

The Artification of Wine: Lessons from the Fines Wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy

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Abstract

In this paper, we address the interrelations between fine art and fine wines, with ‘fine wine’ defined as an aesthetic entity as opposed to a mass-produced product created only to satisfy consumer needs. In the context of fine wines, we discuss the processes of artification, through which such wines are recognized as art (Shapiro and Heinich 2012), and heritagization, in which the cultural differentiation implicit in the concept of terroir (i.e., the various elements of a micro-climate that contribute to a wine’s specific attributes) connects a wine to its history and provenance. Our investigation focuses specifically on fine wines from Bordeaux and Burgundy, which are renowned worldwide for their depth and flavors. What traits are intrinsic to the definition of art, and what social processes culminate in transforming an entity from non-art to art? This article aims to address these questions, and argues that fine wines, as a source of aesthetic pleasure, are themselves an art form.

Key words: fine wines and art; artification; heritagization; Bordeaux; Burgundy.

Introduction

The idea of art can encompass two definitions: art in the artisanal sense as an apex of competence, incorporating an initial vision and painstaking planning, culminating in precise execution; and art in the aesthetic sense, as an expression of emotion, aiming for personal expression rather than financial reward. Any professional activity requiring a progression of careful steps can be deemed artisanal, a form of well-honed craft embodying skilled knowledge and expertise accrued through experience, such as the art of baking, or woodcraft, or any of a multitude of human endeavors. With such care, knowledge, and expertise to an overarching attunement to aesthetic pleasure, we would argue, our perspective changes; the products resulting from this union can fairly be viewed as a bona fide art form. In this paper, we address the interrelations between art and fine wines, in which the latter is equally deserving of being recognized as an art form, with ‘fine wine’ defined as an aesthetic entity as opposed to a mass-produced wine produced solely to satisfy consumer needs.

Wine has long been viewed as an aesthetic source of pleasure. Charters (2006) discusses an aesthetic continuum of products ranging from low (i.e., possessing limited aesthetic appeal) to high (i.e., strongly aesthetic), with wine unsurprisingly in the latter category. Such legendary and elegant wines as Bordeaux’s Château Margaux or Burgundy’s Domaine de la Romanée-Conti are often classified as luxury wines, with the latter ranking as the world’s most costly wine (a 1945 bottle sold at Sotheby’s in 2018 for \$558,000; the average price for a current vintage is just under \$20,000; Dangremond 2019). Fine wines, like celebrated works of art, have become an investment instrument as well as a source of aesthetic pleasure.

The literature points toward two processes that allow fine wines to be conceptualized as art: artification, in which non-art is recognized as art (Shapiro and Heinich 2012), and

heritagization, in which the cultural differentiation implicit in the concept of terroir (i.e., literally ‘soil’: the various elements of a micro-climate that in combination contribute to a wine’s specific attributes) connects a given wine to its history and provenance (Demossier 2018). Both processes elevate the conception of fine wine through recognition of the complex human decisions, geographical elements, and unique cultural heritage that jointly produce a wine worthy of being deemed a work of art.

As a measure of the importance of a fine wine, in 2015, climats (the French term ‘climat’ refers to a wine-growing plot, with each plot comprising its own parcel of vines, and thus its own specific terroir and heritage) in Burgundy were officially recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Veseth 2015). This designation was no small honor—other World Heritage Sites include the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal. Moreover, such recognition singles out these specific world landscapes and climats as worthy of the highest accolades. In this paper, we discuss the twin processes of artification and heritagization specifically in the context of fine wines from Bordeaux and Burgundy, which are renowned worldwide for the depth and balance of their respective flavors. What traits are intrinsic to the definition of art, and what social processes culminate in such transformations? This article addresses these questions, and argues that fine wines are a form of art.

Conceptualizing Wine as Art

In any consideration of wine as art, we must first identify issues associated with using the representational paradigm in the context of wine. Representational ideas are primarily used in evaluating art, which suggests that representational forms undergird all aesthetic evaluations. Such a sweeping statement is open to debate, however. Works of abstract art may provide no

recognizable figurative content, or such content may be incorporated into a broader structural whole (Crowther 2019). Artworks based on land, textiles, or light (e.g., works by the American James Turrell), installations (e.g., the Bulgarian artist Christo working in collaboration with the Moroccan artist Jeanne-Claude), photography, and digital art may or may not be representational. Perullo (2012) suggests that categorizing wine as art using the representational paradigm is simply inappropriate, based on the author's perception of wine as a living entity that continuously transforms itself, whether in the barrel, bottle, or glass.

Art in the Marketing Literature

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) and Hirschman (1983) distinguish between products deemed to be art and their commercial counterparts. Art is produced, Hirschman (1983) argues, by self-oriented creators driven by a need for self-expression; such creators may have a message or personal vision to pass on to others, and financial reward is not the goal. On the inner-most level, art is created first and foremost to please the artist, and acclaim and recognition from peers and the audience is secondary. Art can nonetheless serve in opposition to violence (e.g., Goya's (1820) *The Disasters of War* or Picasso's (1937) masterpiece *Guernica*), challenge the status quo (e.g., Robert Frank's landmark photography collection *The Americans*, which exposed the isolation and implicit racism of American culture), or effect social change (e.g., Lewis Hine's photographs of working children in the early 1900s, which led to the eventual outlawing of child labor in the United States).

Holbrook and Zirlin (1985) create a three-tiered model, in which artists as the first tier are distinguishable from craftsmen; the art world or institutional context are the second tier wherein art works are evaluated by museum curators, directors, art critics, art historians and the like; and

the third tier comprises consumer responses, ranging from hedonic pleasure to experiencing profound aesthetic transformations. In the authors' view, a creation earns the designation of being a work of art based on artist intentions, expert evaluations, and mass-market reception. While hedonic pleasure is simply entertainment, a profound experience allows for self-transcendence (Holbrook and Zirlin 1985), involving a deep emotional response that can blur boundaries between subject and object, allowing for a holistic awareness beyond the self. The authors further differentiate between low and high culture, seeing the former as commercial, providing the greatest pleasure to the greatest number of consumers, and the latter as capable of producing profound experiences with transformative powers far beyond simple, transitory pleasure.

The Post-Modern Turn

Boundaries between art and everyday life have long been blurred, as in, for example, Warhol's soup cans catapulting pop culture into high art (Schroeder 2002) or Murakami's cheerful appropriation of Disneyesque images such as cherries with smiley faces emblazoned on luxury Louis Vuitton handbags (Joy et al. 2014). Post-modernism proffers a form of ironic aestheticization in which art and branding are closely linked (e.g., using artists to produce wine labels, as we will discuss below) or exhibiting works of art in luxury-brand retail outlets (Joy et al. 2014). Holt (2002) argues that marketing influences consumers to crave aesthetics and particularly the aesthetics of commercial products. In this view (see also Venkatesh and Meamber 2008) any product can be aestheticized, through the market process as well as through political and cultural processes. Negrin (2015) notes that the conscious pursuit of art and

aesthetics was formerly allotted only to the rich or the avant-garde, but has now become democratized, with the pursuit of personal style a key driver of today's middleclass aspirations.

An Aesthetic Theory of Art

Is wine art? In raising this question, we explore the philosophical conditions under which wine can be considered art. To ask whether wine is itself a form of art also raises the ongoing underlying question of what art actually is, other than the famous dictum once applied to pornography: "I know it when I see it", voiced by the U.S. Supreme Court Judge Justice Potter Stewart (*Acobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184, 1964). Tomasi (2012, p. 2) suggests that "[a] certain wine is an artwork if and only if it has been produced with the intention to realize certain aesthetic properties in other, none-aesthetic properties, i.e., in the smell and taste of the wine, on the ground of an insight into the depending of the former on the latter." In Tomasi's (2012) view, the aesthetic refers to the valuable experience gained from close attention to the sensuous features of a given object or to an imaginary world as projected by the object. Aesthetic qualities contribute to an aesthetic experience, leading to appreciation. Thus, an artist creates an object designed to embody certain aesthetic properties, which in turn creates an aesthetic experience for a certain audience under certain circumstances. However, as noted above, art works are not always created for an audience; they may have been created purely for the artist alone. Therefore, the intentions of the artist to incorporate aesthetic qualities in an object must be reached independently of an audience. Artifacts and objects in nature can have aesthetic properties but may not qualify as art. Why, then, do we attribute value to the creation, experience, and conservation of art?

The answer to this question may be twofold, in that we attribute value in response to the pleasure art can provide, and to the intention of the artist to realize in their work both aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities, with the former made possible by the latter (Tomasi 2012). For example, the painting technique of impasto (i.e., paint applied thickly with visible strokes from the brush or palette knife, first used by Venetian Renaissance artists) was wielded to great effect by Van Gogh in a number of his paintings, including *Starry Night*, a work of hallucinatory power that starkly portrays the artist's dizzying emotional state. The aesthetic impact is unforgettable. This perhaps most celebrated of his paintings portrays a church and a smattering of small homes overshadowed by the night sky, alive with massive pinwheel whorls of stars, a moon, wind currents; a tree in the foreground snakes upward as if on fire. The image's dark majesty and terror are unmistakable. The non-aesthetic paint and canvas allowed for the realization of the overwhelming, transformative aesthetics of the painting—the view outside his bedroom window during an 1889 stay at an asylum.

Artifacts versus Art

What makes the difference between an artifact and a work of art? In Tomasi's (2012) judgment, the first is produced to serve a specific function (e.g., a clock tells time), while the second embodies aesthetic properties. An artwork can be considered an artifact, although not all artifacts are art. Zangwill (in Tomasi 2012) argues that works of art may also serve a function (e.g., an Eames chair, with its swooping lines and modernist minimalism, that is also supremely comfortable to sit in), provided that function originated in aesthetic insight. A work of art actualizes an imagined or perceived object (e.g., paint applied to canvas to produce *Starry Night*).

Tomasi (2012, p. 8) states an object or event is a work of art if:

1. It is based on an aesthetic insight;
2. The belief that if certain non-aesthetic properties are realized, then certain aesthetic properties would be realized through them;
3. The artist forms a practical intention based on an aesthetic insight;
4. Some proportion of the aesthetic properties of the object depend on non-aesthetic properties;
5. Those aesthetic properties were created by the subject who intended to realize them.

If art is the intentional product of aesthetic insight, which it is, can we then apply these principles to wine?

Wine, as Tomasi (2012) asserts, is an artifact, a natural product but not a natural object, because it must be manufactured. Wine is produced through intentional modifications of grapes performed by one or more agents to achieve a certain effect. As a product, wine is also by its nature a cultural object. Wine embodies the winemaker's original intention, culminating in a unique combination of color, taste, aroma, flavors, alcohol content, residual sugar, acidity, tannins, and the like. Based on Tomasi's (2012) aesthetic theory, a wine can be experienced as a work of art, because an agent with aesthetic intentions made use of non-aesthetic properties (i.e., cultured yeasts, polyphenols, grapes, and other raw materials) to confer aesthetic properties, such as perfect balance, harmony, character, and expressiveness onto the wine, and because the vintner's intention was realized in the creation of the wine. A fine wine, ultimately, is an organic whole composed of perfectly balanced parts, the result of vision, knowledge, and intentional activity that confers aesthetic pleasure.

Although not all properties of wine are intentional, the intentional element is important because it allows for attribution of not only aesthetic properties to the wine, but also of other properties of art objects, such as expressive properties. As an example, a fine wine ‘tells the story’ of its terroir, heritage, culture, and specific points in time, including its maturity.

As Gronow (1997) and Korsmeyer (2004) note, not all wine is immediately consumed. Some wines may be evaluated without being ingested, such as by wine experts who routinely taste but do not swallow, to avoid becoming inebriated and losing their judgmental abilities. Amerine and Roessler (quoted in Gronow 1997, pp. 131-132) point out that, “...we apply certain objective criteria... our enjoyment of wine is...essentially a learned response and is a complex mixture of intellectual and sensory pleasures.” Such learning happens through wine connoisseurship, education, and tourism, and through the accumulation of experience, in which the palate becomes sensitized over time. Proper wine-related rituals inevitably demonstrate wine discernment and taste (Charters 2006; Demossier 2004).

The Role of Art in Wine Branding

Art and wine have long been interrelated. Starting in 1944, renowned French vintner Philippe Baron de Rothschild was the first to commission artists to design his wine labels, with art since the mid-19th century routinely deployed in marketing fine wine. Rothschild’s partnerships with artists featured such luminaries as Cocteau, Chagall, Picasso, and Dalí, as well as Warhol, as the line between art and wine became increasingly blurred. Such branding situated Rothschild wines as daring, elegant, sensual, and high value—much as the arrestingly modernist images on the bottles were. This new trend in exploiting labels as a marketing tool aptly conveyed a given wine’s culturally and geographically unique importance. Consumers who purchased wines

sporting images of fine art entered a rarified world of avant-garde refined sophistication. If you liked the label, you knew you would love the wine, since each reflected the other's promise.

The door Rothschild opened remained open, with art playing a prominent role in the branding efforts of many contemporary vineyards, which now regularly sponsor art exhibits and art festivals on the premises (Negrin 2015). Such events provide cultural authority and aesthetic value to tasting rooms and vineyards, and as a side effect doubtless facilitate consumption. Implicitly, the act of drinking wine becomes another form of experiencing art, an action that art lovers seek out to complement their existing repertoire of artistic pursuits.

Wine as a Complex Living System

Perullo (2012) makes a strong case that wine is more than an artifact created by wine makers. The author views wine as a living entity that continuously transforms itself over time as it matures. Perullo (2012) sees the aesthetic value of a wine as linking two living entities: the wine itself and the individual drinking the wine. During the winemaking process, a vintner faces a stream of choices, both in the vineyard and the cellar, leading to different possible outcomes: the choice of varietal to be planted, the type of vine training systems to use, plant density, pruning mechanisms, and when to harvest. All these decisions are important to outcomes, including aging, and vary from year to year, depending on environmental changes. The idea, always, is to allow the wine to reach the full expression of its present potential and to direct and correct the process as needed to obtain the highest quality in the future.

If wine itself is art, is the wine's creator de facto an artist? Intentionality is not a sufficient condition in the case of wine. It is not enough to create an artifact with aesthetic properties through the use of non-aesthetic properties because the wine is also a living entity. As

such, a wine can develop and mature in often unpredictable ways, the vintner's vision notwithstanding, especially in fine wines during the aging process.

The contemporary Italian artist Giuseppe Penone states emphatically that “wine is nature and wine is culture” (Perullo 2012). The primal embodiment of the confluence of nature and culture, whose color and blend of flavors represent the various forces—soil, light, climate, shade, human visions and decisions—all interact to result in a specific wine.

Fine Wine as Art: Artification and Heritagization

The literature suggests that two processes, artification and heritagization, are of importance for fine wines to be considered art. We discuss these processes in the context of fine wines from Bordeaux and Burgundy.

The Artification Process and Wine

Artification is the process by which non-art is transformed into art (Shapiro 2007: p. 1). We suggest that artists create work within institutional contexts set apart from other creative work. As such, artification involves a major transformation in how social actors consider objects, processes, events, and people in the process, resulting in a loosening of the boundaries between art and what has traditionally been perceived as not art. Shapiro (2007, p. 1) lists the following stages of artification:

1. Aspiration – the movement of objects or events into the sphere of “art.” While currently there are no canons of art as in prior centuries, today's art boundaries are nebulous. If we apply the principle of aspiration to wine, we see that France's 1855 wine classification system elevated the Bordeaux region as a premiere source for fine wines. Since

Napoleon placed the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce in charge of classifying wine in 1858 they were willing to present all cru classes (the French term ‘cru’ refers to wine from a specific vineyard and vines; ‘cru classes’ refers to various classifications of French wines, which range from the most favorable, the first growth (premier cru) down to the least, the fifth growth). It was the Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce that prevailed upon the syndicats of courtiers (i.e., union of brokers) in Bordeaux to actually classify the red wines of the Gironde area (Markham Jr. 2004). The overwhelming number of wines from the Médoc region (high quality) caused a great deal of turmoil among other growers of nearby regions whose aspiration was also to be recognized for their quality wines.

2. Displacement – siting an object out of context to reveal the possibilities of circulation, renaming, exchange, and the like (Shapiro 2019). Displacement occurred in the Bordeaux wine industry in 1855, as noted above, when the wine classification system of the era required wines from certain châteaux to be reclassified. Not until 1973 did Château Mouton Rothschild become reclassified as a ‘first growth’ thanks to the unrelenting efforts and deep political influence of the Baron Philippe de Rothschild (Lewin 2014).
3. Renaming – codifying a new status via a different name, such as when the term ‘fashion’ was replaced for a specific segment of the fashion industry by the far more specific ‘haute couture’ (Venkatesh et al. 2010). Renaming Château Mouton Rothschild as a first growth highlighted its status as a fine wine, moving it closer to the designation of being art. UNESCO’s role in differentiating Burgundy from the larger context of France, and thereby effectively renaming the sites as separate from each other, is an example of both displacement, as mentioned above, and renaming (Demossier 2018).

4. Institutionalization – an imprimatur or acknowledgement from legitimate sources of a given item or event’s legitimate status. Art that has been exhibited in museums, or merely owned by museums, thus has greater value than art relegated to homes, storage, or corporate offices. Bordeaux’s 1855 classification system is a prime example of institutionalization (van Leeuwen et al. 2004). If a wine-producing château had a connection to the 1855 classification system, they were able to keep their historic status. Likewise, when France’s Burgundy region was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015, local wines were institutionalized as part of a super appellation, and prices increased (Demossier 2018).
5. Conflation of art with non-art – as seen in the Art Deco, Arts and Crafts, and Bauhaus movements, such items as buildings, furniture, clothing, and other utilitarian objects became perceived as art via their respective aesthetic functions. The classification Cru Bourgeois is a case in point in Bordeaux. The tasting panel in some years may classify these red wines as superior (almost as good as a second growth), which is then reflected in higher prices. Another example of how this happens is through the design of buildings that form part of the wine landscape. A good example is the Mario Botta designed winery in St. Émilion. The integration of architecture into the landscape adds to the artistic elements of the wine making process (Harea and Simon 2019).
6. Evaluation – the many journalists, art critics, and other writers, collectors, juries, art exhibitions, art gallery and museum staff and corporate staff in charge of art acquisitions who shape artists’ profiles, and who are often more broadminded in their tastes than the academicians of earlier decades. Unsurprisingly, artist recognition, including of digital artists, has increased in the age of social media. A similar increase of recognition of

vintners has occurred as well, in response to greater numbers of wine writers and critics, sommeliers, and wine tasting panels. Robert Parker's evaluation system, for example, significantly affected wine futures and selling between 1982 and its end in 2015 (Woodard 2019).

7. Aesthetic formalization – according to Shapiro (2019), this refers to an understanding of the process of artification by considering an established art form, for example, drawing from the visual and theatrical arts. In the wine world, we can approach the artification of fine wines by considering other existing classification systems. For instance, even in Bordeaux, tasting panels evaluate the lesser Cru Bourgeois wines. Lewin (2015) reports that, as a result, eight additional Cru Bourgeois wines were included at the fourth- or fifth-growth level.
8. Formal roles – the formalization of roles such as theater director, choreographer, and couturier (Shapiro 2019). In the context of wineries, such formal roles are those of the wine maker, the vineyard manager, and other staff roles that have become formalized over time.
9. Intellectualization – discourse related to a given object or activity becomes more formalized and concretized. In the context of wine, wine speak is an excellent example of intellectualization.
10. Lastly, the reorganization of 'time' or 'duration'; performances, events, or objects gain longevity once they transition to becoming art, and thus also gain legitimacy. Once an item or activity accrues cultural currency through artification, investing time in its production and preservation becomes appropriate. For example, the time and effort

required to evaluate a fine wine is considered useful, while few might care about the finer points of a mass-market wine.

Artification and Bordeaux Wines

When we discuss fine wines as works of art, Bordeaux wines, famed for their artisanal character, come immediately to mind. Bordeaux wines have a long history, dating back to the 1st century A.D., when Romans first brought wine-making to the region (Johnson 1994). Wine-making in the region was initiated during the Roman occupation of Gaul (between 58 and 51 B.C.), when Romans planted vineyards to produce wine for their soldiers. Wine-making has remained popular, and Bordeaux wines are now world renowned. The climate, soil featuring calcium from limestone, clay, and gravel, and optimum drainage from rivers result in settings seemingly optimal for viticulture (MacNeil 2001). The region is famed for its châteaux (i.e., wine estates, including vineyards and the family castle, primarily built during the 1700s, and ranging in size from small farm houses to massive palaces).

Bordeaux's marine climate and soil, and the port it hosts, encouraged the growing and distribution of wines, particularly to England. A new group of middlemen emerged in this process of wine industry development. These négociants (i.e., middlemen) worked with the châteaux that grew the grapes and produced the wines, to bottle, distribute, and sell those wines. Political connections and the new strata of middlemen helped popularize the wines and spread their recognition far beyond Bordeaux. Bordeaux blends feature Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with the most favored vineyard producing some of the world's most lauded wines.

In the 1700s, specific appellation boundaries appeared, with consumers drawn to their favorite appellations. The French revolution (1789) brought a halt to many of these activities and

estates were confiscated from the wealthy. The Napoleonic code of equal distribution of property in 1804 did not affect Bordeaux significantly because local winemakers used the method of shareholding in which they were not charged high taxes because they were not seen as corporations; rather, each winemaker paid taxes based on the amount of land they owned. The law was on their side based on what they chose and this helped in the process to classify these wines as fine wines (Ferrand, Kauffman, and Markham 2004).

While the classification system of 1855 does not compare fine wines to art, it is clear that there is a similar distinction between artifact and art when it comes to wines as well. This distinction moves beyond functionality in the description of the fine wines. The Left Bank and Right Bank of the Gironde Estuary are sites dedicated to fine wine growing, with all resulting wines known as Bordeaux wine, of which about six million hectoliters are produced each year. The best wine areas are Médoc, Graves, and Pessac-Léognan on the Left Bank and St. Émilion and Pomerol on the Right Bank (Ferrand, Kauffman, and Markham 2004). St. Émilion was classified as a UNESCO heritage site in 1999, although the region has not used its super-appellation classification as a tool of artification.

Wines of slightly lesser quality are produced in the Entre-Deux-Mers area, and sold as Bordeaux and Bordeaux Superior. South of Bordeaux, the famous sweet Sauternes wines are produced. Bordeaux blends primarily comprise Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Due to an occasionally foggy and rainy climate, in some years the reds are of lesser quality than cabernets from the new world (e.g., California). The first, second, third, fourth, and fifth growths (termed the *cru*) represent the most ambitious grading of agricultural produce ever attempted. This system included fifty-eight châteaux: four first-growth, twelve seconds, fourteen thirds, eleven fourths, and seventeen fifths (Mathews 2019). In the original classification, the first growths

included Château Laffite Rothschild – Pauillac, Château Latour – Pauillac, Château Margaux – Margaux, Château Haut-Brion – Pessac (since 1986, Pessac-Léognan), and Château d’Yquem – Graves. In 1973, Château Mouton Rothschild was included.

One outcome of this system was that wealthy buyers were willing to pay high prices, then as now, for the best wines (Leeuwen 2004). After World War II, high-quality wines were produced until the 1960’s. For the following twenty years, the wines suffered ups and downs, until—from 1982 to 2015—the wine critic Robert Parker boosted the Bordeaux wine industry when he started evaluating the wines of Bordeaux with his point system, which caused high demand for wine as futures. The super luxury first growth (150,000) bottles of a château’s principal wine, its grand vin, commands twice the price of a second growth; prices increased threefold for the 2009 and 2010 vintages because of their quality. It is nonetheless possible for the fifth growth to fetch higher prices than a second growth, if it is a better wine. In recent decades, local limited-production vintners, known as *garagistes* or *microchâteaux*, began producing high quality wines, but as of this writing have not accumulated significant market share. Overall, the quality of Bordeaux wines has risen, due to vintners using fewer pesticides and improving viticulture practices through more targeted pruning, higher trellising, and careful canopy management.

Quality Factors in Bordeaux Wines

It is essential to note that the processes involved in producing fine wines are fraught with unpredictability. The very elements that in combination result in a fine wine—the *terroir*, including the soil, which will differ markedly throughout the region, water supply, and climate, which are subject to the vagaries of human impact—are affected by circumstances far beyond a

vintner's control, such as drought and rainfall levels. The best sites are most likely to produce the best wines, but since environmental circumstances change, a wine that is lauded in one season may rise or fall in quality in another. Despite the careful efforts of viticulturists and vigneron (i.e., growers of vines for eventual use in wine production), the end result of a wine's evolution is to some degree unpredictable until the moment the wine is uncorked; at that point, the aroma, color, and texture set the stage for all that is to follow. Indeed, when one looks at the structural complexity of a wine, one can judge it using a synchronic and diachronic analysis of its color, aromas and flavors. The evolution of the wine in terms of balance and finesse is essential to it being classified as a fine wine.

The artistic dimension of a wine is thus a collaboration, in a sense, between the wine itself, as the clay of the sculpture's vision, and the maker, who inevitably transitions from producer to guide and facilitator.

Authenticity

The aging potential of a wine is important to its value, because it embodies the natural and authentic development of the wine's qualities. A fine wine transforms over time, with the vintner as facilitator; a balanced, harmonious wine comes into being in response to judicious and often limited intervention, or no intervention at all. As the weaver painstakingly sets the warp of the yarns on the loom—which will determine the pattern of the finished product—before weaving, so the vintner sets the parameters of a given wine production. Once the pattern has been set, all that is left are the various processes resulting in the final work: a woven work of art in the first case, a fine wine in the second.

The question of authenticity in wine is a thorny one. The answer lies in how the wine was made, and leads directly to the definition of wine as art. Château Margaux, for example, employs

organic farming methods. Each grape is hand-picked. The final blend for this celebrated wine is Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot. The wine is aged for 18 to 24 months in new oak barrels and fined with egg whites (fining removing undesirable materials from wine while it is aging and is part of the process of clarification and stabilization; England 2019). Château Lafitte Rothschild is famed for its fine red wines, which have achieved worldwide recognition and concomitant high prices. The wines, like sought-after works of art, have achieved luxury status. The aesthetic pleasures these wines provide are experienced through looking, inhaling aromas, tasting, and drinking rather than through looking. The authenticity of both these two exemplary wines—which lies in the original, traditional processes applied to their production and their unique combination of attributes—is unquestioned, and they are avidly collected both for investment and for drinking.

Wine Landscapes, Architecture and Art

According to Harea and Simon (2019) viticultural landscapes that incorporate wineries or wine tasting rooms are inspired by what is around them: the vineyards, bodies of water, natural vegetation. In places like St. Émilion, a UNESCO protected heritage site, historic architecture including monasteries, castles, churches, ruins, and the urban architecture of the towns and villages contribute to the setting. France, and Bordeaux in particular, played a leading and multifaceted role in the evolution of wine architecture (Harea and Simon 2019). As a result, the term Château became a trademark. The wines befitted the magnificent architecture of a château, and the châteaux, often classic in style, became symbols of class, status and superiority (Gollneck and Meyhofer 2000). However, the architecture of vineyards has been largely ignored, until an exhibition on the Châteaux of Bordeaux, organised in 1988 by the Centre Georges

Pompidou, led to the rediscovery of this subject. Focussing on the “Architecture of Wine”, the exhibition documented the reciprocal, often symbiotic relationship between viticulture and architecture in the region (Harea and Simon 2019, p. 117). This event brought a new level of awareness to wine architecture and became the catalyst for a stimulating international discussion of wine and wine culture.

Harea and Simon (2019) highlight three wineries that represent what they deem as art. Château Faugères in St. Émilion is viewed by well-respected judges as “a masterly work of art – a veritable cathedral of wine – a harmonious addition to the countryside” and “an impressive building with outstanding architecture perfectly integrated into its natural surroundings” (Harea and Simon 2019, p. 117). Château Cheval Blanc is the second of such structures. “To have a piece of art like the Château Cheval Blanc standing in the middle of vast vineyard plots and next to a complimentary country house is an amazing expression of modernity,” notes Matuli (2015). Finally, Château La Dominique was awarded a gold medal in category of architecture and landscapes in the context of the 2018 *Best of Wine Tourism* Award. It is described as “a sleeping beauty,” which, while respecting history, embraces innovation in winemaking, wine education and food. According to Harea and Simon (2019, p. 117) “The architect, rather than trying to complement the existing structures, designed a strikingly different building with bright red, wine-coloured walls. He gave to the ‘elegant red wine,’ for which Château La Dominique is recognised and ranked as Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé, a built recognisable face, thus creating a new ‘story’ for the estate. A distinctive feature of this structure is that on the one hand, it is shouting out its architectural presence, on the other, it stands in an alliance and harmonious balance with its host buildings and the directly surrounding landscape elements.”

Emotional Responses to Wine

Ultimately, in assessing whether wine can legitimately be termed art, we must consider our emotional response to a fine wine. When a wine elicits an all-encompassing response to its totality, as opposed to in reaction to certain specific qualities, we can safely say that a wine moves us. Such arousal of emotion indicates authenticity far more than a description of a handful of aromas: we experience perception and judgment on one hand and production and elaboration on the other. Pleasure and appreciation tell the true story.

Perullo (2012) notes that the literal beauty of a wine corresponds to the pleasure it provides: “Pleasure and beauty stimulate more pleasure, beauty and emotion, not constraints. An emotional wine has the capacity to surprise us, is more authentic and is easier to assimilate and digest” (p. 29). The author distinguishes between tasting and drinking, since the former uses an analytical approach detached from the act of swallowing. With attentive drinking, or savoring, we interact with a living and complex system, in contrast to tasting, which is more abstract and decontextualized. Tasting often involves spitting (to avoid inebriation); this act, in presuming the wine is merely a commodity produced to be drunk, diminishes its status as a changeable and evolving entity, according to the author (Perullo 2012). Ultimately, Perullo (2012) sees environmental art (an umbrella term encompassing earth art, land art, eco-art, and multiple related subsets) as a type of art uniquely close to that of wine. When we accept wine as a living entity, the deepest relationship may indeed be between wine and environmental art that, given its organic and uncontrolled nature, like wine, matures and changes over time.

Environmental Art

In environmental art, the building blocks of nature, such as earth, light, water, and climate, are the artists' tools of the trade, much as they are for wine-makers. Such artists work not in the confines of the studio but rather onsite, in the natural world, with time and the natural processes thereof essential to the evolving nature of their installations. This, again, is a commonality with winemakers. Environmental art presents human roles as a cohesive and living system in which transformations are inevitable. Art reflecting the power of nature was intended to create awe (Crowther 2019). Over time and as the devastation to nature caused by human activity became more apparent, environmental art drew attention to such devastation. Environmental art both reveals and transforms what was always there, or modifies what was there in such a way that viewers gain a new perspective on an existing location (e.g., *Spiral Jetty*, by the sculptor Robert Smithson, installed at the Great Salt Lake in Utah, has become submerged and reappeared multiple times since its creation in 1970).

The work of Hungarian-born American land artist Agnes Denes perhaps best exemplifies the connection between agriculture (viticulture being a part of it) and environmental art. Denes' 1982 *Wheatfield—A Confrontation*, a two-acre plot of land planted with wheat, was installed in lower Manhattan, only two blocks from Wall Street and with the World Trade Center towers looming above the field; the wheat was harvested after four months and the installation itself came to a natural end—an embodiment of impermanence. Through this project, Denes juxtaposed the machinery of economic activity with the earthbound reality of nature, referencing waste, hunger, and environmental decay.

The Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson created *Ice Watch*, an installation of glacial ice boulders sited over time in multiple cities worldwide, starting in Copenhagen in 2014, with the specific goal of focusing public attention on the climate crisis through the medium of melting

ice. One hundred tons of ice were arranged to represent a clock face symbolizing the minimal time left to mitigate the global climate crisis and sea-level rise. As with Denes' *Wheatfield: A Confrontation*, *Ice Watch* was by its nature impermanent; the installation lasted only until the massive chunks of ice melted (<https://publicdelivery.org/olafur-eliasson-ice-watch/>).

What these art works have in common is their built-in obsolescence; like wine, they were designed to be experienced, to weather and evolve in response to nature, and, in time, to disappear. These examples lead us to a central conundrum; on the one hand, a key feature of art is its longevity; on the other, some art, such as environmental art as discussed above, incorporates its temporal nature as an essential element of its identity. This conundrum in the context of wine brings us to a significant issue in any discussion of wine as art: time.

Time as a Measure of Value

As a general rule, something that is deemed to be art is something worth saving, displaying, passing on through generations, and certainly, always, savoring. A work of art is ideally timeless, although exceptions exist in terms of environmental art or works that blatantly challenge the boundaries of what we consider art, such as Banksy's 2018 *Girl With a Balloon*, which was designed to self-destruct via a shredder built into its frame. A fine wine, in contrast, is time-limited by design because its enjoyment is ephemeral. A work of art will, ideally, inspire, shock, confront, and/or provide aesthetic pleasure, among other possible emotions, through the centuries; stand in front of Pierre-Auguste Renoir's 1883 harmonious *Dance at Bougival* and you feel the ease of the dance, the pleasure the featured couple take in each other, as surely as the painter himself did. Visit a gallery of Dorothea Lange's *Farm Security Administration* documentary photographs from the 1930s, and you are inside her consciousness, seeing what she

saw and felt, despite her having died more than fifty years ago. Which is as it should be; art as a general rule is meant to endure, to outlive its creators and to carry their emotions, their messages, their fury, longing, and love, as the case may be, into the future. A bottle of wine, in contrast, was created specifically to disappear. A vintner who creates a wine that will never be drunk has failed in their mission—to produce flavors that provide pleasure, which will remain only in memory. We argue, however, that while this sense of time limitation clearly differentiates one form of art from another, it in no way negates the value of each as a true work of art; rather, art bound or unbound by time simply enlarges our understanding of what precisely comprises art.

Heritagization and Terroir

Heritagization incorporates the processes of artification, as the former enables the latter. The region of Burgundy, for example, has a long history of wine making, much like Bordeaux; the components of artification discussed earlier are applicable to fine wines in Burgundy as well. Wines from Burgundy, particularly those from specific climats (e.g., Domaine Romanée-Conti) are considered to be very high quality wines, the best in the world and high priced. Burgundy is in fact the best example of a terroir-driven site in France. It was deemed by UNESCO (in its recognition of the region as a World Heritage site in 2015) as a “living witness of a specific natural environment” (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1425/>): “Since the Middle ages, these communities have demonstrated their ability to identify, exploit, and gradually distinguish the geological, hydrological atmospheric and pedological properties and the productive potential of the Climats.” (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1425/>).

Burgundy has been active in winemaking since the Benedictine monks founded the Abbey of Cluny in 910, creating the first sizeable vineyard in the area. The Cistercian monks, the

force behind Burgundy's largest vineyard, dating to 1336, were the first to recognize that specific climats consistently produced very different wines, which gave rise to the concept of terroir (<https://www.bourgogne-panorama.com/home/history-of-burgundy/>). Demossier (2018) views Burgundy's classification by UNESCO as important to defining the region versus the professional and economic competition, and identifies the climats as a stable and authentic geographic area. Place or terroir must be recognized in the context of an ever-changing global wine story. Such positioning sets the region apart, justifies its wines' identity as a luxury good with concomitant price points, and further, differentiates these old-world wines from new world competitors. In sum, the ability of vintners to lay claim to the uniqueness and authenticity of their wines, based on the wines' place of origin, both sets them apart, and elevates them above the competition.

The concept of heritagization describes the process of a given place transforming to a heritage site, with conscious efforts made to preserve the site (Hristova 2017, p. 8). The idea of heritage refers to both history in the past and possibilities for history in the future (Demossier 2018). As Unesco documents, "The Burgundian model of cultivation and production according to the classification established in the AOC's is in itself a guarantee of integrity and maintenance of the parcels (AOC refers to the *Appellations d' Origine Contrôlée*). The high land value of each parcel sustains their function and the stability of the properties" (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1425>). There is history, man and nature that are involved in this equation (<https://www.bourgogne-wines.com/our-expertise/a-story-of-time/two-thousand-years-ago/the-bourgogne-winegrowing-region-born-under-the-roman-empire-raised-by-monks>).

Heritagization highlights that these sites are living systems. While changes are encouraged, they must fit in with the history and heritage of these sites or landscapes, thereby honouring the

continuity between past, present, and future. While the fees involved in becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site are significant, this honor not only raises the status of wines produced in the regions, it also serves to prevent production and sales of counterfeit wines. As the UNESCO website (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1425>) notes:

The vineyards of the Burgundy Climats are the birthplace and living archetype of terroir vineyards with the particularity of closely associating the gustatory quality of their production with the parcel from which it originates. In Burgundy, since the High Middle Ages, under the impetus of Benedictine and Cistercian monastic orders and the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, the identification of wine with where it was produced has been pushed to the highest degree, giving rise to an exceptional system of land parcels.

Heritization requires intentionality and identification of wine with where it was produced. In turn, it provides structural complexity.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Directions

We argue that fine wine can be considered as an art form. This assertion builds on philosophical considerations, such as the intentionality of the artist, the use of items of non-aesthetic value to create an item of high aesthetic value, and the fact that aesthetic value is not inherently linked to timelessness, as demonstrated in environmental art. In line with Perullo (2012), we acknowledge that wine is a living entity, unlike a painting, and as such undergoes transformation through time, similar to environmental art. In the context of wine, this transformation occurs through the manufacturing processes of production, bottling, and ageing. We applied the terms artification

and heritization in our discussion of fine wines from the Bordeaux and Burgundy regions in France. This is in line with UNESCO's endorsement process that elevated the wine industry as a whole, and the wines of these specific regions in particular, conferring not only economic, but also social benefits through its recognition of history, culture, restoration, and conservation.

In recognizing fine wine as an art form, we must also give due attention to the essential role of terroir in the formation of such art; without terroir, there are no truly fine wines.

Ultimately, perceiving wine as a form of art respects the complex interaction of a multitude of elements, from the terroir itself to the vintner's vision, intention, and creation process, to the collaborative impact centuries of history and place-specific culture have on the final product. In sum, the recognition of wine as an art form confers respect on the remarkable confluence of place and vision that results in a fine wine alive with flavor, embodying all that has gone before, and that may yet appear in the future.

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