# Artworlds - and Scienceworlds?

What makes a painting, a sculpture, or an installation art? According to the philosophical theory called Institutional Theory of Art, it's essentially artists themselves. Whether a piece can be called art is a sort of collective decision that involves artists, critics and exhibition curators, and also art schools and museums, among others. Patrons, collectors, and auctioneers also contribute. Such a network is commonly referred to as the artworld. Incidentally, the artworld's opinion also makes a piece of work valuable in monetary terms.

The point of my article is that science operates through an analogous 'world'. I called it scienceworld. The business of science is to produce new knowledge. Each new fact discovered by a researcher needs to be approved as being science, as opposed to being regarded as speculation or delusion. Such validation, in analogy to processes operating in the artworld, is currently performed through peer review, i.e. a system where fellow scientists check and approve or reject their colleagues' results. It gets more complex when it comes to determining directions and strategies of research, i.e deciding which topics should be pursued, and which can be allowed to wither. Here decisions are taken by those who fund research: government agencies, charities, and individual philanthropists.

Science operates through institutions to a greater extent than the arts: universities, independent research institutes and regulatory bodies, are only a few of the major players. There is also the publishing industry, with often very powerful editors. Furthermore, science journalists bridge the gap between scientific insiders and the public. In the background there are industries that manufacture research instruments and, crucially, translate results of research into products and services, and determine economic viability of ideas. All this, viewed as a complex inter-related network, belongs to scienceworld.

Scienceworld also creates rankings and reputations and distributes rewards such as the annually awarded Nobel Prize.

Why should one pause to think of knowledge as a product of scienceworld? Because, in my view, such an approach allows us to see better how well science serves society. It lets one notice, for instance, that currently most criticism of science accepted as valid is provided by active researchers usually recruited from a given discipline. Looking at this from the perspective of scienceworld may suggest, perhaps, that a greater input into scientific strategies i.e. from humanists or philosophers might be beneficial. Also, being familiar with how to navigate scienceworld is essential for those who want to pursue a career in science.

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## Publication

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