

The Modern Art: Is it Beautiful? Or Awkward?

Nowadays some people think that artists are playing a trick on audience instead of making a contribution to the real art. Some people also hold the opinion that several modern artworks, especially performance arts, are not really worthy to be appreciated. What's your opinion?

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“What the hell is that?” Those words came from my friend Lily, when we went to an art exhibition and were standing in front of a tiny soap box lying in the glass case, which looks completely the same as the soap box we use today.

“I don't know,” I answered her, as I was confusing as well.

Actually in the late 20th century, there was a similar artwork called < Brillo Boxes >, being put in an art display by a well-known artist named Andy Warhol. It soon triggered a heated discussion about the definition of art. Later on, a new word – “pop art” was born, and it also opened a new era of modern art.

However those new arts do not aim to give you a peaceful, pleasant experience like classic arts. Mostly they want you to be shocked, to feel something new. As a result, some of the artworks seemed entirely “ridiculous”. Here we got some examples.

If you are not an art student, you probably know little about [Piero Manzoni](#), an Italian artist. He put his excrement into 90 cans, numbered them, and sold them as artworks. In 2007, No.18 can was sold at 124,000 euros in Sotheby's auction (an art auction house in



London), this price was as expensive as gold. This “artwork” called “Artist’s Shit”, at the same time he made another one called “Artist’s Breath” which is actually a balloon full of his breath. While you shouted out “It doesn’t make any sense!”, Piero Manzoni may smile at you and say “Artwork doesn’t need a sense.” You might see I put the word “artwork” in quotes, because I’m still not sure whether it should be considered as an artwork. What do you think?



Let’s see another example. A performance artist called [Tehching Hsieh](#) imprisoned himself in a cage for one year (1978-1979), with a camera photographing him every day. This artwork called <Cage>, and it was displayed in New York. The most shocking fact in this artwork was that this artist did not talk to anyone during that year. People, especially those who live in noisy cities like New York, had no idea how he conquered the loneliness and against the social instinct of human being. This artwork actually gave the audience a feeling of “pain”. It probably makes people rethink about their life. And it also demonstrates a new meaning of modern art: To show you more possibilities in this world.

But after reading the examples above, you may have a question here: why do modern art no longer offer people a sense of

classic beauty?

After classical art has reached its peak around 19th century, artists tried to find another way to express themselves. Thus they started to create new art forms. Now modern artists don't need to be highly-skilled as ancient artists. All they need is a creative idea, no matter how crazy it might be. A Chinese fireworks artist called [Cai Guoqiang](#) held a fireworks display called "One Night Stand" by the Seine River in Paris. He found 50 couples (volunteers) from all over the world and asked them to make love in tents on a yacht. This romantic artwork was popular among French as it related to the French culture. You see, modern artists are usually adventurous and ingenious.



So the next problem would be: how to identify whether an artwork is worthy of appreciation or not? The answer is: Take it easy. Appreciate what you like and forget about others. This is an age full of personalities, and people show their talents in different ways. Nowadays "Everyone can become a celebrity for 15 minutes" (Andy Warhol). If you got a brilliant idea and you are willing to put it into practice,

you might be the next artist, who knows?