

MEMPHHAUS or My Art Nihilism Memphis Erwin

My Art are toys that are conceived from a stream of conscious and artistically informed decisions from a fully realized historical timeline. I will begin my timeline with the example of Duchamp's fountain. The idea that a urinal can become a sculpture when given the right context was revolutionary and revolting. Only when we get farther into the art narrative does "The Fountain" gain recognition because the world's fundamental comprehension of art evolves.

Magritte's "The Treachery of Images". The surreal 20th century painting depicts a pipe accompanied by the phrase "This is not a pipe" (translated from French). This piece is beautiful in its simplistic and straightforward approach to the realization that regardless of a painting's contents, it is still just a painting. Much of Art is a lie of our understanding. The canvas does not truly become a pipe when paint is placed on its surface "just right". However looking at the image, it clearly depicts a pipe. The work is commenting on the object of the work itself and the lies that become truth. It is simultaneously both a pipe and not a pipe! When I say "My Art is a toy", I am not aiming to deceive the same way it is not treachery to say "Toys are Art".

Artists like Duchamp and Rauschenberg embraced the objects as the artworks and favored intellectual and conceptual ideas to back their use of objects 'as they are'. A readymade shovel becomes a broken arm by only attaching a title. They questioned what Art is and challenged the conventions of it. Art was no longer about rendering and was a vein of self-aware-hypocrisy. Art had become truly intelligent and self-aware.

I closely followed the Bauhaus philosophy about their concerns of the loss of Art's purpose in society. Creativity and production were drifting apart and should not become soulless. The believers of the Bauhaus movement worked to rejuvenate design and Art into everyday life. The ideas that design should be intellectually and creatively pursued are ones that I subscribe too. It was almost a re-emerging of the guild system when Art and craftsmanship were one and the same. They rethought the education of "Fine Arts" into something contemporary as the "Visual Arts". Each of their works were imbued with intellectualism and creativity.

The most notable artist to evolve the Bauhaus ideals is none other than Andy Warhol. I need not talk much of him but he too had the clarity of anything possessing the capability of being artistic. Jeff Koon's is the contemporary follower of Warhol and pushes his own Art into the realm of design and business. He only envisions the work and contacts others to produce it. He is more removed from the Artistic object than any other artist. He does not create his Art himself. He hires professionals to realize his ideas in the material plain. The only way it could get further away is if Koons didn't come up with the ideas at all! He is almost a businessman of sorts. Yet his works are of the most expensive and sought after. Jeff Koons is a household name and I haven't been presented evidence that he has so much as looked at a paint brush. His work can be argued as being soulless but it cannot be said that his Art isn't intellectually and historically informed. Koons' philosophy is what makes his Art great, not the bullshit of romance and intimacy associated with an Artist. Koons makes spiritual objects and it's

of no consequence that he wasn't physically involved with the pieces manufacturing. I share the sentiment that I too create spiritual objects regardless of the "categorization" my aesthetics can manifest. On the other hand Koons' "Made In Heaven" series is a tongue in cheek jab at the very notion of romantic art. It is crude, self indulgent and smart. Basically it is the most expensive pornography to ever hang on a museum wall. It is Art and cannot ever be labeled otherwise. To do so would be a lie. The game of Art has changed and it will always be changing, growing, evolving because Art does not need an answer or even a question. It is loosely a creative and intellectual pursuit.

I've been asked "Where does my Art fit in?" because it can be witnessed as Cartoony, Illustrative, Design or otherwise somewhere outside the blurry boundaries of "Fine Art". What separates "Fine Art" from other industries of Art making anyway? I've been given the answer "Fine Art poses questions where other Art answers them" and that satiated my mind for a time. The more I thought about it, the less that answer held up. There is an inherent intellectualism to it because of the timeline I have laid out; regardless of the creator. The question "What is Fine Art" is the fundamental problem. The question is a treachery of Art. Now the only questions that can rightfully be posed is (A). Does the creator view it as Art? & (B). Does the viewer realize it to be Art? If the answer to either (A) or (B) is "YES" then it is Art! My own philosophy has become a type of "Passive Artistic Nihilism". I develop my work with historical, philosophical and creative contexts but the question of "Is this Art" is none of my concern because I say it is. If the viewer is to recognise my work as truly being Art with a capital A then it shall be unanimous! but I concern myself with none of it because the answer to (A) is "YES".

When I make Art, I play and when I play I make Art. They have become one and the same without boundaries and in my play I explore varieties of themes, applications and schools of thought. In my philosophy I am truly free.