

Spring 2020

## Installation: Untitled#0420, Thesis: Is The Artist's Position Valid and Necessary to Her Completed Artworks ? — An investigation of the artist's position through Martin Heidegger's Poetry, Language, Thought and the fisherman analogy

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### Recommended Citation

Ma, Coco, "Installation: Untitled#0420, Thesis: Is The Artist's Position Valid and Necessary to Her Completed Artworks ? — An investigation of the artist's position through Martin Heidegger's Poetry, Language, Thought and the fisherman analogy" (2020). *Senior Projects Spring 2020*. 343.  
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Installation:

Untitled#0420

Bard Exhibition Center, Red Hook, NY

Thesis:

Is The Artist's Position Valid and Necessary to Her Completed Artworks ?

— An investigation of the artist's position through Martin Heidegger's  
*Poetry, Language, Thought* and the fisherman analogy

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of [Art and Social Studies]  
of Bard College

by

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2020

Untitled#0420

Bard Exhibition Center, Red Hook, NY

## Artist Statement for Untitled#0420

In my practice of mixed-media sculptures and installations, I use different kinds of materials in unexpected ways to provoke uncertainties, inquiries, and reflections. My works entice people to stop and pay close attention. In this process, they may be confused and amused. By being labor-intensive and repetitive with ordinary materials, my works inspire people to see familiar forms and materials in new and fresh ways. Underneath the familiarity of the materials is the “white noise,” a hum of dissonance between the familiar and the strange.

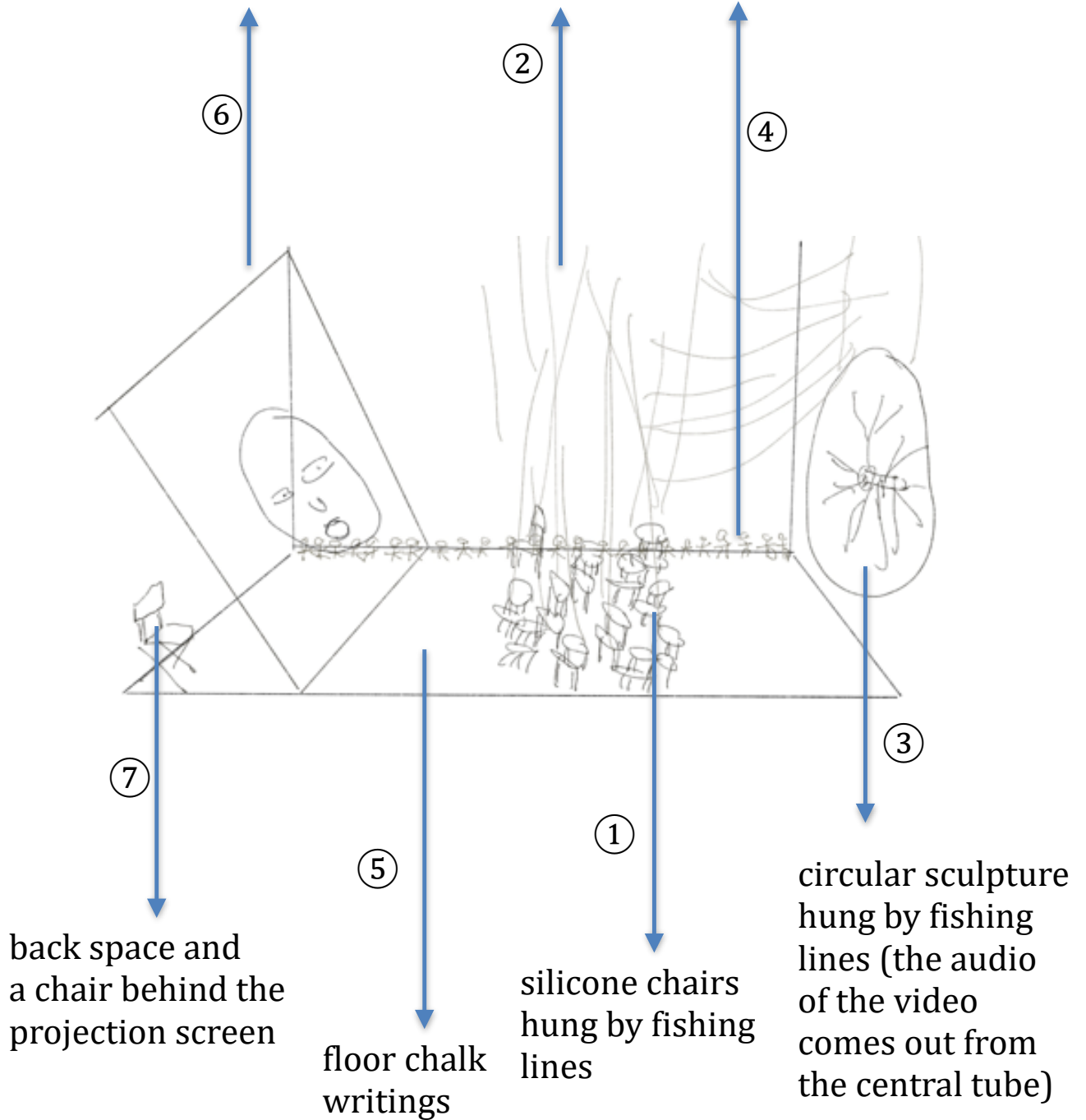
The installation *Untitled#0420* uses fishing lines as its major component, which is related to the philosophy writing that I developed in my senior project. However, the installation did not emerge as a physical explanation of my writing, but as an independent artwork standing side by side with the written part. Overall, the work intends to generate a disorienting, peaceful, quiet, and slightly ghost-like atmosphere.

The installation piece can be summarized into six parts: The fishing line structure above, the silicon chairs in the center, the writing on the floor, the projection on the left with the hidden space behind it, the small figures along the bottom of the wall facing outside of the space, and the circular transparent sculpture on the right. The fishing lines are woven into a net-like structure that connects different parts of the work into one. The net structure is then pulled by a hidden motor to swing the chairs below gently, creating a dream-like environment. The silicone chairs are all cast from the same neutral and commonly used type of chairs. The wax figures and the chairs represent the conflicting state of the viewers, being both absent and present in the work. The video projection shows several layers of my face and my voice, speaking of ‘art’ and ‘artist’ alternatively while breathing in and out. The sound of the video projection comes out from the tube of the circular sculpture as murmuring. The writing on the floor document my thoughts that emerged during creation and are gradually smeared as the viewers come into the installation space. As a whole, the work invites viewers to become a part of this installation when they step into the space.

video projection  
on plastic sheet

fishing line  
structure

wax figures



①





②



3

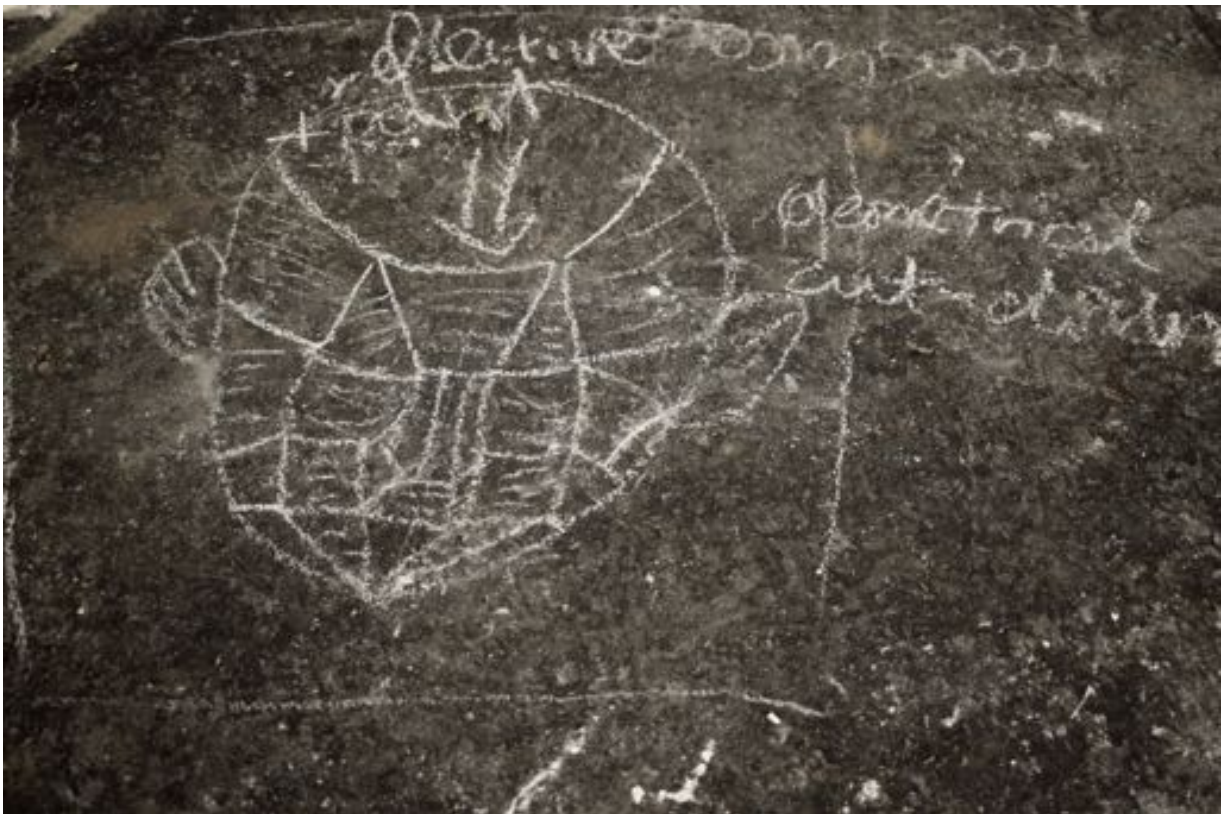
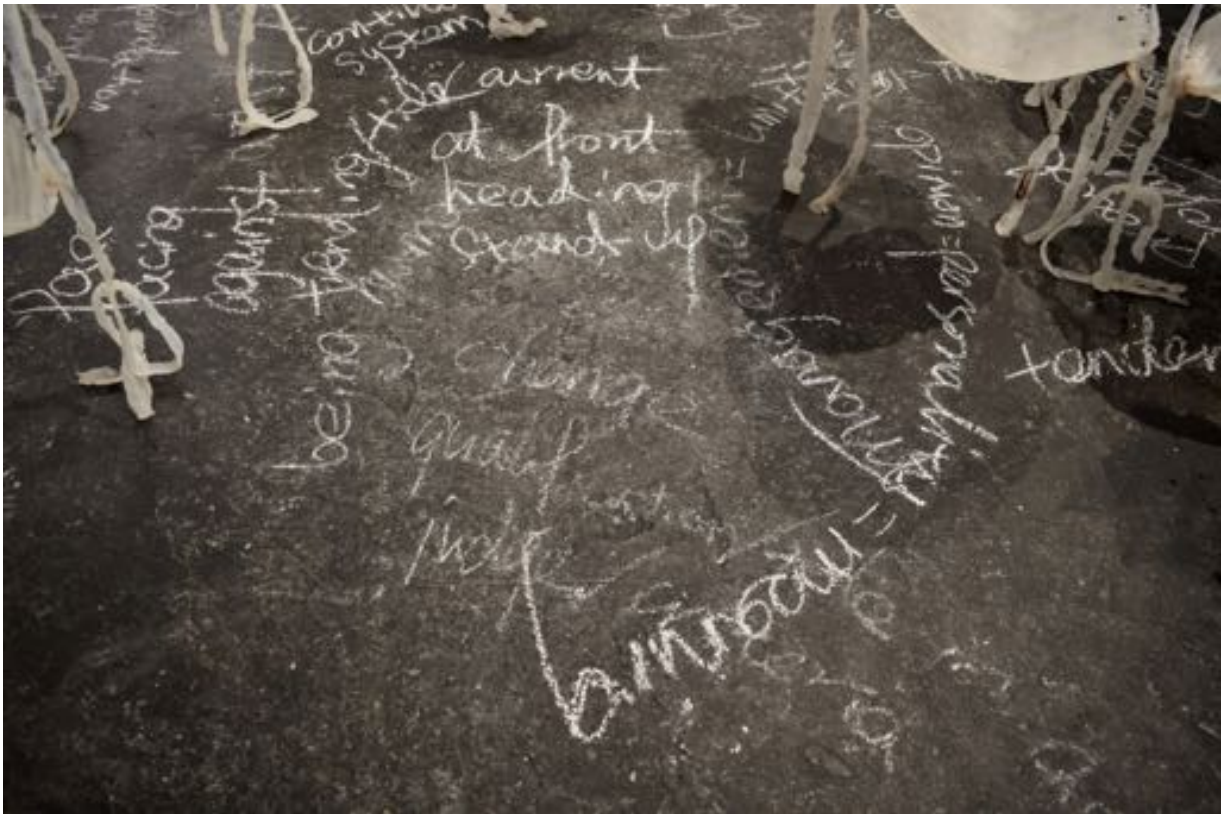




4



5





plint / int  
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suggestion  
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situation / situation  
or developed

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direction  
amplification  
John / Castro  
situation / situation  
or developed



⑥

(see attachment for the video clip)



⑦





overall







(see attachment for the overall-view video)

Is The Artist's Position Valid and Necessary to Her Completed Artworks ?

— An investigation of the artist's position through Martin Heidegger's

*Poetry, Language, Thought* and the fisherman analogy

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## **Introduction**

My senior project is a joint philosophy and studio art project. In such a context, my philosophical writing should not be detached from my art project. But if the connection between them is solely on the content level, with the intention that one part would help to interpret the other, it means that the link between the two parts is only external and artificial.

Hence, the two parts of my project are intertwined instead of one subordinating to the other. My philosophical writing is unavoidably occupied with artistic characteristics, and my artworks inform my philosophical investigation. The initial stage of my philosophy project<sup>1</sup> adopted an atypical writing style, which is narrative and metaphorical; my studio project also included linguistic elements as one of its major component. The installation and philosophical writing both have the concept of ‘fishing’ shared between them, yet, they do not serve as additional explanations for each other. They are two distinctive but related approaches to the same topic.

Through my research and readings on art philosophy for my senior project, I noticed that lots of theories have been presented regarding questions such as ‘What is art?’ ‘Where is the profoundness in art?’ ‘What are the differences between different art categories?’ ‘What is the origin of art?’ ‘How essential are materials/the physical world to art?’ Most of the philosophical writing concerns these major questions, and only a few things are said concerning the artists; even when artists are discussed, philosophers usually use them to support their art theories, whereas the artist is rarely a topic by herself.

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<sup>1</sup> The story in the appendix.

I am a person who makes artwork, so I decided to use my senior project as a chance to see the artist as a subject in herself and inquire into the question of the artist's identity. But visual art and philosophy adopt different medium; one is visual and the other is linguistic and written. Both my philosophical writing and my art project have their own complexity, which resist being entirely decoded from the perspective of the other medium. Thus, for me, finding an appropriate middle ground between these two parts becomes the only solution to form one joint project.

Through my readings of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and chapters from Martin Heidegger's *Poetry, Language, Thought*, I realized that metaphor can serve as an effective mediation between the two parts of my project. Meanwhile in my studio practice, I discovered a method to use monofilament (fishing line) to make a semi-net structure. Afterwards, I turned this structure into a crucial component for my final installation and used it to integrate all of my sculptures into one artwork. I realized that the fishing line, fishing net, and the fisherman — these elements that emerge from the medium that I use in my installation — are appropriate metaphorical objects to explain the art system that surrounds the artist. From these ideas above, I started writing a story illustrating my thoughts on the artist, in relation to the world that she lives in, and then further developed the content of the story into a philosophical writing. The story mediates between my installation work and my philosophical essay, and offers an initial platform to showcase the artist's irrational and intuitive characteristics, which are not directly suitable for philosophical examination and rationalization. Still, the irrational and subconscious characteristics of the artist cannot be completely embraced using rational and philosophical arguments, even with the mediation from the story. As a result, the philosophical writing incorporates a smaller but more compact discussion about the artist than the story, but the

story still embodies undeciphered metaphorical content that waits to be further elaborated in the future.

In the chapters that follow, I will testify if the artist's position is valid and necessary to her finished artwork. The first chapter discusses Heidegger's views on the definition of the artist and the neglected gap between the artist and the artwork in his theory. The second chapter explains the concept of the artist's memory, which amends the gap and unites the artist and the artwork through the creation process. The third chapter compares Heidegger's analogy of earth-artwork-world and my analogy of the artist as a fisherman, and offers the conclusion that the name 'artist' embodies a more profound meaning than solely 'the maker of the work,' as stated in Heidegger's theory.



## Chapter 1:

### Heidegger on The Artist

My focus on the artist's role originated from the insecurity that I felt when I worked on my sculpture pieces for my senior project. When the works were completed, I would suddenly feel a strange detachment that then led to the feeling of being tiny and unsupported. This uneasiness did not vanish over time; it accumulated and was incited more by the philosophical writing that I read, especially by the essay "The Origin of The Work of Art" in the book *Poetry, Language, Thought* by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's viewpoints expressed in this essay are situated around the artwork, which for him is the central element in his art theory. Since artworks are emphasized in Heidegger's philosophical structure as the active agents for the continuation of art, one consequential idea in his essay is that the more independent a work is, the better the work will be. The artist is depreciated in the art-evaluation process: as Heidegger says, "the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge."<sup>2</sup> This statement separates the artist entirely from her artworks, almost as if the work and the artist cannot coexist at all. Yet at the same time, such a statement does not mean that Heidegger ignores the process of creation or overlooks the artist's role as a creator. He declares, "a work cannot be without being created but is essentially in need of creators."<sup>3</sup> The reason that the artist's role is skimmed over in his writing is that he situates his theory in the timeframe after the completion of the work.

To understand the timeframe of Heidegger's theory, I need to first look into the common usage of the word 'artist.' Interestingly, Heidegger's definition of the artist will also be accepted by the

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 40.

<sup>3</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 66.

artists themselves. If an artist such as Georgia O’Keeffe was asked whether she was evaluated as a great artist because she was a great person or because her works were great, I believe that she would choose the second explanation without hesitation, as Heidegger would. This imaginative example implies that when people — non-artists or artists — speak of an artist, their usage of the word is usually similar to Heidegger’s. They refer to a person who creates artworks, that is, the creator. Yet such an explanation is not enough, for the artist can be understood in three ways:

- 1) the person who has the capability of creating art;
- 2) the person who is creating art;
- 3) the person who created artworks.

It is not hard to see that these three explanations differ in their sense of time. To understand where the artist is situated in Heidegger’s theory and how the artist may navigate herself through her works, I want to look into Heidegger’s use of the word ‘artist’ more closely.

One place where the artist is elaborated on is the section “Truth and Art” in *The Origin of the Work of Art*, when Heidegger talks about the createdness of the work:

“*Techne*, as knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing forth of beings *out of* concealedness and specifically *into* the unconcealedness of their appearance; *techne* never signifies the action of making. The artist is a *technites* not because she is also a craftsman, but because both the setting forth of works and the setting forth of equipment occur in a bringing forth and presenting that causes beings in the first place to come forward and be present in assuming an appearance. Yet all this happens in the mist of the being that grows out of its own accord, *physis*. Calling art *techne* does not at all imply that the artist’s action is seen in the light of craft. What looks like craft in the creation of a work is of a different sort. This doing is determined and pervaded by the nature of creation, and indeed remains contained within that creating.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 59-60.

For Heidegger, artists are people who are able to use *techne* to reveal meaning from materials in the process of creation. They are not just craftsmen, for the craft aspect of creation is only a manipulation of materials. By presenting artists as people who have the special ability *techne*, which stands for the capability of revealing truth via the artwork, Heidegger uses the word ‘artist’ to highlight the person who is capable of creation, as in explanation (1). He also implies the happening of creation, in which the *techne* is demonstrated and testified, and the name ‘artist’ is gained. Therefore, the artist for him also means the creator in the execution of the work, as in explanation (2). Because Heidegger acknowledges the artist’s effort in the creation process as exerting her *techne*, he will also accept explanation (3), which allows the artist to claim and stand by her works as the maker. However, Heidegger writes: “even though the work’s createdness has a relation to creation, nevertheless both createdness and creation must be defined in terms of the work-being of the work,”<sup>5</sup> which means that the creation process, as the criterion of the artist, is determined by whether the work functions properly as an artwork. In other words, people can tell if the artist is qualified as an artist only after the work is finished and evaluated. Therefore, because the artist is regulated by the creation, the creation is defined by the work-being of the work, and the work-being of the work is determined only after the completion of the work; it is only possible for the artist to gain her name via the works that she finished.

To summarize, the word ‘artist’ in Heidegger’s context means a person who is not only capable of revealing and showing her ability through the creation in action, but also whose ability is examined through the works created. Still, this explanation is not explicit enough, for if readers examine this description rigorously, they will find themselves arriving at a strange place: creation serves as a bridge between the artist and the artwork, but the determination of the

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<sup>5</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 60.

creation process is distorted, since the *techne* is not revealed during the creation. When the work is completed, the creation process has already terminated and disappeared. It might appear odd to bring attention to such an obvious fact — the creation is no longer in existence. Creation implies that the artwork is in creation, so only when it is terminated, can the completion and the continued existence of the work, which must happen on the same subject, begin. Isn't it natural and obvious?

Yet, before admitting the normality of this succession of actions, consider the following analogy: testifying to the creation process through an artwork is similar to determining a crime through the clues found in a room. The difference between confirming a crime and a true creation is that the former only inquires into the happening of the crime (a crime happened), but the latter requires people to know *what kind of* creation happened (a *true* creation happened). In order to see the quality of the creation process, more is needed from the artwork besides the evidence of the occurrence; an artwork may prove to be a real artwork, but it cannot show the essence of its creation process. For Heidegger, a true creation is defined by the exertion of *techne*; the *techne* is proved by the disclosure of truth; and the disclosure of truth is testified by the artwork. This logic seems impenetrable, but it should still be noticed that the truth testified by the artwork itself may not fully testify to the truth of the artist's creation. The gap here between the past action (a true creation) and the present object (a true artwork) is tiny but significant. Still, after having roughly gone through the question 'Is there a gap?' now we encounter even more questions: 'Why is there a gap, what is this gap, and how can people close this gap?'

From my personal view, the answer to the question ‘Why is there a gap?’ may be found in the fact that the artist’s essential connection to her works is denied in Heidegger’s art theory. This is not to say that he does not acknowledge the fact that the artist creates artworks, but that he emphasizes the artwork as the primary verification of art and treats the artist and the creation process only as the secondary (or even unnecessary) factors of art. On the one hand, such an emphasis signifies the physical limitation of the artist. The artist was born and cultivated in her material world, and her thinking is also rooted in her material world, therefore the artist’s decisions in the making of a work are regulated by the material world, as she can use only the materials available in her world to create and contribute to her culture, but not to extend beyond what is available to her.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the emphasis on the artwork closes the discussion from the artist’s side and only takes on the viewpoint of the viewer, resulting in a one-sided perspective. In the equation of viewer—artwork—artist, emphasizing the viewer’s position will make the equation lose its balance and thus become incomplete. To see from the artist’s perspective, balance the equation, and eventually answer the other two questions ‘What is the gap?’ and ‘How can people close the gap?’ we must first put aside our focus on the artwork and dive into the creation process, which is embodied in the artist’s memory.

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<sup>6</sup> Another way of thinking about this question is that the contribution or alteration of the artist’s current culture is an ‘adding up,’ whereas the foundation of the materiality indicates a ‘going down.’ The ‘adding up’ is a consequence of art, but the ‘going down’ is not possible in art.

## **Chapter 2:**

### **The Artist in Her Memory of Making**

Unlike viewers who can act like a detective in front of an art piece, piecing together a puzzle by comprehending different details in an artwork and then bringing them together into a larger picture, the process of approaching an artwork from the artist's side is the reverse, since nothing is determined from the start. The artist's task is physical rather than mental, and even the mental activities involved in the making process are more physical than mental: she needs to bring the rough skeleton out from the materials, and then work into finer details. To work is to make efforts and engrave this effort-making experience both into the work and the artist's body.

The artist's experience with an artwork exists only in her working and making efforts, in which she paints, cuts, carves, examines each part of the work-in-progress, evaluates her decisions, and finally brings forth the final work. The artist's experience with a work terminates at the completion of the work, but the intensity and vividness of her actions persist in her body much longer, preventing the artist from seeing her work from a pure outsider's perspective. Through this enduring memory, the artist is linked to her artwork. Therefore, the artist's memory is not in the past, but a constant echo within the artist's body. It overcomes time and executes its power regardless of the division between the past, the present, and the future. By recalling the memory of creation, the artist is always in creation, and it is only according to this memory that she is able to associate herself with her work. For the artist, her work is both a work and a signifier for her memory. She looks detachedly at the work-being of the work setting in the present moment; she also has the memory attached to her work that constantly reminds her of her actions that created it.



Nevertheless, memory is intrinsically untrustworthy, for it alters and decays all the time, especially after many times of being recalled. At the same time, the artist's memory that is discussed here is deeper than the memory of, for example, 'a person wearing a black jacket and a blue hat passed me by this morning.' The artist's memory is bound to the physical actions that she puts in her work, which means that the memory is not only a remembered one but an experienced and physical one. It is one that declares 'I acted, made, and created,' and imprints this statement both in the artist's mind intellectually and her body experientially. But this still does not solve the problem, for the artist's memory seems to be composed by both the mental and the physical memory. If this is the case, then, how should people understand the part of memory that still unavoidably alters and perishes? If fading away is the destiny of all memories, including the artist's memory, then can it serve as a reliable source pointing to creation, and also the connection between the work and the artist?

One answer to this question is that memory changes and fades because it is personal and irrational. It is not 'it happened,' but rather 'I know that it happened.' One person's memory might differ from another's memory of the same event because they have different interpretations of it. But another difference between the artist's memory and other kinds of memory (besides the artist's memory being physical) is that the artist's memory is exclusive — both the physical/reliable part and the shattering/unreliable part.<sup>7</sup> The memory of making is only imprinted in the mind of the artist. Unlike the experience of an artwork, it is not open for a larger audience to experience. The artist's memory is more arbitrary than other kinds of memory

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<sup>7</sup> A group of artists collaborating on one artwork is understood as *the artist* for the work, therefore the artist's memory here is also exclusive.

because it is authorized as the *only* one. However, this does not mean that the artist's memory has authority over viewers, nor is it necessary for the viewers to understand the artist's memory as a whole to appreciate a work. It only means that the artist's memory authorizes the artist herself to believe in her actions and connection to the completed works and to project such an association into the continuous existence that only belongs to the artwork in its future. In other words, the memory is indeed true and real, but only for the artist and within the artist. As soon as the memory leaves the artist's body and is transformed into other formats, such as interviews, artist's statements, or artist's talks, it loses its authority and becomes a claim, which is no different from an art critique offered by someone else. The exclusiveness of the artist's memory also indicates that while the artist cannot be a pure viewer because of the intervention of her physical memory, the viewer also cannot experience in an artwork the artist's standpoint: the artist's memory is not fully transmittable (it is physical and experienced) and not required for understanding an artwork (it loses its power when it leaves the artist's body).

If the artist's memory is only effective for the artist to determine her connection to her artwork, but not necessary or helpful to the viewers, then, why should people other than the artist herself care about it? In fact, the artist's memory can detach from the artist's body and become accessible for the viewers. To clarify this situation, I would like to first take a detour into Heidegger's definition of artwork and art:

“One of these ways in which truth happens is the work-being of the work. Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the fighting of the battle in which the unconcealedness of beings as a whole, or truth, is won.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 55.

For Heidegger, an artwork has two aspects, one is its work-being and the other is its thing-being. The thing-being of the work is subject to the work-being of the work, because on one hand, in the physical sense, the artist creates a work by manipulating actual materials (i.e. things), on the other hand, she does so for the purpose of exerting her *techne* and revealing the truth via the artwork, and therefore the work-being dominates the thing-being of the work in the end. Since the primary part in a work is its work-being — to reveal the truth — the work needs to “set up a world” and “[set] forth the earth,” which means creating an appropriate gateway for revealing the closure, and finding the right place between the world (disclosure) and the earth (closure), in order to sustain the strife between them.

To achieve this aim, however, first the work needs to be allowed to remain itself. For this reason, Heidegger introduces the concept of preserving, that is “letting a work be a work,”<sup>9</sup> and preservers, who are the people preserving the work and “standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work.”<sup>10</sup> These descriptions of preserving and preservers illustrate that these two concepts are also closely linked with the viewer’s side and the timeframe after the completion of the work: Heidegger encourages viewers to preserve the work and see the work in its own cultural setting without any artificial frame that is added posteriorly, either personal (e.g. personal projection) or institutional (e.g. viewing in a collection setting). To see a work as it is is to avoid any stretch or stress on the work, which may lead to deviation from its position between its world and the earth, and hinder its mediation between these two; to preserve a work means to accept the delicate balance between the earth and the world, which results from the mediation of the work, without interference. Heidegger’s preservation stands for protecting the finished work

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<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 66.

<sup>10</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 67.

— but will there also be preservation for the artist, that requires her to carefully measure the balance and sustain the openness for the artwork, or is she disqualified as a preserver completely?

The artwork in front of the artist is always incomplete, therefore, people should not use the finished work to standardize and determine the preservation for the artist. Still, according to the definition of preservation above, for the artist, preservation should also be “standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work,” but in the creation process, the incomplete ‘openness of beings’ in the work remains mobile, as it shifts and alters with every action made by the artist. If the openness in the artwork during the creation process is interpreted in the same way by the artist and viewers, the artwork can never be finished, as the artist’s actions must be subordinate to the current agency of the artwork, allowing the work to be situated between its present earth and world comfortably without causing any change or evolution. Yet in this way, the artist’s preservation will always conflict with the word ‘artist,’ which stands for the creator. To create is to generate something new for the work, but not to furnish it to let it sustain its current energy. To see the meaning of preservation from the artist’s side, people must realize that the artist-artwork relationship is drastically different from the viewer-artwork relationship. Although both actions are called preservation, the artist’s preservation should not be understood in the same manner as the viewers’ preservation.

The difference between the two kinds of preservation comes from the difference in the two kinds of artworks. Unlike the finished artwork in front of the viewers, the artwork in front of the artist is not only incomplete, but also without full agency due to its incompleteness or non-existence.

Although artistic qualities may be discovered in an unfinished artwork, the work in its middle stage remains closer to a set of materials instead of an artwork, being vulnerable, boundless, and dependent on the artist. In the creation process, the artist determines the materials, adds and subtracts from them, pushes them toward being an artwork by transforming the thing-being of the work into the work-being of the work, and changes the inner hierarchy between them.<sup>11</sup> From the artist's manipulation of the materials, the artwork gradually gains its boundaries, and declares its independence from the artist for the first time when it is completed. The artist preserves the incomplete work by making the physical existence of the work evolve, promoting the work-being of the work above the thing-being of the work, while not diminishing the openness of the work or bending its natural direction. She nourishes the work so that it may gain its independence when it is completed. Hence, the work that needs to be preserved by the artist is not a determined one, but a changing and formless one.

Heidegger also mentions the term 'createdness' in a way that is similar to the artist's preservation:

"Createdness of the work means: truth's being fixed in place in the figure. Figure is the structure in whose shape the rift composes and submits itself. This composed rift is the fitting or joining of the shining of truth. ... In the creation of a work, the conflict, as rift, must be set back into the earth, and the earth itself must be set forth and used as the self-closing factor. This use, however, does not use up or misuse the earth as matter, but rather sets it free to be nothing but itself."<sup>12</sup>

Heidegger's 'createdness' can be understood as true creation, which fixes the truth in the work by actualizing it in materials. The truth in the work is a force from the past that projects into the future. It allows the conflict between the earth and the world to continue via the work itself after

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, in a realized work, the thing-being of the work is subordinate to the work-being of the work, but in an incomplete work this may not be the case. However, it is hard to decide the exact moment when their positions are entirely shifted.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 64.

its completion. To achieve the truth, the artist must allow the earth, which is the concealedness, openness, and the primitive resource of the world, to stay as itself without being reduced into simply material or matter. Therefore, the explanation of createdness sounds very much like the requirements for the preservers, as they both signify the action of preserving the truth in the work. Therefore, the artist's preservation is the true creation, which is testified by and linked to the artist through the artist's memory.

Now readers may notice that the artwork not only indicates a permanent object in an exhibition space or an incomplete and vulnerable work, but also a work in evolution, that is, a work-in-progress. The boundary of the work-in-progress is indistinct, for who knows what the work will be at the end? Thus the work-in-progress obtains a new meaning: it is no longer inviolable or concrete,<sup>13</sup> nor does it exist passively, always waiting for the artist's modifications. It is now an executing potentiality that can exist both mentally (the waiting-to-be-executed ideas or subconscious thoughts in the artist's mind) and in reality (the realized physical set of materials in manipulation). The work at this stage refers to an imprecise direction that points to somewhere even the artist herself might not yet be aware of; it beams its light toward a yet-unknown destination<sup>14</sup> that will be settled at its completion. Therefore, the artist preserves the artwork by preserving the general direction in the work-in-progress. In her preservation, she forces the mental part to substantialize and evolve through the materials, and eventually reach a purely physical representation, that is, an artwork. In this way, the physical work is more powerful than the mental one, because it has not only realized its full work-being through its thing-being, but also obtained a more substantial and precise direction through the shaping process.

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<sup>13</sup> As it is for the viewers.

<sup>14</sup> Using Heidegger's terminology, it might be the rift that waits to be fixed and sustained.

Now the artist's memory is also an account of the worked-through, in which a work-in-progress transforms into a finished artwork successfully. Therefore, the artist's memory is no longer simply a series of actions on the same subject (as in the physical memory), it is a worked-through and marks a significant transition from one realm to the other. If the artist's body (which contains the mental work-in-progress) and the physical body of an artwork are seen analogically as two containers set next to each other, then the worked-through indicates that the artwork flows like a fluid from the artist's body (in its mental stage) to the physical world (as its full actualization). In this process, the artwork and the artist are almost undistinguishable.

Hence, the worked-through, as a part of the artist's memory, offers a deeper connection between the artist and the artwork in comparison to both the mental and the physical part of the memory. The worked-through does not describe the series of actions that happened in the transition, but it indicates a condensed and profound understanding reached in the work at its completion. If the mental memory is a singular knowledge of a work, and the physical memory is a singular experience of an artwork, then the worked-through is a dense comprehension that breaks the singularity of a work, and enables the artist to see through the work in the past, which is conquered and left behind. As time goes by after the completion of the artwork, first the mental memory will fade away, then eventually the physical one, but as a conclusion and distillation from the past work, the worked-through will persist by offering the artist the drive to depart from the last work and move on to the next piece, in which the worked-through is carried on and modified. However, the worked-through at this stage starts to depart from the realm of the artist's memory. It is no longer retained within the artist's memory as being personal and private, but it

finds its attachment to the past works as representations of its own evolution and history, and also becomes available for the viewers as they gradually confirm their understanding of a body of works. In this way, the worked-through diverges into two versions: one is the mobile worked-through that remains private and evolving in the creation process, and the other is the stable worked-through, the history of which is documented in the past artworks.

To conclude, the artist's memory implies the perishable mental memory, the more persistent physical memory, and the most reliable worked-through memory. The worked-through is the most valuable part of the artist's memory, because it is carried on from one work to another, providing a body of works with the continuity that is also available to and crucial for the viewers' understanding.



### Chapter 3:

#### The Artist as a Fisherman

The first question to ask about my appendix, *The Story of the Fisherman*, should be: why a fisherman? Some may think that my first reaction to Heidegger's theory should be to amend or further explain his theory to fit the purpose of my writing instead of making up an entirely new system of my own. Offering a new system or story indicates that there is an essential difference between Heidegger's theory and the purpose of my writing, or that the new system is unnecessary. *The Story of the Fisherman*, I believe, is necessary as a revision to Heidegger's system. It is similar to the structure in Heidegger's system, but it also includes new elements that are missing in Heidegger's theory.

*The Story of the Fisherman* was the initial stage of my philosophical writing. For me, the purpose of writing this story is to use it as a cabinet, allowing me to place my understandings of the artist's position on the cabinet shelves intuitively and roughly for further rational explanations. It also marks a transition of myself from a creator-in-action in my installation work to a writer investigating the artist's position as a non-artist. When I was writing the story, I thought about the validity of my position in front of my work, and I realized that the question 'Is the artist's position valid and necessary in front of her finished work?' can be asked in two more refined ways: 1) is the artist at least equally significant as her artworks; 2) is the artist's identity valid without the proof provided by her artwork. The first sub-question concerns the necessity of the artist in relation to her work, and implies the presence of a judge. For the judge, the artist might be significant, and the judge evaluates the artist in connection to the artwork. Therefore, the judge must be a viewer looking at an artwork. The second sub-question concerns the validity

of the artist's position in relation to her work. This question does not require people to see an artist as entirely separate from her works, but asks if the name 'artist' stands for something larger than solely 'the maker of the work.'

The answer to the first question is embedded in the concept of the viewer. A viewer is a person looking at an artwork for the sake of art, so the artist as a person has no value to the viewer besides being the creator of the artwork. Furthermore, the worked-through at this stage has gone beyond the scope of the artist's memory and there is no personal residue in a work that represents any substantial trace of the artist. The artwork is not personal, it is only artistic. Even if an artist paints in her work a teddy bear that she carried throughout her whole childhood, for the viewer, the teddy bear only represents an artistic element that may create a private and nostalgic atmosphere within the work. In this way, an artwork can never be as personal as to become a representation of the artist. The personal elements that are incorporated into a work carry only artistic meaning with them, and are only referential and symbolic for the sake of the work. The artwork is an unbreakable filter between the viewer and the artist, permitting only an art-related conversation between the viewer and the artist through the work, but nothing about the artist herself. Therefore, the answer to question (1) is the artist at least equally significant as her artworks (for a viewer)? is a clear 'no.'

The second question involves more concepts and thoughts, to answer this question *The Story of the Fisherman* comes into my philosophical writing. To provide a possible answer to this question through my story, I want to first look into the similarities and differences between

Heidegger's theory and the story or system of the fisherman, and also explain why I insist on using the fisherman instead of adapting Heidegger's existing system.

In Heidegger's writing, three components — the earth, world, and the artwork — form a complete system. Around these constituents, the truth happens and is sustained in the strife between the world and the earth. In his initial remarks, Heidegger speaks the world as identical to opening, revealing, and unconcealing, and the earth to closing, hiding, and concealing. But later in his writing, Heidegger further distinguishes the world and the earth:

“To the Open there belong a world and the earth. But the world is not simply the Open that corresponds to clearing, and the earth is not simply the Closed that corresponds to concealment. Rather, the world is the clearing of the paths of the essential guiding directions with which all decision complies. Every decision, however, bases itself on something not mastered, something concealed, confusing; else it would never be a decision. The earth is not simply the Closed but rather that which rises up as self-closing. World and earth are always intrinsically and essentially in conflict, belligerent by nature. Only as such do they enter into the conflict of clearing and concealing.”<sup>15</sup>

According to this text, the earth and the world form a more complicated system around the artwork rather than being simply against each other on equal stances. The world, which is created by and surrounds an artwork, invites people to choose specific directions from all the others and regulates the unlimited openness in which the artwork is situated. From a historical perspective, the earth exists before the world and the world was born from the earth, and thus the origin of the regulations offered by the world comes from the obscured and concealed earth, unregulated and impenetrable. To say that the earth is self-closing is to say that the world is younger and shallower than the earth: the earth is not fully comprehended by the spectrum of the world. Therefore, the world and the earth are not simply opposing each other, but the world

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<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 55.

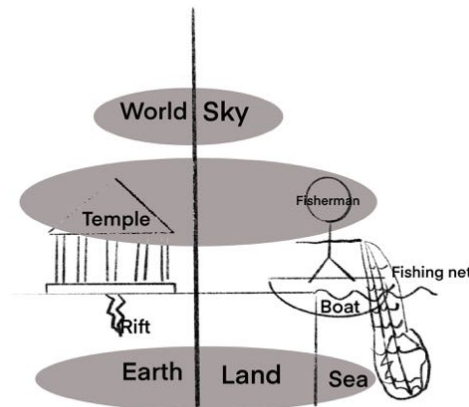
unavoidably embraces the earth as its origin and resource, and consequentially includes the earth as a part of itself,<sup>16</sup> thus prohibiting any complete unconcealedness and also allowing new unconcealedness to emerge continuously into the world itself. In sum, the earth is stable and responds to the activities of the world like a mother; and the world acts like an infant struggling in its mother's arms, always finding new positions and encountering new responses, but has no way out. In such a strife between the earth and the world, the artwork functions as a mediation and site of their conflict. Therefore, the artwork is an embodiment that has the earth as its origin and the world as its formation.

The fisherman story uses many different representations in comparison to Heidegger's system. It includes the strife between the sky (as the world) and the sea (as the earth). This strife is mediated by the artist as a fisherman throughout his life in a more complicated way. As a person who fishes, the fisherman is situated between the sky and the sea, with the support from his boat and the fishing net connecting him to the water. When he fishes, the icebergs are brought up from the sea into the world as a new unconcealedness and an intrusion into the sea. During his time on the land, he is positioned among wives, children, and judges, as a part of the people. This double-layer of identification separates his life into two: one is on the ground among people, and, the other is on the sea alone. Only when he is at sea is he fishing, thus functioning as an element in sustaining the strife. To conclude, the fisherman system also mediates the strife between the earth and the world, but it is not the mediation of a stable artwork, but rather the mediation of the fisherman's life. For the fisherman, to live is to fish, and to fish is to reconcile the struggle between the world and the earth through his existence.

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<sup>16</sup> Yet, the earth is still greater than the world.

To see the comparison between Heidegger's system and the fisherman analogy more clearly, I drew the diagram below:



This diagram shows that Heidegger's system and the fisherman system share many similar characteristics and elements. The world/sky, temple/fisherman, and earth/land and sea are positioned at the same relative location, and the only two parts that are not parallel to each other in the two systems are the rift/boat and fishing net. From one perspective, the fisherman, fishing net, and the fishing boat can be seen as three sub-elements that constitute the temple in Heidegger's writing. The fisherman is the creator, who stands on the boat and uses the fishing net to catch the iceberg. The iceberg is not a real fish. Instead, it is the crystallized sea and represents the result of fishing, that is, a product gained from the fisherman's seeking, waiting, and discovering. In this regard, the iceberg is similar to the temple as an artwork from creation. Therefore, these three elements replace the position of the temple in Heidegger's system, thus inserting the artist back into the central part of the system. Both Heidegger's system and the fisherman system can be categorized into three sections — the section above (world/sky), the middle section (temple/fisherman, fishing net, and fishing boat), and the section below (earth/land and sea). The sections are consistent and similar to each other from a structural perspective.

Since the fisherman system and Heidegger's system are compatible with each other structurally, it is possible to combine them to form a four-stage description, which informs a continuous spiral evolution of the world and art:

- 1) The strife between the earth and the world is sustained by the existence of an existing artwork. In the strife, the earth nourishes and sustains the world as its resource (or 'mother'), and the world desires to reveal the earth, from which it generates explanations and interpretations. The artist grows up on the earth and in the world, in which she continues to create;
- 2) In an ongoing creation, the artist transfers and enriches the mental work-in-progress through the physical material she uses and reaches a finished artwork, in which the potentiality of the work is fully actualized;
- 3) The finished artwork embodies the artist's original world, along with discoveries to contribute to the world. The viewers actively observe the artwork and come to their understanding, which is a mixture of the worked-through and personal feelings. The worked-through is further sustained and confirmed as the viewers continue to comprehend the body of the artist's works;
- 4) At this stage, the new perspectives and ideas represented by the finished artwork have been applied to the world through the presence of the artwork. The old creation has terminated and a new creation has started in this slightly changed world. In the new creation process, the worked-through from the last artwork is carried on to the new work-in-progress, and in this new work-in-progress the worked-through is further modified and evolves with new additions and alterations. Eventually, a new work is born, and the process loops back to its first stage.

These four stages seem to achieve a smooth unification between Heidegger's system and the fisherman system, except that there is still one question left: where does the artist go in stage three? When the dialogue shifts from the artist and the work-in-progress to the finished artwork and its viewers, the position of the artist vanishes. According to the four-stage description, the artist disappears when the work is finished, waiting for the work to contribute to the existing world, and suddenly she appears again with a new creation in process in the new world.

Yet it does not make sense for the artist to disappear, for she must still be within the system, as long as the system is complete and enclosed. If readers look more closely at the comparison between Heidegger's system and the fisherman system, they may discover a fundamental difference between them: since the part below in the fisherman system is split into two (the land and the sea), the activities and the meaning of the middle part are also divided accordingly. When the fisherman is on the land, he exists without his net and boat. He situates himself among the people and constitutes a part of society without any special quality, as his name 'fisherman' only signifies the other part of his life at sea. When he is at sea, he is fully equipped and is always proving his name via the activity of fishing. Unlike the stable situation of the artwork in Heidegger's theory, the identity of the fisherman shifts: he fulfills different roles and responsibilities, and the regular switch between these two parts of his life becomes both unavoidable and natural. Only when these two parts are both present in the same person will the fisherman's life be sustained, his fishing activity will continue, and more icebergs will be discovered. Therefore, although the two parts of his life are separated by the shore physically, they supplement each other to form a living unity — the fisherman.

The co-existence and separation of the fisherman's life on the land and his life on the sea indicate that while the two parts of his life are necessary to each other, their nature is in conflict, so that they may never be united into one. This conflict in nature is also implied by the judge's writing in chapter three of the fisherman's story:

“The ability to concentrate is one of the main characteristics of fishermen. Even when they remind themselves of their lives on the land when they fish, the memories will only appear like rootless ghosts. For a fisherman, going fishing means forgetting his identity as a person and becoming a wild animal.”<sup>17</sup>

The concentration of the fisherman is identical to his forgetfulness. When the fisherman fishes, he almost forgets his identity on the land, and when he is on the land, he also barely remembers his presence in fishing. This phenomenon suggests that when the fisherman concentrates on one of the two parts of his life, he seems to create a mental barrier similar to the shore, which helps to block and activate different parts of his memory concerning his present activities.

The artist is like a fisherman, and the artist's memory operates in a similar way to the fisherman's memory. The artist's memory is equivalent to the fisherman's memory of the part on the sea, which stands for discovery, achievement, and realization. The artist lives to create and she creates to live.<sup>18</sup> When she creates, she forgets her identity as an ordinary person. In creation she feels that she roams in a wildly open space alone, being present and always looking for something new. But when she retreats back to the other part of her life, she seems to gradually lose the validity and certainty of the artist's memory. However, this is only because the ‘shore separation’ between creation and the artist's ordinary life invalidates the mental and physical remembering, making them eventually fade away, whereas the worked-through persists in a

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<sup>17</sup> See appendix, fisherman's story, chapter 3.

<sup>18</sup> She creates to live as a desire for creation in her nature, but not in the sense of supporting her life financially.



different mode that is not as apparent and easily recallable as the former two. Therefore, the artist is similar to the fisherman, being forgetful of the other part when she is present in one part of her life.

Now readers may see the artist in stage three reappear again. In this stage, the artist is not an artist as a creator, but an artist as a person living among the people, similar to the fisherman on the land. When she is 'on the land,' she loses the mental and gradually also the physical validity of her artist's memory, and she only has the worked-through as a reminder. The worked-through had transcended the scope of her artist's memory and found its attachment to her finished works, thus becoming available to the viewers. In this way, the artist loosens herself from the part of her life in creation, and transits to the part of her life as a living person. She rests and replenishes herself, and waits for the next dawn when she sails to go fishing again. An answer for question (2) 'is the artist's identity valid without the proof provided by her artwork?' may also be clear now: the artist's identity is valid without the proof from her artwork, because the meaning of the name 'artist' is more profound than being the creator of the artwork. This name also signifies the part of the artist's life living on the land, that is, a person who not only exists *in* the sake of art, but *lives* for the sake of art.

To conclude, the difference between Heidegger's system and the fisherman system, which is also the reason that I created a new system instead of modifying Heidegger's, is that, in the fisherman system the creation is brought into the system by using the artist as a complete living agent in the center of the system. The emphasis in the fisherman system shifts from Heidegger's stable strife sustained by the artwork, to the sustainable evolution through the artist as the agent. This

difference also provides a yes-and-no answer to my thesis question ‘is the artist’s position valid and necessary to her completed artworks?’ The artist’s position is unnecessary to her completed works, because she is not needed in the art appreciation process for the viewers, but the artist’s position is valid to her completed works, because her name contains a more significant meaning, that is, a living unity that allows the art to be sustained throughout her lifetime.

## **Conclusion**

My philosophical writing intends to inquire into the position of the artist in relation to her finished artworks. Through the arguments provided in the previous chapters, I came to the answer that the artist's position is valid but unnecessary to her finished works.

In chapter one, I demonstrated that there is a gap between the artist and the artwork in Heidegger's system, possibly because he denies the artist to be in close association with the finished artwork.

In chapter two, I introduced the concept of the artist's memory as being both mental and physical, and argued that the physical remembering, being exclusive and untransferable, connects the artist to her artwork and assigns the artist's memory a special authority that is only effective within the artist's memory and for the artist. Afterward, I explained Heidegger's argument for the artwork as a mediation in the strife between the world and the earth, and his concept of the preserver for the artwork from the viewer's side. I asked whether there is also the preservation from the artist's side, and demonstrated that the artist's preservation exists in true creation, as the effort of the artist transforming the mental work-in-progress from her mind to the full actualization in the finished work. The concept of the artist's preservation reveals that the worked-through emerges from the creation process as its conclusion and distillation. Unlike the mental and physical remembering that will eventually fade away, the worked-through is sustained when it is carried on in the next creation process, and gradually also becomes available for the viewers, as a part of it is transplanted into a body of works.

Chapter three breaks the question ‘is the artist’s position valid to her finished work?’ into two smaller and more specific questions. For the first question, ‘is the artist at least equally significant as her artwork?’ I pointed to the existence of a judge in the question (as a ‘for whom the artist is evaluated in relation to her artwork’) and wrote that the judge must be the viewer looking at the artwork in relation to the artist. Since the artist as a person embodies no artistic meaning for the viewer, and the artwork filters out any personal residue in the conversation between the artist and the viewer through the artwork, the artist is not necessarily needed for the viewer’s art appreciation, but only the artwork.

To seek an answer for the second question, ‘is the artist’s identity valid without the proof provided by her artwork?’ I introduced the fisherman system by comparing it to Heidegger’s world-artwork-earth system. Through the comparison, I first proved that the fisherman system is compatible with Heidegger’s system structurally, as it replaces the central position of the artwork with the creation and creator. Then by combining the two systems to form a four-stage description, I found that the artist disappeared in stage three. Later I showed that the fisherman system has the addition of the fisherman’s life on the land, which corresponds to the artist’s life outside of her creation. The land life is a missing part in Heidegger’s system, and this new addition helps to answer the second question by implying that the name ‘artist’ is more significant than solely being the maker of the artwork. The artist is not only the maker of the work, but also a living unity that sustains the development of art and the world. Therefore, the artist’s identity is valid without the proof provided by her artwork, which means that the artist’s position is valid to her finished work, because it is not only linked to her artwork, but also to life and the concept of being a person.

However, the above answer provided for my thesis question in my philosophical writing is still an incomplete one. My fisherman story serves as a subconscious gathering of my thoughts on the artist's position, so that when I rationalized the views that are metaphorically expressed in the story and transformed them into my philosophical writing, I also generated a limitation for my writing, and excluded a further development in the fisherman story. In this unseen development, the fisherman becomes his boat. His new mediation through himself replaces the old mediation between the sea and the sky provided by his boat and net. The new fisherman transcends the old definition of the fisherman, and causes conflicts and alterations in the existing fishing system when he floats back to his old town on the land.

Due to the scope of my philosophical writing and the limitation of time, I did not successfully decode this development and translate it into philosophical language. But this development may hint at the next step for my writing: the ultimate goal in art theory is to find the most appropriate position of the artist, so that from an abstract sense, the artist becomes the artwork — she becomes her mediation between the world and the earth. Such a goal may also lead to a reunion of the land and the sea: at this stage, the artist's life on the land and in creation are integrated into one. To conclude, Heidegger's theory may stay valid again after this further development, when his theory is understood anew from a more profound perspective.

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**Appendix:**

*The story below is not required for reading my previous philosophical writing. Although this story is included in the appendix of my written senior project, it came before my philosophy writing and offered me a place to gather my subconscious thoughts on the artist before proceeding to the stage of rationalization. From one perspective, the scope of the fisherman story is larger than my philosophical writing, and my writing only successfully decoded a part of the story. Readers may find lots of irrelevant elements in the fisherman story in relation to my previous writing, however, I still want to present the story in its most complete form, because there is still lots of subconscious content about the artist-artwork relationship in this story that waits to be discovered. In another word, the story may indicate a future direction for continuing my written project.*

**The Story of the Fisherman**

1

The ocean is widely open for fishermen but there is no single fish in it. People do not know, they still keep spreading their fishing nets into the water, wishing that the invisible net could bring something back for their dinner. Back at home, wives have been wiping their silver knives that are sharp enough to cut open a shark's head. Wives wipe and wipe and some children join their mothers, too. They wonder what they will have for dinner. Saliva dribbles from the corners of their mouths.

Fishermen start to retrieve their nets. The nets are as transparent as the emperor's new clothes. Fishermen cannot see, they cannot predict what they are doing, but they presume that it is a profound thing — catching fish, after all. As they retrieve their nets, they feel the pressure of the nets pressing against their palms. Transparent structures start to pile up on their small boats. There seems to be nothing, but people can clearly feel the presence of the absent through the weight. They pull the nets, again and again, longer and longer, until they see small rocks and seaweeds coming along, but there is no fish. One of the fishermen feels that the weight below is getting heavier after rocks and seaweeds. He becomes so nervous and excited — he thinks that a giant fish will appear in a minute. He starts using his whole strength, and the transparent net begins to be twisted into a thick rope in his hands and press painfully into his flesh. One minute after he starts screaming.

Other fishermen are bewildered at first. They only listen aloofly. They think that the sound is made by an unknown oceanic creature, since they never heard such a high and sharp scream before. Soon people recover from this strange indifference and realize that this is a human voice. They turn around, stare at the origin of the voice and expect to see something exciting: they see dozens of huge icebergs in the fisherman's net. But people's gazes swiftly shift from the screaming boat to themselves. They try hard to analyze what is exactly their feeling at this moment: disappointment, astonishment, peacefulness. They murmur, it is water, after all, it is possible, it is from the sea. The only question now remains for them is: why that fisherman's net is so capable, whereas theirs appear to be smaller. Does that fisherman understand how big his net is — are we sure about ours?

From this moment begins a climax of pulling and stretching. Everybody is incited by the icebergs they saw, they sweat and pant when they retrieve their nets, as if it was not ice but burning fire that they are about to obtain. Soon another fisherman cheers with larger icebergs, soon another fisherman jubilates with even larger icebergs, and another, and another, and soon another fisherman screams, but the sound has become familiar to others and they swiftly turn to the origin of the sound

2

“talk.”

That was the moment when fishermen learned to talk. One fisherman suddenly said, “talk.” Other fishermen followed, “talk!” “Talk!” “TALK.” Other fishermen repeated, “talk.” “Talkttalk.” “talktalktalk.” “TALK.” “TALKTALK.” “TALKTALKTALK.” Other fishermen repeated “talk?” “Talk?” “TALK?” “TALK talk?” “TALK Talk talk?” “tAlk?” Other fishermen excitedly followed, “tAlk!” “taLk!” “talK!” And it went on. After they nearly tried all combinations, they all again went silent as if they never talked. They all returned fishing with their mouths shut. Sometimes they stared at each other and occasionally repeat the things that were said before with a slightly different tone. Several years later, one fisherman suddenly said, “TALK talks tAlk.” Immediately other fishermen followed, “TALK talks!” “TALK talks tAlk talks talk!” “TALK talks tAlk talks talked talk?” “TALK talks tAlk talks talked talk’s TALK!”



This is the moment when they really learned to talk. Another several year passed. Because people learned to talk, they also learned to communicate. When they learned to communicate, they also learned to make judgments about each other. When they learned to make judgments about each other, some fishermen who are talented at judging abandoned fishing and became judges. When there was a group of people doing the same thing, there would be someone who performs the job the best, so fishermen started to call the most established judger the judgist. The judgist received his name humbly and started to cautiously perform his duty of giving speeches to the public at the morning gathering. One of his speech was as followed:

“To my people — fishermen and children — I summon you. Come to me and listen to my advice: one’s fishing is different from another’s, therefore imitation is only the stepping-stone on the path to fishing. Wives, you shall not come to me. Your capability of fishing has already vanished in the process of wiping. The dust on your knives are not only wiped off but also carried away permanently. What you like is not fishing, for you won’t enjoy the splash of tides or the coarseness of the wind, but only the shining silver confined in an elegant case. You shall depart immediately and never come back.

“One’s fishing is different from another’s, indeed, my children, so don’t hide in your room and play fishing games, neither should you follow the wives and wipe with them. When a man is about to be a fisherman, he will always be on his road of becoming and there is no need for pretending. Imitation might be a method of becoming, but it is different from pretending. And my fisherman, for those of you who have caught icebergs and tragically learned to talk, here is my suggestion: don’t talk anymore! Abandon the cleverness of talking, for it is only a sideway on your road of becoming a fisherman. Be aware! Innovation is only its skin. It only pushes you

astray deeper and deeper, separate you from the sea, and when you realized that you have become judges, it is already too late to retrieve back. Neither should you be the wives! You are not the silver knife confined in the pretty box. You don't cut through the boiled fish. You catch fish. The sea is real and unexpected! The secret of fishing is in your body. Stare at the open sea, listen to the turbulence, breathe hard, let the salt particles in the air hurt your lungs, for pains are always helpful, both the gentle and the harsh ones. Keep your foot balanced on your boat. The one who lost his balance and is thrown into the sea both lost his boat and the dignity of a fisherman. Neither does the one who jumps into the sea deserve the name of fisherman. Fishermen are meant to stand on their boats. The distance between the sea and him is unspeakable and yet undeniable. Listen, those of you who haven't learned talking: transparency is not equal to nonentity. These are the only words that you shall learn in your life."

The judge seemed to intend to elaborate more, but he was disturbed by the wives who were weeping, leaving, and dragging their children along with them. He was more annoyed by the children who don't even look back. So he yelled to the remaining people:

"Go fishing!"

3

A segment of the notes taken by a judge:

*Fishermen are wild animals. Ouroboros. They are pretty creatures. Their muscles show in perfect linear structures on their torsos, but such flawless bodies that seem are purely aesthetic*

*can only be obtained through brutal living practices. When they go fishing, the world beyond the coast is nonexistent, for they only think of catching fish. Concentration is one of the main characteristics of fishermen. Even when they remind themselves of their lives on the land while fishing, the memories will only appear like rootless ghosts. For a fisherman, go fishing means forgetting his identity as a person and becoming a wild animal. His position is neither in the sky (for he can't fly) nor in the water (for he can't swim), but above the water. Therefore, his space is narrow and limited. His foot must anchor on the horizon and he does not have much space to move. Only the fisherman's hands are free. They throw the nets up into the sky and down into the water. For how they fish I am unable to continue. This is where I must stop my analysis.*

Judgist's comment:

*Limited freedom is invalid.*

4

A segment of notes taken by a judge:

Yesterday I heard from the fishermen that there was a missing fisherman, who sailed out of town at dawn but did not come back in the evening. People discussed whether they should look for the missing fisherman when they sail tomorrow, but this also means that they will not be able to go fishing, and not fishing is a sin for fishermen, even just for a single day. Regarding this circumstance, here I propose the following solutions:

1, Ask all the wives to decorate their silver knives on each cross of fishing nets. When fishermen go fishing tomorrow, they can fish normally and the sound of the knives knocking onto each other will call the missing fisherman back. People should not worry that the knives will hurt the fish before they are caught. They won't even obtain a scratch from the knives, for they are not the boiled ones.

2, Request the wizard in the forest to bring his growth potion. Give the potion to our children, let them grow strong and steady and sail to find the missing fisherman, so at least they can be functional for those who cannot stop working. Children shall come back before the evening, before they again return to children and definitely before the sea gets dark. Do not forget to repel the wizard back into the forest afterward. He shall not remain here.

3, The search should continue no longer than three days. The missing fisherman may have abandoned his life on the land entirely. In this case, other people should not continue disturbing his new life, but send him our best wishes from the land that we are all too scared to escape.

The comment by the judgist:

*Any solution involving wives is nonsense.*

5

“Why should we remain here?” This morning before the judgist came to the morning gathering, a young judger saw the stage, on which the judgist usually gives his speech, and with these words he questioned. He first hesitated moving forward, but step by step his pace became steadier and steadier, finally he stepped onto the stage. On the stage he started to examine the people beneath. They all moved in unknown patterns with no clear direction — the judgist has not come yet. Abruptly he yelled to the crowd: “why should we still remain here!” And he yelled, again and again, louder and louder, until every person below saw him. They gradually suspended their motions.

The judger is now satisfied to proceed, and his speech was as the following:

“I am a judger. Every day I see fishermen go fishing, wives being repelled, and children being dragged. I hear the judgist giving his talk from here, but I am tired. I’m so tired of these routines! Those of you, who still have ears, I tell you — all of what we have been doing is meaningless! We are set to be what we have become, and what we have been doing is only the extension of what we have become. Indeed, the judgist is brilliant and his theory is well-supported, but the

judist never told you the truth beneath his words, that we are all consumers! You see: fishermen don't catch fish, they catch themselves. Wives don't wipe silver knives, they wipe themselves. Children don't pretend to fish in games, they pretend to be themselves. And we judgers, we judgers don't judge anything, we judge ourselves — we judge ourselves through the judges we made about the judges we made about the judges we made about the judges... Now you see what I mean? Now you see what I mean!

“Our lives are never intersections! We live in a parallel world, in which we demonstrate ourselves and make up our connection with one another, so that we can believe in our lives. But if you see clearly enough into our relationships, you will see that the connections are as weak as those fishing nets. If you pinch the end of the thread and stretch gently, you will see that all of it will untangle into a nonentity — we use others to concentrate on ourselves! The judgist is both too cruel and too kind to not tell you this, that the division of labors among us is a lie. We were never integrity and we never existed in one coherent system. Fishermen live for the fish, wives live for wiping, children live for pretending, and judgers just talk and talk and talk and talk... I hate judgers so much! And I hate that I have become a judger! Fate pushed me onto this road but it did not see that I became a judger to hate such lives. I hate those of you who talk and who evaluate others for the sake of yourself! I also hate the person who started to talk at first among the people! He is the founder of sophism. He is the ultimate sinner, he is —”

But the judger did not manage to finish his talk. The judist came just in time to beat him off the stage with his cane, and the judger run off the stage howled and wailed. People reported that they saw him ripping off his judger's suit on his way running away from the gathering. One month

after, the town lost a judge but gained a new wife. Two months after, the town lost a wife but gained a new fisherman. Three months later, the town also lost a fisherman.

6

A fisherman can think a lot while fishing. When he retrieved his fishing net from the water, he thought: “the speech given by the judge yesterday is not all boring. At least he was right about one thing, that not all groups of people live for the sake of fishing, even though they might think so. On this level we are all equal beings — wives, judges, fishermen, and I. There is no one specific occupation that should be admired more than the others, for they all live different lives.” But be aware, when a fisherman thinks so much, dangers will proceed toward him. The fisherman’s boat gradually became unstable and only after he tried extremely hard did he manage to maintain his balance on the boat. Faith and concentration are equally crucial qualities for a fisherman, but now he lost both because of his thoughts. His boat shook, trembled, and quivered, and finally he was thrown into the water.

According to the judge, a fisherman in the water is no longer a fisherman, since he cannot sustain his delicate distance from the sea anymore. In the water he struggled, but every time he got closer to the sea surface the wild tides always slapped him into the water again. Time passed and the sky began to turn dark, but the fisherman still could not find his way out of the sea. He could not find the surface, neither could he see his boat, and his fishing net also vanished in the water. The sea was no longer welcoming and open for him, but it was as confined as a jail. He was locked inside the water. The fisherman did not know how much time has passed until he finally breathed again. When he opened his eyes, he saw himself floating on the water. the sky

was again clear and bright, the wind was still, and his body lied peacefully on the sea. He waved his arms and stretched his foot and realized that his body still steadily floated like a drop of oil on the water, so he tried to get up and see what happened, and as he tried he went down again.

For a long time the fisherman went up and down and up and down. The mysterious sea made him both forgetful and intuitive, so every time he floated he tried to get up, and when he tried to get up he went down. After hundreds of trial and error, his body finally grasped the secret and he learned to comprehend the status of his limbs and truck without seeing them. As he learned floating, he thought, “only when I became the boat for myself and lie flat on the sea, will I be able to survive.” Then he learned to use his limbs as the paddles and tried to drive away from the sea. When the darkness came again, the wave once more turned violent. In the blowing wind, he heard a voice saying: “be aware! Keep away from the fish, for there are sharks among them!” The fisherman did not have the time to search for the origin of the voice, as at his glance he already saw a shoal of dark fish approaching him. He moved his limbs rapidly to get away, but the water was too turbulent and since he faced upward, his vision was reversed and he could not specify his direction. The fisherman saw the darkness came closer and closer, he felt the slimy bodies of the fish glazing his arms, he was so terrified that he became stiff and closed his eyes. The fisherman waited stiffly as he thought that he would be torn and ripped soon, but a long time passed and nothing happened. He eventually opened his eyes and realized that the dark fish had been swimming around him as a circle, gently nipping off his clothes, shoes, hairs, and nails. The fisherman laid still, for he had the presentiment that once he tried to shake them off his body, the fish would open their mouths with shining and sharp teeth and terminate his life. The fish nipped continuously until everything on him was nipped away. Now the fisherman became a man again.



When the fish nipped him, the fisherman gradually submitted to his tiredness. He fell asleep and had a dream. He dreamed that all the lands were also nipped away by the fish. The wives held their children in their arms while inevitably sank into the water, and the children cried and screamed and fiercely pulled the wives' hairs. The judges all tried to go to a higher place, a hill, a tower, a stage, and as they walk or run, they talked, debated, argued, and tried to let their voice linger a little bit longer, but ultimately they were also swallowed by the water. Only fishermen survived, because they not only live on the land, but also on the sea. But still, they were frightened and hold tight on their boat, for once they lost their boat, they would be no different from others. Suddenly the dark fish emerged around fishermen, dragged and nipped the fishing nets that still drooped in the water. The nets were attached to hooks on the boats, and the fishermen who did not manage to untie the nets from the hooks in time were thrown into the water, struggled, and finally were ripped to shreds by the fish. When the fisherman stared at the remaining fishermen who paddled with their full strength and tried to get away in all different directions, he thought, "I guess these people were no better than having their bodies facing upward and just float on the water."

When the man woke up from his dream, he found himself on the shore of his town. The man saw the yellow light that came from the town and he started to walk toward the light.

7

It was in the morning that people found the man laying on a porch in front of a house. ...

(unfinished)

Things not narrated in the story yet:

the man returns to non-speaking