

Nikolaus Gerszewski

10 statements

on non-representational art



1. Non-representational art in its purest form is absolute art.

1.1. Absolute art is obliged to the laws of divine providence.

1.2. Divine providence reveals itself as a creative impulse of free will.

1.3. Free will is but faith in the inner necessity.

1.4. The artist should unconditionally submit himself to free will.

1.5. The free hand of the artist is but the executer of divine providence.

2. Non-representational art is at the same time abstract and concrete.

- 2.1. A work of art is „abstract“, if it gives expression to intellectual content, without making use of representational technique.
- 2.2. A work of art is „concrete“, if its significance is exclusively found in the explanation of its formal principle.
- 2.3. Thus insisting on a materialistic interpretation, the work of art competes on equal level with objects or circumstances beyond the art-sphere in order to prove its additional aesthetic value as a work of art.
- 2.4. An artwork's aesthetic value proves itself in the quality of the mental penetration to be revealed in its form and design.
- 2.5. As a thing in itself, the non-representational work of art is concrete. By reflecting its status as a work of art, it becomes abstract.

3. Non-representational art is a gate of perception.

- 3.1 A work of non-representational art could be understood as the literal opposite to a picture: something that makes invisible.
- 3.2 By not representing anything, the work of non-representational art is at the same time a representation of nothingness.
- 3.3 Nothingness, however, cannot be represented by a non-existing object, but only by an object that is about to vanish.
- 3.4 The disappearance of the object encourages a certain mental content to emerge, in the form of colour, light and sound.
- 3.5 The absolute work of art is a purely mental one.
- 3.6 By taking shape of a material object, the non-representational work of art marks a boundary between the material and mental spheres.

4. Non-representational art is the explanation of possibility in itself.

4.1 The major principle of non-representational art is „anything goes“.

4.2 „Anything goes“ even may include representation.

4.3 If the artistic intention is non-representational, the representational content of the work is abolished.

4.4 The basic intention of a non-representational artist lies in the abolition of any representational content whatsoever.

4.5 In the very moment of this abolition, „possibility in itself“ appears as something which resists any representational pretension.

5. Non-representational art is the language of form and design.

5.1 In the same way as a „piece of ordinary nature“, a work of non-representational art reveals itself through its form and design.

5.2 Understanding a work of non-representational art means being able to retrace the artist's intention through the work's form and design.

5.3 Like a „piece of ordinary nature“, the work of art reveals the outcome of higher intelligence.

5.4 Understanding a work of art is based on the precondition of advancing trust in the artist's intelligence.

6. Non-representational art breaks with the tradition of representational painting and sculpture, but remains obliged to the tradition of the humanities.

6.1 There is no development beyond tradition, just as there is no literature beyond language.

6.2 Development is the basic principle of creativity.

6.3 Development is the increasing awareness of the laws of causality and effectiveness.

6.4 In order to continue the development of the arts, one must resume the experiences of the foregone generation of artists.

6.5 A development should not be interrupted until it has reached its climax.

6.6 A development that goes beyond its climax is bound to become decadent.

6.7 Breaking with tradition becomes necessary, when the tradition itself turns out to be decadent.

7. Non-representational art is research for creative effectiveness.

- 7.1 For the purpose of creative effectiveness, any uninspired activity shall be banished from the creative process.
- 7.2 One may speak of uninspired activity, when the motivation is not found in the working process, but rather in the economical value of its product.
- 7.3 Uninspired work can never have an inspiring effect.
- 7.4 A work of art has an inspiring effect insofar as it reveals a pleasure principle.

8. Non-representational art follows the principle of logicality.

- 8.1 Logicality is the systematic exclusion of randomness.
- 8.2 The creative process consists of a chain of decisions to be made by the artist.
- 8.3 In order to make decisions, the artist must reduce the given options to a manageable quantity.
- 8.4 By means of reducing the given options, the form of the artwork is determined.
- 8.5. If the artist is not willing or able to decide over certain aspects of his work, he might make use of a chance operation.
- 8.6. A chance operation is helpful, whenever the options are obviously equivalent, or the matter to be decided is irrelevant.
- 8.7 The relevance of a matter is dependent on the artist's intention.
- 8.8 The truth contained in a work of art is but the revelation of the artist's intention.
- 8.9 The transparency of the artist's intention depends on his decidedness.

9 Non-representational art is by no means art for art's sake.

- 9.1 The non-representational work of art does not claim the rank of a masterpiece, but rather wants to serve as an example for the application of a creative principle.
- 9.2 The non-representational artist is not concerned about issues of style, but rather is continually searching for the most effective form to impart his particular experience content.
- 9.3 By means of transmitting relevant experiences of non-representational art into the social realm, we are preparing the grounds for a non-representational society.
- 9.4 The concept of a non-representational society is based on a non-profit economy.
- 9.5 By substituting the notion of profit through that of devotion to the work itself, the product's representational function diminishes.
- 9.6 In a non-representational society, the value of a product consists in the increase of awareness which is gained during the process of its production and, as a result, corresponds in terms of utility.
- 9.7 Where the conditions of production do not facilitate an increase of awareness, one may speak of alienated work.
- 9.8 In a non-profit economy, the general conditions of production correspond to those of artistic creation.

10 Non-representational art is but the final stage of art on the path of its own abolition.

10.1 In so far as the non-representational work of art, in view of its art-status, inevitably becomes an object of representation, non-representational art shall remain utopia.

10.2 A work of art can never get rid of its representational function, not even through the denial of its art-status.

10.3 The denial of the art-status is an artistic technique to bring the division of the spheres between art and life into the focus of attention, with the aim of transcending this division.

10.4 The non-representational artist resembles a priest who denies God in order to transcend the division of spheres between the secular and the divine.

10.5 The division of the spheres of art and life, however, shall not be transcended by a profaning of the arts, but may perhaps be transcended by a deprofaning of the social realm.