

Certainly, here is the English translation of the text:

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## The Artificial Ready-Made: GAI-Art in Light of Dickie and Danto

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In the following proposition, I posit that a work generated by Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI), prompted by a text or a self-made drawing, can be considered a **ready-made** by the artist. This places the ultimate contemporary technological development within the tradition of one of the most revolutionary art historical concepts. By testing this proposition against the institutional theory of **George Dickie** and the philosophy of **Arthur Danto**, it proves not only tenable but also remarkably illuminating for the status of GAI-art. It emphasizes that the artistic act no longer lies (solely) in the artisanal execution, but in the conceptual action of **selection, presentation, and meaning-making**.

According to Arthur Danto, a theoretical context, rather than a visual distinction, is the determining factor for what constitutes art. His thought experiment involving Andy Warhol's perceptually indiscernible *Brillo Boxes* demonstrated that two visually identical objects can have a fundamentally different status: one is an everyday utility object, the other a work of art. The difference is created by the "atmosphere of artistic theory"—the intention, the historical context, and the interpretation that surrounds the object [i].

From this perspective, the GAI artist is not a craftsman but a **curator of possibilities**. The prompt—be it text or a drawing—functions as a theoretical framework. It is the artistic intention that guides the algorithm. When the artist subsequently selects one of the generated outputs, this action is comparable to Marcel Duchamp choosing a bottle rack. The artist is essentially saying: "*this* is the artifact that embodies my concept, my imagination." The GAI output itself, much like Duchamp's urinal, is anonymous and industrially produced (albeit digitally). It only becomes art through the meaning the artist bestows upon it via the prompt and the subsequent presentation. Danto's idea of "**fulfillment by meaning**" (*aboutness*) is crucial here: the digital file is *about* something; it represents an idea formulated by the artist [ii].

George Dickie's institutional theory of art encapsulates Danto's ideas in a more formal definition: a work of art is an artifact upon which a certain status has been conferred by someone acting on behalf of **the artworld**. This "artworld" is an informal network of artists, curators, critics, gallery owners, and the public [iii].

The GAI artist's action is a perfect illustration of this process. The artist, as an established (or aspiring) member of the artworld, confers the status of **candidate for appreciation** upon the generated output [iv]<sup>4</sup>. By entering the prompt and selecting the result, the artist curates the work. By titling it, signing it (digitally or in the metadata), and exhibiting it (in a gallery, online platform, or otherwise), the institutional recognition is completed. The GAI output is the *artifact*; the artist is the *agent* acting on behalf of the artworld; and the exhibition or archiving is the actual *conferral of status*.

In this sense, **the prompt is the modern equivalent of Duchamp's signature on "Fountain."** It is the mark that transforms an everyday object—in this case, an algorithmically generated pixel configuration—into a work of art. The artist does not "find" the work in the literal sense, but selects it from an infinite sea of digital possibilities, and through that selection, it becomes a ready-made.

However, important nuances must be noted. Firstly, there is the difference in origin. Duchamp's ready-mades were pre-fabricated physical objects. The GAI output is a uniquely generated digital object, arising from a human-initiated process. Yet, it retains the essence of the ready-made: the absence of traditional artistic craft. The artist does not procure it by creating with pencil or brush, but by giving a **command (the prompt)**.

Secondly, the proposition raises the question of whether the prompt itself is not the actual work of art. Dickie and Danto would likely view this as a false dichotomy. It is the **entire process**—the conception (prompt), the generation (by GAI), and the institutional ratification (selection and presentation)—that constitutes the work of art. The prompt is the concept, the GAI output is its chosen manifestation, and together they are recognized as art by the artworld.

The proposition that GAI-art can be seen as a ready-made proves highly fruitful when read through the lens of Dickie and Danto. It strips the discussion of technological mystification and places it within a robust philosophical framework of art. Danto teaches us that the meaning of a GAI work does not reside in the pixels themselves, but in the conceptual context the artist creates. Dickie teaches us that the formal status of the work is conferred by the artist's action as an agent of the artworld. The GAI artist is thus indeed a **hunter-gatherer in a digital environment**, who "finds" ready-made images and elevates them to art through the act of selection and presentation. In this way, the spirit of Duchamp is very much alive in the age of the algorithm.

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## Notes

[i] Arthur C. Danto, "The Artworld," *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 19 (1964): 580. Danto states here: "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld."

[ii] Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 44. In this work, Danto further develops the idea of 'aboutness': "Works of art, in contrast to mere things, are *about* something; they possess meaning."

[iii] George Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 34. Dickie's definition reads: "A work of art in the classificatory sense is 1) an artifact 2) a set of the aspects of which has had conferred upon it the status of candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the artworld)."

[iv] Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic*, 38. He emphasizes the importance of the "artist's presentation" and the acceptance by the artworld as part of this status-conferring process.

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Would you like me to translate any specific part of this text back into Dutch, or perhaps elaborate on one of the concepts mentioned, such as Danto's 'aboutness' or Dickie's 'artworld'?