

Introduction

In Chinese medicine, meridian lines are invisible energy channels that run through the body, carrying vital energy or *ch'i*. They connect organs with extremities hovering below the surface of the skin. Small needles are inserted into points that run along these meridians to help stimulate the circulation of *ch'i*. It is a healing practice that dates back over two thousand years. We can sense the results of the treatment, but we cannot empirically measure the lines. The rationalist may claim these meridian lines do not exist because they cannot be detected with modern instruments. It is a story; a myth like the belt of Orion joining the three bright stars in the sky, Alnitak, Alnilam, and Mintaka, that helped ancient engineers build the Great pyramid. Here, I tell a story of contemporary art practices joined together by invisible connections that fall under *Kosmorganic* aesthetics. I offer this narrative so visitors can recognize an art aesthetic that unifies mind, body, and bodies back with the stars. Kosmorganic aesthetics is presented as both a destination to explore, *Kosmorganica*, and a contemporary art movement.

If art is a reflection of the vision and concerns of humanity and the world, then we should be able to gauge our climate by the art thermometer. However, the tendency of contemporary art criticism to analyze practices by form rather than internal mechanisms poses a problem; Contemporary art of the past two decades has produced a plethora of endless self-referential labels without concentrated philosophies and movements.¹ With a deficit in cohesive analysis to make sense of what contemporary artists are doing and why, art can no longer serve its vital function to discern our past, present, and future direction. I advocate for a deeper read in contemporary art trends and focus on art practices I call *Kosmorganic aesthetics*.

Kosmorganic is a portmanteau of 'Kosmos' and 'organicism'. Kosmos with a 'K' and not a 'C.' Kosmos with a 'K' refers to the patterned nature of all domains of existence from matter to mind to an ultimate supreme being, as well as the physical universe. *Organicism* refers to Plato's theory of cosmology found primarily in *Timeaus* and the Pythaorean school. It holds the position that the universe is alive and intelligent that is constructed of perfect harmonies and consciousness. Humans are microcosms of the macrocosmic universe. Kosmorganic aesthetics

conceptually clusters areas that have been vaguely identified and for the most part named in the past few decades. This region has been carved out from at least 20 areas that have labels such as Immersive installation, Ambient Media, and Land art. Kosmorganica connects realms that appear different in form, but their internal mechanisms are similar. Spaces that can be described as immersive, sensorial, experiential, harmonic, and metaphysical fall under Kosmorganica. I thread together these fragmented spaces and describe subtle distinctions that can make it a challenge to locate. I argue that the rise of Kosmorganic art correlates with a shift from a local to a global perspective and an intensified digital lifestyle.

Rather than provide a linear historical narrative, I offer ways of understanding local philosophy and aesthetics. However, for the scope of this analysis, I am not able to include the history of all regions of Kosmorganica. I focus mainly on Western historical references with some mention of parallel traditions of the East. The origin story of Kosmorganica begins with its position. It is not enough to describe destinations, because the aesthetics of Kosmorganica is equally philosophical as physical. Many newcomers will need to pivot their approach to their travel habits and how they navigate the world. Modernity has created blind spots that first need to be unveiled. The information age has exacerbated the situation with its emphasis on *external*, cognitive/linguistic intelligence. To widen this narrow vision of the world is no easy task since the obstacles of a clear vision have calcified for nearly five centuries. A decline in *inner*, consciousness intelligence, of the last couple of decades, has enlarged the blind spot. On the other hand, secondary factors, such as globality and climate change have catalyzed an amalgamation of eastern and western aesthetics that appear in many forms I identify as part of the Kosmorganic movement.

In the first part, I describe obstacles that mislead visitors when they explore Kosmorganica. The Postmodern classification of styles and its self-referential logic need to be retired. This is no easy feat since rational materialism serves as its scaffolding. The disregard of inner intelligences in art shall also be subdued. Upon the arrival of a destination, for an in-depth reading, visitors need to consider the intention of the artist, the context, and one's position. Once a new condition has been established for understanding the internal and external aspects of

Kosmorganica, the visitor can draw connections between its diverse destinations and return home with a fresh view of life. The second part is dedicated to describing the key characteristics of Kosmorganica. The principal areas include *frequency bathing*, ritualistic performance, *ecosophic* practices. The third part addresses how Kosmorganica reinserts art as a movement back into the world. This is a long-term project since it requires toppling an entire system that has separated art from life. I conclude with the integral vision of Kosmorganica as a place where culture, spirituality, social cohesion, and health care are embedded in creative play.

Section I. Way of Looking

The Postmodern haze

Kosmorganica gathers about 20 subcategories of contemporary art.² It will be more accessible to identify the intersection of these areas if one pivots away from the Postmodern gaze of styles; that is defining work solely by materials and self-references. Theorist Frederic Jameson defines a Postmodern lens as one where history and nature no longer serve as reference points.³ Here *nature* is not exclusive to the phenomenal physical world but extends to the essence of *human nature*. Postmodern art is compared with itself and the *art world* serves as its new reference. Jameson blames capitalism as the condition that fosters the blinding cyclone of styles. Art has been reduced to a commodity, like your house, your car, your blender, art too, gets caught up in the capitalist wind tunnel of categorization to be easily marketed and sold. This postmodern tendency to define an artwork by its material surface and self-referentiality does not apply to Kosmorganic aesthetics and yet, its logic lingers in the minds of contemporary critics and audiences.

When anything can serve an artistic material, such as a toilet (Duchamp) or gravity (Acconci), identifying regions by their physicality, rather than philosophy, leads to limitless categories. Philosopher, historian, Coomaraswamy asserts that the tendency of the Modern West to sever art from its role to mimic nature reduces it to a linear progression of styles, limitless variations of treatments.⁴ Mixed-media, Multimedia, Transmedia, Crossmedia, Intermedia, Conceptual, Post-conceptual, Neo-conceptual, Dada conceptual, Neo-Dada conceptual, Post-Neo-Dada conceptual, etc. Art folds onto itself in a vortex turning the flowing wind of history and meaning into a tornado of styles that sweeps up everything in its path. The reading of surfaces and self-reflexivity is all-pervasive in today's prescriptions of contemporary art- You enter a dark foreboding room, a beam of light projects on the front wall. A video plays in a loop in slow motion, with a heavy bass soundtrack enveloping the visitor of a scene reminiscent of Douglas Gordon's *24-hour Psycho*. Replace *Douglas Gordon's 24-hour Psycho* with any number of single-channel video art of the past thirty years. Art is explained as a mirror not facing

nature, but another mirror. Art chaotically feeds back on itself into an infinite regress of Artworld iterations.

Yet, things of this world and our making, including art's self-referential feedback loop, are nonlinear systems. Hence, they will unpredictably, but inevitably change shape. According to a dynamic systems theory, the folding and refolding of feedback ultimately lead to chaos until there is an unexpected transformation. In this system, small effects have large consequences like the straw that broke the camel's back. In the case of a feedback loop, a critical juncture is reached, and a minor occurrence pushes it to a new state and turbulence subsides.⁵ Contemporary art is at the cusp of this juncture. Since the camel's straw depends upon the eye of the beholder, we cannot define what that minor occurrence will be for each visitor. However, Kosmorganica is the calm after the storm.

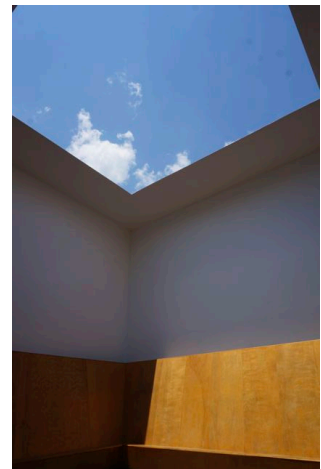
The rational craze to spiritual haze

Art categories should be like road signage to point the visitor in the right direction. However, with the hundreds of categories in contemporary art with no official consensus of definition, one can predict the outcome. While looking for Kosmorganica, the visitor may keep one foot inside the chaotic postmodern tornado of styles. It may be a challenge to loosen the Postmodern grip of labeling art by its external physicality while visitors experience Kosmorganica sights. Contemporary art continues to be categorized according to its external or materialistic expression, such as immersive, monumental, minimal, fiber, ambient, installation, etc. Whereas, before Postmodernism, art was labeled by philosophical reflection. (e.g. Naturphilosophie, Sublime, Surrealism, Fauvism, Romanticism, Symbolism, Impressionism, Baroque, Mannerism, etc.).

The avoidance of articulating internal aspects of art, such as spiritual or metaphysical, may be attributed to practical reasons that coincide with art as a career or profession. Research institutions, foundations, governmental funding, and universities grant more and more to scientific research over the humanities. As a consequence, artists and historians try to sound like scientists avoiding other internal notions deemed misplaced such as mystical, poetic, spiritual,

otherworldly, or ritualistic, key aspects of art aesthetics throughout the ages.⁶ Art historian James Elkins remarks that in academia, any references to spirituality are not taken seriously.⁷ He is not alone. Art historians Lynn Gamwell, Charlene Spretnak, Donald Kuspit, and Leesa Fanning made similar observations.⁸ The majority of art historians, critics, and artists downplay or ignore the spiritual and metaphysical in their examinations of contemporary art. For this research, books on consciousness studies and spirituality in art were not available at the university library. If an analysis is confined to a restricted rationalist view, the depth of Kosmorganica and its metaphysical essence will be left undiscovered for the visitor.

The difference between the reception of Kosmorganica on a sensorial external level and an internal metaphysical level can be compared with taking a trip or going on a journey. You will go somewhere, but the takeaway will not be the same. The difference would be like wading in the shallow end of the pool or swimming in the deep end. Take, for example, James Turrell's *Meeting* light chamber. It consists of a room with a bench and a giant skylight. [See [Forward](#)] Most reviews of this seminal work only examine the physicality of light and the psychological impact and visual sensation on the visitor. The artist himself has conflicting interpretations of his work. Early on in his career, Turrell claimed his light work had no religious overtones.⁹ Yet, Turrell described the light in his installations as revelations.¹⁰ Revelation is defined as 'either the discovery of an unknown fact, surprise at the quality of something, as in wonderment, or divine disclosures.' If we go by the second definition, Turrell echoes the sublime in Romanticism and Transcendental artists of the late 19th century. These artists were concerned with depicting luminosity, eternity, the infinite, serenity, and the magnificent. Although Turrell would deny the depiction of an omnipresence of the divine as the Romantics had claimed. Turrell does give credit to his Quaker grandmother for her inspiration when she spoke about spiritual illumination.¹¹ Raised as a Quaker, Turrell left the Protestant sect in early adulthood and returned to it later in life. In a recent interview in 2018, Turrell evaded the question of his light was connected with religion. This time he did not deny spiritual notions, but he reformulates the language to accommodate



secular New Age wellness values. He describes his light as nutritional, personal, and inner light.¹²

Art is not a substitute religion; it is a religion (in the true sense of the word: 'binding back' 'binding' to the unknowable, transcending reason, transcendent being.) But the church is no longer adequate as a means of affording experience of the transcendental and of making religion real- and so art has been transformed from a means into the sole provider of religion, which means religion itself. -Gerhard Richter (2009)

Interpretations nor history are static. Authors and historians look back and may have completely different readings at another point in time that accord with their context, as well as their position. Many early abstract expressionists spoke of myth and the unconscious in their gestural and emotional paintings in the 1940s. Those internal descriptions of Abstract Expressionism disappear by the 1960s when Clement Greenberg's emphasis on formalism dominates art criticism.¹³ The hegemonic voice of formalism is the gum under your shoe when applying new logic to unfamiliar territory. Art critic, Seth Kim-Cohen asks why we have not graduated beyond strictly formal analysis, leaving the visitor with only sensory interpretation in Ambient art.¹⁴

Ambient art or Ambient media inhabits a large part of Kosmorganica.¹⁵ Theorist Paul Roquet describes ambient media as music, video, literature, fashion that allows one to tune oneself to the exterior environment, with a focus on the mood and emotional attunement.¹⁶ Kim-Cohen argues that if one solely adheres with a perceptual response, such as an immersive colored light that elicits awe, a Turrell light installation, and a fireworks display are of the same breed. I agree but disagree. If we reduce art to physical description and a sensorial reception or as Kim-Cohen puts it, 'what you see is what you get' then it is likely one may confuse a screen saver for Expanded media art or the baby background noise machine for Ambient media. To understand Kosmorganica including Ambient experiences, accepting existing religious overtones are essential. By 'religious' I refer to Mary Evelyn Tucker's definition which has no mention of dogma. Religion is 'an orientation to the cosmos and our role in it...a means whereby humans,

recognizing the limitations of phenomenal reality, undertake specific practices to effect self-transformation and community cohesion within a cosmological context. Religion thus refers to those cosmological stories, symbols systems, ritual practices, ethical norms, historical processes, and institutional structures that transmit a view of the human as embedded in a world of meaning and responsibility, transformation, and celebration. Religion connects humans with a divine or numinous presence, with the human community, and with the broader earth community. It links humans to the larger matrix of mystery in which life arises, unfolds, and flourishes.¹⁷ Tucker's definition of religion is not as restrictive as modern personal and cultural connotations that one normally attaches to it. It includes other domains such as cosmology, mythology, philosophy, sociology, semiotics, and consciousness studies. I align with her definition of religion. However, the label 'religious' is a loaded word for many Western ears. For many listeners, it elicits a knee-jerk reaction and conjures doctrine and the institutions that have prosecuted and divided people more than uniting them. For this reason, going forward, I use the word spiritual and metaphysical when referencing internal knowledge and intelligence.

Outer intelligence with an inner intelligence

Kosmorganica encompasses both external knowledge, such as sense perception, and internal intelligence, such as metaphysics. Of the metaphysical, Kosmorganica concentrates on physical and spiritual cosmology. According to Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence, there are nine types of intelligence. They include logical/mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, existential, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.¹⁸ Kosmorganica focuses on intrapersonal and musical. The intrapersonal refers to that which takes place in one's mind or self and this case consciousness. Musical intelligence in Kosmorganica comprises rhythm, harmony, mathematical proportions, geometry, pattern, and frequencies both of sound and light. This blending of science, art, and metaphysics was typical in ancient social rituals in ancient Egypt and Greece. One could say that Kosmorganica revives Pythagorean School practices.

For the Pythagoreans, structure, and mathematics make up perception and the mind's reconstruction of the external world.¹⁹ They believed that numbers were not merely symbols of quantity, but moreover quality. For them, mathematical ratios were the gateway to creativity, spirituality, and reason. They observed numbers in specific proportions in natural growth and concluded they had to be of the divine. They developed a doctrine to explain the growth of the cosmos through numbers. Numbers are the principles of what exists and the 'One' is its primal ground. 'The One begins to breathe as the breath flows in, it assumes a more complicated structure.'²⁰ In addition to numbers, The Pythagorean school extended a metaphysical understanding of the concept of sound. Pythagoras was interested in harmonizing his universe which included balancing spirit with a body, humans with nature, humans with one another, and ultimately the cosmos. He would use mathematical proportion in audio vibrations and musical intervals to illustrate order which was another expression of the cosmos on a microcosmic level. Pythagoras preached music to be the principal way through which humans can liberate their souls from the constraints of the body and connect with its divine nature. Playing music was spiritual. It was healing. It was a science. It was intellect. It was created and it was community. He preached that numbers translated into sound attune to the patterns of our souls to a cosmic soul and hence, develop the divine within.²¹ Pythagoras was the father of soul music in the literal sense. Like the Pythagoreans, Kosmorganica envisions that through their phenomenological experiences of sound, light, color, and pattern, the visitor attunes with the patterns and rhythm of nature and the universe. If the visitor resides only at the phenomenological level, they will not apprehend these harmonizing aspects. External intelligence balances *with*, not against internal intelligence.

Inner with external sciences

Humanity has forgotten who and what we are and through art, we can be reminded of what has been lost.

*Art is our best means to rediscover the interior integrity.*²² - G.K. Chesterton

With psychological overtones, Coomaraswamy compares the missing *inner science* in the analysis of art in modern western art. By inner science, we refer to intuition and consciousness.²³ Similar to Jameson's assault on postmodern's focus on the surface or styles, Coomaraswamy claims that the *accident* of Western modern art history is how style is confused for art rather than art being the mechanism to express internal mental patterns at play.²⁴

Coomaraswamy contrasts western-style *queuing* with traditional Indian and Chinese art. The greatest difference is visual correspondence tends to be external (physical) in Western modern art history; Whereas it is a combination of internal (mental) and soft external (sensational) sciences in traditional Indian art. The aspiration in traditional Chinese art is to capture exclusively internal mechanisms of mind and spirit or *shên* and *ch'i*.²⁵ Generally, with a traditional western gaze, art is in the eyes or head (conceptual art) and the eastern gaze is in the heart and mind.²⁶ (Kim-Cohen a harsh critic of Ambient media is blind and deaf to Kosmorganic aesthetics which he calls *mute perception* including Ambient media, because his gaze is 100% in the head and neither eyes nor heart.)²⁷ When Coomaraswamy refers to 'mind', he addresses the realm of consciousness rather than linguistic thought. Kosmorganica's internal philosophy is rooted in cosmological consciousness. *Cosmic consciousness*, a territory named in 1901 by R.M. Bucke is defined as:

'Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment or illumination which alone would place the individual on a new plane of existence...To this is added a state of moral exaltation, an indescribable feeling of elevation, elation, and joyousness, and a quickening of the moral sense, which is fully as striking and more important both to the individual and to the race than is the enhanced intellectual power. With these come, what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have this, but the consciousness that he has it already.'

- R.M. Bucke (1901)

Humans have strived for altered states of consciousness since ancient times. Ancient Egyptian Mystery school, the Pythagorean school, Hindu Vedic tradition, Buddhism, and American indigenous people trained to achieve higher consciousness for communal, spiritual, and healing purposes. They did so through chanting, vocalization, visualization, and meditation. Recent technology has proven that the body and mind shift when subjects are exposed to different vibrational frequencies and practicing mindfulness or meditation.²⁸ With recent technology of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and the electroencephalogram (EEG) neurologists have conducted studies with subjects listening to binaural beat sounds and professional meditators. In both cases, they have found qualitative shifts in mental patterns that increase gamma brain wave states, which they call Zen Gamma.²⁹ Gamma rhythms correlate with large-scale brain network activity that is used in creativity, peak concentration, and

associated with compassion, high intelligence, creativity, and bliss. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi called vital ordered mental patterns that reach intense concentration, *flow states*.³⁰ We have yet to measure visitors' brain waves to empirically prove that Kosmorganica guarantees that visitors experience cosmic consciousness or Zen gamma. Depending upon duration, frequency levels, the intention of the artist, and the reception, I believe Kosmorganica aesthetics is a recipe for altered states. In the last section, I elaborate on higher consciousness and healing aspects of Kosmorganica.

Relational Positioning

Not all visitors will be able to shift their gaze to encompass internal as well as external intelligences in their Kosmorganica experience. Internal intelligences are not integral to most educational systems and are mostly transmitted through environmental influences, religious institutions, family, and community organizations. This is probably one of the reasons why most designers and artists of Kosmorganica rarely articulate the intuitive, psychological, and spiritual connections of their work in public documents. Artists leave it open to the position of the recipient. Art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud called creative practices that leaned on context and social relationships, *Relational aesthetics*.³¹ Bourriaud analyzed a mode of contemporary art as a system, where the artist is no longer central, but the designer of a larger social situation outside the parameters of the artwork.³² In this practice, the role of the artist shifts from author to social composer setting up elements and allowing life and actors with their dynamic unpredictability to set the outcome of the work. Although, Kosmorganica does not fall under the typical Relational aesthetic practice. Bourriaud's theory usually entails interaction between more than one visitor as in *socially-engaged art* events. However, like Relational aesthetics, Kosmorganica is an open dynamic system with the visitor as an actor within the artwork and not on the outside looking in. The visitor is central to Kosmorganic work, not the artist; The artist, like a host, orchestrates an event by designing the conditions of a space, such as the light, color, smell, sound, and patterns to be contemplated. Kosmorganica can be appreciated with a range of responses from the outer perceptual experience on one end of the spectrum to an internal state of wonder that may elicit a sense of heightened interconnectivity with the universe on the other end.

Distinguishing Inner Kosmorganica

I stress inner intelligences and relational position, so visitors distinguish when they have arrived at Kosmorganica or not. Another influential factor includes the articulation of the work. If an artist, such as Turrell, speaks to his audience of his light chambers as strictly phenomenological, then the visitor will probably limit their experience to hue and brightness without considering other interpretations. In a society that spends nearly 250 billion on marketing and communications per year, how an artist, curator, critic articulate an artwork for the public alters its reception.

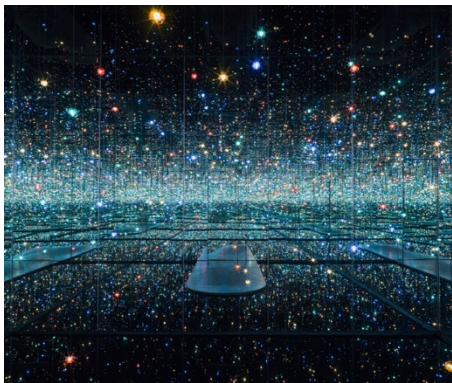
The type of setting is also an important indicator of Kosmorganica. Sights may be situated in a desert, a museum, a forest, or a temple. It is not out of the question that seemingly Kosmorganica may be found in shopping malls, casinos, or a nightclub. To determine the subtlety of locating Kosmorganica, I compare the recent Artechouse's *Submerge* installation with Yayoi Kusama's 1960's infinity rooms and the Abstract expressionist artist Franz Klein with master Japanese calligrapher, Gesshu Soko.

If you hold up a mirror to a mirror, you will find a space without end, without limits, a space with endless possibilities, a new metaphysical space'
-M. Christian (1961) *A New Space Manifesto*



Submerge-Immersive Installation Inspired by Pantone Color of the Year 2020 was an exhibit celebrating a hue of blue for paint dye. From floor to ceiling a kaleidoscope of organic shapes and geometric pattern surround the visitor. Their advertisement reads, 'Imprinted in our psyches as a restful color, PANTONE 19-4052 Classic Blue brings a sense of peace and tranquility to the human spirit, offering refuge. This multi-sensory installation seeks to do the same as the color itself, centering our thoughts, aiding concentration and fostering resilience while immersing visitors into a realm of boundless blue, evocative of the infinite evening sky at

dusk, the vastness of deep, serene ocean waters, and the limitless reflections in the rain.’³³ The design team, Artechouse ends their description with ‘just in time for fashion week.’ Their text recognizes the psychology and healing aspects of what I call *frequency bathing*. The language mimics the words of those interested in consciousness, reflections of nature, sound, and color healing. Yet, the authenticity of their copy is questioned. *Submerge* is an advertisement for Pantone, a company specializing in color for consumer products. The website is in line with Kosmorganica's philosophy, but their marketing communications campaign³⁴ avoids all spiritual healing notions that they claim the color, sound, and shapes elicit. The immersive, abstract, fractal form is Kosmorganic. Yet, I do not consider it part of the Kosmorganic movement because the intention is ultimately a promotional set for a product. Are they truly trying to foster and reflect contemplative practices, healing, and higher consciousness or did they apply the latest digital effects software and mimic the language of wellness culture to promote a product? The communication inevitably alters the reception of what would normally foster community, spirituality, and health. I would assess that *Submerge* is the latter but may act as a placebo of Kosmorganica.



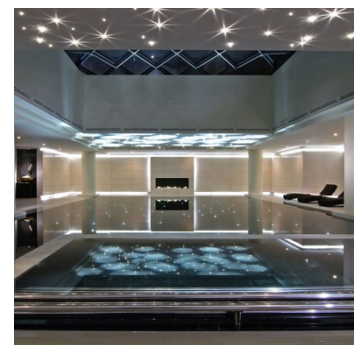
Four years before the first landing on the moon, artist Yayoi Kusama began her series of immersive installations called *Infinity Rooms with Phalli's field*. The room is built with wall to wall and floor-to-ceiling mirrors. The floor is covered with hundreds of stuffed tubers painted polka dot red. Space reflected her hallucinations of a plane of phalluses. Finding them too labor-intensive she used the mirrors to multiply the phalluses to elicit the feeling of an infinite plane. Eventually, the tubers disappeared, and she painted her signature all-over polka dot effect directly onto the mirrors. Behind her dots was an on-going philosophy that echoed the Buddhist concept of *Beginner's mind, shoshin*. Shunryu Suzuki who taught Zen Buddhism at Columbia University in the 1960s described *beginner's mind* as being ‘empty, free of the habits of experts, ready to accept, to doubt, and be open to all possibilities.’³⁵ Without the attachment to mental constructs, one can see, feel, hear, smell and taste the world as it is, not as one label, judges, and attaches meaning. Kusama called her Beginner's mind, *Self-obliteration*, the destruction of the ego (in the Buddhist

sense, not the psychoanalytical one.) It is a strategy of interconnectivity and social cohesion.³⁶ The dissolution of the self or ego allows for a communal space so that one can experience interconnectedness. The dots eliminate cognitive constructs transforming space into what she described as ‘a vast outer space filled with microcosmic accumulations of stardust that lay underneath a simple yet complex unconscious of black and white.’³⁷ Kusama and her work epitomize Kosmorganica. Her aesthetic, philosophy and communication synchronize completely both in form, context, philosophy, and intention.



In the second example, both artists are not part of Kosmorganica. I mention them to show how the philosophical position of the writer/reader affects work even if their materials and form are very similar. The abstract artist Franz Kline is known for his paintings of gestural broad stroked black lines on a white canvas. He insisted his paintings must not be seen as variations of Asian art.³⁸ Klein claimed to be interested solely in formalist concerns, such as contrast, composition, and materials. The physical attributes of a Kline painting to the Japanese

calligraphy painting of Gesshu Soko are strikingly similar, but their philosophy of art could be no further apart. The Zen master calligrapher is not focused on the line itself, but the dance of the brush conveying the artist’s energy or *ch’i*.³⁹ In calligraphy painting, *the spirit is rendered in the rhythm of things*.⁴⁰ True vision isn’t obtained by registration of likeness of an object copied on paper, but when the artist and art merge into a transcending union or *anayar advaita*.⁴¹ Kline is not Kosmorganic in form nor philosophy. Soko is neither kosmorganic in form, however, the philosophy of Zen calligraphy such as interconnectivity, contemplation, a reflection of nature, timelessness, and groundlessness, does reflect many of the values of Kosmorganica. This example spotlights the challenge in defining if an artwork or artist belongs in Kosmorganica. Some could argue that regardless of what the artist articulates, it is for the



visitor to decide since the artist nor critic can dictate how the visitor will experience a work. However, all foreign territory requires some contextual research to avoid a total blunder, such as mistake a spa treatment for Kosmorganica. In the next section, I review the main components of Kosmorganic aesthetics and its integral aspects.

Section II. Kosmorganica aesthetics

The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and science whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead. -A.Einstein

The Kosmorganica realm encompasses *ecosophic* practices, *frequency bathing*, and ritualistic performance. Ecosophy is a term coined by theorist Felix Guattari he describes the nature ecology to include social and mental ecology. It is a expands the environmental movement of the 1960's to include human subjectivity, social relationships with sustainability. His view is not I analyze sights that exemplify these distinctions and demonstrate how they integrate health, higher consciousness, and social cohesion.

Ecosophic practices

1. Ritualistic Performance (sound/art walks, performative rituals)

- Lita Albuquerque, Marina Abromovic, Janet Cardiff, Albert Yonathan Setyawan, Angie Eng,

2. Immersive frequency bathing (Expanded Media, Ambient Media)

La Monte Young, Robert Irwin, Leo Villareal,

3. Ecosophic practices (nature related, land art, harmonic architecture)

Olafur Eliasson/Thorstein

Louis Khan, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot

Frequency Bathing

One should note that Ambient art or Ambient Media exemplifies Kosmorganian philosophy, but the reverse is not necessarily the case. Kosmorganians would say their ambient spaces are contemplative and emphasize presence, architecture, healing, and the spiritual. Ambient in Kosmorganians falls under *ecosophic* or *frequency bathing*. Ecosophic art practice folds the environment, community, and well-being into cultural experiences...

Coomaraswamy asserts that art has always served a holistic role in life in cultures around the globe.⁴² The Enlightenment marked the point of departure of the West from unifying concerns of art as spirituality, healing, communal ritual. We see glimmers of *anayar advaita* mid-19th century with German *Naturphilosophen* and American Transcendentalist sublime, which marks the ground of Kosmorganica and hints of its revival of art as a union of life. Professor of religion, Jeffrey Kosky also recognizes this new shift in the past few decades of the West's attraction to what he calls *wonder*, a theme of the American Transcendental sublime artists.⁴³ Kosky reasons that modern eyes have been blinded by the light of the Enlightenment.⁴⁴ The rational obsession for certainty through empirical validation has left modern humanity disenchanted. Too many answers kill the suspense. He speculates that too much reason coupled with the decline in spirituality has moderns seeking the mysterious, the invisible, a return to a divine cosmos without the attachment of institutional dogma. We haven't managed to kill off God, (as some orthodox rationalists have hoped) but according to Kosky rational certainty is doing a decent job at dissolving our *wonder*. With half of the world living in urban areas, mass deforestation, and accelerated extinction of species, our consumption of the natural world, it is only inevitable there may be fear over where we once sought wonder, the natural world may be gone. Although we agree with Kosky that there has been a shift and a flourishing of Kosmorganica 'wonder' art and that a singular rationalist lens is not enough, we do not believe

science is destroying the romantic mystical. On the contrary, scientific tools help us understand and replicate patterns in nature.

Ritualistic practices

Section III. The Kosmorganica Wave

Every work of art comes into being in the same way as the cosmos' by means of catastrophes, which ultimately create out of the cacophony of the various instruments that symphony we call the music of the spheres.

The creation of the work of art is the creation of the world.' Kandinsky Spirituality in Art

Kosmorganica is an art movement. A movement encompasses the historical moments and situations that nourish its establishment. Like all historical events, is it a response to shifts in the current climate, or what I call *cultural coupling*. It is seemingly contrary entities that are, in fact, complementary. Cultural coupling is when two forces engage in a conversation and form a bridge to produce a balance. For example, German Romantic *Naturphilosophie* was a response to the Enlightenment. On the other side of the Atlantic, Sublime painting with the Hudson School was the American response to the Age of Reason. Nearly 150 years later, Kosmorganica continues where their forefathers left off without the nostalgic gaze. Kosmorganica is a response to an overload of over-conceptualization in the information age where we live in virtual reality more than our physical one.⁴⁵ Yet, Kosmorganians are not throwing out all their digital devices and escaping to the woods. Technology can also be used to mimic and perfect forms found in nature. Kosmorganic aesthetics is also concerned with spiritual and psychological associations that elicit higher states of consciousness. In this section, I describe the conditions that ignited Kosmorganica to propagate in the 1960s and then amplify in the last two decades.

A leap of innovation breeds a paradigm shift. The wheel, the compass, steel, the printing press, the telephone, and electricity are a few major inventions that changed civilization forever. 1958 was the year for Explorer 1, the first successful U.S. rocket to launch into space and the chosen date for the inception of Kosmorganica. From that year forward, the scope of human reality expanded from the planet to the universe. The cosmos was no longer an imaginary separate place from the human realm. Propelled into outer space, humanity would see their world from afar and take a quantum leap in the collective consciousness. We are not outside nor inside the cosmos, but we are *of* the cosmos. Sociologist Martin Albrow calls this period with its new reference point, the Global Age.⁴⁶ Other factors contribute to this new period of *globality* besides an expanded reference from the planet to the universe.⁴⁷ They include climate change,

global destruction with nuclear weapons, and a global communication system connecting the planet.

In globality, the concept of the nation-state collapses and a new consciousness of the fragility of the planet ensues. The return to imitating natural forms is celebrated. Fractal patterns and proportions found in nature following the Golden Mean inspire experimental architecture and land art of Kosmorganica. Art historian, Lynn Gamwell remarks *artists are once again making more explicit and conscious cross-field references to the new paradigm of nature in their work.*⁴⁸ The architecture and urban planning of Kosmorganian, Buckminster Fuller reflects this Global Age and *ecosophic*⁴⁹ vision. Fuller established a philosophy of existence for the future and the architecture design to reflect it. He called it an *omnihumanity* that is *omnisustainable*.⁵⁰ Like Albrow he predicted that the focus of scientific invention on weaponry and capitalism would transform and redirect itself in collaboration with design and art to achieve *omnihumanity*.⁵¹ Fuller traveled the world with his marathon lectures on this new global vision that he forewarned was vital to save humanity.

The reality that humans can annihilate the entire planet prompted the ecological movement and a shift from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric position. In the 1960's Seyyed Hossein Nasr anticipated Kosmorganica in his *ecotheology*. It is an ecological movement paired with a similar structure as a religious one that offers ethical and emotional components lacking in the green movement. Bruno Latour reinforces Nasr's ecotheology; 'Religion presents itself as a rather plausible alternative to an ecological consciousness whose ethical and emotional drives don't seem to have enough petrol to carry us through the tasks it has burdened upon us...Nothing is less conservative, and nothing is more down to earth than religion.' An ecological consciousness with a religious drive may save humanity from the ecological crisis. Latour observes, 'modern church was too busy saving human souls and not including the rest of the creatures and living things and entities in the universe.'⁵²

Eastern religion 1960's.

Universalism

Health/happiness and Kosmorganic digital lifestyle need for phenomenological spaces

Theorist Peter Sloterdijk offers an evolutionary biological explanation of the rise of phenomenological experiences such as ambient media. He claims ambient constructions arose from a physical breakdown in human immunity and a call for solutions in shelter and cultural experiences.⁵³ For instance, atmospheric installations geared more toward healing, such as saunas, sweat lodges, and steam rooms exist in many cultures both ancient and modern. The idea that the human body needs phenomenological experiences for a balanced healthier life is not out of the question. It offers insight into the draw for these environments in Kosmorganica. Could the computer be the new menacing lion? Surveys on the average amount of time people spend in front of screens and their devices hover around eight hours per day. Scientific research on the psychological and neurological effects of immersion in pure data has revealed the digital lifestyle is noxious. Compassion, empathy, creativity, and generosity are endangered due to excessive screen time.⁵⁴ As mentioned before, there have been little to no scientific studies conducted to empirically prove Kosmorganica spaces on the physical impact on the body. I presume that if we did conduct scientific studies on the brain states of visitors after they exit Kosmorganica, they would have a decrease in heart rate, adrenal and cortisol levels will go down, and their brain wave states will be at the Alpha range (8-12 Hz). This is the state associated with relaxation and calm. I do envision that there will be Kosmorganica spaces that induce a Gamma brainwave state where perception and consciousness hit acute levels. Like meridian lines, we'll have to go by observation until we have the technology to measure the benefits.

By articulating Kosmorganic aesthetics with a direct correlation between health and well-being as a critical element and not just a side effect of the work, can support designers to orchestrate their audiences with a more structured path.

segue

In the early 14th century philosopher and mystic, Meister Eckhart observed that art in the West had become a luxury item, an exceptional activity because modernity separated intellectual from emotional, relegating art to the senses. Art became a separate and abnormal activity.⁵⁵ In former times, all activities possessed an aesthetic process. By the 1500s with the arrival of the European art academy art in the West was officially severed from quotidian life and the general public. The industrial revolution broke art down into a business. Anything outside the

commodification of art as a cultural object to be exchanged on a market has been kicked out of the Art world and rests in the real world under other domains. Happiness, health, spirituality, and community, the internal power of the arts, have been reorganized as utilitarian methodologies in the human sciences under the titles of contemplative arts, art therapy, outsider art, folk art, sound therapy, community arts, and religious art. I propose the Kosmorganian movement revives art's natural role as a multifaceted activity rather than a methodology. Kosmorganica reintegrates art back into the world where it fosters health, spirituality, and community.

Conclusion

¹ Two exceptions to critical analysis of contemporary movements are Remix studies/Appropriation art and Relational Aesthetics (Nicolas Bourriaud) or socially engaged events/forms. Here I address the past two decades with the rise in immersive media, atmospheric, ambient art installation, and art that captures natural phenomena.

² At the time of writing, 2021, the subcategories include but are not limited to: Expanded media, Visual music, Mapping, Immersive Media, Intermedia, Transmedia, Ambient, Ambient Media, Sound Art, Sound Walks, Art Walks, Ritualistic Performance Art, Sublime, Atmospheric art, Contemplative arts, Multisensory rooms, Experimental Architecture, Installation art, Visual Music, AV performance.

³ Jameson, F. (1991.). *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (Post-contemporary Interventions)*. Duke University Press.7

⁴ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art*. New York: Dover Publications.86.

⁵ Briggs, J. (2015). *Fractals: The patterns of chaos: discovering a new aesthetic of art, science, and nature*. Brattleboro, Vermont: Echo Point Books & Media. 19-21.46.

⁶ DePaoli, G. (1990) Meditations and Humor; Art as Koan. In Gelburd, G., De, P. G., Hofstra Museum., & Edith C. Blum Art Institute. *The transparent thread: Asian philosophy in recent American art*. (pp.14-36). Hempstead, N.Y: Hofstra University.19.

⁷ Kosky, J. L. (2012). *Arts of Wonder*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.171.

⁸ Gamwell, L. (2005). *Exploring the Invisible: Art, science, and the spiritual - revised and expanded edition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Fanning, L. (2018). *Encountering the Spiritual in Contemporary Art*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. Spretnak, C. (2016). *Spiritual dynamic in modern art: Art history reconsidered, 1800 to the present*. Kuspit, D. B., Gamwell, L., & State University of New York at Binghamton. (1996). *Health and happiness in 20th-century avant-garde art*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.

⁹ Get quote.

¹⁰ Turrell, J. in Kosky, J. L. (2012). *Arts of Wonder*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.91.

¹¹ 'My grandmother used to tell me that as you sat in Quaker silence you were to go inside to greet the light. That expression stuck with me.' James Turrell in Whittaker, R. (2000). Greeting the Light with James Turrell. *Works and Conversations*. (Retrieved 2021, Feb.16). <https://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=32>

¹² Azzarello, N. (2018, Oct.16). Jame Turrell interview on the 'light inside people'. *Design Bloom*. (Retrieved 2021, Feb.16). <https://www.designboom.com/art/james-turrell-interview-light-10-16-2018/>

JT: for me, light is nutrition, almost like food. and I'm concerned with the light inside people. when you close your eyes or dream, you see a different light than with your eyes open. we usually use light to illuminate the things around us. but I am interested in the very personal, inner light.

¹³ **Get citation.**

¹⁴ Roquet describes ambient media as music, video, literature, fashion that allows one to tune oneself to the exterior environment, with a focus on the mood and emotional attunement. Eno who coined the term describes it as Ambient music 'provides calm and space to think, while maintaining emotional freedom and subjective interest that earlier forms of background music sought to erase. It is ignorable as it is interesting.' Roquet, P. (2016). *Ambient media: Japanese atmospheres of self*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota press.

¹⁵ Kim-Cohen, S. (2020). *Against ambience and other essays*. London, England : Bloomsbury Publishing

¹⁶ Roquet, P. (2016). *Ambient media: Japanese atmospheres of self*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota press.3.

¹⁷ Spretnak, C. (2016). *Spiritual dynamic in modern art: Art history reconsidered, 1800 to the present*.14.

¹⁸ Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.xii-xiv.

¹⁹ Ghyka, M. C. (1977). *The geometry of art and life*. New York: Dover Publications.173.

²⁰ Burkert, W. (2003). Lore and science in ancient Pythagoreanism. Ann Arbor: UMI.37.

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- ²¹ Robinson. *op. cit.* pp.60-61.
- ²² Beckett, W. (1993). *The mystical now: Art and the sacred*. New York, NY: Universe.9.
- ²³ Tibetan scholar , Robert Thurman cautioned, the Western privilege of the *outer* sciences over our *inner* sciences has been detrimental to civilization. Clarke, J. J. (1997). *Oriental enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western thought*. London: Routledge.151.
- ²⁴ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art*. New York: Dover Publications.86.
- ²⁵ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art*. New York: Dover Publications.14.
- ²⁶ When written this most likely did not include conceptual art. Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art*. New York: Dover Publications.29.
- ²⁷ Kim-Cohen analyzes art history as a linear progression. He questions that phenomenal formalism is of the past pre-1960's when conceptual art flourished. He is biased toward linguistic conceptualism. Kim-Cohen accuses internal intelligences associated with Kosmorganic aesthetics or what he reduces and calls 'mute perception' as detached from social meaning and discursive analysis. Since he rejects mysticism and healing aspects of art, then the conversation stops short of a consensus that the information Age has produces ambient media. Kim-Cohen, S. (2020). *Against ambience and other essays*.London, England : Bloomsbury Publishing. 10,37, 75-76.
- ²⁸ Dobbs, D. (2005). Zen Gamma. *Scientific American Mind*, 16(1), 9-9. Retrieved December 8, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24997589>
- ²⁹ Colzato, L. S., Steenbergen, L., & Sellaro, R. (2017). The effect of gamma-enhancing binaural beats on the control of feature bindings. *Experimental brain research*, 235(7), 2125–2131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00221-017-4957-9> (Retraction published Exp Brain Res. 2021 Jan 19;:)
- ³⁰ Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2016). *Flow and the foundations of positive psychology: The collected works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*.Dordrecht : Springer
- ³¹ Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Nicolas Bourriaud: Relational aesthetics*. Paris: Les Presses du réel.
- ³² Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Nicolas Bourriaud: Relational aesthetics*. Paris: Les Presses du réel.51.
- ³³ Artechouse, (2020, Feb.) Submerge. *Artechouse*.(Retrieved 2021, Feb.14.) <https://www.artechouse.com/submerge-feb-2020>
- ³⁴ ABC7NY.(2020, Feb.14).Submerge into immersive are installation inspired by Pantone Color of the Year 2020. Youtube. (Retrieved 2021, Feb.14) <https://youtu.be/8vcgoijrcHE>
- ³⁵ Suzuki, S. (2011). *Zen mind, beginner's mind: Informal talks on Zen meditation and practice*. Boulder: Shambhala.xiv.
- ³⁶ Yoshitake, M. (2017). *Infinity mirrors*. New York : DelMonico Books.9.
- ³⁷ Yoshitake, M. (2017). *Infinity mirrors*. New York : DelMonico Books.27.
- ³⁸ Winther-Tamaki, B. (2009) The Asian Dimensions of Postwar Abstract Art. In Munroe, A. (2009). *Exhibition, The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860 - 1989*. 145-157 New York, NY: Guggenheim Museum.
- ³⁹ Ingold, T. (2016). *Lines: A brief history*. London: Routledge.52.
- ⁴⁰ Guo li. Pyne, k. & Atkinson,S in Munroe, A., *Exhibition The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860 - 1989*. (2009).p.89-99 New York, NY: Guggenheim Museum
- ⁴¹ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art*. New York: Dover Publications.6-7.
- ⁴² Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art*. New York: Dover Publications.3.
- ⁴³ The Transcendental poets and painters were fascinated with the sublime. E. Burke translates sublime as evoking fear and wonder. He gives the examples, 'When the prophet David contemplated the wonders of wisdom and power which are displayed in the economy of man, he seems to be struck with a sort of divine horror, and cries out, *fearfully and wonderfully am I made!* An heathen poet has a sentiment of a similar nature; Horace looks upon it as the last effort of philosophical fortitude, to behold without terror and amazement, this immense and glorious fabric of the universe

¹ Burke, E. (1764). *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful: The fourth edition. With an introductory discourse concerning taste, and several other additions.* London: R. and J. Dodsley.

⁴⁴ Kosky, J. L. (2012). *Arts of Wonder.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.15.

⁴⁵ This one point where I am in agreement with Kim-Cohen whereby the over-conceptualization of the Information Age where we 'engage in our world not as pure phenomena, nor as the wishes of the gods, nor representational of other (metaphysics) but as data. Although, he argues that Ambient art does not escape data because it is made of 1's and 0's. Kim-Cohen, S. (2020). *Against ambience and other essays.* London, England : Bloomsbury Publishing

⁴⁶ Albrow, M. (1996). *The global age: State and society beyond modernity.* London: Polity Press. p.4, 79.

⁴⁷ Globality is not equivalent to globalization. The latter points to an economic perspective. Globality describes a new reference point with the realization of the destruction of the planet by, the weakening of nation states, the linking of cultures through the mass communications via the internet. Albrow, M. (1996). *The global age: State and society beyond modernity.* London: Polity Press. p.4

⁴⁸ Kuspit, D. B., Gamwell, L., & State University of New York at Binghamton. (1996). *Health and happiness in 20th-century avant-garde art.* Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.89.

⁴⁹ By 'ecosophy' I refer to Arne Naess' definition: 'ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of sofia (or) wisdom, is openly normative, it contains both norms, rules, postulates, value priority announcements and hypotheses concerning the state of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction. The details of an ecosophy will show many variations due to significant differences concerning not only the 'facts' of pollution, resources, population, etc. but also value priorities.' Arne Naess. In Pojman, L. P., Pojman, P., & McShane, K. (2017). *Environmental ethics: Readings in theory and application.* 221.

⁵⁰ Fuller, R. B., & Kuromiya, K. (1981). *Critical path.* New York: St. Martin's Press. 254.

⁵¹ Fuller, R. B., & Kuromiya, K. (1981). *Critical path.* New York: St. Martin's Press. 254-255.

⁵² Latour, B. (2009). Will non-humans be saved? An argument in Ecotheology. *Journal of Royal Anthropology Institute.* 15. 459-474.

⁵³ Lacey, Jordan. (2020) Translating Ambience. *Unlikely Journal for Creative Arts.* Vol.6. (Retrieved 2020, Nov.12) <http://translating-ambience.com/>

⁵⁴ Study conducts negative effects of screen time on children. In Domingues-Montanari, S. (2017). Studies reveal a correlation between a decline in empathy and the ability of PT(perspective taking-looking beyond one's own perspective) with social media addiction. In Dalvi-Esfahani, M., Niknafs, A., Alaedini, Z., Barati Ahmadabadi, H., Kuss, D. J., & Ramayah, T. (2021). Social media addiction and empathy: Moderating impact of personality traits among high school students. *Telematics and Informatics,* 57 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2020.101516>

⁵⁵ Coomaraswamy, A. K. (1956). *The transformation of nature in art.* New York: Dover Publications.65.