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VARIA

THE AESTHETIC-HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE. REGARDING FRANK ANKERSMIT'S CONCEPT

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Introduction

The human exists as a historical (or rather "historicized") being because it belongs to a community that was formed before its birth and will continue after its death. In a certain sense, we are experiencing history all the time; one might even venture to say that our life in its essence is also a historical experience as a result of its occurrence at a particular moment in history.[1] The very phrase "historical experience" may be perceived as a paradox, because one experiences something present here and now, which I can see, hear, feel, etc., while history concerns something that was, and is therefore absent and cannot be experienced.[2] Perhaps this is the reason for the common tendency of historians to observe history while suspending the fact of being these historical entities, and thus to do their work in a detached manner. They treat the past like an object of scientific research—from an extremely external perspective, as a deconstructible object of analysis, separated from them, their experiences, their feelings. In this approach, the personal factor, so to speak, is regarded as something that distorts historical truth and consequently devalues

[1] Cf. Carr, David, "History and Experience". In D. Carr, *Historical Experience: Essays on the Phenomenology of History*, New York, 2021, p. 166.

[2] Díaz Maldonado, Rodrigo, "Historical Experience as a Mode of Comprehension", *The Journal of the Philosophy of History*, No. 13(1), 2019, p. 86. Philosophers of history who consider the problem of experience in relation to the writing of historical texts from outside an epistemological perspective include Martin Jay, Hayden White, Hans Grumbecht, Joan Scott, Eelca Runia and Frank Ankersmit, among others. Cf. ibid.

the significance of historical experience somewhat "tainted" by the historian's personal point of view.

Realistically, this laboratory objectivity is impossible to achieve in research, whose subject is a matter as particular as the past, which cannot be directly experienced (unless one is a first-hand participant in past events or their bystander observer). However, we also indirectly experience history through our direct, subjective experience of the reality and the events taking place in our surroundings, our interactions with people and other social or institutional creations that do not have a tangible form (such as the law, the financial system, trends, social movements),[3] but above all—through an interaction with the material products of our culture. Buildings, squares, streets, paintings, sculptures, books, photographs, chronicles, tapestries, costumes, etc.—any kind of cultural texts, whether they are considered works of art or not, organize the space in which we move and operate.[4] Each of these objects has its own horizon of the past, given to us as we experience them in the present as individuals, with only our own perception, emotions, personal existential baggage, and so forth.

In this article, in order to present the role played by the perception of the individual subject in contact with the past, which can be accessed both by interacting with a historical document and with a work of art, I will examine the concept of experiencing history proposed by Frank Ankersmit. The researcher explains the idea with the use of an analysis of Francesco Guardi's (1712–1793) capriccio *Arcade with a Lantern* and a Rococo embellishment from an etching by Jean Bérain (1640–1711), showing the parallels between the historical experience and the aesthetic one. I will look into the analysis of the first of the aforementioned works, as the author considers its formal and semantic structures identical with the characteristics that define what he understands as subjective historical experience.[5] Following Jonathan Clark, who presents the ontological implications of Ankersmit's theory, I will investigate the relationship between historical and aesthetic experience and the factors that shape the relationship between subject and object of experience. Lastly, using my

[3] Carr, op. cit., p. 166.

[4] Ibid., p. 157.

[5] Ankersmit, Frank, "Subjective Historical Experience: The Past as Elegy". In F. Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, Stanford, 2005, p. 285.

own example, I will demonstrate how the past can be experienced by interacting with a work of art, in which the past is "sifted through" the experience of an artist who did not live in the times to which he refers. Through a brief analysis of a contemporary architectural work, I will explain how the past can be experienced in the way the author experienced it, i.e. when his or her historical experience is present in ours, the aesthetic one.

Ankersmit and Guardi

Frank Ankersmit distinguished three types of historical experience: 1. *objective historical experience*; 2. *subjective historical experience*; and 3. *sublime historical experience*. Objective historical experience is associated with reception of the past "here and now"—it relates to the means by which people in the past experienced the world, and thus concerns direct participants in historical events and eyewitnesses. On the other hand, subjective historical experience involves a situation in which "the past has already acquired its independence from the present"[6] and, as the object of the historian's research, results in a fusion of past and present. Prior to exploring this in greater detail, we should briefly address the category of sublime historical experience.

The sublime historical experience is one where the past somehow detaches from the present. Ankersmit associates it with the acute sense of loss experienced by the historian, resulting from the fact that the previous world has irretrievably disappeared. In such instances, the historian is able to see the workings of the vortex of "unfathomable powers" into which humankind has been thrown, and to convey this in their writings. "In such cases, the historian's mind is somewhat the scene, on which the drama of the world is enacted".[7] The reason for this is that through this experience the historian becomes part of what he or she is describing—the almost tragic disjunction between the present and the past—and what will become an expression of his or her own experience of the past. In the sublime historical experience, the subject appears almost as a bard who has discovered the secret truth of how the world works.

It is worth noting that the three experiences mentioned above can intertwine. For example, the memories of a former concentration camp prisoner

[6] Ibid., p. 264.
[7] Ibid., p. 265.

(objective historical experience) may absorb and fascinate me to such an extent that they begin to resonate in my mind (subjective historical experience), while evoking a sense of loss and disorientation—and it is my experience of the past that I can convey in, for example, an insightful academic essay on the Second World War (sublime historical experience).[8] As we can see, the role of the individual subject, who in historical experience "merges" with what he or she experiences, is fundamental for Ankersmit. Justifiably, the author draws on the example of the *Arcade with a Lanter*'s capriccio by Guardi (see Figs. 1 and 2), a piece that is not outstanding but, as it will become clear shortly, particularly relevant, both for personal and research reasons.

Ankersmit discusses—as he calls them—the formal and semantic frictions in this painting. Among the compositional techniques used by Gaurdi, he mentions: 1. the contrast between the weight of the top of the painting and its bottom, emphasized by the light colonnade (it makes you want to turn the painting upside down, the author says); 2. the elongation of the left wall towards the small dome in the background and its displacement further right towards the intersection of the lines on the horizon; 3. the creation of a quasi-tunnel by the arcade and the walls, which suggests a great distance from the intersection point while seeming to bring it closer to the viewer. All of these effects constitute "improbable probability" and are caused by the juxtaposition of the presumed location in the painting of the observer viewing what is happening in the painting and the perspective from which he or she is viewing it. This play with perspective causes the intersection point, located where the ship's mast crosses the horizon, to be at odds with how we are drawn to the left side of the image.[9]

However, Ankersmit cites a friction of a semantic nature as the most important one in Guardi's capriccio: the clash between the sharp Mediterranean sun in the background and the dark foreground of the painting. An element fundamental to the mood evoked by the juxtaposition of the two—using film terms—shots is the stream of light on the ceiling of the arcade, on the lower left side, which will narrow as the day progresses. For Ankersmit, it is "a kind of natural sundial objectively and impassively registering the regime of day and night that is supremely indifferent to all human action and endeavor as

[8] Cf. ibid., p. 266.
[9] Ankersmit, op. cit., pp. 268–269.

Fig. 1–2. *Arcade with a Lantern*, capriccio by Francesco Guardi, circa mid-17th century

symbolized by cooking, eating, and drinking Pulcinellas below it."[10] This particular element struck Ankersmit because he recognized in it something he had once known and felt himself, but had now forgotten—a prevailing mood of boredom and stagnation. When he first saw the work, it "triggered in [him] an openness to the experience to this specific aspect of Guardi's painting."[11] Well, as a child he was ill very frequently, so he had to spend a lot of time at home, in bed, away from his friends who were playing outside. This situation made him feel excluded and gave him a strong sense of lethargy and boredom. At such moments, Ankersmit writes, when one feels eternally trapped, interaction between a person and the world is suspended, and the reality "manifest[s] its true nature."[12]

[10] Ibid., p. 276.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., p. 286.

The compositional distortions caused by the play with perspective and the viewer's perception and the visual contrasts (weight—lightness, darkness—brightness) "seem to define the walls of a prison within which our feelings have been incarcerated."[13] This prison of perception gives us access to the mood of the *ancien régime*—boredom precisely, or at least to one of the moods of this historical period, as significant as our own moods for ourselves. Ankersmit argues as follows: "Our moods are the frame within which all our experiences of the world are enclosed, and so it is with historical periods."[14] And he adds:

> So when a painting, such as the Guardi's capriccio, has its "resonance" (to use the most appropriate metaphor here) in a mood of our own, our own mind will find itself in agreement with the sound timbre or color of historical period, and then we are closer to it than we can ever come; […] [T]he "mood" of a painting may strike us far more directly and with much greater intensity than anything we actually see in it.[15]

For constructivist or positivist historians, only a conclusion based on tangible evidence has the value of a historical source. For Ankersmit, what can bring us closer to an era than an object from the past is the mood contained in a work of art, which resembles the invisible sound of music—we hear it within us, in our ears, while we always perceive things from a distance.[16] For in the subjective historical experience, a personal reaction to an image or historical artifact can reveal something that no one was aware of before, and which can redefine our relationship with the past. This is revealed only to us because we are who we are and will not resonate with anyone else. It is reminiscent of the work of an actor who uses their experience to empathize and embody the character they are playing and to complete it with their own personality. According to Ankersmit, this abrupt suspension between past and present is only possible when the subject and the object of experience are in mutual contact with each other, which is not mediated by the epistemological schema of language, historiographical tradition, or ethical and ideological

[13] Ibid., p. 272.
[14] Ibid., p. 274. Author's emphasis.
[15] Ibidem. Author's emphasis.
[16] Ibidem, p. 274.

prejudices that determine the content of historical experience and thus destroy its directness and immediate nature.[17]

Artwork: the door of perception

Ankersmit's personal experience grants him access to the past conveyed in the representation created by Guardi on the basis of his own experience of an era. In this sense, historical experience resembles aesthetic experience, especially if it occurs when the subject perceive a historical object of aesthetic value—in this case, an intentional object[18] created by an artist. In Ankersmit's view, historical experience does not only resemble aesthetic experience but can even be regarded as a version of it.[19] Jonathan Clark went a step further: he merges subjective historical experience with aesthetic experience and uses the phrase "aesthetic-historical experience." In this view, a work of art (literary text, painted image, film, or sculpture) is an equivalent source of historical truth to, for instance, chronicles or letters. The work of art is like the tunnel of Guardi's capriccio created by the arcade vault and the play with perception—it guides our gaze and forces us to look through it and focus on the other

[17] See Clark, Jonathan Owen, "Aesthetic Experience, Subjective Historical Experience, and the Problem of Constructivism", p. 1, Academia.edu, https://www.academia.edu/3044494/Aesthetic_Experience_Subjective_Historical_Experience_and_the_Problem_of_Constructivism. Accessed on July 10, 2024.

[18] I use the term as defined by Roman Ingarden, who identifies as an intentional object "any object that is a product and a correlate of consciousness," "it has a two-sided structure, it is formed by an intentional structure and content." See Sosnowski, Leszek, "przedmiot intencjonalny." In *Słownik pojęć filozoficznych Romana Ingardena* [en. *Dictionary of Philosophical Concepts by Roman Ingarden*], M. Gołaszewska et al. (eds.), Krakow, 2001, p. 220. An intentional object is a work of art that "is born in the artist's mind; in the form of this more or less clear vision, it is an intentional object accessible only to the author. To become an intersubjectively accessible object, the artist's vision must become real (must be embodied) in some form of material object." See Makota, Janina, "dzieło sztuki" [en. Work of Art]. In ibid., p. 33.

[19] Frank Ankersmit draws on John Dewey's theory of aesthetic experience, explicated in his book *Art as Experience* (1934): "We should note, in this connection [with Dewey's theory], that historical experience can be seen as a variant of aesthetic experience. For not only is historical experience most often effected by works of art from the past; but, more important, the submission of our perceptual apparatus to the object of experience is the defining feature of both historical and aesthetic experience". See Ankersmit, Frank, "Representation as Representation of Experience," *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 31(1–2), 2000, pp. 161–162. Available at Wiley Online Library, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-9973.00134. Accessed on July 17, 2024.

side, on what is beyond it—i.e. the reality of the past itself. Ankersmit argues that although his personal experience has enabled him to dispel, as he puts it, the "clouds of contextualization"[20] and to see the past "as it is or was," it does not mean that the historical experience has been disrupted by that of his own. On the contrary: it provides the means by which such experience can be evoked, because this is the factor that makes it somewhat possible to suspend one's own ego, to liberate oneself from the context, and to surrender entirely to the object of experience. Like aesthetic experience, subjective historical experience is "complete in itself" and in order for it to occur, a context of knowledge and theory that "kills its authenticity" is not necessary.[21] Ankersmit states that:

> great and valuable historical insights will always have their roots in historians' "unintentional and unconscious mémoires"—in their experience [...]— and historians forsake the most valuable instrument at their disposal, as historians, when they refuse to make use of them. So I am recommending historians to trust, under such admittedly most unusual circumstances, themselves rather than Theory [...]."[22]

We are "defenseless against the scheme of thought," but when we find ourselves in harmonious alignment with the work—i.e., when in our "mind possessing a kaleidoscopic variety of forms of which one suddenly matches one of the past itself"[23] —we disassemble its compositional, linguistic and conceptual patterns and see what is beyond them. The art with which we interact is, to refer to Viktor Shklovsky, a ploy that deautomatizes our perception.[24] Moreover, Shklovsky claimed that the aim of art is to "give sensation

[20] Simply put, it is the context of our knowledge of the world, language, thought patterns, theories, traditions, prejudices, etc., through the prism of which we look at the world and through which we filter what we see, feel and hear in order to make sense of it and to put it into concepts.

[21] Ibid., p. 278.

[22] Ibid., p. 283. Author's emphasis.

[23] Ibid., p. 277.

[24] Szkłowski, Wiktor, "Sztuka jako chwyt" [en. Art as Device]. In *Teorie literatury XX wieku. Antologia* [en. Theories of 20th Century Literature: An Anthology], A. Burzyńska, M.P. Markowski (eds.), Krakow, 2006, pp. 95–111.

to things in the form of seeing rather than comprehending"[25] and to abandon perception determined by the "algebraic method of thinking", under the influence of which "the thing perishes in sensation."[26] Hence, it is a matter of liberation from the automatism of thinking, from the context, to which referred Ankersmit, who sees the human experience (unique, precisely because everyone is an entirely unique individual with a different existential baggage)—one might say—as a device that makes perception in historical experience uncommon and more bizarre.

In aesthetic-historical experience, an ontological reciprocity exists between the subject and the object, indicating that

> the human subject, as a brain-body, is immersed in a physical world which is mind-independent, but which itself determines the conditions for the subject's continued survival. At the same time, the nature of this physical world (what we might call t h e p h e n o m e n a l world) is shaped by the subject's innate cognitive and motor abilities […].[27]

It means that the relationship between the world and the human is based on his perception, action and knowledge, which is the result of his "interaction with the world embodied in experience."[28] What is significant in this conception, is the emphasis on the sensory aspect of contact with reality, from which the processing of external stimuli into concepts and data begins. Drawing from Paul Crowther, Clark claims we also acquire a range of cognitive and sensorimotor skills that we use unconsciously. They are not related to the reasoning that is part of the act of perception, i.e., they are not inherently linguistic, but rather practical.[29] These pre-conscious factors that determine the relationship between the subject and the world are called phenomenological depth factors. They include:

[25] Ibid., p. 100.

[26] Ibid.

[27] See Clark, op. cit., p. 4. The author draws on Paul Crowther's *Phenomenology of Visual Arts (Even the Frame)* (2009) and *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness* (2001).

[28] Ibid., p. 7. Clark cites here Ankersmit. See Ankersmit, *Sublime Historical Experience*, chapter "(Pragmatist) Aesthetic Experience and Historical Experience," Stanford, 2005, p. 248.

[29] Cf. Clark, op. cit., p. 5.

a tacit relationality (hidden orderings of the perceptual field, based on our current positioning, which organize how we are aware of some but not all of the items present to consciousness at once, combined with the move from perception to apperception[30]); virtual aspects of perception (how our perception of an object depends, for example, on the ideational simulation of other perceptions of the same object that are not currently present in experience); practical knowledge of the affordances[31] of objects (or the pre-conscious awareness of the properties of objects that enable potential ways to enact with them).[32]

Therefore, when interacting with a historical object, it is important to consider how I perceive it, the possibilities it offers for use (affordance), the way it might be perceived (taking into account absent points of view—virtual aspects of perception), and what point of view is indicated by its structural elements (implicit relation). Its contemplation thus also becomes a (self-)reflection on the bare process of experiencing it.

Ankersmit discusses the subjective experience of history using the example of 18th and 17th century works created by artists who lived in those times and who were thus able to convey in their art the mood they themselves experienced. But what about contemporary works that address the past? Can we experience history, or the mood of an era, in pieces that do not originate from such time and the mood of which the artist did not directly experience? An affirmative answer to this question can be found in Peter Eisenman's *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* from 2005 (see Fig. 3). What

[30] Apperception (from Latin *ad-* "to, toward" + *percipere* – "perceive, understand, gain") is a process of "integrating the content of consciousness into imaginary relations [Pol. 'związki wyobrażeniowe']." See Andruszkiewicz, Adam, "apercepcja." In *Słownik filozofii*, Warszawa, 2004, p. 35. In psychology, apperception refers to "the process of comprehending a perception by integrating it with similar or related perceptions or previously acquired knowledge; also the awareness of the act or experience of perceiving, or self-consciousness in contrast to perception". See Colman, Andrew M., "Apperception." In *A Dictionary of Psychology*, 1st edition, New York, 2001, p. 49.

[31] Affordance is "a term coined in 1977 by the US psychologist James Jerome Gibson (1904–79) to refer to a resource or support provided by the environment to an organism, furnishing or affording the organism with an opportunity to act in a particular way. Examples of affordances include a surface that affords physical support, an edible substance that affords an opportunity to eat, and the positioning of an outstretched hand that affords the prospect of shaking hands." See Colman, "Affordance." In *A Dictionary of Psychology*, op. cit., pp. 16–17.

[32] Clark, op. cit., p. 5.

plays the pivotal role in this memorial, is the individual reaction of the perceiving subject, somatically involved in the reception of the work constituting the "tunnel" through which one can see—or rather feel—the truth about the reality of the past, "as it is or was." In the following example, the way in which an object is seen is strongly related to the condition of the corporeal subjectivity of the human being, who, as Richard Shusterman says, "thinks with his body" and shapes his knowledge of the world to a great extent in active interaction with the surrounding environment, other objects, and bodies.[33] This is particularly evident in architectural works, for which the body provides the basic model for the relationships captured in their design. For instance, the body provides the point of reference for the experience of space and determines the directions and perspective from which we observe our surroundings. Furthermore, our ability to move allows us to determine distance and proximity, which in architectural design define the visual and multisensory effects associated with the sensation of space and distance.[34] This openness of architecture to the senses is skillfully utilized by Eisenman in the memorial described in the following paragraph.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is an installation of 2,711 concrete blocks spread over an area of more than 19,000 m² in the area of Berlin city center. Resembling coffins or tombstones, the rectangles are of equal width (0.95 m) and length (2.38 m) and vary in height, ranging from about 20 cm to 4.7 meters. Cobbled paths run between them, not exceeding one meter in width.[35] As we enter the memorial, the blocks get higher with every step we

[33] Shusterman, Richard, "Myślenie poprzez ciało. Rozwinięcie nauk humanistycznych – uzasadnienie dla somaestetyki" [en. "Thinking Through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics"], translated into Polish by S. Stankiewicz, p. 48, Florida Atlantic University, https://www.fau.edu/artsandletters/humanitieschair/pdf/shusterman-s-45-60-polish-translation-of-thinking-through-the-body.pdf. Accessed on July 20, 2024.

[34] See Shusterman, Richard, "Somaesthetics and Architecture: A Critical Option." In *Architecture in the Age of Empire. 11th International Bauhaus-Colloquium*, K. Faschinger, K. Jormakka, N. Korrek, O. Pfeifer, G. Zimmermann (eds.), Weimar, 2009, pp. 288–290.

[35] See Majewska, Justyna Ewa, "Pomnik Pomordowanych Żydów Europy w Berlinie [en. *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin*]," July 5, 2013, Histmag.org, https://histmag.org/Pomnik-Pomordowanych-Zydow-Europy-w-Berlinie-8119. Accessed on July 30, 2024. And Brody, Richard, "The Inadequacy of Berlin's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*," July 12, 2012, *The New Yorker*, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/

Fig. 3. Peter Eisenman's *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin (2005)

take, making it seem as if we are drowning in an ashen sea of *Stelenfeld* [en. "Fields of Stelae"]. The narrow alleys and gradually rising blocks, their multitude in a large space, reminiscent of a labyrinth or a graveyard from which it is not easy to get out, evoke anxiety, a sense of danger, and growing panic—all the feelings that accompanied the victims of the Holocaust. These sensations are strengthened when one comes to visit the memorial with company (with family and/or friends), who fan out across the square and then call their names between the stelae. The echo is then carried throughout the installation; immersed in the shadow of the cold obelisks, we hear them but do not see them. When the parents are separated from their child, the panic becomes real both for them and for the child; they are in a similar situation to one of the thousands of Jewish families that Eisenman's work commemorates.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe explicitly demonstrates that in the act of concretizing the work, without a thorough knowledge of the history of the Second World War, anyone, even a child, can, through their own

the-inadequacy-of-berlins-memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe. Accessed on July 30, 2024.

experiences stored in their memory and body, become a subject of historical experience.

Conclusions

Although Ankersmit's conception of experiencing history implies a separation between experience and language,[36] it does not contradict Boris Uspenskij's cultural and semiotic approach to history, which he sees as a narrative text. In his view, it reconstructs "an imaginary system that conditions both the reception of various [historical] events and the reaction to them."[37] For both Ankersmit and Uspenskij, history is a process involving the past and the present, in which "present" as well as "absent" participants are involved. We, the contemporaries, are part of the same historical process as the direct participants in the events and the bystanders watching them at the time. How we perceive an event today, how it is commemorated today, as well as the act of commemorating it itself, are all elements of the historical process, and we—one might say—are bystanders post factum.

In this process, the perception of the individual subject plays a key role: it participates in the process of concretization of an artwork, transforming it into an aesthetic object.[38] Moreover, there are no such things as more or less objective receptions of the past—rather, they are all "contaminated" by our individual perception (we should add: so firmly rooted in our corporeality[39]).

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[36] A proposed solution as to how to combine experience with language in Ankersmit's conception is provided by Rodrigo Díaz Maldonado in his article "Historical Experience as Mode of Comprehension." See. Díaz Maldonado, op. cit.

[37] Uspienski, Boris, "Historia i semiotyka. Percepcja czasu jako problem semiotyczny" [en. "History and Semiotics. Time Perception as a Semiotic Problem"]. In B. Uspienski, *Historia i semiotyka* [en. History and Semiotics], translated into Polish by B. Żyłko, Gdańsk, 1998, p. 21

[38] It should be noted that an artwork is not the same thing as an aesthetic object. The latter is a result of the reception of the work and its concretization, "which is conditioned by an adoption of an aesthetic attitude oriented towards the aesthetic qualities of the work. [...] Ingarden states: 'The aesthetic object constitutes the particular, value-laden face in which the work of art appears, and is at the same time the fulfillment of one of the possibilities of its full (or at least more complete) definition'". See Sosnowski, "przedmiot estetyczny" [en. "Aesthetic Object"]. In *Słownik pojęć*, p. 213 .

[39] Shusterman emphasizes what John Dewey wrote in *Art and Experience*: "'biological' factors create 'sources of aesthetics,' thus shaping even our most spiritual experience of fine arts and imaginative thinking." See Shusterman, Richard, „Odnowienie somatycznej refleksji. Filozofia ciało-umysłu Johna Deweya" [en. Renewing Somatic Reflection. John Dewey's

At the same time, it is this "contamination" that liberates us—cultural studies and history researchers—from the burden of a methodological and theoretical context and deautomatizes our perception. The conclusion can be drawn that history which one experiences as an aesthetic object constitutes a historical experience. Naturally, history is not, in the Ingardenian sense, an intentional object (with the exception of being an object of a historian's research). Whether one looks at war photographs, reads diaries, chronicles, or artistic cultural texts (such as films, plays, sculptures, or paintings), history merges with aesthetics and, as a result, evokes an aesthetic-historical experience. It seems that Ankersmit calls for experiencing history as a work of art, from an inner perspective, involving an individual experience, instead of treating it as if it were an object under a microscope in a laboratory. The experienced past not only becomes closer to us, but also transforms into the present because it is "within us."

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The Aesthetic-Historical Experience. Regarding Frank Ankersmit's Concept

This paper discusses Frank Ankersmit's concept of historical experience and the pivotal role of historical subject's individual perception in experiencing the past. The author delves into Ankermit's analysis of Francesco Guardi's 18th-century capriccio *Arcade with a Lantern*,

an artwork whose structure, according to the historian, is identical with defining features of what he calls a subjective historical experience. Following the analogy of subjective historical experience and aesthetic experience and Jonathan Clark's ontological implications of Ankersmit's theory, the author explores the relationship between the subject and object of the experience. Finally, using the example of contemporary architectural work, it is demonstrated how interaction with an artwork enables us access to the past, even though its creator did not live in the times he refers to.

Keywords: aesthetic-historical experience; Frank Ankersmit; subjective historical experience; history; perception

Słowa kluczowe: doświadczenie estetyczno-historyczne; Frank Ankersmit; subiektywne doświadczenie historyczne; historia; percepcja

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