

Concept

Pure Art

1. INTRODUCTION. – Art has the potential to overcome cultural, social and ideological division and to bring people together. We are of the opinion that it is the time for a renaissance of consciousness – and that art can play an important role in the process. For that reason, we are striking out in new directions with the concept of PURE ART.

From birth, we are driven both by our senses and by the search for higher understanding and meaning. Culture can, thus, never satisfy only *one* of these two aspects. PURE ART facilitates contemplation both on esthetic and on mental and ethical principles. It unites the world of the senses with meaningfulness and humaneness.

The following characterization of PURE ART makes no claim to be authoritative or comprehensive. The ideal represented here is much more a product of a vision of what, from our perspective, is socially desirable and of what role art might play in the future.

«We are of the opinion that it is the time for a renaissance of consciousness.»

Our approach shows parallels to neoplatonism and to related idealistic schools. We are also close to *Delville's*¹ and *Kandinsky's*² understanding of art. That notwithstanding, the concept introduced here is distinct and follows neither a specific ideology nor a particular style.

We are fully aware of the fact that the ideal of PURE ART is scarcely realizable in all aspects. Nonetheless, it can serve as a guiding principle and facilitate positive developments. This seems important to us in the face of multitudinous global challenges and an art market ever more strongly dominated by materialism and intellectually elusive concepts.

¹ Jean Delville: *Mission de L'Art*, 1900 (English translation online: <https://archive.org/details/newmissionofarts00delv>).

² Wassily Kandinsky: *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. MFA Publications, NY and Tate Publishing, London, 2001.

2. NATURE AND PURPOSE. – We understand PURE ART as a medium that leads a person to him- or herself. PURE ART unites the sensual and the meaningful. PURE ART opens and enhances, touches and lifts up, strengthens and empowers.

At the same time, this artform celebrates the beautiful, reveres the natural and connects with the spiritual. Visionary power is just as important in the process as self-understanding (**Fig. 1**). PURE ART harmonizes and heals what is broken.

«We understand PURE ART as a medium that leads a person to him- or herself.»

What is pure in art has the power to unite people regardless of nationality and skin color. It bridges chasms and encourages community. It lifts the beholder into the light, connecting with his or her innermost being.

Practitioners of PURE ART are strong in character and sensitive at the same time. They are artists who are endowed not only with talent and dedication, but also with inspiration, empathy and charisma. People who transcend their selfish interests and personal problems in favor of human values.



Fig. 1. *The eye: mirror of the soul and key to perception and visionary insight*

(Original: Wassily Kandinsky: *Über das Geistige in der Kunst – insbesondere in der Malerei*, 1911).

PURE ART is art of authentic people, endowed with consciousness, heart and dedication. People who, despite a world gone awry, believe in the light and devote their talent to performing a higher service.

3. THE PURE, VISIONARY, INGENIOUS. – Something that is pure is distinguished by being genuine and complete in itself. It follows its own rules and is characterized by naturalness and authenticity. In analogy, we understand PURE ART as a medium that permits people to develop and, at the same time, empowers them. PURE ART sharpens perception and extends consciousness. It addresses feelings and motivates, thereby lifting up and vitalizing.

Closely connected with what is pure is the concept of the visionary. This derives from the Latin *viso*, which means *revelation* or *disclosure*, or from *videre*, for *to see, to recognize*. A visionary episode includes an act of seeing and understanding, in conjunction with a profound experience. This process reveals unknown aspects of being and puts a new perspective on old beliefs.

From Antiquity until the Enlightenment, art was principally regarded as a philosophical-spiritual means for serving the causes of knowledge and human perfection. In the process, during the Renaissance, the concept of the *genius* evolved, referring to highly creative individuals and social trendsetters with brilliant abilities, a high measure of inspiration and great creative power.

«Poetry heals the wounds inflicted by reason.»
(Novalis)

PURE ART is not restricted to the visible and the material. It builds on a higher principle that has its source in the native state, the visionary and the brilliant. Artists who discover this principle in themselves become sages and a vessel of PURE ART. They dive into the mystery of life and look at reality with different eyes. In this, such artists transcend cognitive conventions. Through their work, they open spaces of beauty and inspiration, by facilitating essential experiences and elevating collective consciousness.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF PURE ART. – We have defined a total of 21 qualities for the characterization of PURE ART and have arranged them in the form of a vision wheel (Fig. 2). Seven of the 21 aspects are allotted to each of the three radial planes *Consciousness*, *Emotion* and *Energy*, according to their qualities and effect on *Spirit*, *Soul* and *Body*.

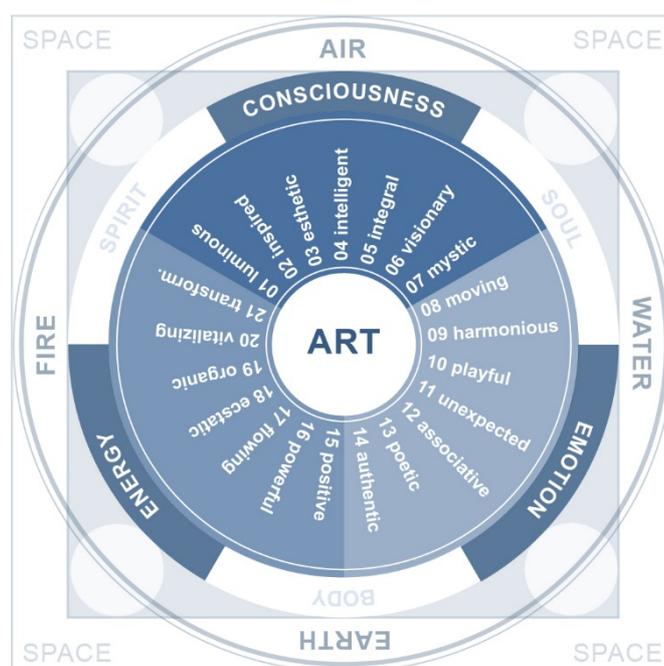


Fig. 2. Vision wheel with 21 characteristics of PURE ART, the planes *Consciousness*, *Emotion* and *Energy*, as well as five elemental qualities (see text).

Below we describe these 21 characteristics more precisely. Their sequence in the wheel has been chosen deliberately: it comprises not a hierarchy of terms, but at most a certain progression. As well as the planes *Consciousness*, *Emotion* and *Energy*, the wheel is framed by the five elements – *Earth*, *Water*, *Air*, *Fire* and *Space* (or *Aether*). These define additional qualities, as is described more precisely in **Table 1** and *Section 4.4*.

4.1 CONSCIOUSNESS

The first seven characteristics of PURE ART relate to a spiritual dimension that we call *Consciousness*. By this, we are referring less to mind and intellect, but primarily to inner disposition, world view and values. One goal of PURE ART consists of encouraging self-knowledge and raising consciousness, which are important prerequisites for personal development and humaneness.

Characteristic 1: LUMINOUS

Light is both an important carrier of information and universal creative principle. Figuratively, light facilitates clarity and farsightedness, which can lead to expanded consciousness. A central quality of PURE ART is the capability to bring things "into the right light" and, thus, make them more-easily knowable. Together with this comes an inner enlightenment in the form of delight and devotion. Without this quality, there is the danger that art remains stuck in darkness and people cannot find their inner light. When luminosity flows into art, new perspectives reveal themselves and creativity finds its path.

Characteristic 2: INSPIRED

Inspiration is a cornerstone of any form of art. Like creativity, inspiration arises instantaneously – it appears, as it were, of out nothing. It is often marked by vivid-symbolic characteristics or shows itself in a poetic way. When inspiration allows itself to be captured artistically, it connects immediately and stimulates further endeavors. To reach a state of inspiration, the artist must connect with his or her very own creative principle and put aside cogitation and conditioning. Only in this way can something greater inside light up and manifest.

Characteristic 3: ESTHETIC

A work of PURE ART captivates through a unifying esthetic and formal principle. By *esthetic* we mean more than the subjective evaluation of beauty. Esthetic is an ordering principle that defines a work of art in style, color and content, melding different elements into a whole. A *positive* esthetic is recognized through its impact. On contemplation of esthetically high-quality PURE ART, a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction arises spontaneously.³

«Beauty will save the world.»
(Dostojevsky)

³ In Indian philosophy, in Sanskrit, there is the ancient concept of *rasa*. This describes the elevated state that comes on experiencing an artistic masterpiece.

Table 1. Overview of the 21 characteristics and five elemental qualities defined, in analogy to the vision wheel of PURE ART shown in Fig. 2. For details, please see text.

No.	Characteristic	Additional aspects
Consciousness		
1	luminous	light, colorful, brilliant
2	inspired	connected, ingenious
3	esthetic	sensual, elegant
4	intelligent	clear, essential
5	integral	complete, causal
6	visionary	clear, enhancing
7	mystic	hidden, essential
Emotion		
8	moving	uplifting, heartfelt
9	harmonious	sensual, ordered
10	playful	light, inquisitive
11	unexpected	innovative, unconventional, strange, funny
12	associative	inward, dreaming
13	poetic	tender, detached
14	authentic	open, unconventional
Energy		
15	positive	uplifting, affirmative, joyful
16	powerful	strong, natural
17	flowing	open, soft, heartfelt
18	ecstatic	sensual, euphoric, enhancing
19	organic	grown, natural, functional
20	vitalizing	building, strengthening, healing, healthy
21	transformative	dramatic, moving, healing
Earth		
solid, fixed, powerful (16), organic (19), vitalizing (20)		
Water		
fluid, cleansing, healing, cooling, touching (8), flowing (17), vitalizing (20), transformative (21)		
Air		
light, free, uplifting, dynamic, inspiring (2), playful (10), poetic (13), transformative (21)		
Fire		
hot, warming, glowing, luminous (1), expansive, burning, devouring, energetic, powerful (16), ecstatic (18), transformative (21)		
Space (or Aether)		
empty, far, unending, integral (5), visionary (6), mystic (7)		

See also: John O'Donohue, *Divine Beauty – The Invisible Embrace*, Bantam Books, 2004.

Characteristic 4: INTELLIGENT

PURE ART is intelligent, but not necessarily intellectual. The intellect can neither create inspiration nor feel pleasure. Its strength lies in analyzing and structuring. A great work of art seldom begins with an idea, but with a creative impulse, coupled with a feeling. This impulse generates the urge to create art. As in Nature, behind this work lies a higher, inherent intelligence. This appears of itself during the creative process and is highly functional and esthetic.

Characteristic 5: INTEGRAL

The term *integral* relates to a broad, open attitude and a sense of universal attachment. Integral consciousness draws from the wealth of pure being and endless potential. Every great vision contains the idea of unity. Existence is perceived as a mystic oneness. Therefore, the more experiences and insights an artist integrates into his or her life, the more highly developed and more significant his or her work. PURE ART of integral character allows a magnificent panoramic view over life in all its facets. It is not concerned so much with details, but conveys to the marveling viewer a feeling of the connection and splendor of all life.

Characteristic 6: VISIONARY

PURE ART often attains levels not directly visible to the outside eye. The visionary artist dives into archetypal deeps or soars to platonic heights. There, the artist recognizes him- or herself in a new light and life is seen from a greater perspective. The visionary transcends the commonplace and the purely rational – it reflects a purposeful greater whole. Unlike in utopian, fantastic, or psychedelic settings, visions are, as a rule, experienced in full consciousness, not in a kind of dream state. Rather than being fogged, the senses are sharpened and enhanced during visionary states.⁴

Characteristic 7: MYSTIC

The origin of creativity lies beyond the rational. Existence forms a self-contained mystic unity. In a state of supposed separation, PURE ART *cannot* come into

being. The mystic artist becomes one with the essence of being. He or she, thus, becomes a kind of medium through whom life manifests and knows itself. The signature of a pure artist is admittedly always recognizable, but the work nevertheless remains mystical in the sense that it cannot adequately be described or grasped with words alone. It beckons beyond itself, without completely giving away its source. It is precisely in this that its mystery and fascination lie.

«There is geometry in the humming of the strings,
there is music in the spacing of the spheres.»
(Pythagoras)

4.2 EMOTION

The next seven characteristics of PURE ART relate to the dimension of feelings. Feelings, mostly unconsciously, determine more than 90% of our actions. In addition, they join the body and the soul together. One goal of PURE ART consists of emotionally addressing people, motivating and empowering them.

Characteristic 8: TOUCHING

One of the most important tasks of PURE ART is to touch the viewer emotionally. In a state of creative delight⁵, the influence and power of the heart is increased and a feeling of fulfillment is engendered. Art that comes from the heart opens other hearts and actively contributes to understanding and tranquility. Whoever is creative, positive and emotionally present will create works of art with uplifting impact.

Characteristic 9: HARMONIOUS

Harmony is an expression of adherence to natural law and order, both functionally and esthetically. The harmonious reveals itself in the microscopic as well as in the macroscopic, in the laws of music just as in those of Nature. PURE ART is purposeful, causal and harmonious. Some breaks in harmony to build tension are not objectionable, provided that the disharmony is never an end in itself or pure provocation, but an artistic means

⁴ Joanna Sionkowski, *Visionäre Kunst – Kunstgeschichtliche Bedeutung und Analyse*, Norderstedt, 2011. (There is no English version of this book available currently).

⁵ *Negative* contact and drama are commonplace in contemporary art and in the media. Although they are certainly legitimate and also a reflection of the times, in PURE ART we focus on *positive* resonance.

of enhancement, based on the principle of polarity, by building up and then resolving dissonance. What is crucial is to find the right balance or the happy medium.

Characteristic 10: **PLAYFUL**

The instinct to play is inborn in all people and in most of the higher animals. In play, children explore the world and themselves. The artist is also someone who likes to play. He or she experiments with ideas, feelings, colors, materials and techniques. In play, understanding takes a subordinate role, with fun and curiosity dominating and so the new and the unexpected can arise from it. PURE ART takes advantage of this. Out of the power of playful naivety and effortlessness it creates what can lead to highly poetic artworks as well as innovative ideas.

Characteristic 11: **UNEXPECTED**

An essential feature of PURE ART is to break through the conventional with unanticipated changes in direction, thus making completely new perspectives possible. The unexpected and unconventional lures viewers out of their reserve and confronts them with something unfamiliar. This can lead to appealing connections. What is important is that this principle is not being defined as antithesis or refusal. Since the denial of something that exists is not something new, but merely its inversion. The unexpected must be convincing on its own terms and offer wholly new solutions. Only in this way can PURE ART remain independent and free.

Characteristic 12: **ASSOCIATIVE**

The associative in art allows a deeper connection than the purely logical or strictly defined. Associations enable viewers to come into resonance with their inner world and their feelings. At the same time, awareness and sensitivity are intensified. The associative does not discriminate between right and wrong. It is much more a matter of whether something is consistent and produces resonance. When that is the case, new levels of consciousness are activated and the imagination is inspired.

⁶ These three concepts are part of the so-called transcendentals of Medieval scholasticism. According to *Socrates* and other Greek philosophers they are essential characteristics of being.

Characteristic 13: **POETIC**

Poetry cannot really be described, only experienced. As far as PURE ART is concerned, poetry means something profoundly intimate and delicate. It reflects a high level of emotional sensitivity and etherealness. This can reveal itself in the form of dedication to the classical ideals of Truth, Good and Beauty.⁶ Poetic art is an extremely touching artistic form, characterized by inner beauty, refinement and humaneness. It was not for no reason that poetry experienced a flowering during the European classical and romantic periods and is rediscovered time and again. The same applies for visual art.

*«Poetry is truth dwelling in beauty.»
(Robert Gilfillan)*

Characteristic 14: **AUTHENTIC**

People intuitively recognize what is true and what is false. Only the genuine appeals positively to our feelings. PURE ART is always self-consistent and, in this respect, authentic. That relates both to the work of art and to the artist. Its prerequisites are self-knowledge, the courage to be truthful and openness to change. Those who, in the course of their lifetimes, transform the problematic aspects of their personalities, rather than cultivating them, achieve originality and authenticity that goes far beyond the personal and is timeless.

4.3 ENERGY

The last seven characteristics of PURE ART are concerned with a dimension that we refer to as *Energy*. It relates to both our emotional and bodily condition. One goal of PURE ART is to vitalize people and to empower them to act confidently, responsibly and constructively.

Characteristic 15: **POSITIVE**

PURE ART requires an unconditional YES to what is and what one would like to express. We firmly believe that sustainable change is only possible when based on a

fundamental life-affirming, peaceful attitude. Undeniably, artworks that are products of states of rage, rejection, or inner turmoil can be expressively powerful and moving. However, they only become positive and constructive in the sense of PURE ART when the artist overcomes personal abysses and egotism and confidently puts his or her talent in the service of the community.

Characteristic 16: **POWERFUL**

PURE ART can be recognized by, among other factors, its powerful impact: it is immediately moving, it triggers positive feelings and associations and it raises essential questions. Its underlying energy can be subtle or mighty. In its effect, though, it hits our innermost core. PURE ART leads us to the point at which resistance transforms into devotion, at which a NO becomes a YES, at which clear decisions are made and implemented without compromise.

Characteristic 17: **FLOWING**

Life means constant change. The same also applies for PURE ART. It comes into being when the artist follows his or her inner dynamic and achieves full flow. This state can neither be anticipated nor controlled. It can be purposeful or chaotic, but at all times follows its own rules. The artist needs to dive trustingly into the river of creativity and, through various channels, must feel how an artwork or a vision might evolve best.

«*Panta rhei – everything flows*»
(*Heraclitus*)

Characteristic 18: **ECSTATIC**

Ecstasy is an enhanced, highly energetic state of awareness and happiness. In PURE ART, it is bound up with the irresistible drive to express oneself imaginatively and to be creatively active. Delight, energy and lightness come into alignment. Ecstatic experiences strongly resemble the so-called *flow* state. They are experienced on the physical-sexual, mental-emotional, or spiritual level and can lead to visionary artworks and to profound insights.

Characteristic 19: **ORGANIC**

The organic in PURE ART is an expression of a creative coherence and intelligence. Like in Nature, the captivating powers of the organic lie in its functionality, complexity and esthetic. The natural is genuine and unsophisticated. Under the right conditions, it thrives in and of itself, like a plant in the sun. PURE ART does not have to mimic Nature rigidly to be organic. It simply gives the creative principle space to let a work of art unfold naturally.

Characteristic 20: **VITALIZING**

PURE ART is sustenance for body, soul and spirit. It lends the viewer energy. It produces joy. And it inspires. This vitalizing, life-sustaining, quasi *maternal* principle is inherently beautiful. Like Earth and Nature, creativity draws from abundance and gives itself out of pure love. Similarly, PURE ART acts healingly and upliftingly on the viewer by creating harmony and beauty in a natural way.

Characteristic 21: **TRANSFORMATIVE**

PURE ART creates space for change. Through discourse with oneself and the world, it gives people the necessary confidence to venture a step into the unknown. In this way, it can play out dramatically. As an intermediate state, the dramatic has high artistic value when it is not permanently centering on itself, but indicating a way forward. Like in antique drama, PURE ART can clarify and liberate from illusion and fear (catharsis). It supports and expedites the process of transformation, without losing itself in the merely negative.

4.4 FIVE ELEMENTS

As is shown in the vision wheel (**Fig. 2**) and in **Table 1**, elemental qualities may also be called on to describe PURE ART. The four- or five-element theory has been used since Antiquity in different cultures, both eastern and western. It involves analogies more than it does exact descriptions of particular (natural) states. A transposition to PURE ART is obvious, in that a deepened understanding is made possible from a holistic point of view.

1st Element: EARTH

The element *Earth* represents everything fixed, solid, immovable. It is categorized as material and more as masculine and corresponds in the human body to the feet, legs and pelvis. *Earth* provides a solid foundation and is fertile ground for growth. Stability, deep-rootedness and tradition are typical qualities. In combination with *Water*, *Earth* indirectly also stands for nourishment and vitality.

PURE ART with *Earth* qualities can give orientation and stability. Anything that is excessively light is brought back to reality. Pictures with *Earth* power often display all nuances from brown to rust tones, if need be in combination with green, gray and black. The impact of the *Earth* element is stabilizing and vitalizing. Related characteristics in the vision wheel (Fig. 2) are the qualities *powerful* (16), *organic* (19) and *vitalizing* (20).

2nd Element: WATER

The element *Water* represents everything fluid, flowing and alive. It is categorized more as feminine and corresponds to the abdominal region in the body as well as to the emotional level. *Water* is ever in motion, now a gentle brook, now a raging storm. It is a symbol of fecundity, cleansing and healing.

PURE ART with *Water* qualities shows itself in the characteristics *touching* (8), *flowing* (17), *vitalizing* (20) and *transformative* (21). Appropriate colors are all blue and most pastel tones. The corresponding effect is more cooling and soothing.

3rd Element: AIR

The element *Air* stands for everything moving, light, transparent. It symbolizes change, renewal and freedom. Air can neither be seen nor held. It is everywhere and at the same time nowhere. It can whisper softly, or it can rage like a hurricane. Lightness and joy, but also change, fall into this category.

PURE ART with *Air* qualities can be feminine or masculine. It is more dreamy, floating and buoyant. Now it invites one to celebrate and dance, another time to contemplate and philosophize. It freely avails itself of almost every color, above all bright and transparent tones, as well as white. It also shows itself in the form of wind-chimes and sounds. Related characteristics in the vision wheel are the terms *inspired* (2), *intelligent* (4), *playful*

(10), *unexpected* (11), *poetic* (13) and *transformative* (21).

4th Element: FIRE

The element *Fire* stands for everything hot, burning, devouring. Its energy is more masculine and the corresponding parts of the body are, above all, the head and the heart. *Fire* is pure energy. It spreads and is hard to control. It can warm and protect, but can also burn down and destroy. In this regard it has cleansing and transformational qualities as well, like *Water*.

PURE ART with *fire* qualities is often expressive and impulsive. It captivates with bright colors, often yellow to red and has a strongly energizing impact. Related characteristics in the vision wheel are *luminous* (1), *powerful* (16), *ecstatic* (18) and *transformative* (21).

5th Element: SPACE

Space, originally introduced by *Aristotle* as *Aether*, is a kind of invisible field that contains and is embedded in the whole of existence. *Space* itself is unknowable. And yet it is a prerequisite for all existence. It is present in atomic theory just as it is in the unimaginable vastness of the cosmos. Figuratively, *Space* or *Aether* mean the numinous, the intangible, the unending.

PURE ART with *Space* qualities is expansive and transcendent. It acts simply and minimalistically. It expresses itself more in monochrome colors or in black and white. Related characteristics in the vision wheel are *luminous* (1), *integral* (5), *visionary* (6) and *mystic* (7).

4.5 PRACTICE

The weighting and interplay of the above described 21 characteristics and 5 elemental qualities of PURE ART can vary, according to the type of artwork and depending on the subject and the character of the artist. Not every quality must or can be present at the same time. Our experience has shown, however, that *at least two aspects* from each of the three categories (*Consciousness*, *Emotion* and *Energy*) should be represented in order for a work to qualify as PURE ART.

5. STYLES. – As indicated before, PURE ART is not restricted to a particular style. Important is the intention and consciousness of the artist, and the quality and impact of the work. Whether this is a painting, an artistically made vase, or a digital work is secondary (Fig. 3).



level, to the core of true being and essential creative power. Here, the great and the marvellous emerge in the form of PURE ART!

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Translated from German by Dr. Andrew, Beard, UK

Picture credits **Figs. 1 & 3**: Shutterstock

Fig. 3. Entry to new geometrical visual worlds and stylistic forms of expression with the aid of fractal algorithms and modern imaging techniques.

The pure and the visionary, as described here, are to be found in countless movements in art history. The mythic cave paintings of Lascaux are still touching today, just as the ornamentalism of the Persians or the sacred geometry of the time of the construction of the Gothic cathedrals. The fantastical insights of expressionism and surrealism hold the same fascination as hyperrealism or the digital alienation from reality. So, thanks to new media and computer-generated imaging techniques, completely new possibilities for expression have come into being, endowed with great creative potential despite their technological foundations (**Fig. 3**).

What is perhaps common to all of these trends is the tendency to transcend the visible and to advance into wholly new dimensions of perception and experience. PURE ART seeks to expose the mystery of existence. This can succeed if all levels of human existence are included and the rational, emotional and intuitive are combined together in a state of inner centeredness and harmony. When that happens, mankind advances to the next