

When you're most despairing... the clouds may be clearing

30.07 – 17.08

It takes him about a day and a half to complete one, and the last time he sold any he sold them for a dollar and a half a piece. He says, "Guess I'm getting cheated, but then it's worth a whole lot to me just to have something to do to pass away the time."¹

Lemel is a jewellery trade term for the small shavings of precious metals such as Gold, Silver, Platinum and Palladium, that are left over from filing and other techniques that handmade jewellery pieces require. Think of it as the wood workshop equivalent of sawdust.

Hence it follows that in the labour-process the means of production transfer their value to the product only so far as along with their use-value they lose also their exchange-value. They give up to the product that value alone which they themselves lose as means of production.

But in this respect the material factors of the labour-process do not all behave alike. The coal burnt under the boiler vanishes without leaving a trace; so, too, the tallow with which the axles of wheels are greased. Dye stuffs and other auxiliary substances also vanish but reappear as properties of the product. Raw material forms the substance of the product, but only after it has changed its form. Hence raw material and auxiliary substances lose the characteristic form with which they are clothed on entering the labour-process. The corpses of machines, tools, workshops, &c., are always separate and distinct from the product they helped to turn out. If we now consider the case of any instrument of labour during the whole period of its service, from the day of its entry into the workshop, till the day of its banishment into the lumber room, we find that during this period its use-value has been completely consumed, and therefore its exchange-value completely transferred to the product.²

The distinction between artist and non-artist did not exist; it was only a question of the difference of mental gifts between one man and another. Such as those gifts were, no one was debarred from the means of expressing them in art by some means or another.³

4. There *are* experiences for each person which accomplish what art and entertainment fail to. The purpose of this essay is to make you aware of these experiences, by comparing and contrasting them with art. I have coined the term 'brend' for these experiences.

Consider all of your doings, what you already do. Exclude the gratifying of physiological needs, physically harmful activities, and competitive activities. Concentrate on spontaneous self-amusement or play. That, is concentrate on everything you do because you like it, because you just like it as you do it.

¹ Eliot Wigginton, *Fox Fire 4*, 1999, p 60.

² Karl Marx, *Capital Volume One*, 1977, Progress Publishers: Moscow. 196-7.

³ William Morris, *The Relations of Art to Labour*, 1890, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1890/relations.htm>.

Actually, these doings should be referred to as your *just-likings*. In saying that somebody likes an art exhibit, it is appropriate to distinguish the art exhibit from his or her liking of it. But in the case of your just-likings, it is not appropriate to distinguish the objects valued from your valuings, and the single term that covers both should be used.

These just-likings are your "brend." Some of your dreams are brend; and some children's play is brend (but formal children's games aren't). In a sense, though, the attempt to give interpersonal examples of brend is futile, because the end result is neutral things or actions, cut off from the valuing which gives them their only significance; and because the end result suggests that brend is a deliberate activity like carrying out orders. The only examples for you are your just-likings, and you have to guess them by directly applying the abstract definition.⁴

I think I have a right to look upon you as enrolled soldiers of that rebellion against blank ugliness that I have been preaching this evening. You, therefore, above all people are bound to be careful not to give cause to the enemy to blaspheme. You are bound to be specially careful to do solid, genuine work, and eschew all pretence and flashiness.⁵

ry reason, then, to ask the artist: *Is your product good for me even if I don't like or enjoy it?* This question really lays art open. One of the distinguishing features of art is that it is not just a means to an end, but an end in itself. (Functions of art such as making money or glorifying the social order are real enough, but they are rarely cited in defense of art. Let us put them aside.) When the "scientific" justification of art is discredited, the artist usually has to admit: If you don't like or enjoy my product, there's no reason why you should "consume" it.

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And first I must ask you to extend the word art beyond those matters which are consciously works of art, to take in not only painting and sculpture, and architecture, but the shapes and colours of all household goods, nay, even the arrangement of the fields for tillage and pasture, the management of towns and of our highways of all kinds; in a word, to extend it to the aspect of the externals of our life.⁷

What worries me in this exhibition is the number of people who see progress as moving from the traditional precious to an equally "precious" obsession, that of being "Art". Surely this is simply exchanging an historic decadence for a 20th century decadence?⁸

Every cultivated person is able to make a clear distinction in principle between the aesthetic and the sensual enjoyment of female beauty, even though he may not be able to draw the line between these components of his impression on a particular occasion. In the one case we surrender to the object, while in the other case the object surrenders to us.⁹

Well, I've always made objects of some sort.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah, what is "of some sort" do you mean?

ALEXANDER CALDER: Well, usually they're made of wire...and ah...

⁴ Henry Flynt, *Art or Brend*, 1968. <http://www.henryflynt.org/aesthetics/artbrend.html>.

⁵ William Morris, *Art and the Beauty of the Earth*, 1884, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1881/earth.htm>.

⁶ Flynt, *Brend*.

⁷ William Morris, *Art Under Plutocracy*, 1884, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1883/pluto.htm>.

⁸ David Poston quoted on p 50 in Philip Sayer. "David Poston: Renaissance Man." *Crafts*, no. 251 (2014): 46-51.

⁹ Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 2004, Routledge: New York, 70.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, when did you start using wire?

ALEXANDER CALDER: Oh, I used wire since I was a kid.¹⁰

I thought it should just be made and not cherished or sold. The things that I'm exhibiting now . . . Of course someone comes in and looks at them in the space of five minutes and perhaps really that's all the time it should be.... And then they should be just thrown away or not used any more. The thing is that one might want to come back a week later and look again.¹¹

you know, making gifts – making a gift – you can talk – if you want to say commission, but it's not uncommon for me to – if I were going to dinner to someone's home or going to weekend festivities, instead of buying a bouquet of flowers I would make a brooch... So, you know, heightening the moment with celebration and, my goodness, as a jeweler what a wonderful way to do that, making something that you give to a loved one or making something to – in appreciation of a thank you.¹²

"I think that over time, the messaging that the supermarkets have allowed, has reduced the value of food in people or the community's mind. And I think we're going to start seeing the true cost of food now and on our supermarket shelves."¹³



Darcy
WEDD

asbestos

¹⁰ Oral History Interview with Alexander Calder, 1971 October 26, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-alexander-calder-12226>.

¹¹ Oral history interview with Ray Johnson, 1968 April 17, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-ray-johnson-13236>.

¹² Oral history interview with Robert Ebendorf, 2004 April 16-18, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-robert-ebendorf-11967#transcript>.

¹³ Kath Sullivan, Fruit and veg pickers' minimum wage arrives this month and then we'll see the true cost of food, 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2022-04-08/fruit-and-veg-pickers-minimum-wage-arrives-this-month-/100975464>.

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List of works:

Counter-clockwise from door:

Untitled V, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on cotton blend, 57 x 116.5 cm.

Untitled IV, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on cotton blend, 57 x 57cm.

Untitled VII, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on cotton blend, 53 x 57cm.

Untitled I, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on cotton blend, 57 x 116.5cm.

Untitled III, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on canvas, 85 x ?.

Untitled VI, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on canvas, dimensions.

Untitled II, 2022.

Dust (aluminium, steel, wood, acrylic, copper, brass, micarta), lemel, cleargun glue, varnish on cotton blend, 57 x 116.5cm.

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Plinth (L to R, top to bottom):

1. *M-C-M*, 2021, silver, brass, teeth.
2. *Masticated Ring*, 2022, Bronzil (two dollar coin metal).
3. *Tooth Ring #4*, 2022, silver, shard of tooth.
4. *Artist's Hand (ring)*, 2022, silver, finger nail.
5. *Tooth Ring #3*, 2021, silver, copper, tooth.

6. *Three (ring)*, 2021, silver, \$5 and \$10 dollar notes.
7. *Coil Ring #1*, 2021, copper, \$5 dollar notes.
8. *Coil Ring #2*, 2022, Silver, \$50 dollar note.
9. 'Banjo', 2022, silver, \$10 dollar note.
10. *Silver Coin Ring*, 2022, silver.

11. *Appearance (ring) #1*, 2021, silver, brass.
12. *Appearance (ring) #2*, 2021, silver, gold.
13. *Tooth Ring #1*, 2021, silver, wisdom tooth.
14. *Tooth Ring #2*, 2021, silver, wisdom tooth.
15. *AUSD Ring #1*, 2022, Bronzil (two dollar coin metal).

16. *Pendant*, 2022, copper, silver, nickel silver, acrylic, lemel (silver, steel, copper gold).
17. *Ring*, 2022, Brass, copper, teeth fragments.
18. *Hair Ring*, copper, nickel silver, acrylic, hair.
19. *AUSD Ring #2*, 2022, Bronzil (two dollar coin metal).
20. *Dust Brooch*, 2022, brass, acrylic, copper, lemel (silver, steel, copper gold).