

Markus Schrenk
Proprioceptive Art

I argue for the possibility of proprioceptive art in addition to, for example, visual or auditory arts, where aspects of ballet and some martial arts will serve as examples of that art form.

My argument is inspired by a thought of Ted Shawn's, one of the pioneers of American modern dance: "Dance is the only art wherein we ourselves are the stuff in which it is made."

In a first step, I point out that in some practices of martial arts (in the paper I will introduce "hyongs" & "katas"), we are, too, the stuff these performances are made of.

Second, I show that, as martial arts practitioners, we ourselves are not in the first place visual or auditorial observers (as common in painting or music) but introspective, proprioceptive perceivers of our bodies and their movements. (As a corollary we get that we are, in such a case, necessarily our exclusive first-person audience.)

In a third crucial step, I show that the martial arts practices referred to, hyongs & katas, and especially the proprioceptive aspects thereof, can indeed count as art by many standard ontologies of art.

Thus, proprioceptive art is possible: some practices of some martial arts are actual existing examples of that art form.

Over and above the argument for the possibility of a proprioceptive art form the paper also has a missionary aim. Just as, for example, the impressionists and cubists taught us new ways of seeing, the martial arts (and related "arts" such as yoga) could teach us novel ways to perceive artistically.