg made a comeback'.⁸⁵ This was exactly the comeback to which Art and Language was objecting.

However, on the brink of ending this chapter quietly, he presents his grand finale, which directly links him to the practice of Art and Language. He uses a 1970 typed work of art by Lawrence Weiner, who already in 1968 contributed to *Art-Language* with his typed-art titled 'statements', to indicate the ongoing development of the necessity of theory. For Wolfe, this is the highest form of theorized art possible; 'Art made its final flight, (...) one last dendritic

⁸³ Wolfe, *The Painted Word*, 6.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 55-56.

⁸⁵ T. Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York 1975) 85.

synapse, it disappeared up its own fundamental aperture ... and came out the other side as Art Theory! Art Theory pure and simple, words on a page, literature undefiled by vision, (...) as ineffable as the Angels and the Universal Souls'.⁸⁶ So although Wolfe raises the same critique towards Greenberg, he defines Art and Language as part of the same modernist trend. In fact, he not only defines them as part of the modernist trend but as the ultimate end stage of modernism. He argues that the non-visual form of art, as practiced by Art and Language is the perfect example of the combination between art and theory, according to Wolfe one of the main aspects of modernism. Here the difference between Wolfe and Art and Language in their perspective towards modernism becomes clear. Where the members of Art and Language define themselves by their objection against Greenberg's idea of modernism through their theoretical one-upmanship, Wolfe clearly holds a different view. This difference in view becomes even more important in the light of another research on the subject of Art and Language, that of Margriet Schavemaker.

Lonely Images

The comparison between Wolfe's work and Art and Language leads me to a more recent analysis of Art and Language and their use of theory. In *Lonely Images*, the Dutch art historian Margriet Schavemaker analyses the use of language in the visual arts of the 1960s. In this work, she devotes a great deal of attention to Art and Language as a collective and the theoretical context they provided as a method of interpretation.

Schavemaker introduces three different developments in the use of language in visual art; first of all, she focuses on a Dutch exhibition titled *Schrift en Beeld* and its contributors. The core of this exhibition was made up of cubist painting in which letters and writing had a prominent place. Apart from cubist art, other forms such as collage and, more recent, *decollage*, along with forms of handwriting as an integral part of visual art were on display in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum. (Interestingly enough, Schavemaker now holds the position of head of collections and research at that same museum.) After this focus on the

⁸⁶ Wolfe, *The Painted Word*, 97-98.

predominantly German artists represented in this exhibition, she turns to an inquiry into the use of language within the international artist collective *Fluxus*. After discussing artists such as George Brecht, George Macuinias and Ben Vautier and their relation to the depiction of language, the use of Zen philosophy and their legacy, she introduces the final and, for us most interesting part of her work, the critical analysis of Art and Language.

The reason for introducing Schavemaker's view on Art and Language is, as briefly stated above, her connection of Art and Language's critique and Tom Wolfe's *The Painted Word*. Here she acknowledges the similarity between Wolfe and Art and Language on the subject of modernism, but also indicates Wolfe's final remark on conceptual art as a conflicting element in their ideas. It is interesting to note that Schavemaker uses Wolfe to make an argument differing from the one made here. She uses Wolfe as an example of the critique towards Art and Language and the fact that their art could be seen as the 'fulfillment of the modernist art movement that had been dominated by art theory'.⁸⁷ Although Wolfe's critique on modernism art obviously results in a critique on theoretical conceptual art, the fact that he criticizes modernism on comparable grounds cannot be ignored. This results in a difference in focus through an emphasis placed on Tom Wolfe by Schavemaker to illustrate the idea of Art and Language as an ongoing modernist development, where the emphasis on Wolfe in this essay is to supply an example of discourse within art supported by other authors.

Although Schavemaker also acknowledges the idea of discourse, in the context of Wolfe's neglect of Art and Language's critique and their same goal of 'exposing the hidden art critical discourse that created the idea that modernist art was about a pure visual experience',⁸⁸ she does not further elaborate this idea of discourse. Here lies the main difference between Schavemaker's account of Art and Language and the one presented in this essay. This difference can be further illustrated by Schavemaker's use of French poststructuralist thought to analyze Art and Language. She focuses on the possible application of Foucault's ideas, as proposed in his 1966 *Les Mots et les Choses*, to the content of their art, though concluding that Art and Language held serious objections against this form of

⁸⁷ M. Schavemaker, *Lonely Images* (Amsterdam 2007) 235-236.

⁸⁸ Schavemaker, *Lonely Images*, 236.

'French Thinking'. Her use of *Les Mots et les Choses* as a focus on the relation between art and theory stands in contrast to another possible use of Foucault's *Les Mots et les Choses*. In this work Foucault focuses on the paradigm shift in the relation between the visual and de textual. This focus could then be utilized as a theoretical explanation of the manner in which Art and Language position themselves within the art-world.⁸⁹ The difference in use of Foucault's ideas on the paradigm shift is the subject. Where Schavemaker focuses on the works of art and the changing relation between the visual and the textual, one could focus on Art and Language's writings, and inevitably, their practice of distinction as well, as done in this essay. It is thus not the case of a difference in theory, but the subject to which one applies that theory.

Although offering a different focus on Art and Language, Schavemaker's analysis is nevertheless a useful one. It appears to be the most comprehensive account of the journal written by an 'objective' author, objective in the sense that all other comprehensive histories or analyses are written by either former or current members of Art and Language. It is however necessary to stress the difference in perspective in the light of turning to the journal's practice of distinction in relation to other artists. This relation between Art and Language and other conceptual artists, most noticeably Marcel Duchamp, is a further illustration of the manner in which the journal's members positioned themselves within the art-world.

Against conceptual art

To further illustrate Art and Language's practice of distinction; it did not stop with their objections against Greenberg's ideas. Contemporary conceptual artists were also subjected to fierce critique. In the previous chapter, the reaction to Lippard and Chandler's *Dematerialization* was set forth as part of the developmental context in which to interpret Art and Language. This reaction, when situated in this theoretical context, can be indicated as an important aspect of the practice of distinction.

⁸⁹ M. Schavemaker, *Lonely Images* (Amsterdam 2007) 210-211.

Apart from their disagreement with Lippard and Chandler on the subject of conceptual art, it seems like the journal's early members were also occupied with creating a unique position for themselves by criticizing other, contemporary, conceptual artists such as Robert Barry (b. 1936) and, of course, Marcel Duchamp, who was viewed as the founder of conceptual art by the general art public. Where the critique towards Duchamp is fundamental, Barry was one of several artists who, 'from an Art and Language point of view' were not taken seriously as conceptual artists.

It is an attempt to point out some of the inconsistencies which the Art and Language artists feel to be involved in much recent work, it is hoped that the pointing out of these inconsistencies will clarify the work of Art and Language artists if only by virtue of showing a considerable gap in both method and technique between them and some other conceptual artists.⁹⁰

Terry Atkinson does not beat around the bush when using the words 'inconsistencies' and 'considerable gap'. In his 35-page essay 'From an Art and Language point of view', published in the second issue of *Art-Language*, he situates the group, through the argument of theoretical perfection, above and beyond most other conceptual artists. One interesting example is that of Robert Barry, an American conceptual artist who experimented with formless art in the late-1960s. Atkinson reacted to the recent publication of Barry's 'Psychic Series, 1969'. These series consisted of statements concerning his theoretical state of mind, such as; 'All the things I know but of which I am not at the moment thinking' and 'everything in the unconscious perceived by the senses but not noted by the conscious mind during trips to Baltimore, during the summer of 1967'.⁹¹

These statements were the cause for Atkinson's critique. In a highly theoretical manner he deconstructed these sentences to arrive at the conclusion that Barry's form of art was nothing but 'sheer nonsense'.⁹² Through philosophical questions such as 'what is it to perceive something?' and 'does he maintain that the action of perceiving through the sense is similar in both the

⁹⁰ T. Atkinson, 'From an Art and Language point of view' *Art-Language Vol. 1.2* (1970) 25.

⁹¹ Atkinson, 'From an Art and Language point of view', 36-37.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 40-41

conscious and unconscious state?' Atkinson indicates the shortcomings of Barry's work.⁹³ Atkinson's basic argument is therefore that Barry is theoretically incapable of producing the sort of art which Art and Language produces. With a touch of arrogance he admits his 'shortcoming of my analytic-existential dichotomy analogy' needed to execute a perfect theoretical analysis, this shortcoming however, did not stop him in his crusade against Barry.⁹⁴

In Barry's work there does seem to be a trace of the simple-minded and mundane ghost of Marcel Duchamp.⁹⁵

The form of critique passed on Barry is essentially the same as the objections raised against Duchamp's status as the founding father of conceptual art. Before turning our attention towards these objections, however, another interesting development within the ranks of Art and Language can be noted. In the same essay, Atkinson argues against LeWitt's status as both a member of Art and Language and as a contributor to a larger conceptual movement. This conceptual movement, to which Robert Barry belonged as well, was, according to the prominent figures within Art and Language, inferior to their own artistic practice. The fact that LeWitt influenced both groups, without a renunciation of his participation in the latter one, lead Art and Language, barely a year after LeWitt's contribution to the first issue, to sever all connections with LeWitt, accepting the fact that 'Sol LeWitt would no longer be prepared to lend any support at all to the Art and Language view'.⁹⁶

Already in the first issue of *Art-Language* Marcel Duchamp was a (negative) point of reference for Atkinson, Baldwin and Bainbridge. In the introduction Atkinson's and Baldwin's *crane*⁹⁷ is placed in opposition to Duchamp's *Bottle Rack*. The main argument against any comparison with Duchamp's work is the fact that he merely used the technique of 'declaration', (declaring a ready-made object as art, and placing it in an art context such as a

⁹³ Ibid., 39.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 53.

⁹⁵ Atkinson, 'From an Art and Language point of view', 41

⁹⁶ Ibid., 35.

⁹⁷ *Crane* is a work of art consisting of a (theoretical) crane which shifts identity according to its context, whether it is placed in a museum or on a playground, every time its identity changes.

museum) whereas Atkinson and Baldwin focused on the possibilities of different identities of the object. Apart from the comparison between both works of art, a general statement is made against the idea that 'Duchamp's influence is all-pervasive'. They stated that 'it is certain that at least the British group will disagree with this assessment', thus rejecting Duchamp's status as a founder of conceptual art.⁹⁸ This introduction, however, apparently made the difference between them and Duchamp not entirely clear, for Atkinson returned to the subject of difference in the earlier discussed essay 'From an Art and Language point of view'.

In this essay, apart from the objections against LeWitt and Barry mentioned above, their negative stance against Duchamp was made perfectly clear. The division of this rather extensive essay into three separate sections left room for an entire section to be dedicated to theoretical criticism of Duchamp. Apart from this section the negative tone about Duchamp can be noticed throughout the entire essay. For instance, in the introduction Atkinson reserves a paragraph to return to the introduction in the former issue of *Art-Language*, which apparently had been interpreted by their readers as an acceptance of Duchamp's status, although the cited sentence would, in my opinion, leave no room for any misinterpretation. The simple statement 'I believe Duchamp to be vastly over-rated as a thinker' was to make up for any vagueness left after the publication of the first issue. Another statement along the same line: 'Contrary to Richard Hamilton's view that there is plenty there in Duchamp's work to significantly interpret, I believe there is plenty to show that there is very little there to significantly interpret' was meant to solidify their objections. Showing that there was 'very little to significantly interpret' was exactly what Atkinson did in the final section of this essay.⁹⁹

The third section thus functions as a theoretical deconstruction of Duchamp's essay 'The Creative Act', in which Duchamp examines the relation between the artist, spectator and the creative process in a more or less philosophical manner:

⁹⁸ 'introduction' *Art-Language vol.1 no.1* (1969) 4-7

⁹⁹ T. Atkinson, 'From an Art and Language point of view' *Art-Language vol.1 no.2* (1970) 25.

The creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualification and thus adds his contribution to the creative act. This becomes even more obvious when posterity gives a final verdict and sometimes rehabilitates forgotten artists.¹⁰⁰

Where Duchamp's article merely consists of two pages, Atkinson takes the liberty to analyze his essay in seven pages. He concludes his analysis on a sarcastic note stating that 'I find his assertions incomprehensible. But the fault must rest with me, it could not possibly rest with an artist as eminent as Duchamp'.¹⁰¹

The objections against Marcel Duchamp lead us back to the objections against Clement Greenberg, both established figures within the world of art. This leads me to a new question; how can Art and Language's ongoing critical stance be interpreted when taking into account that their critique is directed against figures more successful than themselves? This is an issue to be raised in the final chapter, after discussing Arthur Danto's perspective on the 1960's art-world. Through Danto's perspective on the mechanisms of the world of art, one could situate the practice of distinction in a broader context. This philosophical context leads me to the next chapter in which I will further elaborate on Danto's idea of 'the end of art'.

¹⁰⁰ R. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York 1959) 77.

¹⁰¹ T. Atkinson, 'From an Art and Language point of view' *Art-Language vol.1 no.2* (1970) 60.

4. Danto and 'the end of art'

Telling artworks from other things is not so simple a matter, even for native speakers, and these days one might not even be aware he was on artistic terrain without an artistic theory to tell him so. And part of the reason for this lies in the fact that (...) one use of theories, in addition to helping us discriminate art from the rest, consists of making art possible.¹⁰²

In 1964 Arthur C. Danto (b. 1924) provided the world of art with his perspective on the recent, that is the first half of the twentieth century, developments in the 'Artworld', a term coined by him to include all different facets of art, for instance artists, critics, theorists, museums and the public.

Several different aspects of Danto's idea can be singled out. These aspects include his most cited works and earlier discussed subjects such as Marcel Duchamp and Clement Greenberg, two influential figures without whom a critical analysis of twentieth-century art seems futile. Firstly, it is necessary to review his famous article 'The Artworld', since he situated himself within the world of art through this essay. This essay, as cited above, can be seen as the forerunner to a wide array of Danto's publications on the same subject, and since it was written in the same decade as the first publications by Art and Language it functions as the basis for an interesting comparison between both views on the relation between art and theory.

Apart from an overview of Danto's first major essay, it is interesting to turn to his other essay collections for a more detailed view of his ideas. Here, I will discuss two important works which show the development of Danto's view on modern art. First of all, the earlier mentioned *After the End of Art* and, secondly, *De Komedie van de overeenkomsten*, A Dutch collection of essays by Danto covering a time-span of nearly twenty years of thought (1981-2000). Both collections function as a conveniently arranged outline of his ideas. After this fairly general overview, I shall resort to a more detailed inquiry into Danto's ideas on Marcel Duchamp and, especially, Clement Greenberg.

¹⁰² A.C. Danto, 'The Artworld', in: J.M. Thompson (ed.), *20th Century Theories of Art* (Ottawa 1990) 531-545, 532.

I shall place Danto's ideas in a greater context by focusing on the critique received after the publication of his work. Through the inclusion of the objections against his ideas an overall, workable, account can be proposed for the analysis of Art and Language's practice of distinction and the idea of discourse within the world of art.

Danto's philosophy

A quick glance at a list of Danto's publications immediately teaches us one thing; his interest in the workings of the world of art derives from his philosophical streak. In the years between 1965 and 1973 he published three works concerning philosophy, only to be followed by a biography of Jean-Paul Sartre in 1975.

This philosophical inlay can be seen as the basis for Danto's critique on the world of art. Another interesting manifestation the influence of philosophy on his ideas is his 1999 work *Philosophizing Art*, which is a collection of essays written on the same art critical subjects as, for instance, his *After the end of art*, but in a more philosophical tone, including philosophical ideas from the past two centuries to illustrate his arguments. In this work an interesting essay concerning Andy Warhol stands out, 'The Philosopher as Andy Warhol'. This was a reaction to Warhol's own self-depiction as an illiterate, a-philosophical artist. Here, Danto shows respect for Warhol's ideas on art.¹⁰³ However, Danto's admiration of Warhol's philosophy can be placed opposite of the critique on Warhol's art offered in 'the Artworld'. This contrast leads me to Danto's first and foremost comment on art in the 1960's, through which he secured himself a position amongst art critics and theoreticians alike.

¹⁰³ A.C. Danto, *Philosophizing Art* (Berkeley 1999) 61-62

The Artworld

In 1965 Danto published his comment on the state of contemporary art. Here he introduces the 'imitation theory of art', a widely held pre-twentieth century view on art which entailed the idea that art should, first and foremost, be a realistic portrayal of the object, person or landscape in question. Danto indicates the rise of post-impressionist painters, such as Van Gogh, Cézanne and Gauguin as a defying factor in the supremacy of the imitation theory.

Instead of a 'revolution in taste', a 'theoretical revision of rather considerable proportions' was required for the acceptance of post-impressionist paintings as artworks.¹⁰⁴ This revision came in the form of the idea that these painters were not so much unsuccessful in their creation of an imitation as successful in their creation of new forms. When situating this idea in the late-1950's and early-1960, Danto concludes that pop artists, as exemplified by Roy Liechtenstein's huge portrayals of comic strips, can still be considered creating new forms; the simple procedure of enlarging of a graphic novel image, locates it in the category of art.¹⁰⁵ Now, while engaging himself in pop art, Danto indicates the problems rising when reviewing other artists, such as Robert Rauschenberg and Claes Oldenburg.

Both artists created sculptures that were identical to a 'normal' bed. These beds, although slightly differing in their mode of display (Rauschenberg's bed hung on a wall) or their form (Oldenburg's bed was a rhomboid), were subject to questions on their use and the possibility that someone might actually try to sleep in them.¹⁰⁶ Danto describes this problem as follows; 'to mistake an artwork for a real object is no great feat when an artwork is the real object one mistakes it for. The problem is how to avoid such errors, or to remove them once they are made'.¹⁰⁷ In this case, this problem was easily solved by placing them in a their rightful context, the museum or gallery. At the same time, the fact that

¹⁰⁴ A.C. Danto, 'The Artworld', in: J.M. Thompson (ed.), *20th Century Theories of Art* (Ottawa 1990) 531-545, 533.

¹⁰⁵ Although Danto only indicates the rescaling of Liechtenstein's image, the depiction of this image and the occasional accompanying texts were different. Especially his use of a grid to form a dotted fill differs from his original model.

¹⁰⁶ A.C. Danto, 'The Artworld', in: J.M. Thompson (ed.), *20th Century Theories of Art* (Ottawa 1990) 531-545, 535.

¹⁰⁷ Danto, *The Artworld*, 535.

both works of art showed slight differences in relation to a normal bed made them less prone to be perceived as such. Another development however, that of Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*, can be seen as a perfect illustration of the problem outlined by Danto.

Mr. Andy Warhol, the Pop artist, displays facsimiles of Brillo cartons, piled high, in neat stacks, as in the stockroom of the supermarket. They happen to be of wood, painted to look like cardboard, and why not?¹⁰⁸

Danto questions the relation between Warhol's Brillo boxes and the actual soap-pad containing boxes as produced in a factory. This might be common knowledge, but I cannot but stress the similarity in terms of production since he coined his New York studio, located on East 47th Street, *The Factory* for its assembly line-like production of, for instance, serigraphs. The question here remains why 'the Brillo people cannot manufacture art and why Warhol cannot *but* make artworks'. To further illustrate the ridiculousness of this situation Danto continues on an apparently annoyed, popular note; 'Why not just scrawl his signature across one? Or crush one up and display it as *Crushed Brillo Box* ("a protest against mechanization...") or simply display a Brillo carton as *Uncrushed Brillo Box* ("A bold affirmation of the plastic authenticity of industrial...")? Is this man a kind of Midas, turning whatever he touches into the gold of pure art?'.¹⁰⁹

Danto's objections against the kind of art produced by Warhol are clear, there is no manner to distinguish Warhol's box from the real Brillo box and the only reason why this box is accepted as a work of art is Warhol's saying so. Apart from Andy Warhol's authority on the subject of defining art, another aspect contributing to its status as art is the gallery. Danto indicates the gallery as the main responsible actor for the artists cannot be blamed for trying to make and sell art. The gallery occupies the same function regarding Rauschenberg's bed and in Warhol's Brillo box. This gallery however, is strongly joined to a certain

¹⁰⁸ Danto, *The Artworld*, 540.

¹⁰⁹ A.C. Danto, 'The Artworld', in: J.M. Thompson (ed.), *20th Century Theories of Art* (Ottawa 1990) 531-545, 540.

theory of art for it is 'the theory that takes it up into the world of art, and keeps it from collapsing into the real object which it is'.¹¹⁰

Conveniently enough, Danto provides the theory which could explain the acceptance of this new form of art. According to Danto, 'there is an *is* that figures predominantly in statements concerning artworks which is not the *is* of either identity or predication; nor is it the *is* of existence, of identification, or some special *is* made up to serve a philosophical end (...) I shall designate this the *is* of *artistic identification*'.¹¹¹ This artistic identification is exactly the answer to the earlier posed question 'what makes it art?', so the *is*, as indicated by Danto, can be equated with the theory of art which justifies an object's status as art. This essay positioned Danto as an art critic, or perhaps theorist, within the 'artworld'. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze the manner in which, especially in his essay 'the end of art' and his more recent work *After the End of Art*, Danto further elaborates his ideas on the then current state of the artworld.

The end of Art

This book is devoted to the philosophy of art history, the structure of narratives, the end of art, and the principles of art criticism. (...) To glorify art of previous periods, however glorious it was, is to will an illusion as to the philosophical nature of art. The world of contemporary art is the price we pay for philosophical illumination, but this, of course, is but one of the contributions to philosophy for which the latter is in art's debt.¹¹²

In the introduction to *After the End of Art*, Danto resists the postmodernist notion of *everything goes* in relation to art. He explicitly addresses the structure of narratives, which is interesting in the context of discourse and art. Andy Warhol's Brillo Box made Danto reconsider the very principles of art. No longer could art be judged by its appearance, since there was no actual difference between a picture of Warhol's Brillo box and an image of a normal Brillo box, or for that matter, between a cardboard and a plywood box. This was, according to Danto the actual end of art.

¹¹⁰ Danto, *The Artworld*, 541.

¹¹¹ Danto, *The Artworld*, 536-537.

¹¹² A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) xiv.

Danto's main issue is perhaps most clearly formulated in an essay written as a reaction to the critique on his work. In this essay, 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense' Danto summarizes his basic view held throughout his work.

In the mid-1960's, however, it was no longer clear that we could pick the art-works out from the non-artworks all that easily, since art was being made which resembled non-artworks as closely as may be required. (...) So what couldn't be an artwork, for all we knew? The answer was that one could not tell by looking. You could not after all pick the artworks out like cashews from a pot with peanuts.¹¹³

So if art was no longer recognizable, the theory surrounding a work of art became prominent and, at the same time, the actual *raison d'être* of these artworks. Danto's idea of the 'end of art' was originally Hegel's. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Hegel proposed three different stages of art which were to be followed by the end of art, for art was no longer a necessity within society. The final stage, romanticism, which took place in Hegel's own time, would gradually fade. Hegel's explanation for this, as given by Danto, is that 'The End-of-Art Thesis proclaims our liberation from having to find sensuous equivalents for the content of thought. Thinking has risen above and beyond what art is capable of. Art belongs to a less evolved mode of thinking than what the mind, not only ideally but actually, is capable of'.¹¹⁴ This end however, came later than Hegel thought, not directly after his era of romanticism but more than a hundred years later through the imitation of a soap-box.

Another aspect are Danto's observations on the use of sociological concepts in the world of art, such as discourse and deconstruction. He shows how these concepts were situated within the artworld and how museums, art critics, catalogues and academies used these terms to promote art and formulate a narrative surrounding a particular movement. Danto ascribes this tendency to the development of using a new form of communication. Through postmodern theory, such as post-structuralism, art itself would become inevitably postmodern.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ A.C. Danto, 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense' *History & Theory* 37 (1998) 127-143, 129-130.

¹¹⁴ A.C. Danto, 'Hegel's End of Art Thesis' (1999) 3-4.

¹¹⁵ A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) 144-146

In a sense, Danto is describing exactly the development which occurred among the members of Art and Language. According to him, in the late-1960's and early-1970s, 'artists turned away from art as defined by modernist criteria (...) (they) began to sense a certain relevance to what they were doing in the postmodernist texts that did fill the gap left by (...) modernist art criticism'.¹¹⁶ The use of poststructuralist theory, as for instance Danto's example of the French literary theorist Jean-François Lyotard, however, works both ways. I believe, as argued earlier, that post-structuralist theory could simultaneously be utilized to analyze art. It is interesting to note that Danto does not make the same claim. These theories were used as a manner of critique towards the ruling modernist discourse, not as a form of self-reflection on the artist's own participation in this discourse through critique. He further elaborates the Marxist critique on the workings of modernist art by noting the idea that 'artists who worked "outside the system" could regard themselves as agents for social change and even revolution (...) making art which, to use a term which came into favored use, *subverted* the institutional status quo by circumventing the institutions deconstruction showed to be oppressive'.¹¹⁷ Although this seems to fit perfectly within the, in the previous chapter, outlined practice of distinction by Art and Language, Danto does not find this Marxist interpretation fulfilling.

Danto does not disagree with the account of a deconstructionist approach to modernism, however, according to him it cannot encompass the deeper philosophical structure lying at the base of this development. The end of art, in his view, should be interpreted as a lack of a developmental vehicle such as Greenberg's modernist theory; so in essence, artists were liberated to go their own way. One could question whether the results of this liberation are desirable, such as Warhol's Brillo box which completely relies on the institution and the artist's narrative. This liberation thus resulted in a democratization of the art-world, or as Danto formulates it 'a Babel of unconverging artistic conversations'.¹¹⁸ The question remains whether the institutions of the artworld transformed in the same speed as the artists and the surrounding theory or if those museums, critics, galleries and the audience remained the same, thus

¹¹⁶ Danto, *After the End of Art*, 145.

¹¹⁷ A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) 145-146

¹¹⁸ Danto, *After the End of Art*, 148.

continuing to expect certain conditions. This question becomes more interesting when posed in the light of the next chapter, in which I will return to the subject of Art and Language's practice of distinction for this can be seen as the perfect example of this newly gained freedom.

Recurring subjects: Duchamp & Greenberg

I am anxious to discuss Greenberg from this angle because his way of doing art criticism has become extremely problematic in an artworld almost defined by Duchamp as its generative thinker.¹¹⁹

The quotation above is interesting in relation to Art and Language on two different levels. First of all, Danto sets Greenberg's ideas forth as problematic, thus distinguishing himself from this formalist trend and agreeing with Art and Language on this subject. The second idea to be extracted from this sentence, is that of Marcel Duchamp as a world defining, generative thinker, which contradicts Art and Language's fierce objections against Duchamp's status as expressed in this earlier cited sentence; 'I believe Duchamp to be vastly over-rated as a thinker'.¹²⁰

The fact that Danto handles the same subjects as Art and Language can be seen as an indication of the leading position of both the artist and the critic. Under the header 'from aesthetics to art criticism', Danto sets off on a mission to indicate the flaws in Greenberg's theory. Danto demonstrates that Greenberg's view is entirely grounded on the interpretation of Emmanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement*. The main problem in following a Kantian interpretation of art is, according to Danto, the fact that it 'segregates form from content'. Danto places this Kantian idea opposite to his own source of inspiration, Hegel. Hegel suggested two components of art criticism; first of all, the content of art and secondly the 'work of art's means of representation'. When both aspects are taken into consideration, the critic should be able to propose a clear view on the object in question.¹²¹ So basically, the faults in Greenberg's mode of critique can

¹¹⁹ A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) 84-85.

¹²⁰ T. Atkinson, 'From an Art and Language point of view' *Art-Language vol.1 no.2* (1970) 25.

¹²¹ A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) 97-98.

be traced to an earlier opposition between both German philosophers. However, ascribing Greenberg's critique to a (in)correct interpretation of Kant is too simple, for Danto returns to the subject of Greenberg's art criticism in the context of Marcel Duchamp.

To further illustrate the problems rising when merely taking into account aesthetics Danto turns to the reception of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* in 1917. This *Fountain* was basically a urinal placed upside down with the autograph of Duchamp's alias written on it. Through this display of readymade objects Duchamp tried to demonstrate that aesthetic beauty was no 'defining attribute of art'. In this case, Duchamp's attempt to separate art from a pure aesthetic valuation concurs with Danto's embrace of Hegel's idea of a duality of form and content. As Danto argues: 'a distinction I regard as crucial between aesthetics objects and works of art which Duchamp made central to his practice, but which Greenberg hardly took notice of as philosophically important'. Although Duchamp's ready-mades were, against his intention, admired for their beauty, his comment on the valuation of art still remains. When ignoring Danto's perspective on Duchamp's grounds for proposing his ready-mades, in essence, one could trace Warhol's Brillo box to same category of the fountain regarding its acceptance by the artworld. In both situations the simple fact of an artist's declaration turns the object into a work of art.¹²²

Concluding, one could state that Danto's objections against Greenberg are grounded on its emphasis of form over content, while Danto argues for a duality between both aspects within art. In the next chapter I will focus on the ideas of Danto, Greenberg and Art and Language in relation to each other. Where Greenberg is criticized by both Danto and Art and Language their grounds differ heavily, while at the same time, their ideas on the relation between aesthetics and theory also form a basis for conflict.

Danto's view on the artworld leads me, once again, to review Wolfe's perspective on the same matter. Although *The Painted Word* was officially published in 1975, roughly a decade after Danto's 'Artworld', a striking resemblance can be noted. Without suggesting an influence of Danto on Wolfe, the sentence 'In short: frankly, these days, without a theory to go with it, I can't

¹²² A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) 84-85.

see a painting'¹²³ cannot but be compared to 'one might not even be aware he was on artistic terrain without an artistic theory to tell him so'. Although both authors propose the same general idea, their argumentation could not be more different. Where Wolfe offers a fairly popular account of the world of art in the second half of the twentieth century, Danto provides a far more art-critical, or perhaps, theoretical account. This art-critical account shall function as the basis for a further analysis of Art and Language's position within the world of art.

Although Wolfe may differ distinctively from Danto in his raising of Duchamp as the beginning of the end of art and his far more popular and practical account, both authors stress, in essence, the same development. This development, the fading of traditional markers for the indication of art and the accompanying rise of new forms of more theoretical art, such as Art and Language's conceptual art, will function as a context in the next chapter. In this chapter, Art and Language's practice of distinction shall be placed in this wider philosophical context to answer questions raised through the idea of art discourse.

¹²³ T. Wolfe, *The Painted Word* (New York 1975) 1-2.

5. The End of Art (& Language)

Conceptual art is not just another particular kind of art, in the sense of a further specification of an existing genus, but an attempt at a fundamental redefinition of art as such, a transformation of its genus: a transformation in the relationship of sensuousness to conceptuality within the ontology of the artwork which challenges its definition as the object of a specifically 'aesthetic' (that is, 'non-conceptual') or quintessentially 'visual' experience.¹²⁴

When returning to the subject of Art and Language's distinction, it is necessary to situate the journal and its members in the context of the previous chapter. As the British historian of philosophy Peter Osborne underlines in the citation above, conceptual art can be seen as 'an attempt at a fundamental redefinition of art'. This definition remains, through its emphasis on the subversive factor within conceptual art, basically within Arthur Danto's idea of the 1960's artworld as 'a Babel of unconverging artistic conversations'.¹²⁵

Before analyzing the relationship between Art and Language and Danto's view on the artworld I will briefly summarize his views. As Danto argues, art of the 1960's marked a turning point in the history of art. The disappearance of the traditional developmental vehicles, such as Clement Greenberg's modernism, resulted in a wide array of possibilities for new forms of art. Conceptual art, alongside for instance pop art, can be seen as an example of these new forms. Although the disappearance of a dominant theory provided the breeding ground for new theories, it resulted in the lack of a clear direction of art. This so called 'end of art' was already predicted by the 19th century German philosopher Georg Hegel, and thus reinterpreted and relocated by Danto to suit the 1960's.

The second part of Danto's view on the 1960's artworld, is a warm welcome of new forms of art theory as provided by, for instance Andy Warhol. Although Warhol can be seen as the instigator of Danto's views through his exhibition of the unrecognizable Brillo box, Danto portrays him as a true philosopher. This is the other side of the fading of traditional theories. When Greenberg's view on modernism became discredited during the 1960's, other

¹²⁴ P. Osborne, 'Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy' in: M. Newman and J. Bird (ed.), *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (London 1999) 48.

¹²⁵ A.C. Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997) 148.

theoretical views took its place. However, as Danto argues in *After the End of Art*, he objected to Greenberg's view because of his one-sided Kantian interpretation of art. Well, interestingly enough, Art and Language can be seen as the exact opposite of Clement Greenberg. Whereas Greenberg advocates the importance of form over content, Art and Language argues for a content-based form of art. This contradiction leaves Arthur Danto in between both views with his view of a perfect balance between form and content.

Art and Language's distinction

This recurring comparison between Greenberg and Art and Language leads me to situate Art and Language further into Danto's idea of the end of art. As indicated, Danto argues that in the 1960's liberation in the world of art took place through the disappearance of an all-encompassing theory. This theory gave way to new initiatives. One of these initiatives, Art and Language, remained in opposition to this former discourse. So, when combining Danto's idea that Greenberg's modernism had already reached its limits in the first half of the 1960's with the fact that Art and Language continued to position itself against Greenberg as late as 1969,¹²⁶ an interesting development can be noticed: Although Greenberg's influence was on its return, Art and Language still found the need to criticize his ideas in order to position themselves within the artworld. The first two volumes of *Art-Language* were, as argued in the third chapter, particularly negative. Apart from their critique on Clement Greenberg, other conceptual artists such as Barry, Morris, LeWitt and of course Marcel Duchamp were considered inferior. This critique, through which they distinguished themselves, was by no means contributing to their form of art; in fact, one could state that this negative stance overshadowed their own works of art.

Art and Language's practice of distinction runs parallel to the creation of their theoretical art. However, after the first decade of their existence, these two forms seem to join. The critical part remained an important aspect of the remaining Art and Language members but their focus started to shift towards the

¹²⁶ See Joseph Kosuth's 1969 article 'Art after Philosophy'.

representation of their own ideas instead of a mere offering of critique. This point of convergence shall be discussed later on in this chapter after a further elaboration of their practice of distinction.

The critique offered by members of Art and Language can be seen as an ideal method of positioning oneself within the 'democratized' artworld. In this artworld, here remaining within Danto's view, where strict rules no longer apply and, for instance, Art and Language is merely one of the 'unconverging artistic conversations' it becomes necessary to define one's own form of art. Art and Language clearly chose to do so through critique of their precursors and contemporaries. Before turning to the analytical aspect of this chapter, a short summary of the course of development of Art and Language's pursuits might be helpful in the analysis of their practice of distinction.

Art and Language, or at least Atkinson, Baldwin and Bainbridge, made name for themselves through their theoretical works of art such as *Hot-Cold, Air Show* and their *Maps*. After receiving attention from the artworld, and being placed within the same category as other more theoretical conceptual artists, they started to distinguish themselves in order to uphold a sense of originality. To remain on the foreground of conceptual art they had to be perceived as the true avant-garde. So when already visible within the world of art, they felt the need to distinguish and position themselves once more.

Through the combination of the American and the British like-minded artists, thus including artists such as Kosuth and the later criticized LeWitt, they professionalized their own practice. In the beginning of the 1970's they were regarded as an international art collective distinguishing itself from basically the entire artworld. However, the problems rising between both chapters of Art and Language led to the split in the second half of the 70's, thus leaving merely Baldwin, Harrison and Ramsden at the core of the Art and Language collective.

From the late-1970's onwards, the triumvirate decided to refrain from their overly critical stance and adjusted themselves to the demands of the international art market, by making the transgression from their pure theoretical art to a visual depiction of their ideas. The exact moment could be located at one specific 1981 painting: Art and Language's *Study for Gustave Courbet's Burial at Ornans Expressing...* Here they combined two existing paintings, Courbet's and

Jackson Pollock's *War*, accompanied by a text 'specifying the expressive content'.¹²⁷ This painting marked their entrance to the world of visual art. The ideas they had so long despised now became a necessary facet of their own work. Their newfound visual focus did not blur their earlier views on conceptual art and their subjects of critique, for Harrison, who became an active author after *Art and Language's* decade of critique and continued to function as the voice of *Art and Language*, did not refrain from defending their critique.

When reflecting on this abbreviated account of the first fifteen years of *Art and Language's* existence, one could draw no other conclusion than the fact that in the end they were forced to adhere to the rules of the artworld, by yielding to the conditions of visual art. Through this yielding they subjected themselves to the idea so fiercely objected. However, they did not deflect to a Greenbergian interpretation of art, instead they can be seen as the perfect example of Danto's ideal of both form and content. In the late 1970's their visual art, combined with a theoretical content, placed them at the core of the artworld, or at least at the centre of demand of the artworld. Whereas in the first decade of existence they were subversive and experimental, these two aspects gradually disappeared through the visualization of their art, thus directing themselves to the periphery of the artworld.

Art after Art and Language

Before making a final statement on the workings of *Art and Language's* practice of distinction it is interesting to indicate *Art and Language's* influence, or perhaps more general, the initiatives within the artworld from 1975 onwards. As argued, at the end of the 1970's, *Art and Language's* works became increasingly visual, resulting in their adoption of painting as their primary mode of expression in the early-1980's. To situate this development within the analysis of their practice of distinction, it is necessary to reflect on the different developments within the artworld at that time.

¹²⁷ M. Baldwin, C. Harrison and M. Ramsden, *Art and Language in Practice Vol. 1* (Barcelona 1999) 153.

In the mid- to late-1960's the critical stance within art was ever present. We have seen this in Art and Language's precursors such as Fluxus and its contemporaries, even their contemporary art critics such as Arthur Danto and Tom Wolfe, who, although proposing different arguments, were part of the same critical movement. In the 1980's however, entirely different forms of art, some as reactions to conceptual art, can be seen developing. Although Art and Language was, during the late-1960's and early-1970's an exception with its highly theorized non-visual form of art, its contemporary conceptualists were also less interested in aesthetics and the visual representation of the artist's ideas. The movements in the 1980's still relied on the ideas of conceptualism but did so in a more visual manner.

For instance, an example of these 1980's movements is Neo-Pop, a movement heavily relying on pop art, most noticeably Andy Warhol's mode of industrial production, but refraining from the Warhol-like philosophy as indicated by Danto. Jeff Koons for example, one of Neo-Pop's most prominent figures in the 1980's and 90's, after having worked as a Wall-Street stockbroker, turned to the creation of art as a simple matter of salary. This new, highly commodified form of art can be seen as the direct opposite of Art and Language's early works of art, here returning to Francis Colpitt's argument that 'its noncommodity status deprives it of any commercial value'.¹²⁸ In the 1980's, commercial value became, through Neo-Pop, one of the main aspects of the creation of art.¹²⁹

Neo-Pop however, is of course not entirely representative for the artworld of the 1980's. Other, more political forms of art gained importance. David Joselit explains the influence of conceptual art on art in the 1980's as a result of the fact that artists were 'no longer aspiring to be masters of a particular medium (...) (but) began to function as 'managers' or 'producers' of information'.¹³⁰ So, artists were influenced by conceptual art and its emphasis on content instead of form, however, they did not refrain from a visual expression of this position as 'managers' or 'producers' of information. The political aspect of

¹²⁸ F. Colpitt, 'The Formalist Connection and Originary Myths of Conceptual Art' in: M. Corris (ed.), *Conceptual Art: Theory, Myth, and Practice* (Cambridge 2004) 28-48, 29.

¹²⁹ M. Archer, *Art after 1960* (London 1997) 170-172.

¹³⁰ D. Joselit, *American Art since 1945* (London 2003) 161.

late-1970's and early-1980's art can be seen as a newfound focus on identity, especially the identities of gender, race, ethnic, and sexual experiences. So although remaining within the critical sphere of conceptual art, two important aspects changed in the 1980's: the subject of criticism, it being no longer the artworld itself but the circumstances of society and the mode of representation.

As an overall observation on the successors of conceptual art, a quick glance at the movements in the 1980's indicates that Neo-Pop was not the only movement reverting to earlier forms of art, other movements, such as Neo-Geo, Neo-Abstraction, Neo-Abstractionism and Conceptual Abstraction, filled the void left by conceptual art. The main similarity in these new forms was their focus on the visual. Although drawing on conceptual art, aesthetics regained a more prominent place within the 1980's artworld.

Interestingly enough, Neo-Geo, a form of art concerned with urban geography, was highly influenced by the post-structuralism of Foucault, de Certeau, Barthes and Jacques Derrida. Within this movement, as argued by Erika Doss, 'Neo-Geo painters embraced postmodern theory to link abstract art with socially alienating geometric networks – urban grids, office towers, high-rise apartment building, public schools, prisons, parking lots'.¹³¹ However, in contrast to Art and Language, these artists focused on the entire society instead of 'merely' the artworld. Neo-Geo can be seen as an example of the artists' concern with society and identity. This concern is once again placed opposite the works of Neo-Pop artists such as Koons by Doss, referring to the 1980's as 'cultural controversy and the decade of greed'.

When taking into account the art climate of the 1980's one could state that Art and Language adjusted itself to the recurring focus on the visual aspects of art. As argued, although producing visual artworks, Art and Language's critique remained unchanged. It just took a different position with the presentation of their artworks. Where in the late-1960's and early-1970's critique was a major part of their artistic presence, not to say in fact their *raison d'être*, in the 1980's they pushed their paintings to the foreground. Whether this happened in reaction to the changing artworld or as an indication of the unsatisfactory practice of distinction shall be discussed.

¹³¹ E. Doss, *Twentieth Century American Art* (Oxford 2002) 214-215.

Art and Language's agency

Having introduced both concepts of discourse and agency in the third chapter, and indicated Art and Language's practice of distinction as a form of counter-discourse, I will now continue this argument by exploring the possibilities of agency within the 1960's artworld. This possibility of agency is even more interesting in the context of Danto's idea of the democratization of the artworld.

When considering the fact that the ruling discourse, such as Clement Greenberg's modernism, disappeared in the 1960's, logically there would be no need to even object to this discourse. However, in contrast to Danto, Art and Language still insisted on the existence of an oppressing discourse of which they supposedly subtracted themselves. Their creation of a counter-discourse in the form of *Art-Language* can be seen as an example of their persistence. Returning to the discussed ideas of Michel de Certeau, one could, when accepting the existence of a Greenbergian discourse and disregarding Danto's ideas on this matter, ascribe a certain form of agency to Art and Language's practice of distinction.

Perhaps it is necessary to return to de Certeau's basic concepts for a deeper understanding of Art and Language's position in relation to the objected discourse. The two concepts of *strategy* and *appropriation* contextualize the practice of distinction further within poststructuralist theory. As argued in the third chapter, a strategy can be defined as becoming possible 'when a subject of will and power can be isolated from an environment'.¹³² In this sense, Art and Language can be seen as the subject, whereas the general artworld can be considered the environment. Through strategy, Art and Language can function within the objected discourse without confining to the modernist rules. However, when we combine this with the concept of appropriation, the idea that the subject of will and power operates within a ruling discourse through alteration and appropriation of its rules, the idea of agency becomes somewhat problematic.

Although Art and Language objected to the general modernist discourse, it is possible that although objecting the discourse, they remain a part of this

¹³² M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 19.

discourse, especially when considering the return to an aesthetic representation of their ideas after their decade of critique. In this sense one could argue that Art and Language fought the modernist discourse, but, after a ten-year struggle, lost and was forced to confine to the set of rules once contested. In short, it can be argued that, theoretically, Art and Language was able to possess a form of agency within a ruling discourse. This would imply the existence of that discourse throughout the late-1960's and 1970's, thus contradicting Arthur Danto's view on the artworld, which holds that the modernist discourse was already dismantled in the second half of the 1960's.

When considering Art and Language's position within the artworld from a poststructuralist perspective, the practice of distinction is still in need of further discussion. I believe the main question to be answered here to be: did they succeed in establishing themselves within the artworld? Although this evades the more theoretical aspect of the development it remains a necessary point for a more practical insight. When only taking into account the first decade of Art and Language as an international art-collective, one could claim them to be an important aspect within the world of conceptual art and, perhaps the entire artworld. However, as indicated, the transatlantic mid-1970's split and the following embrace of visual representation, which lead to a loss of their status as avant-garde artists, lead me to argue that although Art and Language tried to position itself within a changing artworld, namely that of the 1960's, they did not succeed in upholding their practice of distinction and formless theoretical art when interest decreased.

6. Conclusion

When reflecting on Arthur Danto's ideas on the artworld and his theory of 'the end of art', one has to acknowledge the *status aparte* of the 1960's as a transgressing episode in the history of art. As Danto argues, the 1960's marked the turning point within the artworld from a dominant master narrative (Greenberg's modernism) to a variety of accounts providing art with new theories for the interpretation of artworks.

In this research I have focussed on one of these variety of accounts, the transatlantic art collective, Art and Language. This collective can be seen as a perfect example of the theoretical diversification in the second half of the twentieth century. They positioned themselves within the western artworld through their theoretical, formless art and, as analysed in this essay, their journal *Art-Language*. This journal was the vehicle for their continuing critique on different aspects of the world of art. Throughout the first decade of their existence, their critique remained the most important aspect of their movement. Although originating in the sphere of highly theoretical conceptual art, when faced with objections, critique and opinions towards their artworks, they found the need to position themselves within the artworld. Through their journal, they distinguished themselves from likeminded, though inferior, artists. This practice of distinction continued from the late-1960's into the mid-1970's, when the collective disintegrated under the mutual differences between its international members, leaving a mere total of three artists at its core.

In short, in this essay I have presented several aspects of the 1960s as a transitional period on the basis of an analysis of Art and Language. First of all, their theoretical, formless works of art were, especially in the 1960's, new, unique, experimental and subversive. However, exactly the formlessness of their artworks resulted in a lack of attention from critics and public alike. The need to remain subversive and controversial is best noticed in the first issues of *Art-Language*. In these issues, Art and Language positioned itself as the true conceptual, theoretical sovereignty, which was to be taken into account when considering the conceptual movement as a whole. Likewise, their continuing objections against Clement Greenberg and Marcel Duchamp can, as argued, be

accounted for by the need to position themselves. Through the rejection of both Greenberg's and Duchamp's status as key figures in the world of art they drew attention to themselves.

When considering Art and Language's critique from a poststructuralist perspective, an interesting contradiction emerges. This leads me to pose the my main research question once more: *How did Art and Language criticize Greenberg's dominant discourse of art, and to what extent did it, perhaps unconsciously, contribute to the conservation of this discourse?*

The idea of a ruling discourse within the world of art is fundamental to the ideas of Art and Language. They claim that modernism, and its most prominent critic function according to a structure of power, providing art with the theory necessary to be attractive within the artworld. Through the representation of the precursing movement as a power structure, they raise themselves as instigators of a counter discourse, possessing a form of agency to subtract themselves from-, and criticize the discourse in question. Interestingly enough, their critical stance against modernism and the presentation of themselves as the possessors of truth places them within the same category of art discourse as Greenberg's modernism. In fact, Art and Language creates a new, more exclusive discourse, although it never replaces Greenberg's discourse as the foremost.

One of the reasons for this failure to replace Greenberg's discourse can be found in the ideas of Arthur Danto. According to him, democratization of the artworld provided new developments with the liberty to steer away from previous ruling theories. It is thus remarkable that Art and Language held on to this discourse in order to position themselves. Especially when considering the fact that after the split between both chapters of the collective they quietly turned to a more visual representation of their ideas and redirected their critical stance from the foreground to the margins of their practice.

Retrospectively, they did succeed in these first years of existence in securely situating themselves within the world of art. The earliest formless artworks are still considered a milestone and their objections against Clement Greenberg continue to receive attention when considering the subversiveness of the 1960's artists. However, when reflecting on one of the sub questions posed in

the introduction (*how did this critical stance influence their own art form and their recognition as artists?*) I would like to suggest that the remaining members of the collective were eventually overcome by their own critique. The fact that Art and Language turned to a visual representation of their ideas, abstract painting accompanied by the theoretical explanation once detested, can be seen as an indication that, in spite of their objections against Greenberg's discourse, they remain within this same discourse. Thus adjusting to the demands of the market, complying to the requirements set for successful artists. In this sense they remained within the discourse, and possibly even strengthened it.

Concluding, I would state that Art and Language's call for formless theoretical art in the late 1960's is problematic when combined with the knowledge that after a decade they chose a more visual portrayal of their ideas. The combination between critique on modernism and the on-going creation of visual art undermines the credibility of both these aspects of their artistic practice. Both art and critique are necessary aspects of the artworld. Where art is the critic's *raison d'être*, without critics defining the boundaries, the artworld would result to chaos. In a very bluntly way, one could use the principle of *trias politica* to indicate the difficulties when combining art and critique. Through this metaphor, which signifies the three separated powers of the artworld; the executive- (the artist), the legislative (the critic) and the judiciary power (the museum), one could argue for the necessity of a separation of powers.

I would thus argue that this separation of powers is not only necessary for the survival of interest in Art and Language itself, but remains a necessary aspect for the general health of the artworld. Although these powers depend on each other and often keep close ties, without this separation there would be no internal control or possibility to balance the power of critics, museums and artists alike.

As always, certain aspects of this research are in need of further elaboration. This creates the possibility for further research on the position of critical conceptual artists within the artworld of the 1960's. One of the aspects in need of attention is the content of Art and Language's own formless art. When considering the content, which was influenced by, for instance, Noam Chomsky, one can draw a clearer parallel between their critique and deconstruction of

their counterparts' artworks and their own creations. Another interesting aspect in relation to Arthur Danto and his philosophical view is the influence of 19th century German philosophers on art critics. Both Danto and Greenberg admit being highly influenced by respectively Hegel and Kant, which creates the possibility of, for instance, a parallel comparison between both views and their influences. As indicated in the third chapter, one could also resort to a different theoretical context to situate Art and Language within the artworld. Through the use of Bourdieu's concepts of *field* and *habitus* for instance, other interesting aspects of Art and Language's position within the artworld can be analysed.

7. Bibliography

- Alberro, A. and B. Stimson (ed.), *Conceptual art: a critical anthology* (Cambridge, Mass 1999)
- Archer, Michael, *Art Since 1960* (London 1997)
- Art and Language, *Badges* (Gent 2011)
- Art and Language, *Homes from Homes II* (Zurich 2003)
- Atkinson, Terry, *Art & Language: Texte zum Phänomen Kunst und Sprache* (Cologne 1972)
- Baldwin, Michael, *Art and Language in Practice* (Barcelona 1999)
- Barthes, Roland, *Image-Music-Text* (New York 1977)
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge 1984)
- Burgin, Victor, *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity* (London 1986)
- Carrier, David, *The Principles of Art History Writing* (1991)
- Chomsky, Noam, *Syntactic Structures* (The Hague 1957)
- Corris, Michael, *Conceptual art: theory, myth, and practice* (Cambridge 2004)
- Crowther, Paul, *The Language of Twentieth-Century Art* (New Haven 1997)
- Danto, Arthur C., *After the End of Art* (Princeton 1997)
- Danto, Arthur C., Gregg Horowitz, Tom Huhn and Saul Ostrow, *Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy, and the Ends of Taste (Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture)* (1998)
- Danto, Arthur C., *De Komedie van de Overeenkomsten* (New York 2002)
- Danto, Arthur C., *Philosophizing Art* (Berkeley 1999)
- De Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley 1984)
- Doss, Erika, *Twentieth-Century American Art* (Oxford 2002)
- Frascina, F. (ed.), *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York 1987)
- Foucault, Michel, *De Geschiedenis van de Seksualiteit Vol. 1: De Wil tot Weten* (Nijmegen 1984)

- Galenson, David W., *Conceptual Revolutions in Twentieth-Century Art* (New York 2009)
- Greenberg, Clement, *Homemade Esthetics: Observations on Art and Taste* (Oxford 1999)
- Hills, Patricia, *Modern Art in the USA* (Upper Saddle River 2001)
- Habermas, Rebekka, G. Schwerhof (ed.), *Verbrechen im Blick: Perspektiven der neuzeitlichen Kriminalitätsgeschichte* (2009)
- Harrison, C., *Art and Language in Practice Vol. 2* (Barcelona 1999)
- Harrison, C., *Conceptual Art and Painting* (Cambridge, Mass 2001)
- Harrison, C., *Essays on Art and Language* (Cambridge, Mass 1991)
- Harrison, Charles, and Paul Wood, *Art in Theory: 1900-2000* (Oxford 2009)
- Hatt, Michael, and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A critical introduction to its methods* (Manchester 2006)
- Joselit, David, *American Art Since 1945* (New York 2003)
- Kemal, Salim, and Ivan Gaskell, *The Language of Art History* (Cambridge 1991)
- Kotz, Liz, *Words To Be Looked At* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 2007)
- Kraaijpoel, Diederik, W.L. Meijer and L. Allen, *Niet Alles is Kunst* (Soesterberg 2010)
- Kraaijpoel, Diederik, *Was Pollock Kleurenblind* (Amsterdam 1997)
- Lippard, Lucy R., *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (London 1973)
- Newman, M. and J. Bird (ed.), *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (London 1999)
- Osborne, P., (ed.), *Conceptual Art* (London 2002)
- Schavemaker, Margriet, *Lonely Images: The Visual Arts of the 1960's* (Amsterdam 2007)
- Schillinger, J., *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts* (New York 1948)
- Thompson, James M. (ed.), *20th Century Theories of Art* (Ottawa 1990)
- Tomkins, Calvin, *Post- To Neo-: The Artworld of the 1980s* (New York 1988)
- Wallis, Brian (ed.), *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York 1984)
- Wolfe, Tom, *The Painted Word* (New York 1975)

- Young, L. and C. Harrison (ed.), *Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis* (London 2004)
- Zurbrugg, Nicholas, *Critical Vices: The Myths of Postmodern Theory* (Amsterdam 2000)

Articles

- Allen, A. 'The Anti-Subjective Thesis: Michel Foucault and the Death of the Subject' in: *The Philosophical Forum* 31 (2000)
- Borden, L. 'Three modes of conceptual art' in: *Artforum* 10 no. 10
- C. Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' in: *Partisan Review* 6:5 (1939)
- Danto, Arthur C., 'The Artworld', *The Journal of Philosophy* 61 (1964)
- Danto, Arthur C., 'The End of Art: A Philosophical Defense' *History & Theory* 37 (1998)
- A.C. Danto, 'Hegel's End of Art Thesis' (1999)

Journals

- *Art-Language*