

KAMRAN KHAVARANI

California, United States

**WHAT IS ART, WHAT IS “PERSONART”: ART FOR A NEW
CONSCIOUSNESS, ART FOR A NEW HUMANITY****Abstract:**

Art is dead and will remain dead until we define its true meaning. Socrates' teachings propose that meanings cannot be understood without knowing their opposites. What is the opposite of art? Many great thinkers have tried to define “art,” distinguish it from what art is not and defend its essence; among them Leon Tolstoy, who eloquently said, “Art is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; but it is a universal means of union among men, toward well-being of individuals and of humanity.” Yet, beginning in the late 19th century, the notion of “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” implied “anything goes” in visual arts. That brought on freedom of expression, while gradually destroyed the true meaning of the art, its essence and its divinity. Consequently, the world has paid a ransom for that “liberation.” In the modern aesthetics field, scientists suggest that there are “laws” that differentiate “art” from mere “personal expressions,” which I have termed “PersonArt.” Twenty-six years ago, neurologist Ramachandran and philosopher Hirstein suggested that artist deploy certain rules or principles to “titillate the visual areas of the brain.” They called those rules “laws.” Those laws are the universal values, necessary for judging true art. Today, visual art is dead because its universal values have been replaced with personal expressions. Just imagine how barbaric and inhumane it would be if we declare “justice is in the eye of the beholder.” To restore the divinity to visual art, we must first define what constitutes art. In search for that definition, consider a simple question in the tradition of Socrates' dialogue; can anyone understand “fast” without knowing “slow?” In parallel, can we understand the meaning of “art,” without knowing its opposite? It is truly astonishing that no word exists in Western languages for the opposite of “art.” A look into ancient history and across cultures can shed light on the meaning of “art.” From the time of Cyrus the Great, the king of ancient Persia, the term “honor” was defined as effective goodness. Then the opposite of art was clear --“effective badness.” The absence of a transparent definition for “art” and its opposite in Western languages has opened the floodgates for enormous opportunities for “tastemakers” to create and exploit a multibillion dollar “business” with absurdities in the name of “art.” This is a travesty. As a result, creation has been replaced with personal expressions.

Attachment:<http://www.iises.net/download/Soubory/attachments/poppies-at-water.jpg>

Keywords:

Keynote Remarks, Arts for a New Humanity, Kamran Khavarani

JEL Classification: Y90, Z19