



Phenomenological Research in Art Studies: A Robust Framework for Aesthetic Inquiry

Bambang Sunarto^{1✉}, Febri Yulika

¹Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, Indonesia

²Institut Seni Indonesia Padangpanjang, Indonesia

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Abstract

This article examines aesthetic experience as a central focus in art research, a field complicated by its inherent subjective and objective dimensions. It proposes a phenomenological methodological framework designed to balance the objective analysis of artworks with a subjective understanding of individual experience. The recommended methods are grounded in core phenomenological principles, including an emphasis on lived experience, the application of epoché (the bracketing of preconceptions), phenomenological reductions for uncovering essences, and the description of essential experiences. The article demonstrates that phenomenological approaches can systematically accommodate the depth of subjective experience and the personal nature of art, while maintaining the analytical rigor essential for academic research. Notably, this article presents a coherent methodological approach for examining aesthetic experience, effectively bridging the gap between scientific rigor and aesthetic sensibility, and thereby fostering a richer, deeper understanding of how art is experienced and interpreted.

Keywords: phenomenology; art research; aesthetic experience; epoché; lived experience

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INTRODUCTION

Art research is a complex field, inherently involving both subjective and objective dimensions in the study of aesthetic experience. Art is not merely a cultural product amenable to physical analysis; it is also an immersive and deeply personal experience for individuals. Dewey (1934, p. 1) posited that aesthetic experience arises from the interaction between art objects and an individual's emotional and intellectual responses, thereby creating unique meaning. Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 4) similarly emphasized that perception underpins human experience, with art serving

as a medium through which individuals understand their world. Consequently, researchers face the challenge of reconciling the objective analysis of artworks with a subjective understanding of individual experiences.

Addressing the methodological complexity in art research necessitates approaches that can accommodate the depth of subjective experience while upholding objective analysis. Van Manen (1990, 9) argues that phenomenology provides such a framework, systematically exploring subjective experience by enabling researchers to uncover the essence of aesthetic experience through individuals' narratives and

✉ Corresponding author:
E-mail: bambangsunarto@isi-ska.ac.id

reflections on their interaction with artworks. This approach considers how cultural context, personal background, and environmental factors affect aesthetic experiences. Thus, effective art research must employ an integrated approach that bridges subjective and objective dimensions to uncover the holistic essence of aesthetic experience.

The positivistic approach to art research faces significant limitations in deeply understanding the phenomenon of art. Creswell (2014, p. 22) argues that a positivistic approach overlooks the essential subjective dimension of human experience, including in the context of art. Consequently, research focusing solely on quantitative aspects may obscure the deeper meaning of an artwork. Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 4) asserts that the experience of art is inseparable from individual perception, which is infused with deep emotions, interpretation, and meaning. Bourdieu (1993, p. 28) further highlights the importance of analyzing social and cultural structures in understanding the production and reception of artworks. Therefore, phenomenology, with its emphasis on deeply understanding subjective experience, offers a more appropriate methodological framework for exploring the essence of aesthetic experience and uncovering layers of meaning within the individual-artwork interaction (van Manen 1990, p. 9).

The need for a research paradigm that adequately accommodates aesthetic experience is particularly pressing in art studies. Aesthetic experience not only involves an emotional response to an artwork, but it also encompasses a broader social and cultural context. According to Dewey (1934, p. 25), aesthetic experience results from an individual's interaction with an artwork, yielding meaning derived from personal context and experience. This imperative to understand aesthetic experience renders positivistic research approaches, which are often reductionist, insufficient for capturing its full complexity.

Phenomenology offers a powerful

alternative for understanding aesthetic experience. Van Manen (1990) emphasizes that phenomenology enables researchers to explore subjective experiences in depth, thereby uncovering the essence of the individual-artwork interaction. This approach attends not only to the technical aspects of the artwork but also to its perception and interpretation by individuals within their social context (van Manen 1990, p. 9). Thus, the study of art necessitates the adoption of a more holistic research paradigm that integrates both subjective and objective dimensions of aesthetic experience.

The relevance of phenomenology as a methodological alternative in art research is crucial for a deep understanding of aesthetic experience. By focusing on individuals' subjective experiences, phenomenology enables researchers to explore how artworks are perceived and interpreted within the context of everyday life. According to van Manen (1990, p. 9), this approach provides a solid foundation for examining human experience holistically, given that art cannot be adequately understood through formal, often quantitative, analysis alone.

Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 4) asserts that perception is at the core of aesthetic experience and that art serves as a medium that connects individuals to the world around them. Utilizing a phenomenological approach, researchers can explore the emotional and social dimensions often overlooked by traditional research methods. This indicates that phenomenology is not only relevant but also crucial for addressing the complexity of art experience, offering deeper insights into the meaning and value embedded in individual artwork interactions.

A general tendency in contemporary art research has been to employ qualitative approaches, particularly phenomenology, to uncover aesthetic experiences. However, the existing literature still leaves significant gaps related to the systematic application of phenomenological principles in art research. Most research on phenomenology in art tends to focus on philosophical

explanations or descriptions of individual experiences, lacking adequate elaboration on the methodological application of phenomenological principles in empirical research (Suyanto 2019, p. 27; Hasbiansyah 2008, p. 2). This raises a critical question: how precisely are phenomenological principles implemented in art research, and what methodological guidelines should art researchers adhere to when employing this approach?

Phenomenological research fundamentally aims to uncover the essence of meaning experienced by individuals or groups in encountering a phenomenon, including artistic phenomena (Suyanto 2019, p. 26; Hasbiansyah 2008, p. 1). However, literature discussing phenomenological methodologies in the arts often lacks clear operational guidance, making it challenging for researchers to apply this approach consistently and accurately. For instance, questions concerning how to phenomenologically identify and analyze aesthetic experiences, along with ensuring data validity and reliability, largely remain unanswered in recent scientific publications.

Internationally, recent literature acknowledges that a consensus on applying phenomenological methods within the social sciences and arts has yet to be reached. While various procedures are recommended, not all meet the stringent criteria of phenomenological philosophy and robust research strategies (Giorgi 2008, pp. 1-9; Bouziot 2023, pp. 1-14). Generally, some perspectives emphasize the importance of the epoché, requiring researchers to suspend prior assumptions and judgments to maintain neutrality and objectivity towards the research subject. However, this practice often proves challenging to apply consistently in art research, particularly given the inherent complexity of aesthetic experiences, which simultaneously involve both subjective and objective dimensions.

Furthermore, another significant gap is the limited discussion on integrating subjectivity and objectivity in phenomenology-based art research. While phenome-

nology, as a qualitative method, underscores the importance of individual subjective experience, researchers are also obligated to maintain objectivity in data analysis to ensure the academic accountability of their findings (Sobur 2013, pp. vii-viii; Litdia 2020, p. 5). This integration presents a considerable challenge, as researchers must skillfully balance personal interpretation with scientifically verifiable analysis.

Previous research, such as that conducted by Hasbiansyah (2020), has indeed demonstrated phenomenology's utility in revealing symbolic meanings in the performing arts. However, such studies remain largely confined to descriptions of experiences without offering in-depth methodological elaboration (Suyanto 2019, p. 27; Hasbiansyah 2008, p. 2). Concurrently, international literature, as evidenced by the *International Journal of Education & the Arts* (2016), indicates that phenomenological analysis in art can leverage data collected through participatory observations, photographs, videos, or aesthetic artifacts, though it still necessitates critical and reflective interpretation (Hofmann 2016, p. 5). Yet, comprehensive guidance on how to effectively integrate subjectivity and objectivity during this analysis is still lacking.

Consequently, a clear gap persists in the related literature concerning: (1) the practical application of phenomenological principles in art research, (2) specific methodological rules for art researchers employing phenomenological approaches, and (3) the integration of subjectivity and objectivity within art research. Bridging this gap is crucial for enabling art researchers to develop a more structured and academically rigorous methodology. This research aims to address these deficiencies by developing a clear and applicable methodological framework to guide art researchers in their phenomenological studies.

Based on the aforementioned problem background, this study poses the following questions: (1) How are phenomenological principles applied in art research? (2) What methodological rules must art researchers adhere to when using

phenomenological approaches? (3) How can subjectivity and objectivity be integrated in art research through phenomenological approaches? Accordingly, the three primary objectives of this research are to: (1) formulate applicable phenomenological principles for art research, (2) identify essential methodological rules for art researchers, and (3) develop a comprehensive phenomenological framework for contemporary art research. The benefits derived from this research include: (1) providing practical methodological guidance for art researchers, (2) enriching the epistemology of art research, and (3) bridging the divide between phenomenological theory and art research practice.

METHOD

This research method is based on three main components: (1) a comprehensive literature study of classical phenomenological texts, (2) a philosophical reflection on the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer, and (3) a case study of various phenomenological research utilizing art objects. The literature study aims to understand the foundational principles of phenomenology, with classical texts by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger being central. Husserl's (1970, p. 25) concept, emphasizing the importance of epoché, enables researchers to examine the research object free from preconceived notions. Equally crucial is Heidegger's assertion (1962, p. 56) that human understanding is inseparable from its existential context, implying that aesthetic experience cannot be divorced from an individual's cultural and historical background.

Philosophical reflection will be conducted, drawing upon the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty and Gadamer. This reflection focuses on the nature of aesthetic experience and hermeneutic dialogue. Aesthetic experience is conceptualized as the interaction between an individual and the world, generating perception as the foundation of human experience (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 139). Hermeneutic dialogue

is crucial for understanding how artwork interpretation varies with individual context, thus necessitating its consideration (Gadamer 1975, p. 273). Ultimately, this study will articulate how phenomenological approaches are employed to examine lived experiences, including aesthetic ones (van Manen 1990, p. 11).

Case study methods will also be employed in this study, as art research using a phenomenological approach benefits from concrete examples illustrating methodological application. These case studies will offer practical insight into how this approach can be effectively applied within art studies (Smith and Flower 2008, p. 53).

The analytical techniques employed will encompass three main approaches: hermeneutic analysis, theoretical synthesis, and critical evaluation. Hermeneutic analysis will be utilized to understand key phenomenological concepts, such as epoché and Being. Understanding, as Gadamer (1975, p. 273) posits, arises from a dialogue between text and reader; similarly, in art, it is a dialogue between the artwork and the connoisseur, where interpretation is shaped by cultural context and individual experience. Through this analysis, researchers will delve into the deeper meanings of the foundational phenomenological texts. Theoretical synthesis will follow the understanding of key concepts, facilitating the formulation of applicable principles for art research. This approach enables the integration of diverse ideas and perspectives, culminating in a comprehensive framework for exploring aesthetic experience (van Manen 1990, p. 11). Critical evaluation will focus on the implementation of phenomenology in art research. This process will involve critical reflection to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the employed approach. It is crucial for ensuring the effective application of phenomenological principles within the context of art (Smith and Flower 2008, p. 53).

Fundamental Principles of Phenomenology in Art Research

A deep grasp of phenomenology's core principles is essential for conducting rigorous research in the arts. This section will detail four core concepts: epoché and phenomenological reduction, intentionality of aesthetic awareness, phenomenological description, and eidetic intuition. These principles, though fundamental, pose significant conceptual and methodological challenges if misunderstood, potentially compromising research integrity. Therefore, an early, clear explication of their complexities is vital, ensuring subsequent discussions on implementation and validation are firmly grounded for precise and scholarly investigations into aesthetic experience.

Epoché and Phenomenological Reduction

Phenomenological research in art must employ fundamental principles, specifically the concepts of epoché and phenomenological reduction, serving as essential methodological foundations to uncover the essence of aesthetic experience. The application of these principles enables researchers to access and depict aesthetic experiences profoundly and authentically, while avoiding biases that might obscure the artwork's original meaning. This approach provides a robust methodological framework for art research, which appreciates the complexity and uniqueness of human experience in interaction with art.

Epoché, a crucial first step, involves the suspension (bracketing) of theoretical assumptions and judgments. Through epoché, researchers must suspend all inherent prejudices and assumptions to immerse themselves in the lived experience of art, free from prior theoretical distortions or biases. This process allows researchers to set aside all assumptions and preconceived notions inherent to them as individuals engaging with the world (Butler 2016, pp. 2033–2043; Chan et al. 2013, pp. 1–9), thereby allowing authentic and pure access to the experience of phenomena. This approach demands rigorous discipline, as the suspension of initial interpretation of-

ten presents a significant personal challenge for researchers (Thomas & Sohn 2023, pp. 1–12).

In phenomenological reduction, researchers must focus on “what appears as is” as the core principle. According to Husserl, research must be directed towards the direct, undistorted experience of art objects to reveal the natural and original meaning of the experience (Butler 2016, pp. 2033–2043; Chan et al. 2013, pp. 1–9; Thomas & Sohn 2023, pp. 1–12). This principle directs art researchers to observe works of art without preconceived aesthetic or cultural prejudices. Consequently, it enables the artwork to “express itself” within an aesthetic experience unique to everyone.

As a logical consequence of applying epoché and reduction, researchers must also eliminate aesthetic and cultural prejudices in the observation of art. Through the suspension of established cultural and aesthetic interpretation frameworks, researchers can avoid distortions of meaning stemming from social and historical biases. As Andrews (2019, pp. 69–79) elaborates, drawing on Stenner and Cooper, phenomenology fosters a “radical openness to the elimination of prejudice,” allowing aesthetic experience to be captured in its purest and most authentic state. This is especially important in contemporary art research, which often confronts diverse and complex cultural contexts.

Intentionality of Aesthetic Awareness

Intentionality, a core tenet of Husserlian phenomenology, posits that consciousness is inherently directed towards a specific object (Siewert 2022; Thomas & Sohn 2023, pp. 1–12; Read 2025). In art research, this means aesthetic experience is intrinsically relational to the artwork. Consciousness actively forms a relationship with the art object, from which meaning and value emerge.

This directedness is fundamentally structured by the noesis-noema relationship: noesis represents subjective mental processes (perception, interpretation, judgment), while noema is the artwork as con-

stituted in consciousness, complete with its nuances (Kortooms 2002; Giorgi 2002, p. 282). This distinction enables systematic analysis, as the noema, representing the intended content, persists even after phenomenological reduction (Penchev 2021, p. 13; Drummond, John, & Embree 1992).

The noesis-noema dynamic underscores the uniqueness of each aesthetic experience, profoundly influenced by individual context and background. The intentional structure confirms that aesthetic experience is active, not neutral; consciousness dynamically shapes artwork meaning through perception, imagination, and reflection (Crowther 2022; Vassiliou 2023, pp. 227-231). Thus, phenomenological inquiry links aesthetic experiences inextricably to their social, cultural, and historical contexts, affirming that consciousness's intentionality is inseparable from the experiencer's lived situation (Crowther 2022; Vassiliou 2023, pp. 227-231).

Heidegger's concept of "being-in-the-world" further enriches this understanding by emphasizing human existence's inherent embeddedness. Aesthetic experience, therefore, extends beyond a mere subject-art object interaction to encompass broader social, cultural, and historical environments (Lee 2025; Thomas & Sohn 2023, pp. 1-12). While formally a C→O relation, its practical manifestation is deeply contextual and multifaceted, rendering aesthetic experience complex and dynamic (Lee 2025; Thomas & Sohn 2023, pp. 1-12).

In conclusion, the intentionality of aesthetic consciousness asserts that art experience is profoundly active, relational, and contextual. Consciousness continuously directs itself towards the artwork, forming unique noesis-noema relationships and engaging dynamic intentional structures. This phenomenological approach offers a robust framework for understanding and analyzing aesthetic experience in art research, highlighting the crucial interplay of context, interpretation, and the intricate subject-art object relationship (Siewert 2022; Thomas & Sohn 2023, pp. 1-12; Crowther 2022; Vassiliou 2023, pp.

227-231).

Phenomenological Description

Phenomenological description serves as a central method in art research employing a phenomenological perspective. Its goal is to deeply explore aesthetic experience. This approach prioritizes the detailed description of experience over causal explanation. Specifically, phenomenology focuses on individual experiences rather than their underlying causes (Giorgi 2010, p. 7). This approach enables researchers to capture the essence of aesthetic experience free from pre-existing assumptions or theories, thereby yielding authentic insight into how art is perceived and understood by individuals.

Phenomenological descriptions also serve to unveil the inherent structure of aesthetic experience. This structure encompasses elements such as context, perception, and emotions, which interact to form meaning (van Manen 2023, p. 112). By descriptively analyzing aesthetic experiences, researchers can identify inherent patterns and relationships, thereby contributing to an understanding of how artworks function within social and cultural contexts. Through phenomenological descriptions, researchers can elucidate how individuals interact with artwork, revealing nuances often overlooked in quantitative analysis (Smith & Flowers 2008, pp. 53-80; Smith and Fieldsend 2021, pp. 147-166).

Another important aspect of phenomenological description is the articulation of implicit meaning within art experience. Aesthetic experiences frequently contain meanings that are not immediately apparent; thus, meticulous descriptions can help uncover them (Finlay 2011, p. 110; 2013, pp. 1-3). An in-depth examination of individual experiences enables researchers to extract hidden meanings underlying emotional and cognitive reactions to artwork. This approach not only enriches the understanding of art but also facilitates broader interpretation, reflecting the diversity of human experience. Thus, in art research, phenomenological descriptions

emphasize prioritizing subjective experience and unveiling the structure and meaning inherent in the individual's interaction with the artwork. Consequently, this method offers a powerful framework for understanding the essence of aesthetic experience, serving as a guide for researchers exploring phenomenology in the context of art.

Eidetic Intuition

Eidetic intuition is a key concept in phenomenology. It serves to capture the essence of aesthetic experience through a deep and reflective process. It emphasizes capturing essence through imaginative variation, allowing researchers to explore a wide range of possible experiences that may not be immediately apparent. Eidetic intuition is the ability to apprehend objects beyond mere empirical facts and access the deeper meaning of experience (Giorgi 2010, p. 8). In the context of art research, eidetic intuition provides a means for researchers to explore and understand the nuances inherent in the interaction between individuals and artworks.

Eidetic intuition also plays a role in identifying the invariant structures of aesthetic experience. Through this approach, researchers can identify elements that remain consistent across diverse individual experiences, even when context and interpretation vary. Through a process of reflection and intuition, researchers can discern patterns and structures within recurring aesthetic experiences (Finlay 2011, p. 112). Thus, eidetic intuition serves not only to understand individual experience but also to uncover the general principles that underlie aesthetic experience.

A crucial aspect in applying eidetic intuition is the distinction between empirical facts and phenomenological essence. As Smith and Flowers (2008, p. 54) state, "Phenomenological research must be able to distinguish between what is seen and how the experience is perceived, so that the researcher can access the essence of the phenomenon being studied." In the context of art, this implies that research-

ers must identify and explore the deeper meaning of artworks, transcending mere physical observations or quantitative data. Thus, eidetic intuition serves as a bridge connecting subjective experience with a broader understanding of art and culture.

Overall, the fundamental principles of phenomenology, particularly through the concept of eidetic intuition, provide a robust methodological framework for art research. By capturing essence through imaginative variation, identifying the invariant structures of aesthetic experience, and distinguishing between empirical facts and phenomenological essences, researchers can develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of aesthetic experience. This approach not only enriches the study of art but also contributes significantly to the development of phenomenological methodologies within art research.

METHODS

Conducting rigorous phenomenological art research demands adherence to specific methodological rules for authentic aesthetic exploration. This section outlines three critical components: phenomenological attitudes, emphasizing epoché and reduction to minimize bias; the investigation procedure, detailing systematic steps for describing and interpreting lived experiences; and phenomenological validation, addressing trustworthiness and rigor beyond traditional objectivity. A thorough grasp of these interconnected elements, attitudes, procedures, and validation is paramount for ensuring the depth, authenticity, and scholarly integrity of research into aesthetic experience.

Phenomenological Attitudes

In art research, adopting a phenomenological attitude is a fundamental methodological principle for gaining an in-depth understanding of aesthetic experience. This approach involves three core aspects: liberation from the natural attitude, openness to phenomena without theoretical

predispositions, and methodological reflexivity.

Liberation from the natural attitude is a crucial initial step. It requires researchers to suspend everyday assumptions and worldviews to perceive phenomena in a novel, unbiased manner (Husserl 1970, p. 25). For art researchers, this means consciously setting aside subjective and cultural biases that could distort their observation and analysis of artworks, thereby accessing aesthetic experiences in a purer and more authentic state.

Openness to phenomena without theoretical predispositions is another vital principle. Researchers must approach art objects without imposing pre-existing theoretical frameworks, assumptions, or knowledge (Finlay 2011, p. 112). This allows them to capture deeper, potentially unexpected meanings that emerge directly from the aesthetic experience, preventing biases that might obscure a comprehensive understanding of the artwork.

Finally, methodological reflexivity is essential. This involves a continuous, critical awareness of the researcher's position, experiences, assumptions, and involvement throughout the research process. In phenomenology, reflexivity is not merely an auxiliary technique but a core component of interpretive validity and depth (Smith & Flowers 2008, p. 54; Smith and Fieldsend 2021, p. 148). Art researchers must actively reflect on how their backgrounds and perspectives shape their understanding and analysis of artworks. This practice enhances research validity and enriches the comprehension of the complex aesthetic experience.

By integrating liberation from the natural attitude, maintaining openness to phenomena, and practicing methodological reflexivity, researchers can achieve a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the meaning and value inherent in artworks. This not only enriches the study of art but also significantly contributes to the advancement of phenomenological methodologies within art research.

Investigation Procedure

In art research employing a phenomenological approach, investigative procedures constitute fundamental methodological rules for an in-depth understanding of aesthetic experience. This procedure encompasses several key elements: the stages of stratified reduction in artwork analysis, imaginative variation techniques for identifying essences, and the protocol description method for aesthetic experience.

The stratified reduction stage in the analysis of artworks represents a crucial initial step within the phenomenological investigative procedure. This systematic process requires researchers to progressively diminish assumptions and biases that might influence the interpretation of artworks (Giorgi 2010, p. 10). The process begins with the epoché, where the researcher suspends all prejudices related to the artwork to access a purer experience. By performing stratified reductions, researchers can identify the underlying elements of aesthetic experience and how they interact within a broader context.

Following reduction, researchers can apply imaginative variation techniques to uncover the essence of the aesthetic experience. This technique involves exploring the various possibilities of interpretation and experience that can arise from interaction with artworks (van Manen 2023, p. 112). By imagining how experiences might differ across contexts or perspectives, researchers can identify the deeper and more diverse meanings inherent in the artwork. This technique also helps researchers avoid narrow interpretations and fosters a broader understanding of aesthetic experience.

The protocol description method serves as a crucial step for documenting the aesthetic experience derived from interaction with the artwork. This method involves collecting narratives and reflections from individuals experiencing the artwork, enabling researchers to capture the essence of the experience in detail (Smith & Flowers 2008, p. 54; Smith and Fieldsend 2021, p. 148). This protocol description includes not only what the individual expe-

rienced, but also how the experience was perceived emotionally and cognitively. Thus, researchers can develop a richer and deeper understanding of aesthetic experience, reflecting the complexity of interactions between individuals and artworks.

Therefore, investigative procedures in phenomenology-based art research constitute a robust methodological framework for exploring aesthetic experience. By applying the stages of stratified reduction, imaginative variation techniques, and protocol description methods, researchers can develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the meaning and value inherent in artworks. This approach not only enriches the study of art but also contributes significantly to the development of phenomenological methodologies in the context of art research.

Phenomenological Validation

Phenomenological research in art necessitates a robust validation framework to ensure the quality, credibility, and academic rigor of its findings. This validation is fundamentally linked to three interconnected components: descriptive adequacy, internal consistency of meaning structures, and intersubjectivity of aesthetic experience. These three components collectively form a crucial methodological foundation, enabling art researchers to generate nuanced knowledge, accurately reconstruct complex aesthetic experiences, and contribute to a culturally valid and academically responsible understanding of art.

Descriptive adequacy in art phenomenology refers to the researcher's primary ability to accurately and comprehensively describe aesthetic experiences without oversimplifying their inherent complexity (Bouzioti 2023, pp. 1-14). This criterion mandates unwavering fidelity to the phenomenon precisely as it appears in the subject's consciousness, actively preventing the imposition of external theoretical interpretations that could distort the original and authentic meaning of the aesthetic experience. An adequate descriptive process critically requires the implemen-

tation of *epoché*, or the suspension of the natural attitude, wherein researchers systematically set aside personal judgments and *a priori* assumptions about the art object under study (Smith & Osborn 2016, pp. 25-52).

Internal consistency of meaning structures emphasizes the coherence and inherent unity of meanings emerging from phenomenological analysis (Giorgi & Giorgi 2003, pp. 243-273). The structure of meaning within aesthetic experience is not atomistic; rather, it possesses a complex and intricately interconnected internal organization. Researchers must consistently and logically identify and articulate these nuanced meaning structures, meticulously ensuring that the analysis culminates in a complete and unified understanding. Internal consistency does not imply uniformity; instead, it strongly demonstrates the capacity to unveil diverse and interrelated dimensions of aesthetic experience that genuinely form a coherent totality of meaning (Peebles 2021, pp. 5455-5477).

Intersubjectivity of aesthetic experience acknowledges that, despite its inherently subjective nature, aesthetic experience possesses communicable and understandable structures that can be meaningfully shared among individuals (Gerber 2016, pp. 30-40; Chilton et al. 2015, pp. 1-33). Intersubjectivity in art phenomenology does not indicate a search for universal consensus but highlights the profound possibility for sharing and understanding aesthetic experiences through precise articulation and deep, empathetic reflection. These three components, descriptive adequacy, internal consistency, and intersubjectivity, are inherently interconnected and indispensable in art research practice, with their simultaneous and integrative implementation vital for producing high-quality phenomenological art research.

Implementation of Research in the Arts

The application of phenomenological principles in various art forms is complex, posing significant challenges in translating abstract concepts into concrete research de-

signs. This overview presents how phenomenological principles are implemented in art research, drawing upon four studies: Mikalonytė & Kneer (2025)'s "The Folk Concept of Art," Burley's (2021) "'That's What Art Does': Revealing the Possibilities of Religion and Ethics Through Film," Grant (2020)'s "Art and Achievement," and Caldarola & Leñador (2024)'s "On Affective Installation Art." These studies demonstrate how researchers explore intentionality, epoche, lived experience, description, and the revelation of meaning as central to their inquiries.

Intentionality

Intentionality in phenomenology posits that consciousness is always directed toward something; it is always "about" or "of" an object that is interpreted, perceived, and given meaning by the subject. Mikalonytė & Kneer (2025) explicitly address "intentional creation" as a feature of art manipulated in experiments to observe its effect on the public's concept of art. They also allude to the historical-intentional view, which necessitates "artistic intention" for a work to be considered art. Their findings indicate that intentional actions significantly influence judgments of whether a painting is deemed art. Furthermore, attributing belief, desire, and intention to produce a work of art strongly correlates with the assessment of the object as art and its creator as an artist.

Burley (2021) highlights how the director of "Dead Man Walking" asserted that the film was "much more than propaganda for a specific purpose," signaling a deeper intention beyond direct advocacy. This distinguishes a philosophical approach of advocacy from a contemplative one, where the latter aims to "facilitate a broader understanding of the various possible positions" rather than promoting a specific stance, implying diverse authorial intentions.

Grant (2020) examines "achievement theory" in art, suggesting that the excellence of some artworks stems partly from their being achievements. This implicitly

acknowledges the artist's deliberate effort or skill, referring to "the superiority of the perception and actions of artists, including their mental actions," as a factor in artistic value. Caldarola & Leñador (2024) introduce "affective artifacts" designed to alter an agent's affective state, demonstrating a focus on deliberate design. Examples such as comedy films intended to evoke cheerfulness illustrate the intentionality behind their creation.

Epoche

The concept of epoche, or bracketing, involves suspending judgments or assumptions about the external world's existence to focus on the experience itself. It is an attempt to approach a phenomenon without pre-existing prejudices or theories. While Mikalonytė & Kneer (2025) do not explicitly use "epoche," their study of the "concept of folk art" can be interpreted as a form of restraint. They aim to illustrate how people do think about art, rather than prescribing how they should, involving a "restraint" from philosophical theory to observe folk concepts.

Burley (2021) directly discusses "contemplative philosophy," which seeks to "do conceptual justice to the world in all its diversity" without assuming to mediate between competing perspectives for a universal standard of rationality. Contemplative philosophers "pay attention to the peculiarities of various points of view while trying to prevent their values from distorting phenomena," aligning closely with the epoche principle. In contrast, Grant (2020) and Caldarola & Leñador (2024) do not explicitly address epoche. Both analyze art through specific theoretical frameworks ("achievement theory" and "affective artifacts," respectively) and do not attempt to defer judgment to direct experience, thus not fully reflecting the phenomenological aspect in terms of epoche.

Lived Experience

Lived experience is a core focus of phenomenological research, aiming to understand how phenomena emerge in

the subject's consciousness as they are. Mikalonytė & Kneer (2025) empirically investigated how participants judged artwork, implying direct engagement with stimuli. Their findings suggest that the concept of art is formed based on domain-sensitive experiences, leading to an aesthetic view of functionalism that defines art by its ability to meet the needs of aesthetic experience.

Burley (2021) emphasizes how narrative artworks, particularly films, serve as "sources for, and perhaps as an example, of philosophical thought." "Dead Man Walking" is used as a case study to demonstrate how film facilitates a "better understanding of certain concepts" through audience engagement. Anecdotes about student responses illustrate how art influences individual experiences and thoughts, leading to diverse interpretations. The idea that art "brings the appreciator to the side of suffering and joy [and] brings the appreciator to take suffering and joy as a foothold for contemplation" underscores the emphasis on lived experience in phenomenological research.

Grant (2020) compares achievement theory with "experientialism," which explains artistic value by "referring to the value of the experience offered by the work of art." While focusing on art as an achievement, the alternative view considered still touches upon the experience of art. Caldarola & Leñador (2024) center their research on the "affective character" of installation art and how it "expands knowledge about the affective life of its appreciators." This research indicates that installation art contributes to "identity building." They discuss how affective artifacts alter agents' affective states, "often through direct manipulation of objects." Interactions with installation art, such as touching an ice block in "Ice Watch," are depicted as directly influencing affective reactions like sadness and guilt, highlighting lived experience as crucial in phenomenological art research.

Description

Description, as a phenomenological principle, involves accurately and detailedly recounting experiences without interpretation or causal explanation. Mikalonytė & Kneer (2025) described the concept of folk art based on experimental results, distinguishing between essentialist and non-essentialist definitions to see which best fit people's concepts. Their study illustrates how different properties (intentional creation, aesthetic value, and institutional recognition) affect the evaluation of something as art.

Burley (2021) uses description to explain how film can reveal "the possibilities of the senses" or "possible ways of seeing things, understanding the world, which may, otherwise, remain unclear." Burley argues that art's descriptive function is central to the "contemplative approach" to philosophy, as description seeks to explain various entities in possible positions. Grant (2020) aims to "articulate the theory of achievement in a more complete and explicit way," explaining how it clarifies the difference in artistic value between an original painting and a perfect copy. This description also delineates "excellence," which includes "qualities as a manifestation of dexterity, courage, and imagination for the creator artist." Caldarola & Leñador (2024) describe the affective core of some installation artworks, discussing the "affective character of six works of installation art" and demonstrating "how they can reveal aspects of who we are as human beings." They also explain how "Ice Watch" triggers feelings of sadness and guilt by conveying information about global warming resulting from human actions.

Revelation of Meaning

A vital principle in phenomenological research is focusing on how meaning is ascribed to experiences and phenomena by subjects. Meaning is not an objective entity external to experience but emerges within the experience itself. Mikalonytė & Kneer (2025) sought to understand what ordinary people identify as art and the un-

derlying concepts. They explored whether folk concepts are essentialist, cluster, or disjunctive, relating to how meaning is associated with art by non-experts.

Burley (2021) argues for film's importance in "explaining the possibilities of the senses rather than evaluating the 'claim of truth.'" The core idea is that art allows for "a broader understanding of the various possible positions." Art also fosters a better understanding of concepts such as faith, truth, and love, which can be studied by focusing on the process of meaning-making for individuals. Grant (2020) focuses on explaining "why some works of art are good works of art" and determining "artistic value." For Grant, meaning relates to the value and quality associated with the artwork. He also posits that there is a basis for achieving the quality of artworks, enabling them to demonstrate excellence and talent. Caldarola & Leñador (2024) focus on how installation art, as an affective artifact, contributes to understanding "who we are as human beings." They also believe that installation expands "knowledge of affective life." The meaning derived from interaction with art is central, especially in how art evokes feelings like sadness and guilt and connects to broader social issues such as global warming.

While not all presented studies explicitly use phenomenological terminology, many of their discussions, particularly those concerning subjective experience, creator/viewer intentions, and meaning-making processes, strongly resonate with the principles of phenomenological research. Among them, Burley's (2021) research most closely aligns with the concept of epoche and emphasizes direct experience in understanding meaning.

CONCLUSIONS

Phenomenological research offers a comprehensive and robust methodological framework for understanding aesthetic experience, inherently encompassing both subjective and objective dimensions. This framework is anchored in four core

principles: phenomenological epoch and reduction, aesthetic awareness, intentionality, phenomenological description, and eidetic intuition.

Methodologically, phenomenological research in art studies demands adherence to specific guidelines that ensure depth, authenticity, and scientific integrity. This involves cultivating a phenomenological attitude, which necessitates liberation from natural attitudes, openness to phenomena without theoretical predispositions, and rigorous methodological reflectivity. Essential systematic investigative procedures include layered reduction stages in the analysis of artworks, imaginative variation techniques for identifying essences, and protocol description methods for aesthetic experience. Finally, phenomenological validation is achieved through descriptive sufficiency, internal consistency of meaning structures, and the intersubjectivity of aesthetic experience.

The implementation of these phenomenological principles in art research emphasizes intentionality, epoché, lived experience, description, and the expression of meaning. Specifically on: 1) Intentionality: Consciousness is consistently directed toward the art object, deriving meaning from it; 2) Epoché: Researchers must suspend prior assumptions and judgments to approach the experience without prejudice; 3) Lived Experience: The focus is on how phenomena directly arise within the subject's consciousness; 4) Description: The experience must be accurately and meticulously described without interpretation or causal explanation; 5) Meaning Expression: Research aims to understand how meaning is ascribed to experiences and phenomena by the subject.

This approach empowers art researchers to address the complexity of aesthetic experience, bridging the gap between scientific rigor and aesthetic sensibility. Ultimately, it fosters a richer and deeper understanding of how art is experienced and interpreted.

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