

A Stuckist Manifesto

THE STUCKISTS

(est. 1999)

anti-anti-art

The first Remodernist art group

The Stuckists are a independent group of painters and writers who elbowed their way to national prominence last summer with the publication of their manifesto - an outspoken attack on conceptualism, Brit Art and post modernism's self reverential irony.

They are the only artists in the country to have achieved a national profile without the backing of institutions, wealthy private patronage and the sycophancy of gutless critics, not one of whom has even had the prescience to acknowledge the existence of The Stuckists.

Central to The Stuckists belief is what they call 'the naming of names' and 'the demarcation of the arts'. Damien Hurst's fish in a tank is a mixture of daft poetry and bad taxidermy. Discardable as an advertising gimmick, utterly useless as art or literature.

Like most people, Billy Childish and Charles Thomson, (the co-founders of Stuckisim) are sick and tired of arts unhealthy obsession with meaninglessness and manic materialism. Whilst vigorously promoting painting as the most vital visual art form and antidote to the current commercial cancer, they also have an equal commitment to writing and poetry.

Stuckism's objective is to bring about the death of Post Modernism, to undermine the inflated price structure of Brit Art and instigate a spiritual renaissance in art and society in general.

This new epoch is called Remodernism. Work based on emptiness and cynicism, which was seen as great under the old paradigm, will have a very short shelf life under the new one.

The Cappuccino Writer and the idiocy of contemporary writing

- 1. There is popular writing known as the blockbuster or airport novel but this is considered trash by the critics. Then there is the writing by pseudo-intellectuals which is very popular with the critics but considered even worse trash by us.**
- 2. Contemporary writing is cowardly and unchallenging because squalor is tedious not remarkable. If you find yourself in a rubbish bin the only interesting narrative is how to climb out, not how ill you can make yourself by ingesting it.**
- 3. The main problem with contemporary writing is that writing, like the other arts, can only ever be a reflection of an aspect of the creators character.**
- 4. Salmon Rushdie is the epitome of contemporary turgidity and defies anyone of sensibility to read more than one paragraph, wherever that paragraph may happen to be. His writing achieves all the characteristics that defeat anything worth saying, a position guaranteed in todays self preening philistinism to win all the prizes. His style is artificial and insulting to even average intelligence, the story lines are a random assemblage and the language false. We advise people not to read him.**
- 5. We don't like the 'Cappuccino Writers' either, e.g. Will Self and Martin Amis, (so named because of their penchant for cappuccino as opposed to tea or coffee). Also we are bored by Ian Banks, Irving Welsh and Ian McEwan.**
- 6. The common characteristic of the Cappuccino Writer is his puffed-up preening self regard. His writing is artificial and painfully over-aware of itself.**
- 7. The Cappuccino Writer is not an outsider. It is pitiful to see affluent and feted mainstream writers posturing as underground martyrs.**

8. The ultimate accolade for nausea is Nausea by Jean Paul Sartre, who is an intellectual toss pot. (Existentialism was tedious in the first place, even when it had the benefit of novelty).

9. It is a characteristic of the Cappuccino Writer to describe intimacy in the style of a twelve year old public schoolboy's fetid and gauche imagination.

10. The mention of buggery does not make the Cappuccino Writer dangerous or a pop star. Authors should be cautioned that most women in real life situations do not automatically insist on anal sex.

11. The writer can only write what he knows about him/her self. To develop as a writer you must develop as a person.

12. Writers who stive to maintain a fashionable stance will always be marred by all the limitations and stiltedness which that fashion is formed from. This applies equally to underground or cult fashion as it does to the middle of the road variety.

True writing is the tearing asunder of such restraints, not the pandering to them that we see in England's pathetic drug-culture pretenders.

13. In any period that the writer lives he/she has to say the wrong thing to get it right.

14. Writers that have to be interviewed by Melvin Bragg to be recognised as writers aren't writers.

15. The Cappuccino Writer is distressed because he doesn't have the media status of his Brit Art equivalent. (This is one mercy to be thankful for). He pretends to be a bit dangerous and a bit risky but the biggest danger the Cappuccino Writer runs is not being invited to the right parties.

16. One of the worst things a writer can do is conceive of themselves as a writer whilst writing. The best writing is written by human beings. Besides what kind of an idiot would want to be anything other than a human being? (This is especially true of poetry and poets).

17. In visual arts any new idea (fashion) is presumed to be original and thereby render all previous forms as defunct and old fashioned. In post modern writing the concrete poem and Finnegans Wake are not presumed to make all other forms of writing redundant so, thankfully the writer is forced to at least attempt to communicate in a semi-recognisable language.

18. The probable reason that writers have to communicate in a more accessible manner is because, unlike the visual artist who only needs to pander to a self deceiving elite, the writer is reliant on the general public to buy his or her work. This is one of the most convincing proofs of democracy in action ever encountered.

19. The main advantage of contemporary literature over current established visual art is that it attracts less media attention and is therefore easier to ignore.

20. Revelling in zipless sex, shopping, drug taking and cool, nihilistic posturing is an easy evasion of self and real emotion. Life and depth start where these stop. What we need is the challenge of being human, to put it mildly.

21. It is a matter of debate whether Dazed and Confused readers or Time Out readers are the most fashion-conscious, cool-conscious and therefore unconscious. Attention to the ephemeral demands of society is in inverse proportion to knowing anything worth knowing.

22. What makes great writing great?

The first stage of meaning is known as understandability and the willingness of the writer to feel that the reader is not utterly beneath their contempt. The second stage of meaning is actually writing something that is worth understanding. Something is not worth understanding in writing if its not worth understanding in life. This is what makes great writing great.

23. Great writing appears to change the world but in fact what it does is to reveal more of what the world truly is.

24. The relationship between objectivity and subjectivity. It is the subjective path that the reader connects with as their own. By subjective we mean the honest uninhibited experience of one's true feelings, motivations, desires and fears. This is not something that can be faked. Any attempt to adopt a predetermined persona is an evasion of the heart. Anything without a heart, by definition is dead.

25. Objectivity is only necessary for the writer to view himself in his subjectivity and prevent a decline into ego-mania and ultimately a lonely and penniless death in Hastings.

26. The writer must be bold and compassionate. He must have belief, or at least try to understand his lack of it. It is the writer's duty to consider the reader. A bit of consideration is good.

27. The writer who strives and sticks with his work inevitably comes up against his/her own limitations time and time again. This is the point where the writer cannot find solutions in writing alone, writing is there to serve life, life is greater and more demanding than writing can ever be.

Summary

On inspection there would appear to be fewer problems with contemporary writing than with contemporary visual arts, but both have the problem of being spiritually bankrupt. (Except poetry, which on the whole has the problem of being utterly tedious).

Despite the benefit of centuries of literature the Modern writer still manages to sound less developed, less contemporary and less vital than his dead predecessors. He tries to sound big and brave when in truth he is scared of his own farts.

Post Modernism's reflex recourse to a stance of invulnerability tourniquets emotion. If you don't experience life more keenly after reading a piece of writing then that writing is a lamentable failure. If you feel your soul is depleted after reading a piece of writing then you can expect to see that writer on the South Bank Show.

Sometimes a savage truth in the writing leads the reader to feel numbed horror, this is the revealing of iron in the soul from the burning off of the encrustation of complacency. This is good writing. This does not appear on the South Bank Show.

Billy Childish
Charles Thomson
3. 5. 2000

The following have been proposed to the Bureau of Enquiry for possible inclusion as Honorary Stuckists:

Nikolai Gogol
Fyodor Dostoyefski
Mark Twain
Herman Melville
Knut Hamsun
John Fante
George Orwell

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