7. Aesthetic Experience and Functioning in Society: Intrinsic Functioning in Theory and Policy Practice

7.1. Functioning of the Performing Arts in Society under Conditions of Autonomy

Chapters 5 and 6 have addressed two key issues concerning the functioning of performing arts in society: the autonomy of art and the distinction between aesthetic experience and artistic experience, or rather: non-artistically and artistically aesthetic experiences.

On the one hand, the autonomy of art is a precondition for art’s functioning in society. Artists should be free to choose the subject matter, the expressive media and the manner in which they explore these media in order for art to perform its functions in society, specifically the more critical functions. The free exploration of expressive media leads to unexpected results which are generally expected from artistic activity: the elements of surprise, fantasy and creativity are intimately bound to aesthetic experience. On the other hand, art’s autonomy appears to limit the functioning of art in society. Based on the institutional paradigm, the suggestion has been advanced that artistic development in Western societies has taken a self-referential turn which has led to uncertainty as to how art should be valued and to a decrease in art’s audiences. Only expert audiences are able to follow art’s developments and therefore art’s impact on society has become limited, for it only affects small proportions of society that have an appropriate cultural competence and *habitus* for ‘properly’ experiencing art. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the supposed functions of art in society are a weapon in the struggle for dominance in the cultural field. This means that the actions of agents in the artworld, and even the statements they make on art’s functioning in society, are normative. They institute a ‘proper’ way of experiencing art and a ‘proper’ functioning of art excluding other groups and functions from the field of art.¹

¹ Note that this concept of art’s autonomy makes it perfectly feasible for the arts to function autonomously within heteronomously defined contexts. The example of the *Blue Moon* festival in Groningen, cited in the Introduction, can be used to explain this. One of the festival’s aims was to draw the citizens’ attention to a new part of town. This means that the aesthetic activities employed have to relate to the setting of the new city district, which is heteronomously defined by the city administration, but the artists should determine how they react aesthetically to this situation, i.e., how they imaginatively explore their mediums to either contribute to or criticize this heteronomously defined situation. Such can also be the case with artists working in school settings where they have the assignment to make their work function within the school setting, without being told *how* to do this.
These issues are a result of the professionalization of artists. However, it has also been shown that the professionalization (and thus autonomization) of art is incomplete. For instance, professional artists have not been successful in blocking self-taught artists from entering the field of cultural production. Furthermore, new genres may have been denied entrance but have nevertheless gained recognition through quite the same type of mechanisms of autonomization. This means that multiple fields of production have arisen, and this weakens the claim of traditional art forms to yielding the ‘correct’ and most valuable art products and/or experiences. As a result of the greater social mobility of people and technological development of media and means of dissemination, the mechanisms for autonomization have been weakened and thus the distinction between high and low culture has become irrelevant. Though it seems true that subsidies in Western societies tend to favour already established art forms and the policy system may be slow in absorbing new ones, this has nevertheless happened, as can be seen by the example of pop music. This does not mean that subsidized arts have no societal functions, it only means that such functions can also be found elsewhere. A striking feature of the Bourdieu’s field theory is that it reduces the actions of agents in the field of cultural production to strategic decisions in the struggle for dominance in the field. However, it has been suggested that this represents a limited interpretation of Bourdieu’s theory. It cannot be ruled out that the decisions of agents in cultural fields are based upon their vision on the functions of art in society. Although the institutional paradigm certainly points to limitations of art’s functioning in society, it does not exclude art’s functioning altogether. Institutional theories are even dependent on the notion of a function of art as art in society.

The notion of disinterestedness, the contemplation of cultural objects for their own sake, is crucial to the functional paradigm. This view of aesthetic experience seems to preclude any interests one might have in the object, and thus art’s functioning in society becomes a difficult matter. However, Chapter 5 demonstrated that this traditional view represents a limited interpretation of Kantian aesthetics as Kant does proclaim that art’s function is to communicate knowledge of the world, albeit in its own specific way, namely through aesthetic means. Furthermore, as was demonstrated in Chapter 6, there are multiple ways to experience art. Disinterested contemplation can be regarded as ‘following the rules of the art object to let it do its job’. This has been called ‘sympathy towards the work’. It has also been shown that the engagement with art objects can be active and involved. Absorption into the work is a viable way to aesthetically experience artworks, as long as one takes an active interest in it. Furthermore, one can alternate between different, specific interests in order to experience a work, a way of contemplation that has been described as shedding and adding specific lenses to the art work to discover multiple meanings. It also has been shown that different groups can take different interests in the same artworks and thus experience them differently. They attach different values to the experience of the same art works.

The functional paradigm suits the present research for it focuses on the specific functions of art in society. Nonetheless, it depends on the institutional paradigm because, for art works to
function aesthetically, it relies upon cultural or art institutions with reception practices that aid in developing appropriate attitudes in audience members. Institutional and functional theories complement one another. A closer inspection of both paradigms leads to the conclusion that there only is ‘relative’ autonomy for the arts in Western society (Van Maanen, 2008a). As Shusterman puts it:

… there is no compelling reason to accept the narrowly aesthetic limits imposed by the established ideology of autonomous art (or indeed its traditional definition of the aesthetic as utterly disengaged from life’s practical and material interests). Nor does challenging the established form of artistic autonomy mean rejecting the whole idea of a relatively autonomous institution of art. (Shusterman, 1992, p. 143)

The separation of art from society is not as absolute as it seems. Even art practices in dedicated institutions can coincide with everyday non-artistic praxis without threatening the possibility for art to function in a specific, aesthetic way (either non-artistically or artistically), i.e., as art.

This leads to some important points for this research:

- The research outcomes cannot be generalized to beyond Western cultures. The research depends on the Western phenomenon of (relative) autonomization of culture and art. In cultures where art forms are more closely connected to other social activities, such as funerals and weddings, the values that are attached to the experience of these art forms are quite different. Thus the functioning of art and culture in these societies cannot be studied in the same way.
- The way in which advisory boards evaluate artistic quality is crucial in the development of autonomy in the arts. It is also crucial in the possibilities of the functioning of the subsidized arts in particular in society. When advisory boards only pay attention to the development of artistic languages and not to their dissemination in society, the functioning of the subsidized arts appears to remain limited to specific audiences.
- Because of the fact that the (subsidized) arts have a limited audience, it is important to know how the arts can function in society for those who do not attend performances. Furthermore, the composition of audiences is a measuring point in evaluating art policy.
- The research into the functioning of art in society cannot be based upon specific properties of cultural objects themselves, but should be based on the specific nature of the experience of such objects. The functioning of culture and art in society occurs through the values that cultural activities generate for individuals. These values can yield certain functions for the individual, and both the individual values and functions can yield functions on a collective level. A thorough description of the aesthetic experience is therefore at the basis of this research.

The closer look at the nature of the aesthetic experience (in Chapter 6) has revealed that the values such experiences generate should be divided into non-artistically aesthetic values, which can yield certain non-artistically aesthetic functions, and artistically aesthetic values,
which can yield artistically aesthetic functions. The non-artistically aesthetic values can add significance to the artistically aesthetic functions. The artistically aesthetic values and subsequent functions depend on the fact that the subject has invoked his or her imaginative power in order to generate a meaningful experience. Thus the simple model of the functioning of the performing arts, as introduced in the first chapter, has been refined in two ways. First, the refinement involves enabling specific values of the aesthetic experience for the spectator. Subsequently, these values can give rise to functions for the individual spectator, and both the values and functions on individual level can give rise to functions at the collective level. Second, the refinement involves the distinction between non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values and functions within what has been denoted as intrinsic functioning. There are two non-artistically aesthetic values: the excitement of the experience of non-present worlds and empathizing with imagined emotions that yield the function of the sublimation of needs and the satisfaction of sublimated needs. There are three artistically aesthetic values: delight in the use of one’s imaginative power, the experience of new perceptions, and the testing of one’s views and insights.

The personal development that has been connected to art in the policy document can therefore be understood as development of one’s perception. This can lead to a change of one’s perception but this is not necessary for the experience to be artistic in its nature. A reconfirmation of previously held views can also occur, as long as the views have been challenged during (or as a result of) the experience. Furthermore, the perception scheme of a subject need not always be expanded as a result of the realization of artistically aesthetic values. The experience can also lead to a new order in the scheme where previously held perceptions have become more prominent. Some people, mostly those with a habitus for doing so, will be able to express verbally an interpretation of the experience. Some art forms, such as drama, are more prone to generating interpretations than others, such as dance and music. Their text-based nature and presentation of a storyline which enables the development of propositional knowledge facilitate developing a verbally expressible interpretation of the work. But interpretation is neither part of the experience itself nor an indicator for its artistic nature. At this point, the question ought to be posed as to whether or not all functions realized are dependent on the values. Van Maanen suggests that there is an instrumental relationship between values, functions on a personal level, and societal functions. However, he also writes:

Generally speaking, values form a means to realize functions. The result of this is that functions, in contrast to values, can also be realized by activities other than artistic ones. Social coherence, open-mindedness or autonomous citizenship can also be achieved by participating in sports, watching television, reading books or (...) attending debate series. There is only one function

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2 Plus of course the extrinsic values, which do not derive from the aesthetic communication itself but from the ‘organizational setting’ within which the aesthetic experience is realized; i.e., the physical organization of the meeting of the artwork and audiences, and the institutional relations between the arts organizations.

3 Van Maanen distinguishes between values, functions and societal benefits (Van Maanen, 2005b, p. 73).
that can be called purely art-intrinsic and that is the development of the power of imagination. The use of this power is the inalienable core of artistic value. (Van Maanen, 2005b, p. 74)

In other words, the functions based upon the non-artistically aesthetic nature of the experience can all be realized by other activities as well. It seems obvious that participating in a football match between gay and Muslim sportsmen, for instance, as has been staged on several occasions in the Netherlands, can be helpful in generating mutual understanding between different groups in society. The integration of young asylum seekers in the Netherlands has been proven to occur successfully through membership of an amateur sports club. The question remains as to whether or not cultural events can be specifically successful in this respect because they operate on the perceptive level. Specifically those societal functions that aim at fostering mental abilities of the population might best be served by cultural activities. This issue should be investigated in more detail (see Chapter 9). In the present research, both the non-artistically and artistically aesthetic values of the aesthetic experience and their subsequent functions at personal and societal levels are relevant. This means that the intrinsic values and functions used in the model for evaluating art policy can include both the non-artistically and the artistically aesthetic values and functions. The inter-relationship of functions and values is depicted in Figure 7.1. The instrumental relationship is as follows. The non-artistically aesthetic and artistically aesthetic values of the aesthetic experience are instrumental to intrinsic functions on a personal level, which, in turn, are

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Figure 7.1 Interdependence of intrinsic values and functions of aesthetic experience

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instrumental to intrinsic functions on a societal level. It is a matter for debate as to the extent to which the extrinsic functions are dependent on the intrinsic functions, as has been suggested in some of the policy documents, specifically for the social domain. In Figure 7.1, the relationship has therefore been indicated with dotted arrows. The relation between intrinsic and extrinsic functions is researched in Part III of this book. Chapter 8 deals with the economic domain and Chapter 9 with the social domain. In the remainder of this chapter, the intrinsic functions on personal and societal levels are discussed. The intrinsic functions found in the policy documents should be related to the values and functions as found in theory.

7.2. Relating the Intrinsic Functions from Theory to Those in the Policy Documents

7.2.1. Personal Experience

In the policy documents, the aesthetic experience has been described as an emotional experience (being addressed at emotional level, being surprised, being impressed, being bewildered). It involves experiencing something unique (beauty, uniqueness, aesthetic form) and can be entertaining, although a question arose here regarding the nature of the entertainment: relaxation versus what has been indicated as ‘intellectual’ entertainment. Imagination and fantasy have also been mentioned as part of the experience (see Table 4.1). Questions have risen about the specific artistic nature of the experience and the relationship between artistic quality and the nature of the experience.

The emotional nature of the aesthetic experience is also evident in theory. The experience of non-present worlds and empathizing with presented emotions can generate an enjoyable experience and subsequently aid in the affect-regulation of persons. Sharing experiences with other audience members can enhance the experience as well as the beauty of forms, the uniqueness or authenticity of the performance (either through the star quality of the performance or through the uniqueness of the art languages employed, or both). These qualities can enhance the experience (make it profound) but the artistic nature of the experience does not reside in them. Moreover, the perception of non-present worlds can invite a person to use his or her fantasy and empathize with imagined emotions.

The artistic nature of the aesthetic experience is connected with the fact that the imaginative power is being invoked to produce an imaginative thought which makes the experience into a meaningful perception. The use of the imaginative power gives rise to delight, which is a value of the experience. This makes clear what the difference between relaxation and ‘intellectual entertainment’ is. The experience can be merely relaxing when it does not challenge the perception system of the subject. However, when the perception system is challenged, this should not be regarded as simply putting effort into the experience, rather than facilitating a pleasurable or entertaining experience. It enhances the pleasure derived from it. This can be explained by the fact that a challenging experience gives rise to tensions. The incongruity between the referent, the signifier and the signified causes tension between
the referent and the perception scheme of the subject which can only be relieved by producing an imaginative thought. This gives rise to a feeling of relaxation and to delight that can be experienced on the basis of the fact that one has been able to resolve such tensions. The use of the imaginative power thus gives rise to pleasure, which can be regarded as ‘intellectual entertainment’. Both types of entertainment should be considered as intrinsic because they are linked to the aesthetic values (be they non-artistic or artistic) of the experience. However, this does not mean that cell ‘D’ of Table 4.6 is empty. This is because there is yet another form of relaxation that is relevant here, which has not been hinted at in the policy documents. Aesthetic experiences in themselves can be a source of relaxation because, to the participant, they represent a break from everyday routines. Attending the performing arts (usually) means that one ventures outside, meets other people and, during the experience, one is submerged in a totally different world. This in itself offers a recreational form of relaxation. However, this form of relaxation is also present when going to a football match, dining in a restaurant or going on vacation (although when done routinely, the ensuing relaxation may dwindle; moreover, it should not be forgotten that (parts of) these experiences may also induce much stress). Thus the relaxation resulting from the break from routine should be placed in cell ‘D’ of Table 4.6.

Furthermore it has now become clear that a distinction should be made between fantasy and imagination. Both have been taken together in Table 4.1. Invoking one’s fantasy (in Dutch: voorstellingsvermogen) is needed when experiencing non-present worlds and empathizing with emotions of others. However, when the perception scheme of the subject is challenged, the imaginative power has to be invoked (in Dutch: verbeeldingskracht). Therefore a distinction between fantasy and imagination is useful, fantasy being a non-artistic aesthetic property of the experience, imagination an artistic aesthetic property.\(^5\) The imaginative...

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\(^5\) In the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* the terms ‘Imagination’ and ‘Phantasia’ are discussed. ‘Imagination is generally held to be the power of forming mental images or other concepts not directly derived from sensation’ (Manser, 2006 [1967]). In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes two tasks for the imagination: to complete the necessarily fragmentary data of the senses (e.g., one can only see three sides of a cube at once, but one imagines that there are six sides) and to combine experiences into a single connected world. Kant refers to this as the ‘productive imagination’. Both are necessary to create knowledge. Coleridge has taken up Kant’s two tasks in distinguishing between the Fancy (a mode of memory which operates mechanically), Primary Imagination (which is Kant’s productive imagination) and Secondary Imagination. The Secondary Imagination dissolves, diffuses and dissipates in order to recreate. For Coleridge, this is a vital function of imagination as it helps to discover deeper truths about the world (Manser, 2006 [1967]).

The word ‘fantasy’ refers to the power to form mental images as well. In Greek philosophy, the word *phantasia* – usually translated as ‘imagination’ – refers to ‘the psychological capacity to receive, interpret and even produce appearances and those appearances themselves’ (Sheppard, 2006 [2005], p. 270). Aristotle places phantasia between perception and thought. To Aristotle, phantasia includes mental images, dreams and hallucinations. It is based on sense perception. ‘The Neoplatonists took over Aristotle’s concept \(\ldots\), but developed it in ways of their own. Plotinus \(\ldots\) suggests that there are two ‘image-making powers’, one that receives images from sense-perception, and one that receives images from the intellect’ (*ibid.*, p. 271). Here again two forms of imaginary capacity are discussed, quite similar to Kant’s use of the term. In this research, the first is denoted as ‘fantasy’, the second as ‘imagination’. Note that Coleridge’s Secondary Imagination occurs at the level of functions of aesthetic experience in terms of this research.
thought puts the existing perception scheme of the subject to the test. This can lead to new views and insights, which means that the imaginative thought becomes permanently embedded in the perception system of the subject, or that its order has been rearranged. This relates personal experience to personal development. Sometimes the experience results in a process of interpretation. All of the functions listed under ‘personal experience’ in Table 4.1 turn out not to be functions of the aesthetic experience at all. They are values that can be attained through aesthetic experience.

7.2.2. Personal Development
In Table 4.2, personal development has been described as mental development of the spectators (stimulation of the mind, furthering maturity, reflection, reappraisal of values, and personal development as a means to further participation in society). Furthermore, personal development has been characterized as broadening the mental scope of spectators (learning alternative visions on life, experiencing new ways of looking at things, satisfying curiosity, bringing perceived certainties up for discussion and developing the ability to make independent choices) and as rendering significance to events in life and thus finding a secure place in the world mentally. The first two categories can easily be related to the description of the aesthetic experience. Personal development through the arts occurs when the perception schemes of spectators are modified. The significant feature of personal development that occurs through the arts is that it occurs at the level of perception. The arts differ from science in their manner of knowledge generation. The knowledge may be linguistically inarticulate but it is imbued with a sense of importance. Personal development is related to personal experience in the arts: the knowledge is generated through perception.

The issue of knowledge creation automatically refers to the possibilities for artists to express their ideas and views through their works. Note that, to them, such ideas may not even be conscious and expressible in a verbal manner. They manipulate the expressive possibilities of the medium and thus create the meaning. However, the spectator also adds his or her creativity to the experience through the use of imaginative power or through the variety in perception schemes applied to the experience (in the terms of Zeglin Brand: alternating between different interested lenses). This means that spectators can add to the work meanings that artists had not intended or thought of. The mental development and widening of the mental scope of spectators seem to amount to the same thing, thus the categories no longer need be distinguished. They can be summed up under ‘development of perception’ because it is the perception schemes of spectators that are being developed in the first place. This is an artistically aesthetic function of the experience and relates directly to change of views and insights.

Rendering significance to events in daily life should be regarded as a value generated by the aesthetic experience. As a value, this relates to excitement by the perception of non-present

\[6\] Cultural education has also been mentioned in Table 4.2 but this can be disregarded in the present discussion because it is a task for cultural institutions and not a function resulting from aesthetic experience.
7. Aesthetic Experience and Functioning in Society: Intrinsic Functioning in Theory and Policy Practice

worlds and empathizing with imagined emotions, for the significance of what one experiences is mainly related to the emotional aspect of aesthetic experience. The development of perception in aesthetic experience is always accompanied by a sense of the importance of the new perceptions realized. But it can also be related to the artistically aesthetic value of experience of new perceptions, for this is an emotional experience as well. Rendering significance as a value is instrumental to a function on societal level: determining one’s identity (or developing one’s identity when the experience is artistic) and establishing social structures. To summarize: rendering significance is a value of both non-artistically and artistically aesthetic experience. The development of perception is a function of artistically aesthetic experience.

7.2.3. Identity and Debate
In Table 4.3, the functions of art in society that relate to identity and social interaction have been subdivided into three categories. First, there are the functions relating to the identity of individuals (historic and/or ethnic). This means that people can relate to history or to ethnic groups. Second, there are the functions that relate to social interaction and establishing social structures. This involves bringing people together through shared experiences and representation of (sub-)group identities. This also means developing a sense of community and self-esteem. Third, there are the functions that relate to the confrontation of different (sub)groups in society: debate and clash of ideas. This means one’s ideas and perceptions can be tested against those of others, the arts are seen as a free space to experience differences in society. This category can be regarded as a subcategory of the second. However, it is important to note that the debate can be conducive to the peaceful coexistence of different groups, fostering mutual understanding between them. One can be receptive to the culture of others on the basis of a strong sense of one’s own culture. This is a politically interesting feature of aesthetic experience. But it can also result in a clash of ideas. Cultural policy tends to overrate the positive side of mutual understanding and promoting elasticity in society while it disregards the more negative side when cultural expression can lead to clashes and tensions in society.

The description of the aesthetic experience in Chapter 6 has not made the functions of identity and debate immediately clear. At several points, however, these functions may be connected to the account of aesthetic experience. It is obvious that one’s perception schemes and one’s identity are related. Who we are, the views and insights we adhere to, and how we react to certain situations all determine the framework we use to make sense of experiences. The development of one’s perception schemes (coupled with a sense of significance) will result in a change in identity and is important in social interaction. People can affirm their identity through cultural activities, through the experience of codes or languages that they have become accustomed to. When the experiences are shared experiences, as is the case

7 With this last point, the social policy issues which have been identified as extrinsic functions already become apparent and thus their classification as extrinsic functions is debatable. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.
with the performing arts, group identity is affirmed. This may prove to be a very profound experience, but nevertheless it is an act of confirmation that thus strengthens an established identity.

Aesthetic experiences that are artistic in nature invite spectators to use their imaginative power. On the one hand, this may lead to appreciation of new aesthetic forms and thus to development of the group identity. On the other hand, it may lead people to question their views and insights. When the existence of subcultures is defined on the basis of shared beliefs in norms and values (as discussed with reference to the theories of Zijderveld and Newman in Chapter 1) this means that people can question the identity of the group they belong to or feel they belong to. This may lead spectators to engage in debate with their group members in order to put the shared norms and values up for discussion and subsequently change them. The performing arts seem to be specifically useful in this respect because performing-arts experiences can immediately be shared experiences. However, other art forms may be just as effective in this context, such as visual arts in public spaces for instance. Here, we see a convergence of the interests of an artist aiming at criticizing society and of the spectator experiencing this critique. However, the experience may also have an entirely different effect. The spectators in question may decide not to engage in public debate on what they have experienced and may just decide to quit the group that upholds the morals questioned by the experience. If this means starting to vote for a different political party or donating to a worthy cause or refraining from undertaking actions that might harm people of which one has become aware through the experience, this may be considered as a moral response to the aesthetic experience. Furthermore such an experience may lead people to conclude that the ideas and values to which they adhere are less absolute than they thought them to be. This refers to the propositional knowledge (Davies, 2006, pp. 213-14) that can be attained through aesthetic experience. Specifically dramatic forms of art are capable of ‘asking’ the audience member to consider what he or she would do in certain circumstances.

The experience of aesthetic forms that one is not accustomed to may lead one to reject these forms and the culture they stem from. This can be regarded as one of the more harmful effects of cultural activities in relation to identity. For instance, older people may feel baffled

8 Different art forms can have meaning for certain social groups. Sharing the aesthetic experience can build group identity and different social groups can thus be defined on the basis of the aesthetic traditions in which they participate. Some specific art forms have meaning to them and others do not. In this respect, social groups are sometimes referred to as ‘interpretative communities’. Shusterman rightly points to the fact that these should not be regarded as academic critics of art, but as any social group that attaches meaning to certain cultural practices. Academic criticism may help specific groups in adhering such meaning (Shusterman, 1992, p. 108). However, based on the discussion of ‘interpretation’ in Chapter 6, it seems fair to say that ‘interpretative community’ is not the right term, as meaningful reception can also take place without interpretation and possibly most frequently does.

9 Note that the organizational and institutional frames that encompass the aesthetic experience may prevent these types of functions, specifically in the contemporary Western artworld where many may not feel ‘at home’ in formal cultural institutions. Attending performances for this reason alone can thus estrange individuals from their communities of origin, rather than the artistic functioning that results from the experience (see Chapter 9).
at the loudness of music youngsters enjoy. This will not lead to mutual understanding between elderly people and youngsters. Also the overt expression of ethnic or sexual identities in the public sphere, as in carnival parades and the Canal Parade on Gay Pride Day, for instance, may induce appreciation of the culture of ‘others’ but it can also give rise to rejection of this culture and instigate violent reactions towards it. The debate between cultures will then fail to induce more mutual understanding.

For the present discussion, the foregoing analysis leads to the conclusion that identity is related to perception, and that the affirmation of existing identities may be a result of non-artistically aesthetic experience (when the perception scheme does not alter). A change in a person’s perception scheme may lead to a development in identity, thus altering social structures. When the experience has been challenging – without a resulting change in views and insights – this can lead to a clash of identities at collective level.

7.2.4. Summary
The above discussion shows that the intrinsic functions of the aesthetic experience found in the policy documents can be related to the values and functions of aesthetic experience that have been found in theory. The policy documents thus prove to have been written with an ample understanding of the values and functions that arise from aesthetic experience. However, the expression of the functions in the policy documents is less precise than in theory. Therefore the values and functions as found in theory will be used in the remainder of this research. The above discussion is summarized in Table 7.1.

The table indicates that the sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs is still the vaguest of functions. Abbing suggests that the sublimation of needs and the satisfaction of sublimated needs are related to the process of civilization. With the ever-increasing intricacy of society, there is an increasing need to tone down affects. Art can be a way of either sublimating affects or releasing them with their combination, or ‘ toggling’ between restraint and absorption. However, Abbing also mentions sports and play (games) as ways to do this (Abbing, 1989, pp. 66-70), therefore it is right to classify these as non-artistically aesthetic functions. The policy documents do not devote attention to these functions, which means that elaborating them extensively is not necessary. This means that developing a sense of belonging, of one’s place in a historic, ethnic or social respect, is a sublimated need which can be fulfilled through cultural activity. As was also the case with Table 4.6, the critical function of art in society seems to be missing in this table. However, one should bear in mind that the critical function of art can only ‘work’ when art is being experienced. The critique formulated by artists may lead to the development of people’s perception. This has been included in the table as an artistic function.

The next step in the research involves clarifying the relationship between these intrinsic values and functions and the extrinsic functions as they are mentioned in the policy documents. Research should be performed on the extent to which extrinsic functions depend
## Values and Functions from Theory

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<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Values and Functions from Theory</th>
<th>Functions mentioned in the Policy documents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Experience (Table 4.1)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Development (Table 4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identity and Debate (Table 4.3)</td>
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<td>Non-artistically aesthetic values</td>
<td>Emotional experience</td>
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<td>Empathizing with imagined emotions</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Sublimation of needs and satisfaction of sublimated needs</td>
<td>Rendering significance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Delight in use of imaginative power</td>
<td>‘Intellectual’ entertainment</td>
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<td>Experience of new perception</td>
<td>Emotional experience</td>
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<td>Development of perception</td>
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The arrows in the table indicate the instrumental relationship between values and functions.

* Note that there is a third form of relaxation or entertainment that results from aesthetic experience. This is an extrinsic value as it results from the organizational setting and thus is not included in this table.

** The fact that this box is empty means that the policy documents focus on the artistic functions rather than on the aesthetic ones.

**Table 7.1 Intrinsic functions of aesthetic experience: comparing the theory with policy documents**
upon intrinsic values and functions. This type of relationship has been suggested in some of
the policy documents, specifically for the social domain. This will be the topic of Chapters 8
and 9.

7.3. The Value of Development of Ways of Expression

The discussion of theories on aesthetic experience in Chapter 6 has made it clear that the
theories leave little room for the development of ways of expression as a function of art in
society. Nevertheless, this has been mentioned as a function of culture in the policy
documents. The development of the media in which the artworks are executed is an integral
part of artistic practice. Moreover, artistic development has been mentioned in the policy
documents as a function from the perspective of the artists, in conjunction with the
expression of ideas and views (see Table 4.4). This is about renewal of the cultural system
itself and research and development of new ways of expression. The policy documents relate
these functions specifically to artistic (and fringe) activities.

Several authors invoke a distinction between style and content (e.g., Bourdieu and Van
Stokkom). It seems obvious to assume that an artist expressing his or her ideas does so in the
content of the work of art. But this seems a very crude way of describing the actual process
of creation because, first of all, artists may not be consciously aware of the perceptions they
express and may not be able to express them verbally (just as spectators may not be able to
do so). Second, the expression of perceptions occurs through the imaginative exploration of
the material, which means that the ideas may develop during the process of making an art
work and they may not be present beforehand. In this respect, Eldridge’s ‘formula’ of art as
a means of expression is more useful. Artistic expression entails two necessary
characteristics:

• presenting a subject matter as a focus for thought and connecting a feeling or attitude
towards the subject matter by means of

• exploration of the expressive possibilities of the medium (Eldridge, 2003, p. 259).

This means that Eldridge does make a distinction between style and content, but he argues
that the one is fused to the other. The development of ways of expression is therefore more
than just the development of style. However, Eldridge’s account does not entirely
accommodate abstract forms of art. In his view, even abstract works represent something
and thus present a subject matter.

This line of reasoning describes the articulation of ideas and views as expressing certain
feelings or attitudes towards some subject matter. These feelings or attitudes are aroused in

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10 Furthermore the ideas are only present in the artwork itself and do not exist outside of it (see
11 It is debatable whether or not this is true, but this is not a problem for the performing arts because
there seem to be no purely abstract performing-art works apart from abstract music and dance (and
possibly Dadaist works and word games like Beckett’s, but these works can also be considered to refer
to a certain subject matter, namely, the use of language and its conditioning power in everyday life).
the spectator when the work is performed. This links ‘expressing ideas and views’ (Table 4.6, cell A) directly to ‘personal experience’ (cell C). This leads to the conclusion that cells A and C are related to one another, but the development of ways of expression can also be related to identity building because new identities can be related to new forms of expression. For instance, rap music became possible with the technological development of music amplifying devices. Black American urban identity became expressible in this way (Shusterman, 1992, chapter 8). Furthermore, the development of ways of expression can also be related to the economic functions mentioned in the policy documents (cell F). The development of designer software and the development of electronic music instruments can yield considerable economic returns, for instance. Thus the value of the development of ways of expression is threefold:

- Offering the possibility for new perceptions (which means that new experiences become possible).
- Offering the possibility to express new identities (or giving hitherto under-represented groups the ability for self-expression).
- Economic development through the exploitation of technological advancements of media (including media for reproduction and dissemination).

This means that the functions mentioned in Table 4.4 are related to those in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Thus they need not be discussed separately in the remainder of this research.