

**MODERN ART:  
ARE WE ALL CRAZY, OR IT'S JUST ME?**  
*(A piece that will surely make me lots of enemies.)*

Raised in Europe, with a deep-rooted classical education, modern art is a puzzle to me. So, I went to check out an exhibit of one of my rising modern artist friends. As I entered the gallery, vivid colors smeared on canvases jumped at me, looking like finger paintings by kinder gardeners.

My artist friend explained: "See this canvas over here? I laid it on the lawn and threw cans of paint over it from the second floor to get this effect. So, what do you think?" I didn't have the heart to tell him that it looked like a vandalized classroom wall, or graffiti on a freeway. "That canvas over there," he pointed with pride, "I splashed it with paint-soaked rags and threw fur balls at it, before beating it with a baseball and blending it all with a broom. It took me a whole afternoon to do it! But I just sold it for fifty thousand dollars. Galleries in New York are fighting for my work. So what do you think?" I looked up at the canvass that took up an entire wall, and said: "It's...hm, enormous! Your work is monumental." Fortunately, he had too big of an ego to take it literally.

After this frustrating encounter with modern art I headed to the sculpture garden. I needed to surround myself with the graceful beauty of ancient statues, feel the smooth marble of mythological figures, or admire the muscular construction of the human body even from more contemporary artists, such as Rodin. From my previous experience I concluded that for me, art should be a little more than just someone's mood or personal expression. I need more than that! I must see the craft behind the work of art, see the artist's skills, the years of study, discipline and hard work that would come alive from his moods and feelings. Feelings alone do not require art. Seeing something that a first grader can do does not impress me at all. I feel cheated. I feel gyped!

Would Picasso not had his blue period, I would not take him seriously. How would anyone dare to compare his late sketches that looked like scribbles, and sold in the tens of millions, with the mastery and skills of a Rembrandt, a Michelangelo, or a Leonardo da Vinci?

What do modern artists think? They can just smear anything, many of them without skills, and sell it for a fortune? They dupe us, and we're stupid enough to buy. Like Pop Art. Marilyn Monroe by Andy Warhol? Oh, what a joke! If I saw it at a garage sale, I wouldn't

give two dollars for it. His Elvis sold for 100 million! I hate to see our children being duped into commercial products parading as art, while being alienated from the true classical form of art that is often demeaned or ridiculed today.

I was still looking for the statues in the statue garden, but all I saw was a junk pile of broken glass, steel rods, rusted sheet metal and wooden wheels. All thrown together. I must be lost, I thought. This must be either an abandoned construction sight or a junkyard. “Where are the statues?” I asked. “Lady, you’re looking right at them,” was the answer. My reaction to that is probably not for your ears. By now, I was stressed out from my relaxing modern art day.

Fortunately, that evening we had tickets to a concert. Oh, how I yearned to enjoy the soothing violins of Vivaldi, or the romantic arpeggios of Chopin to enchant my ears and elevate my soul. And maybe a powerful symphony by Beethoven to make me feel a part of the creation of the Universe. No such luck! This was “contemporary” music night. A cacophony of distorted noise, rattles, rumbles, and screeching invaded my being. I was hit by a tsunami of toxic noise pollution, exploding in the very core of my heart, pounding at my ears, splitting my head. I had to leave the concert hall after twenty minutes of this horrendous torture as I wondered was this art, or punishment?

On my way home, I stopped at Cafe Cartel in Redondo Beach. It was poetry reading and open-mike night. I really needed the subdued, poetic atmosphere to heal from the deadly assault of modern art. Robert Frost, William Blake, Emily Dickinson, where are you? Come to my rescue! But the poets of tonight, the voices of tomorrow, gushed out mile long laundry-lists, unrelated objects and random events that didn’t make any sense to anyone else but to the “enlightened ones.” To top it, a shower of vulgar vocabulary spilled out and foamed from their foul mouths as they shouted at the audience with unrestrained anger. I felt I was being yelled at. Every second sentence was spiced with the F word. In this esoteric world, poems that dare to rhyme would be laughed at and ridiculed. If Robert Frost lived today, he wouldn’t have a fighting chance to be published. Thinking I must have wandered into the wrong century, I headed home with sadness.

My very last refuge was the sanctuary of my bedroom. Here the claws of modern art can’t reach me or assault me anymore! As I curled up in my bed with a new book and opened the pages, I saw long, runaway sentences without any punctuation. This must be a mistake, I

thought. I was trying to read, but after a whole page I hadn't yet retained anything. This was another modern writer, desperately trying to be "different." As I closed my eyes and gave up, I thought, maybe I should express my raw feelings as well, without skills, like every one else, in a contemporary fashion. Therefore, I created a short poem to be savored, admired and envied. So, here is my modern masterpiece, complete with the mandatory F word:

Modern Art Sucks:

This is my F\_R\_E\_A\_K\_I\_N opinion.

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Here we go! Now I can blend in with everybody else.