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Modern Art Readings Homework

1. Summarize “On the Problem of Form” in your own words.

When there is an inner necessity, the Creative Spirit originates inside a human’s mind, leading to the creation of a new value. As the new value has been created, the human begin finding a material form to express the new value. Nevertheless, the Spirit is concealed underneath its material form, so not many people can see though the material surface to the hidden Spirit inside. Blinded by hatefulness and ignorance, most people regard the new value as absurd and inferior, simply because this form is different from their form. This is the fallacy of reasoning. All artists have their own forms—the forms that suit best to express their ideas. Unfortunately, people often falsely concluded what is best for them is best for everyone. They are simply mistaken. The purpose of form is to express the idea or the content, and the content of each artist is different. Therefore, there can be various forms, and one cannot judges which form is better.

The form itself is not the most important thing; rather it is the Spirit inside such form that is most significant. It is not that significant whether the form is stylish, in accordance with certain movements, purely original, etc. The most important thing is that the form develops from the inner necessity, and the Creative Spirit.

2. On page 51 of “Understanding Comics Chapter 2” is a big triangle. Explain in your own words how to use the triangle.

On the three vertices of the big triangle are the labels, which are the picture plane (the top vertex), reality (the left vertex), and language (the right vertex).

The vertical distance of the triangle represents the degree of iconic and non-iconic abstraction of the visual art. As you move towards the top of the triangle, the art becomes more and more non-iconic. In the contrary, as you move downward to the base of the triangle, the art becomes increasingly iconic. In the similar manner, as you move towards the left, the art becomes more realistic. And as you move towards the right the art become less realistic, simpler and language-like.

Therefore, the place of the visual art on the triangle tells you how much it is iconic or non-iconic, and how much it resembles reality or bends towards language.

3. Is “No.5, 1948” good art? Explain your answer using examples from the readings.

No.5, 1948 can be considered a good art. As mentioned in Kardinsky’s *On the Problem of Form*, the most important aspect of good art is that it grows out of the inner necessity and expresses the Creative Spirit. Different inner necessity needs different form of expression. In this case, No. 5, 1948 has no attempt to resemble reality, but rather seeks to express passion through the beauty of abstract art intended to be felt not just seen.

In addition, from the *Understanding Comics* Chapter 2, there are 3 main components of art mentioned on each vertex of the triangle, which are picture plane, reality, and language. Nevertheless, any sort of art is as good as others. No. 5, 1948 would be categorized at the spot near picture plane, where the art is non-iconic abstraction which made no attempt to stick to resemblance. Its lack of the aspects of realism or iconic resemblance do not make it a bad art, it just showed that the artist valued the beauty of art itself more than the realism or resemblance of ideas.