The Institutional Theory of Art

George Dickie (1936- )

For an object to be considered as art it must meet two conditions:

1. The object must be an artefact. It must have been worked on by humans. (This can be interpreted in a very broad manner).

2. The object must have been *given the status of art* by a member of the art world e.g. a gallery owner, art critic etc.

**Problem**

What criteria does the member of the art world use when deciding whether or not to grant an object the status of art?

a) If the member uses no criteria, then the definition of art is arbitrary and meaningless.

b) If the member uses some specific criteria, then these criteria should define art and not the institutional theory.