

The murder and resuscitation of Duchamp

At first I was disappointed when I saw Gardar Eide Einarsson's Tarp paintings. A black tarp glued over a canvas with a painted outline suggesting there is something underneath. It was not until I realized that the tarp was silkscreened that I fell in love with the paintings. Why is it that the choice of disregarding the object changed my experience of the paintings so drastically?

There are always multiple assets to consider when looking at an artwork. There is craftsmanship, concept, proportion, color, sources and the list just goes on. As an artist all of these assets needs to be closely considered no matter the media you are working with. Of course some of these assets are basic principles of aesthetics and deeply rooted in art as a whole while other assets needs to be attended to and others disregarded. This you can do as freely as you want to as long as you can defend your choices. As an artist, where do you draw these lines?



When photography was invented and gained its foothold in society some declared realist painting (with the intent of capturing reality beyond painterly esthetics) dead. Why paint the object when you can use the object itself. It gave new opportunities and changed how art could be confronted. When Duchamp exhibited his readymades in the beginning of the 1920s

he captured reality through absurd use of the objects themselves. Through Duchamp's conceptual work he could defend his choice of embracing the real life object to create something that disrupts our notions of the real world while using it to do so. The idea was now valued as an artistic asset and can now compete in the decision making of an artist when it comes to best articulate and create your ideas. As long as you can give a good enough answer, context or concept anything can and is art. Even the apple that is painted

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in a still life painting, not just the painting itself. The apple has now got equal if not more artistic value than the painting trying to resemble it.

So if anything is or can be art or at least an east ethic experience why shouldn't Gardar have glued a tarp straight onto the canvas? It would add qualities like realism, texture, light, color, depth. Still it is a much more compelling painting as it is with the silkscreened motive. It would be a completely different painting. "A tarpaulin, or tarp, is a large sheet of strong, flexible, water-resistant or waterproof material, often cloth such as canvas or polyester coated with urethane, or made of plastics such as polyethylene.)¹ It is shiny and almost luxurious looking, but still sturdy. The tarp is covering something, hiding it, but more importantly it is protecting something. Had the tarp been glued on it would be a tarp covering a painting, instead of a painting of a tarp. This is the reason why disregarding the object made this painting so much better. There is so so much mystery between something covered up, but what makes this series of paintings so special is that when the taros are painted they are not just a painting of a tarp, but a painting of a tarp covering something and therefore the painting of a tarp becomes just as real as a real one would be. Had he used a real one it would simply just be a tarp.

Sources

1. Einarsson, Gardar. "Tarp." Standard Oslo, 04.04.2014
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