

Rian Morgan

ROUTINE

MFA THESIS

## HIGH ART & POPULAR MEDIA

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The visual arts, unlike music and film, do not enjoy a popular appeal. It's relegated as an elitist's medium. The stuff of kings and millionaires. Owned by few and displayed in museums not as an expression of the artists' true intent, but like a large trophy case to be marveled at. <sup>1</sup>This is distinct from music, film, and even literature. These modes of expression and creativity rely on popular appeal, mass enjoyment, and identification with the protagonist on a large demographic scale.<sup>2</sup> It's easy for an average person to appreciate the work involved in the production of a movie and the process that was involved because we are so familiar with the medium of television. The average American watches in excess of 6 hours of television a day.

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<sup>1</sup> "Art is not like other culture because its success is not made by its audience. The public fill concert halls and cinemas everyday, we read novels by the millions and buy records by the billions. We the people, affect the making of most of our culture, but not our art. The art we look at is made by only a select few. A small group create, promote, purchase, exhibit and decide the success of Art. Only a few hundred people in the world have any real say. When you go to an Art gallery you are simply a tourist looking at the trophy cabinet of a few millionaires." Banksy. Wall and Piece. London: Random House Group Limited, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "It is of course undeniable that television is an example of Low Art, the sort of art that has to please people in order to get their money. Because of the economics of nationally broadcast, advertiser-subsidized entertainment, television's one goal...is to ensure as much watching as possible." E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 42.

SHOW ME THE MONET<sup>3</sup>

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Art (fine art) is the “other” because of how art is [not] appreciated in post-global America. It’s artistic value is displaced for its monetary value. The ideas are often shallow but the price is high. The value of artwork is not in the ideas presented but in how much it fetches at auction. But when presented with a work of “fine art” the average person will not give a damn what it means. It’s not that it may not be an interesting image or that there won’t be some sense of awe about a truly great work of art. But it requires work to figure out and really study a piece of artwork. Who wants to work at that? My question is rather rhetorical because most anyone that is in the cult<sup>4</sup> of American art really loves this stuff.<sup>5</sup>

The thing that has always bothered me about art is the economic system behind it. I’m not anti-capitalist, but the money and the whole political aspect to the “art world” are extremely distasteful. I doubt there are many who disagree but there are also a lot of people who make art to make money. As if they were mutually the same thing. As if art was solely a commodity. Well often it is I guess in this day and age but it doesn’t always have to be. There are people who try to find ways to communicate with a larger audience and avoid all the trappings of the industrial art complex.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Banksy. *Wall and Piece*. London: Random House Group Limited, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Artist, Art-Critics, Art-Theorists, Art Instructors, Gallery / Museum – Owner/ Operators, Art Collectors, Snake Handlers, etc...etc. You get the idea.

<sup>5</sup> (See Back Pages – NOBSTLF). “Screened Out,” *The Art Conspiracy*, Jean Baudrillard, Verso, 2002, pp. 181-185.

<sup>6</sup> “the cult of art.”

## I TAKE A PENCIL AND BEGIN TO DRAW WRITE?

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Can you imagine what it must be like for a person to walk into a contemporary art gallery or museum and try to figure out what the artist is saying in their artist statement? Can you imagine how frustrating and annoyed one is afterwards without some form of reference to the loaded art-criticism and obscure concepts presented in them? Does this really add any meaning to a work of art—honestly? Art theory and criticism is great for the cult but damaging to the project of contemporary art.

How on the one hand can it be said that P.M. Art is an attempt at bringing the role of the artist down to the level of the “everyday man,” and on the other obfuscate our intent about a body of work behind theory and criticism that virtually no one knows about other than people involved in the art world? The double standard and oxymoronic posturing becomes evident. The idea that we’ve been taught this trickery as a valid form of presenting ideas is something that younger artists must step back and away from. Run from in horror even. Art is only good when it’s honest.<sup>7</sup>

When theory replaces the artwork, and visual expression itself, we have ceased to be artists and are attempting to become philosophers / scientists. Legitimizing a body of art based on what the artist writes is ludicrous<sup>8</sup>. This is partly why you see so many uninteresting works of art in art magazines and at gallery shows. The substance and meaning is in the text and the rest is what is hanging on the wall. Theory is a subtext to

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<sup>7</sup> (See Back Pages – NOBSTLF). “Infinite Jest,” David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1996, pp. 694-695, 1053.

<sup>8</sup> I do recognize the irony of writing about *writing about* art.

the work on the wall and should never be placed higher than it or replace the visual artwork itself.

This is not to say that art theory and criticism do not have some value. Without some understanding of critical art theory it would be nearly impossible for me to write this. Theory is a great tool for the visual artist to form a more concrete conception of what they are trying to present visually. It can serve as a tool for understanding what an artist is doing in context of other ideas and ways of thinking. Theory can inform the artists and help guide how they produce art. However, it is not an important aspect of the work itself, visually. It certainly isn't an important aspect of enjoying a work of art. Theory definitely is not something that casual admirers of art need to appreciate the visual image.

Now there is a rather large contingent of Post-Modernist artists<sup>9</sup>, critics, theorists, and snake handlers that say the theory is as important, or even more important, than the art because it helps to *explain* what the artist's true intent is. That it helps to *democratize* art and brings the role of the artist back down to the *everyday*. That theory removes the mysticism and secrecy of art and makes it accessible. This cannot work<sup>10</sup>. Ours is a generation of artistic-pragmatics. We need to really look<sup>11</sup> at the image again and forget the theory for a moment when presented with a work of art. It's all there after all, correct? The theory and philosophy should be there lurking in the borders ready to be seen anyways. If the work stinks is the theory somehow supposed to revive it<sup>12</sup>? To help explain why something looks the way it does? Quite literally I feel that if I wanted to be

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<sup>9</sup> I'm assuming of course...

<sup>10</sup> I'll go out on a short limb here and say for many other artists as well.

<sup>11</sup> ...not read.

<sup>12</sup> As it stand now "yes."

“that guy” I could slop off some crap and write very beautifully and convincingly about a drawing and it would be accepted. And on the other hand I could spend enormous amounts of effort making a beautiful image, but because it cannot be explained well, would fall under the category of pedestrian or “outsider” art. This happens all the time. In academia and in the “art world.”<sup>13</sup>

Art in an ideal world should be transparent, free, and democratic. Art should be what Open-Source is to computer programmers. Free to be viewed, analyzed, reconfigured, and improved upon by others at will.

#### SOUND AND VISION<sup>14</sup>

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My parents were hippies<sup>15</sup>, which pretty much made for an interesting childhood. They made raised garden beds in the backyard and grew their own vegetables. My dad would make music with Moog synthesizers or Yamahas<sup>16</sup>. My mom painted watercolors and would sell her stuff at art fairs<sup>17</sup>. My dad's beard literally reached his belt and he only cut it down shorter after I became accustomed to hanging by it as a baby. But needless to

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<sup>13</sup> I love that phrase “art world” because it serves to separate the art from the rest of the world - which currently it does.

I think my parents used/prefer the term “freaks.”

<sup>14</sup> Think of The Doors, (early) Pink Floyd, Brian Eno and you'd get the gist. I don't remember which brand of organs my father preferred back then... one of those brands I'm sure.

<sup>14</sup> Incidentally, there's a person somewhere who has/had their house filled with my Mothers paintings.

say there was music playing and art being made all the time in my house growing up. The two have always been intertwined for me. Music was visual and visual (art) was sound.

I remember finding some old tapes my father had made where he would set a portable radio/tape recorder up somewhere in the house and connect a microphone to it. You could hear everything going on that day, my sister and I playing/fighting and the sounds of the house in general. Great stuff and much more visual than an image could have been of our little house and family<sup>18</sup>. Though not nearly as succinct as an image could be, the tape recording tells a story by bearing witness.<sup>19</sup>

## ART & POOP CULTURE

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It is impossible for anyone of my generation in the U.S. that has lived here since birth, to imagine what life would be like without a television<sup>20</sup>. Like me, people of my generation grew up with this stuff. It was everyday and although we knew it was different it still was familiar the way an Atari or Nintendo console was new yet familiar. The way

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<sup>18</sup> In vision and hearing, shapes, colors, movements, sounds, are susceptible to definite and highly complex organization in space and time. "Visual Thinking," Rudolf Arnheim, University of California Press, 1969, pp.18,.

<sup>19</sup> Americans seemed no longer united so much by common beliefs as by common images: what binds us became what we stand witness to. "A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again," *E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction*, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 42.

<sup>20</sup> For younger writers, TV's as much a part of reality as Toyotas and gridlock. We literally cannot imagine life without it. We're not different from our fathers in that television presents and defines our contemporary world. Where we are different is that we have no memory of a world without such electric definition. "A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again," *E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction*, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 43.

BBS systems and the Internet/WWW were everyday. It's all understood and makes sense simply because it has always been there<sup>21</sup>.

As I mentioned earlier the average American consumes 6 or more hours of television a day and this is especially true for people 35 and younger from what I can tell. Lop on top of that the amount of time spent in front of a desktop, laptop, cell phone, Blackberry, iPod, PSP, portable DVD Player, GPS, and you get the idea that our immersion in the hyperbolic digital medium is just as comfortable for many of us as traditional art mediums.

It can be and feel like a pretty cold medium as well at times because of the very nature of watching. TV gives us information and the passive stance required for viewing, for taking in, what is presented requires very little effort.<sup>22</sup>It's spoon-fed and cruel in an ironic sense. But still it's "fun" to watch. It must be or at least reinforces something that is genuinely missing in modern life etc...etc.

#### WILL WORK FOR THE HOLE IN THE DOUGHNUT<sup>23</sup>

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This multimedia piece is a way for me to bridge the gap between the established art world and the people who are outside the "art world." The people who have an

<sup>21</sup> There's nothing special about this by the way. We grew up with it so it's just as natural as thinking about the sky being blue or candy tasting good etc.

<sup>22</sup> "Television's greatest minute-by-minute appeal is that it engages without demanding. One can rest while undergoing stimulation. Receive without giving. In this respect, television resembles certain other things one might call Special Treats...basically fine and fun in small amounts but bad for us in large amounts and really bad for us if consumed in the massive regular amounts reserved for nutritive staples." E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> "Consumption," Virtual Unreality, Exene Cervenka, 2.12.61 Publications, 1993, p.2.

interest in art but never had the time or the inclination to study it further than to say “ I know I like something when I see it but I don’t know why.” There are a lot of people like this in modern America. It’s not their fault. There’s definitely more importance in the educational system these days on science and mathematics than there are in the creative arts.

I digress. What I want is for people, young and old, to have access, better access, to the creative arts. To have access to this without the trappings of an established art world that requires knowledge not applicable to most Americans<sup>24</sup>. I want to make an art that is not solely for the culturally elite, nor for the graffiti artist, but that can exist somewhere in between that space.

Television, or the moving screen of film, is the natural answer for me. I’m not trying to be a filmmaker. I never studied film nor do I ever intend to. There are thousands of great “video artists” but I’m not comfortable with that term either. Sure I work in video for this project but it’s not necessarily the only way to do this. However, I think the medium of TV is an incredibly efficient way to dispense art and visual imagery.

What I want to do is to make an animation using drawings and video and music. All the things I love and try to combine them into a cohesive piece that tells a bit of a narrative. I want it to be something that literally anyone can look at in virtually any setting. This could be shown in a gallery, on a computer, on the television, on a cell phone even for all I care. I just want to make something that people can actually see out there in the real world and not sequestered solely to academia and the gallery system. I

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<sup>24</sup> Those outside the “cult.”

want to make something that is as close to a truly democratic art as I can imagine and this is the only way I can think of doing it.

One thing that I've always felt I had to defend (to myself I think more than any one person) is the notion of "artistic influence." There's countless times when I made an image for a class or had an idea about something that I was trying to make or come to terms with conceptually regarding my work that I was told by a teacher or a fellow student to go to the library or otherwise lookup "so and so" because their work is somehow reminiscent of mine in some regards and how beneficial this would be to me. To know that there's someone else out there who had the same idea, same struggle, or same aesthetic would help me in my predicament or quandary with my own image making, etc...

It's a quite logical and valid idea really all in all and I'm pretty comfortable with it. It can help you figure out how they tackled their situation and thus help me (or whomever) tackle a particular situation making an image. But, I always felt empty afterwards. It's like "damn that really sucks that it's been done – and done better than how I was going to do it." Then there's the times when you find the artist or thinker that someone told you was really relevant for what you were working on and you look at it or read it and say to yourself "this is *not* what I was thinking about at all." This is even more distressing because it signals for me that I am way farther off from image to idea than I even pictured myself being at this point. So all in all I personally never found it all that much helpful except when you come across something you haven't seen before and can admire it for what it is. Catalogue it somewhere in the back of your brain. Reference it – then forget it.

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But really what I've always taken visual inspiration from was first, music, and secondly, music videos<sup>25</sup>, and last literature<sup>26</sup>. There's something about music that is so open ended and translatable across nearly all types of thought patterns as to conjure up images and ideas and concepts that are so hard to arrive at while sitting in silence. Time becomes very lucid and distant and it becomes possible for me to sit in front of a drawing for hours without realizing that it's 5am and I really should think about getting some rest before I go to work the next day. It has that quality that art has always (for me) been missing. Perhaps it's *because* I've grown up in the post broadcast / pre-internet age that my attention span is about 3.2 seconds long but I know that there are very few times I've ever *seen* something so interesting that I can't look away for a long time. It's happened but not nearly as often as when I *hear* a song I've never heard by Aphex Twin or Squarepusher or something. It's as if music is my crutch (and all artists have a crutch I don't care what anyone says about how bad crutches are. We all wobble around with at least one when making art) and it's nearly impossible for me to make something visual without having something audible to go along for it inside my interior brain space that I live in when making an image. More than likely though, to sort of flashback to my childhood again, I operate this way when making images because they were so inseparable growing up; both through my parents' interests and hobbies and because of the *televisual*<sup>27</sup> experience of 6+ hours of T.V. life.

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<sup>25</sup> Mainly the work of Chris Cunningham. <http://www.director-file.com/cunningham/>

<sup>26</sup> This paper has been overwhelmingly influenced by David Foster Wallace's writings in terms of both style and substance. I really like him and he has helped me put together into words what I've felt to be true, but somehow unable to write, for some time.

<sup>27</sup> Of or having to do with television, esp. the visual aspect of a television program or broadcast.

## CRITERIA

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I wanted to make an artwork that was in a format or medium that could meet these requirements: (1) It should be very cheap to purchase (2) It should be easy to maintain and carry (3) It should be viewable in numerous ways (4) It should be easily modified by the owner in a way they want to view it. The only thing that could meet these requirements that I could come up with was a video.

A video can be viewed on a television, computer, or streamed over the Internet – making it easy to view and transport. It can be easily edited and reconfigured. It is a fairly cheap item to purchase as compared to most paintings, drawings, sculptures, etc. It can be modified with relatively little artistic skill.<sup>28</sup> In short; it is the most democratic medium that I can imagine to work within currently.

## THE ROUTINE

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It's a simple narrative about a man who wakes up, yawns, turns off the alarm clock, scratches the crust from his eyes and rises. He goes down the stairs to make a pot of coffee. He gets a shower in and shaves his face. Grabs some clothes and turns on the T.V. to check the weather report. He lets the cat out. The man grabs a cup of coffee and

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<sup>28</sup> Windows Movie Maker™ or iMovie™ as examples.

watches the television for a bit. He gets his head together and grabs his coat and bag. He turns off the T.V and locks up his house as he leaves. He walks out into the rising sunlight and off to his car.

He is now in character. He put on his public self-image and steps out into the day. To be seen and unnoticed. To be an individual and *homogenic*<sup>29</sup> person all at once. He prepares himself to navigate the world's roads, laws, rules, and social expectations, interact with others (and images of others) across numerous mediated streams of being.

The viewer gets to stand witness to the protagonists moving from his private/inner self to his publicly projected image of self. We see these in two ways: literally and figuratively. The viewer witnesses this in the literal sense as the basic narrative unfolds and we see it figuratively in the juxtaposition between the hand drawn images moving in and out of the digital video. This back and forth between the two types of media represents the tension between mans<sup>30</sup> private sense of self and the public projection of self he presents to the world.

Rather than deconstructing the "self" into segments and compartments of being and reality I wanted to use two distinct mediums<sup>31</sup> to try and reconstruct the idea of a "person." Make something appear as whole as I could imagine without the notions of hyper-reality, cool-irony, skepticism, and mania. It's my attempt at restoring what has been taken apart. "Paradoxically trying to restore what's taken for 'real' to three whole

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<sup>29</sup> *Greek* *homogeneia*, community of origin, from *homogens*, of the same race, family, kind; see *homogeneous*.

<sup>30</sup> In this case...

<sup>31</sup> Video and Drawing obviously.

dimensions, to reconstruct a univocally round world [person] out of the disparate screens of flat sights.”<sup>32</sup>

The private self is a less mediated existence that (I contend) still remains in all of us despite the hyperbole of contemporary life. He is the part of ourselves we suppress to make sense of what we see, do, and interact with in the public sphere of American culture and “reality.” He is the closest part of us that can be thought to be authentic or honest. The *real* as how we truly see ourselves when we look in the mirror at six AM still shaking the sleep out of our skulls.

The drawings represent privately held feelings, like the sentimental and oftentimes idealistic or impractical thoughts that roll around in our heads. The un-ironic and idealistic values that are privately espoused despite the cheap and negative irony so habituated in modern American life. You can’t come out and say these things, be this way, because of how one may be perceived as weak and loathsome.

Irony, like postmodernism, offers us little if nothing except an empty shell of a world wrapped in the history of images. It was/is a critique of the past and therefore offers few answers for the future.<sup>33</sup> It’s easy to say the *opposite* of what you truly mean because it deflects any responsibility in your notions, feelings<sup>34</sup> and even your authentic<sup>35</sup> sense of self. Irony lets us hide behind what we *truly* feel and gives us an “out” to merely

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<sup>32</sup> “A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again,” E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> “A dog, if you point at something, will look only at your finger.” “A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again,” E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> (See Back Pages – NOBSTLF) “Infinite Jest,” David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1996, pp. 694-695, 1053.

<sup>35</sup> I believe in an authentic *sense* of self or at least the feeling of one. How can we operate without one?

*suggest* what we think. It's an evasion from being how we really see ourselves – who we really *are*. It's so ingrained in our everyday life that it is almost unnoticeable and impossible to avoid in even the most basic of human interaction.

Irony is a lie and we're all practiced liars.

I find it remarkable how many of us seem to arrive at deeply personal and individual uniform or mask to exist in public. The “self-image” we put out there. It goes beyond merely the clothes we choose to wear or a certain overall aesthetic sensibility, but the body language, the gesture, the expression on our face, choices in the products that define who we are as a person<sup>36</sup>. The complete package, in other words, we assemble.

Our professions, economic classes, belief systems, and locations<sup>37</sup> in America can have an enormous impact on how we perceive our individual sense of self against the backdrop of others in the public arena. In America, it's the images that bind us as a people.<sup>38</sup> It's what unites and separates us. One must ask oneself. Who will I be today?

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<sup>36</sup> ...Or reject which in itself still implicates the rejecter because there is recognition that this is indeed a reality in contemporary life.

<sup>37</sup> As example...there are probably hundreds of factors that could explain this.

<sup>38</sup> Americans seemed no longer united so much by common beliefs as by common images: what binds us became what we stand witness to. “A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again,” *E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction*, David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1997, p. 42.

NOTES & OTHER B.S. TOO LONG TO FOOTNOTE:

1. "Screened Out," *The Art Conspiracy*, Jean Baudrillard, Verso, 2002, pp. 181-185.

But what can art mean now in a world of hyperrealist from the outset, a world that is cool, transparent, image-conscious? What can they do but tip us a last paradoxical wink – that of reality mocking itself in the most hyperrealistic form, that of sex mocking itself in its most exhibitionistic form, that of art mocking itself and its own disappearance in its most artificial form: irony. The dictatorship of images is, in any event, an ironic dictatorship. But that irony itself is no longer part of the accused share; it is, rather, party to the insider-trading, to that hidden, shameful complicity which binds the artist, playing on his/her aura of derision, to the stupefied, incredulous masses. Irony, too, is a part of the art conspiracy.

Art playing on its own disappearance and the disappearance of its object was still an art of great works. But art playing art re-cycling itself indefinitely by helping itself to reality? Most contemporary art is engaged in just this: appropriating banality, the throwaway, mediocrity as value and ideology. In these innumerable installations and performances, what is going on is just a compromise with the state of things – and simultaneously with all the past forms of the history of art. An admission of unoriginality, banality and worthlessness, elevated into a perverse aesthetic value, if not indeed a perverse aesthetic pleasure. Admittedly, it is claimed that all this mediocrity is sublimated in the transition to the level of art, which is distanced and ironic. But it is just worthless and insignificant at that level as before. Transition to the aesthetic level rescues nothing. In fact the opposite is true: it is mediocrity raised to the second power. It claims to be worthless: 'I'm *worthless*, I'm *worthless!*' and it really is worthless! We have here the whole duplicity of contemporary art: laying claim to worthlessness [*la nullité*], insignificance and non-meaning; aiming for worthlessness, when it is already worthless; aiming for non-meaning, when it already signifies nothing; claiming to achieve superficiality in superficial terms. Now nullity is a secret quality which not everyone can aspire to. Insignificance – true insignificance, the victorious defiance of meaning, the stripping away of meaning, the art of the disappearance of meaning – is an exceptional quality possessed by a few rare works – works which never claim that quality.

There is an initiatory form of nullity, just as there is an initiatory form of the nothing, or an initiatory form of evil. And then there is insider-trading, the fakers of nullity, the snobbery of nullity, of all of those who prostitute the Nothing for value, who prostitute Evil for useful ends. We must not let these fakers get away with it. When Nothing shows up in signs, when Nothingness emerges at the very heart of the system of

signs, that is the fundamental event of art... With this paranoia colliding with art, there is no room for critical judgment any more, but merely for an amicable, and inescapably convivial, participation in nullity. This is the art conspiracy and its primal sense, carried forward by all the private shows, hangings, exhibitions, restorations, collections, donations and speculations. It is a conspiracy which cannot be 'unhatched' in any known universe, since, behind the mystification of images, it has put itself beyond the reach of thought.

The other side of this trickery is the way people are bluffed into according importance and credence to all of this, on the grounds that it is not possible that it should be so worthless and empty and there must be something to it. Contemporary art plays on this uncertainty, on the impossibility of a reasoned aesthetic value-judgment, relying on the guilt of those who simply cannot understand, or have not understood that there is nothing to understand. Here again, this is insider-trading. But we may also take the view that these people, whom art keeps at bay, have indeed fully understood, since, by their very stupefaction, they show an intuitive understanding that they are victims of an abuse of power; that they are not being let in on the rules of the game; that the wool is being pulled over their eyes. In other words, art has made its entry into the general process of insider-trading (and not merely from the financial point of view of the art market, but in the very management of aesthetic values). In this it is not alone: the same kind of collusion is to be found in politics, the economy and information, with the same ironic resignation on the part of the 'consumers.'

2. "Infinite Jest," David F. Wallace, Back Bay Books, 1996, pp. 694-695, 1053.

It's of some interest that the lively arts of the millennial U.S.A. treat anhedonia and internal emptiness as hip and cool. It's maybe the vestiges of the Romantic glorification of *Weltschmerz*, which means world-weariness or hip ennui. Maybe it's the fact that most of the arts here are produced by world-weary and sophisticated older people and then consumed by younger people who not only consume art but study it for clues on how to be cool, hip – and keep in mind that, for kids and younger people, to be hip and cool is the same as to be admired and accepted and included and so Unalone. Forget so-called peer-pressure. It's more like peer-hunger. No? We enter a spiritual puberty where we snap to the fact that the great transcendent horror is loneliness, excluded engagement in the self. Once we've hit this age, we will now give or take anything, wear any mask, to fit, be part-of, not be Alone, we young. The U.S arts are our guide to inclusion. A how-to. We are shown how to fashion masks of ennui and jaded irony at a young age where the face is fictile enough to assume the shape of whatever it wears. And then it's stuck there, the weary cynicism that saves us from gooey sentiment and unsophisticated naïveté. Sentiment equals naïveté on this continent... what passes for hip cynical transcendence of sentiment is really some kind of fear of being really human, since to be really human... is probably to be unavoidably sentimental and naive and goo-prone and generally pathetic, is to be in some basic interior way forever infantile, some sort of not-quite-looking infant dragging itself anaclitically around the map, with big wet eyes and froggy-soft skin, huge skull, gooey drool... this hideous internal self, incontinent of sentiment and need, that pulses and writhes just under the hip empty mask, anhedonia.