

To think, or not to think, this is the question

Or why do we need contemporary art in our everyday life

Nowadays the world of art is divided into two parts: those who adore and protect contemporary art and those who hate and criticize it constantly. Art is losing its traditional forms and boundaries, It's hard to understand who is an expert, who is an artist or what is art at all. "*Art is advertising for what we really need*"¹ - this is the answer that I prefer to use.

Let me start with an example of spontaneous dialogue with my mom, person who isn't related to contemporary art at all and, probably, belongs to that group of people who can't stop criticising it:

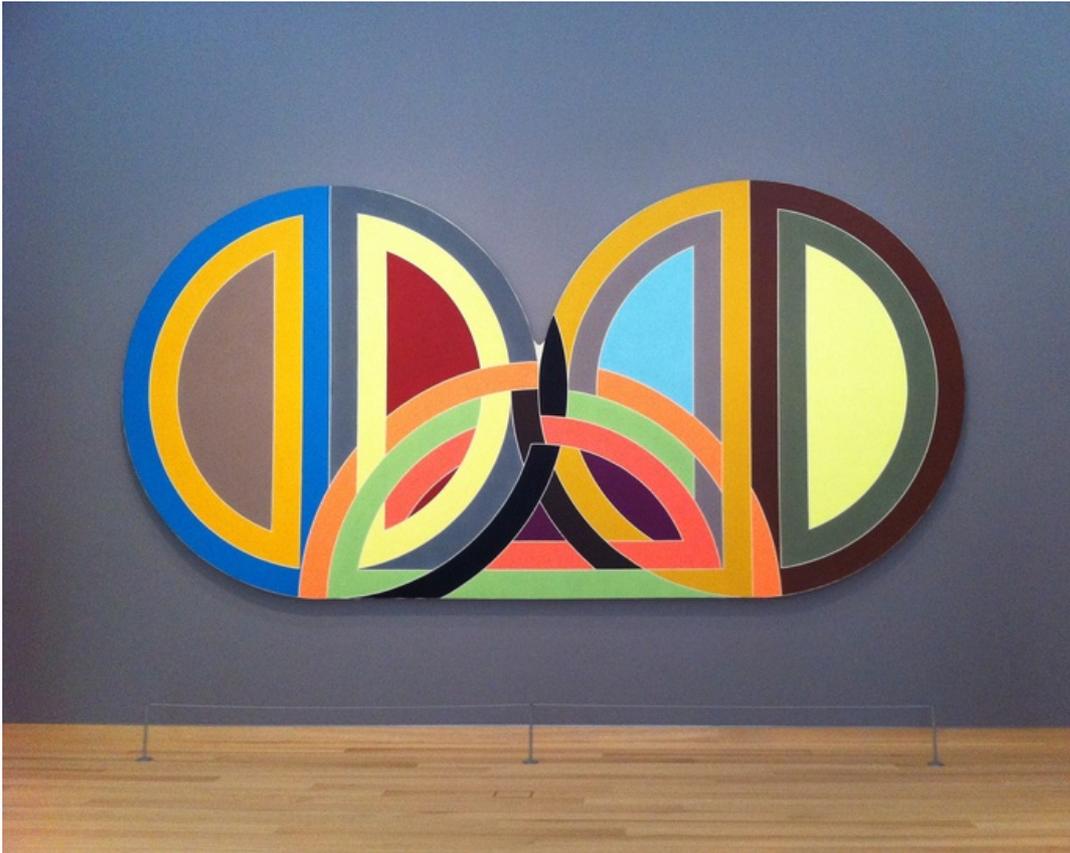
- Mom, this room is too white, you need to put some colorful pictures on the walls.
- Yes, I need to buy something.
- But you were gifted some nice paintings recently, why don't you use it?
- You know, it seems like I'm tired of all those traditional naturmorts, paysages and portraits. So I'd like to have something simple and easy, without any heavy ideas or plots.

"Welcome to the club" – I thought. She just unconsciously expressed the wish to have a piece of contemporary art in her room; my mom is one of those who are tired of thinking too much, exhausted and overwhelmed by events happening around us. So what do "we really need" in our 21st century? It's the age of gender equality, sexual freedom, technological progress, political wars, times of diversity, when cultural boundaries become invisible and almost doesn't exist. What are we looking for in our everyday consumeristic lives with overload of slogans, information and 24-hour online routine? I'd say – simplicity.

I'm sure, all of you heard at least once, expressions like "I could draw these lines as well, there is nothing sophisticated, it's not an art!"- people reject pieces of art because of simplicity, without understanding how important it is. But for an individual who spends eight hours per day working in the office, then three hours in a traffic, and one hour in a line for fast food dinner, a poster with a colored circles on a huge neutral paper, hanging on her/his wall, may be a piece of freedom, space and simplicity.

Let's do not forget that art is created not only for museums and galleries, but for simple consumers as well. While talking about art, we need to free our minds from such evaluations as "bad" or "good", because both of them are useless. Art is behind these definitions; it is a reflection of reality - of "what we really need". And probably after decades or centuries future generations will evaluate our current culture by these circles and squares.

¹ "Art is advertising for what we really need" taken from video provided by YouTube channel "The school of life"



Frank Stella
Madinat as-Salam I, 1970
118 X 300 inches
Polymer and fluorescent paint on canvas
Frederick R. Wisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles, California
Image source: www.abstract-art.com

“But, after all, the aim of art is to create space - space that is not compromised by decoration or illustration, space within which the subjects of painting can live”, as Frank Stella says.

What other job contemporary art does for us? It brakes traditional concepts about the world around, by making our minds more flexible and creative. On the picture below you can see part of the Installation “Women of Venice” by Carol Bove, exhibited in the National Pavilion of Switzerland during last Venice Biennale.

I can imagine what could happen in the brain of an average individual, who saw this installation and started questioning her/himself about how blue pipes are related with women. From my point of view, exactly this is one of the most important functions of art – there are as many perceptions of women, as many artists exist; and as more we see and compare, as flexible our imagination and creativity are.

If in previous times women have always been depicted as women, now it can be either blue pipe, or green drop, and no one except the artist decide how to show it. Simple and banal objects are given unusual concepts, what indirectly changes our everyday reality and perception of world around us. I’d like to believe that after seeing “Women of

Venice” or any other unusual installation, the mindset of any individuals would change at least on 0,01%.



Carol Bove, installation view of sculptures included in 'Women of Venice' at the Swiss Pavilion, 57th Venice Biennale, 2017. Image source: www.frieze.com

I think that our generation is tired of thinking too much. We are required to make choices among millions of options on a daily basis and it makes us anxious; our minds are full of doubts and negative information, that's why we need simplicity, freedom and beauty. Let's say that contemporary art today is a call to slow down, to see colours in our everyday lives, to be more creative and feel the space, to free our minds from moldy paradigms and stereotypes, to accept diversity and creativity.

P.S.: don't forget about humor, sometimes artists just want to make us laugh ☺

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