market. Or maybe these experts really To Deceive and Slaughter is going for

had no idea of what the art world was 🗱 about 7,000 dollars; we're curious to

GOING ONCE, TWICE -

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Damien Hirst - For The Love Of Goo

EDITORIAL

THE SUBTLE ART OF

OBJECTIVITY

OR: DEFINING

INTANGIBILITY

THE SUMMUM OF

I'm not completely at ease talking

about art, mainly because I never

had anything over the bare minimum

of cultural education: a weekly hour

of Aesthetics in my last year of high

school, a class that was taught by a fe-

male teacher who (I think) unknowing

gly but strikingly illustrated the irony

of the concept of teaching beauty by

appearing in front of her blackboard

in an uglier outfit every week. This is

faded colours and spongy textures of

her step-in pyjamas are still as hor-

rifying to the mind's eye as they were

to my poor eveballs way back then. Art

in my life is whatever speaks to me on

any sort of personal level, since those

three years of journalism in college

didn't do a lot for my artistic exper-

tise either. Okav, so then who decides

what is art and what is not? Certainly

not me, a complete cultural savage if

ever there was one, right? Surely, no-

body with such a barbaric and under-

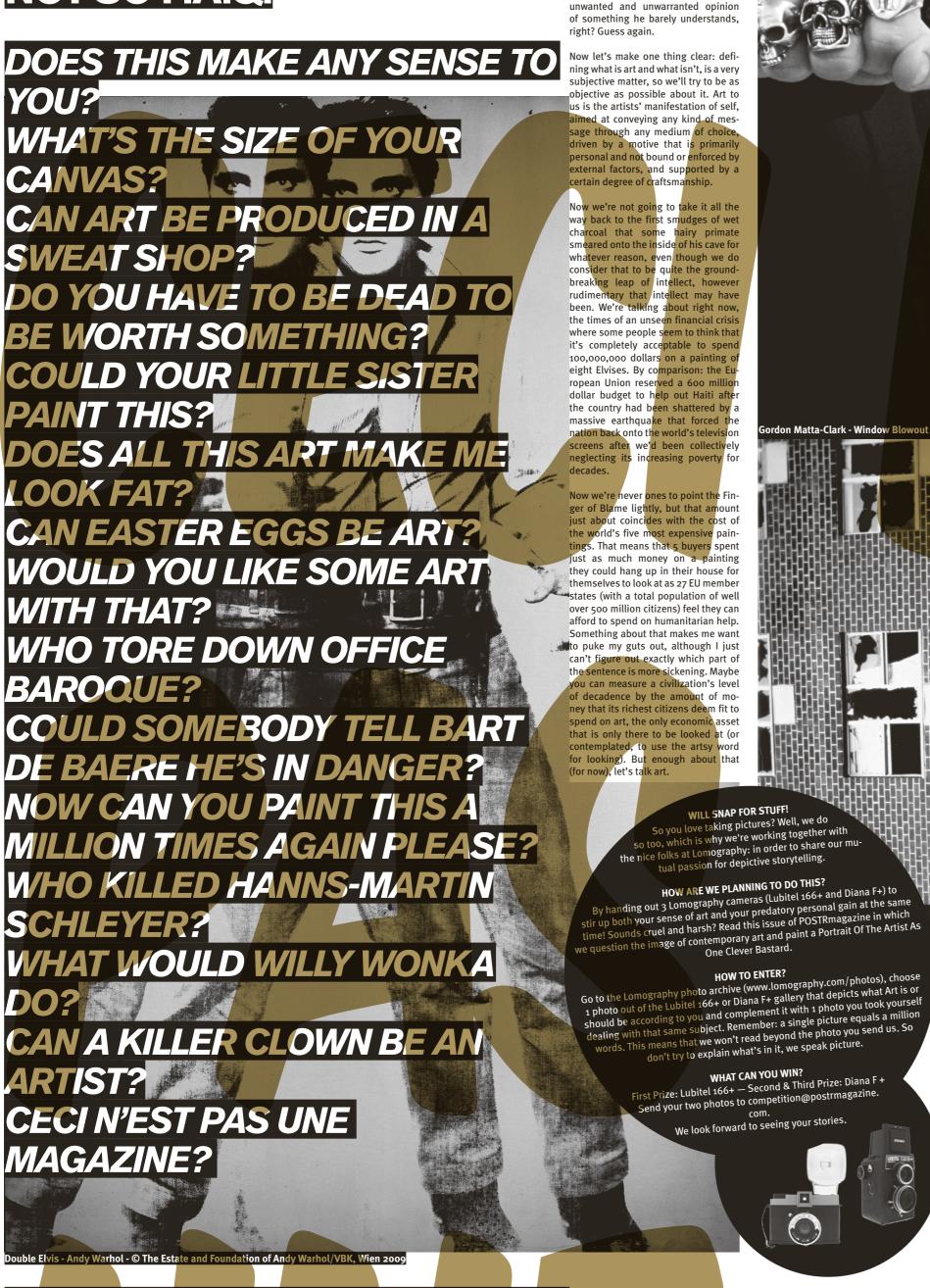
developed sense of art will have the

arrogance to try and actually give an

now well over a decade ago, and the



NOT SO F.A.Q.



SWEET STICKY REDEMPTION AESTHETIC RIOTS IN THE KINGDOM OF CHOCOLATE



to an upper class chocolatier, might look at the ICC for ourselves, the enter stage where cultural mayhem ight soon break loose. We aggressively pounded the doors, considered a break-in by means of forced entry and endlessly kept on ringing the housekeeper bell. But there appeared to be no time for an editor and his photographer on a brutal quest to find out what really happened in this place. All we knew was that the pompous builing we faced there in the bare cold oked very dead to us. The smell of oil aint — and by extension cultural in-

nter of our contemporary art scene

ovation — was long gone and soon to be irreversibly replaced by the seducve smell of chocolate. The ten to fifty housand passers-by that walk past the building on a daily basis will no onger be pleasantly surprised or brutally disturbed by art they would never have come across otherwise.

END OF DISCUSSION, LET THE WAR BEGIN

But how does a Royal Palace degenerate into a sticky-fingered symbol of today's gluttonous society? After all our attempts to enter the royal suites ailed miserably, we decided to take e matter to DDV an artist who was osely involved with the ICC. During e revolt, he started doing the exnal communication and ended up ining himself to the gates when the police was trying to remove its ocinjers. That didn't only make him an tremely badass artist, he later also ecame the co-founder, Social Comissioner and chairman of the NICC. deed; in the aftermath of this polical coup, a new center for contemorary art had settled somewhere in a dead corner of the city. A forwarded e-mail from DDV had kind of dragged us into this whole operation. "We were diverse and well organized opposition", he begins to complete the story. "Consisting of young and unknow people as well as established artists such as Guillaume Bijl, Leo Copers, Luc Deleu or Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven. Apart from the police, we also managed to get the press on the scene, so they Bervoets out by his legs." So the artists stayed for ten more days and made it to the 7 o'clock news that week. "Se-

would be restored and regain its original character and destination. But for many years, nothing worth mentioning happened in the ICC case, until recently its reopening as a luxurious brasserie and chocolatier was silently

DDV questions this puzzling twist. "Why don't they start a chocolatier in the suburbs? Because they know if they do, they wouldn't see a single person. So you simply can't banish all museums, theaters or any other cultural facility out of the center and even scattered around the city's outskirts. Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against chocolate. But at least they could've next to the institution of contemporary arts within the same building." The man we are sitting in front of may just be Belgium's most bizarre and dedicated artist. You might have seen him digging a hole for Gordon recently - something he's persevering for five years now - at a location that is a secret up until this day. He studied at the St-Lu-

kas institute for Visual Arts in Brussels one step further. Because if you admit, and at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts you become a part of the problem. And in Ghent. Since 1979 he has done over _I will never be a part of the problem." a hundred performances, installations nd exhibitions across the world and ne co-founded Club Moral. His work bizarre artist, his sizzling phrases were still haunting our heads, and focuses mainly on performance, body art, true crime art, bootleg, mash-u we could somewhat comprehend ho and remix works, a number of which being an artist can be a bitter pill sois presented in the online Bastan Art Gallery. Although he's supposed to live off his art by now, he currently works in a warehouse of the Royal Aca-Despite his anger he admitted g no intention at all to evoke any form of civil disobedience during the infamous reopening weekend, "I'm rough with always setting up whateer you need to make something happen. For about ten years, I've worked hard for the NICC and for the most part even voluntarily. I have deliberated for the social framework for artists and a national policy for artist workplaces and studios. But now I follow the path of Ulrike Meinhof. Maybe I'll take part in the resistance if other artists star revolting with me, but that's all." Al though he claims to be done fighting this man who has corresponded w serial killer John Wayne Gacy for se veral years, appeared rather eager t

point out the true face of evil for us. THE ART OF **PROVOCATION** When politicians informally asked the

current MuHKA-director if there was

any interest within art circles in a new

the director of a Museum for Contempresenting chocolate - after all, a naporary Art, that equals committing tional heirloom - as one of our most mass murder. It isn't even a matter of interest, it's about commitment. He really is the Hanns-Martin Schlever of in any way involved in this maneuver fine arts. You should kidnap this guy, either. But if fighting the recession is detain him for forty days and then leathe real priority in our cultural policy, ve him in the trunk of a car with a bullet than that just might be the case. "If we in his head. He is officially allowed to can only occupy a minimal percentage feel insecure. Indeed, I am a threat to in this potential Chinese market, profit him because he is the enemy. The NICC rates would know no end", one of the might mediate but I won't take part manufacturers said. Indeed, a chocoin it anymore. I'm operating indepenopened a chocolatier and a brasserie dently now and I won't avoid violence. your bets on. And that's just a little I won't say that I'm going to shoot him. food for thought that you can mull over I'm just saying that I might. Nowadays, everybody has to live with the fear of being shot, so why not in the world of However, at the same time, an estafine arts? A lot of journalists and other blished contemporary artist — you people got shot for much less imnortant matters. War starts where the dis-

vily anticipated cultura

Antwerp last summer — is preparing to make a great work of art and blend it with a printed publication you might he familiar with. That's why you might come across two wacko journalists and a twisted editor auctioning it off just to As we left the cozy apartment of this drive home their point sometime and mewhere soon.

CRUEL BLOODY JUSTICE pieces of art just seems too extreme to be right. But then again, it's a big world and there are a lot of rich people far-reaching intellectual evolution even give a single crap about art and of our species is at the same time a what's hanging on their living rooms

of a man called Damien Hurst. Damien,

in the most highly unlikely case you're

reading this; don't take this the wrong

way, this is not in any way a personal

attack, nor is it a judgement of you on

a personal level. And we're not being

sarcastic, either, so please keep th

lawyers on a leash. The choice for this

perhaps slightly gruesome metapho

lies in the simple but striking ana

logy between today's contemporary

art world and a terminally sick patient in a cancer ward, clinging to life with

arms full of sores and intravenous

tubes after a life of decadence and

environment and all the inescapabl vices of the curse of wealth. A tumor

doesn't just pop up out of nowhere

nally, it kills its host. You don't blame

a tumor for being a tumor, you blame

the cause. And in this case, it looks

like the dying patient has brought this

impending doom upon itself through

rything that's wrong with modern art,

and at times it seems like he chose to

be exactly that; the cancer that will

eventually kill the sick and corrupted

art world from the inside out. If so, we

wish him the best of luck, if not, we

is the creator of the world's most

pensive piece of art ever made.

The Love Of God is a mold of an 1

piece of contemporary art ever made.

tant to be a coincidence; spending a

that money on making it is a part

its message. Now I don't know wh

but there's something about this blin

ged-out Skeletor that gets to me; pro-

of this horrific icon of death and terror

that's encrusted with these beautiful

glittering diamonds. Why make such

a thing in the course of the worst re-

not partially to point out the gross

surrounding modern art and the scary

tion? That's what it tells me, anyway.

It says something about the nature o

modern art while depicting its death

at the hands of the artsy circlejerk that

was always willing to pay increasin-

whatever reason it may have had. We

say had, because at the moment, it

looks like the crisis is finally catching

up to the art world that seemed to b

impervious to its greedily groping ten-

Some said it was inevitable, while

others said that art could not be tou-

ched by any crisis, that brilliant ideas

sion. Those others must have been ei

ther severely demented or knowingly

lying, because anybody who calls him

self an art expert should know that the

tacles for so long.

ongruence between the big money

bably it's the morbid aesthetic

look at.

low the art market works basically like

any oth<mark>er market out the</mark>re. So that

leviou<mark>s little games tha</mark>t really can't

stand to see the light of day, shit will

over the past years. The ceiling has

before he kills us all.

It grows and festers for years until fi

moral decay. Poisoned by a polluted

stinking indicator of everything that's walls. Or maybe I'm just being naïve in rotten about us. These people spend assuming that artists are by their namore on other people's ideas than ture broad-minded spirits who all recomost people could dream of spending gnize some basic form of interhuman decency and social justice. So I'm not going to unfairly accuse Martinez and those like him of being artsy hipster nnacle of our podgy society's utter tual ways than other filthy rich scum. decadence. Art isn't like a car or a big N° 5 is a symptom of a far greater ill. house. You can't drive it around town a brilliant creation by a tormented geart. That also implies that you have to or live in it while at the same time imthe outlines of decadence of our derailed society. Meaning that as usual, everybody's guilty. We're way out of

> your house for others to not see and ALL YOU SEE IS... CRIME of sophistication. The showing off lies IN THE CITY in the not showing anything: buying

> an idea and making it perfectly clear tion has been the standard for a long, of its originality. And if one day you do get sick of it, you just lend it out to a plete opposite of that? If an individual nuseum so you can look liberal and feels completely isolated and ignored benevolent while getting a nice tax reonly so that idiots with a lot of money ring world around him in big, block don't get the satisfaction of coming off silver letters, isn't that art as well? It as broad-minded and intelligent just sure feels a lot more honest than what because they cornered the market on some supposedly innovating artists are doing nowadays. Now you could say that that's a completely personal

> > thing I need to know as I go along".

chocolate-shop thing is a loss for art

and mixing pot of contemporary art

into a chocolate factory is the artis-

the womb. Yes, chocolate is one Bel-

gium's richest cultural heritages. Yes,

it appeals to many, many people and

s one of the things we're known for all

ver the world. But we dare question

n today's complex times. To us, this

looks more like the political wing of

duct, chocolate beats art to a bloody

mess. And in these economically tes-

ting times, that will make a difference

elgium's grand new chocolatier, an

ode to our national cultural heirloom full of little trinket-selling shops that

you can all house in the same building.

day and the only art centre that sells

bite-size portions of its pieces to the

visiting public. It's so brilliant; it would

be poetry if it wasn't so gruesomely

opportunistic. Political tactics and

economic motives shouldn't come into

play when it comes to art, but unfortu-

nately, that's the way it has been and

will be for quite some time to come. Or

maybe we're just being paranoid, and

this chocolate business is really just as

naïve and one-dimensional as it looks.

We say blessed be the innocently ho

because they have to. We hope that

you don't live to see your creations

become a status symbol for some rich

lame who doesn't understand what

pinion and as such shouldn't come *lurning* a into play in a debate regarding art, ecially because art in itself is the decade-long centre common pool of aesthetics and can only be rich in and through variety. and mixing pot of Why mention it then? Because art is part of our society, and like our society, contemporary art it has a lot of problems and injustices in it. That makes this a political discusinto a chocolate sion, which means it becomes justified to talk about personal opinions since factory is the i<mark>ey re</mark>present demographic ni nd we live in a political system calartistic equivalent led democracy where every opinion is supposed to matter. After all, it's not of crawling back ke we have a ministry of Culture for fuck of it. Keeping all this in mind, into the womb. somebody please explain to me v we have a self-professed ignoramus for a Secretary of Culture? Joke of this get so out of hand? Or are we Schauvliege's naïve innocence might looking at this the wron<mark>g way and</mark> be as endearing as it is disarming, but was it never in any sort of hand in the that doesn't mean that we can leave our art budget in the hands of a rube first place? Some would argue that art has always been the plaything of the surrounded by lobbyists and expect extremely powerful and wealthy; the that everything is going to be okay. I ince money took the ro<mark>le of society's</mark> Holy Divine Crown, art has fallen prey cated and broad-minded people who to the greedy claws of whoever has the fattest bank account. The kind of stract. An artist is nothing without a people who live at the top floor of our social skyscraper like David Martinez, don't really know anything about the

who spent \$54,7 million on the most expensive penthouse in Manhattan (and by extension, the world) so he Sure you might, but not without macould hang up his \$140 million Jack-king a few gruesome fuck-ups on the son Pollock (N° 5, 1948 — looks like a few cans of paint smeared randomly onto a canvas if you want to be cyniowever, not even every artistic lan- cal about it) inside it. Now there is no guage can be understood or learned of doubt that Pollock's paintings are the work of a genius, albeit a very disturand interaction: the world of art has its bed one. Some experts argue that his own secret societies and underground works became ever increasingly comfraternities, the members of whom plex over time, going as far as saying and to turning a decade-long centre communicate in a coded language that his paintings contained mathethat is indecipherable to outsiders. The members of these brotherhoods represent mathematical chaos before are called art experts, and they are the there was even such a thing as Chaos

BUTTERFLIES IN CHAINS

there seemingly hasn't been any cei-

in an entire lifetime. The most dis-

gusting part however, is that contem-

porary art has not just become any

other toy for the revoltingly rich to

pressing others who have slightly less

money than you do. Instead, you buy

an idea that was conceived by some-

body smarter than you, hang it up in

somebody else's though

ling on the price for pure, uncut art.

FREEDOM SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

Art is more or less like a language;

mainly meaning that art is just ano-

ther means of establishing a connec

tion with others and getting your point across, whatever that point may be

(even if the point you're trying to make

is pointing out to others that there is

piece of art has a perfect spectator;

since the variety of our human world

is so immense that there will alwavs

e someone who gets exactly what

ows, that's not the main issue here.

languages, and this is no different in

speak your audience's language if you

want to get your message across, and

even then there are a million dialects

for every main spoken tongue. Artis-

tic expressions of whatever kind are

bound together by at least one com-

mon denominator: the drive to create

a personal translation of something

n your mind for others to unders-

tand. Whether you write it or paint it

or carve it out of stone, it's there for

others to take in. The more complex

your message and specific your me-

dium, the more you demand from you

oublic. The more you want your pu-

olic to understand every little nuance

and detail of what you're saying, the

smaller that public is likely to become

(depending on the complexity of your

message and the words you use to

bring it across). Bare with us here, the

story is not going to get any less tan-

you ask me, the true beauty of a

s in its total freedom: ideally, eve

artist is completely free to choose

s or her message, the language i

conveyed in and the words used

ress its essence. Meaning that ar

vious or cryptic as he or she like:

ose with a universal message

mand more effort from their pub

re is literally every little nuance yo

interpret anything. So understa

g an artist's message also depend

factors that the artist has no contro

ity and intelligence come into play

well as their pre-existing knowle-

t by the influence by a mecenas,

orld to feed him his inspiration

A PORTRAIT OF THE

ARTIST AS GREEDY

at will eventually slip its way into the

nes who decide what is art and how

old at an auction, the art-world's ri-

to grasp the abstraction and outlan-

dishness of some contemporary art.

which would in its turn justify both its

price and its exclusion from the com-

mon public, such as you and I, people

more money than you can reasonably

hope to spend on elementary things

like food, clothing and shelter and as

such could never fully appreciate its

or the world of art is the Earth's most

sophisticated secret society hiding in

plain sight, flaunting its obscurity by

means of falsely assumed intellect and

So what happens next? Basically, it

means that art is adopted by society's

uxuries is that art increases in value

over time (or so we're made to believe)

and as such becomes the easiest re-

source to invest in. It's nice to look at,

a lot less risky and controversial than

oil or guns and great for showing off

at cocktail parties. And up until now,

pex and turned into just another com

big, big money.

meaning anyway. Maybe. Either that,

uch cash it is supposed to yield when

y to complete

n think of in between, and of cours

order to achieve a more profor

reciation for the

n's natural tendenc

gible than this.

The point is that our great human ci-

vilization boasts a lot of different

no point to anything). On a more per-

N° 5 is the most expensive painting in tual of greed and social classification—the world, in case you're wondering, where money is sacrificially burned—and allegedly Martinez already sold it in order to make wealth look like renement. We say 'look like', because vitably paid even more for it. Sounds we believe that money can't possibly perverse? Maybe so, but then again, be a determining factor in developing says who that this wasn't always the someone's sense of art. On the other case? Without the De Medici family, hand, we could be absolutely wrong. Leonardo Da Vinci might have been Maybe it takes exactly the detached liust another anonymous character and deformed mind of a millionaire with some zany ideas, fit for the looniebin. Same thing goes for a lot of other great artists over the course of history, if by great you mean 'hangs in multiple museums and is known throughout the world'. Looking at it

who don't know the pain of living with that way, you could conclude that the their parents to please go to on Sungreatest art, along with all the other bests of whatever things in the world, has always been a toy for the tyrants.

Flash forward to recent and at first glance completely unrelated news: in November 2009, the Belgian government announced that it would be spending € 140 million on social housing in 2010. Now I don't know about you, but personally I think that if a painting on some guy's wall just about equals our entire social housing budget, somebody's got a problem. Don't get me odity for only the exuberantly rich to property in not saying that we need to property artists, those who are still free enjoy. The only difference with other spend more money on social housing. of fame's cynicism and simply create Or less, that's not the point. I just wonder what Pollock would have said to Martinez when he paid all those dollars for his painting. Art is ideally a manifestation of freedom in its most you were saying when you made them.

untainted form. The contrast between

gatively. "I don't know exactly what

happened, all I know is that when he

was asked about the ICC, he wasn't in-

terested. Can you believe he actually

said that to me?" DDV fulminates: "As

cussion ends. If the other side doesn't

want to vield, we'll just have to take it

netimes. Seemingly unrelated:

colate manufacturers are sent out to become our most eye-catching national representation on the World Expo Shanghai 2010. Now we don't think that there's something wrong with prominent cultural goods. And we're not subtly implying that politics are

late horse isn't the worst thing to place may remember him from his solo exposition in the Middelheim park in

Jan Hoet Jan curated Do<mark>c</mark>t imenta IX in Kassel n 1992 and fo<mark>unded the museu</mark>m of

nodern art S.<mark>M.A.K. in Ghent in</mark> 1999. n 2003, he became artistic director or the MART<mark>a museum in Herf</mark>ord, I True art always forces itself upon the artist. He shapes his idea into an artwork under a certain level of compulsion. Both the idea and the form have to fit perfectly. Art is also the way an artist communicates how he relates to society. Artists mostly have one leg outside society and the other one inside it. They use the leg within to absorb and to bundle all the impulses, the other one is to shape the ideas in form of criticism to society, whether or

ceptions. But today's prices are really blowing out of proportion. The demand for some artworks exceeds the supply and there's the notion of prestige as well. The concept of being able to brag with a famous name on your wall. But the price doesn't define or resuch a way it becomes a comment or a flect the artistic value of an artwork. It isn't but a medium that shows the innot ironically or cynically. Even a still terest for a certain work. It's variable life painting can be social criticism bethough. There was a time when classic cause it's the artist's acquired inforart was more valuable than contempomation changed by himself in any way. rary art. Nowadays it's quite the opposite. It doesn't make much sense to me He can add total silence or absence. Just take a look at the landscapes by when you have to pay more for some draft by Sigmar Polke than for an et-Raoul De Keyser. Art can be social critiism exactly by not living up to expec- cher by Albrecht Dürer. That's that pertions. Moreover, art is never created verted edge again, although it's rather recognize what you already know; due to the buyers than the market it it offers you a new look on reality. But self. As for the evolution, when we talk basically, shape and content have to be in harmony. If Yves Klein wanted like ours, art is continuously approa-

oof as every other investment plan comes somebody's lifelong desktop eminder of a bad idea. out there. Today, art obeys the same laws as any other material resource or product. Why? Because everybody There is a problem with some art, volved decided to treat it like one. hat's what's been happening: galle- the millions and millions that are being spent on some pieces of art while the

ies buving up an artists entire stock and then sticking 90% of it in a vault in order to make work by that artist ar- death on a daily basis. But the debate nice amount of cash but ends up stuck with an empty workshop while he galleries start to push the price on getting into right now. Injustice and rowned upon to say the least, but the we all know that. But the truly sickeart world is free of such trivial, earthly ning thing about contemporary art is restrictions. As the most sophisticated that it has become a tool for already and elevated branch of our society, the same standards. Collectors turn into dealers and start giving out under-the-table hand jobs to galleries the prices on 'their' artists ever higher Galleries and dealers putting in bids to auction houses on works by artists loped human beings. No. Art dealers they represent in order to set trends are the same brutally bloodthirsty mofor the art scene to follow. This is not speculation, check out Ben Lewis' documentary on the Contemporary Art porate presidents of this world, only hope to see him cut out by a scalpel Bubble if you don't believe us. (*) they have coated themselves with a aint-thin varnish of cultural mascara esigned to make them look sophis-The ceiling has ated and open-minded instead of edy and cold-bloodedly calculabeen reached, and ting. They use the same dirty tricks to et their hands on the biggest share the picture that's of the loot; establishing monopolies, cornering markets, misleading the painted on it is not public, etcetera. Collectors, dealers, galleries: everybody's involved. Now The price tag on this thing is too bla- a pretty sight to don't be mistaken; we don't have any roblems with that. If spending tens of

> ger ri<mark>sing the way they h</mark>ad been doing of being honest about their unquenthe Texan with the cowboy hat who been reached, and the picture that's pain<mark>ted on it is not a</mark> pretty sight to doesn't hesitate to let off his twelve-

who are we to judge? What does get

ing Caleb Larsen's A Tool To Deceive hope that Damien Hirst does kill the *in<mark>d Slaughter*, wh</mark>ich is basically a intemporary art world. I hope that stic cube that you buy on eBay, reverv last crooked art dealer, auction cei<mark>ve by post and</mark> then need to plug ouse and collector ends up with wanto your computer so that it can auto atically put itself up for sale on eBay artists they chose to push into the again to be sold for more money than spotlight in search of a quick buck. I ou bought it for. To me, that's a grea hope that they burn those warehouses vay of getting people to think about and the works inside them in a futile he degree of commercial meddling in sive and expensive, just like they burcontemporary art, the betting and spened all those millions of dollars when times were still looking up. Let them culating that has become more impor tant than the art itself. Because in the market wrong is going to end up stuck with a plastic cube that has become so nspire some of them to actually make expensive that nobody feels it's worth some decent material again.

eventually and undoubtedly hit the they are trying to pass themselves off

fan. And it has. Art prices are no lonary as cultured and sophisticated instead

QUESTIONS: What do you think about the art market today and how do you think it will evolve in the next decade:

art or ideas for a while. Art became an this desperate hope that somewhere

ago, that's exactly why they call it a vely stupid to make the same mistake.

ordinary economical asset a long time there is a next guy who will be as nai-



Established Belgian artist who assembles everyday objects in a surprising way thus giving them new layers of meaning. The theme of violence and tension appears regularly but is depicted poetically and aesthetically.

I This is really too complicated to explain. Art is obviously a human way of expression and can appear in any maginable form: sound, sculptures, mages or paintings. These expressions are created in a way so that they can deeply move people. At least if you are willing to expose yourself to it, which anyone who wants to feel the experience of art really should do. There's a very wide range of levels, both for the artist as well as the one who's experiencing the art. So one can only experience a piece of art if he's on the same level as its creator. So if someone really gets touched by a schlager singer, most likely he won't feel the same emotions when listening to Maria Callens. The opposite is true as well, which doesn't imply that someone who really appreciates Maria Callens can't feel moved by a *schlager* singer. There are many different levels of art. The higher the level of an artwork, the higher its meaning. People just can be moved by or feel connected higher the level of an artwork is, the gnized as one of the human rights.

dislikes soccer can watch the most exciting game, but he won't feel a thing. And the same goes for a lot of other things, just compare a commercial tv station with a channel like Arte. But as I said before, you really need a couple of books to answer that question.

of sensing things. Are people acces-

sible to art? Well, someone who really

Everything can be bought or sold, so why not art? I don't have problems with that. People have always been approaching things from a commercial perspective and therefore disabusing things as well. That isn't just one of today's problems only. There will always be artists whom the public initially doesn't even notice but then become widely respected, or not. Then again, some artists who are highly anticipated eventually don't seem that interes ting. It doesn't mean that a very successful artist is automatically an abo-

minable artist. The level of success one has on the art market simply doesn't indicate whether it's a great artist or not. Once again there's a variety of levels and possibilities in between and it is extremely hard to estimate that. That's why some artists are overestimated and others are underestima ted. Sometimes the high price that is paid for an artwork reflects the artistic value, sometimes it doesn't. But extremely high prices that are paid for artworks are rather exceptional. Just compare the prices of art with some of the bonuses other people get. Ninety percent of the Belgian fine artists simply can't survive by creating art. It doesn't matter whether it are important or smaller artists. Some are on welfare, others teach classes or have another job and there's only a minority that can live of its artworks. Still I think this is a normal situation. The with the entity. So art really is a matter more difficult it becomes to reach

to be in an empty world, far away from

consumption, he was only perfectly

right to patent his color blue (Interna-

tional Klein Blue - IKB) which contains

Of course the art market has a perver-

ted edge, but so has society. People

search for salvation in a prospe-

rous job in stead of in a message. So

that's perverted as well. Sports isn't

just sports nowadays and correspon-

lingly, art isn't just art. Everything

constantly fluctuating. Directors

of museums are writing articles in

curator and makes choices. As far as

I know, Mondriaan never was a mem-

ber of a jury whereas today everybody

wants to be in one. But art has always

been and will always be a commodity.

Michelangelo and Jan van Eyck never

lived in poverty. Artists whose works

only started making money after they

died, like Vincent van Gogh, are the ex-

newspapers. The artist has become

a pigment that hardly has molecules.

stays about the same. The only thing that's changing is technology. Thanks to the internet, I now know a lot of artists or expositions from around the I can't give you a proper answer to that question

large public. When Michelangelo was

painting the Sistine Chapel, it was

only a handful of people who knew

about it, cared about it and attended

it. This might sound a little bit cruel.

but the big masses simply don't give

much about that. If you look at it glo-

bally, what the masses care about is

surviving. Or they care about religion

because people can survive with reli-

gion. At least, people have the illusion

that religion can help them surviving.

So basically a lot of people run away

from art because artworks can touch

someone within its deepest self, and

that frightens them. They don't want

to be confronted with that. And that's

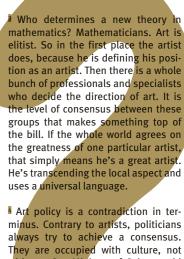
what art often does, confronting

someone with himself. Furthermore

the art market doesn't really evolve, it

If you compare with other countries. the Belgian governmental support for the art community was always kind of shabby. A couple of weeks ago, our Minister of Culture said in an interview that artists should know money doesn't grow on trees. So there's no need to say more. The ninety percent of artists that can't survive by practi cing their art doesn't have a message on that. I can't tell exactly how much money there's needed for the art sectude is very wrong. Art should be subsidized because art is a general interest. You can compare it with water or lots of other things that are necessary for mankind. It really should be reco-

ching life. It's only normal that the line between art and design is getting thinner. Tobias Rehberger won two Golden Lions at the Venice Biennale simply by decorating a café. The total aspect pecomes more important. When an artist is exhibiting, a single work doesn't stand alone anymore; it refers to the other ones as well. It becomes kind of a theater wherein the connections between all of the works in an artist's oeuvre tell the story. At least, that is what happens in postmodernism



vith art. Our Minister of Culture said he doesn't know anything about art. I solutely can't endorse that as being a good answer. She could have said that she was going to learn about art. Or at least try to understand the pragmatics of the phenomenon. But it's scandalous that she doesn't. That's nothing but municipal politics to me. Yes, art may be the most abstract motor of this whole culture thing. But a Minister of Culture, of all people, is supposed to be able to handle abs-















