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Art and the possibility of failure

Abstract
Humans have developed various practices to confront the indeterminacy of their existence. Roughly speaking, there are two types of such practices. On the one hand are those through which humans control the uncertainty that permeates their actions and choices. These are practices of self-reassurance and risk reduction. On the other hand are practices in which humans welcome or search out uncertainty, practices that are explicitly open to the risk of failure. One particularly remarkable example of the latter set is art. Art is a practice that embraces the uncertainty of human existence in a special way. Generally speaking, artworks do not aim to reassure. Rather, they are open to uncertainty. Thus, art represents a special mode of reflecting on a constitutive feature of human existence, namely, the possibility of failure. What does it mean that art is, in principle, always susceptible to failure? The present article explores this question.

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Humans are beings who, at their core, are defined by indeterminacy[1]. According to an anthropological commonplace, humans' nature is to not have a fixed, static nature, but to develop their own nature[2]. This concept of human nature is generally referred to as second nature[3]. Second nature cultivates determinacy in the context of indeterminacy. In an existentialist vein, one might say that humans are doomed to determine themselves. Using another central concept of philosophical anthropology, one might say: "Man is condemned to be free" (Sartre 2007: 29). Humans are beings that are, from the very beginning, free to determine themselves.

This characteristic of humans has a decisive consequence: humans are beings capable of failure. When humans determine themselves, things can go wrong. They can make mistakes, act in a way not up to the task, overestimate their abilities, overstrain themselves and others, and much more. A term particularly suited to sum up all these phenomena is the concept of failure. To the degree to which humans are capable of determining themselves or have to determine themselves, they face the possibility that their projects can succeed or fail. This possibility is characteristic of beings fundamentally defined by indeterminacy. Whatever choices humans might make and whatever projects they might undertake, they can always fail in them. Uncertainty is a foundational aspect of human practices.

Humans have developed various practices to confront this fundamental condition of their existence; indeed, these practices are formative of humans' second nature. Roughly speaking, there are two types of such practices. On the one hand are those through which humans control the uncertainty that permeates their actions and choices. These are practices of self-reassurance and risk reduction. On the other hand are practices in which humans welcome or search out uncertainty, practices that are explicitly open to the risk of failure. One particularly remarkable

[1] I intentionally leave open whether this indeterminacy should be conceived as a human attribute or as an aspect of human practices. On the second option, see the arguments offered by Bertram 2019 and Bertram 2020a.

[2] In philosophical anthropology, one proponent of this thesis – in the context of a long discussion that goes back to Herder, if not further – has been Helmut Plessner. See Plessner 2019: 287-98.

[3] John McDowell's work has given this idea prominence (see McDowell 1994). However, it has been around since Antiquity and had considerable significance for Hegel and those who followed him (see Bertram 2020a).

example of the latter set is art. Art is a practice that embraces the uncertainty of human existence in a special way. Generally speaking, artworks do not aim to reassure. Rather, they are open to uncertainty. Thus, art represents a special mode of reflecting on a constitutive feature of human existence, namely, the possibility of failure. What does it mean that art is, in principle, always susceptible to failure? The following article explores this question.

The first section analyzes various explanations of what art is. Only the third explanation can help us grasp how and why art is constitutively bound up with the possibility of failure. In the second section, I discuss Adorno's paradigmatic explanation of art's unshakeable potential to fail. My critique of Adorno's position leads me to seek a different account in the article's third section. In contrast to Adorno's reliance on the concept of modernity, I contend that art's inherent possibility of failure can only be understood on the basis of individual works of art in comparison with themselves. In the fourth part, I connect this explanation with an important topos of the philosophy of art (one that also plays an important role in Adorno's concept of aesthetic modernity): the concept of the end of art. I claim that the end of art, properly understood, is inscribed into every single artwork in the form of its potential to fail. Thus, the end of art should not be seen as a historical epoch, but as a definitive feature of art itself.

1. *Three explanations of art*

In order to discern what kind of significance the possibility of failure has for art, it is useful to delineate different explanations of what art is. Sufficient is a rough typology based on the insight that for many twentieth-century philosophies and theories of art rejecting an essentialist understanding of art was seen as the decisive issue[4]. Anti-essentialism is a magic word of modern theories and philosophies of art[5]. Of course, one could argue all day about the extent to which certain positions in the tradition are actually essentialist. I do not want to dive into such a thicket, so I will

[4] How the rough typology developed here could be located in the discussion about the definition of art is explained in Bertram 2019: 15-8.

[5] Wittgenstein's philosophy in particular assisted anti-essentialist definitions of art, a point made well in Weitz 1953.

just assume that we can distinguish between essentialist and anti-essentialist conceptions of art. But I still do not think that is enough. I think it is also necessary to differentiate between various types of anti-essentialist theories. Anti-essentialist conceptions of art can be either static or dynamic. Static anti-essentialism is when art is defined paradigmatically. One example is John Dewey's aesthetics. When he says that, ideally, art should be structured as an experience[6], he defines art in a static fashion, even if his explanation is anti-essentialist. Because generally speaking, he is saying that art always makes the same contribution to human life. Naturally, this contribution can be realized in all kinds of different ways. And when something can be realized in fundamentally divergent ways, it cannot be defined in essentialist terms. Thus, in Dewey's theory, art cannot be defined in essentialist terms. This mode of anti-essentialism is nevertheless static insofar as it presumes that a paradigmatic, supertemporal conception of art is possible.

This does not apply to anti-essentialist theories that define art through historical or other temporal developments. For instance, those who, following Hegel, assert that art develops over time, will say that because of its dynamic, art cannot be defined in essentialist terms. I think that Adorno is an important representative of this approach, because his aesthetic theory is rooted in the idea that art changes in correlation with social affairs[7]. So, that is my brief typology of explanations of art for the purposes of this paper. In short, there are essentialist, static anti-essentialist, and dynamic anti-essentialist theories of art[8].

For our purposes, the third type is of most interest, because it gives particular weight to art's possibility to fail. It is obvious that humans can fail in all of their practices. When a woodworker constructs a table, the frame can end up being too weak, making the table rickety and useless. And when someone tries to ride a bike, they can lose balance for whatever reason and fall over. Analogously, essentialist or static anti-essentialist conceptions of art might say that an artwork can fail to be that which it essentially or paradigmatically is. It might fail to exhibit the structure of experience with an uncompelling arc of suspense. But the dynamic anti-essentialist position on art precludes such claims. For it, a

[6] See Dewey 1989, especially chapter 3.

[7] Adorno speaks of "art's own law of movement" (Adorno 1997: 1) that dictates art's relation to social forms.

[8] Of course, non-essentialist approaches may display both static and dynamic aspects.

work of art might, for instance, successfully realize one of art's functions and still fail because it is anachronistic. If art is dynamic, this means that there is no universally valid standard of success that would serve as a measuring stick for judging an artwork's failure. Rather, inherent in every individual work of art is its own singular potential to fail, and a work of art can only succeed by grappling with its very own potential to fail.

At first glance, it might seem that this statement applies to all objects. But a closer look shows otherwise. Adherents of the dynamic conception of art admit that there is no way to cull together a series of features in a way that would guarantee aesthetic success. Rather, they maintain that the fundamental possibility of aesthetic failure simply has to be accepted. In this sense, they make aesthetic failure into the standard of aesthetic success, and this success only results out of a struggle against the possibility of failure. Simply put, from the perspective of a dynamic, anti-essentialist conception of art, works of art struggle for their own aesthetic success[9].

But if works of art struggle for their own aesthetic success, then the possibility of failure is inscribed in them. This is the issue I want to analyze in this essay. In order to gain a better understanding of art's constitutive relation to its own potential to fail, I would first like to outline something of a classic approach to this question by drawing on the concept of modernity. It basically states that art's struggle for modernity is the reason why art always flirts with failure. I will explore this notion and explain why it comes up short. This will then help reveal a more convincing conception of art's constitutive relation to its own failure.

2. *Modernity and Art's Self-Dissolution (Adorno)*

A prominent position on art, one that goes back at least to the seventeenth century, asserts that art is committed to modernity. Modernity (in both Hegel and Adorno) must be understood as a concrete process of historical transformations which challenges traditional ways of conceiving of and assessing art with respect to its formal values and social functions. Art, Adorno writes, is fundamentally guided by the "category of the new" (Adorno 1997: 23). Thus, art does not succeed or fail in the

[9] For an explanation of aesthetic success, see Bertram 2019, ch. 4, especially pp. 190-204.

same way that any old object of utility does. It can only succeed by bringing about something new. Works of art must actualize something that has not yet existed. In other words, a poem must actualize something poetic in a way that has never been done before, a string quartet something string-quartet-like in a way that has never been done before, a painting something painting-like in a way that has never been done before. But it is impossible to determine with certainty what one must do in order to create something new. For this reason, it is not possible to establish universally applicable conditions for the successful realization of a work of art. Thus, art is constantly confronted with the possibility of its own failure.

Taking this foundational principle of aesthetic modernity to its logical conclusion, some have claimed that art has a tendency to dissolve itself. According to this line of reasoning, the space for creating something new is always getting narrower. And, to the extent to which art is constitutively defined by its ability to produce something new, this situation means that art is always confronted more and more by the possibility of failure. At the end of this progression is the tendency to self-dissolution. Art barrels towards its own end – the end of art. Art reaches the point where it is no longer capable of accomplishing that which defines it – the realization of something new. This underscores art's intertwining with its own failure. In a word, with each success, art comes closer to its own failure, because every aesthetic success shrinks the space for creating something aesthetically new. Thus, art unavoidably works towards its own self-dissolution, towards the end of art.

Certainly, the same does not hold for everyday use objects. When the woodworker constructs a table, they are not working towards the self-dissolution of tables or furniture as such. Rather, they produce something that has a more or less self-evident role in a particular set of practices. This is also true of everyday and non-everyday practices like peeling potatoes and riding bikes. These practices, too, play a self-evident role within a certain historical-cultural context. Works of art, in contrast, do not have such a self-evident role. Rather, their worth is always fundamentally in question. According to the theory that modernity is a defining feature of art, this self-destabilization necessarily leads to the self-dissolution of art. Thus, in the end, art causes itself to fail. Its modernity is at once its end.

Adorno analyzed with particular rigor art's commitment to modernity and its tendency to dissolve itself. Thus, a brief discussion of Adorno's position will be helpful for my argument. According to Adorno, art al-

ways seeks to secure its own autonomy within society, because only by retaining autonomy is it capable of resisting the pressure of social forces. Artworks realize their autonomy through their unique language, through "the law of form" (Adorno 1997: 226). But as soon as an artwork successfully develops a unique language, this new language is assimilated by society. With the advent of modern societies, this process of assimilation only accelerates. Art has a progressively more difficult time maintaining its autonomy. The reason for this, Adorno thinks, is that society gradually absorbs all autonomous artistic formations until art no longer has any room to forge new languages.

Art reacts to this development by destroying itself. In Adorno's words, this marks the "deaestheticization of art" (Adorno 1997: 16)[10]. Modern societies witness the production of works of art that no longer put forth a unique language and that thus deny their own status as art. Among them are icons of modern art like Duchamp's ready-mades and Warhol's Pop Art. In Adorno's view, the deaestheticization of art is also exemplified in the technocratic aspects of serial music and in concrete poetry, with its tendency to rob itself of meaning. In these movements, art tries to save itself by no longer insisting on its quality as art. Paradoxically, it seeks to preserve its autonomy by (freely, through what might be seen as an autonomous act) dispensing with that very autonomy. Thus, for Adorno, art necessarily moves towards its own dissolution.

Adorno's account is informed by the notion that artworks' impending loss of autonomy is a process that, in a sense, becomes more radical over time. It is not so definitive for early phases of art as it is for later phases. Simply put, early on in history, works of art had ample space to actualize new things and thus succeed. Later on, however, as society began assimilating art's forms to a greater degree, the creation of something new confronted more and more hurdles. Adorno's argument thus gives the impression that what was at first a success gradually veered towards failure.

But this is not a part of the thesis that I began with. The initial thesis was that artworks maintain various relations to their own potential to fail and that this relation is constitutive for their being as works of art. My plan was to explore the concept of modernity in order to make this thesis clearer. But it seems that this did not work. Why? The problem

[10] As Hullot-Kentor explains in a translator's note: "'Entkunstung': Literally, the destruction of art's quality as art" (Adorno 1997: 368).

that stands in the way might be put like this: Modernity is offered as a criterion for why there are no criteria for artistic success. The failure of artworks and art as a whole would thus follow out of something that transcends each individual work of art. Modernity is not actualized by individual artworks, but by art as a whole. For this reason, art's failure can only be explained by art's self-dissolution, and the end of art enters the scene.

I think that this is an expression of the contradictory attempt to establish general criteria for how artworks relate to their own failure. My initial assertion that artworks are constitutively bound to their own failure implies that there are no criteria that would guarantee an artwork's success. I drew on the concept of modernity to explicate this point. Modernity is a criterion for the lack of criteria. Art's orientation towards modernity was supposed to articulate how art lacks criteria for assessing the success of artworks. But I think it is clear now why this is contradictory, because it is an attempt to ground art's lack of criteria through a criterion. It is like gunning the engine while pulling the handbrake. Ultimately, the appeal to modernity inadequately captures why the relation to the possibility of its own failure is constitutive for every work of art.

3. *Claims to Aesthetic Success*

What is to be done? I think that we can learn something from the discussion about the concept of modernity. We have to look for a theory that can adequately explain an individual work of art's relation to its potential failure on the basis of terms that the artwork sets for itself. Recall that the concept of modernity was supposed to explain how artworks actualize something new. But neither the concept of the new nor the concept of modernity is particularly helpful here. I think that the concept of uniqueness is more useful. Every work of art seeks to create something that is its own. An artwork possesses uniqueness when it poses a challenge for its recipients. Thus, that which an artwork creates can be analyzed in relation to how rewarding it is for its recipients. Artworks are communicative objects. They establish their own forms of communication with recipients. This is the sense in which artworks constitutively posit their own standards for their own success or failure.

At the same time, however, artworks aim towards something more general. They are guided by the idea of actualizing uniqueness in the sense of setting up a unique form of communication. This idea is, succinct-

ly put, the idea of art. When I say that artworks are guided by this idea, I mean that they develop a notion of themselves as art. They represent on their own terms a particular realization of the specific mode of communication that constitutes art as a whole. They represent this idea in a self-referential way and want to be received according to the standards that they themselves put forth. Thus, artworks should be conceived of as objects or events that are constituted through referring to themselves. One part of this self-constitution is their act of making a claim to succeed according to their own self-determined conception of art[11].

This opens the path for an analysis of artworks' constitutive relationship to their own potential to fail, because artworks are constituted through the conception of art that they set out to realize and their actual execution of this norm. They make a claim about what art is through their own realization of it. This sets them up for failure, because they can fail to deliver on the terms that they themselves establish. An artwork's success can only be understood from this perspective. This helps clarify the meaning of the above-discussed claim that works of art always struggle for aesthetic success. It is just another way of saying that they always seek to inquire into and lay out the terms of what exactly it is that they themselves accomplish as works of art. I think that it is possible to explain each individual artwork's constitutive relation to the possibility of its own failure in three steps:

1) Every work of art poses its own type of challenges to its own reception.

2) Through this singular challenge, each artwork participates in a process encompassing all other artworks in which the practices of producing singular challenges to reception is further developed.

3) Within this general process, every individual work of art seeks to succeed in creating its own singular challenge to reception. This attempt necessarily confronts the possibility of failure.

Adorno's concept of the "law of form" offers a good notion of the meaning of statement 1). The idea is that every work of art establishes its own criteria for that which it aims to accomplish; the measure for a

[11] On artworks' self-referential constitution, see Bertram 2019: 117-26.

work of art is developed internally to that work itself. This internal construction of standards should be conceived of as radically as possible, even more radically than Adorno himself does. An artwork not only internally articulates its own topics, motives, and other contents, but also everything involving its own form. This concerns the very principles informing how an artwork employs certain forms, such as particular elements and relations, open modes of generating form and content, mimetic processes, and so forth. Each artwork offers its own interpretation of certain fundamental concepts of art, thus at once positing criteria for its own form while seeking to do justice to these self-established criteria. In doing so, artworks grapple in diverse ways with traditions demarcated by other works of art, certain artistic genres, and much more. By establishing their own law of form, individual artworks participate in a broader artistic context, despite their uniqueness.

But as statement 2) makes clear, artworks stand within a broader artistic context in another sense. Artistic traditions develop the concept of a practice in which objects posit their own unique challenges to their own reception. The challenge aspect of artworks derives from the fact that they themselves set, on their own terms, the criteria relevant for their reception. But this practice of producing challenges thus defined is not a practice invented by just one object. An artwork only engages in and offers its take on this practice in relation to other artworks that do the same. This context precedes each and every individual artwork.

Because of their position within this practical context, artworks not only develop particular challenges. They also, as in statement 3), make a claim to succeed in the sense that they really do challenge their recipients. Artworks are not just objects that do or do not confront recipients with a challenge. They are also objects that aspire to realize such a challenge. They want to succeed in this. But they can also fail to do so. Their success or failure is not something that can be assessed on the basis of external observation. Rather, their success and with it their potential to fail is something that they themselves set the terms for. Artworks struggle for aesthetic success. Individual artworks' struggle for aesthetic success is fought out both in their relation to themselves and in their relation to other works of art. The practice of art thus has a deeply antagonistic aspect. Adorno offers a particularly drastic take on this: "each artwork is the mortal enemy of the other" (Adorno 1997: 35). This formulation is drastic in the sense that it suggests that aesthetic success is exclusively restricted to one individual artwork. But this is not true. Many artworks can be aesthetically successful. At the same time, they can

have different aesthetic worth. Artworks struggle amongst one another for such worth. This worth is measured according to how successful they are on their own terms.

4. *The end of art reconsidered*

The possibility of art's failure has been repeatedly discussed over the history of philosophical aesthetics with the notion that part of art's constitution is to reach its end. Hegel articulated this notion with his famous proposition about the end of art. In doing so, he put forward a line of thinking that reappeared in Adorno's work, namely that the practice of art gradually loses stability over time. According to this reasoning, art is subject to a law of increasing modernity. But I think I have shown that it is implausible to maintain that art really is subject to such a law. Because art is, by definition, unstable. This instability permeates a Schubert string quartet just as much as it does a Duchamp ready-made. No work of art can rely on some pre-given foundation of criteria that would guarantee its stability. Even when an artwork is clearly situated within a certain genre and its traditions or is clearly defined by the trends of its time, it still must establish on its own the criteria that determine its success. The criteria for success are thus always characterized by a fundamental uncertainty. Thus, it is not plausible to claim that the uncertainty faced by artworks somehow grows over time. Of course, it is true that the socio-cultural context in which the practice of art occurs is always changing. But these changes are not of the sort that would decrease art's stability or increase its instability. Art is fundamentally defined by uncertainty about whether it will succeed or fail according to the terms it sets for itself.

This argument can be expressed with the language of Hegel's aesthetics and his concept of the end of art. Hegel famously claimed: "Art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past" (Hegel 1975: 1:11). By "highest vocation", Hegel meant when art was the primary medium of reflecting historical-cultural practices. In Hegel's opinion, this was true in Antiquity. Before Christianity and the Enlightenment, he explains, historical-cultural relations were reflected through mythology; certain narratives or other images articulated how people understood the cultural practices they were engaged in. So, Hegel thought, Antiquity art articulated how those engaged in a particular historical-cultural practice understood it; in other words, art adequately

represented this self-understanding. But once the time of its "highest vocation" had elapsed, art's self-evident connection to a particular set of historical-cultural practices also reached its end. But this ending is, for the conception of art laid out here, art's beginning. The end of art "in its highest vocation" is the end of art practiced in the mode of fundamental certainty. This end marks the beginning of art's unique ability to be a practice that submits itself to fundamental uncertainty.

A re-interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics on these lines reveals that his concept of Romantic and post-Romantic art comes close to the definition of art developed here[12]. Perhaps counter to his own classicist intentions, Hegel's concept of Classical art has less systematic rigor than his precise account of modern art. To modern art Hegel ascribes plurality and an antagonistic character, which he, correctly or not, asserted did not apply to Classical art (see Hegel 1975: 1:602-11). In his ruminations on the end of art, Hegel, perhaps without knowing it, explained the fundamental instability of art. While his aesthetics of Classical art is an explication of art in the mode of certainty, his aesthetics of Romantic and modern art is an explication of art in the mode of uncertainty – in the mode of its fundamental confrontation with failure. As Robert Pippin has shown, Hegel can offer considerable insight into modern art, insights that can be gained not by applying his theory of Classical art to modernity, but by systematically fleshing out the implications of his notion of Romantic and post-Romantic art (see Pippin 2013).

On the other hand, an analysis of Hegel's aesthetics uncovers something foundational about theories of the end of art in general. Hegel can be read as trying to exclude large swathes of art from their impending end. In Antiquity, Hegel seems to say, art is so stable that it is not confronted with an end. The threat of an end only appears with the advent of Romantic art. Only then does art enter an era where its success is fundamentally uncertain. Hegel thus has a tendency to immunize a lot of art from the possibility of failure, a tendency that is also evident in other theories of the end of art. Understood as apologias for Classical art, these theories are often informed by the notion that uncertainty in art is a specifically modern or post-modern phenomenon. As Adorno pointedly states in his *Aesthetic Theory*: "It is self-evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to the world, not even its right to exist" (Adorno 1997: 1). Adorno's

[12] For a more thorough account, see Bertram 2020b.

rhetoric implies that there was once a time when art was more self-evident, but that this self-evident certainty has gotten lost along the way. But this ignores the fact that art is fundamentally not self-evident. As discussed, no artwork can rely on self-evident foundations or criteria. Each has to provide its own novel justification for why it draws on particular traditions in particular ways. Things in art that seem self-evident like the form of a sonnet or the structure of a sonata are only self-evident on the surface, because each artwork has to provide new reasons for why it adopts these forms. Thus, sticking to tradition gives artworks just as little certainty as breaking with tradition does. All attempts to bracket art's fundamental instability are unconvincing, including theories of the end of art.

But there is something to be gained from this critique of theories of the end of art. It demonstrates that the end of art is not a historical state towards which art as a whole develops. Rather, it is an element of every single work of art. Every work of art confronts the end of art. Each confronts it in the context of its attempt to challenge recipients on its own terms and in its competition with other works of art. The end of art is the possibility of failure that looms over every work of art. When artworks struggle over what art is, their status as art is always at stake. In this sense, art is a fundamentally unstable practice.

Because art is a fundamentally unstable practice, the understanding of itself as art that each artwork posits is not, as some thinkers such as Arthur Danto claim, an attempt to develop a theory of art (see Danto 1986: 107). Rather, each artwork claims to be art in the sense that it aims to challenge recipients in its own way. Whether it accomplishes this, however, remains up for debate. For this reason, a key part of the practice of art are recipients' various assessments of artworks. Artworks' contested status partially derives from recipients' arguments about if and why an artwork is successful or not. Disagreement about art needs judgment, art criticism, and recipients' expressions of opinion in activities like discussions after a concert or while reading a book. Conceiving of art as a practice that is always contested means conceiving of these activities as constitutive aspects of the practice of art.

I cannot and do not want to put forward a theory of aesthetic judgment here. However, I would like to briefly discuss why this exploration of artworks' inherent potential to fail led to the question of aesthetic judgment. On the one hand, it is a symptom of the fact that each artwork sets its own criteria of success. On the other, it is a symptom of recipients' interest in the success of art, a point that becomes clearer

when one situates aesthetic success within the broader context of human practices as a whole. The criteria that an artwork sets for its own success are also criteria through which an artwork seeks to challenge other human practices. Thus, the success of an artwork is not determined by that work on its own terms alone, but also by the extent to which it challenges other practices that its recipients are involved in[13]. Artworks' yearning to be successful as art is connected with their ability to challenge other practices, which means that artistic success has to be viewed in relation to these other practices as well. In other words, aesthetic success is constitutively bound to the reception of artworks. Aesthetic judgments should be conceptualized in this context[14].

I hope this article has made it easier to understand how art is a practice that reveals with particular brilliance the fundamental instability of human practices. These reflections underscore the specific way in which art is defined by uncertainty. Because there are no stable criteria for judging whether an artwork is successful, each artwork faces the task of positing its own criteria of its own success and then living up to these criteria, a process fraught with uncertainty. Thus, art is a practice that is formed anew by each and every work of art. Art makes a special contribution to human practice as a whole, because art confronts other human practices with a practice that constantly mutates in unpredictable ways. Art is capable of breaking through rigidity and habituation. One problematic flipside of the uncertainty that defines human practices is the fact that their forms can harden in an attempt to resist this very uncertainty. Art has unique potential in this regard, because it urges that practices be altered. In doing so, it reminds people of the fundamental instability of human practice[15]. But at the same time, and more importantly, it concretely calls into question human practices, impelling their renegotiation[16].

Translated from German by Adam Bresnahan

[13] I draw here on Carroll 2009, particularly chapter 2.
[14] On the concept of aesthetic judgment in this sense, see Bertram 2014.
[15] This reminder stands at the center of the concept of art developed by Christoph Menke in Menke 2013.
[16] On this argument more generally, see Bertram 2019.

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