

# Policy Statement

*Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics*

# HYPERION

On the future of aesthetics



## *Policy Statement*

**W**hat is our concern here? Is it not the future of art? That is, art as it is and art as it is becoming, or art's futurity? Is this not also the coming to be of humanity? Of the revelation and expression of our very being? Is it not light that we need in order to see; is it not light which enables this revelation and expression? The critic needs, as the artist needs, like Hyperion, to be a progenitor of light; for Nietzsche, philosophy was but one of those lights: "My philosophy rescues art – and through art it saves life. Fundamental thought. The rest of my life is the consequence." Clearly, art and life are inextricably bound together, and through art, philosophy redeems life; that is, both art and philosophy can be truthful revelations of existence and, when united, even more so.

**by Rainer J. Hanshe**

How do we live with art? How does it inform our lives? And what does it do to us? How should we engage with art? Through the tragic confrontation of the fearsome and the questionable, life is not idealized, but exalted despite its horrors. To live with this tragic demand is to live with a perilous and exigent threat, but it is a necessary one, one which gives birth to struggle, to striving to affirm existence in the midst of its terrors and to living a more courageous and noble existence, one devoid of the enervating affect of pity.

What is it that the artist wants for the work of art and how can we receive the gift of art with equal energy? The spectator before the work of art must exert a degree of concentration close to if not equal to that which the artist exerted during the creation of a work. Art deserves and demands serious attention. It is our intent to generate criticism which artists would value and find invigorating; those who simply wish to be extolled cannot truly be interested in art, only in blind faith and adulation. When the artist and the aficionado of art become believers, art as life is at risk. Faith, of any order, is what is dangerous; even art works must be confronted with exacting questions. When art usurps life and forces one to unquestioningly bow before it as before a god, it is time to side with King Lear and shout into the wind, Nature's above art. It is not belief, but questions which will reveal the mysteries of art to us; if those mysteries remain obscure, that in itself is a revelation.

To further explore this relation between art and life, The Nietzsche Circle developed Hyperion in order to provide a forum for the rigorous pursuit of aesthetics through offering writers the freedom to communicate in the most unharnessed manner, with the full breadth of their intelligence, outside the bind of any editorial restrictions or whatever other unwelcome impositions. It is our objective to produce serious thought, to offer criticism which is intelligent, insightful and exacting, criticism which meets the demands which art itself requires, for only through a rigorous examination of aesthetics will the enigma of art open itself to us. Through such criticism we seek to investigate art with intelligence and imagination, and, as Blanchot said, "To let the depth of the . . . work, that which resides therein, always more clearly and more obscurely, speak."

It is not our concern to explore only what might be considered 'Nietzschean' art, but of taking up the arrows which he shot into the distance, picking them up, and shooting them in new directions, of living with his ideas and transforming them. It is a question of speculation and meditation. How do we reach new, radical states of becoming? Is it not through pursuing urgent inner needs, needs which obey not ossified institutions but seek out what Emerson called an original relation to the cosmos? For Nietzsche, "The tragic artist is not a pessimist - it is precisely he who affirms all that is questionable and terrible in existence, he is Dionysian."

It is time for a form of criticism that is tragic and Dionysian.

**IMAGE:**  
**Auguste Rodin, *The Age of Bronze*, 1877**  
**S. 468, RFR 19**  
**Bronze, 181 x 66.5 x 63 cm**  
**Accession to the collections of the Musée Rodin 1952.**  
**© Musée Rodin/Photo: Bruno Jarret**

“We are fated

To find no foothold, no rest,

And suffering mortals

Dwindle and fall

Headlong from one

Hour to the next,

Hurled like water

From ledge to ledge

Downward for years to the vague abyss.”

– Holderlin, “Hyperion’s Song of Fate”

***Hyperion* is published by The Nietzsche Circle and  
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