

KITSCH IS NOT A FOUR-LETTER WORD

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In the kingdom of Kitsch you might have been a monster; you might not. The term Kitsch, in relation to the painted arts, has the shadow of general misconception upon it. In it, people read poor taste, vulgarity and of being passé. It has become a collective dust bin for all ill-perceived art under the sun; an easy labeling to make.

For what we know as the modern age, there have been certain rules laid upon the painted arts. The defined art of today came to be from a desire to distance painting from its origins, no longer to represent nature or the being of man. The imperative in arts was no longer skilled handcraft and for it to evoke emotional reactions, but rather it being innovative and new. These rules came about in 18th century Europe and was the invention of art, a term previously non-existent. This great divide from paintings of the past evolved into the giant, all-consuming beast we call modernism. What did not conform to the newly established rules of modern painting, was plutoed to the pit named Kitsch.

That which with intent did not comply to the banishment of the sentimental, however, lived on alongside the art. It was to emerge again and, subsequently, split the painted arts into two fractions: art and Kitsch—divided by which part of the human psyche they appeal to.

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While art has grown to only approve of interpretations from a purely aesthetic point of view, Kitsch aspires to provoke sentimental reactions. Working in the tradition of classical paintings,—the old masters—Kitsch painters keep exploring the emotional spectrum of the painted arts. A tradition that art, in essence, broke away from at birth, and thereby is no true product of. And so, in Kitsch we find the riveting, the warmth—the paintings addressing our emotional depth; that which makes us human.

However, seeing as this requires a master's skill of the craft, Kitsch is not a title to attribute all non-modernistic paintings, and certainly not all paintings thought of as crude. The majority of paintings dismissed with the title, would not stir the senses in the way of true Kitsch. Few are well-enough made; they cannot bring about the emotional awakening from the dogmatic slumber of pure aesthetics.

Text: Lars Arve Bratteberg