

JASON HOLT
PARTWORKS

BACH'S *THE ART OF FUGUE*, Schubert's *Symphony in B minor*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Michelangelo's *Bearded Slave* and *Atlas*, Rodin's *Gates of Hell*, David's portraiture of Napoleon and Madame Récamier, certain later Cézannes, Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle*—all deservedly famous, all provocatively unfinished. As Monroe Beardsley observes, such unfinished works “have a powerful incompleteness—so much so that some people feel compelled to try to complete them.”¹ One thinks of Süßmayr “finishing” the *Requiem*, of Max Brod editing *The Trial* or preserving it in such a form that readers are liable to gloss over the gaps. Unfinished works inspire counterfactual imagining: What would the *Requiem* have sounded like if Mozart had completed it? How might *The Castle* have ended if Kafka had been able to finish it—to his satisfaction? No doubt it is such imagining that inspires efforts to complete the great unfinished works of others, not to mention the obvious cachet of virtue by association.

Setting aside significant moral issues concerning the permissibility of finishing another's work, however artful, however respectful, such “finishings” may be—Mozart and Kafka were in no position to sign off on these works, and indeed Kafka's deathbed request was that Brod have the manuscripts destroyed—cases of unfinished artworks are provocative in other ways as well. Where death interferes with the completion of a great work, the work's posthumous incomplete status serves as a poignant reminder of mortality, a counterpoint to the immortal greatness of the work and the talent that produced it. Aside from such romantic notions, we might be concerned with epistemological issues, the business of identifying unfinished works or determining degrees and kinds of incompleteness. Many times one can seemingly tell an unfinished work at a glance, even though, extending Danto's insight, just as indiscernible counterparts may

¹ Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1982), 193.

be art and non-art respectively, or completely different artworks with completely different meanings, so too might indiscernibles prove to be finished and unfinished works of art. In many cases there is sufficient contextual information to confirm the perceptual suspicion that a work has not been completed, that the artist has not signed off on it. But although there are often indications, glaring or subtle, that a work is unfinished, it is entirely possible that sometimes we will not be able to tell or will be wrong in particular judgments about the status of certain work as finished or unfinished.

My purpose here is not to explore in any detail these epistemological questions, for we know enough about enough unfinished works to tackle a different, comparably important, and largely neglected set of issues concerning the theoretical status of unfinished artworks, which I somewhat playfully call *partworks*, and the implications they have for fundamental theories of art. I will argue that if we characterize partworks in anything like an intuitive way, according them partial artwork status and neither as full-blown artworks nor as non-artworks *simpliciter*, the implications for art theory will be potentially profound. I will argue that we should accord partworks partial art status, and that current theories of art cannot account or allow for such, as the criteria they provide are not articulated in, and cannot be paraphrased into, a form allowing for a graded conception of the divide between art and non-art that partworks suggest. I will also argue that the kind of graded concept allowing and accounting for partworks and serviceable as an essential supplement to art theory can be found in more traditional approaches to art theory, specifically those that emphasize, over and above simple artefact production, the psychological aspects of the creative process.

1

The first order of business is making clear what exactly I mean by the term ‘partworks.’ Taking the examples with which I began this paper, partworks are unfinished artworks, unfinished in that more work needs to be done in order to complete them, works on which the artist has typically, and for this reason, not signed off. By signing off on a work, sometimes with an actual signature, sometimes merely with the thought “Yes, that’s it,” and a moving on to other things, an artist implies at least a minimal satisfaction that the work is in its proper final form (though whether the completed work counts as successful is an entirely different matter). Partworks therefore designates not only works abandoned or left unfinished when artists die, but also works in progress that will, but have yet to be, completed. Throughout the process

of Michelangelo sculpting it, *David* was in this sense no less a partwork than *Atlas* has remained to this day. At the moment the work was finished and so deemed by the sculptor himself, the partwork of *David*-in-process became the completed work of sculpture. In the case of lasting partworks, the creative process, once interrupted, has never been resumed.

I would like to further clarify the term partworks by outlining several things that I do not mean by it. For instance, some people are inclined to assert, speaking rather loosely, that *all* artworks are incomplete, meaning perhaps that every work can be further improved (though this is doubtful in many cases), that all artwork leaves something out (think of the absent Goliath the already massive *David* suggests), that art strictly requires an audience and so in the absence of such is incomplete, or that the history of any artwork is always unfolding, is still being written. Whatever the merits of these views, I mean partworks to refer, in contrast to works which are complete in a more conventional sense, to those that are incomplete in that conventional sense. Nor do partworks include those artworks that exhibit what might be called gappy completeness: orchestral works with cadenzas, fictional narratives with important but aesthetically rewarding omissions, and so on. Also excluded are stand-alone cases, parts of unfinished composite works that count as complete works in themselves, Rodin's *Paolo and Francesca (The Kiss)* vis-à-vis the unfinished *Gates of Hell*, for instance. Sketches and studies in service of future work, as separate from the eventual work itself, should also be excluded, constituting plausible artworks in their own right (as with David's drawing for *Oath of the Tennis Court*) or possibly being relegated to mere non-artistic, though undeniably useful, art auxiliaries (as with some of Magritte's rough sketches and photographs). I also exclude, similarly, artworks that have been envisioned and perhaps prepared for but on which work has not yet begun, as with the fictional paintings in Willeford's *The Burnt Orange Heresy*. A more difficult exclusion, perhaps, is the case of completed but partly destroyed works, such as the *Venus de Milo*. Although there is an obvious sense in which the *Venus* we have is incomplete, missing parts that it used to possess, it should not be counted as partwork. Though constitutively incomplete relative to its uncorrupted predecessor, the *Venus* was, and remains, a finished work. Asymmetries between once-finished and not-yet and never-will-be finished works are too substantial to allow partly destroyed works into the partworks class. In short, partworks do not include any of the following: all art, gappily complete art, stand-alone art, mere preparatory work, merely envisioned art, or partly destroyed art.

The picture of partworks that has been given here is that of a band surrounding the line dividing the artwork class from its non-art complement, of partworks on the road to becoming art, irrespective of whether they ever arrive at the intended destination. This does not mean that partworks are, paradoxically, both art and not art. Strictly put, they are *not* artworks, at least not yet, because more work needs to be done on them and the artist has yet to sign off. A sonnet-in-progress at ten lines is not a sonnet yet. Nonetheless, partworks are crucially distinct from *mere* non-artworks of the quotidian kind (i.e., ordinary objects). Artistic effort has gone into bringing partworks toward a state of completion, and so less work needs to be done on them to complete the envisioned work. An unfinished sonnet is not simply a marked up piece of paper or ordinary bit of text. At ten lines, a sonnet-in-progress needs only four more, which would require rather less work than starting afresh. Intuitions may differ on whether a completeness requirement for art is appropriate, but it seems undeniable that, however much composition and sculpting went into them, Schubert's "*Unfinished*" *Symphony* is not a symphony, nor Michelangelo's *Atlas* a sculpture. It appears likewise unavoidable to acknowledge how very different the "*Unfinished*" is from ordinary sound, how different *Atlas* is from ordinary rock. Locating partworks thus on the cusp between art and non-art seems like the only reasonable thing to do.

2

At this point it should be apparent that at least one desideratum of art theories is the ability to allow and account for the partial status of partworks. Arguably a theory of art should be able to do this, and certainly not in an ad hoc manner. If an art theory proves unequal to this task, this will count as a serious mark against the theory. Even if a theory provides otherwise reasonable criteria for distinguishing art from non-art, such explanatory failure will remain a shortcoming, undermining any claim it might have to overall classificatory success. A surprising thing about most contemporary art theories is that they appear woefully inadequate in allowing much less accounting for partworks as such. Most if not all of these theories implicitly adhere to a rigidly dichotomous, all-or-nothing perspective that leaves no real cusp for partworks.

Institutional theories hold, roughly, that it is both necessary and sufficient for art that a thing be an artefact and be presented as a candidate for appreciation to the artworld, or that the artefact have artwork status

conferred on it by someone acting on behalf of the artworld.² Such a view finds partworks difficult to accommodate. Take the presentation view first. An unfinished sculpture like *Bearded Slave*, though incomplete, is certainly an artefact, and it has been offered to the artworld as a candidate for appreciation. This is sufficient, on a naïve presentation view, for *Bearded Slave* to count as a full-blown sculptural artwork. But it is not one. (I assume here that the piece is not offered as an odd form of found art, though perhaps in principle it could be, in which case it would still not count as a finished sculpture.) On the status conferral view, the unfinished sculpture, though an artefact, presumably has not, owing to its unfinished state, had artwork status conferred on it by someone acting on behalf of the artworld. If someone were to, or were to try to, confer such status, he or she would produce, if anything, short of chiselling out the rest, the peculiar form of found art mentioned above. Claiming that partial art status can be conferred on behalf of the artworld seems ad hoc, and increases just suspicion that institutional theories leave something crucial out of the mix. The act of status conferral in cases of traditional art is sometimes thought to be an implicit matter of making the work. However implausible this might seem, given that status conferral in general is an explicit, formal, all-or-nothing matter, it is doubly implausible to suggest that partial artwork status is implicitly conferred unconsciously by an artist's partial completion of a work. Neither can account for partworks: the presentation view inflates, where the status conferral view deflates, the partial status of partworks. (I have glossed over certain details here to cut a wider swath of institution-theoretic possibilities: for instance, Dickie's presentation view requires that an artefact be of a *kind* created for artworld presentation, but on the status conferral view it is only a *set* of an artefact's aspects on which art status will be conferred. My main point is unaffected by either gloss. If partworks are not of a kind created for artworld presentation, then they count, on the refined presentation account, as mere non-artworks, just as on the status conferral view.)

According to historical theories, what makes something art now is bearing a certain kind of relation to art of the past, typically by being intended to be regarded in one of the ways art of the past has been correctly regarded.³ (I use 'artefact' here rather than the more-inclusive 'thing,' as I

² See George Dickie, *The Art Circle* (New York: Haven Publications, 1984), 80–81; *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U Press, 1974), 34.

³ Jerrold Levinson, "Refining Art Historically," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47 (1989): 21.

do with Beardsley's preferred phrase, 'arrangement of conditions', for ease of exposition.) Partworks present a double challenge here. There seems to be good reason to suppose that it is not partworks themselves that are ever intended to be regarded in a historically permissible way, but rather the finished works that partworks were intended to become, which leaves partworks merely non-artworks of the quotidian kind. On the other hand, if a partwork is itself (as part of the envisioned work) intended to be so regarded, it either counts as a stand-alone artwork (which may be the case sometimes), or more forcefully fits the historical criterion and counts, where it should not count, as a full-blown artwork.

Aesthetic theories are similarly challenged by partworks. On the intentionalist view, it is necessary and sufficient for art that an artefact be deliberately created so as to provide aesthetic experience or reward aesthetic attention.⁴ Again, in the case of partworks, the object of the intent is not the partwork itself but the envisioned finished work that the partwork is becoming, which relegates partworks, again, to non-art of the quotidian kind. In the case that the partwork itself is (sometimes, though often not) the object of such intent, we have once more either a stand-alone artwork, or a partwork counting as full-blown art where it ought not to. Aesthetically appealing partworks, such as all of those mentioned above, will prove straightforward counterexamples to functionalist theories,⁵ since they are artefacts that reliably provoke aesthetic experience and yet should not be counted, as functionalism would count them, as full-blown artworks.

Related problems face various anti-essentialist theories of art. Functional-institutional, historical-functional,⁶ and other such hybrid views inherit the same problems besetting each of their constituent theoretical sources, and for obvious reasons. The family resemblance view of artworks, along with more recent cluster-theoretic accounts,⁷ will also find partworks to pose a real challenge. For instance, it is not clear why unfinished Michelangelos, which resemble his finished sculptures much more so than most sculptures

⁴ For example, Monroe C. Beardsley, "An Aesthetic Definition of Art," in *What Is Art?*, ed. Hugh Curtler (New York: Haven, 1983), 19.

⁵ For example, George Schlesinger, "Aesthetic Experience and the Definition of Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): 175.

⁶ See, respectively, Stephen Davies, *Definitions of Art* (Ithaca: Cornell U Press, 1991), 207–21; Robert Stecker, *Artworks: Definition, Meaning, Value* (University Park: Pennsylvania State U Press, 1997), 48–65.

⁷ For example, Berys Gaut, "'Art' as a Cluster Concept," in *Theories of Art Today*, ed. Noël Carroll (Madison: U of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 25–44.

do, would not count as artworks, to say nothing of the tight relational similarities between the two types. If, however, such partworks might be foisted out of the full-blown artwork class, then they will be unduly relegated, once again, to the class of mere non-artworks of the quotidian kind. A resemblance/cluster-theoretic account already faces tough resemblance cases, but if partworks do, as it seems they do, lie on the cusp between what is and is not art, these problems grow to unwieldy proportions.

3

The inability of much current aesthetic theory to do justice to partworks highlights the need to reorient the theory of art at a fundamental level. The first step should be diagnosis, figuring out what has gone, if not completely wrong, then at least not completely right either. In most of the theories discussed above, the link between an artefact—whether artwork or partwork—and the artmaking conditions posited (institutional, historical, intentional, functional, or resemblance) does not provide the wherewithal to disambiguate partworks from artworks, or from mere non-art, in any plausible way. Part of the problem seems to be excessive focus on the link between already existing artefacts and whatever is deemed the art transfiguring relation, where the focus rather should also include (when relevant) what goes into producing the artefact, that is, the link between creators and the works they bring into being. To characterize this link exclusively in terms of transfiguration, artefactual production, or even artefactual production spurred by post-production intentions (correct regard, aesthetic experience) seems insufficient, for the object of the intent is the work that may emerge, not its partwork predecessors. What we need is a graded concept, one the application of which admits of degrees, putting partworks in league with things that are partly bald, parboiled, somewhat grey, or mildly depressing. Work is a graded concept, in that one can do work to varying degrees. But work is not the concept we need, it is rather the concept of which we need to give an account.

Artefactuality is of no use here, because partworks count as full-blown artefacts, although not complete as intended, much less as full-blown art. That is the received view, at any rate. It should be noted, however, that a graded notion of artefactuality might be proposed. Whatever the motivations for such a graded concept of artefactuality—partefactuality, as it were—the implications are untenable. Artefactual degrees would depend upon how much work goes into the production of a given artefact. Thus we could have two artefacts completely alike in every respect (appearance, constitution,

and function), yet have radically different orders of artefactuality, one, for instance, being two or a thousand times *more* of an artefact than the other. But there are no degrees of *being made*. The scepticism that would ensue vis-à-vis the application of the concept of artefactuality, which is, if not essentially defined by, at least intimately tied to, the task of sorting into types the various things we find in the world, undercuts whatever ground might be gained otherwise. Such gradations in the concept of artefactuality are, by implication, simply untenable.

A much more promising possibility for marshalling a gradable concept in service of understanding the link between artists and the works they create is to appeal, not to the mere production of artefacts, but to ways in which such production is often characterized in more traditional aesthetic theory. One obvious candidate is the concept of *expression*, of artistic creation as an expressive act. (Among the various accounts of artistic creation as a form of expression, the classic is of course Collingwood's.⁸) Although expressivist theories are fraught with many difficulties (especially where it is only the expression of emotion that is deemed relevant), nothing prevents contemporary theory from borrowing from such accounts as needed without wholeheartedly endorsing or capitulating to them. An expressive act creates meaning (creates a meaningful item) in a way that satisfies the immediate impulse to do so, whatever further ends may be sought. Ordinary actions and utterances are expressive in a rather weak sense: one can make psychological inferences from a person's behaviour. Artworks are psychologically revealing too, and often yield general descriptions or explanations of their "messages." But paraphrasing the meaning of ordinary actions and utterances at best leaves out nothing essential. With art, though, attempts to paraphrase might be better or worse, helpful or hindering, but must, even at best, omit the essential particularity of what is/how it is expressed in the work.

We may characterize the expressive act of artmaking as an attempt to realize a vision—a perspective that, though intuitive, implies a perhaps uncomfortable realism about artistic vision, although it does not presuppose naïvely that an artwork must be somehow fully blueprinted in every last detail in the artist's consciousness before any work begins. The process of creation is not blind, of course, but nor is it usually fully foreseen. Much can be discovered, worked out, experimented with, and revised as the work

⁸ R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1938), 109–44.

proceeds. Perhaps an artist's vision can only be fully discerned, even by the artist, in its complete realization in the actual finished work. This view is hardly a novel one. Even when a work is finished, and has been signed off on by the artist, accounting fully for what makes the work a satisfactory realization of the vision may elude its progenitor, apart from an intuitive sense that the effort has sufficed. Even if the work is seen, after the fact, as constitutive of what was expressed in the creative process, the work remains answerable to the purposes that initially prompted the creative process and guided it to completion. As Merleau-Ponty remarks on seeing Matisse paint a brushstroke: "[T]he stroke was chosen so as to satisfy ten conditions scattered on the painting, unformulated and unformulable for anyone other than Matisse, since they were defined and imposed only by the intention to make *this particular painting which did not yet exist*" (emphasis in original).⁹ A vision not only motivates but constrains the work that elaborates it.

The graded character of expression is reflected in ordinary descriptions, apropos of unfinished artworks, of incomplete expressive acts in the weaker, ordinary sense. We often speak of not fully expressing our thoughts, of revealing only part of what we feel, or of leaving our point half made. In such cases, an expressive act has been initiated and perhaps continued, but it has not been concluded. If we can characterize artistic creation as an expressive act of some kind—an expression of self, of vision, of mental states—then we have a straightforward explanation of partworks as the products of only partly completed expressive acts. The shortfall between partwork and art is explained by, and corresponds to, a partwork's degree of expressive incompleteness, that is, the extent to which the vision that motivates and constrains the work remains unrealized. To be clear, the proposal offered is not that an expressive link between creator and work is sufficient for art, but rather that this link might be necessary, particularly if this move allows us to account for the status of partworks as such. There is plenty of room for other necessary conditions (institutional, historical, aesthetic, and so on), however radically this might alter the shape and spirit of such views.

In a sense, then, what I am offering here is a threshold view of art, though one distinct from other sorts of threshold view found in aesthetic

⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern U Press, 1973), 44–45. For a different interpretation, see Sue Campbell, *Interpreting the Personal: Expression and the Formation of Feelings* (Ithaca: Cornell U Press, 1997), 50–51. It is interesting to note, as Campbell does, that Merleau-Ponty left *The Prose of the World* unfinished.

theory. By saying this I do not mean, for instance, that a work, in order to count as art, has to achieve a certain level of aesthetic value, audience approval, or critical endorsement. Rather, I am proposing an expressivist view of the unremarkable fact that in most cases of creating art, the work proceeds incrementally until the job is done and the artist signs off on it, which signifies that the expressive act is complete. (In fact, we can interpret the sign off as the summary expressive act announcing that everything else has been done—a sort of meta-expressive “That’s all.”) Relative to the envisioned final product, in-process work is expressive only in part, just as water approaching the boiling point, though not boiling yet, is still heating up. *Vis-à-vis* the respective thresholds of boiling point and finished state, gradations of temperature and expression allow for plausible and theoretically useful descriptions of heating up and creating out.

4

If trying to preserve an intuitive view of partworks as occupying a middle-ground between non-artworks of the quotidian kind and bona fide artworks has such drastic theoretical consequences as I have suggested above, then this might be taken as a *reductio* of the intuitive view. Perhaps then we may be motivated to deny that there can, strictly speaking, be partworks at all, to avail ourselves in other words of either an inflationary strategy (elevating partworks to the status of full-blown art) or a deflationary strategy (reducing partworks to the status of mere non-art). In fact, though I have called the view of partworks proposed here intuitive, no doubt there will be competing intuitions that point to one or the other of these strategies.

The inflationary strategy implies rejecting the completeness requirement for art: where a work is unfinished, it may still count as art, even if the artist has not signed off on it. One might be tempted toward this strategy by the tendency to count unfinished art as part of an artist’s *body of work*, by the superficial grammar of such phrases as ‘unfinished work’, and so on. One might also find the inflationary strategy plausible in cases of “near-miss” partworks, such as *The Trial*, in which the gaps are either unnoticed or easily filled in by the reader. Such differences between artworks and near-miss partworks are perhaps indeed negligible in this phenomenological sense. However, while it may be appropriate to include partworks within an artist’s body of work, this does not imply proper inclusion in a list of the artist’s *works* (for which completeness might be needed), since ‘work’ in ‘body of work’ operates as a mass noun requiring neither discreteness nor comple-

tion of the object's constituents, whereas this is not obviously so for 'work of art' in the usual sense. Likewise, we should not be misled into thinking that 'unfinished' in 'unfinished artwork' operates like an ordinary predicate, as in 'representational artwork', but should instead note that it is rather more like 'interrupted sentence', which does not properly refer to sentences, only sentence fragments. Although the inflationary strategy is somewhat plausible for near-miss partworks, it fails to be so for cases of glaring incompleteness, such "manifest" partworks as the "*Unfinished*" *Symphony*, and so on.

The inflationary strategy also gives rise to *sorites* problems, for if *Atlas* counts as a full-blown sculpture, then so must earlier and earlier stages of it, right back to the first chisel stroke on the original hunk of marble. The untouched marble might have counted as found art, and the once-struck block might have counted as a sculpture—in another context. But barring the freeing of statue from stone in a single chisel stroke, the un- or barely touched marble does *not* count as a sculpture when intended to become *David* or the sculpture *Atlas* never was. One might simply insist that *Atlas* is in no sense less a work than *David* is, citing perhaps the fact that (as with *Requiem* or the "*Unfinished*"), incompleteness aside, such partworks are substantial enough to provide rich aesthetic rewards, and so ought to count as artworks no less than a vast majority of artistically inferior finished works. But of course providing for aesthetic experience, intense and profound as it might be, is insufficient for art, and so the undeniable quality of a great partwork will not make it an artwork.

Still, if the inflationary strategy were to succeed, the theoretical implications of *prima facie* partworks would remain significant. For instance, partworks are *not*, as a kind, intended either to be presented to an artworld public, to be regarded as past art has correctly been, or to provide for aesthetic experience. Thus the inflationary strategy casts *prima facie* partworks as counterexamples to prominent varieties of institutional, historical, and aesthetic theories, since *qua* artworks they do not meet the posited criteria. The deflationary strategy likewise serves up partworks as counterexamples, since *qua* non-art they are nonetheless artefacts presented to the artworld as candidates for appreciation, intended (by curators rather than artists) to be regarded in historically appropriate ways, and providing for aesthetic experience.

The deflationary strategy of reducing partworks to mere non-art perhaps seems plausible in that, aside from the work remaining to be done, the artist has not signed off, and what crucial cases like Duchamp's *Foun-*

tain are supposed to show is that it is (virtually) sufficient for art to have an artist sign off on *something*. This signatory condition is the one procedural requirement for art on which various theoretical approaches might comfortably agree. Even if one could sign off on a work on the artist's or the artworld's behalf, both the unfinished status of the work and the lack of artist's signatory closure suggests that whatever the artwork we "create" or "finish" by presentation or status conferral *cannot* be either the envisioned work or properly the artist's. We cannot make the "*Unfinished*" *Symphony* a symphony just by signing off on it, nor would it be Schubert's if we either pulled a *Süssmayr* or somehow transfigured the "*Unfinished*" into a finished musical or perhaps meta-musical work of another kind, just as it is Duchamp and not a plumbing manufacturer who is the artist of *Fountain*.

Insisting that the signatory move is the *only* stage of artmaking that ever matters simply ignores the undeniable importance of work already done on partworks and the substantial work required to bring most types of art into being. Often an artist has not signed off *because* there is work yet to be done. Putting the 'work' back in 'artwork' does not, however, rule out cases like *Fountain*, virtually effortless and instantaneous as its transfiguration might have been. In these cases we might have a kind of instant artmaking, where the work is initiated and completed in a single act, artworks without any precedent partworks. Be that as it may. The point is not that all artworks were partworks first; perhaps substantial work is necessary, not for all forms of art, but for most. The point is rather that partworks as such have important implications for theories of art. Better to explain fringe cases like *Fountain* in terms of more standard cases, if possible, than to let the fringe rule unfettered over the entire artwork class. Since most if not all artworks were partworks at some point, the intuitive view of partworks offered here accommodates such fringe cases without straying too far from art at its very core.