

Is the purpose of art to shepherd humanity away from nature towards an entirely artificial future, in which eating is replaced by solar power consumption and we manufacture new components of ourselves as we see fit?

In 1924 Nikolai Berdyaev wrote the following in his "The End Of Our Time":

"The results of the introduction of machinery into man's life are numberless, and they extend to his spiritual life and to all that he does. Science and art are involved in mechanization: they are marked by that break-up of organic unity which the machine entails on everything. Contemporary art, finished with antiquity and the Renaissance, looking only to the future and worshipping the future, is bent on dismembering the human body and its eternal forms; in it the likeness of man must at last disappear."

I believe we are headed towards an entirely artificial existence in which the laws of nature will be largely irrelevant to our daily experience. I speculate that the arts have been a catalyst in making that possible. In the following examples of Viewer/Content/Context, it seems that getting to "Artificial" in the "Viewer" category has been greatly aided by the existence of art. (When I say "human", I mean a fully-biological unmodified human, for example the kind of person found in the year 1500. When I say "robot", I mean either "machine intelligence" or "technologically-modified post-human". "Traffic cone" can be substituted with "Artifact created by humans/post-humans/intelligent machines in the future".)

Maker	Viewer	Content	Context	Example
Natural	Natural	Natural	Natural	A human picking blueberries in the wilderness
Natural	Natural	Natural	Artificial	A human seeing wild blueberries in a painting
Artificial	Natural	Artificial	Natural	A human encountering a traffic cone in the wilderness
Artificial	Natural	Artificial	Artificial	A human seeing a traffic cone on TV
Natural	Artificial	Natural	Natural	A robot seeing blueberries in the wilderness
Artificial	Artificial	Artificial	Natural	A robot encountering a traffic cone in the wilderness
Artificial	Artificial	Artificial	Artificial	A robot seeing a traffic cone on TV

