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The relevance of Kant for communication on art

In my paper, I will research the notions of "communicability" and "sensus communis" within Kantian thinking. Communicability is one of the most important characteristics of the aesthetic according to Kant. (Böhme: 1997, 51) Through the aesthetic, people are able to express their feelings and as a consequence the aesthetic always assumes companionship, a community. Aesthetic judgement is communicable and supposes general agreement. This agreement can not be deducted from an abstract principle, but always starts from the particular encounter with the aesthetic. Connected to this communicability is Kants interpretation of "sensus communis". This shared sense is a subjective relationship between imagination and reason that every human being shares. The aesthetic judgement is not merely an individual opinion, but is shared by all others. Thus, Kant is talking about a 'subjective generality'. What is the relevance of this perspective in the contemporary globalised (art) world? How we can communicate about art, is a crucial problem within cultural sciences. On the one hand, there is the threat of universalism, where the aesthetic is judged starting from an abstract principle and every cultural artefact that does not meet these abstract standards is excluded. On the other hand, when the aesthetic is seen as merely a construct, there is danger of relativism. In both cases, talking and judging the aesthetic seems irrelevant as it is either already defined by universal standards or it is rejected entirely. I will demonstrate that Kant, through contemporary interpretations, can be of major importance to find a solution to this problem. On the one hand, Kant starts from the particular artwork and not from an abstract definition of art and communication on art. In this way, one point of view does not have to exclude other point of views. The concept of communicability on the other hand, ensures judging and talking about the aesthetic is possible and even necessary.