

Cafe Society March 6th

On an unusually windy morning Anthony decided he had to eat at the cafe as fire alarms were being tested throughout his building. He wouldn't be able to read or answer emails or listen to music, so out he went.

He recognized the couple who may not have been a couple at the adjacent booth. He remembered them being loquacious so he tilted his ear.

So..I tuned into your friend Scott's mini-lecture about people who don't like art.

Oh? And?

Well it was straightforward enough. Scott used to of course work at a public gallery in a university so there would always be people coming in then taking one look and leaving with a snort of derision.

Or with some words. Strong words.

Oh yes. Like *what is this shit?*

But these people enter the gallery, so presumably they have a hope that there might be something they consider to be good art.

Or why would they even look let alone walk into the gallery?

Killing time, perhaps. Something useless like art is nevertheless useful for killing time.

No.....

The server took Anthony's order. This was another fresh server to whom he had to explain no butter on the pancakes. The server look startled then realized that this customer was a regular and would thus be familiar to the kitchen staff.

No, Susan. I know people who don't even go into galleries. They have absolutely no time or use for art.

You and I both have brothers like that, David.

True. Although my brother likes music and had some interest in architecture. None whatever in painting or sculpture or heaven forbid media art.

No interest in either performance art or theatre.

None.

David and Susan ordered refills of their morning tea.

We both saw that movie *The Square*, right David?

Yes. That movie.

Yes, I mean relational aesthetics already satirized itself from the get-go.

Art is for the one percent. Too easy and I don't think true. Art systems, mind you, are another story.

For some people, yes. There have always been people who only like art if its useful...like banners and posters and theatre props.

And there always will be such people, Susan. But where are they coming from?
Who knows? Like Ray at the video co-op. He doesn't like art except for agitprop theatre.

Oh. I know who you mean. Miserable sod.

Anthony laughed. He also knew people who thought they were radical by not liking art. To him, a philistine was a philistine.

It was Smithson who stated that art was important precisely because of its uselessness, right?

I believe so. That quote has been parroted and paraphrased ad nauseum.

And then there's the quasi-Situationist perspective that art is never separate from society.

The problem with that is that if taken to ultimate conclusion there is no longer anything that registers as art.

Well Asger Jorn was not at all a bad painter.

But, Susan. We both know people who don't like galleries. They only like public art.....radical theatre or public performance art. Which I have no use for unless it really fucks up everyday conceptions of what constitutes public space.

Hmmmm..... Let's order a couple of draughts.

David and Susan flagged the server as he delivered Anthony's breakfast. The Playlist switched over to a louder programme..all recognizably eighties tunes.

Anthony didn't mind the louder playlist. He thought the couple or not couple in the adjacent booth had taken their conversation as far as it could go. He liked art himself because it was useless and fun, although he would never dismiss someone's work for being too earnest if he thought it was effective. He did not think that propaganda was necessarily a bad thing.

The Look of Love by ABC now played in the cafe. Anthony had liked this song decades ago.

Love as real estate..how profound. Well, actually not really. But blasts from the past often were a pleasant distraction from all that was pretentious and ponderous.

Yippee ay yippie ay yay!