

What is accessible art

So the concept has been bouncing around in my mind for a while, and I guess it's time for me to talk about it.

It more or less begun when I was studying [avant-garde movements](#) in literature (namely cubism, dadaism, surrealism...) and it poked my interest further into these modern sculptures which apparently don't mean anything. By this time I was already writing poetry and matched my style with that of the post-war, but I really never defined why. It is poetry free of rhyming, complex words, consistent metric... in my opinion, it is pure expression, and it's important to write without filters. But let's define "art" as "any form of expression that has a feeling attached". Many more things than poetry, paintings and music can be art, even the ones we despise. Making a statue and burning it can be art if you wish to call it so. It doesn't mean "all art" anyway.

Prior to studying these movements, I had no idea of what these works of art might mean, not only in literature but in audiovisual art and the many other forms that the avant-garde encompasses. That is because this art requires you to know the historical context to understand it. You have to know what happened in Gernika to understand [Picasso's probably-most-famous painting](#), you have to know how society was like to understand [dadaist poetry](#). (and [here's](#) why Tzara did them like that). We can sum it up like this:

- World War I happened, society was devastated after that and self-humanity was questioned.
- People begin to question the principles of Art.
- These movements are born as a negation of classical principles, effectively questioning art to its full extent. See [The Treachery of Images](#) for what I consider it to be a very good example of questioning the principles of art.

The problem is that, sadly not everyone is entitled to such a level of education, nor is able to receive it properly due to the blatant ableism in the current system. This essentially voids all meaning from the art, therefore making it, by our definition, pretty much not art (to us). For me, while the avant-garde came with necessary movements that renovated what we know as art, it is not good art.

Along the avant-garde, we could also mention [Modernism](#), and more specifically (just so I can use an example I have studied), [Ruben Darío](#), a Nicaraguan poet that started the Spanish-American modernism. If you were to look at one of [his poems](#), you'd notice the perfect metric, the complex words, the rhymes (but only if you know Spanish, but just take my word for it). These poems are visually very beautiful, but when it comes down to the essence, they don't mean that much. He makes strong use of sensorial imagery, using words that make you feel auditive, visual, or other stimulus, but the content is emotionally near-void to me, imagine to someone who cannot even understand or process the words on there.

This is where I wanted to introduce the idea of accessible art. I'm certain that it's nothing new, but let's at least define it in our own terms. If art is any form of expression that has a feeling attached, then accessible art is art that:

- Does not require any kind of educational background to understand.
- Is stripped of any resources that might make it unnecessarily complex.
- Is accessible to all people, including those with impairments, disabilities, disorders and conditions.

This pretty much makes the only requirement to understand the art "to have felt something similar to what the author wanted to express". If you paint a landscape that inspires a feeling for you, it can inspire the same or a similar feeling to someone else who doesn't even need to be able to see the painting, even having it described can work.

In my case, both the artist (me) and the reader (anyone) can benefit from this. My poetry is unfiltered, words rarely change after they've been written in the draft, and I write as I think of the verses. It's also unusual to find rhymes or perfect metric, but it gives me full creative freedom and I can represent my feelings pure, as if I had just vomited them into the paper (check [this interview](#) with one of my favourite artists which explains what I'm talking about much better). That also avoids the reader problems with word meanings, unnecessary boilerplate, excessive decorations. It's stripped down to a minimum, there's nothing but the emotion. And as I shared these poems with my friends and with the world, I noticed that they were *actually* getting something out of it, they understood my emotions with just one poem, when for all of us it's really hard to pick up the emotions of any classical or modern poet. I started considering these a success after the first time I had made someone cry by just reading the poem. I knew I was heading well. Now, it has happened several times and I'm still taking that route, pure and unadulterated feelings, because it worked better than refining my poem for months so that someone can stare at it and feel nothing.

The [page where I publish my poems](#) is also devoid of any kind of decoration, it was written by myself and by scratch, with a couple of helper scripts I wrote myself. Hopefully the page, being solely content, is screenreader-friendly, and I can reach the objective of accessible art: being able to appeal to as much people as possible without being conditioned by educational background or ableism.

Art is currently not accessible for creators either. As much as I don't like to admit it I guess I have a way with words, the poetry I write clicks, it sounds good. My visual art isn't that good but I can create decently. But the fact that art is accessible to *me* doesn't mean it is for everyone. Not everyone has the right tools to create, but most importantly, even if they have the right tools, *we stop them from creating*. We stop people from creative expression when we qualify art as mediocre, average, the usual "anyone can do that". So what if anyone can do that? I did, and there's my emotions in it, that's what matters. Stop gatekeeping people from being creators, **everyone** can create, **everyone** can be creative, because art is not just words, audio or imagery as much as this post makes it look otherwise; art is also in the way we move and even in the way we exist. (I will proceed to shamelessly quote a modified (caps removed) version of one of my poems, named "[I will create](#)").

[...]

I will create
because everything I do deserves
to be seen and appreciated.

[...]

I will get rid of all my filters
I will stop caring about others' opinion
I will destroy destruction forever

I will create a better me
I will create the best of me
I will make my existence art

I am creation
and creation is art.
I will not be bound to a single canvas.

I will create for myself,
opinions are a consequence.

That poem came out from me when I had uh... poet's block? I was afraid of what I was going to create because I feared it not being good enough, I feared being average. I wrote this poem to remind myself that creating is not about others, it's about *you*. And that should affect how we understand creators too.

Accessible art should not only stop in the way we create art, but also in the way we consume it. Museums need to be accessible too, we should try to caption art that is uncaptioned for people with audiovisual impairments, we should try to make art for everyone.

Accessible should be the standard.

TL;DR: Make art that doesn't require a context, art that is accessible to *everyone*, art that any person could understand given they have had similar feelings. Do not gatekeep people from being creators, let anyone create, because everyone can create. Provide several mediums for your art or make it accessibility-tool-friendly, let everyone enjoy art.

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