Editorial

Everyone must have experienced the disappointment of sharing the experience of a piece of art, only to encounter a lack of reciprocal enthusiasm or indifference. Art, being always subject to individual tastes, emotions, appeal, and fashion trends, is inevitably shaped by the historical and cultural context of its time. Yet amidst this subjectivity, certain works stand the test of time, prompting us to ponder how humanity reaches a common understanding of what constitutes a great work of art. In this quest, philosophy provides relevant and valuable tools in addressing the complex questions that are raised by art.

Louis Groarke proposes an Aristotelian definition of art grounded in two elements. Art is something that involves skilful craftsmanship and has the power to evoke a delightful experience to the spectator. Groake's perspective challenges the prevalent contemporary notion that anything created by humanity can be considered a work of art.

Focusing on poetry, *Joe Friggieri* contends that the best poets convey profound truths about life, emotions, and experiences. Friggeri argues that poetry through its language of imagination, employs concrete images to evoke new thoughts and reflections that other form of communication may struggle to convey. This line of reasoning can indeed be extended towards other various art forms such as paintings, sculpture, architecture, music, dance, literature, and cinema.

But when it comes to cinema, *Mario Cordina* draws parallels between Plato's allegory of the Cave and the cinematic experience, as he highlights the captivation of the audience to the illusion of reality and suspension of disbelief. Does this observation support Plato's claim that art remains a powerful vehicle for the distortion of truth? Cordina argues that cinema evolved from philosophy through its similar questioning stance on human existence. In the process, cinema contributes to the continual evolution of philosophical thought.

This point is reinforced by four additional contributors – *Ian Rizzo* who views Pink Floyd's rock music album *The Dark Side of the Moon* as a great work of art aligned with existential and phenomenological themes; *Inger Cini's* appreciative article on Werner Herzog's documentary *Fata Morgana* which

also embodies existential themes and links to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*; *Guillaume Collett's* observation of the recurring use of '*there*' in the lyrics of music band Radiohead that symbolises de-personalised feelings leading to transcendence of individual subjectivity ; and *Kyle Galea's* illustration of how science fiction through its blend of art and philosophy inspires technological innovation for future prosperity while fostering dialogue on ethical and social implications.

Yet, as art grows out of philosophy and shapes it in return, *Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci* expresses concern about the complex relationship that has now developed between them. He delves into issues such as the fusion of contemporary art with philosophy, the impact of artificial intelligence on art and the role of traditional aesthetic elements. Schembri Bonaci emphasises the need for philosophy to reintroduce the act of reading into the understanding of paintings.

Within a somewhat different perspective, artist photographer, *Jamie Fettis* advocates for a pre-cognitive, non-verbal approach to art, that offers instantaneous perception and aims for the shock of the new.

Perhaps it is appropriate to conclude our reflection on art with another realistic observation on the dual nature of humanity —its creative powers to produce great works of art, is matched by an equivalent genius capacity to destroy. *Adrian Camilleri Chiaro*, questions whether acts like the protest campaign of Just Stop Oil that target iconic artworks to raise awareness of environmental degradation, lead to meaningful changes or merely serve as alarming spectacles.

Alas, humanity's expression of feelings, the driving force behind artistic endeavours, always remains the hardest act to comprehend.

The other articles, briefly.

Professor Matt Qvortrup is interviewed by Ian Rizzo wherein he shares his Kantian perspective on political philosophy, emphasising the importance of reason and open debate in democratic societies. The interview also touches on democracy's global challenges, the rise of populism, and the role of political philosophy in addressing contemporary issues such as climate change and artificial intelligence (AI).

Colette Sciberras explores the dichotomy between nature and technology, focusing on the idea that technology, often driven by economic and political forces, has the potential to enslave humanity. Encouraging readers to adopt a non-dualistic perspective, the author emphasises the crucial

principle '*know thyself*' when questioning humanity's relationship with nature and technology.

Peter Mayo commemorates the 100th birth centenary of Lorenzo Milani, an influential Italian pedagogue known for his contributions to critical education and social justice. Milani's teachings address issues such as social class, collective learning, and an anti-war pedagogy. Despite his religious background, Milani advocated for a secular, non-denominational education focused on raising the critical educational level of the marginalised.

Christopher Fenech examines the relevance of transhumanist movements, tracing their origins to Julian Huxley in the 1950s. He highlights the diversity within the transhumanist movement that encompasses various perspectives on human enhancement though science and technology. While acknowledging the importance of transhumanist ideas, the author stresses the need for a broader reflection on emerging technologies that consider socio-economic disparities, ecological concerns, and philosophical questions.

Steven S. Gouveia explores the transformative effect of AI on medicine, emphasising improved reliability, precision and operational efficiency compared to human expertise and manual data analysis approach. The author raises, though, ethical considerations that are exemplified by concerns about potential biases in AI models.

Alexander Lazarov, in a similar vein, explores the challenges and necessity of integrating AI into healthcare, highlighting the crucial role of the philosophical perspective in this discussion. The author contemplates whether the relationship between AI and humanity will result in a battle of supremacy or whether it will be a journey with shared successes and learned failures.

Valdeli Pereira, in his book review on *Plato at the Googleplex* by Rebecca Goldstein commends the book for its innovative exploration of Plato's philosophy in a contemporary context. Goldstein's clever use of dialogues fosters a connection between ancient wisdom and current issues, and thereby showcases the enduring relevance of philosophical inquiry for both scholars and general readers.

The philosophical manifesto now in its fifth series, drafted by *Ian Rizzo*, delves into the complex nature of justice. Advocating for full transparency and independence in the legal system, the manifesto emphasises a restorative justice approach, that addresses the causes of crime. The manifesto acknowledges ongoing challenges to secure justice for minority rights, non-human animals, and the environment while emphasising the importance of economic justice.