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A New Beginning at the Frontier of Philosophy: Art and Truth of Being in Heidegger's Thought

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Abstract

This study asserts that in Martin Heidegger's thought, art is not a boundary signaling the exhaustion of philosophy; rather, it is an authentic ontological beginning that enables thinking to return to its own source. Heidegger indicates that Western metaphysics has long grasped Being through conceptual representational patterns, objectifying categories, and abstract ontological schemas; therefore, it has failed to adequately direct itself toward the opening of Being—the disclosure of truth understood as *aletheia*. This conceptualizing approach leads to the blurring of the primordial relationship between human and Being, obscuring the fundamental philosophical question: "What is Being?" In Heidegger's thought, this forgotten relationship becomes distinct again only within a *Lichtung* (clearing). This *Lichtung*, as an ontological ground where Being opens and makes itself visible, allows thinking to transcend its conceptual limitations. Thus, thinking finds the possibility to turn toward the truth of Being by stripping away its historical determinations. Art, for Heidegger, is a privileged realm that makes this orientation possible. In a work of art, Being emerges not as a representational object, but as a process of unfolding in which truth makes itself visible. This process is not merely an aesthetic sensation; it bears the quality of an event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) that prepares the return of thinking to its ontological origin. Consequently, art is not a point where thinking ends; on the contrary, it is an act that enables the re-commencement of thinking alongside the disclosure of truth. Basing itself primarily on the text *The Origin of the Work of Art*, this study discusses the relationship between art, truth, Being, and creation within the framework of Heideggerian ontology.

Keywords: Heidegger, philosophy, the origin of the work of art, truth, being, ontology.

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1. Introduction

Philosophy is one of the fundamental forms of intellectual activity through which human beings question their relationship with Being, knowledge, truth, and their own existence. However, philosophical thinking cannot be reduced merely to explaining what exists or providing answers to particular questions. Philosophy also provides an opportunity to question the foundations, concepts, and limits of thought itself. In this respect, the fundamental characteristic of philosophical thinking lies in opening established and seemingly immutable assumptions to reconsideration and questioning the nature of the relationship between human beings and Being. Indeed, philosophy can be regarded as a second-order activity of inquiry, insofar as it involves not only thinking about the world but also making thinking itself an object of thought. From this perspective, individuals' implicit assumptions concerning the world and their own position become visible; assumptions that are accepted without question in everyday thinking become subjects of critical and well-grounded reflection (Honderich, 1995, as cited in Barrett, 2015: p. 28).

The interrogative nature of philosophy transforms it into a practice of thinking that continually begins anew. The philosophical pursuit of truth signifies not an attempt to arrive at a definitive and immutable conclusion, but rather a continuous effort to transcend the limits of thought itself. Therefore, philosophy is not merely a field in which answers are produced, but a dynamic mode of thinking in which the questions themselves are also subjected to inquiry. As Çelik (2013: p. 13) points out, philosophical thinking constitutes a form of inquiry that carries human beings beyond the boundaries of what is known and enables thought itself to be continually reconstructed.

This mode of inquiry acquired a new dimension, particularly in modern thought, as the concepts of reason, science, and representation gradually became central. Conceiving Being as a "totality of beings" that can be explained and objectified through scientific knowledge has led to the question of what Being itself is being pushed into the background. This transformation in the understanding of philosophy's fundamental question laid the groundwork for the reconsideration of philosophy's own foundations in twentieth-century thought. In this context, Martin Heidegger revisited the fundamental assumptions of Western metaphysics and placed the question of Being at the center of philosophical inquiry.

One of the most influential interpretations of this transformation is provided by Martin Heidegger, who argues that Western philosophy, from ancient Greece onward, has primarily understood reality in terms of beings (*das Seiende*) and has consequently neglected the more fundamental question of Being itself (Heidegger, 1995: pp. 15–25). Heidegger characterizes this condition as the "forgetfulness of Being," a condition that became increasingly pronounced in modern thought with the dominance of calculative and representational modes of thinking (Türkmen: 2018, p. 36). Accordingly, the fundamental task of philosophy is to ask anew the question, "What is Being?" and to ground thinking within this ontological horizon (Öztürk, 2019: p. 145). From this standpoint, philosophy should not be understood merely as an abstract activity of thought, but as a continuously developing field of inquiry that questions Being, truth, and creation.

According to Kuçuradi (2018), truth has traditionally been conceived as something that exists independently and is therefore sought as though it were an entity waiting to be discovered. She argues that truth is not something to be sought or discovered as an independent entity; rather, every correct piece of knowledge concerning human reality and existence constitutes a truth. In this sense, truth is neither an existing entity nor a property of reality or existence as such, but rather a quality of knowledge (p. 78).

The Greeks, according to Heidegger's interpretation, succeeded in directly grasping Being as a mode of unconcealment, that is, as the bringing-forth of what is present and allowing it to come into the open. This revealing is expressed through the concept of *physis*. The revealing of *physis* involves the emergence into the light of what is concealed. The transition from concealment to unconcealment is associated with *poiesis*, understood as a bringing-forth. One of the ways in which both *physis* and *poiesis* bring beings into unconcealment is *techne*. The concept of *techne* refers, on the one hand, to practical skill and the arts and, on the other, to a mode of knowing and thinking. As a mode of thinking, *techne* signifies the movement from the concealed to the unconcealed, from non-presence to presence, and from what remains hidden to what is revealed (Çüçen, 2003: p. 176). Thus, *techne* should not be understood merely as a productive activity, but also as an ontological process through which beings are brought into unconcealment.

In this context, the meaning of art in Heidegger's thought differs from the modern aesthetic conception that regards the work of art merely as an "object." The work of art is more than an expression of the artist's subjective emotions or a formal arrangement designed to produce aesthetic pleasure in the viewer. Rather, the work constitutes an event in which Being is disclosed in a particular way. Art can therefore be understood as a realm of thinking and creation in which the truth of Being comes into unconcealment and what is concealed is brought into the open. With the emergence of the work of art, not merely a

physical object comes into being; rather, a world is opened, and the meaning of beings becomes visible within a new context.

In Heidegger's conception of art, this understanding also makes possible a reconsideration of the relationship between art and philosophy. Art and philosophy are not two entirely independent domains; rather, both provide distinct modes through which the relationship between human beings and Being can be questioned and disclosed. While philosophy transforms the meaning of Being into a question, art enables Being and truth to disclose themselves within a concrete work. Thus, art is not a secondary activity situated at the margins of philosophical thought. Rather, it constitutes a distinctive mode of thinking through which fundamental questions concerning the meaning of Being become visible and experientially accessible.

From this perspective, the expression "a new beginning at the limits of philosophy" should not be understood as signifying the end of philosophy or the loss of its validity. Rather, it refers to the reconsideration of the traditional boundaries of philosophical thought.

In Heidegger's thought, this new beginning becomes possible through the renewed asking of the question of Being. Bringing the question of Being back into focus requires truth to be understood not merely as a scientific or epistemological problem, but as an ontological phenomenon associated with the unconcealment of Being. It is precisely at this point that art assumes a significant position. The work of art enables truth to be understood not merely as a concept about which one speaks, but as an event through which truth comes into unconcealment.

Consequently, Heidegger's conception of art extends beyond the boundaries of aesthetics and provides an opportunity to rethink the relationships among Being, truth, human beings, world, and creation. The meaning of a work of art should be sought not merely in its formal characteristics or in the object it represents, but in the world, it opens and the realm of truth it brings into visibility. This approach transcends the narrow definition of art as the "production of the beautiful" and repositions art as an ontological realm in which unconcealment occurs and truth comes into presence.

Method

This study was designed as a qualitative, theoretical, and interpretive research study aimed at elucidating the relationship between art and the truth of Being in Martin Heidegger's thought. The primary objective of the study is to examine the position of art in Heidegger's philosophy not merely as a domain of aesthetic production, but in terms of the disclosure of Being and the realization of truth. Accordingly, art is considered not simply as a field of aesthetic production, but as a distinctive mode of thinking and creation through which the truth of Being can disclose itself.

The primary sources of the study consist of philosophical texts in which Heidegger develops his ideas concerning Being, truth, and art. In this context, *Being and Time* and *The Origin of the Work of Art* were considered the principal reference works. In addition, other texts addressing the relationships among art, truth, technology, creation, and Being in Heidegger's thought, as well as scholarly studies on Heidegger, were consulted.

Philosophical hermeneutics and conceptual analysis were employed together as the primary methodological approaches. Philosophical hermeneutics enables not only the identification of the direct meanings of the concepts presented in Heidegger's texts, but also the examination of their functions within his overall philosophical system and the relationships among them. The interpretive process was therefore conducted not by explaining concepts in isolation, but by revealing their interconnectedness within the broader framework of Heidegger's thought.

In the first stage, Heidegger's approach to the question of Being and his critique of Western metaphysics were examined. In the second stage, the transformation of the concept of truth was addressed in relation to the question of Being. In the third stage, the position of art within this ontological framework was evaluated, with particular emphasis on the manner in which the work of art discloses truth. It was discussed that the emergence of a work of art does not merely signify the production of a physical object, but also enables the establishment of new meaning.

The study sought to demonstrate how the art–Being–truth triad is constituted within Heidegger's philosophy of art. In this context, it was aimed to establish that the work of art is not so much an object that represents truth as a realm that enables truth to occur and become unconcealed. The historical development of art and the aesthetic theories of different philosophers were not comparatively examined in detail; rather, such approaches were consulted only to the extent that they contributed to clarifying Heidegger's conception of art. The scope of the study was limited to the ontological significance of art in Heidegger's thought and the capacity of the work of art to disclose the truth of Being.

Within this methodological framework, the study approaches Heidegger's conception of art not merely as an aesthetic theory, but as an ontological approach that enables philosophy to reconsider the questions of Being and truth.

2. Art and the Unconcealment of Truth in Martin Heidegger

In Martin Heidegger's philosophy, art is conceived as a privileged site in which truth comes into unconcealment, while the work of art is grounded as the ontological space in which this process of disclosure (*aletheia*) takes place. As Heidegger states, "the work of art is the setting-into-work of truth" (Heidegger, 2018: p. 56). From this perspective, the work of art acquires significance not merely as an aesthetic object, but as an event in which the truth of Being is realized. This relation between art and truth is directly connected to Heidegger's understanding of Being. According to Heidegger, the Western philosophical tradition progressively neglected the question of the meaning of Being, as metaphysical thought increasingly privileged knowledge of beings over Being itself. Heidegger describes this condition as the "forgetfulness of Being." This diagnosis also forms the basis of his understanding of art, for art is positioned as a privileged domain in which the forgotten question of Being can be thought anew. In this sense, art is not, from an ontological perspective, merely a form of aesthetic production; rather, it is an activity that carries the potential to disclose the truth of Being.

From this perspective, the work of art is conceived as a process of unconcealment that reveals hidden dimensions of Being and deepens ontological awareness. Art therefore reorients thought by opening up a space in which the truth of Being can be experienced. When read alongside Topçu's (2011) understanding of thinking, art appears not merely as an aesthetic experience, but as a field of intellectual inquiry into Being and truth (pp. 11–19). In this sense, modern thought does more than offer an epistemological framework; through its ontological and cultural dimensions, it also makes possible a reinterpretation of the human relation to Being, truth, and creation. From Heidegger's perspective, the artistic process can be understood both as the creative essence of the relation between reality and its perception, and as an inquiry into the relation to truth within the coordinates of time, the human being, source, object, and symbol.

The most concrete and striking manifestation of this ontological transformation is found in the phenomenon of art, which exceeds the limits of mere aesthetic experience. In this respect, art is central to this transformation, since it returns thinking to its origin through the unconcealment of Being. Heidegger expands the boundaries of philosophy and brings into view the ontological and creative function of art. From Heidegger's perspective, art occupies a central place in this transformation precisely because it allows thinking to turn toward its origin through the unconcealment of Being.

In light of modern and postmodern debates, the relation between art and philosophy extends beyond the boundaries of a merely aesthetic or theoretical domain; it becomes an intellectual practice that redefines the ontological and epistemological dimensions of human experience. Thus, the Heideggerian approach moves beyond the limits of modern thought while also revealing the reciprocal relation between the transformation of philosophy and the ontological function of art. These debates, shaped by postmodern and critical-theoretical perspectives, challenge the idea of absolute, objective, and universal foundations of knowledge and prompt a reconsideration of the role of philosophical thought. Heidegger articulates this transformation through the concept of the "forgetfulness of Being" (Türkmen, 2018: pp. 36–39). Such an approach reduces Being to a conceptual object and thus forecloses the possibility of attesting to its unconcealment. Calculative and representational thinking has lost the capacity to disclose truth itself. Heidegger's critique therefore reveals the epistemological limits of modern thought and calls for a reconsideration of philosophy's ontological priority.

In this context, Heidegger foregrounds the ontological function of art. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, he conceives the work of art not merely as an aesthetic object, but as a field of *aletheia* in which Being discloses itself (Heidegger, 2025: pp. 55–56). According to Heidegger, the work of art makes Being visible in its own light; as a *Lichtung*, it creates a clearing that allows Being to come into unconcealment.

This clearing enable thinking to return to its own origin and allows truth to come into unconcealment. The work of art is certainly something made, yet it always speaks beyond itself. It discloses something beyond itself to the public; it gives expression to an other, and is, in this regard, allegorical.

In the work of art, something else is brought together with the fabricated thing. The work is a symbol (Harrison & Wood, 2011: p. 1018). In the work of art, Being is not merely represented; it appears in its own truth. Art offers human beings the possibility of transcending the limits of time and moving beyond individuality. This possibility points to a distinctive path of knowledge disclosed by art. In Heidegger's thought, art is thus positioned not simply as an aesthetic activity, but as a privileged mode of unconcealment that makes access to the truth of Being possible. This approach is directly connected to his broader philosophical orientation. Although Martin Heidegger belongs to the phenomenological tradition and is widely regarded as one of its prominent figures, his intellectual path departs in significant ways from classical phenomenology. His primary concern is fundamentally metaphysical. Even during his years as a student of theology, Heidegger, as in

Aristotle, raised the question of the most fundamental meaning of Being by proceeding from the multiple senses and modes of its predication. The primary originality of Heidegger's approach lies in his direct application of the phenomenological method to the problem of Being, thereby reconstituting thought on an ontological basis (Cevizci, 2009: p. 657).

According to Martin Heidegger, the essence of art lies in the emergence, within the work, of the truth of Being, that is, of unconcealment. For this reason, art enables human beings to become aware of their place in the world by disclosing that which is not immediately visible. Through art, truth appears in a different light; in this manner, the individual comes to grasp anew both the world in which they live and their place and orientation within it (Gür, 2012: p. 13). Heidegger's reflections on art take shape, unlike classical aesthetic theories, within the framework of a philosophy of Being. He does not regard art merely as an aesthetic activity or as the fabrication of beauty; rather, he argues that art possesses an ontological dimension. For this reason, he claims that, in order to answer the question of what art is, one must first investigate the ground from which art emerges and the very nature of its originary meaning.

One of Heidegger's most important texts on art, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, is a work in which this question is addressed in detail. There, Heidegger states that, in order to comprehend the essence of the work of art, it is necessary to inquire into the origin of art (Heidegger, 2025: p. 17). Being, or the Being of beings, transpires within the work of art. Whatever the work manifests, it allows to appear within its own truth. Thus, the cypress trees we commonly encounter in cemeteries rise in Van Gogh's paintings like the thorns of the earth stretching toward the sky. In this form, they gather death, our fragility, and the height of the heavens. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger notes that truth happens in the Greek temple. This does not imply that something is correctly represented or conveyed in the temple; rather, beings as a whole are brought into unconcealment and held there. Being, which conceals itself, clears and illuminates itself (*lichten*). This kind of lighting (*Licht*) places its shining appearance or radiance (*Schein*) into the work. This radiant appearing that settles into the work is beauty. Beauty, therefore, is a mode in which truth occurs as unconcealment (Heidegger, 1977, as cited in Gür, 2013: pp. 20–21).

This ontological opening rejects any attempt to limit the function of art to aesthetic value alone. Crucially, Göz and Mutluel note that, within a philosophical framework, art mediates the human confrontation with existential questions and contributes to the development of ontological awareness (2018: pp. 25–28). Thus, art plays an active role in humanity's search for existential meaning by linking Heidegger's ontology with philosophical reflection. According to Heidegger, the question of the origin of art also includes the relation among the artist, the work, and the essence of art. In explaining this relation, he acknowledges that the artist is the creator of the work, while also maintaining that the work itself is an element that brings forth the artist. Heidegger expresses this reciprocal relation as follows: "The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist" (Heidegger, 2025:p. 18).

This statement implies that the relation between the artist and the work of art should not be understood as a unidirectional relation of production; rather, it points to a reciprocal ontological relation between the two (as cited in Gürsoy, 2025: p. 221). From this perspective, art in Heidegger offers an ontological opening against the epistemological exhaustion of modern thought. Philosophy itself is not exhausted; what requires reconsideration is the mode of thinking, particularly in relation to the depth of its engagement with Being. Art occupies a central place in this reconfiguration, since it bears witness to the unconcealment of Being while also enabling thinking to return to its own origin. Heidegger's ontological approach shows clearly that art is not merely an object of philosophical reflection but a force that can renew thought and open a clearing in which Being becomes manifest.

3. The Ontological Relation Between Philosophy, Art, and the Work of Art

Philosophy is an activity of thought characterized by its capacity to ask questions. Through a particular kind of questioning, it enables human beings to reflect on themselves and on the meaning of life (Kerimoğlu, 2017:p. 13). From Heidegger's perspective, philosophy stands at the center of the search for fundamental knowledge and truth, while art appears as an ontological extension of this search. The relationship between art and philosophy cannot therefore be confined to aesthetic evaluation or formal analysis alone; it also possesses an existential and ontological dimension. Both art and philosophy require an inner transformation and a conscious practice of existence, since art becomes part of the individual's process of self-discovery and of transcending his or her own limits (Cündioğlu, 2012: p. 25).

The meaningful placement of art within a coherent framework becomes problematic without the conceptual grounding provided by philosophical thought. While philosophy seeks to understand Being and its limitless dimensions, art similarly turns toward the depths of human experience, striving to move beyond established boundaries. For this reason, art establishes a guiding relationship with

philosophy as it seeks to determine its own direction. At the same time, art seeks to express subjective experience, creative freedom, and individual autonomy in their fullest form, thereby revealing the possibilities of human self-realization.

In Heidegger's view, art is understood not merely as an aesthetic object or a domain of sensory experience, but as an ontological process in which the truth of Being comes into unconcealment. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger argues that the work of art brings beings into appearance "in their own light" and renders truth visible through a *Lichtung,* a clearing in which unconcealment becomes possible. In this sense, art is not an act that stands against the exhaustion of philosophical thinking; rather, it is a means through which thinking can return to its ontological origin. Accordingly, in order to arrive at the meaning of the work of art, Heidegger begins with the question of what art itself is

Heidegger's understanding of art elevates the concept of "unconcealment" (*aletheia*) onto an ontological plane. For Heidegger, the work of art is the site where the truth of Being comes into unconcealment; that is, art reveals not merely beings as such, but the mode of their Being. In this sense, art is an activity that discloses not only human experience but Being itself. As Heidegger states, the work of art "sets up a world" and simultaneously "sets forth the earth"; through this dynamic, Being emerges from concealment and becomes visible (Ağırbaş, 2025: p.118).

As a site where Being discloses itself, the work of art surpasses the limits of modern thought, which is governed by calculative reason and representation. Heidegger emphasizes that modern technology and calculative thinking conceal Being by reducing it to a mere "standing-reserve," thereby obstructing the manifestation of truth. According to Kuçuradi, the work of art should be understood not primarily as a reflection of objective reality or as the expression of emotions, but as a structure that discloses a particular existential condition of the human being, thereby offering knowledge (Kuçuradi, 2016: p. 75). Art provides knowledge concerning the human; however, this knowledge is not attained through scientific or conceptual explanation, but directly through ostension. Accordingly, the work of art does not simply describe something; rather, it brings it into unconcealment in a form that can be experienced (Arslan, 2016, p. 95). In this respect, art is not merely an aesthetic experience, but an ontological act that makes possible the renewal of thinking (Öztürk, 2019: pp. 145–147).

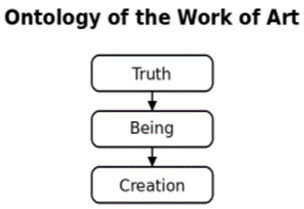


Figure 1. The Ontological Process of the Work of Art

Heidegger also emphasizes the historical character of art's ontological role: a particular work of art can establish or re-establish a particular "world" within its own historical context. This means more than an aesthetic experience; it signifies the re-interpretation by a culture of its own mode of existence. Accordingly, the work of art is not only an individual creation, but also a social and historical event of truth. In Heidegger's terms, a tension or struggle emerges within the work of art between world and earth. Whereas world refers to the horizon of meaning constituted by human beings through purposes, values, and cultural relations, earth represents the concealed and resistant dimension of Being (Heidegger, 2018: p. 47). The work of art emerges as the site where these two dimensions encounter one another, and it is through this encounter that truth comes into unconcealment.

Within this framework, works of art belong to a domain that cannot easily be reduced to language. Critical discourse may often turn into a form of interpretation that limits and diminishes the truth of the work rather than reaching it. For this reason, the most authentic relation that can be established with art rests not on a judgmental attitude, but on a sincere and attentive mode of understanding. Such an approach makes possible a deeper experience of the layers of meaning disclosed by the work (Rilke, 2020: p. 42).

At the same time, excessive proximity to the work often leads not to a genuine grasp of its essence, but to the imposition of the subject's own meanings upon it. In this respect, the quality of one's approach to the work is directly related to the depth at which it can be understood. Hence, understanding a work of art and determining its value requires a process of philosophical inquiry that goes beyond mere aesthetic evaluation. The work of art discloses the way human beings understand both the world and themselves; in this sense, its analysis is directly connected to the fundamental questions of philosophy (Kuçuradi, 2016: pp. 57–58). Although philosophy and art can be distinguished and pursued as separate domains, the extent to which each can be regarded as art or philosophy in its own right has remained an open question for centuries (Oruç, 2009: p. 45).

The relationship between philosophy and art has been interpreted in diverse ways throughout the history of thought. Within the Platonic framework, art was conceptualized as an imitation of truth, whereas Aristotle

posited art as an expression of the universal. For Hegel, art was the sensuous manifestation of the Absolute Spirit, thereby establishing a strong connection between art and philosophy.

In this context, Martin Heidegger describes the work of art as a site where truth comes into unconcealment, while Arthur Danto, from a contemporary standpoint, argues that the meaning of art is determined through philosophical interpretation (Read, 2020: p. 19). Art therefore cannot easily be understood apart from philosophical thought, since philosophy is driven by the quest to explore infinity, and art seems to pursue a similar aim. For this reason, art turns to philosophy as a guide, aiming to achieve the deepest exploration of subjectivity, autonomy, and creativity (Dede, 2025: p. 2).

As two disciplines that question and interpret the fundamental dimensions of human experience, art and philosophy occupy intersecting yet functionally distinct fields. According to Martin Heidegger, art should be understood not merely as an aesthetic activity, but as a process of unconcealment that makes the truth of Being visible and directs thought toward its ontological ground. The philosophy of art, in turn, interrogates the role of the artist within society and defines the distinctiveness of art as the expression of the artist's individual inner world (Rothko, 2020: p. 162).

The table below summarizes the approaches to art and philosophy put forward by Heidegger and contemporary philosophers. Heidegger frames art as an ontological medium through which Being comes into unconcealment, while philosophy deepens this process on the level of thought. A comparison of Heidegger with contemporary philosophers further highlights the distinctive character of art's ontological function in his work. Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus emphasize the human necessity of creating meaning in the world; for them, existence is shaped through conscious human action. Heidegger, conversely, does not view human action as a precondition for the disclosure of Being; rather, through art, Being reveals itself in its own truth, and thinking witnesses this truth.

In a similar vein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty stresses the way in which Being acquires meaning through perception and experience within a phenomenological framework. Heidegger carries this approach onto an ontological plane; art is not only a perceived phenomenon, but a field of *aletheia* in which Being discloses itself. Although parallels can be drawn between Jacques Derrida's understanding of deconstruction and Heidegger's approach, Heidegger, however, prioritizes ontological truth; the work of art, by revealing the layers of Being, makes possible a return to the origin of thinking (Öztürk, 2019: pp. 145–146).

Table 1. Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives on Art and Philosophy: A Comparison of Philosophers

Philosopher	Meaning of Art	Function of Philosophy	Ontological Approach	Orientation Toward Truth	Explanation
Heidegger	Art is the *Lichtung* that discloses the truth of Being.	Philosophy questions the meaning of Being.	Ontological; prioritizing Being itself.	Art discloses truth.	While art directs thinking toward the source of Being, philosophy deepens this process conceptually.
Sartre	Aesthetic experience externalizes human freedom.	Philosophy examines existential freedom and responsibility.	Existential; centered on free will.	Truth is shaped by human actions and choices.	Art allows the individual to experience freedom, while philosophy analyzes the existential responsibility of human beings.
Camus	Art reflects the absurd.	Philosophy examines the human attitude toward meaninglessness.	Existential; grounded in absurdity/meaninglessness.	Truth emerges through human experience.	Art and philosophy enable human beings to confront meaninglessness and, thereby experiencing truth through this process.
Merleau-Ponty	It creates meaning through perception and the body.	Philosophy explains phenomenological experience.	Phenomenological; centered on perception.	Truth is determined through experience and perception.	Art concretizes perceptual experience, while philosophy conceptualizes that experience.
Derrida	It produces multilayered meaning through texts and representations.	Philosophy analyzes meaning through deconstruction.	Post-structuralist; focused on language and text.	Truth is a structure constantly reproduced.	Art and philosophy demonstrate that meaning is not fixed; it can always be reinterpreted and brought to light.

Over time, "*The Origin of the Work of Art*" has become one of the most significant twentieth-century texts in aesthetics and ontology. By bringing art into relation with the question of Being and truth, Heidegger fundamentally reoriented the terms of the debate. This approach had a

profound impact on art history and critical practice through such intellectual frameworks as hermeneutics (Gadamer), deconstruction (Derrida), and phenomenological aesthetics (Merleau-Ponty). Through its concepts of world, earth, strife, and unconcealment, the essay radically reshaped existing debates on representation, materiality, context, and the political-historical role of works of art, becoming a major reference point in the philosophy of art. Within this matrix, Heidegger's understanding of art both differs from and enters into dialogue with contemporary philosophical approaches. Art is not merely an aesthetic experience; it is an ontological act that makes possible a renewed beginning of philosophical thought and mediates the disclosure of Being. Consequently, the work of art functions as a clearing in which Being reveals itself, taking on an ontological role that transcends the boundaries of modern and contemporary philosophy.

Similarly, philosophy is not merely a theoretical endeavor; it also grounds the practice of making sense of life through its existential and experiential dimensions. Thus, art and philosophy, through different methods yet toward a common end, disclose the ontological and epistemological layers of human experience.

According to Heidegger, philosophy remains at the center of questioning fundamental knowledge and truth, despite the epistemological limitations of modern thought. Art is the ontological extension of this questioning, creating a clearing in which Being itself is disclosed. The essential function of philosophical thought therefore becomes visible through art; thinking does not merely produce knowledge, but bears witness to the truth of Being. This context repositions philosophy at the forefront of foundational knowledge, while strengthening the ontological function of art.

Heidegger's thought is built upon a critique of Western metaphysics; in his view, metaphysics has consistently thought Being through beings (*das Seiende*) and has thereby forgotten Being itself (Dilmen, 2014: p. 98). This forgetfulness has led to the loss of the capacity for questioning, which constitutes the essence of thinking (Türkmen, 2018: p. 38). Heidegger seeks to overcome the subject–object distinction inherent in Western metaphysics. Rather than attempting to overcome the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity by reducing reality to either subjectivity or objectivity itself, he seeks to transcend it by questioning their origin and foundation. According to him, the representational thinking of Western metaphysics, which is based on the distinction between subject and object, arises from the fact that the underlying conditions through which the subject and the object reveal themselves have been forgotten (Altuğ, 2012, as cited in Kaya, 2023: p. 25).

Heidegger emphasizes the necessity of asking anew the question "What is Being?" in order to re-establish philosophy's relation to truth (Öztürk, 2019: pp. 145–161).

In questioning the nature of the work of art, Heidegger's ontological approach asks whether it can truly be understood as a mere "object," thereby criticizing the three main categorical interpretations of the object developed in Western thought. The first of these defines the object as a "bearer of properties," a substratum standing at the center of various attributes belonging to it. The second understands the object as a synthesis or unity of the manifold of sensory data reaching the mind. The third, and the most deeply rooted and widespread, approaches the object through the structure of 'formed matter,' according to which a thing emerges when a certain matter (*hyle*) receives a form (*morphe*). Within this view, matter is idea, yet it remains non-absolute in terms of the simple shaping of the finite by the infinite. Matter is not essence but mere form or symbol; yet even as a relative distinction, it remains identical both with that which it symbolizes and with the idea as the absolute in-forming of the finite into the infinite (Schelling, 2017: p. 175).

All three of these traditional definitions fail to account for the character of the work of art as a "work," since such frameworks reduce it to the level of an ordinary thing or an object of use, thereby veiling its distinctive nature as that which discloses truth. At the deepest level of his inquiry into the thing, Heidegger draws a sharp ontological distinction among tool (*Zeug*), thing (*Ding*), and work (*Werk*). Within this hierarchy, the tool occupies an intermediate position between the thing and the work, and the essence of the tool lies in its serviceability (*Dienlichkeit*), that is, in its usefulness. Yet the instrumental being of a shoe is experienced not by looking at it from the outside, but through the reliability (*Verlässlichkeit*) it provides. As long as a tool fulfills its function, it withdraws its own being from notice; only when it breaks, wears out, or fails in its service does it lose its quality of being ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) and become a bare object standing before us as present-at-hand (*vorhanden*). This is the reflection within the ontology of art of Heidegger's analysis of beings in *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 2018: pp. 41–42). Heidegger's ontology of creation radically rejects traditional approaches that view the work of art either as a mimetic "representation" of the external world or as a "fiction" severed from truth. From this perspective, art is one of the most authentic manifestations of human existence in the world. As Tunalı (2002) notes, in Heidegger's thought the work of art is not merely an object of philosophical speculation, but the primary medium in which Being itself discloses itself as a "happening" *(Geschehen)* and an "event" (Ereignis). By transforming the

silent call of Being into a concrete work, art becomes an ontological opening that enacts directly that primordial event of truth to which theoretical philosophy can only point (p. 76).

Unlike the tool, the work of art is the site where the quality of createdness manifests itself in its purest form. Rather than serving an external purpose, the work itself opens a field of truth. If, for example, we consider an Ancient Greek temple, the temple does not merely make the presence of the god possible there; it also gathers within a single spatial unity all the oppositions of human existence: birth and death, victory and defeat, sacredness and misery. By drawing together this entire network of relations in which human destiny takes shape, the temple makes possible that majestic and mysterious clearing (*Lichtung*) of truth. The being of the work thus lies not in its being an object of use, but in its enacting this very ontological disclosure.

More than a simple object, the work of art is the opening of a world that determines the spiritual horizon and vital coordinates of a historical people. A temple, for instance, through its spatial presence, grants things their proper identity and gives humanity an existential perspective. The continuity of this perspective depends upon the work's remaining a "work" and upon the divine not withdrawing from that site. A fundamental distinction emerges here. Whereas tool, once it puts material into the service of a particular function, effaces that material within usefulness, the work of art brings material such as stone, paint, and sound into prominence in its own splendor and honors it as an element of earth. The work is neither simply an advanced tool endowed with aesthetic qualities nor an ordinary object. Rather, it is the site in which a world is ontologically established.

The ontological ground of the work lies in the manifestation of truth within a clearing (*Lichtung*). This clearing is the ground upon which human destiny and all existential relations are gathered together and made historical. The work invites the subject who turns toward it into this world. Yet this world-opening, this unconcealment, remains inseparable from the self-secluding and mysterious nature of earth, that is, concealment. The work resists becoming a mere object and continues to remain an "event" of truth only so long as this ontological tension is preserved and a consciousness capable of bearing witness to it remains present. This process allows Being to come into unconcealment in a new way and at the same time contributes to the formation of historical meaning. Accordingly, the institutional and social existence of art constitutes a fundamental ontological ground for the emergence and sustainability of the work of art .

Widely regarded as one of the most powerful texts in twentieth-century aesthetics and ontology, *The Origin of the Work of Art* reconsiders the character by which a work is a "work" on an existential basis beyond traditional criteria of beauty. Based initially on lectures delivered in 1935–1936 and ultimately published in 1950 in the collection Holzwege, this text argues, through limited yet profound examples such as Vincent van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant shoes or the grandeur of an Ancient Greek temple, that art is not a "representational object" to be judged according to predetermined criteria, but rather an "event" in which truth itself happens. The concept of "origin" (*Ursprung*) here points not to a simple historical beginning, but to the ontological source of a thing's essence. Through this inquiry, Heidegger unsettles the established subject-object distinction of Western metaphysics and challenges the shallow view that regards the thing merely as a "tool" or a compound of "matter and form."(Montero,2020: s.56). Ultimately, art is defined as a privileged clearing (*Lichtung*) in which a historical community constructs its own world of meaning and in which that world becomes visible. This definition transforms the relation among knowledge, Being, and truth into a comprehensive practice of thought intertwined with the philosophy of art.

Within this framework, art is not merely an activity of representation, but an event in which the truth of Being comes into unconcealment. Accordingly, the work of art should be understood not as an object, but as an ontological opening that establishes a world and makes Being visible (Yılmaz, 2004: p. 112).

Heidegger's conception of the "end of philosophy" signifies not the exhaustion of thinking, but the possibility of a new mode of thought oriented toward the truth of Being (Türkmen, 2018: p. 36). Modern philosophy, especially with Cartesian thought, grounded Being in consciousness. By placing the human subject at the center of truth, this approach reduced the world to representational objects. Heidegger conceptualizes this tendency "calculative thinking" (*rechnendes Denken*), maintaining that this mode of thought reduces Being to a measurable and manipulable "presence."

Under this technological enframing, Being, rendered mute, finds its voice again in the exceptional clearing opened by art, for the work of art does not imprison beings within the plane of instrumental utility, but leaves them before us in their mysterious and untouchable essence. Art therefore functions as an ontological threshold that frees thought from the narrow constraints of calculability and opens it to the still-unexhausted possibilities of Being. At this threshold, the ancient strife between 'world' and 'earth' is concretized anew as truth itself, free from the modern subject's desire to objectify. In Heidegger's approach, art is

not merely an object of aesthetic appreciation or an act of representation, but a singular mode of thinking in which the truth of Being comes into unconcealment (Cora, 2024: s. 615). In this sense, the work of art is understood not as an objective entity, but as a field of disclosure (*aletheia*) in which Being makes itself visible. By defining the work of art as an event in which truth takes place, Heidegger establishes a profound intellectual affinity between art and philosophy (Heidegger, 2025: p. 39). Art thus exceeds the status of an aesthetic object and is positioned as a distinctive practice of thought that discloses the truth of Being. Put more simply, works of art become central mediations in philosophical inquiry and in the understanding of Being.

Conclusion

Heidegger contends that art does not bring philosophy to an end; rather, it renews thought and redirects it. The "end" of philosophy, in this sense, does not signify the closure of truth but instead opens the way to a new beginning. Within this context, art is not simply an activity that accompanies philosophy. It is a phenomenon that transforms thought itself and constitutes a space in which Being offers itself to human experience. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, Heidegger presents the artwork as a clearing in which the truth of beings is set to work. This clearing transforms the human relation to the world and moves thought beyond the limits of conceptuality. For Süner (2017), Heidegger establishes an ontological field by approaching the artwork through the interrelated concepts of object, truth, and world; in this respect, his approach also comes into partial contact with aesthetic theories concerned with explaining the effects of artworks on the viewer. From Altar's (2009) standpoint, art may be understood as an intellectual process in which aesthetic judgment and freedom are intertwined; this process shapes the subject's way of making sense of the world and reinforces the epistemic value of art. Çıl (2022), in turn, interprets Heidegger's ontology of art as an event that brings the concealed into view and opens a new mode of visibility within human experience. Jaeger (1958) and Tate (1990) likewise note that the artwork is not merely an aesthetic object, but a site that opens up the question of Being. Kaya (2023) points to the contribution of Heidegger's understanding of art to contemporary philosophical debates, whereas Kockelmans (1985) describes the artwork as a distinctive field situated at the boundary of philosophy, one that makes possible a reconsideration of the question of Being. Taken together, these perspectives make it possible to assess the aesthetic, epistemological, and ontological dimensions of Heidegger's understanding of art within an integrated framework.

In "*Martin Heidegger and a Hammer as Part of Equipment and as an Art Object,*" Griffiths (1993) argues that any attempt to think what art may be must ultimately be grounded in the question of Being. From this perspective, art is understood neither as a sphere of cultural achievement nor as a manifestation of spirit; rather, art and artistic production belong to a process of disclosure through which the meaning of Being is brought to light. In Heidegger's thought, therefore, art and philosophy do not stand as separate domains, but as two closely related fields that complete and deepen one another.

Art makes truth visible by moving beyond the conceptual limits of philosophy, thereby transforming human experience. Philosophy, in turn, interprets this experience and reorients the course of thought. The relation between art and philosophy, then, is not merely a theoretical interaction but an ontological process through which Being and truth come into view. Through this interaction, thought and creation support one another, as art becomes a living continuation of philosophy, while philosophy, through art, reaches toward the depth of truth.

In conclusion, Heidegger's approach demonstrates that art and philosophy are not separate disciplines but together form an ontological unity in which each completes and deepens the other. This dialectical interaction represents one of the most distinctive and transformative expressions of the human relation to the world and of the understanding of Being. The ontological framework Heidegger develops in *The Origin of the Work of Art* allows for a deeper understanding of the meaning and function of art. The work illuminates that art is not simply an aesthetic object, but an ontological field intertwined with philosophical thought, one that discloses the truth of Being. Within this framework, the interaction between art and philosophy highlights both the formative role of philosophy in relation to art and its transformative effect. As art extends the boundaries of philosophy, philosophy, through art, discloses the depth of truth and reinforces the ontological value of art. From Heidegger's ontological perspective, the relation between art and philosophy should therefore be understood as a process that makes possible a new beginning at the limits of philosophy while revealing the truth of Being.

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