

Holding on: a consideration of touch within a world of conservation.

Student name: Luke Cotter

Student number: 2200994

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Abstract

The following essay is a consideration of the value of touch as well as the value of preservation, the benefits of touching artworks, the benefit of preserving artworks and the gray area that the world currently sits in within these actions. We preserve artworks as a way of holding on to the past and learning from it in the future, it also acts as an idea of wealth and tradability, it can be rooted in our art institutions as a way of preserving not only the artworks but the places themselves. Without art the art institution dies. I will be investigating art that defies the typical well known rule of 'Do not Touch' as a means of exploring hapticity.

Touch is of the body, covered in an elastic material we call skin the body tries to observe its surroundings. It uses this skin to pick, press, pull. To caress, touch, move, mangle. The skin has the ability to create or to destroy, how we use this tool of ours is imperative to the creative arts. When making art we hold, stretch, touch, brush, kneed, pinch and much more. When we observe art we look, see, gaze, stare, glance. 'Do Not Touch' is a very prevalent set of words within gallery and museum culture. We must look after the arts, preserve them, make sure they are here in years to come for people to study and look back on. But that is not always the case.

This essay will discuss the preservation of art and those who decide to neglect preservation in aims of targeting something else within an artwork. Art history has been massively influential in the building of today's society and has formed an array of minds that have created waves in culture. Although this is important to acknowledge, it is also important to see that in a world of exciting new artworks emerging that there is a place for art that bypasses being preserved. This question stems from a line of research surrounding touch as a method of exploration within art. My research leads me to believe that we have been neglecting touch as a tool within the arts and that there should be somewhat of a shift to a more haptic based practice. Coming to this conclusion I decided that I wanted to research more into why we aren't allowed to touch artworks in the first place. There are multiple factors as to how it began although in a modern era it is primarily conservationist.

When we touch upon or consider the conservation and restoration of art, the fair assumption is that it is a positive thing; art being kept for future people to experience. The art of restoration and the art of conservation do differ slightly, this line is a thin one but the two professions often do not directly represent each other.

Art conservationist Diana A. Tay says that the difference is, that conservators are pluralistic and are required to have a knowledge in science as well as an engagement with the wider community amongst many others as part of the process of conservation.

Tay goes on to say that restoration can be seen as an act of returning an object to its presumed original appearance and/or function. With that being said the process of conservation can involve elements of restoration but is not always necessary.

Tay.D.A, (2018)

This showing that someone who conserves a piece and someone who restores a piece sees the other in a different light, both professions clearly alter the state of an artwork, whether it is to directly aim for a previous state of a work or to fix the current state of the work. This is in some fashion changing the artwork, and this idea of 'change' is what would happen to an artwork if we were to leave it exposed to its surroundings regardless.

Take Chauvet Cave for example, using very basic hand drawings on dry, bumpy, cracked cave walls, a cave filled with artworks from 30,000 BP which depict animals of the time. Preserved in place for so long due to the lack of human interaction yet now has reached a point in its life where it has been discovered by humans again and put on display, the work begins deteriorating due to this and has to be closed permanently. This concept in itself is interesting, closing an artwork off from the public because it might deteriorate, taking the privilege of experience away because it might affect the work. However, it is the people that artworks are preserved for, we preserve art for future generations to be able to see them, closing an artwork off from people then could be considered counterintuitive.



Figure 1 : Replica of Chauvet Cave. (2019)

The French government decided the best way to solve this problem was to make a 1/1 scale replica to be observed by the public, totally replaced, with no aspects of the original. This concept in itself is strange, the replica is of a work which is known for its age and its preservation has been created to take people away from the original. It is a perfect example of the kind of things that German philosopher Walter Benjamin was afraid was going to happen coming into a modern era with artworks all the way back in the 1930s yet the issue is still present to this day. As seen in this quote,

“Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.” Benjamin.W (1935).

What Benjamin speaks of here is the fact that a piece of art is not just worth its visual or material being but rather that of the space it inhabits for the time it inhabits it. This concept shows why the reproduction of Chauvet cave has such little meaning in regards to its source material, it does not represent the cave as it is not true to its lifespan. The work reminds us of the cave successfully but has neither the history nor the potency of the original. It is as Benjamin further states,

“This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership. The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction”. Benjamin.W (1935)

For instance, consider that a reproduction of a piece or a place has its own history, It in itself is an original. However, it does not exist in the same way as the artwork that it has tried to simulate. It highlights a new point in time and space and therefore has no real or accurate representation of the other. Fascinatingly Benjamin also speaks of the physical condition of an artwork, that the various sufferings the work has had point towards why it is only that artwork that can be in that exact condition. Whether through damage in transport or through the hands of an interested viewer, the effects are an element of the works signature. Therefore touching a sculpture has an interesting dynamic.

The intrigue of touching a sculpture could be the make up of its true identification.

The reason we might want to touch a sculpture however, is actually quite interesting.

In her article *Why touching art is so tempting – and exciting*, Marlen Komar mentions her interview with lecturer at the University of Bath, Simon Hayhoe, who specializes in art education and disability. Hayhoe suggests that the reason we might want to approach an artwork to touch it could be to do with the history of early renaissance paintings in churches which were kept at a great height to make people wonder, therefore touching the artwork would be a way of fulfilling that wonder and learning more about a piece, it is also worth mentioning that this desire could be an act of rebellion towards the rules of looking from a distance. It is an act of empirical investigation, which is to gain knowledge through experience, if we touch an artwork we stand to gain more knowledge from the experience thus leading to a fuller understanding of the work. Komar.M (2020)

Although, touch is a massively underutilised part of sculpture. There have been some really interesting works that only work when interacted with physically. For instance Pierre Huyghe's, warm, smooth yet hardened, *La déraison*, which has a heating system built into the marble sculpture. This sculpture interacts with people on a personal level, you're only rewarded with the experience of the work if you explore your physical connection to it. The piece visually appears to be an old forgotten statue with cold broken features yet upon closer inspection feels alive, warm and inviting. This emphasises the possibilities of touch as a tool within sculpture and shows us that sculpture does not just have to be intricate or overly complicated to shock us, with touch we can shock the viewer and create a sense of intrigue not only into the work that has gone into creating the work but now the physical state the work exists in.

In the piece Huyghe also has tried to replicate the original state of the statue by Jean Baptiste Belloc, which was made for the 'Exposition Coloniale Internationale' in 1931 as a sculpture/statue that represented Africa in relation to France. Huyghe then covering his sculpture in moss and creating his cast of the work with all of its damage as it was, this has an interesting relationship with replicas considering the words of aforementioned Walter Benjamin however, this piece is not claiming to be the work nor is it claiming to be a replica, it is a use of the symbolism that the sculpture once held, through recreating this lost sculpture with its head missing and form mangled it speaks of the life that it has lost, with the healing that breathes through the work encompassing the life it once had or still holds.



Figure 2: Pierre Huyghe, (2014), La déraison.

This artwork surprises the viewer, it holds the viewer closer for a longer period of time. The reason this is important is because it exists in a space which contradicts the act the work is aiming to stimulate. The work wants touch, needs touch and can only function in a space where a viewer feels safe to do so. Yet we continue to question our ability to interact with the work. This then creates an element of surprise, and surprise is a very strong tool within artworks, it can be used to keep people engaged in a work for longer and give the work a more personal feel. So when someone chooses to touch the work and they are greeted with a warm sensation it draws them in.

It is as Italian artist Giuseppe Penone says in his writings following his series of works *To Unroll One's Skin*, The skin is a sensitive surface which has the capability of relating to the world around us, that within certain works of art the primary source of knowledge is not the sight but the action of contact, he mentions that the action of touch is how an artwork is born and that contact has the capability of surprising us with knowledge that occurs in spontaneity, this then has an imprinting effect on us as people as we use this primary function of touch first and then sight as an aid of identity. Penone.G, (2018).

Clearly Penone has a great appreciation for touch which many artists share, as we look further into the ideas that Penone shared with us he begins to speak of a technique called 'frottage'. This practice is the act of taking an impression of a surface through rubbing a pencil or charcoal over a piece of paper pressed against an outer surface, the most typical of which you will find replicating the surface of a tree or leaf. Penone's interest in this technique is evident in his work and feeds back into his philosophies around touch and creating.

The idea that a flat surface can imitate a 3D texture is an intriguing one although it has its benefits. Within a gallery space creating a work that visualises texture is a way of making something we can't touch more physical within a space. Although we cannot touch the work the frottage pieces show an act of touching and a motion of physical interaction. Whether that is enough as an experience of a physical object is something I find myself questioning because even though it does directly focus on touch through its creation the act of touch is not necessarily an element of the work that the public would be able to interact with physically.

Touch is an instinct, we trust it and look to it for comfort, for reassurance. Therefore in the history of art there have been periods of haptic empowerment that have influenced massive parts of culture. An example of this is devotional touch, the idea that touch, no matter who you are, will always be available to those who wish to have a connection to God, that touch has some spiritual influence and that the touching of spiritual icons has some profound effect as mentioned here in Peter Dent's, *Sculpture and Touch*,

“The most common type of touch deployed by rich and poor, male and female, lay and cleric alike was probably the devotional touch, which was evident in everything from how small statues, reliefs and even religious paintings were literally handled in the domestic sphere.” Dent.P, (2008).

This is an interesting quote to me as it speaks of a time where touch was not forbidden and in fact was celebrated. The experience of the church has entirely transformed as of recent years. My exploration of multiple spaces in Venice this year has highlighted for me many aspects of the church that push the aspect of tourism on people yet remove the haptic enjoyment of the space, rope barriers being persistently present, guards and invigilators consistently over your shoulder ensuring

your hands aren't stretching out to admire the statues of saints and the gold gilded thrones.

A piece that highlights this disconnect perfectly is 'Crucifix' by Donatello. Using pearwood to create the piece, it has a smooth but firm exterior, pearwood being one of the nicer woods to work with as it is a wood that does not feel itchy or scratchy. Using a wood that is kind to the touch also shows that this sculpture is a sculpture to be used, designed to have dynamic, to react to the viewer physically. The piece has joints in the shoulders so that it can be taken down from the cross and hugged, kissed and held. As a sculpture it stands against most traditional conceptions of religious artwork, as mentioned earlier in the essay the typical thing to do was to hang works high and out of reach but this stands against that conception.

When looking at the piece we see that it has been made thicker in comparison to that of the usual sculpture of Christ, it has more burly features and the sculpture is more bulky. This might be to accommodate the idea of touch and allowing more interaction. In a way this work has been made with the idea of protection or conservation in mind, to allow the aspect of touch it has had to subsidise elements of a typical representation of Jesus. This work shows a sculpture which has both stood the test of time and also been interacted with. We cannot tell from the photographs if it has had any significant damage since its original creation but if anything that highlights the importance of experiencing an artwork rather than simply viewing it.



Figure 3 : Donatello, (1408-1409), Crucifix.

The piece has an interesting history, this story comes from that of *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (The lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors, and architects, 1550) by Giorgio Vasari (1511–74). The story states that Donatello created this sculpture from one body of wood apart from the arms and formed this piece for the Bardi di Vernio Chapel in Santa Croce where he was met by his friend Brunelleschi who claimed that the sculpture was “the body of a peasant and not the body of christ”. Vasari.G (1505) It was said that Donatello claimed that if it was such a bad sculpture then he should do a better one as proof.

Brunelleschi then went ahead and created a piece that surprised Donatello to the point of him dropping the items he was holding, the work was more slender and more fragile, was not touchable, had no joints in the shoulders and was permanently fixed to the cross.



Figure 4: Filippo Brunelleschi, (1410 -1415), Crucifix,.

This story is relevant as it highlights things about sculpture that we are to consider when making. One of these things being that of tactility, although Donatello saw the piece Brunelleschi made as a better piece, it lacked a vital element that Donatello had included in his piece a part that made it more accessible by the poor and rich alike, this binding factor sets the piece apart from other sculptures of Jesus, it has character and versatility. “The symbolic value of an object is not inherent to it but is rather generated by the people themselves” Vinas.S,(2015). This quote was taken from a book on contemporary conservation. It speaks of the reasons for which we decide that something is worth keeping and how people have done so for many years now, Vinas mentions that an artwork is only preserved if the person behind the piece is considered to some regard important. Van Gogh would not have the

appreciation for his work as he does now if it wasn't for the fact that people recognised his genius. Although this is true in modern society, the quote also speaks to that of the beholder, the people admiring work decide on what is important or not.

Another experience I found amusing in Venice was the experience of encountering a relatively small room off the back of one of the most impressive and immersive rooms in all of Venice, the Tintoretto Scuola Grande di San Rocco, it is filled with detailed wooden sculptures, paintings filling all walls and ceilings and even a decorative tiled floor. As you traverse this room you reach an opening into a smaller room, where you are met with a 36 foot wide painting of a crucifixion of Jesus that envelops you. Or at least that is the experience you are supposed to have, for myself it was different. The painting was being restored, obstructed by a similarly enveloping set of scaffolding. Not hidden away however, the room was accessible to the public and you may enter and observe the process. This experience was a refreshing one, it allowed me to see people physically interacting with an artwork, and a religious one at that. A depiction of Jesus being touched by paint. What would have been a painting of physical domination towering over you suggesting a sense of holiness and power, now in a state of vulnerability, needing the careful hands of a group of enthusiastic restorers. The work of Tintoretto, a renowned Venetian artist from the 1500's being interacted with once more, an enlightening experience for a passing admirer.



Figure 5: Photo Collage made by author (2024) using, Tintoretto's, *Crucifixion* (1565)

So, does that mean that if a piece of art is important that we must preserve it? Not necessarily, for instance the work of John Latham with *SKOOB Towers Ceremonies*, (SKOOB being, books spelt backwards). These pieces were a series of connected sculptures/performances which included creating stacks of books most of which were three metres in height and setting them alight from the bottom up. When asked why he had done this Latham's answer varied between,

“It was not in any degree a gesture of contempt for books or literature. What it did intend was to put the proposition into mind that perhaps the cultural base had been burnt out” Latham.J, (1975).

As well as being an “attack on institutionally acquired knowledge”.Latham.J, (1975)

The reason I bring this series of sculptures (or as Latham called them, ‘events’) to light is that they have lived on past the works physical presence, the artwork still exists, I am writing about it now yet it physically ceases to exist.

It is also important to mention that these acts were in a time of Destruction within art, Gustav Metzger holding the Destruction in Art Symposium of 1966. This symposium was full with artists who felt as though the war had driven them to create artworks based around the idea of destruction as creation, this was a politically driven movement and the symposium was said to have drawn modern outlooks on dated preconception. DIAS was created through invitations sent to artists asking them to make papers 20 minutes in length of maximum on the idea of destruction or aggression as a way of creating, this directly linking to the idea of material being destroyed or affected aggressively to create something of some significance culturally or socially. Some of the artworks mentioned in the invite were that of,

“Millares (Spanish) - paintings made by tearing canvas; Pro-Diaz (French) - painting by exploding petrol; Tinguely (Swiss) - auto-destructive sculpture; Latham (British) - burning Skoob towers; Vostell (German) - smashing a Mercedes-Benz with an express train; the Japanese group Gutai, demonstrating by tearing paper in public.” DIAS, (1966)

(From the invitation leaflet sent out before the symposium.)

The symposium has brought to light many interesting points of discussion within art for myself, the idea of process being the most powerful influence in an artwork speaks to the idea of performative acts taking precedent. The reason this interests me is because it speaks of the artistic influence, it is the true embodiment of Fine Art, it speaks of the artist just as swiftly as it does that of the artwork.

What artists often seek through their work is to engage with something that fascinates and challenges them, while also questioning how we perceive the world around us. In this case, the symposium encourages us to question the nature of art itself—whether it demands a conservative, preservationist approach to its creation,

or whether more destructive methods can also serve as valid forms of expression. it could become less meaningful to protect an artwork from its inevitable decay, preserving it in its original form, rather than allowing it to age, deteriorate, and reveal the marks of time whilst also better embodying the essence of being human. In its natural process of aging and destruction, an artwork might express something deeper about the fleeting and fragile nature of life itself.

Which leads me back to SKOOB Tower Ceremonies once again in speaking of destruction as a means of creation or expression. Interestingly Latham has created an artwork that once existed as a physical sculpture, the idea of a form, with depth and tactile intrigue, and then took it from us all within one artwork. Thus accelerating the idea of degradation in relation to the topics that the books he was using as building blocks held. I think it is worth asking whether this artwork was successful in its pursuits because the artwork is aiming to destroy these units of literature in a sense of reclaiming and highlighting the 'burnt out' culture that they represent. This artwork was in that sense a way of saying that we should be able to move on from the past and discover new things for ourselves through exploration.

The work now only exists through photography of these events and writings of what occurred. Photography, however is an interesting solve to the idea of perishing as it asks questions of what we see, it is not the true experience which it is capturing as it is still images of a moving breathing piece, the pictures of SKOOB Towers ceremonies remind us of their being and their unbeing yet they capture in flat still frames.

These photographs are now being preserved in themselves, the work is kept at Flat Time House Gallery in London which is a gallery space held in the location of John Latham's previous house, the Gallery was opened as a ode to John Latham's concept of 'Flat Time' which was that he kept the door to his house open at all time and was free for discussion until his death.

The gallery was opened in 2008 and held a series of exhibitions, a lot of which were based on ideas Latham had influenced change within. The space also holds Latham's archived works and concepts which are there to support alternative learning and a space for artists residency opportunities. This whole location is a point of interest to me as it is a space that both speaks of points that encourage the idea of destruction but prove the importance of preservation.

When thinking of how a work is treated it is always related to contact, how our skin interacts with an object, what physical changes we make to a surface. When considering this concept I found myself drawn back to the work of Giuseppe Penone whose writings I mentioned earlier in this essay. The piece of writing included was taken from a series of works the artist created called, *To Unroll One's Skin*. The works produced in this series vary in effect although all follow the idea of creating work that portrays the skin in a way that emphasises its importance and to 'Reverse One's Eyes'. Penone States,

"The skin, like the eye, is a boundary element, the end point capable of dividing and separating us from what surrounds us, the final point capable of physically enveloping enormous expanses...It is the point that allows me, still and after all, to recognize myself." Penone.G (1977)

Interestingly, Penone speaks of the skin as an eye here, his perception of boundaries of the body apply both to our skin and to our eyes, as if they are to try

and involve us with our surroundings and create relationships with them. Where he says it is to recognize himself shows how he sees himself always in relation to the work, they exist on the same plane, there is a relationship.

The idea Penone presents here is what makes interaction and activation of an artwork so important. We do not just simply look at artworks, we relate with them, whether through touch (physically) or to be touched (mentally).

Although it is not a part of this series Penone has explored this concept in many of his artworks, most notably his work, '*Continuerà a crescere tranne che in quel punto*' (*It Will Continue to Grow Except at That Point*). Which is a smooth, cold, (bronze) sculpture of a hand attached mindfully to the rough and scaly trunk of a tree, as the tree grows the hand becomes embedded in its skin (bark) effectively changing the course of its natural growth. This work gives a visual representation of how we can affect the things we touch, although it might seem like a static object the tree has a very complex growth ahead of it. The hand, the catalyst of change and the tree, the affected. An interesting question arises out of this, is the sculpture the hand, the tree or both?

It could be argued both, the hand has directly influenced the growth of the tree therefore 'sculpting' it yet the hand was a sculpture in itself. What we can ascertain from this then is that the hand has turned the tree into an artwork, a sculpture.

Where before it was not. Touch, in that sense, has had a huge effect here, altering even the language that surrounds an object. Penone makes us question these things in his work, he brings to the forefront the complexities of touch.



Figure 6: Giuseppe Penone, (1968 - 2003) , 'Continuerà a crescere tranne che in quel punto',

Touch is complex, that is why it is exciting, it is worth being explored. it is an area of uncertainty scientifically, we know not where touch ends and where bodily functions begin, for instance it is as stated in Matthew Fulkersons, *'The First Sense: A Philosophical Study of Human Touch'*,

"One immediate implication of this complexity is that human touch starts to look less like a single sensory modality (like vision and audition seem to be) and more like a multisensory form of sensory awareness". Fulkerson. M, (2014)

With touch being so complex it is easy to see why we cannot simply allow touch in a lot of public art spaces, it is because it is unclear the degree to which you can restrict someone when referencing touch within an artwork, It can be a deciding factor in the lifespan of an artwork and can determine how it will be perceived in the future.

Another artwork that came to mind when thinking of this effect was Nereo Costantini's 1969 bronze sculpture of *Juliet* from the Shakespearean play *Romeo and Juliet*. This sculpture was raised in Verona, Italy and has gained a tourist following from around the world. Though this work was created as a celebration of the world renowned play romeo and juliet It has taken a strange path in popularity, the piece has gone through serious physical changes through the last 56 years. In the image below (*Figure 6*) we can see how the piece has obtained such drastic wear, the piece has a widely known myth attached to it, the myth states that if you are to touch Juliet's breasts then you will be awarded with good luck in your love life. This tale has brought people from far and wide to interact with the sculpture in aim of claiming the prize of love.



Figure 7: Juliet, Nereo Costantini, (1969), Verona, Italy.

However, this piece has raised some questions in reflection. This rendition of Juliet is of her as a 13 year old girl, as she is in the story. Yet the area of most contact is her breasts. The current state of the work highlights a type of behavior that is deeply embedded in culture to this day, a fundamental wrongdoing. The piece was created as a celebration but has now been transformed into this mirror pointing back at a public that is hypersexualising a 13 year old girl through a very questionable act of touching.

This piece shows how touch can be perceived as a negative tool in artworks although it still holds a sense of power, it has created an image of today's social allowance of sexualisation and has totally transformed as an artwork from an innocent embodiment of love to an unsettling reflection of human indecency. To add to this story further, the locals surrounding the area of the artwork started to notice there were significant cracks and wear around the breasts and right arm of the sculpture, which were becoming dangerous to the public, this led to the sculpture being removed and placed in the Castelvecchio Museum, which would have been an interesting enough turn of events.

However the city of Verona then decided to commission a replica of the artwork which cost \$27,000 and place it back in the location of the original piece.

“The famed statue has been pulled from its Verona home due to cracks and wear from the touch of thousands of love-seeking tourists. A crack in the fair Capulet's right breast and right arm alarmed locals, who petitioned for the statue to be saved.” Sheffer.S (2014)

There are obvious advantages to remaking the statue as it did bring quite a large amount of tourist attraction to the area and kept that part of Verona populated more frequently which in turn would help local businesses. However there is a question to

be asked of the authenticity of this new business plan. Does the statue still have its power? It is fair to assume that the original piece might not have had any sort of 'magical powers' but if there were people who truly believed that it held this remarkable quality then, it is reasonable to wonder whether the new object holds this supernatural quality.

Returning to the writings of Walter Benjamin in *The Work of art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction* where he states that an art object is a sensitive thing because of the consistent questioning around authenticity whereas a natural object has a sense of security in its essence from the beginning. This question of authenticity is entwined with the idea of time, the duration and history that a piece has experienced. Yet the reproduction is an object which makes us question the authenticity of the original. Benjamin.W. (1935).

Taking the principles of Benjamin's writing we can ascertain that the same effect might be possible with the statue of Juliet. The original claims to have a token of good luck embedded in its breast yet now the presence of a reproduction which claims to do the same could build a feeling of uncertainty which surrounds both objects.

This essay has been an attempt to highlight some interesting characteristics that have risen within artworks that have changed the outlook that I have on sculpture. The works mentioned in this essay have varied quite largely, from Donatello's *Crucifix* as a sign of religious connections to touching art within society all the way to *SKOOB Tower Ceremonies* by John Latham which was a more contemporary work of conceptual art relating to the movement of destruction within art. The interesting thing about the connection between these two works however is that they both seem to surround this idea of knowledge, the church being the space that 'gives

knowledge' and the burning of books being the destruction of institutionally acquired knowledge.

Both of these artworks consider the audience quite intently, they cause an action or a reaction in response to their physical presence. An effect I have noticed the works had on myself as a viewer was that it made me realise distance, distance as an important feature in art, how we control the viewers presence as a way of making them see the work differently. The work of Donatello and even Brunelleschi with both of their crucifixes suggests some sort of power play that interests me deeply within the church. The artworks push the audience back to look up and admire but then Donatello draws us in with the aspect of function. Latham is also doing something similar in that of testing our ideas of power, he pulls us in with this familiar sight of the book but then pushes us back with fire, the flames creating heat that the skin acknowledges and warns us of the dangers ahead, wonderfully toying with our sense of place and position.

Then moving on within the essay there are also the similarities between the works of Giuseppe Penone and Pierre Huyghe, both the pieces have a physical realisation of the human body, whether that being the bronze hand or the fallen figure they both give us a human representation. Penone deals with the idea that we as humans might be exerting a force on nature, that we are leaving an imprint on our surroundings that cannot be changed. This idea is taxing to process but the work drives home the sense of accountability that we should feel when observing our natural world. Whereas, Huyghe shows us how neglect and destruction has led to the death of human-made things, with his work really pulling us in to observe the growth of the moss and the warmth of the material all whilst also representing a sculpture of France's relations with African countries, possibly even pointing towards

ideas surrounding French politics. What both these pieces really do well is capture the essence and importance of touch. It is clear to see that both works benefit from the principle of touch combined with art. Both pieces directly address the viewer's privilege to touch and the sensation of which our skin allows us in reaction to the arts.

Taking all of this into consideration it is clear that there are differences between all of the works mentioned in this essay, however, there is an element that joins all of them. Touch. Relationships between artwork and art viewer, interactions. The works Included In this essay Are affected by people and people's skin. But so is every artwork from delicate paintings to public statues, an artwork always relies on the care of the viewer when approached. People will always have a direct effect on artworks.

Attempting to preserve works of art presents us the opportunity to relearn tales of our past, to look back on the things that have shaped our society today and also the things that have shaped the societies around us. However, this attempt to keep and preserve things for people of the future to learn from does come at a cost. If people stop interacting with works of art and become afraid of touch, then a fair assumption would be that artworks themselves become less inviting and harder to engage with. If this is the case then the idea of preserving art for the future becomes obsolete as those people will become less and less engaged with the arts because of its oppressive demeanor. Whereas opening sculpture up to the possibility of haptic engagement allows the viewer to recognise the work as something inviting and allows space for the work to touch us, (both metaphorically and physically). Allowing an artwork to be short lived in an act of defiance could be the way forward for sculpture.

If we allow work to be impermanent then we give it the freedom to be fragile and urgent and give it the possibility to comment on current issues in the moments that they are happening, to open people's eyes to the things that are now. Life itself is impermanent, possibly even too short yet we fill it with experiences that shape us and create excitement, joy, sadness, shock, envy and so much more, so my point is that an artwork can do the same, as long as we give art the space to react to us as we react to it.

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