## **COMP1720**

Art & Interaction in New Media

### Week 4: How do we judge art?

Dr Tony Curran

Semester 2, 2020





## how do we judge a work of art?





Orson Welles

F for Fake

1973

film still



## three ways to judge a work of art

ethical: is it good for the world?

poetic: is it made well?

aesthetic: what do I feel when I look at it?

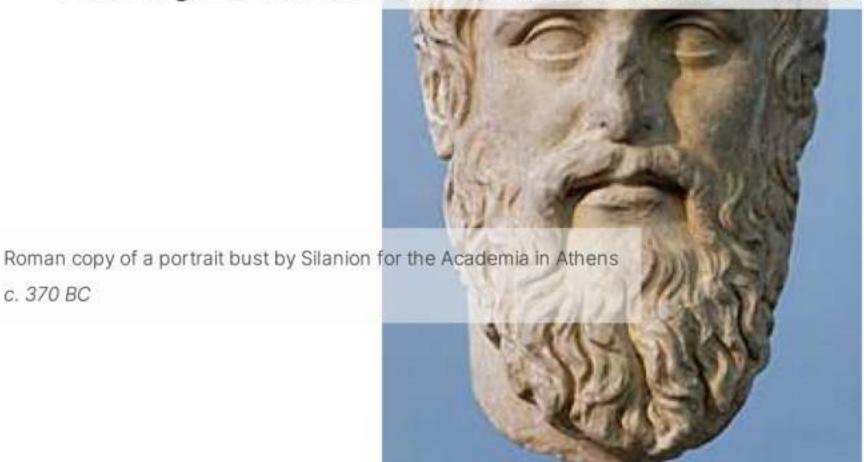
Rancière, Jacques. 2004. The politics of aesthetics: the distribution of the sensible. London: Continuum.

## ethics

c. 370 BC



Plato argues that artworks are lies that deceive us from truth



## ethics

Images can create deceive



A poster advertising the exhibition 'The Eternal Jew' an anti-Semitic propaganda show that toured Germany. Source BBC online 1937



## ethics

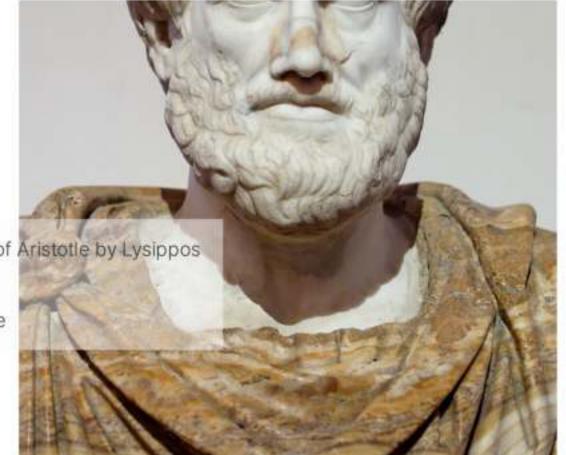
Portrait of an Aboriginal girl
date unknown
Union Hotel Fitzroy, Melbourne
Photo by Liz Conor



## poetics



Aristotle says that if a lie is made well, it can help heal our stress/anxiety

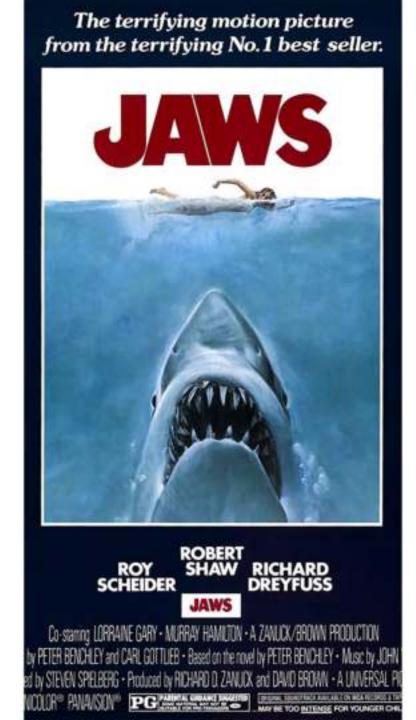


Roman copy of a Greek bronze bust of Aristotle by Lysippos
c. 330 BC

marble with modern alabaster mantle

## poetics

JAWS 1975 Directed by Steven Spielberg





### **Tony Albert**

ASH on Me

2008

# Installation, 150 × 150cm National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

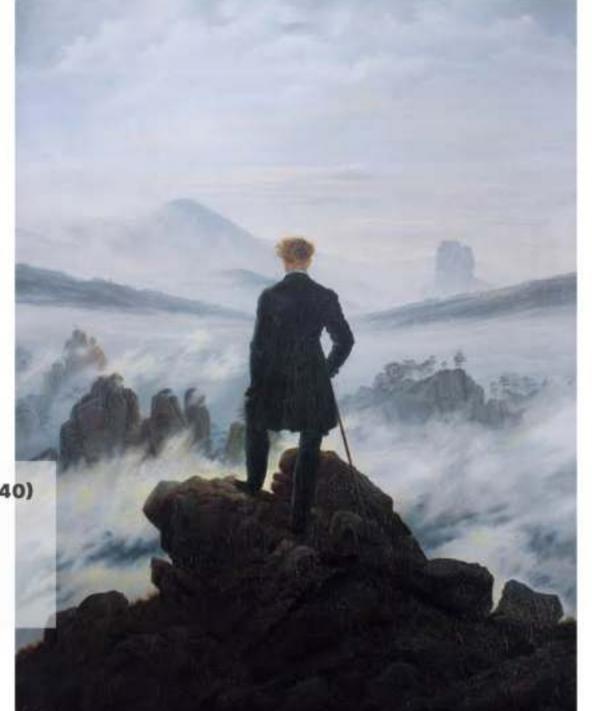
### **Aesthetics**

Imannuel Kant (1724 - 1804) said beauty is the measure

we can feel an artwork's beauty/ugliness, sublimity and humour, balance, harmony and dissonance

the better the work, the more emotional response we can have to it

If something is truly beautiful, we all agree



Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840)

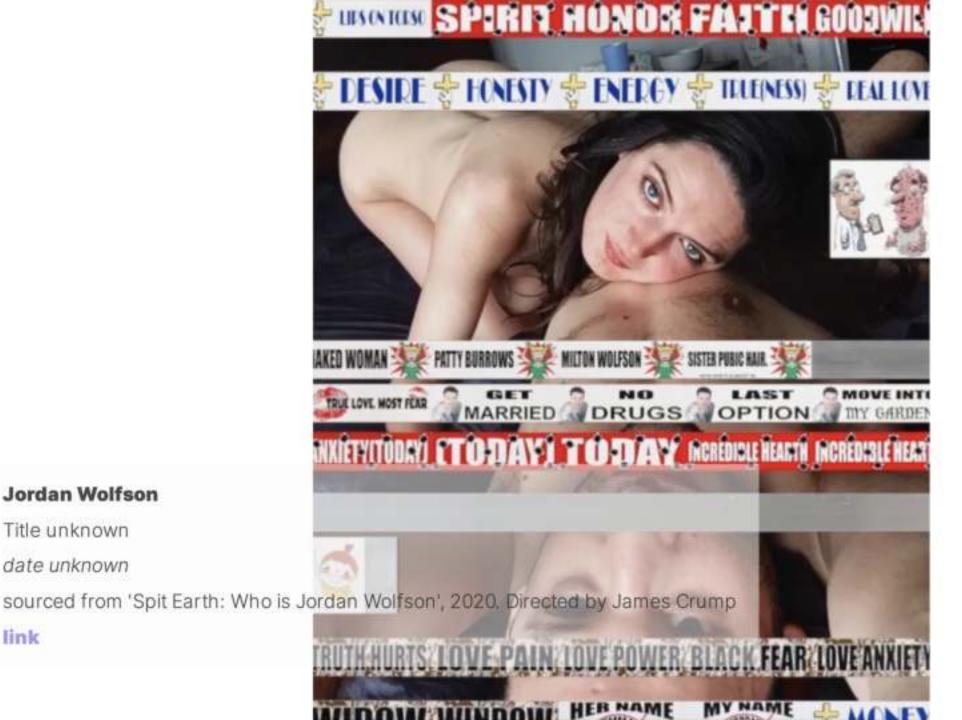
Wanderer above the Sea of Fog 1818

Kunsthalle Hamburg

## critiquing art

most critiques of art address one or a mix of these three concerns

- is it good for the world? (ethical)
- is it made well? (poetics)
- is it beautiful? (aesthetics)



Jordan Wolfson

Title unknown

date unknown

link





#### Jordan Wolfson

Animation, masks

2011

digital animation with sound duration 12 min, 29 sec

© Jordan Wolfson. Represented by David Zwirner, New York/Hong Kong, and Sadie Coles HQ, London

# how have artworks been judged along these lines?

let's look at two artists that mix these critics dimensions:

**Robert Mapplethorpe** (1946–1989)

Kerry James Marshall (b. 1955)



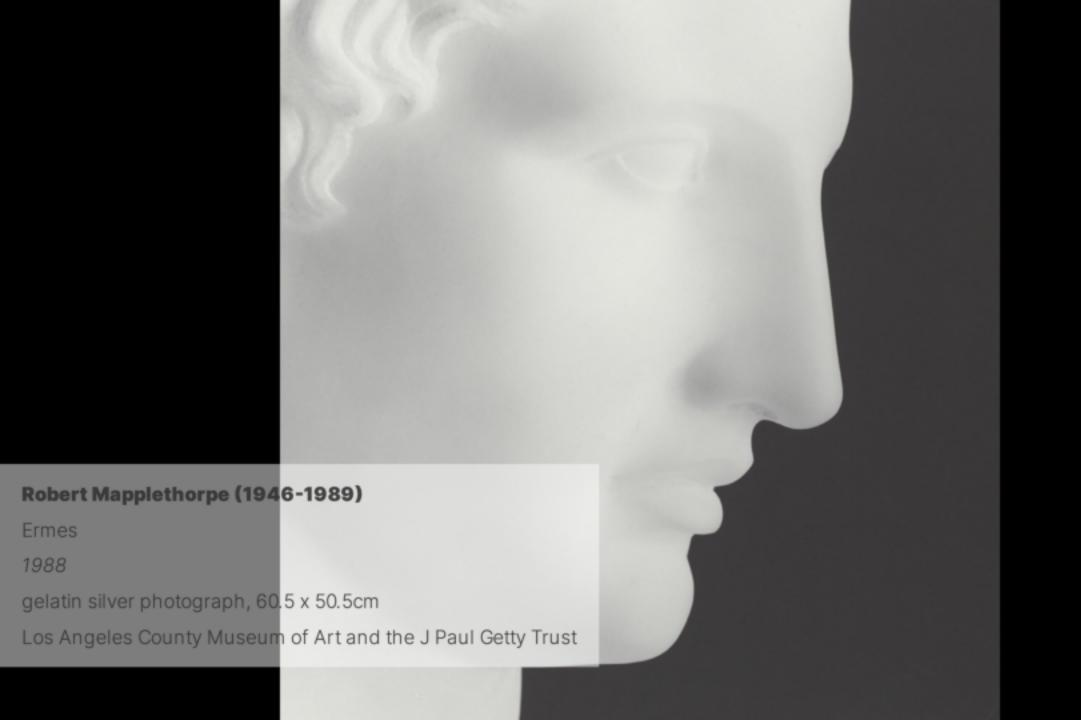
### Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989)

Lisa Lyon

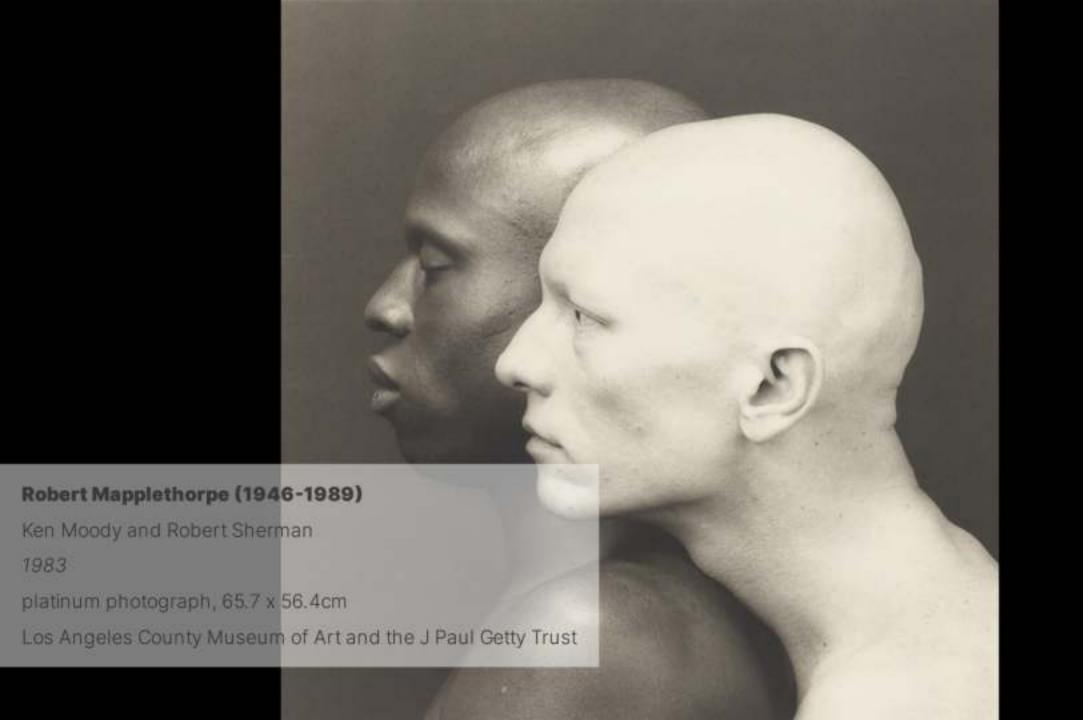
1982

gelatin silver photograph, 38.6 x 38.6cm

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. © Robert Mapplethorpe Estate



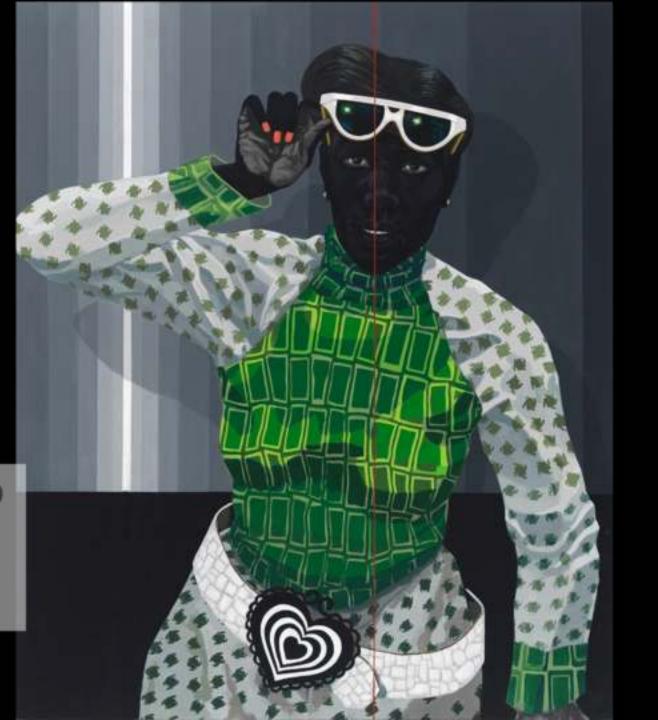






Thomas



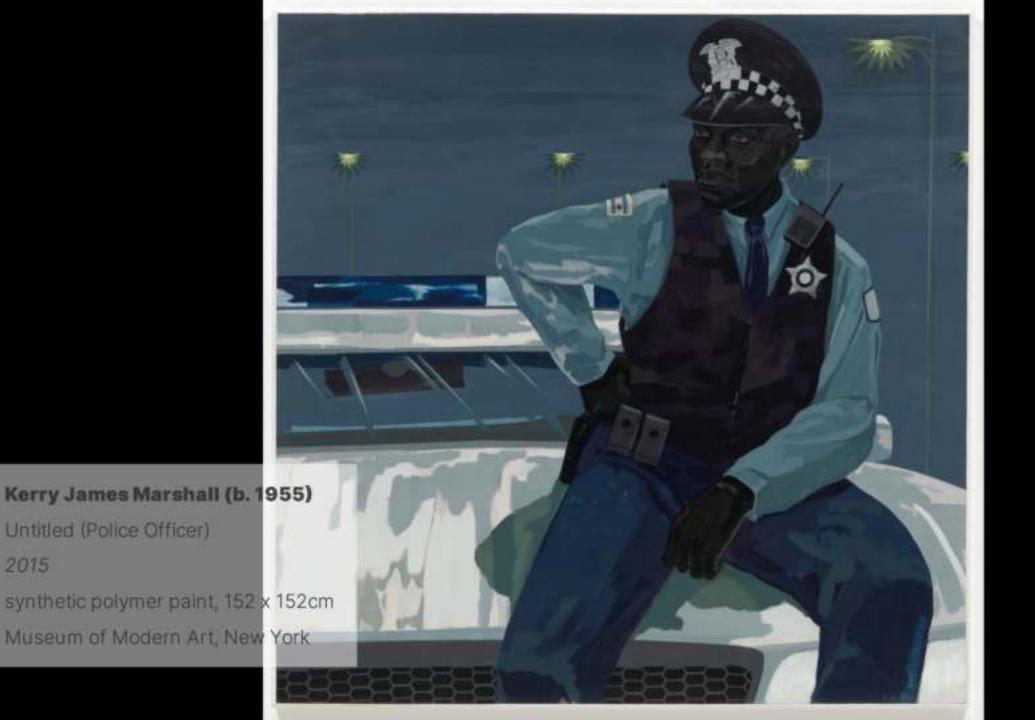


### Kerry James Marshall (b. 1955)

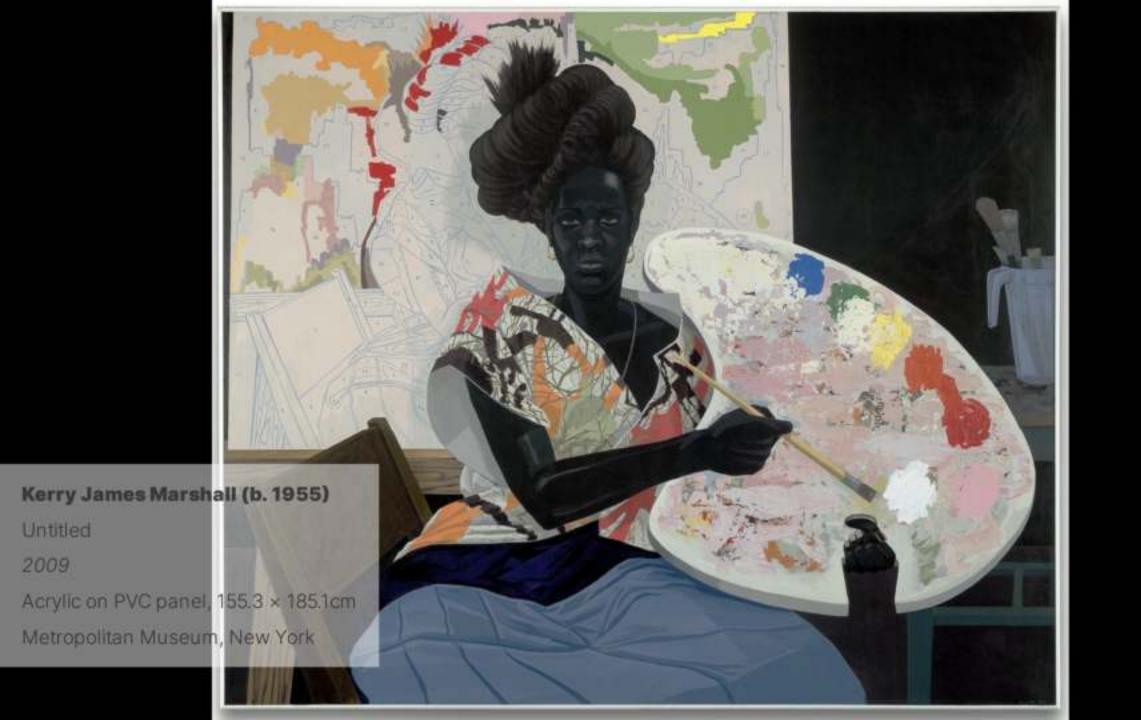
Untitled (Red Line)

2014

acrylic on PVC panel 90 x 75cm









### Kerry James Marshall (b. 1955)

Still-Life with Wedding portrait 2015

Acrylic on PVC panel, 152.4 × 121.9cm Metropolitan Museum, New York

## talk

what do you think is something that is valuable?

- good for the world
- beautiful
- well-made



