



Art Aesthetics

Reasoning DURING times of extreme poverty
(arguments against polishing my work by Dr.
Spencer Roberts)

Written by:

Lindsey Payne

Concepts and Aesthetics

Familiar Beginning

I think there may be a time in every artist's life, at least when we first start out, that we think we must draw, paint, or sculpt something perfectly. The lines must be accurate, the drawing must look like the person. A drummer cannot miss a beat. This idea of perfection is misleading, outdated and enormously overrated. Talent is more versatile. Thinking outside of the coloring book lines could be more conclusively intriguing and productive.

I remember when I won my first art contest. I asked myself; how can I say what I want to say in a way that conveys the message that wins the prize? I was great at drawing and painting for my age. Was I the best technical artist? No, but I was outstanding. Was my idea more

important? Yes. And at age ten, I knew a carbon copy of the idea would not be as effective as a messier, colorful illustrative version to express the meaning. It was a smiling globe which would have been creepy and uncanny contrived in a realistic version. It would not have won the prize money I was eager to win.

My mind won the money to buy the candy, doll, and the game boy I wanted but could not have. Not my attention to details. Not “polished” work. It was my ability to conceptualize the idea that a smile makes the world go around in a way that was suitable opposed to making a creepy polished version that would only have won if it were a contest based on technical skills or a lifelike robot contest.

Because of the invention of the camera, it does not make sense to make work completely identical to the subject. What are we trying to say about the subject? Perfect, polished art is something I can admire in works of architecture and portraits painted before the camera was invented. Otherwise, it seems insulting to the people including myself during this time who cannot afford rent or food. Every day is a struggle. My fear of “polished” work comes from this naked truth, but it also comes with history.

Concepts and Aesthetics

Dressing Up

Conceptual art is about the idea, not the aesthetic presentation of the art. As an artist who places an emphasis on the meaning instead of the presentation, I do not see a need for work to be glamorous. I see it as “dressing up.” Most people are not wealthy. In the 2020's most people have difficulty affording rent and purchasing food due to the increase in costs. Nice looking art means purchasing mediums and programs that are costly. Not everyone has access to expensive equipment or can afford expensive computer programs. Even people from wealthy families have been seen begging for jobs because they are having financial issues. Now, in 2024, the rent is higher than it has been in decades in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Although I occasionally like art that is “beautiful” or as Dr. Roberts says “polished” I

also value art that is not. The idea is more important than the finished work, however I do appreciate finished work.

I am a person who values both art and people based on their personality opposed to the way someone or something looks. You can polish a work of art all day if you can afford it, but if it is not interesting conceptually, I would not pay too much attention to it. I am always respectful, I may even admire the craftsmanship, but there is something often quite forgettable about it to me. I remember "fountain" by Marcel Duchamp. It is not the Sistene Chapel, but it is uniquely its own. It is an everyday object. That is the point. I may not remember a painting that was the most technically beautiful work of art I ever saw unless the meaning was important or interesting. It does not make one more important over the other, it is my preference as an intellectual who sees the value in conceptual art. A portrait before the invention of the camera done realistically is logical. Brilliant. Experimental portraiture in the current time, is more intriguing (also less depending on the context). I think artists making polished work should ask themselves in 2024, why am I making it when most people cannot afford food or pay rent? That's the difference between me and the artists who copy me and act like I do not exist although it was my conceived idea.

While working and studying at CalArts, one of my favorite works of art (and still is) was a room full of Cheetos. It was not polished. It was interesting because it an idea expressed via a room full of Cheetos that was one of the most memorable works of art I have ever had the pleasure of witnessing and eternally one of my favorites.



Jazmin Urrea, RED 40 media exhibit

Retrospectively, although it was not “polished,” again, as I was instructed to do to my art, it was one of the most beautiful and inspiring things I have ever witnessed. It was created in a Non offensive way in a tone that was agreeable. If the Cheetos had an expensive adhesive, gloss, or finish on them, it would have been a total failure. Polishing this art would have ruined it because it is great the way it is. It would say something else entirely and not have the same presence. Conversely to my “lower” grade last term due to a lack of “polish” the idea that a conceptual artist’s grade is lower for not polishing a work of art in this period is laughable. The work reminded me of Andy Warhol’s Campbell Soup Cans, 1962. Pop Art blurred the lines between high and low art. It paved the way for conceptual art. Warhol, like other pop artists, used well-known objects in his work. I use well-known objects in my work, but they are often discreet. Not everyone can see it in an obvious way that a. large amount of my work is created with everyday objects. There is an obvious element of fun in pop art that gives us a hit of dopamine during troubled times. This is something society needs more than ever. I think that polishing conceptual art does not make sense because I would be reminded of a trip to a wax museum or something uncanny as mentioned previously. There is work that I have made that is polished. I put a great deal of work into detail in several paintings when the meaning called for it. But as far as polishing blurry pixel art and the other submissions, it does not really make any sense. The blurry pixels represent the unknown. If I were making art about something else, I would alter the image to a more polished work.

The message conveyed is more important than the look of the art. My mirror projects this term state this without any question. The original images are created using nature, natural phenomenon, science, and experimental painting using ink. The original images create a natural reflection on the surrounding surfaces depending on the angle. The image it projects tells the story that cannot be seen in the original images. This to me is human nature. We are so much more than our appearances. We all have stories to tell and unique qualities to show even if they are not on the surface. Communication is similar. We often say and do things to describe our feelings and thoughts or the opposite.

Sometimes we communicate things to hide our feelings. My mirror work talks about the value of communication and the value of the idea over the polished version. The viewer must determine if the art is the original or the projection. Both(?)

This is due to the nature of humanity where we all judge people based on what we say, project, look like, while some of us take our time to understand people. We are all unique. Although it can be understood that this work is about the judgement of humans, we can also determine that it is not judgmental. It is not polished although it is about polished work. It is work created to encourage people to view art as more than just the original image. What is equability?

Work is valuable based on the idea more than it is based on being "polished" or beautiful unless there is a good reason for it. I valued the vehicle I purchased for only \$500.00 that got me from California to Rhode Island without any issues. It had dents all over it. It was not attractive. It was immensely reliable and comfortable driving it knowing that the engine was reliable. I traveled without any concerns and slept well in it. The greatest amounts of polish could not have made it more "beautiful" but I saw it as more valuable to own that amazing old Volvo than renting or putting a deposit down on an expensive vehicle with potential engine problems just to fool everyone into thinking I was richer than I was. Not everyone sees beauty the same way. Getting rest was easier in that vehicle. No one in their right mind would rob me. No one in their right mind would hit on me driving that vehicle. Getting rest was more valuable on my trip and made me healthier. Health is more beautiful than a more polished version of myself in a polished vehicle than would have been wrecked due to a lack of sleep. Do nice flawless vehicles seem less valuable? No. I like nice vehicles. It always depends on the context. The situation.

Not everyone can afford to use the highest quality cameras and special effects, the most expensive paint, especially during a time that rent, and food costs are inconceivable. Some of us are forced to make choices that do not necessarily make sense to the wealthy, but they are made to keep us alive and well.

Concepts and Aesthetics

LOOK(S)

I value cleanliness. But I still value messy art. My art is not always clean, even if it is clean. There was a trend on YouTube about cleanliness as beauty. It was called the “clean girl” aesthetic. I agreed and still agree with this idea that grooming yourself and being extremely clean was healthy and beautiful. It was something for everyone. It is not offensive to encourage people to be clean and tidy, especially when depression is on the rise and there is a lack of medication and counseling for mental illness throughout the world.

The “clean girl” routines did not suggest or force anyone to do anything like have larger eyebrows, smaller eyebrows, or change the way anyone looked in a demeaning fashion. It was simply a look that required cleanliness and attention to detail.

I thought and still think a clean appearance is agreeable. Logical. During a time when food is expensive, it makes sense to focus on cleanliness and grooming as beauty. The clean routine encourages humanity in a healthy way. It is good for morale, especially when it is difficult. I love dressing up, but it is not always possible or logical.

In 2015 I filmed a car wash and used the footage in my film “flowers of antimony”. Although it was conceptual and the camera operations were chance based, it was still “polished” in the sense it was what I can conscientiously affirm as “clean” aesthetically because it includes footage from a carwash. However, not everyone can afford the polish at the end. Having a clean car is necessary when the windows get too dirty to see out of. Polishing your vehicle for additional money is not a necessity, although it is obviously preferred.

Why polish a work of art in 2024? Responsibility is not the issue; it is the prohibitive cost of rent and food during this time I am writing this. A lack of polish in look(s) does not lower the value.

During the toughest times in my life, I still found a way to take showers. I joined gyms and worked out for the showers afterwards. I got approved for credit cards so I could go shopping (as well as not die in the hot

weather). I had an excuse to be inside, and it was not illegal to be inside stores if you were purchasing something. I felt horrible as a homeless woman. Worthless. I wanted respect for my mind. My ideas. Money. I felt better as a clean woman regardless of my situation. But as far as something being more valuable based on appearance, I disagree. For example, If forced to choose, I would take a smart man over a beautiful man any day of the week. Art. Music. Writing as well. It is about *who* that person is. And *what* their art is about. I do not “value” *polished* art the same way I value ideas. I value *humanity*. I do not judge a work of art or a person based on whether they are polished, yet I still do have a “clean” routine in my daily life and art, unless life is too difficult to manage. In the worst-case scenarios, I have always found a way to binge watch or read something for day or so until I felt like myself again (which is what *Parallel Ghost Girl* represented in addition to physics, see *Biography*).

It is transformative in nature to change a work of art.

Most of my work is transformative, not as much as it is making an image “better” (I disagree with the word entirely) but to discover what I am really trying to say, an exploration, occasionally finding alternative ways to communicate. I often take one image and change it multiple times to say something. This is conceptual.

Excessive polish seems ridiculous during times of poverty, but a clean routine is ethical, even in this time, because it encourages humanity to keep moving forward and discourage stagnancy, although stagnancy, in small doses, has a reflective nature that can be beneficial if not excessive (see *Reflection*). Additionally, too much polish brings in such results as the uncanny valley, often retrospectively. Mainstream artists may find their works of art a little less attractive than they thought they were. I have noticed that excessive usage of AI lately makes people seem like statues instead of people. I think retrospectively, these aesthetic choices will be far more uncanny than realized during the creation to keep up with the current trends. It reminds me of watching the Pixar baby from *Tin Toy*, 1988 (the first CG baby) and other images shown by Maureen Furniss in 2015 while discussing the uncanny valley. It is another reason I object to the idea

that something must be polished, although at times it does appear nice or interesting. Unless it states otherwise contextually, the artist determines the art's presence depending on the intention and determination of the context. The viewer typically views it as it is unless instructed otherwise. Perspectives are always versatile.

Alternatively, "polish" is not necessary to get a point across. It is difficult to afford food, let alone beauty products. Creating a work of art with recycled materials due to a lack of funds for the required materials to have a more polished effect makes sense especially if the artist cannot afford beauty products. How is that artist supposed to have polished work if the artist cannot afford to be polished themselves? This is why I think asking for polished work is unethical unless there is a monetary exchange that can support the artist so the necessary materials can be purchased. It is like making fun of someone poor who wears tattered clothing and comparing them to a millionaire in a beauty contest. It is unfair. Additionally, there are multiple perspectives, politics, beliefs, and stylistic choices with reason for decades. Saying that art must be one way or another is inappropriate. It should ultimately be the choice of the artist whether or not their art is polished. Lowering someone's grade based on their work not being "polished" is not ethical in year 2024. I looked at one of the artists' works mentioned to compare my work to during presentations and did not find her work "polished". I thought she did an excellent job, it was cleaner than the similar work I did several years ago, including small books I made, similar color schemes, but it was not impressive conceptually or aesthetically. However, she did an excellent job with the animation aspect of her art. It reminded me more of a future box office hit than something in an arts context. I recommended her for animation on LinkedIn. I wonder why she had access to stop motion classes and studios, but I did not. I cannot help but wonder what I could have made with money, access to a stop motion studio and classes? Would it have been considered "polished" enough? I was planning to create The Legend of Sleepy Hollow; I wonder if it would have been chosen for the website if I could have made it?

My work continues the histories and legacy of American artists who came before me. It follows the trajectory of pop art, conceptual art and influenced by other artists around the world. I do not feel the need to steal the identity of people around the world and claim it as mine because I have been through a great deal and know who I am. I am an American Prolific artist, and I am proud of my work.

Conceptual Targets; Hit and Miss

Strategies for Viewing Beauty

There is too much emphasis on beauty in society. We are too judgmental and attacked for one tiny flaw on social media. One bad photo could be the end of a celebrity. Realistically, it statistically shows that it takes professional photographers over forty photos to get a good shot of a super model.

I look great from some camera angles and terrible from others. The joke's over, it is the same for everyone. Some people get plastic surgery to modify themselves to what is considered attractive during that time. To get each shot right. I suggest we stop looking for polished work and perfection and concentrate more on the talents and positive qualities we have. What is that person about? It is about talent not looks when it comes to entertainment, but to compete with most people get plastic surgery to fit in and/or meet Hollywood and other social structure standards. With this in mind, we should look at the fact that everyone has redeeming qualities. So does art. Conceptual art is not about beauty or polish, its' origins are in the dada movement. Anti-art. Where is anti-beauty when you need it? Pop Art showed us that older looking people are beautiful. Andy Warhol wore I am deliberately including bad camera angles on my website along with good camera angles. If I am dismissed and never looked at again for my talents it is a sign of the times. People constantly put me down and attempt to degrade me even if I am feeling confident in the way I look. I am tired of society looking at people like they need to be polished. Perfect. Only beautiful with plastic surgery to meet society standards. Art does NOT need plastic surgery to be acceptable. I reject the need for art to be polished to receive a higher grade. I reject these ideas in society forcing humans to groom themselves to the point they must change themselves with

plastic surgery just to be considered beautiful. I support conceptual art and the idea that beauty should be perceived not as the way something looks but we should look more closely to what that art is about. What is the idea? Is it necessary to polish that work? What is the point in today's world? A beautiful person is not necessarily a good person and polished art does not mean it is interesting art. People, art, and objects can all be interesting without having to be glamorous. What is the person about? Does art need to dress up? When someone dresses up, I see it as admirable, but what is the point when society is in poverty worldwide unless it is a special occasion? I would like to keep the way I look because I was born this way. I was adopted and it is meaningful to me. It hurts when someone insults me. I prefer someone to like me the way I am and not a polished wax museum version of me, especially with the usage of AI and creation of robots based on people without their permission, like the chinese inventor who created a sex robot that looks like Scarlett Johansen although he has a wife. I feel like it is a polished version of a human. An insult to everyone involved.

Not everyone wants the way they look, and they alter it. That is ok too, but I think the pressure on humans to be perfect walking photogenic beings without any flaws is not beneficial conducive to humanity. Flaws are beautiful too. Unpolished art should be appreciated and not forced to get plastic surgery to walk a red carpet. Again, I like people based on personalities and art based on the idea, but until someone can prove that only a physical embodiment can be beautiful, I completely disagree. Mike Kelley talked about how he wasn't interested in conventional ideas of beauty, but he was interested in the sublime.

Polished art is nice to look at but it is not what I am about. I prefer style to beauty. Something intriguing. Overrated "beauty" what I will now call "the polished" is not always interesting. There is so much more to life than a polished work of art. I would rather read something.

Giles Deleuze: Against the Dialectic (Nietzsche & Philosophy, (Part 1 of 2) talks about Dionysus being the victor of the art world essentially because he is careless due to partying. I thought this was interesting

because when I am not having fun, I do not do well. It is challenging to have fun without any money. When I am happy it is easier to get hired. Having a good mindset is essential to survival. Right now, I am faced with homelessness and starvation, I am all the way across the world without enough money to make it home. I was promised to have enough money for housing, a plane ticket and everything I would need through school and after graduation guaranteed legally. Now I am afraid for my life worried about being homeless. I also just literally lost my last living grandmother. I am reading Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and also studying Stoicism to handle this situation because learning about neurosis and stoic tactics is useful during this time in addition to learning about Philosophy. What I am learning about stoicism is similar to my thinking process and how I handle things and helping me keep it together during the most difficult time of my life, although I would much rather have fun and make the things I planned using the money I was legally informed I would receive.

My work, sadly will not be what I wanted to make or "polished" enough to get the highest marks because it will not represent this situation I am in. I am afraid for my life in England, my visa is running out of time and I have nowhere to stay after graduation. No way to purchase a plane ticket. I am lucky to have food and a copy of *Anti-Oedipus*.

All my friends who were/are artists were/are into philosophy. I was not. Now I am reading the books everyone has always suggested.

Getting through this situation seems impossible; thinking about polishing my work seems like a bad joke. Perhaps my philosophy studies will lead me to a different way of thinking, but as of now, polishing my art defeats the purpose and is insulting because I have been wrong legally by AUB.

WORKS CITED

Websites:

<https://www.beatbooks.com/private-details.php?record=36381&soldItem=true>

<https://andipaeditions.com/blog/140-the-importance-of-pop-art-in-the-context-of-art-history/>