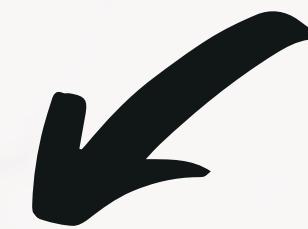


# Debating Art



not just this



# what is art?

but also this



# what do people get from engaging with art

- **aesthetic value**
  - seeing the technical expertise and appreciation of the skill of the artist - details, colours, shadowing etc.
- **cognitive value**
  - understanding or thinking of the message forwarded by the art
- **experiential value**
  - the emotions the piece of art can invoke in you
    - when producing their art, the artist is making decisions that enable them to control what your emotional response is (e.g. major and minor keys, camera angles in films, colour schemes)

why do we then care about making art accessible?

- driving **social change** (through cognitive value) - rest of the workshop
- art as a **status signaller** - ability to talk about and own art can facilitate social interactions and impact how people perceive you
- providing **unique emotional experience** - a difficult argument to make, but can be powerful



# the role of art in forming social narratives

- individual emotional response
  - breaking the apathy barrier
  - makes the issue feel more proximate
- contextualisation
  - what we believe is true
    - we have not seen very much of the world - most of your understanding comes from art
  - what we believe is important
    - issues we see portrayed, representation of events (e.g. historical atrocities)



# what kind of messages get represented in art

- reflection of **social power structures** - art that gets sanctioned and seen is influenced by certain factors
  - **artists** - need to have a level of privilege to access education / connections etc.
  - **critics**
  - **gallery owners**
  - **museums**
  - **producers and publishers**
  - **profit incentive** - even if these people are not prejudiced, they have to appeal to majority culture
- is there a way for different art to break through?
  - **indie art awards**
    - willing to consume your art more
    - publishers think you are a safer bet
    - critics then want to talk about your art
  - **art democratisation**
  - **trend towards appreciation of minority art**
    - social movements → virtue signalling
    - rich people like exoticism → that then creates market
  - **cultural appropriation**



- art isn't just a message but is **charged** about how one should feel about the message
- elements of art go unnoticed and we don't question them
  - there are **background characteristics** that influence your perception of what the world should look like
  - these characteristics are hardly ever questioned and therefore considered objective
- consumption of art also **empowers** the artist
  - monetarily
  - the way they are represented ('they did a bad thing, but their films are so good')
- but the author does not have a **unique ability** to **control the message** of that art
  - depends on social interpretation
  - this allows e.g. minority groups to reclaim artwork
  - e.g. opp for *THBT* social movements should not adopt works of art as symbols where the artist does not identify with that movement



**does art reflect  
the artist?**



# representation in art and why it matters

- media reflects what we think the world is and ought to be
  - representation provides reassurance that a path through life is **viable** if someone who is like you achieved it (even if fictional)
  - forms **expectations** of how we should act
    - boys and girls demanding attention, LGBTQ+ stereotypes
  - **normalisation** of social failures
    - not seeing women in power on TV leads to perceiving the lack of female CEOs as normal
    - outrage from casting choices that diverge from the 'default'
  - influence on our **understanding of the past**
    - Stonewall



# key takeaways

- art debates do not have to be 'fluffy' and 'low impact' - art influences a large portion of how we **interact with the world** and **see ourselves**
- art **cannot portray objective truth** - it is always to some extent charged and the position of the artist matters
- some groups have bigger access and capacity to set and influence the narratives that we consume
- increasing **accessibility** is therefore important
  - more people being able to create art → bigger diversity of narratives that art forwards
  - more people being able to consume art creates an incentive for those who create it to cater to them → further diversification

