

# The Artist's Hands' Self-Reflection

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## Abstract

The self-reflective vision of man's hands in action has come to represent his ("evolving") subjective and collective consciousness. When, in the Renaissance, artist's hands became conscious of themselves as the subject and author of their own representation, it opened unlimited possibilities for the future of art and civilisation. The subject of the artist was released. In this paper, it is suggested that our hands' increasing self-awareness of their role as subject and author of their own discourse has paved the way towards revolutionary transformations of consciousness since the Renaissance. Moreover, it is contended that the artist's hands' self-reflection has ultimately come down to us as the perennial subject of art itself.

Whereas in antiquity and throughout the Medieval period of Western history, artist's hands had predominantly expressed the desire and will of authority and tradition, by looking into his own hands, the liberated artist of modernity began to see his subjective power, channel and manage his energies, and direct his unique original thoughts into his artistic work. In what follows, citing examples from the Renaissance to the 20th-century, I discuss this topic in line with the concepts of revolution and frontiers, paying particular attention to some of the fundamental changes one can observe in Modernity as a result of the artist's hands' leap into self-reflective consciousness.

**Keywords:** self-reflexivity, the artist's hands, evolution, self-consciousness, leap