

We think the meaning and ideas in art should be manifest in the physical piece of art itself – not in the talk about and explanation of it... We introduce to you:

Physicalism

THE PHYSICALIST MANIFESTO

Artists – it’s time to fight back. The assumption that art must communicate a deep emotion or an important message has filled contemporary art galleries with **overly-intellectualized, visually uninteresting art**. We are calling into question this and other purported art “truths.”

“Physicalism” advocates honesty, joy, freedom, invention, and beauty.

refuse to bullshit

Many artists feel pressured to **impose false meanings** on their work – whether these meanings are about philosophy, art history, society, or their own personal psyches. They feel forced to *bullshit*. Bullshitting demeans the artist, and worse, it demeans the art. **Visually compelling art should not require an esoteric philosophical explanation** to justify its existence. **We beseech the artist** – stand up to the art establishment and **refuse to bullshit!**

delight in creation

Freed of the mandate to convey deep meanings and emotions, **artists can reclaim the right to pursue happiness**. Reject the notion that great art comes *only* out of misery and that *all* good artists are filled with angst and frustration. We say to **delight—rather than despair—in creation**.

question art dogma

Artists are still constrained by certain dogmas, or **unquestioned “truths” about what art is or should be**. We encourage you to **question rules** such as: drawing is fundamental to *all* art making, *only* tortured artists can be great artists, and art that does not contain meaning beyond the visual is *soul-less*. Such ideas are untrue and outdated and **it is time to move on!**

invent visual ideas

A “visual idea” is any formal element in a work of art, such as color, line, or composition, which is physically *seen* by the artist or the audience. Many in today’s art world believe that *everything has been done* – **that we are just stuck looking back, regurgitating ideas from the past**. But there are an *infinite* number of unexplored visual ideas. Create an innovative process, combine media, make something that cannot be categorized. **Do something new! Be inventive!**

emphasize beauty

And *please*, emphasize beauty! **Ugliness does not make art important**. Art does not have to be deep, philosophical, and filled with angst to be important. **Beauty can make art important**. Artists should be free to decide for themselves what is important and beautiful and celebrate it in their work. **Ugly, angst-filled art has had a monopoly on the art world for long enough. We are fighting back!**

The Physicalists
www.physicalism.org