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Weird Ways to Make Art

Dan Matthews · Wednesday, May 16th, 2018

What is art in 2018? If you believe in the timelessness of art, then art in 2018 is the same as art in any other year: creative expression through a medium; a creative act that anyone can interpret with a variety of lenses. Case closed, right?

I don't want to forget that medium and context matter. I also don't want to forget that a phrase like "case closed" is the antithesis of art. In this author's humble opinion, art should bring you ever-questioning to the next door in the next room, draped with wonder, absorbed, blissed-out, outraged, even disgusted, or feeling something you can't describe with words.

Art that settles for "case closed" is bad art, the type of art that assumes it can interpret the scene for you. But this is a subjective conversation. Some people want art that makes them feel secure. If you want to feel secure, that's up to you.

We are in the weirdest time period for art now, because thanks to [Dada](#), the surrealists, abstract expressionists, and the postmodernists, just about anything is art, and we have more mediums than ever before. Thus, witness [GPS art](#), the new medium with which you can sketch a picture on a map and get exercise at the same time.



What a quintessentially contemporary way to make art. Now you can multitask and make a picture, crossing off your daily cardio routine while you express your inner child. All you need is an app like RunKeeper, Strava, or Nike+. Then, you run a route that makes a picture on the map. Before you laugh, think about what an artist like Ian Cheng could do with this. Check out this video by Cheng, who uses algorithms to make this world and the creature in it come alive:

Imagine what someone with Cheng's skills could do with a drone, gps, and the ability to sketch your route on a map. If you can program an app, you don't need to confine yourself to the existing options, options that confine you to normal gps maps of cities. What if you were to create an app that allows you to make gps art all over the globe? Suddenly, the whole world becomes a canvas.

It's not just about technology. When it comes to new, sometimes weird art, the fashion world is an exciting place to look. For a long time, the art world loved to look askance at fashion. No matter how artistic the design, a dress wasn't "art" because the designer made it primarily to sell it. The 20th century saw a transformation of the relationship between art and fashion. Italian designer [Elsa Schiaparelli](#) collaborated with surrealists Jean Cocteau and Salvador Dali; with Dali, she created her famous [Lobster Dress](#).

Schiaparelli's surrealist work preceded Alexander McQueen's Spring Summer 1999, the exhibit that featured two robot arms spraying a white tube dress with paint while the model wearing it posed on a revolving floor-piece.

McQueen's exhibit married fashion with abstract expressionism and robo tech, focusing on process like Jackson Pollock and other abstract expressionists did, but in a new way. Doesn't that open the door for everyday fashion to exist as art? Everyday fashion is process — the process of getting up in the morning and fashioning an artistic ensemble that will turn heads throughout the mundane processes of the day.

This is even happening in men's fashion, as these [street style photos](#) show:



Just because critics don't consider a well-composed outfit art, does it mean it's not art? Are these men making art through their choice of clothing?

I think this is art because it makes people think differently about men and because of the aesthetic appeal. The clothing has collectibility, which makes the articles much like artworks. There is the inevitable wear and tear ([chance procedures?](#)), the temporality of the clothing, and the fact that this clothing has a practical use, unlike normal works of art, which don't have a practical purpose. But if expressionism is art, and fashion is a way to express yourself, then composing your outfit a certain way is a weird way to make art. It pushes the boundaries and makes art out of everyday life. It makes art out of function.

What people wear can be performance art, too. [Monika Rostvold](#), a Texas State student, covered herself in Chik-Fil-A fries and ketchup and put an "All You Can Eat" sign on her crotch. In this case her body functions as a plate for fast food. She's making a statement about how we use women's bodies. She's also making weird art. Previously, she sat on the University's library steps wearing nothing but headphones, a blindfold, and tape over her nipples.

Many great works of art used to be commissioned by royalty and by the church. In that sense, the recent [Met Gala](#) brought things full circle. The theme was Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination. Ariana Grande wore a gown screen printed with images from Michelangelo's fresco The Last Judgement. Rihanna, in what many consider to be the crown jewel of the night, wore a bejeweled gown with a bishop's hat, bringing catholic vestments into the realm of art. And Katy Perry sported a huge set of angel's wings — unfortunately the chainmail Versace mini-dress accompaniment didn't live up to the heavenly standard of those wings.

Art can be gorgeous and divine, it can be absurd, and it can be process and praxis. Whatever it may be, make it weird. There's no better way to celebrate the strangeness of our time.

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