
Contemporary Sculptural Haptics in Sociocultural Context

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Abstract: In the paper the phenomenon of the so-called contemporary sculptural haptics is discussed. Under this term the authors understand the quality of contemporary art objects to make sight bodily, that is, to reduce any image or imagery that these objects (be they physical or virtual) attempt to represent to merely physical shapes, which is done in such a way that the horizon of the transcendental appears to be sealed off or cut off by immense sensory overload. Consequently, when dealing with sculptural haptics our eyes rather "touch" the art object (even if it is a seemingly shapeless and amorph sculpture) than look at it. This lack or collapse of transcendental horizon that was once glowing from the inside of things and especially works of art results in a form of sensual eternalism, when art is understood only as something that represents this or that form of "reality", be it the reality of concepts produced by our mind to describe the world we live in or the so-called "physical reality" of dense material objects or any other given, particular, defined form of reality, as opposed to Transcendental Reality as such. It is also stated that haptics of this kind, overall, results in an uncritical attitude when works of public art that are totally unrelated to the unique character of the place are installed in it (the so-called plop-art). Instead of this subtle form of the violence of international market economy and post-capitalism over the residents of the place where such artworks are installed, more subtle and sensitive to the environment site-specific works should instead be preferred.

Keywords: Contemporary Haptics, Public Art, Plop Art, Site-Specific Art, Sculpture of Ukraine

1. Introduction

On the night of August 23, 2023, an act of vandalism took place in Stryi Park in the center of Lviv, Ukraine. Under attack was a granite sculpture of a sculptor from Kyiv Vasyl Korchovyi, "Vpevnena" (the title could be translated as "Confident" (Figure 1)), which was installed as a temporary exhibit of a mobile exhibition under the project of the Lviv Sculpture Week. Created in 2021 at the International Symposium in Kaniv (Ukraine), under the curatorship of the "Chervone Chorne" art association, this sculpture, along with seven other granite works, appeared before the eyes of Western Ukrainian spectators, provoking intense public debate. The reaction was mixed, consisting of sheer appreciation for the sculptor's work alongside with what seems to have been a spontaneous expression of public rejection of contemporary sculptural haptics, which is offered

to the community under the label of contemporary beauty as it is reflected in public art, of new aesthetics (one might want to call it post-aesthetics, which would mean the kind of aesthetics that no longer has anything to do in common with the Beauty and the Beautiful), which is no longer a science of beauty, but rather a mirror of any forms, in this case – features of a person's appearance. Contemporary sculptural haptics (also primitive haptics, naturalistic haptics) is a term that we offer in order to properly and adequately explain the quality of contemporary art objects to make sight bodily, that is, to reduce any image or imagery that these objects attempt to represent to merely physical shapes, which is done in such a way that the horizon of the transcendental appears to be sealed off or cut off by immense sensory overload, that is to say, our eyes rather "touch" the art object (even if it is something seemingly shapeless and amorph) than look at it. This lack or collapse of transcendental horizon glowing from the inside of

things and especially works of art results in a form of sensual eternalism, when art is understood only as something that represents this or that form of "reality", be it the reality of concepts produced by our mind to describe the world we live in or the so-called "physical reality" of dense material objects or any other given, particular, defined form of reality, as opposed to Transcendental Reality as such.



Figure 1. *Vasyl Korchovyi. Confident. 2021. Granite. Park exposition of the mobile exhibition in Lviv 2023.*

The nuance that needs to be discussed here lies in a subtle substitution of concepts, since the essence of the dispute has nothing to do with body-shaming (as the sculptor's supporters claim) [1]. In fact, we are talking about the fact that public art must take into account the position of the public, because, as it turned out, the abnormally expanded field of sculpture does not always correspond to the site-specifics of the city, causing tension between sites and non-sites, as explained in "Artforum" by Robert Smithson. Moreover, as James Wines, the founder of the firm "Sculpture in the Environment" noted, when public art exclusively pursues the goal of private art, this is when the phenomenon of plop / plonk art arises, emphasizing the disjunction between social needs of the community and the vision and tastes of the artist that are manipulatively imposed upon the community. It is in such cases that court can rule out the necessity to dismantle a work of public art, as it happened in 1989 with "Tilted Arc" by Richard Serra. It is symptomatic that Serra, in response to the court decision to remove the sculpture, stated, in a dialogue with Hal Foster, that he denied the widespread thesis about the merging of contemporary art with the life of people [2]. As an elite artist, he did not consider the goal of art to be the aesthetic satisfaction of everyone and everything; however, such a position turns egalitarian aspects of public art into nothing else but a bubble of cultural populism.

Cultural populism is also inherent in the case of the scandal surrounding "Vpevnena", in the very name of which a challenge to public perception was already encrypted.

Meanwhile, the idea of forming culture walks / sculpture trail, which is now becoming a widespread trend in the world according to UN programs regarding sustainable urban development (in particular, "Sustainable cities and human settlements" and point 11 of "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" [3]) and which is being implemented in various locations around the world, from Australia to Great Britain and the USA, is a relatively new event in Ukraine. After the Dubai International Financial Center inaugurated the first Global Art Forum in 2007, at which the definition of global art was recognized as a synonym for contemporary art, and after UNESCO agreed with the formula "art is business", encouraging benchmarking strategies for the development of public art by the network of international Biennials, the post-ethnic cultural industry in Ukraine has started to perceive the business model of market development of art (which is subject to well-articulated and justified criticism from within the society of Western countries) as a symbol/standard of true democracy, thus falling into the trap of self-colonization, the danger of which was described by the Bulgarian analyst, Professor of Sofia University Alexander Kiossev at the turn of the millennium.

In fact, art-business structures and private galleries first of all, as in this case of "Ya gallery" of the curator of the Lviv exhibition Pavlo Gudimov, perform the unconscious role of an interpretive community, spreading false Eurocentric patterns, which Walter Mignola explored as colonial systems of Western cognition ("modernity /coloniality world-system"), which nullifies the development of national cultural consciousness as such. Because of that, the pearl of garden and park art of Lviv found itself at the center of a scandal, when it temporarily hosted 8 sculptural objects from the landscape collection of the city of Kaniv, including the work by V. Korchovyi, which was not accepted by the residents of Lviv and which triggered a heated debate in mass media, social networks, and academic institutions.

The sculptor himself insists that whether his artwork is beautiful or not is solely a matter of individual taste and that the woman he sculpted is beautiful, just as the sculpture as such. The mayor of the city, Andriy Sadovyi, spoke in the defence of the artist taking a picture of himself and his wife standing next to the back of the scandalous sculpture (Figure 2), upon which he posted the photo on the Internet with the ironic commentary saying that "No matter which way you look, art in the park is a great idea" [1]. This literally added fuel to the fire. In the end, the granite sculpture was doused with oil and an attempt was made to set it on fire, so the police opened criminal proceedings. As a result of the social upheaval, the Ukrainian graphic illustrator Maksym Palenko created a caricature of the controversy surrounding the "non-format" sculpture (where an obese connoisseur of Ukrainian cuisine, in particular lard, is having a debate with the sculpture), and posted it on the network with a commentary about the testing the nation's sense of beauty (Figure 3). Many participants of this debate accused their opponents of Soviet thinking patterns, urging to keep up with the spirit of time; others noted the banality of age-related

deformations of the body, which should not be hidden with children being allowed to get used to such transformations reflected in public art; finally, there were those who claimed to have liked the artwork while declaring that in life they adhered to the traditional formula "a healthy mind in a healthy body".



Figure 2. The mayor of Lviv Andriy Sadovy with his wife near the reverse of the sculpture "Confident". 2023.



Figure 3. Max Pavlenko. Caricature on the sculpture "Confident". "But what an abomination." 2023.

Considering all of the above-mentioned, the authors believe that this study's aim is to showcase how contemporary sculptural haptics, which itself might be seen as art form derived from the consequences of the collapse of transcendental horizon that was once glowing from the inside

of things (and especially works of art), results in a form of sensual eternalism, when art is understood only as something that represents this or that form of "reality", be it the reality of concepts produced by our mind to describe the world we live in or the so-called "physical reality" of dense material objects or any other given, particular, defined form of reality, as opposed to Transcendental Reality as such. Consequently, the aim of the study is also to demonstrate that haptics of this kind, overall, results in an uncritical reading of the landscape, when works of public art that are totally unrelated to the unique character of the place are installed in it (the so-called plop-art). As the authors want to show, instead of this subtle form of the violence of international market economy and post-capitalism over the residents of the place where such artworks are installed, more subtle and sensitive to the environment site-specific works should instead be preferred.

2. Literature Review

The essence of the dispute over the nature of the installment of "Vpevnena" in Stryi Park in Lviv has much deeper roots, than merely a dispute about what kind of sculpture should be installed in public spaces and what the procedures of this installment should look like in order not to neglect the perspective of the locals – after all, the very people, for whom the park was created and who should, in theory, benefit the most from any new sculpture or any other kind of artwork in the park. There is a lot to this heated public debate that was invisible in the beginning.

It is impossible to understand the true nature of what is at stake here without digging into the history of the XX century philosophy. From this latter, it becomes obvious that, ultimately, the debate was not the result of a clash of high and low cultures, as this distinction ceased to exist decades ago – back at the times of T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer's "The Dialectics of Enlightenment" it had already become blurred and was becoming relatively unimportant, but it was, rather, a conflict between deeply-rooted in quotidian life values and mindset remnants of Renaissance- and Baroque-based aesthetic perspective and the kind of global art that is firmly connected and associated with international art market and hence – erroneously, without doubt – deemed "progressive", while in fact being a gateway to the kind of post-capitalism that will inherit all the flaws (standardization, universalization, etc.) of the existing capitalist mode of production. This latter term should, for the sake of accuracy, also include capitalism understood as a way of production of beauty and taste, which makes it rather difficult not to recall such wonderful sources as J. Berger's "Ways of Seeing", H. Lefebvre's "The Production of Space", manifestos by the Situationists, "The society of the spectacle" by G. Debord and suchlike works, without which it is impossible to develop a proper understanding of the argument surrounding "Vpevnena": indeed, the question being discussed here is as much about aesthetics as it is about the economic and social mode behind contemporary trends in global public art.

To address the issue of ugliness adequately – which means,

to connect it within the scope of this particular essay to the broader subject of transcendental aesthetics – we decided to rely on the approach developed by a XIX century aesthetician and disciple of Hegel, Karl Rosenkranz, whose “The Aesthetics of Ugliness” was translated and commented on by a Kyiv-based philosopher and translator Mariia Shkepu.

These literary sources make it relatively clear that the essence of the matter is that the positivist contemporary sculptural haptics is essentially materialistic, body-focused and body-centered approach in art, the kind of approach that abandons what one might call “creative idealization”, which, by the way, was used not only by the scandalously famous Bologna engraver of the 16th century, tried for pornography and forgery of engravings, Marc-Antonio Raimondi, but also by Peter Rubens, Jacob Jordans and even Auguste Rodin in the case of his nude Balzac sculpture.

And yet, the question is broad and trivial, to which the answers are just as numerous: what is art and whether aesthetic or ethical limitations are necessary, after all, has transcendental aesthetics finally been rendered completely obsolete by the advent of global public art? And, last but not least, is deskilling – so characteristic of the contemporary society – to blame for the growing inability to distinguish between the global and the local, the spirit and trends of art market and the need to adjust them when creating artworks that will be installed locally, in a particular, unique place?

3. Plop Art as Cultural Populism

Since the beginning of the 2000s, Richard Florida's concept of creative class and creative cities, according to which every art institution stimulates the globalizing public movement (one might call it “totalized design”, using a term coined by Gal Foster), has led to cultural populism because of the victory of the nobrow marketing culture in the new millennium, exactly as it was declared by the critic of “The New Yorker”, John Seabrook, in his book “Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing, the Marketing of Culture”. It seems noteworthy to mention the fact that Gal Foster, fiercely disputing with Seabrook, asked, quite rhetorically, “Yet what if this brow system has undergone a lobotomy before our very eyes?”, while defining Seabrook’s toponymy not only as “a dumbing down of intellectual culture”, but as a transition “to commercial culture, which is no longer seen as an object of disdain but as “a source of status””. Respectively, the conclusion by Foster was that “he drinks more deeply at the oases of nobrow culture than he does in the gardens of elite culture” [4].

The author of “Confident” tries to quench his thirst from two sources simultaneously: while using the glossary of one of the traditions of Mediterranean imagery – namely, the one associated with ferocious cults of Magna Mater, a primeval deity also known in the form of the so-called Venus figurine, he declares “nobrow” and poeticizes the aesthetics of the ugliness, as if arguing with Karl Rosenkranz, whose philosophy of ugliness might be summed up in defining ugliness as “the aesthetics of a determinate being of unfreedom” [5]. Phatic-network aesthetics helps to combine

kitsch with the global average of the pastiche of art consciousness. This is exactly what Leslie Fiedler declared three decades before Seabrook in his speech “The Case for Post Modernism” (1968), at the University of Freiburg at a symposium on contemporary literature, where he used the term “postmodern” as a strategy for the gap between high and mass art (this report appeared the following year as the article “Cross the Border — Close the Gap” in “Playboy”).

Fiedler's ideas, in particular on the elimination of the gap between the audience, the critic and the artist, and, accordingly, between the professional and the amateur, became the ground for the spread of deskilling, pornography, appropriation, deviant gestures, pushing contemporary art to the sociopolitical activism of the two thousandth and mindless incorporation of network aesthetics of our times. Fiedler annulled borders, threw aesthetics, ideals, expertise, finally, ethics out into the dustbin of history because «Postmodernism implies the closing of the gap between critic and audience, also if by critic one understands leader of taste and by audience, follower. But most importantly, it implies the closing of the gap between artist and audience or, at any rate, between professional and amateur in the realm of art»; «The revival of pornography is best understood in this context, also; for it, like the Western and science fiction, is a form of pop art. Since Victorian times, it has been the essential form of pop art – the most unredeemable of all kinds of subliterate, understood as a sort of entertainment closer to vice than to art» [6].

Obviously, in the case of the educated citizens of Lviv, their public aesthetic culture appeared to be incomparably higher than the level professed by the author of “Confident”. M. Epstein, considering haptics as a tactile form of expression that stimulates the reproductive function of the body, in particular in the context of somatosophy, tries to find out what corporeality adds to consciousness if the latter can be transferred to a quantum basis. Corporeality is a marker of its own disappearance, because it provokes paranoid attention to the body that is being worn out, that is why contemporaries are responsible for preserving the memory of the body, because saying goodbye to the body provokes the embodiment of philosophical opinions [7]. I will add that corporeality also provokes the embodiment of the art episteme in such a form where there is no transcendental aesthetics left. Moreover, when there is too much of the physical in art, banal boredom arises, but “poverty even intensifies the acuteness of singing, clinging, tormenting in that which is barely feminine...”, because it is always more difficult to enjoy than to desire, and when the body becomes flesh, then it already “suffocates, oppresses and becomes hell” [7]. That's why “Confident” in Lviv really becomes a hell, and confidently suffocates, against which the residents quite rightly rebel, intuitively resisting this form of subtle aesthetic and cultural violence.

It is not by chance that the derogatory slang term *Plop art* is used for such low-quality public art in public places. The term was introduced by the American architect and constructivist sculptor James Wines, a champion of environmental art, the president of the SITE (Sculpture in the Environment) firm

founded in 1970, who explained the dichotomy as the disjunction between fake and truth, between the artist's fantasies and the real social problems of the place. Hence, explanations such as: "Plop art (or plonk art) is a pejorative slang term for public art (usually large, abstract, modernist or contemporary sculpture) made for government or corporate plazas, spaces in front of office are fully justified buildings, skyscraper atriums, parks, and other public venues. The term is a form of wordplay from the term pop art and connotes that the work is unattractive or inappropriate to its surroundings – that it has been thoughtlessly "plopped" where it lies" [8]. Usually, contemporary public art is abstract, visually simplified objects, but in this case figurative sculpture reshapes the traditional art vocabulary in a hyper-realistic spirit as an example of private internalization of art thinking masquerading as public art. And such tactile mimicry, according to J. Baudrillard, is a multi-simulation of the "tactile communication culture" [9]. Meanwhile, the media remind us that modern culture is too far ahead of the outdated tastes of society: "After an outpouring of hate, the curator of the project Pavlo Gudimov said that this fact "once again confirms the great distance between society and culture, which sits in a bubble"... that the sculpture " Confident" is aimed at making people understand: bodily beauty exists in all manifestations" [1]. However, the arguments in favor of the comparison of "Confident" and the Venus of Willendorf (one of the Venus figurine sculptures mentioned before) does not work since the ancient human consciousness of a certain kind did not perceive the body as separate from totemistic religious patterns, and the ecstatic nature of the figurative sense is hinted at by the plastic generalization in the interpretation of the hands, feet, or the symbolism of the interpretation of the head.

We must also cite another example of quite delicate and even, metaphorically speaking, diplomatic avoidance of primitive haptics, which can be seen in Perth, where annual sculpture symposia organized as part of "Sculpture by the Sea" sculpture trail gave birth to, among other sculptures that we will not discuss here, a doll-pink hyper-realistic image of a sumo athlete by the Chinese sculptor Mu Boyan from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing (CAFA) ("Horizon" (2018, Figure 4)), received a cash prize from the mayor of the town of Waverley, because the work is figuratively and formally distanced, the hero seems to be meditating by the sea, and the perception of this character is very benevolent, since the author did not rely on provocative concepts or ideologies [10]. By the way, Ukrainian sculptor Egor Zigura (Figure 5) also participated in the "Sculpture by the Sea" project in Perth in the spring of this year. He exhibited the two-meter long composition "Colossus Holds Up the World", created in 2016 (Figure 6), where the bodily effect was annihilated by the convention of a form-forming surface with spatial caesuras, so that the elements of air, sea, matter and myth had a synergy of dialogism (M. Bakhtin), and Renaissance plastic "presence is not erased by emptiness", focusing on the author's idea of criticizing consumerism, because through commodification "society does not have a coherent structure — it is a fragile and incomplete

mechanism" [11].

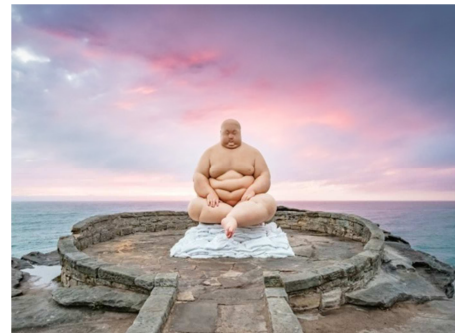


Figure 4. Mu Boyan. *Horizon*. Sculpture by the Sea. Bondi 2018.



Figure 5. Egor Zigura, *Colossus Holding the World*. Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi 2022–2023. Photo by Gareth Carr.



Figure 6. Egor Zigura, *Colossus Holding the World*. Bronze 2016. Sculptor's studio.

Instead, the haptics of V. Korchovyi actually eliminates presence by emphasizing "doubled presence", as this paradoxical nuance was explained by J. Baudrillard [12]. In addition, "Confident" is installed in the context of a park operating within a traditional aesthetic concept, thus creating a dissonance that David Fenner, professor of Philosophy and Art at the University of North Florida, described as the fact "that aesthetic regard for The Garden began to wane", and, while not accepting the division of artworks according to hierarchies of aesthetic or artistic merit, states that contemporary artists ignore the changes in the episteme of garden and park landscapes of the 21st century, not showing respect for this form of art. Indeed, it is worth remembering that "the notion of celebrating The Garden as an art form is

motivated in part by the expansion of opportunities for experiences that may be as rich as those afforded by any other form of art" and that "the reasonableness of understanding and celebrating The Garden as an art form, since artistic success with a garden that rises to the level of being a work of art – and clearly not all do – entails having to master a set of skills that typically dwarf what must be mastered to manipulate the media of "simpler," more plastic art forms". Therefore, with those conditions being fulfilled, "we have reason to celebrate the successful garden work of art with greater exuberance because of the level of evident skill needed to bring it into existence» [13].

Although in the context of the exhibition space organized solely according to principles of art business, "Confident" would look appropriate, in a traditional park landscape, as it was evidenced by the reaction of the public, it causes a reaction of a certain type of irritation, which is too easy and simple to call "hating". Since it is not the nation that needs to be re-educated, but certain artists and private galleries need to become more sensitive to understanding the spirit of the place and to distinguish between public and plonk art.

Back in 2011, professor of cultural studies from Loughborough University Jim McGuigan, who taught in many countries of the world, in particular at the Vienna International Center for Cultural Studies, criticizing the absorption / incorporation of neo-avant-garde stratagems in the context of "cool capitalism", called on contemporaries to revive independent criticism and get rid of cultural populism in the name of public interest, based on a multidimensional analysis of a wide range of problems. Supporting «critical cultural intervention in the public sphere» Jim McGuigan writes: «During the 1980s, cultural studies in Britain – and elsewhere – took an uncritical populist turn. The field of study had hitherto focused, with a distinctly oppositional orientation, upon the arts, popular and mass culture as sites of ideological contestation. Yet, increasing concern with describing and indeed celebrating processes of cultural consumption – the active audience, resistance through rituals etc. – lost sight of economic and political struggle over the circulation of culture in society. This cultural populist tendency became less concerned with questioning the status quo and unwittingly, in effect, endorsed neo-liberal development over the past thirty years. Mainstream cultural studies thus ceased to be a critical means of analysing the present cultural condition and tended, instead, to identify itself with it» [14].

Accordingly, the status of cognition in post-industrial society has changed, with attention now being focused on the event, actionism, information, concept, and not on attempts to understand the essence. It is not by chance that Professor Peter Osborne, Director of the Center for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University, states that modern visual practices after the socio-cultural turn are everywhere post-conceptual and capitalized, which leaves the imprint of deskilling on creativity. Osborne complains about the situation with the British financial system, which is "complex, because of which cultural institutions are always forced to look for additional sources of funding for their

activities. But you can't look for money where culture is always politics and propaganda, otherwise real problems begin" [15]. Cultural populism in theory and practice also clearly explains the root of the problem with "Confident", which was manifested in the rejection of the park sculpture by Lviv residents, and it is actually something that the community of the city can be proud of.

4. Essential Destruction of Postclassical Culture and Memory of the Past

A deeper, philosophical look at the entire scandal around "Confident" might be formed after integrating into this research the works of Ukrainian philosopher, professor Mariia Shkepu, who studied the problem of the "dissonance of the fundamental logic of social practice, the distorted modes of its postclassical dimensions and the categorical decay of subjectivity", as a consequence of which a situation of "the decay of categories in postmodern semantics, which is immanent to the denial of classical formation and objective foundations of historical development" is brought into being. Consequently, philosophically speaking, "the artistic culture loses its attribute in the pre-emptive representation of reality and moves along its inversely destructive logic, and the art criticism subordinates itself to such destruction" [16], which might be the case in the situation with the sculpture being discussed here, as well as with the reaction of the part of the audience and critics and artists who unanimously supported the aesthetics offered by the artwork and the approach of installing works of art without any consideration of the opinion of the residents and locals of the place where the work is being installed.

Referring to the concept of "invalidity of culture" developed by K. Noyka, Shkepu proves that the ongoing crisis state of culture and art is connected to "the failure of the dialectical imperatives of classical formation in social movement practises after the classical period". Developing this point, she then hypothesizes that when "multiple manifestations of reality (phenomenon, form, being, reality, freedom, etc.) are brought to the fore beyond their apprehension through categories of essence, content, essential existence, reality, necessity", a situation appears in which "the theoretical reflection in general and the artistic reflection in particular created the gaps of the arbitrariness of subjectivity, which caused the syndrome of formal knowledge and formal art" [16].

Thus, "postclassic time is a regression in regression: in it these derivative categories are already collapsing, serving as a means for linguistic, figurative, semantic, moral deconstruction of the historical reality and of subjectivity itself. Artistic culture becomes a reproduction of fragments of the "liberated" from the essence of "realities", and amorphous methodology of postcultural science acts as both a factor and a consequence of the categorical disintegration of knowledge" [16].

Accordingly, the position of all the apologists of

naturalistic haptics, who fight so militantly for the contemporary phenomenology of the thing in the spaces of art, which becomes a banal market commodity, of all the lobbyists of instrumentalized consciousness (artists, critics, scientists, curators) might be understood as a consequence of cognitive hysteresis and professional deskilling. From the perspective of the authors of this research piece, the criticism of cultural populism, which famous Western scholars have not abandoned since the intensification of discussions about the "death of postmodernism", with the hope of protecting civilizational culture from collapse, is useful precisely in the times of the war in Ukraine, when scientists, critics and artists are trying to find updated paradigms and art epistemes adequate to modern challenges, in particular for the post-war rebuilding of Ukraine, that has to take into account the mistakes made, and later – admitted and studied by the West.

It seems quite logical, then, that on the initiative of Ukrainian civil society, the "Sustainable peace manifesto" was created, which states: "The world will never be the same as it was before the war, so instead of returning to the pre-war status quo, our goal is to look at what made the war possible and create a new, safer system... The time has come for both Ukraine and the world to answer the question of what this end will look like. We are driven to do this because the world is still bogged down in outdated concepts..." [17]. Therefore, in the conditions of the essential transformation of the "spatial memory network" (Amal Pushp [18]), artistic and culture-creating epistemes already need to be revised in order to overcome the destruction of entropic vectors of post-culture's development trends.

Considering the fact that many Western analysts are sure that the events in Ukraine are actively changing the whole world, transforming the existing cultural landscapes and paradigms towards the weakening of the influence of business strategies of the art market, scientists, critics and artists of Ukraine should be ready to bear a heavy responsibility. By criticizing globalism and cultural imperialism, where the market opposes cultural-artistic autonomy, passionate artists and scholars find true creative possibilities for the future flourishing of cultures.

David Hesmondhalgh from the University of Leeds occasionally expresses skepticism about the "power of the media" when "the creators of symbols" and meanings lost the guarantee of audience attention [19]. Moreover, the limitless growth in the number of texts since the break of the 1980s and 1990s does not indicate a similar breakthrough in their quality although it can be used to prove a lack of control by the authorities and capital. As early as the early 2000s, Hesmondhalgh emphasized that modern technological reductionism remains dangerous, so it is necessary to have the courage to conduct qualitative historical analysis to ensure we will be able to avoid negative consequences, and to talk about low-quality texts, artifacts, pastiche of pop culture, recognizing today's culture as complex, ambivalent and even controversial. Only in this way will the modern cultural situation have an optimistic long-term perspective, and the

collectively pieced together memory of humanity will have enough power to keep mankind from falling into savagery (one might see this savagery as a kind of post-apocalyptic scenario in culture rather than in society, economy and environment per se). After all, as Walter Benjamin once rightfully argued, there is not a single document of culture that is not simultaneously a document of barbarism.

Therefore, it is worth trusting intuition when the affect of feelings, according to Lyotard, is transformed into a spontaneous return effect, which is beyond time and space, consciousness or memory, because it is the main argument of the mission of art, because the very physical appearance of the work of art bears the stamp of the disappearance of the essential phenomenon – "that's why such a gesture always inspires nostalgia and leads to anamnesis" [20]. J.-F. Lyotard wrote not only about the loss of grand narratives, he also spoke about the importance of the ancient Greek aisthesis, the "sensual feeling" that makes the human soul and creativity feel full of full life. Lyotard's opinion remains part of the agenda, because he sought to prevent the collapse: "Today's 'modernity' does not wait for aisthesis, as if it would give the soul the peace of a beautiful harmony; it [today's 'modernity'] is waiting for aisthesis to pull itself [today's 'modernity'] out of nothingness at the last moment.

... Nihilism not only puts an end to the effectiveness of great emancipatory narratives, it not only entails the loss of values and the death of God, which makes metaphysics impossible. It casts doubt on the basic aesthetic opinion. Aisthesis is an event, for the soul exists only if it is driven by it; and when it is not there, the soul dissipates in the absence of the inanimate. It is a duty of works of art to honor this wonderful and unreliable condition" [20].

5. Conclusion

Today sculptural haptics is a marker of a total socio-cultural crisis, when, as Lyotard argued, civilization, aware of its own mortality, cultivates the aesthetic pleasure of representing its ruined ideals. Therefore, critical positions are being expressed more and more boldly in the global scientific discourse. To be more precise, these positions quite often tend to revolve around the kind of socio-philosophical analysis that condemns cultural populism that adheres to benchmarking strategies. The art-episteme dichotomy testifies to the rethinking of the narrative of contemporary art, to the efforts of passionate artists and scientists to free themselves from the repressive pressure of the aesthetics of globalism, which today strengthens the negative influence of the market ideology of biocapitalism on the collective consciousness of nations, leading to the dominance of the philosophy of things, the reification of creative expression, and ultimately to professional deskilling. Under these circumstances, the main duty of modern theories and practices is the rejection of spiritual materialism/nihilism, and vice versa – an attempt to reintroduce into critical discourse the ever-relevant ideals of transcendental aesthetics, which awakens in contemporaries "minimal soul", which is sensitive to subtle manifestations of

the spirit of aisthesis.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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