

MANIFESTO

for aesthetic reinvigoration

Our world is filled with dreamers, creators, and innovators. We have self-driving cars, trains levitating on magnets, holograms, blockchain technology, robots, rockets ... Every aspect of life is getting shaken up and revolutionised by new, exciting creations.

Now take a look at Fine Art and tell me what you see. In sharp contrast to the vibrant energy of entrepreneurs and engineers, I see artists still playing with inanimate objects they found on the street, still taking strings and balloons and laying them out into million dollar spaces, still getting excited about bricks and rubble piled up in exhibition rooms.

I see our aesthetic culture sitting in stasis, lagging far behind, playing with the same old motifs on long exhausted land. Zero movement. No breaking of boundaries.

Something is out of balance. Culture is supposed to be at the forefront.



The greatest artists always used to be 100 years ahead of their time. Let me ask you: if the art you see today is 100 years ahead of its time, does it paint the picture of a future that excites you?

What would invigorate me is seeing a future where we go beyond what we thought was possible. If we had painters, sculptors, musicians, writers, designers and architects at the same level as our most forward-thinking entrepreneurs, can you imagine the spiritual shift on the collective mind?

What I am dreaming about is a far more vibrant culture, where artists band together to work on aesthetic issues, bring about exciting manifestations and reimagine archetypes that inspire a strong society.

I want to see artwork that dominates a space with unapologetic glory. I want it to be fiery, energetic and strong. I want it to tell powerful, confident stories that make us feel proud of who we are.

*It's time for artists to take back responsibility
for imagining a more inspiring, uplifting and
exciting outlook for culture.*

Before we can dream of a more exciting future, we need to **break through a barrier**. Because on the road to a vigorous, fiery culture we find a massive obstruction: a monstrous pile of confusing artspeak, cringe-inducing concepts, awkward performances, meaningless images, emotional political messages, deconstructed ideas and weak aesthetics, held together by a sticky philosophical cement called 'Postmodernism'.

The reason we're not aspiring to greatness anymore, is because the arts establishment has convinced us there is no way to go further. **It has imprisoned the creative mind**, by holding artists to a rigid rulebook: question the foundations of your culture, deconstruct everything, normalise weakness, bolster victimhood, consider strength oppressive... Any artist creating anything that doesn't comply with those rules is considered conservative, retro or not forward-thinking enough.

But this is a trap. What's truly regressive is following a trite trend that has been around for almost a century.



*Let's reinvigorate the
creative flame!*



SMASH through the wall

If we want to move forward and conquer new territory, there's no room for Postmodernist thinking.

Let's break through the walls of creative imprisonment, and march into a new era of AESTHETIC VIGOUR.

This is how I propose we do it...

1. Create art that uplifts!

Our imagination is meant to take people to a higher vibration and make them feel more alive. Forms must be explosive! Dynamic, inspiring, thrilling! Galvanise the spirit of the viewer.

2. Honour the harmony of a composition.

The process of creating is not a casual aimless act, it is continuous problem solving to find a balanced construction. Our aim is to find compositions that activate the human senses, much like solving a mathematical formula where everything falls into place, and you know it's right. Trust your natural sensitivity to true strength and harmony.

3. Reimagine the archetypes of our culture.

How can you build a strong society when you keep hearing anti-heroic stories? We need to reinvigorate inspiring archetypes such as heroism, bravery, aspiration and nobility, in order to lift our culture's spirit.

4. Confidently express your unique voice.

Every artist must bring an individuality to their artwork (not a constant regurgitation of other people's ideas!). Creativity is a gift. It's the ability to receive ideas and bring about unique conceptions. But it's also a gift to the people you share the work with. As an artist you give people a glimpse behind the curtain of your imagination, allowing them to see through your eyes.

5. Kill 'artspeak'.

It adds nothing. If art needs to hide behind confusing, pseudo-intellectual gibberish, it's probably not genuine. Our work should be strong enough to stand on its own, without the diversion of meaningless words. Instead, find the genuine story of your creation and use it to strengthen the viewer's connection to the work.

6. Muster the courage to break the rules and do something different.

Few artists dare to do so today because they're scared of being rejected. In these times, if you create something of aesthetic strength, you'll be labeled unprogressive, if you create something of pure virility, you'll be regarded as radical. Either way, it might not be what the arts establishment wants to see. Many doors might close. But let's be honest, what's the point of being an artist, if you can't express your truth?

7. Collectivise with other artists.

It's our only chance to make waves in a strongly atomised art world. As individuals we'll never get anywhere. All artists need to come together and hold themselves to a higher regard. Start looking for other artists that aren't on the mainstream bandwagon.

8. Be revolutionary by returning to your foundation.

A sculptor sculpts. A painter paints. Don't get lost in endless conceptualisations. Don't fall into the trap of believing that 'anything can be art'.

In aesthetically starved times, the most revolutionary act is to actually MAKE something.



Artists, break free!

If I'm going to be an artist, I'd like to be aligned with creative truth and honesty. I won't be able to live with myself, going on as a sculptor, just playing by the rulebook of the art establishment clique. And I know I can't be the only creative who feels this way.

So this manifesto is a call to action

As artists, creators, visionaries, we need to come together and dream up a new way. I believe true creators are dreamers, not followers of what already exists. Our raison d'être is to imagine things that aren't here yet.

That's what artists do. That's how we break through into new, exciting realms.

Fer de Villiers

