



ISSUE 72

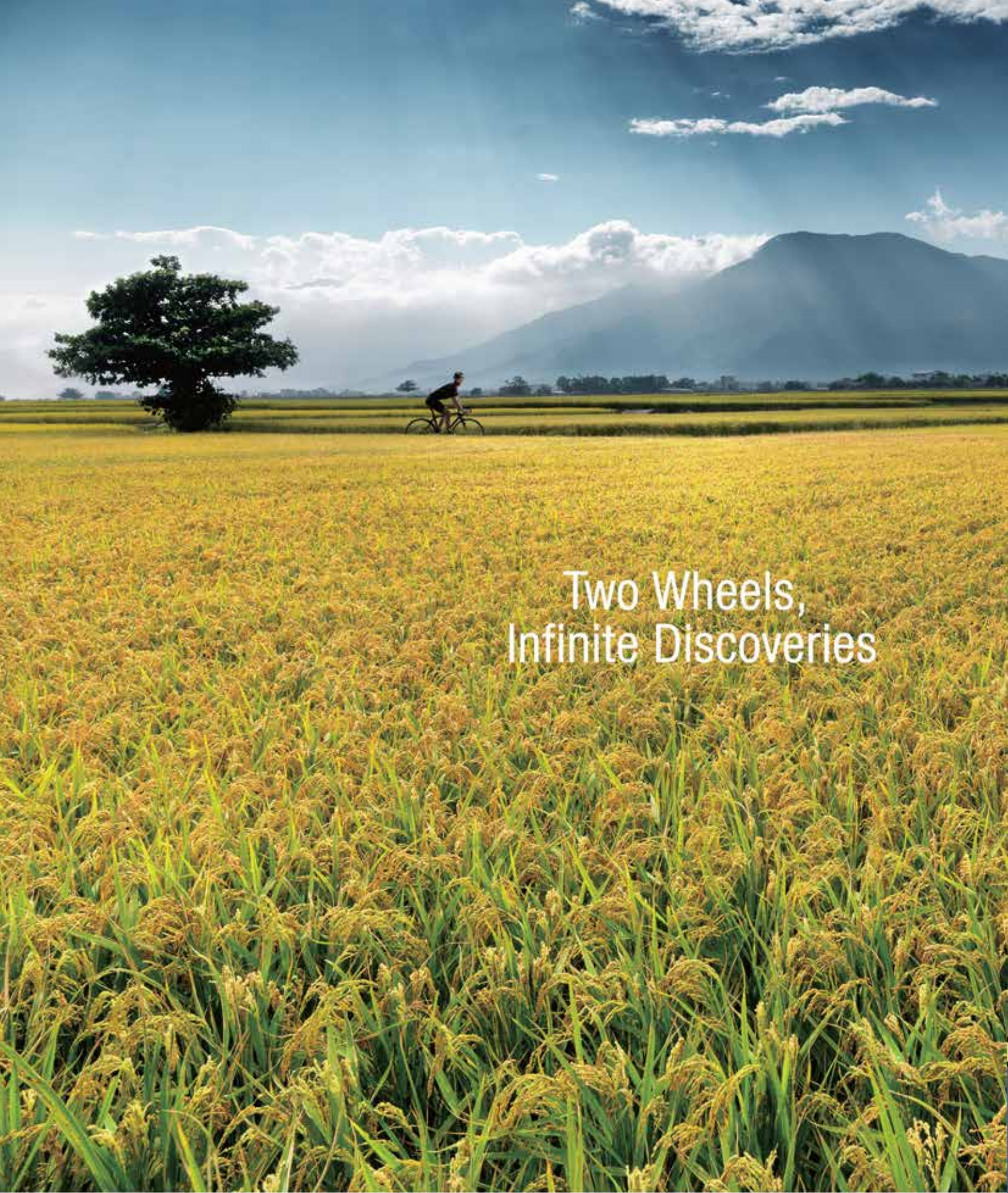
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The background is a vibrant, abstract collage. It features bold, sweeping brushstrokes in red, teal, yellow, and dark blue. There are also areas of white and light pink. A red circle is drawn around the central text. At the bottom, there's a strip with a pattern of red and white stars on a blue background, reminiscent of the American flag.

THE
ART
ISSUE



Two Wheels, Infinite Discoveries

How far can two wheels take me?
How many valleys passed, how many kilometers traveled,
How many friendly smiles met...how many memories made?
From coastline to tree line...surf to snow...wetlands to highlands...
So much inspiring beauty and challenging terrain.
I found it all...cycling in Taiwan!

Stunning Beauty at Every Turn

Taiwan
THE HEART OF ASIA

LARGE AND IN CHARGE

Contributors

Aaron Hertzmann
Lindsay Wong
Lydia Tan
Nina Gan
Victor Jure
Yin Loon
Yuki Koh

Editor-in-Chief

Aaron Stewart
aaron@campus.com.sg

Creative Director

Lynn Ooi

Designer

Yun Ng

Sales Enquiry:

ad_query@campus.com.sg

Lennox & Ooi Media Pte Ltd

11 Paya Lebar Road #02-12 S409050
Tel (65) 6732 0325

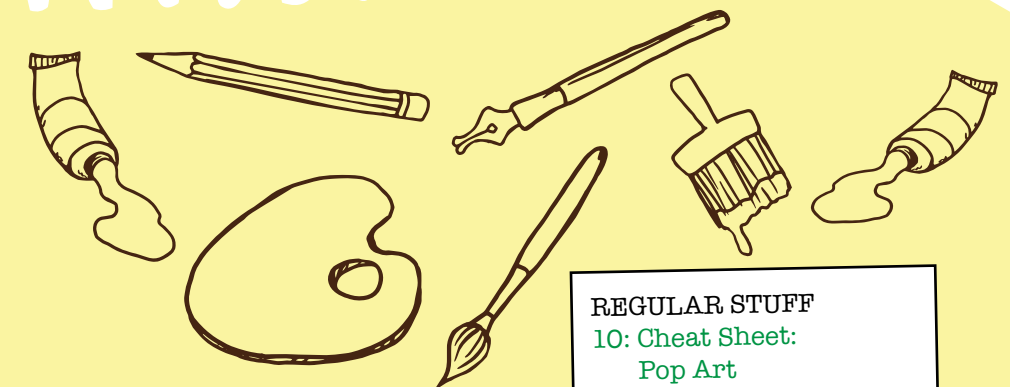
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Student contributors always welcome!

Bored of staying at home and are itching to write something about the state of... something? Then drop us a line and be part of our team of contributors! We welcome all students.

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BY YUKI KOH-JUAT NEE

ART FOR LIFE

Best art museums around the world

Art museums are recognised as the pinnacle of the artistic spirit. Be it in the way the works are curated and protected, the tour experiences, or even the structure of the museum, art museums are quintessential staples of the art world. It really isn't an experience that you can quite replicate. With that said, let's explore some of the best art museums in the world.

Louvre (Paris)

You can't talk about art museums without mentioning the Louvre. Housed in the heart of Paris, it anchors itself as an unmissable pyramid elegantly pieced together from glass and pole - and despite its modern appearances, the Louvre dates back to 1190, when it was originally built as a fortress. Since then, the Louvre was refurbished and opened in 1793 with 537 paintings on display. The museum has since risen to become one of the world's biggest museums, and boasts a staggering 380,000 artefacts and 35,000 works of art. In spite of the pandemic, the Louvre also pulls in the biggest number of visitors to a museum on an annual basis.

If you're thinking of visiting the Louvre, you may consider their thematic virtual tours, ranging from the importance of dance in art, myths in popular culture, and even artist-politics power plays that stretch centuries back. Aside from that, The Louvre has forayed into Virtual Reality (VR) with the 'Mona Lisa Beyond the Glass' experience, as well as digital storytelling to cater to kids and adults alike. The Louvre also has its own podcast (in French), where you can tune into the luscious history surrounding the museum as well as some of their priceless works of art.



Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (Spain)

As a homage to expressionism, the Guggenheim revolutionised the concept of museum design and what it meant to combine art and architecture. Iconic for its series of sleek, shiny serpents, this Museum is as formidable on the outside as the inside, and stars masterpieces from Andy Warhol, Anselm Kiefer, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and more. Beyond that, Guggenheim's galleries are decked with cutting-edge technology like the ZERO, a 300° curved projection of Bilbao's urban history. This immersive experience brings art museums to new heights and pushes the envelope on meshing technology and art together.

Interestingly, Guggenheim also maintains a strong online presence with its online blog articles and curated online collection. Easy to browse and navigate for art lovers, this is complemented by online art programmes that cater to young children, teenagers, and adults as well. After all, if you can't go to the museum, the museum can bring itself to you. By bridging this gap, it brings people closer to the art that they love and know, and enables them to produce art in the safety of their home.



Vatican Museum (Vatican City)

The Vatican Museums display a splendid collection of Renaissance art and Roman sculptures, alongside many portraits of past popes. Nevertheless, what really draws people to the Vatican Museums is its architecture and masterpieces. The Sistine Chapel, for one, was decorated by Michelangelo, while Raphael magicked the Stanza di Raffaello. Likewise, Giuseppe Momo's spiral staircase creation - though likely built for functional enter/exit purposes - has attracted much awe for its beauty and efficiency over the years.

Though you might be barred from taking pictures in some rooms, the Vatican Museums offer a deeper look into such places through VR tours of the Sistine Chapel, Salone Sistino, New Wing, Profane Museum and more.

Looking forward to visiting?

Do you have any art museums you'd like to visit once we can freely travel again? Singapore has a number of art museums we can visit, from the National Gallery to the ArtScience Museum. We may have no Michelangelos, Raphaels or a Mona Lisa, but you'll never know what hidden gems you might stumble upon.

BY LINDSAY WONG

VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR

THE ART AND AESTHETICS OF K-POP VIDEOS

K-pop is a genre known for its artistry not only in its lyrics and music but also in the accompanying music videos. Visuals are essential in the industry - a lot of money goes into the production of music videos (MV), but the high budget is necessary to stand out in this saturated market. Music videos are only released a few times a year on average for each K-pop group and artist, so they have to display a certain level of artistry to deliver a compelling and attractive MV to fans.

INSPIRATION

Many K-pop MVs draw artistic inspiration from literature, art, and even philosophy. For example, in BTS' 'Blood Sweat & Tears' MV, there are various references, ranging from religious imagery and classic art. Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper', Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 'The Fall of the Rebel Angels' and Michelangelo's 'Pietà' are the main references for the song. The video is six minutes long (by contrast, the song is only 3:37 minutes long) and is about the contrast between the evils of illusion and the sanctity of reality. These kinds of inspiration can lend to the narrative and visual aesthetics of the music video, influencing the mood of the song.



COSTUMES

Since viewers usually watch music videos because of the artists, costumes are incredibly important for visuals. All kinds of outfits are worn to set the mood, from suits to miniskirts to traditional costumes, such as the hanbok. VIXX is one group that has paid tribute to Korea's rich history and heritage by wearing a traditional Confucian scholar hanbok in their music video for 'Shangri-La'. The song itself incorporates elements from traditional musical instruments like the gayageum and is influenced by East Asian mythology. Wearing the hanbok fits the concept of the song, making the MV and the members look ethereal.



COLOUR

Similar to set design, colour also has the power to influence the mood by setting the tone and atmosphere. Every MV generally subscribes to a particular colour palette, while some use colour to separate different mood segments of the song. If the song is upbeat or has a positive message, the setting is more likely outdoors in the sun - this can be seen in BLACKPINK's 'Ice Cream' where the entire MV is pink to reflect its bubblegum pop. In contrast, if the song is emotional or conveys negative feelings, it typically takes place at night, often in the rain or a darker setting. In TWICE's 'I Can't Stop Me', the backdrops show gradients of colour and shadows, making the MV more dramatic, perfectly matching how dramatic the song is.



SET DESIGN

Set design is essential in music videos because the setting significantly affects how the message is conveyed. This includes the use of props, many of which allude to the song's lyrics or central themes. In EXO-CBX's 'Blooming Day', the members are often surrounded by pots of flowers, which points to the title of the song and the fact that it is about a blooming relationship between two people.



CHOREOGRAPHY

One of the hallmarks of K-pop is their dance - choreography allows idols to stand out, as all the members are in sync to deliver a stunning performance. A song's choreography can be complex or simple yet impactful, but they all contribute to the narrative or performance. Dance is a form of expression and MVs almost always contain choreography.

For example, HATFELT is an expressive dancer who uses her body to depict her sorrowful feelings in her song 'Ain't Nobody'. The song is about the intensity of her feelings of love and pain, and she portrays it by tossing and turning in her choreography. Good choreography helps us visualise and fully enjoy a song.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

These different elements all come together in music videos to paint a beautiful picture for K-pop groups and artists. Most music videos inherently have artistry at their core and have visual aesthetics that are sure to amaze viewers every time without fail.



BY LINDSAY WONG

THE ART OF SCARE: ARTISTIC HORROR FILMS

While slashers and thrillers may make for exciting horror movies that thrill us and chill us down to our very core, artistic horror films are often overlooked. Many movie fans consider the horror genre trashy or tacky, with the sole purpose being to scare viewers with cheap thrills. Nevertheless, there are many hidden gems within the horror genre that are artistic and convey deep messages, simultaneously scaring viewers.



RAW (2016)

'Raw' is a French coming-of-age horror movie about Justine, a vegetarian student who undergoes unusual initiation rituals at her new veterinary school. Cannibalism is the main theme of the film, as Justine is forced to eat a raw rabbit's kidney but then develops a craving for human meat, and loses control of her desires. 'Raw' also explores female sexuality, as Justine must navigate a male-dominated environment. Tastefully directed by director Julia Ducourmau, 'Raw' received critical acclaim for its message of female empowerment through Justine's character. While it was criticised for being too graphic and bloody, it enabled the film to leave a longer-lasting impression on viewers.



SUICIDE CLUB (2001)

Since Japan has one of the highest suicide rates in the world due to the work pressure and bullying, suicide is considered a taboo topic that is not often explored in the media. 'Suicide Club' tackles suicide head-on by following police officers examining an incident of which 54 schoolgirls commit a mass suicide. This triggers a wave of suicide across the country among the youth. 'Suicide Club' was directed by Sion Sono, who was once part of a pseudo-Christian Communist cult, whose experiences influenced the film's direction. With 'Suicide Club', Sono hoped to also address the influence of pop culture and the media on the youth. The film garnered a cult following and even a sequel called 'Noriko's Dinner Table'.



THE CELL (2000)

'The Cell', starring Jennifer Lopez and Vince Vaughn, is about a psychologist who enters the mind of a serial killer through a new transcendental science in order to save the last victim who's still alive. While many scenes seem stereotypical for horror movies, it is inherently clever in depicting how serial killers think and feel. The film is brutally honest and portrays the serial killer without any filter, from his gory visual to the way he slaughters his victims. The surreal landscape and dream-like atmosphere utilising Gothic visuals and Pop Art references offer up a disturbing yet stunning eye candy that makes the film an artistic masterpiece.

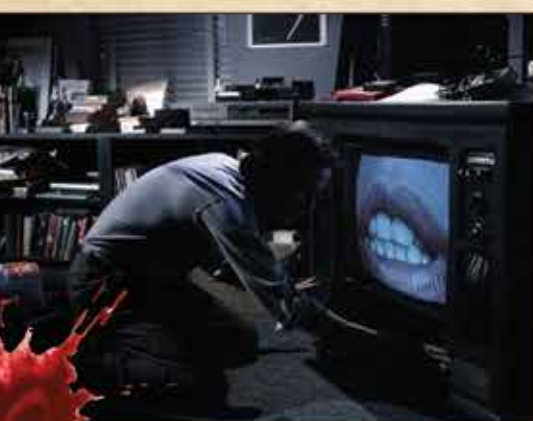
DOGTUOTH (2016)

From the outside, they seem like the perfect family, as the husband has a high-paying job and a massive house. However, the family occupying the house is anything but perfect. 'Dogtooth' is a bizarre Greek fantasy film about a controlling, violent, and abusive father who keeps his children (a boy and two girls) locked away from the outside world, well into their adulthood. This is the definition of a dysfunctional family - the father feeds them lies and the children act like animals at times. While the film surpasses all understanding of a plot, it is artistic in the way that it injects humour into moments of horror and bizarreness.



VIDEODROME (1983)

'Videodrome' is a film about body horror that is set in a dystopian future in which technology has infiltrated every aspect of everyone's daily life - not too far off from the reality that we know today, and even shows technology similar to Siri and Alexa. The protagonist, Max, is a TV station CEO looking for the people behind 'Videodrome', a channel featuring violence and torture. Soon, he gets slowly and painfully consumed by 'Videodrome' in a gruesome process. The cult classic features themes that are still relevant in today's world. With 'Videodrome', director David Cronenberg aims to tap into our subconscious by depicting our masochistic, subservient tendencies on screen.



BY NINA GAN

SLEEPING BEAUTY

ART HOTELS AROUND THE WORLD

You don't have to go to a museum to see works of art - if you know where to book your hotel. A great way to get your cultural fix is to spend the night at special lodgings that offer fascinating artwork right in your room, or at least throughout the hotel. Say goodbye to the days of sterile rooms and say hello to thoughtful, bespoke experiences, with captivating collections right at your fingertips.



XVA Art Hotel DUBAI, UAE

The XVA Hotel in the old Bastakiya quarter is a renovated traditional majlis-style building with original architectural motifs, wind towers and open courtyards. Decorated in an Arabian minimalist style, each of the 12 rooms is designed in a different style by regional artists, and the courtyard café is where the city's creative types meet.



Azulik TULUM, MEXICO

Situated within Tulum's jungle, Azulik is a luxury sculptural masterpiece boasting a maze-like open jungle design, constructed from hand-crafted wooden frames and thatched straw roofs. The hotel has a small gallery and funds the nearby SFER IK, which boasts artisanal workshops and artist residencies.



Hotel April SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

Designed in the New French modern style, Hotel April is a small boutique hotel with alluring brickwork, rich tones of dark wood, and stunning chandeliers. Each room is different, playing with contrasting surfaces, from smooth marble to elegant wallpapers, and rustic brickwork intertwining as a continuous theme.



La Fonda On the Plaza SANTA FE, USA

Situated in the heart of historic Santa Fe is the Pueblo Revival style La Fonda On the Plaza hotel. Boasting the allure of old world charm, with paintings from local and Native American artists, the historic hotel showcases handcrafted glass tiles, wooden headboards and cabinets, and handmade chandeliers.



The Fife Arms BRAEMAR, SCOTLAND

Situated in the foothills of the Scottish Highlands, this 'Victorian coaching inn' - framed by dramatic mountains and an idyllic landscape - features over 16,000 antiques and 12,000 works of art, ranging from Pablo Picasso to Gerhard Richter, and even watercolour paintings by Queen Victoria and Prince Charles.



Art Mai Gallery Nimman Hotel CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

As Chiang Mai is Thailand's art capital, Art Mai Gallery Nimman Hotel doesn't just hang paintings on the walls - each floor of the hotel is dedicated to a specific style of art (ie. Pop, Abstract, Surreal, Lanna). Their Artist Signature rooms are individually decorated by a different artist with their signature styles.



The Silo CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Remodelled from an old grain silo is the architecturally stunning Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art in Africa (the largest museum of contemporary African art in the world). Above it is the modernist Silo Hotel which boasts industrial steel-and-glass design with an explosion of colour and contemporary African art throughout.



McMenamins Crystal Hotel PORTLAND, USA

The McMenamins Crystal Hotel's decor of the 51 rooms is inspired by performances at the Crystal Ballroom. Each suite boasts dark velvet drapery and colourful headboards with accents of animal print upholstery to add a touch of rock n roll. The gorgeous soaking pool and basement bar are also design showcases.



BnA Alter Museum KYOTO, JAPAN

Each room at BnA Alter Museum is different, as it's decorated by individual artists. The Kyoto branch is the art hotel chain's first outlet outside Tokyo, and features 31 permanent exhibitions by 15 Japanese artists. The ten-storey vertical gallery showcases the best of Japanese contemporary art and the city's hippest bar.



Le Collatéral ARLES, FRANCE

With just four rooms, Le Collatéral was once a medieval church. The bare concrete and brickwork, wooden and metal staircases, and minimalist structure make it a great gallery for colourful commissioned art works. The hotel is also a cultural centre for artist residencies, exhibitions, and workshops.

FUNNY NOT FUNNY

THE ART OF MEME

Memes are valid pieces of artistic expression - they embed in our consciousness, help us understand the world around us, and become part of our cultural psyche. Nearly every current development in our lives gets the meme treatment; nonsensical, hilarious, sarcastic, and easily relatable, memes add a different hue to our otherwise mundane life. Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins coined the term 'meme' to explain his concept of an idea that spreads by means of imitation from person to person, competing for attention.



Trollface

A MEME IS A DEMOCRATIC ART

Art is constantly evolving, but if the purpose of art is to express a human truth, the meme fits the bill. We use memes to understand, critique, and share thoughts about the world around us - they help break down complex information in one single image and text. In a time of eyeball economy, memes engage online users with a comical twist to current affairs, giving them respite from a plethora of information.

In a way, memes can be compared to street art - they represent a running commentary on society, and have evolved to disrupt norms, question society, and start a visual dialogue that can speak truth to power. Underappreciated for their value, both forms of art run the gamut of subject matter, and are a highly accessible art form - and memes have become easily widespread thanks to the internet.

As an art form, a meme is democratic - anyone can create and consume memes because they're highly accessible and easy to make. Memes are a cultural icon of the internet era, and although it was born on the internet, it's slowly making its way into physical art galleries.



Woman yells at cat

THE ANATOMY OF A MEME

There's no single format that memes must follow. Any image can be made into memes by superimposing text on them, but what matters the most is that they can make you laugh irrespective of everything.

Some photos of people have gone down in meme infamy. We all remember the 'Success baby' and the 'Disaster girl'. Even movie and TV stills are fair game: Boromir from Lord of the Rings is a well-known one, as well as the 'Woman yells at cat' meme taken from Real Housewives of Beverly Hills.

Photos aren't the only medium: rage comics are popular for their ability to depict human emotions with a satirical punchline using very simple line drawings. Remember seeing a line drawing of a confused Jackie Chan? Before that, there was a very rudimentary comic character simply called 'trollface' which has fronted many popular memes.



Success baby



Disaster girl



Boromir

HALL OF FAME

While memes can be made by anyone and everyone, some people have made their mark with their own style. Stefano Guerrara has built up a reputation for art history memes with his 'Se i quadri potessero parlare' (If the Paintings Could Talk) series which highlights how paintings from hundreds of years ago can resonate with a modern audience.

There are also meme collectives on Instagram that have amassed millions of fans, as pages like @sarcasom_only show. With over 15 million followers, this account addresses our everyday struggles - personal hygiene, feeling overwhelmed, being single, and more. A great resource for tracking the latest memes and trends is the website, Know Your Meme.



Confused Jackie Chan

FUTURE OF ART MEMES

What's interesting about memes is that they can be created by anyone with a funny idea and aren't necessarily good at artwork, empowering those with a good sense of humour. For a meme to be a valuable piece of art, it has to become memorable and continue to remain relevant, and thanks to the vastness of social media, there's no shortage of meme makers.

beauty is in the eye of the beholder

WHY IS HIGH FASHION SO UGLY?

Fashion has an odd relationship with ugliness. They can be unflattering, clunky, frame-swallowing, mismatched, and excessive - in contrast to the breathtaking haute couture gowns, sharply-tailored tweed suits, and well-cut clothes that we traditionally associate with the word 'designer.' These days, people pay thousands of dollars (or more) just to look like a mentally-challenged peacock or a lazy couch potato. Sure, 'ugliness' is subjective, and maybe there's more to the fashion industry. So why is fashion these days so... 'ugly'?

reasons for ugly

There's a plethora of reasons why ugly designer clothes are so en vogue. One of the reasons is because we react to it: Ugliness in fashion makes fashion relevant.

With the prevalence of social media, there's a desperation to be unique, which spawned a sartorial genre that many outside the fashion bubble would deem 'ugly.' Whether it's something spectacularly mismatched or something that seems straight out of bed, 'ugly' isn't something most people would follow.

The rise of ugly could also be attributed as an increasing need for women to be noticed on their own terms, without being involuntarily objectified. Notions of what's attractive and seductive are being redefined along with gender concepts. Fashion can be seen as pushing boundaries of shapes, patterns, and unisex or genderbending fashion: catwalks have evolved from Victoria's Secret-style female objectification to become fascinating, innovative, odd, and at times, repulsive.

However, there seems to be a difference between ugly fashion and ugly clothing: the latter is just badly designed garments, while the former speaks toward a certain trend, decade or design that may not be the most flattering nor aesthetically stunning in the moment.



key looks

Here are some ugly fashion iterations that are prevalent among today's fashionistas:

NORMCORE

A prominent iteration of ugly fashion can be seen in 'normcore' - a unisex trend that's been around since 2014, popularising unpretentious, everyday clothing that aren't necessarily flattering. This deliberate choice of unremarkable or unfashionable casual clothes is personified by the extraordinarily boring high-waisted jeans (with tucked in shirts), hoodies, zip-up sweaters, and leisurewear that go with boring, dad sneakers. No overt logos, no glitz, nothing expensive, and if it's unisex, that's even better.

Stella McCartney



LV x Supreme



Chanel x Michael Cutini

SIMPLY OUTRAGEOUS

Of course, there will be designers out there who'll supply outrageously out-there pieces to fulfill the needs of social media-driven demand, and for celebrities who pride themselves on being loud and visible icons of fashion. Just think of Blahnik's 'bants' (boots + pants), Balenciaga's silhouette-manipulating shapes, Prada's flame shirt, and Gucci's super bright unitards. It seems that only beloved celebrities can get away with wearing gaudy designs.

Seinfeld is the style reference



RETRO 90s

At the root of the current ugly fashion is an undercurrent of '90s influence, because we know fashion is always recycled. One of the most prominent trends from that era is denim: the material is used in slouchy 'wide-leg jeans' (with a high waist to give it a more chic look) and even overalls. Since 'grunge' was a popular music genre, oversized plaid flannels, platform sneakers, and bucket hats also made it back to the 2020s.

UGLY FOOTWEAR

One of the most noticeable trends in designer footwear is its variety of styles - it's out with sexy stilettos, and in with brand collaborations with utilitarian flat shoe brands like Crocs and sneaker brands. Think of the outrageous Balenciaga x Crocs or Jeremy Scott x Uggs collabs. These days, it isn't difficult to find sneakers from designers that seem so unwieldy and clunky that they don't look practical. Still, they're more comfortable than 6" stilettos.

Prada's Flame Shirt



Gucci's Unitard



Would you wear this?

the pride of designers

One misconception about fashion designers is that they're all in the business of making beautiful clothes, but that's already changed. It's interesting how some designers are actually celebrated for their 'ugly' designs, from Miuccia Prada who's often credited as the inventor of the 'ugly chic' to Balenciaga who's famous for his bizarre, 'ugly' sneakers. Since ugliness in fashion makes fashion relevant, the labels getting the most attention are making clothes that are often deliberately gawky and unflattering, sometimes painted in lurid or mismatched colours. Make no mistake - ugliness is having a moment right now.

BY VICTOR ARANEDA JURE
(MONASH UNIVERSITY)

KAPOW! ZAP! SPLAT!

HOW COMICS MAKE SOUND ON THE PAGE

TYPICALLY, COMICS ARE CONSIDERED A SILENT MEDIUM. BUT WHILE THEY DON'T COME WITH AN AURAL SOUNDTRACK, COMICS HAVE A UNIQUE GRAMMAR FOR SOUND.

FROM WOLVERINE'S SNIKT! WHEN UNSHEATHING HIS CLAWS, TO MOZART'S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 23 IN THE DEATH OF STALIN (LATER MADE INTO A FILM) THE USE OF "TEXTUAL AUDIO" INVITES COMICS READERS TO HEAR WITH THEIR EYES.

FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS SYMBOLS, FONT STYLES AND ONOMATOPOEIA (WHERE WORDS IMITATE SOUNDS) MEAN READING COMICS IS A CROSS-SENSORY EXPERIENCE. NEW AND OLD EXAMPLES SHOW THE ENDLESS POTENTIAL OF THE ARTFORM.



HOLY ONOMATOPOEIA BATMAN!

Onomatopoeia – isn't unique to comics but comic artists have certainly perfected this figurative form of language. POW! BAM! BANG! appear on the page when Batman and Robin land a punch. SNIKT! when the word is drawn and displayed next to the hairy mutant. BLAM! is the sound made by the Penguin's umbrella when it shoots from a distance.

The list of sounds represented by onomatopoeia is limitless in terms of creative potential. There are words that mimic sounds directly, such as SPLOSH! (the sound made by an object falling into water) and made-up sounds like that of Wolverine's adamantium claws.

The language of comics offers creative freedom to expand the aural lexicon. One online database lists over 2,500 comic book sounds with links to comics images in which they've been used. This can also present special challenges for translators. Sounds represented in comics can range from speech sounds (subject to language rules including those governing how syllables can be formed) to human-made non-verbal sounds like

sneezes, to sounds made by objects and environments.

Visual context is important too. We only recognise the warning of Wolverine's violent retribution in SNIKT! when the word is drawn and displayed next to the hairy mutant.

Likewise, the word THWIP! by itself may not mean much. But when positioned in context it can imbue a comic page with excitement and adventure.

Imagine a young man dressed in a tight red-and-blue bodysuit diving at high speed from the top of the Empire State building. Suddenly, just before hitting the ground, THWIP! he shoots spider webs from his wrists, using them to swing from building to building. Both readers and the crowd of enthusiastic fans on the page react: "Here comes Spidey!"

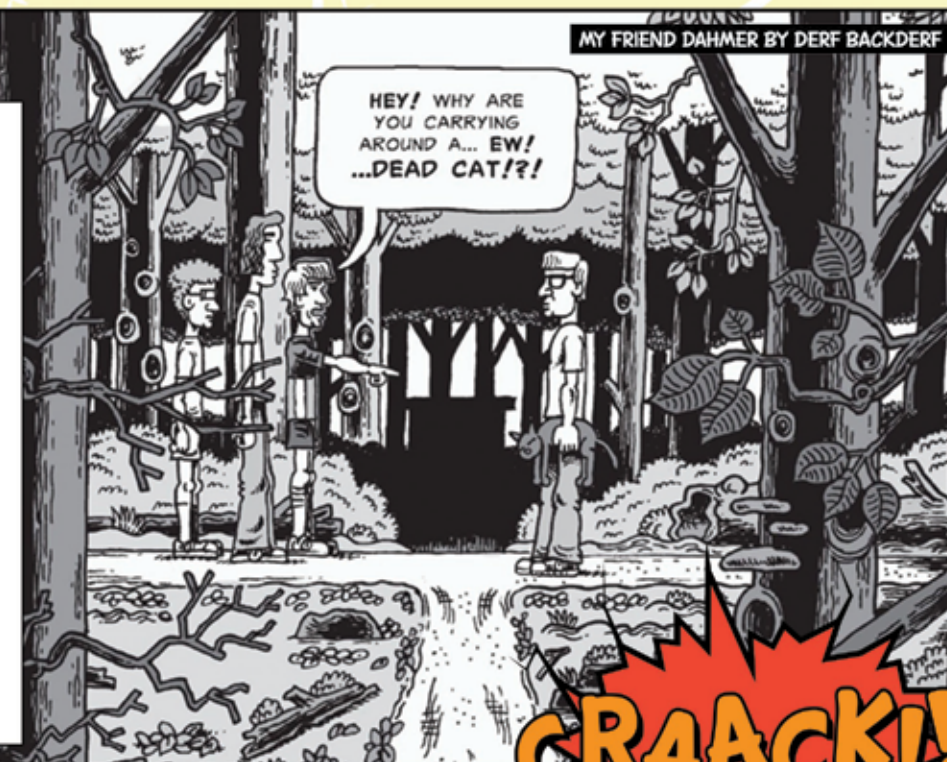


THE WAY THEY SAY IT

Comic creators also use font style and size and different speech bubble shapes and effects to shout, whisper or scream language.

Bold, italics, punctuation, faded or irregular letters are used to emphasise different features of the written words: fear, courage, loudness or quietness.

In *My Friend Dahmer*, created by a school friend of the infamous serial killer, the protagonist is seen carrying a dead cat on his way home by a group of kids. Comics creator John "Derf" Backderf applies bigger-bolder words in one of the kids' speech balloon to emphasise the shouting and surprise of onlookers.



♪ RED ROOF ON A GREEN HILLTOP ♪



BAREFOOT GEN BY KEIJI NAKAZAWA



HOW TO TALK TO GIRLS AT PARTIES BY NEIL GAIMAN



DEATH OF STALIN BY FABIEN NURY

MUSIC TO MY EYES

The 1973 manga *Barefoot Gen*, written by Keiji Nakazawa, explores his firsthand experience of the bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath.

Gen, the main character, sings through several pages of the story. The author uses a musical note symbol (♪) to indicate where speech bubbles are sung. By the final pages of the fourth volume, Gen sings to celebrate that his hair is beginning to grow again after being affected by radiation poisoning.

When preceded by the easily recognisable musical symbol, it's virtually impossible to read the dialogue without "hearing" a melody: ♪ Red roof on a green hilltop ♪

Expanding on this concept, *How to Talk to Girls at Parties* by Neil Gaiman contains musical panels where the combination of drawings, words and signs present a soundtrack.

In film terminology, this is diegetic sound – noises or tunes from within the storyworld – as opposed to a narrative voiceover or a musical soundtrack the characters can't hear within the story.

In Gaiman's comic a combination of illustrations, musical notes and words (including the onomatopoeic TUM for a base drum beat) convey the sense that music fills every room of the house where a party is taking place.

In the political satire comic that inspired a movie, *The Death of Stalin* creator Fabien Nury and illustrator Thierry Robin show lines from Mozart's orchestral score for his Piano Concerto No. 23 at the bottom of two pages. This adds drama to a climactic scene where Russian leader suffers a stroke.

Next time you read a comic book, make sure you listen carefully. KABOOM!

The world of art is a complex one, and for those who're new to the art world may find it confusing when it comes to labelling them by genre. You may know Renaissance or Impressionist art, especially when artists like Michelangelo or Van Gogh are mentioned. Then there's Pop art – how much do you know about this very influential genre of art?

Cheat Sheet

#72 Pop Art

Ignorance = Fear
by Keith Haring



DEFINITION

The Pop art movement was a cultural phenomenon of the late 1950s and 60s, mainly populated by British and American artists. By definition, Pop art incorporates everyday, commonplace objects – like soup cans, comic strips, road signs – which are often physically incorporated into the artwork. Branded or commercial symbolism is an especially important theme in Pop Art.

American Pop artists were inspired by the alluring 'America Dream' of success, beauty, and money during the 50s and 60s. While they were inspired by what they experienced within their own culture and society, Pop art in Britain was essentially influenced from afar. Fueled by a post-war bankrupt nation, British artists created art which longed for the glossy American Dream, lauded on television, newspapers, and in advertising.

The Pop art movement was a major shift for the direction of modernism. Their iconography can be taken from television, comics, movies, and all forms of advertising, presented without praise or condemnation. It's like a scrapbook of current affairs.



Andy Warhol

FAMOUS ARTISTS

You can't mention 'pop' without mentioning iconic artists like Americans Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Keith Haring or Britons like David Hockney and Richard Hamilton.

The majority of Pop artists began their careers in commercial art: Andy Warhol was a magazine illustrator and graphic designer; Ed Ruscha was also a graphic designer, and James Rosenquist was a billboard painter.

WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT?

The Pop art movement aimed to blur the boundaries between 'high' art and 'low' culture. It rejects both the supremacy of 'high art' themes of morality, mythology, and classic history, as well as the pretensions of other contemporary avant-garde art. While it's been described as vulgar, non-aesthetic, and a joke by the art world, it was democratic: it brought together both connoisseurs and untrained viewers.

Pop art also became a voice of an era – their easily comprehensible images reflected a particular social situation. It celebrated commonplace objects and people of everyday life: in a way, it actually elevated popular culture to the level of fine art.

IDENTIFYING A POP ART

Pop Art is often characterised by bold colours, particularly the primary colours: red, blue and yellow – similar to your typical comic strip palette. These colours reflected the vibrant, popular culture around them.

Pop artists often used combinations of 'found' or 'ready-made' objects and imagery of popular, political or social phenomena, often displayed in collages.

FAMOUS WORKS

Andy Warhol is known for his silk-screen prints. One of the most recognisable of his pieces is 'The Marilyn Diptych' (1962), consisting of 50 images of Marilyn Monroe from a single publicity photograph from the film 'Niagara'.



Roy Lichtenstein is known for his stylised reproductions of comic strips (specifically DC Comics) in the 1960s using colour dots and flat tones: one of his most famous works is the 'Drowning Girl' (1963).

Richard Hamilton's seminal 'Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?' (1956) collage portrayed a domestic scene that both lauded consumerism and critiqued the decadence.



POP ARTISTS OF TODAY

There are many famous contemporary Pop artists today, including Neo-Pop artist Jeff Koons and Japanese visual artist Yayoi Kusama.

Pumpkin by Yayoi Kusama



Balloon Dog by Jeff Koons

BY LYDIA TAN

PICTURE-PERFECT EATS

SOCIAL MEDIA AESTHETIC FOOD TRENDS

Social media has become a big factor in determining the trends, be it in fashion, memes or dances. One such trend that has benefited from the visual-focused viral factor of social media is food – in particular, aesthetic foods. There's just something enticing about seeing a short video or picture of food that looks beautiful and delicious at the same time. Here are some popular aesthetic food trends that you might have come across on your social media feed.

@helloyummy.co



CLOUD BREAD

Along with sourdough breads and dalgona coffee, this trend started on TikTok during the pandemic. As their name suggests, these breads are extremely soft and fluffy, producing immensely satisfying bread pulls. The recipe only requires 3 ingredients – egg whites, cornstarch, and sugar – whipped together to form a stiff meringue, which is what gives the bread its cloud-like texture. Some versions include food colouring to make pastel-coloured bread for that Instagram-worthy shot.



@deesbasement

KOREAN LUNCHBOX CAKES

Mini foods tend to go viral easily on social media and these small cakes definitely prove that point. These cakes are small enough to fit in a square lunchbox (the size of a burger box) and take inspiration from Korean minimalist cakes. Colourful frosting is used to create cute designs or watercolour marble effects with pretty pastel colours. The customisable designs make them perfect for any occasion or as a tasty gift.



@kristalis_jelly

3D FLOWER JELLY

If you remember the raindrop cake trend from 2016, think of this as an upgraded version. Coloured cream or gelatin is injected into a clear jelly dome with a syringe that has a special blade attachment to create flower petals and leaves. Not only do they look extremely realistic, they are completely edible too! Some versions include animals like koi fish or text piped into the jelly to make the designs even more customisable.



@thatcheesplate

CHARCUTERIE BOARD

Charcuterie boards involve plating bite-sized portions of cold food, usually on a wooden board. A spread of charcuterie includes various forms of cured meats (like salamis and hams), but can also include cheeses, fruit, vegetables, nuts, and dips. Each charcuterie board is an artform in itself, with different colours and textures all positioned perfectly to create a feast for the eyes and mouth.

HOMEMADE BOBA

With more people staying home during the pandemic, many bubble tea lovers have started making their own boba concoctions at home. You can make boba in different flavours outside of the classic brown sugar pearls, along with drinks to pair them with. Recipes are super simple: all you need is a microwave and some simple ingredients and you have yourself your own boba drink!

@emilyfigueroa



SMOOTHIE BOWLS

A variation of the acai bowl, this was another popular health trend on social media. Smoothie bowls are the more colourful and customisable variation to acai bowls, depending on what ingredients you choose to add to the smoothie blend. Some smoothie bowls are also vegan – made with only frozen fruits, these treats are super tasty and healthy.

@nessthebowerbird



KOREAN CAFE-STYLE DRINKS

The Korean cafe aesthetic is all about the minimalistic look and calm, chill ambient vibes. While it can be hard to create a cafe setting at home, you can create the drinks inspired by the trend. This hibiscus lemonade is made by placing ball ice with hibiscus petals in a tall glass, then pouring in the syrup, soda, and lemonade to create a colourful work of art that you can virtually drink with your eyes.

@y.na_



VISUALS SELL

The pandemic has definitely contributed to the virality and creation of many of these trends. More people staying at home means they often have more time to scroll through social media or experiment with these viral recipes. These aesthetic food trends are examples of the tried-and-true 'visuals sell' formula of social media, which is still what makes them so pleasing to watch even after the fad has died down.

BY AARON HERTZMANN, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

WHY WOULD ANYONE BUY CRYPTO ART?

LET ALONE SPEND MILLIONS ON WHAT'S ESSENTIALLY A LINK TO A JPEG FILE?



Vandal Gummy Bear NFT by WhlsBe

On March 11, Beeple, a computer science graduate whose real name is Mike Winkelmann, auctioned a piece of crypto art at Christie's for US\$69 million.

The winning bidder is now named in a digital record that confers ownership. This record, called a nonfungible token, or NFT, is stored in a shared global database. This database is decentralised using blockchain, so that no single individual or company controls the database. As long as the specific blockchain survives in the world, anyone can read or access it, and no one can change it.

But "ownership" of crypto art confers no actual rights, other than being able to say that you own the work. You don't own the copyright, you don't get a physical print, and anyone can look at the image on the web. There is merely a record in a public database saying that you own the work – really, it says you own the work at a specific URL. So why would anyone buy crypto art – let alone spend millions on what's essentially a link to a JPEG file?

NFT by Fewocious



ART IS INHERENTLY SOCIAL

It might be helpful to think about crypto art in the context of why people buy original works of art.

Some people buy art for their homes, hoping to incorporate it into their living spaces for pleasure and inspiration. But art also plays many important social roles. The art in your home communicates your interests and tastes. Artworks can spark conversation, whether they're in museums or homes. People form communities around their passion for the arts, whether it's through museums and galleries, or magazines and websites. Buying work supports the artists and the arts.

Then there are collectors. People get into collecting all sorts of things – model trains, commemorative plates, rare vinyl LPs, sports memorabilia – and, like other collectors, art collectors are passionate about trying to hunt down those rare pieces.

Perhaps the most visible form of art collecting today, and the one that drives so much public discussion about art, is the art purchased for millions of dollars – the pieces by Picasso and Damien Hirst traded by the ultrawealthy. This is still social: Whether they're at Sotheby's auctions or museum board dinners, wealthy art collectors mingle, meet and talk about who bought what.

Finally, many people buy art strictly as an investment, hoping that it will appreciate in value.

IS CRYPTO ART REALLY THAT DIFFERENT?

If you look at the reasons people buy art, only one of them – buying art for your home – has to do with the physical work.

Every other reason for buying art could apply to crypto art. You can build your own virtual gallery online and share it with other people online. You can convey your tastes and interests through your virtual gallery and support artists by buying their work. You can participate in a community: Some crypto artists, who have felt excluded by the mainstream art world, say they have found more support in the crypto community and can now earn a living making art.

While Beeple's big sale made headlines, most crypto art sales are much more affordable, in the tens or hundreds of dollars. This supports a much larger community than just a select few artists. And some resale values have gone up.

VALUE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

Aside from the visual pleasure of physical objects, nearly all the value art offers is, in some way, a social construct. This does not mean that art is interchangeable, or that the historical significance and technical skill of a Rembrandt is imaginary. It means that the value we place on these attributes is a choice.

When someone pays \$90 million for a metal balloon animal made by Jeff Koons, it's hard to believe that the work has that much "intrinsic" value. Even if the materials and craftsmanship are quite good, surely some of those millions are simply buying the right to say "I bought a Koons. And I spent a lot of money on it." If you just want an artfully made metal balloon animal, there are cheaper ways to get one.

Conversely, the conceptual art tradition has long separated the object itself from the value of the work. Maurizio Cattelan sold a banana taped to a wall for six figures, twice; the value of the work was not in the banana or in the duct tape, nor in the way that the two were attached, but in the story and drama around the work.



Comedian by Maurizio Cattelan

MANUFACTURING SCARCITY

It still seems hard to get used to the idea of spending money for nothing tangible.

Would anyone pay money for NFTs that say they "own" the Brooklyn Bridge or the whole of the Earth or the concept of love? People can create all the NFTs they want about anything, over and over again.

In crypto art, there is an implicit contract that what you're buying is unique. The artist makes only one of these tokens, and the one right you get when you buy crypto art is to say that you own that work. No one else can. Note, though, that this is not a legal right, nor is there any enforcement other than social mores. Nonetheless, the value comes from the artist creating scarcity.

This is the same thing that's happened in the art world ever since photographers and printmakers had to figure out how to sell their work. In the world of photography, a limited-edition print is considered more valuable than an unlimited edition; the fewer prints in the edition, the more valuable they are. Knowing that you have one of a few prints personally made and signed by the artist gives you an emotional connection to the artist that a mass-produced print doesn't.

This connection could be even weaker in digital art. But what you are buying is still, in part, a connection with the artist. Artists sometimes publicly tweet their thanks to their crypto art patrons, which may strengthen this emotional connection.



Again, the buyers weren't really buying a banana, they were buying the right to say they "owned" this artwork.

Depending on your point of view, crypto art could be the ultimate manifestation of conceptual art's separation of the work of art from any physical object. It is pure conceptual abstraction, applied to ownership.

On the other hand, crypto art could be seen as reducing art to the purest form of buying and selling for conspicuous consumption.

In Victor Pelevin's satirical novel "Homo Zapiens," the main character visits an art exhibition where only the names and sale prices of the works are shown. When he says he doesn't understand – where are the paintings themselves? – it becomes clear that this isn't the point. Buying and selling is more important than the art.

This story was satire. But crypto art takes this one step further. If the point of ownership is to be able to say you own the work, why bother with anything but a receipt?

A BUBBLE BOUND TO BURST?

There are also environmental costs. Certain blockchains used for crypto art are really bad for the climate, because they require computations that consume staggering amounts of energy. That said, if buying it right now gives you pleasure – and you enjoy sharing what you've bought and the community around it and you're using a more environmentally friendly blockchain – that's great.

If you're buying it for some future reward, however, that's risky. Will people care about your personal virtual gallery in the future? Will you care? Will crypto art even be a thing in a few years?

As an investment, it just seems inconceivable that the higher prices reflect true value, in the sense of these works having higher resale value in the long term. As in the traditional art world, there are a lot more works being sold than could ever possibly be considered significant in a generation's time.

And, in the crypto world, we're seeing highly volatile prices, a sudden frenzy of interest, and huge sums being paid for things that seem, on the surface, not to have the slightest bit of value at all, such as the \$2.5 million bid to "own" Jack Dorsey's first tweet or even the \$1,000 bid on a photo of a cease-and-desist letter about NFTs.

Much of this energy seems to be driven by price speculation. It's also worth noting that the winner of the Beeple auction seems to be heavily invested in the success of crypto art. The cryptocurrencies that drive crypto art are often considered highly speculative.

Right now, there's a big NFT bubble.

There have been lots of bubbles before – tulips, baseball cards, Beanie Babies – objects that were flying off the shelves one year and then piled up in landfills the next. And, in a bubble, a few headline-making winners get rich, while a whole lot of others lose their shirts. Even if crypto art lasts, maybe the particular artist or platform where you're buying won't be popular in the future.

Art is, fundamentally, a social activity. The more our social lives are lived online, the more it may make sense for some people to have their art collections online, too – whether or not blockchain is involved.

THE LIST

WEALTHIEST MUSICIANS IN THE WORLD

PAUL MCCARTNEY

Net Worth: \$1.2 billion

Paul McCartney had a successful musical partnership with John Lennon when they were writing for the legendary band, The Beatles. After The Beatles disbanded, McCartney went on to have a very successful solo career, composing much of his own music.



ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER

Net Worth: \$1.2 billion

Andrew Lloyd Webber has composed 21 musicals so far - from Phantom of the Opera to Evita - which have captured the imagination of everyone young and old. He's also won 6 Tony's, 3 Grammys, an Academy Award, an Emmy Award, and a whole host of other awards.



JAY Z

Net Worth: \$1 billion

Jay Z is one of the most successful hip-hop artists ever, who's also an astute businessman with his own clothing and record label. He has 22 Grammys under his belt and became the first hip-hop billionaire in 2019. He's also married to superstar Beyoncé.



MADONNA

Net Worth: \$850 million

Madonna is certified as the best-selling female music artist of all time by Guinness World Records, having sold well over 30 million records worldwide. With revenues of \$1.4 billion from her concerts, she remains the highest-grossing solo touring artist of all time.



BONO

Net Worth: \$700 million

Bono was the lead singer of U2 and a well known philanthropist. He's received 22 Grammy Awards and is inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. He's also been knighted by Elizabeth II for his services to the music industry and for his humanitarian work.



It may come as a surprise, but musicians are some of the wealthiest people in modern society. These musicians prove that catering to our interests can be very lucrative indeed. We now have billionaire musicians like Paul McCartney and Jay-Z who show everyone that being in the arts can really pay off. Here are the richest artistes as of 2021.

RIHANNA

Net Worth: \$600 million

Rihanna is the diva from Barbados who's had a decade in the musical limelight with 8 studio albums under her belt. These days, her wealth comes from her businesses which involve a skincare brand and a luxury underwear brand.



BEYONCÉ

Net Worth: \$500 million

Beyoncé Giselle Knowles-Carter, once the lead singer of 'Destiny's Child', has a very successful solo career. She's won 22 Grammy awards, and is the most nominated artist in the history of the Grammys. This entrepreneur also has a line of activewear.



TAYLOR SWIFT

Net Worth: \$400 million

Taylor Swift has 10 Grammys and 29 AMAs (she's the artist with the most AMA wins ever), with countless tours and an endless list of chart-topping songs and albums under her belt. She also often donates to causes she supports and people in need.



KATY PERRY

Net Worth: \$330 million

For over a decade, Katy Perry has entertained audiences around the world with infectious pop hits and a larger-than-life stage presence. In addition to being a musician, her fortune comes from brand endorsements and as a judge on American Idol.



LADY GAGA

Net Worth: \$320 million

Lady Gaga is known for her unconventionality and provocative work, selling over 27 million albums during her career. Famous for her outrageous fashion, she's also a Grammy- and Academy Award-winning singer, songwriter, and actress.



SOWING CHAOS

BY NINA GAN

ART OF THE APOCALYPSE

These days, many people across the world have felt like they were living in the middle of an Apocalypse. With the Covid-19 situation flaring in Southeast Asia, the heatwave in the American west coast, and the ocean catching fire in the Gulf of Mexico, it does feel that way. The end of time has been a popular source of inspiration for artists throughout history - all bonded by the shared desire to depict this mysterious, fantastical, and unimaginable end of the world.

With synonyms like "disaster" and "catastrophe," the word "Apocalypse" is depicted as the complete destruction of the world, as can be seen in the Book of Revelation - the final book of the Christian Bible. The book is full of symbolic and obscure images, some referring to a series of prophecies about the future end of the world.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

One of the most famous parts of the Apocalypse to be depicted in art is the chapter about Death, Famine, War, and Plague - collectively known as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.



THE FOUR HORSEMEN (1498)
Albrecht Dürer

One of the most famous artworks to feature this quartet is Albrecht Dürer's series of fifteen woodcuts about the Apocalypse. His depiction of *The Four Horsemen*, the most popular, transformed a previously static image into a powerful symbol of Doomsday, with each horseman representing a different aspect of suffering that will ultimately deliver the demise of mankind.



DEATH ON A PALE HORSE (CA. 1800)
William Blake

In another representation of the horsemen, William Blake's energetic watercolour of *Death on a Pale Horse* features only Death riding a white horse, although a black horse and its rider (probably Famine or Plague) is also seen. Rather than portraying Death as a dark, malevolent character, he's seen here as more of a divine presence.

THE LAST JUDGEMENT

The most powerful scene of the Apocalypse is undoubtedly the Last Judgment, and has inspired numerous artistic depictions - the most famous of which can be seen in the Sistine Chapel.



THE LAST JUDGEMENT (1498)
Hieronymus Bosch

Hieronymus Bosch's *Last Judgment* triptych - an artwork formed of three panels - is filled with his typical dream-like elements. Only the central panel represents the *Last Judgment*, with Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the apostles looking down on a chaotic earth that's filled with tiny figures doing all sorts of things. The left panel represents the expulsion from the Garden of Eden while the right represents Hell in which green demons surround the damned.



THE LAST JUDGEMENT (1912)
Wassily Kandinsky

In the 20th century, Armageddon art didn't represent specific scenes, but rather the feelings of uncertainty and fear. Wassily Kandinsky, the father of abstract modern art, painted *Last Judgment* using only colours and forms that represented emotions evoked by the Apocalypse. Through the composition of bright primary colours and black lines, one may discern the image of a blue angel.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

The Apocalypse isn't just about representations from the Bible - the idea of the end of the world is universal, and can be interpreted in many ways.



In a series of over 150 paintings, Nabil Kanso's *The Apocalypse Series* (1982-84) evokes a sense of terror with its portrayals of humanlike creatures depicted in dark and violent colours. You don't need to know what it's about - you can feel the despair and horror.



Otto Dix's *Der Krieg* (1923-1924) is a wake-up call to the menacing and destructive capabilities of the human race. The images are based largely on Dix's grisly memories - an unflinching account of the horror and perversity of war with dying, dead, or decomposing bodies, shell-shocked soldiers, and bombed-out landscapes.



For a non-conventional interpretation of the prophecy, Edvard Munch concentrates on the individual suffering with his most famous piece, *The Scream* (1893). It can be viewed as a more intimate interpretation of the apocalypse theme.

The Birds and the Bees

While the term 'erotic art' often conjures up images of European depictions of nude art, sexuality took hold in Europe much later than other parts of the world. From Rome to India to Japan to the Americas, erotic art existed hundreds, if not thousands of years ago. Sexuality is part of the human experience since our inception as a species.

BHUTAN:

Brash art to repel gossip

JAPAN & CHINA: Sex ed in pictures

The Chinese also had their own version of erotic art, which flourished from the late Ming dynasty (14th-17th century) until the early 20th century. The scenes often include snippets of humour, and compared to shunga were less audacious and more refined. Like shunga, erotic art in China also became tools for innocent brides and young couples in need of sex education.

The 8th century Moche civilisation in the north coast of Peru were known for their unique ceramic vessels, many of which preserved sexually explicit images that depicted heterosexual fellatio, masturbation, and most commonly, sodomy. Scholars believe the absence of vaginal sex could be indicative of a form of gender equality that cast women as more than just future child-bearers whose value relies on their virginity.

India is home to many temples that are famous for their erotic sculptures, including Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Virupaksha Temple in Karnataka, and Lingaraj Temple in Orissa. The temples feature mithuna couples participating in Tantric intercourse; some sculptures also depicted acts of bestiality. These carvings are prominent only on the outer walls and not inside the temples, and a popular belief is that it signifies that people leave all sexual desires outside before embarking on a spiritual journey.

Ancient Pompeii is well known for its profusion of erotic art which can be seen literally everywhere. Large, erotic frescoes adorn the walls wherever the eye can see, possibly as advertisements for brothels. Meanwhile, paving stones as well as stones in the walls reveal phallic symbols that point the way to the brothels, which unsurprisingly also featured many erotic frescoes and graffiti in their rooms, portraying all manner of sexual adventures. Prostitution was relatively inexpensive and widespread in ancient Rome, and even a low-priced prostitute earned more than three times the wages of an unskilled urban labourer.



OPERATION:
DOOMSDAY.

