

# Electronic music

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Electronic music

What is art?

Dickie  
Levinson  
Van Gerwen  
Abramowicz

Electronic music  
as art



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# Typical music

- ▶ Richard Teitelbaum, moog synthesiser » listen
  - a new instrument: audible mechanics of playing
  - thick expression, etc.
- ▶ Not electronic music

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# A stipulation

- ▶ Electronic music is an artefact consisting of sound produced by a machine which provides the logic in the result

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# Sounds and their causes

A phenomenological characteristic

- ▶ We hear the causes of the sounds—normally
- ▶ The sound of water running from a tap
  - The **sight** of water running from a tap
  - **suitably prompts** us to hear the sound
  - Not: it explains what we hear

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- ▶ we hear the world like we see the world
- ▶ likewise, we hear musicians in the music
  
- ▶ except in electronic music: here we do not hear the individual musicians

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# “Art is what is in the concert hall”

Procedural (nominal)

- ▶ “A work of art in the classificatory sense is (1) an artifact (2) upon which some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the Artworld) have conferred the status of candidate for appreciation.”
  - Institutional definition — George Dickie (1973, 25)
  
- ▶ It does not say what a work of art should be good in
  - Wise
    - no endless debates
  - But also disappointing
    - directors of concert halls can be mistaken

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# Historical Definition

- 1 Initial step: Objects of the Ur-arts are artworks at  $t_0$  (and thereafter)
- 2 Recursive step: If  $X$  is an artwork prior to  $t$ , then  $Y$  is an artwork at  $t$  if it is true at  $t$  that some person or persons, having the appropriate proprietary right over  $Y$ , nonpassingly intends (or intended)  $Y$  for regard in any way (or ways) in which  $X$  is or was correctly (or standardly) regarded
  - Jerrold Levinson, “Defining Art Historically”, Lamarque and Olsen (eds.), 2004, 27–35

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# In lay terms . . .

- ▶ Something is a work of art if it is clear how it is to be appreciated—because this is like how previously works were appreciated; correctly and meant like this by someone who would be in charge of this
  
- ▶ But: **absolute new art?**

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# Ethical autonomism

## Phenomenological specifications

- ▶ “how it is to be appreciated” depends on the procedure—for instance: paint on a canvas
- ▶ But what makes it artistic?—the fact that masterpieces were made in it
- ▶ The effect of this?—That the audience allows this procedure to require an artistic attitude

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# Art practice

- ▶ Art is a practice — three aspects which feed-back into each other
  1. rules/habits of conduct: **artistic attitude**: opening up to artistic appreciation; leading hopefully to rewarding experience
  2. **artists** creating objects and events allowing the above (intentions)
  3. **Art works**: the objects and events are such that the audience links them to the intentions of the artists and the appreciative experience

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1. X is a work of art if and only if it properly instantiates an established artistic procedure.
  2. An ordered set of phenomenological specifications concerning the manipulation of material is a procedure if and only if it allows for more than one proper instantiation.
  3. A procedure is artistic if and only if it has allowed for one or more instantiations with acclaimed high artistic value.
  4. To establish a work's artistic merit the audience must take up an artistic attitude.
- ▶ ... a car crash and performance art

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# Marina Abramowicz, *Rhythm 5*



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# Electronic music

## 1. Procedure:

- Have computerlike sound-generator produce sounds
  - it is not music in the traditional sense of having the audience listen to sounds wherein the musician is audibly present
  - Has audience wonder about the intentional structure

## 2. Artistically meritorious examples?

- ?

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# How to promote electronic music

- ▶ suggest the intentional structure as that of an artificial intelligence: it is an art of the computer (not of humans)
- ▶ Don't use electronic music to go against the standard concept of art
  - that mistake has been made before: formalism's "significant form" as the essence of art
- ▶ ... but expand it
- ▶ remove audible human input: aesthetics, stylistics, melodies, etc. — celebrate its inhumane logic

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