The primacy of the noematic. On the methodological relevance of art for phenomenology

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Abstract

As Husserl already noticed, artworks themselves have a phenomenological character. This means, however, that to experience artworks as phenomena no “*epoché*” and no “phenomenological reduction” is necessary. The leading question of my essay is whether, and possibly how, this observation can be methodologically generalized for understanding phenomena. I discuss if, and possibly how, a phenomenological reflection on art allows and even demands a general conception of phenomenology that nevertheless does not confuse artworks with phenomena in general. My intention is to show that and how phenomenality can be clarified with reference to its spatial character. Accordingly, works of architecture that are artworks will play a decisive role in my argument.

Keywords Phenomenology · Art · Perception · Architecture · Space

1 Art as Epoché

Art plays but a marginal role in Husserl’s phenomenology. Only once in his systematic writings, namely in *Ideas I*, Husserl discusses art, and he does so only quite briefly, pointing to the importance of poetry for imagination (“*Phantasie*”).¹ More extensively, and also in a more illuminating way, he refers to art in a letter addressed to the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal written on January 12th 1907. In this letter Husserl ponders the proximity of art, and in particular poetry, to phenomenological investigation. As he writes, works of art “translate us” or, as it were, “even force us” into a state of mind very similar to that of phenomenological viewing, insofar as they claim to be experienced without any “existential” positing.² Thus “purely

¹ Hua III.1. (1976, p. 148).

² Husserl (1994, pp. 133–136).

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aesthetical artworks” as Husserl calls them have as such a phenomenal character. Moreover, they initiate a change from the normal, everyday attitude of experience, the so-called “natural attitude,” to a quasi-phenomenological attitude that refrains from the factuality or reality of something and instead takes what it refers to as purely appearing. Art, like phenomenological investigation, is thus characterized by a refraining that Husserl calls “*epoché*.”³

Husserl did not pursue this consideration any further, so he did not attempt to investigate the very character of artworks in order to conceive their phenomenality in more detail. He seemed to be content with the parallel between phenomenological viewing and aesthetic experience, though he did not ascribe any epistemological relevance to the latter. Rather aesthetic or artistic experience is “pleasure.” So far as artists are concerned, aesthetic experience is a practice of imagination, an “intuitive appropriation” of the “world phenomenon” in order to acquire an “abundance of forms and materials for creative figuration.” For Husserl, artworks seem to be mainly, or even exclusively, manifestations of this creative process, and because of this they can stimulate the imaginary force of contemplators, readers, and listeners. Thus the phenomenal character of art is reduced to aesthetic imagination, which, again, is a process immanent to consciousness without any reference to something as belonging to the exterior world. It is because of this immanence that Husserl can draw a parallel between art—or, more precisely, aesthetic or artistic imagination—and phenomenological viewing, which is also a practice of pure “immanent” consciousness.⁴

As sketched, Husserl’s considerations on phenomenology and art are completely in line with his conception of phenomena as developed in the summary of a series of lectures later entitled *The Idea of Phenomenology*. According to Husserl’s explanation, the term “phenomenon” is ambiguous in virtue of the essential correlation between appearing (“*Erscheinen*”) and something that appears (“*Erscheinendes*”). Although, as Husserl adds, the Greek word *phainómenon* literally means “something that appears,” the word is preferentially used for appearing as such (“*das Erscheinen selbst*”), the subjective phenomenon (“*das subjective Phänomen*”), i.e., for the appearing of something in consciousness.⁵ Both phenomenological investigation and aesthetic or artistic imagination are such “subjective” appearances, to which something must be reduced in order to be experienced as phenomenon. Because both phenomenological investigation and art are thus independent possibilities of phenomenal experience, both can get along well without the other. So discovering the parallel between phenomenological viewing and aesthetic or artistic experience has no consequences for phenomenology as such.

However, in presupposing the subjective and “immanent” character of aesthetic experience, Husserl would have problems explaining his statement according to which works of art “translate us” and, as it were, “even force us” into a state of mind similar to that of phenomenological investigation. Artworks can only effect such a

³ Hua III.1. (1976, pp. 65–66).

⁴ Hua III.1. (1976, p. 104).

⁵ Hua II (1952, p. 14).

translation as objective entities—for instance as visible pictures, readable poems, or audible pieces of music. As such entities, they are not “immanent” to consciousness but exterior or, to use with Husserl’s term for the contrary of immanent, they are “transcendent.” As a consequence, the aesthetic version of phenomenal experience would be initiated by something that, according to Husserl’s understanding of phenomena, could not be phenomenal at all. Without being phenomenal, however, artworks could not initiate aesthetic phenomenal experience. Moreover, they must be phenomenal in character, since it is the creative phenomenal experience of artists that becomes manifest in artworks. So, if artworks, being “transcendent” entities, must have a phenomenal character, phenomenality could not be defined as necessarily immanent to consciousness.

This is a remarkable result, not least because it shows that Husserl himself, reflecting upon art, cannot avoid at least indirectly admitting the transcendence of phenomena, thus bringing his programmatic definition presented in *The Idea of Phenomenology* into serious difficulties. The transcendence of phenomena becomes even more important if Husserl’s conception of phenomena and phenomenology is no longer regarded as sacrosanct because doubts concerning the very possibility of “immanent consciousness” have been raised. Admittedly, it would not make sense to regard phenomena as something solely “objective.” Something can only appear as appearing *to someone*, and in this regard Husserl’s determination of phenomenality in reference to the “essential correlation between appearing and something that appears” is convincing. A phenomenon is neither just an entity nor a subjective impression. It is an appearance, and as such it includes both the “subjective” and the “objective” side. However, precisely because of their correlative character, phenomena must not be reduced to the “subjective” side as Husserl does, identifying “appearing” with the presence of something in consciousness. In order that something can be present for someone, it must really or objectively appear—otherwise it would not be a true appearance but rather something imagined or even a phantasmagoria or hallucination. In order to exclude this, appearances must be “objective,” and accordingly the “subjective” experience of something appearing cannot effectuate its appearance but can only *confirm* it. Or, to use Husserl’s terms for the “subjective” and “objective” side of the “essential correlation” he introduces in *Ideas I*: “noetic” experience presupposes something “noematic” as being “transcendent.” The noematic is prior to the noetic, and with artworks this priority becomes explicit. So to conclude, artworks must be conceived as transcendent phenomena initiating phenomenal experience and thus also allow or motivate reflective experience of phenomenality. As a consequence, they should be regarded as phenomena *par excellence* and thus as the leading paradigm of phenomenology.

This suggestion is, of course, no plea for reducing phenomenology to aesthetics or philosophy of art. Phenomenology can claim to be a general philosophical conception only if it is not limited to particular topics. Also, not every phenomenological investigation should be required to include a more or less extensive discussion of art. Discussions of art, however, would be indispensable for reflections on the very possibility of phenomenology itself. If artworks are phenomena *par excellence*, then they offer a potential for phenomenological self-clarification—in particular, for clarifying how phenomenality as such is to be conceived.

Phenomena, as it goes without saying also for Husserl, are appearances, necessarily appearing to someone. However, what is “appearance”? How can the appearing of an appearance most adequately be described? And how can artworks take the lead in answering these questions?

In order to get on with that, the understanding of art presupposed in the foregoing considerations should be explained. First, it should be emphasized that artworks can only function as a phenomenological paradigm in the way sketched if they are not merely determined as a class of entities neatly separated from other entities. To be phenomenologically relevant, they must not be taken as entities sharing properties with other entities, differing from the others thanks to some special class of properties—for instance, as when poems are understood as linguistic utterances of a certain kind; and similarly with paintings or pieces of music. Many poems, paintings, or pieces of music are no artworks at all, whereas many other things like vessels, buildings, gardens, installations, or stage designs and stage performances *can* be artworks. So, what tentatively might be called the “aesthetic quality” of something (or, to use the canonical term, its “beauty”) is not a matter of what something is or of which factual properties it has. For instance, in saying that a picture is an oil painting, painted on canvas, of a certain size, dating from a certain historical period, and—surely or likely—produced by a certain painter, one says nothing concerning the aesthetic quality of such a picture. The factual properties of a picture can be empirically verified or falsified and thus belong to its being, whereas aesthetic quality applies to appearing. It is, more precisely, an intensification of appearing. Though a picture’s character as an artwork cannot be verified or falsified, it can be experienced, and such experience, again, is not merely subjective. It can be shared with others and guided by an agreement concerning the picture’s aesthetic quality.

The foregoing characterization echoes a distinction essential for phenomenology, namely, the distinction between factual entities and phenomena and, correspondingly, between a “natural” and a phenomenological attitude. The distinction between the empirical qualities of something and its beauty, also the distinction essential for phenomenology, should be taken strictly, though not without taking into account that a phenomenological investigation devoted to the phenomenal character of something will not be able to ignore its factuality. Such investigation is similar to a discourse on something as beautiful, which is hardly possible without speaking of its empirical qualities. The beauty of a painting is that of a painting with particular empirical qualities; hence, its beauty cannot be described without reference to the painting’s determinateness, including its qualities. Likewise, the phenomenal character of something is that of something factual in whatever respect. In both cases, however, the crucial difference lies in being attentive to something different. Discussing the beauty of a painting, one is not primarily attentive to and interested in, for instance, its size; likewise, in investigating the phenomenal character of something, one does not intend to disclose its factual being. Rather, both aesthetic discourse and phenomenological investigation perform what Husserl calls *epoché*, and both do so not by ignoring the empirical or factual but rather by a kind of perspectival shift. The parallel sketched again indicates a coincidence of aesthetic and phenomenal quality—not in every case, however, but only in the case of an aesthetic intensification

of phenomenality. If intensified appearances can lead to an understanding of appearances as such, phenomenology should be concerned with this coincidence in order to explain phenomenality as such.

2 Phenomenology of Art and Phenomena in General

In concretizing such a phenomenological reflection, one should first of all stress that experience and conceptual clarification of artworks as beautiful things are not by chance called “aesthetical.” Deriving from the Greek word *aisthesis*, “perception,” the term indicates that aesthetic experience is *primarily perceptive*; paintings, for instance, should above all be viewed; accordingly, convincing interpretations will only be possible if based on attentive visual experience. So if artworks thus are experienced in their intensified phenomenality, phenomena in general must be primarily perceptible. The perceptible, again, is primarily *particular*. One does not perceive something in its determinateness as shared with other exemplars of the same kind, but only as the individual one has before one’s eyes. Hence individuals of intensified perceptibility, namely artworks, would be individualized to a comparatively high degree and accordingly should be taken first and foremost in their individuality, which, in turn, may disclose the individuality of everything appearing.

An artwork can only be an individual if it is *distinct* and, together with this, *separate* from other things so that it *sticks out* from the plurality of things or from a diffuse ground or background, at least to a certain degree. No picture would be a picture without delimitations, which accessorially can be accentuated by a frame; no piece of music could be listened to if it were mixed up with diffuse noise. Pictures that are artworks, then, would stand out especially clearly and thus draw attention. Nevertheless, artworks need not be showy; many of them will be modest in appearance or even show a tendency to inconspicuousness. They only must be recognizable as particular appearances—and so must be everything, to be experienced as appearing.

Something distinct, separate, and sticking out is necessarily *spatial*. In order to appear separately something must be separated from other things by at least some interspace. Thus, it is interspace that allows something to appear as individual and also as perceptible. Also, nothing can be perceived without the perceptible and the person perceiving being separated. Perceptibility and perception require distance, and distance is only possible in space.

Both aspects of distance—from other things, and between something experienced and the experiencing person—are especially relevant for artworks as intensified appearances. Such artworks are normally meant to appear optimally and thus (to the extent possible) under optimal conditions. In order to appear for contemplation, pictures need distance from disturbing surroundings and thus *free space*. Not by chance do curators organizing expositions care for appropriate rooms, or for an appropriate setting in given rooms, in order to allow pictures to appear as well as possible. In doing so they also provide free space for unimpaired contemplation. Music too needs free space to sound and to be experienced by those who are willing to listen.

The example of pictures exhibited in museums or galleries provides an opportunity to introduce an aspect of appearing not previously mentioned. Contemplating pictures, one normally does not stand still, standing away from the picture always at the same remove. Rather, one changes one's position in order to try different perspectives, thus confirming Husserl's insight that perception is "kinaesthetic" in character. Contemplated from farther away, a picture would offer a different view than at close range; further, viewing a picture not only directly, but also sidelong, may reveal aspects that otherwise would have remained concealed. Such multi-perspectival contemplation is even more required by sculptures, to say nothing of buildings.

This observation reveals something further for an understanding of appearances. Something appearing does not appear once for all, but rather more or less differently. Such manifoldness is essential to appearing; saying that something "appears," one normally would (or at least could) add a more or less detailed description of how differently it appears. So every appearing is essentially a particular mode of appearing among others.

However, this does not mean that appearing things are scattered in a sheer chaotic manifold, so that it would not make sense at all to call them "things." The manifoldness of appearances is fully compatible with their distinctness, as has been explained, provided that all particular ways of appearance really are modes of something that is identifiable as the same thing. Taken as appearance, however, such an identical thing cannot be something "behind" or beyond its appearances, but rather must be "within" its appearances, something to be experienced with their coherence. The example of an artwork may confirm this. Contemplating a sculpture, for instance, one normally does not doubt that its different aspects are that of the same sculpture. This is so not least because different aspects are not separate from each other, but rather merge. Walking around a sculpture, one observes a continuous modification of its views; one more or less explicitly knows that every particular view will turn into another, just as a former view will have preceded the actual one. As an experienced contemplator of artworks, one also knows that a more or less satisfying experience of a sculpture needs different, possibly many different, views and repeated contemplations. So one more or less clearly realizes that a sculpture is not just a simple thing to be experienced at first glance, but a complex of appearances that, in their coherence, all are more or less different appearances of the same.

That there is nothing "behind" appearances is especially obvious with artworks. They have no "hidden" qualities; rather, as an intensification of appearing, every part or an aspect of an artwork has been "functionalized" for appearance. Thus, artworks are things made for appearing, appearances manifest as things and as such completely accessible as complexes of appearance.⁶ So everything that is there does or can appear, if not at first glance then in the course of discovery, which, it should be added, can only confirm appearances and does not "constitute" them. If something appearing would be entirely "constituted" in consciousness, one could not understand how, in different approaches, something could be discovered ever more fully. It is difficult to deny such progress, if not impossible. Experiencing something anew, one may discover what until then had not been realized and perhaps feel surprised

⁶ Figal (2010).

by that. However, new discoveries will not invalidate the view one has acquired before. Otherwise, a new discovery could not even be regarded as “new.” So the possibility of getting back to something experienced and recognizing it as the same indicates that something experienced several times is really the same thing. Accordingly, something experienced as a complex of appearances must really be such a complex. So it will as such “prescribe” how to be experienced, admittedly not in every respect—because in such a case different experiences of the same thing would not be possible, yet they are possible—but in its essential features. For instance, a looming sculpture is to be experienced by looking up; a very small sculpture will “prescribe” another attitude of contemplation than a large one will.

Reconsidering the example of a sculpture only to be experienced in walking around it, one easily realizes that a sculpture is a complex of appearances because of its spatial character. In its spatiality something has different sides and aspects and is, in Husserl’s terms, the “horizon” of its different appearances. This, again, makes the conclusion plausible that phenomenality as such is spatial. Sticking out from a ground or background and from their surroundings, being individuals and forming a complex of sides continuously complementing each other, appearances are modes of spatiality. They are what space allows to be there as something distinctively extended and thus as “appearing.”

The spatiality of appearances should not be taken as one particular character that could be complemented by introducing “the temporality of appearances.” While one has become accustomed to speaking of “space and time” as if they were equivalent—at least since Kant’s discussion in the *Critique of Pure Reason*—they are not “symmetrical” conditions of phenomenality. Time presupposes space. Something can only change according to a temporal order if it is already there as a complex of appearances; something can only be performed temporally in a spatial context, and likewise something can only come to appearance anew under spatial conditions always already given. Though the experience of something appearing is successive and thereby clearly temporal, the subject-matter experienced often does not prescribe a particular succession. Sculptures, for instance, are temporally neutral. They can be experienced in many different ways and successions, and even texts or music scores need not only be read from the beginning to the end. The different aspects of an artwork are not primarily related to each other successively. Their order is primarily spatial.

3 Spatiality

Since, according to the foregoing considerations, there is good reason to assume that phenomena do not just appear in space but rather are as such spatial, an adequate phenomenological reflection on phenomenality cannot do without extensive consideration of the very character of space. This point has already been touched on in mentioning the different aspects of something’s accessibility, and also the “kinaesthetic” character of perception. Pursuing the question of the spatial character of phenomenality further would include an investigation of how the spatiality of both appearing and its experience could be described in detail. Thereby both of

the following would have to be taken into account: the “objective” or noematic and the “subjective” or noetic side of phenomenality. However, such a phenomenological approach requires that space be considered also in a third aspect. It is space that “connects” the noetic and the noematic side, and such connection should not only be discussed with an orientation toward the “connected” aspects. According to Husserl’s definition of phenomena as it has been introduced earlier, every phenomenon not only has two “sides” but is also the “essential correlation” of these sides. As the “connection” between the noetic and the noematic side of a phenomenon, space could also be identified as this “correlation.”

This step might be difficult to follow. How should space be a “correlation” or a “connection”? These terms do not describe, but rather only indicate, and thus could even be regarded as merely metaphorical—a suspicion that could only be refuted by description. But how should one describe the “connecting” or “correlating” character of space? Does space have such a character at all? As one might think, someone gets into “connection” with something just in referring to it, whereupon this reference may be motivated by this entity as affecting the referring person. If this is in principle all that must be said about noetic-noematic “connections,” then there is no need of introducing something specifically “connecting” at all.

On the other hand, one cannot really deny that reference to something appearing is, in whatever way, determined by spatial situations. Depending on the situation, something would be more or less perceivable and, likewise, someone would find herself or himself under conditions more or less hindering or supporting her or his reference to something. Spatial situations, however, are not necessarily how they are just by chance. They can be planned and formed, and such planning and forming does not apply to actual perception and actual perceptibility but rather to a possibility of both that, again, has to be distinguished from the dispositions of someone to perceive and the inherent quality of something to be perceivable. Planning and forming spatial situations, then, apply to a “third” that is different from the noetic and the noematic side of phenomena. This “third” is space as it has been indicated as “connection” or “correlation.”

Planning and forming space is the task mainly of architecture. Buildings are not just “objects” but *built spaces* that mostly house people and also objects relevant for people in different respects. As spaces, they normally will draw attention to themselves only in case of furnishing or renovation; otherwise, one will normally concentrate on one’s activities and on the things of interest in them. However, this is different with buildings that are artworks. Such buildings are normally not ignored as banal, ordinary buildings are; rather, they are recognized in their particular beauty, or are maybe even be contemplated. They are intensified buildings, intensified built spaces that allow the experience of space as such.

Such experience is, of course, dependent on the particular character of a building. In every case, however, it will be concerned with the proportions of a building’s rooms and with the particular way that the interior of a building communicates with its exterior. Except for buildings hermetically closed—and for habitation of whatever kind, such buildings are likely very few—the experience of a building is always that of inside and outside and thus of graduated space. For instance, looking out of a window—especially a large one, or a glass wall—one will more or less explicitly

realize that, with a building, space has been doubled; a building is situated in space and so takes up space, but it is also space itself. With a doubling of space, space is reflected and thus, in varying degrees, to be experienced independent from one's own possible spatial activities and also from the spatial appearance of something in a building's rooms. Architecture as an art is mainly concerned with such reflection of space, in design as well as in construction.

Accordingly phenomenology, reflecting on the spatial enabling and character of phenomena, is bound to architecture as to an especially illuminating paradigm. With architecture, the "essential correlation" of phenomenality as such becomes manifest and thus describable. Architecture, and primarily so as art, allows for descriptions of how in particular the noetic and the noematic sides of phenomena can be "connected" in ways that by no means can be reduced to them.

However, the phenomenological importance of architecture is not limited to that. With buildings, the character of the noetic and noematic sides of phenomena also become especially clear. As has been discussed, artworks must be understood as primarily perceptible – hence the experience and conceptual reflection of art is rightly called "aesthetical." If artworks are only intensified phenomena, the priority of the perceptible must apply to phenomena in general. This, again, is most clearly confirmed by buildings.

Certainly, buildings in general have a "meaning." They are meant for habitation, and grasping this is tantamount to understanding what they essentially are. Thus, in conceiving the experience of buildings one implicitly or explicitly is completely in line with Aristotle's ontology, according to which what has been explained as the meaning of something constitutes its "being-ness."⁷ Husserl follows the Aristotelian way, stating in *Ideas I* that in grasping the meaning (*Sinn*) of something, one understands it as an "originary self" (*originäres Selbst*).⁸ Heidegger too follows Aristotle in *Being and Time*, defining the being of something as "meaning relevant for use" (*Bedeutsamkeit*).⁹ In the case of tools, this may be plausible at least to a certain degree. Tools are often of a rather schematic shape, so their visual and haptic appearing mostly remains unnoticed, whereas in grasping a tool, one immediately apprehends what it is. With buildings, however, this is remarkably different. "Habitation" is no meaning that would be immediately and once and for all clear. Rather it can be realized in many different ways, and a particular way of habitation will be dependent on the particular character of a building. Buildings are not necessarily schematic, and buildings that are artworks never are, so that with such buildings no unquestioned understanding of "habitation" would become manifest. New possibilities of habitation are primarily manifest with individual buildings, and accordingly they can only be discovered by devoting oneself to a building's individuality, as it is manifest with the built space of the building itself. Thus, perceptual experience of space in rooms precedes understanding. Or, if perceptual experience is not reduced to sheer sensual recording but rather includes an understanding of its own kind, understanding presupposes what, in Husserl's terms, can be called "primordial

⁷ Figal (2019).

⁸ Hua III.1. (1976, p. 332).

⁹ Heidegger (1976, pp. 111–119).

understanding.” Such understanding could be characterized as a sensual, intuitive, non-schematized apprehension of possibilities that are not organized by an encompassing and thus unifying meaning.

This consideration can surely be generalized for artworks. No artwork is ruled by a homogeneous meaning that could be grasped once and for all; it has to be experienced “aesthetically” ever anew, such that one must be attentive to its perceptible appearance, discerning an ensemble of possibilities complementing each other in different, never definitely determined ways, and, despite their non-determinacy, appearing as consistent and as unmistakably those of an individual artwork. If artworks are appearances intensified, one may assume that everything appearing, albeit not in the same intensity, has such a primordial meaning, and that it is this meaning that primarily constitutes appearances. Appearing things are primarily “things on their own” and only secondary “things for us.”¹⁰

4 Conclusion

To conclude these considerations, some remarks should be added concerning the status and methodological requirements of phenomenology conceived in paradigmatic orientation to artworks and aesthetic experience. What is first worth underlining is the general character of phenomena, namely that, according to such a conception of phenomenology, phenomena are primarily perceptible appearances that, however, are not to be reduced to correlates of the senses but have primordial meaning or—to take up a term coined by Merleau-Ponty—“brute sense” (*sense brut*).¹¹ Discovering and describing “brute sense” would be an “aesthetical” endeavor not limited to artworks but concerned with everything appearing in its perceptibility and also with reference to its other characters. It would attempt to clarify how such characters – for instance, conceptual intelligibility – are related to perceptibility.

According to such a program phenomenology, second, will not have a “pure” or transcendental “ego” as its foundation and thus be performed with reference to correlates purely immanent in consciousness. Considering the phenomenon of art, Husserl himself could not but exceed such a conception. Even more, his prominent successors, developing phenomenology further, have basically been unhappy with Husserl’s conception and have made attempts to overcome it. As, most prominently, Merleau-Ponty has shown, phenomenological philosophers have a “shadow”; their phenomenological achievements established in *epoché* must be founded in the “natural attitude” of natural life.¹² However, Merleau-Ponty’s distancing from Husserl is problematic at least in one respect: reducing phenomenal experience to a “chiastic” intertwining of perception and the perceptible,¹³ he not only abandons a purely transcendental “ego” but also the very possibility of transcendental reflection. As a consequence, the status and character of phenomena remains undetermined, and

¹⁰ Figal (2015, pp. 98–125).

¹¹ Merleau-Ponty (1964a, p. 13).

¹² Merleau-Ponty (1969, pp. 266–267).

¹³ Merleau-Ponty (1964b, p. 180).

Merleau-Ponty can only refer the task of phenomenology to art, which is supposed to perform the “chiastic” intertwining amidst the “flesh” of perception and perceptibility and thus confirm its possibility.

What has been developed with the foregoing considerations could be regarded as an alternative to Merleau-Ponty’s conception, admittedly an alternative that in some respects is indebted to him. Understanding phenomena as spatial and reflecting “transcendentally” on their very possibility in reference to space should appear promising, not least because two basic conditions for the very possibility of philosophizing phenomenologically can thus be fulfilled. First, conceiving phenomena as spatial can accompany more or less detailed descriptions, thus offering a perspective on detailed phenomenological investigation and discovery. Such descriptions, second, can be especially phenomenological because of their reflective character, namely because they reflect the so-described phenomena in their very possibility, namely, in reference to space. So Husserl’s distinction between a “natural attitude” and a phenomenological attitude can be reformulated, and thus maintained, in the context of a phenomenology that has learned that exteriority and phenomenality do not exclude each other. It is art that has taught phenomenology this lesson.

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