

Social engagement of art and aesthetic education

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It is one thing for artists to be socially engaged; it is quite another thing to realize the aims of that engagement, because such an ambition presupposes a responsive audience. To become responsive to (the social aims) of art the audience must be educated. However, there is little agreement among artists and aesthetic educators on the question of what aesthetic education actually is and, without doubt, this confusion is linked to the no less difficult question of what art actually is.

In my lecture I shall try to shed some light on these questions, taking literature as an example. First, I shall discuss four basic conceptions of art - mimesis, expression, form and interpretation. Second, I shall discuss the implied social relevance of each of these conceptions. Finally, from a developmental perspective, I shall discuss the implications and justification of these four conceptions of art for aesthetic education in schools and museums.

Biography:

Jos de Mul is a philosopher and art historian. He is Professor of Man and Culture at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, the Netherlands. He has published several books and many articles on aesthetics, the philosophy of culture and technology, and (the history) of hermeneutics. Some relevant publications in the context of the symposium are:

‘Aesthetic development of the individual’. In: A.W. van Haaften, M. Korthals en T. Wren (ed.), *Philosophy of Development. Reconstructing the Foundations of Human Development and Education*, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer 1997, 135-152.

‘Artistic Development’. In: A.W. van Haaften, M. Korthals en T. Wren (ed.), *Philosophy of Development. Reconstructing the Foundations of Human Development and Education*, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer 1997, 183-198.

Romantic desire in (post)modern art and philosophy, Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press 1999.

Forthcoming:

The Tragedy of Finitude. Dilthey's Hermeneutics of Life, New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming.