

MANIFESTO

Julian Rosefeldt

PROLOGUE

All that is solid melts into air.

KM|FE 1848

To put out a manifesto you must want: ABC to fulminate against 1, 2, 3; to fly into a rage and sharpen your wings to conquer and disseminate little abcs and big abcs; to sign, shout, swear; to prove your non plus ultra; to organize prose into a form of absolute and irrefutable evidence.

I am against action; I am for continuous contradiction: for affirmation, too. I am neither for nor against and I do not explain because I hate common sense.

TT 1918

I am writing a manifesto because I have nothing to say.

PS 1920

I speak only of myself since I do not wish to convince; I have no right to drag others into my river, I oblige no one to follow me and everyone practises his art in his own way, if he knows the joy that rises like arrows to the astral layers, or that other joy that goes down into the mines of corpse-flowers and fertile spasms.

Does anyone think he has found a psychic base common to all mankind?

How can one expect to put order into the chaos that constitutes that infinite and shapeless variation – man?

TT 1918

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

KM|FE 1848 ~ Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*

TT 1918 ~ Tristan Tzara, *Dada Manifesto 1918*

PS 1920 ~ Philippe Soupault, *Literature and the Rest*

SITUATIONISM

We are continuing the evolution of art. The ideas are irrefutable. They exist as seeds within the social fabric, awaiting expression by artists and thinkers.

LF 1946

Mankind is passing through the most profound crisis in its history. An old world is dying; a new one is being born.

Capitalist civilization, which has dominated the economic, political and cultural life of continents, is in the process of decay. It is now breeding new and devastating wars. At this very moment the Far East seethes with military conflicts and preparations which will have far-reaching consequences for the whole of humanity.

In the meantime, the prevailing economic crisis is placing greater and greater burdens upon the mass of the world's population, upon those who work with hand or brain.

The present crisis has stripped capitalism naked.

It stands more revealed than ever as a system of robbery and fraud, unemployment and terror, starvation and war.

The general crisis of capitalism is reflected in its culture. The economic and political machinery of the bourgeoisie is in decay, its philosophy, its literature and its art are bankrupt. The bourgeoisie is no longer a progressive class, and its ideas are no longer progressive ideas.

On the contrary: as the bourgeois world moves toward the abyss, it reverts to the mysticism of the Middle Ages. Fascism in politics is accompanied by neo-Catholicism in thinking.

JRC 1932

Modern art, suffering from a permanent tendency to the constructive, an obsession with objectivity, stands isolated and powerless in a society which seems bent on its own destruction. Western art, once the celebrator for emperors and popes, is becoming an instrument of the glorification of bourgeois ideals.

Now that these ideals have become a fiction with the disappearance of their economic base, a new era is upon us, in which the whole matrix of cultural conventions loses its significance.

But, just as with a social revolution, this spiritual revolution cannot be enacted without conflict.

In this period of change, the role of the artist can only be that of the revolutionary: it is his duty to destroy the last remnants of an empty, irksome aesthetic, arousing the creative instincts still slumbering unconscious in the human mind.

Our art is the art of a revolutionary period, simultaneously the reaction of a world going under and the herald of a new era.

CN 1948

We glorify the revolution aloud as the only engine of life. We glorify the vibrations of the inventors. Young and strong, we march with the flaming torches of the revolution.

This is the place – for the rebellious spirit.

The petty and materialistic – be off with you!

AR 1919

We call upon all honest intellectuals, all writers and artists, to abandon decisively the treacherous illusion that art can exist for art's sake, or that the artist can remain remote from the historic conflicts in which all men must take sides. We call upon them to break with bourgeois ideas which seek to conceal the violence and fraud, the corruption and decay of capitalist society. We urge them to forge a new art that shall be a weapon in the battle for a new and superior world.

JRC 1932

Against the spectacle, our culture introduces total participation.

Against preserved art, it is the organization of the directly lived moment.

Against particularized art, it will be a global collective practice.

This culture would not be dominated by the need to leave traces.

A revolution in behaviour capable of extension to the entire planet, and of being further extensible to all habitable planets.

To those who don't understand us properly, we say with an irreducible scorn: 'We, of whom you believe yourselves to be the judges, we will one day judge you!'

GD 1960

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

LF 1946 ~ Lucio Fontana, *White Manifesto*

JRC 1932 ~ John Reed Club of New York, *Draft Manifesto*

CN 1948 ~ Constant Nieuwenhuys, *Manifesto*

AR 1919 ~ Aleksandr Rodchenko, *Manifesto of Suprematists and Non-Objective Painters*

GD 1960 ~ Guy Debord, *Situationist Manifesto*

FUTURISM

My friends and I stayed up all night. We were sitting under mosque lamps hanging from filigreed brass domes, star-studded as our souls, all aglow with the concentrated brilliance of an electric heart.

For many hours, we'd been trailing our age-old indolence back and forth over richly adorned, oriental carpets, debating at the uttermost boundaries of logic and filling up masses of paper with our frenetic writings. Immense pride filled our hearts, for we felt that at that hour we alone were vigilant and unbending, like magnificent beacons or guards in forward positions, facing an enemy of hostile stars, which watched us closely from their celestial encampments. Alone we were, with the floundering drunks, with the uncertain beating of our wings, along the city walls...

At long last all the myths and mystical ideas are behind us! See there, the Earth's very first dawn! Nothing can equal the splendour of the sun's red sword slicing through our millennial darkness for the very first time!

We believe that this wonderful world has been further enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed.

We want to sing about the love of danger, about the use of energy and recklessness as common, daily practice.

We intend to glorify aggressive action, life at the double, the slap and the punching fist.

We wish to glorify war, and beautiful ideas worth dying for.

FTM 1909

We will elevate all attempts at originality, however daring, however violent. The suffering of a man is of the same interest to us as the suffering of an electric lamp.

We rebel against everything which is filthy and worm-ridden and corroded by time.

We must breathe in the tangible miracles of contemporary life – the iron network of speedy communications which envelops the Earth: the Earth which itself is hurtling at breakneck speed along the racetrack of its orbit.

How can we remain insensible to the frenetic life of our great cities and to the exciting new psychology of nightlife?

UB | CC | LR | GB | GS 1910

We shall sing of the great multitudes who are roused up by work, pleasure or rebellion; of the pulsating, nightly ardour of arsenals and shipyards, ablaze with their violent electric moons; of railway stations, voraciously devouring smoke-belching serpents; of factories hanging from the clouds by their twisted threads of smoke; and of the lissome flight of the aeroplane, whose propeller flutters like a flag in the wind, seeming to applaud, like a crowd excited.

FTM 1909

– please turn over

We will destroy the cult of the past, the obsession with the ancients and academic formalism. We want our country free from the endless number of museums that everywhere cover her like countless graveyards.

UB | CC | LR | GB | GS 1910

Do you really want to waste all your best energies in this unending, futile veneration for the past, from which you emerge fatally exhausted, diminished, trampled down?

FTM 1909

Shit to Florence, Montmartre and Munich. Shit to dictionaries. Good-taste-isms. Orientalism. Academicism. Shit to Dante, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Goethe. Beshitted dilettantisms. Shit to Montaigne, Wagner, Beethoven, Whitman and Baudelaire!

GA 1913

Look at us!
We're not exhausted yet!

Our hearts feel no weariness, for they feed on fire, on hatred, and on speed!

Look around you! Standing tall on the roof of the world, yet again, we hurl our defiance at the stars!

FTM 1909

Our eyes, spinning like propellers, take off into the future on the wings of hypothesis.

DV 1922

Let the reign of the divine Electric Light begin at last.

FTM 1909

Make room for youth, for violence, for daring!

UB | CC | LR | GB | GS 1910

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

FTM 1909 ~ Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*

UB|CC|LR|GB|GS 1910 ~ Umberto Boccioni / Carlo Carrà / Luigi Russolo / Giacomo Balla / Gino Severini, *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*

GA 1913 ~ Guillaume Apollinaire, *The Futurist Antitradition*

DV 1922 ~ Dziga Vertov, *WE: Variant of a Manifesto*

ARCHITECTURE

How day will eventually break – who knows?

But we can feel the morning. We are no longer moonstruck wanderers roaming dreamily in the pale light of history. A cool early morning wind is blowing around us; he who doesn't want to shiver must stride out. And we and all those striding with us see in the distance the early light of the awakening morning!

Glassy and bright, a new world shines out in the early light; it is sending out its first rays. A first gleam of jubilant dawn. Decades, generations – and the great sun of art will begin its victorious course. Today more than ever we believe in our will, which creates for us the only life value. And this value is: everlasting change.
BT 1921

We fight without respite against traditionalist cowardice.

We no longer feel ourselves to be the men of the cathedrals, the palaces and the podiums. We are the men of the great hotels, luminous arcades, straight roads and beneficial demolitions.

Let us overturn monuments, pavements, and flights of steps; let us sink the streets and squares; let us raise the level of the city. We must invent and rebuild it like an immense and tumultuous shipyard – agile, mobile and dynamic in every detail; and our houses must be like gigantic machines.
ASE 1914

In the distance shines our tomorrow. Hurray for the transparent, the clear!

Hurray for purity!

Hurray and hurray again for crystal, for the fluid, the graceful, the angular, the sparkling, the flashing, the light – hurray for everlasting architecture!
BT 1920

Architecture that bleeds, that exhausts, that whirls, and even breaks. Architecture that lights up, stings, rips, and tears under stress. Architecture has to be cavernous, fiery, smooth, hard, angular, brutal, round, delicate, colourful, obscene, lustful, dreamy, attracting, repelling, wet, dry, and throbbing.

Alive or dead.

If cold, then cold as a block of ice.

If hot, then hot as a blazing wing.

Architecture must blaze.
CH 1980

I like elements which are hybrid rather than 'pure', compromising rather than 'clean', distorted rather than 'straightforward', ambiguous rather than 'articulated', boring as well as 'interesting', inconsistent and equivocal rather than direct and clear.

I am for messy vitality over obvious unity.

I am for richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning;

I prefer 'both-and' to 'either-or'.
RV 1966

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

BT 1920 ~ Bruno Taut, *Down with Seriousism!*

BT 1921 ~ Bruno Taut, *Daybreak*

ASE 1914 ~ Antonio Sant'Elia, *Manifesto of Futurist Architecture*

CH 1980 ~ Coop Himmelb(l)au, *Architecture Must Blaze*

RV 1966 ~ Robert Venturi, *Non-Straightforward Architecture: A Gentle Manifesto*

VORTICISM / BLUE RIDER / ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

A great era has begun:

the spiritual 'awakening', the increasing tendency to regain lost 'balance',
the inevitable necessity of spiritual plantings, the unfolding of the first blossom.

We are standing at the threshold of one of the greatest epochs that mankind
has ever experienced: the epoch of great spirituality.

Art, literature, even 'exact' science are in various stages of change in this
'new' era; they will all be overcome by it.

VK | FM 1912

We do not need the obsolete props of an outmoded and antiquated legend.
We are creating images whose reality is self-evident, both sublime and
beautiful.

We are freeing ourselves of the impediments of memory, association, nostalgia,
legend and myth. Instead of making cathedrals out of Christ, man or 'life', we
are making them out of ourselves, out of our own feelings.

The image we produce is the self-evident one of revelation, real and concrete,
that can be understood by anyone who will look at it without the nostalgic
glasses of history.

The sublime is now.

BN 1948

It is not necessary to be an outcast bohemian, to be unkempt or poor, any more
than it is necessary to be rich or handsome, to be an artist. Art has nothing to
do with the coat you wear.

The 'Poor' are detestable animals! They are only picturesque and amusing
for the sentimentalist or the romantic!

And the 'Rich' are bores without a single exception, *en tant que riches!*

Ladies and gentlemen – Long live the great art vortex!

Our vortex is not afraid of the Past: it has forgotten its existence. The Future is
distant, like the Past, and therefore sentimental. The new vortex plunges to the
heart of the Present.

But we wish the Past and Future with us – the Past to mop up our melancholy,
the Future to absorb our troublesome optimism.

With our vortex the Present is the only active thing. The Past and Future are the
prostitutes Nature has provided.

Art means periodic escapes from this brothel. Life is the Past and the Future.
But the Present is art.

We want to leave Nature and Men alone. We need the unconsciousness
of humanity – their stupidity, animalism and dreams. The art-instinct is
permanently primitive.

We only want the world to live, and to feel its crude energy flowing through us.

Ladies and gentlemen...

BLAST

BLAST sets out to be an avenue for all those vivid and violent ideas that could
reach the public in no other way.

BLAST will be popular, essentially. It will not appeal to any particular class, but to the fundamental and popular instincts in every class and description of people: to the individual. The moment a man feels or realizes himself as an artist, he ceases to belong to any milieu or time.

BLAST is created for this timeless, fundamental artist that exists in everybody.

BLAST presents an art of individuals. We want those simple and great people found everywhere.

There is one truth, ourselves, and everything is permitted.

We are proud, handsome and predatory. We hunt machines, they are our favourite game. We invent them and then hunt them down.

Thank you very much.

WL 1914

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

VK|FM 1912 ~ Vasily Kandinsky / Franz Marc, *Preface to The Blue Rider Almanac*

BN 1948 ~ Barnett Newman, *The Sublime is Now*

WL 1914 ~ Wyndham Lewis, *Manifesto*

STRIDENTISM / CREATIONISM

To the electric chair with Chopin!

The blue discharge of car exhausts, scented with a dynamic modernity, has exactly the same emotional value as the beloved talents of our 'exquisite' modernists.

Man is not a systematically balanced clockwork mechanism. Ideas often run off the rails. They never follow on continuously, one after another, but are simultaneous and intermittent.

Logic is a mistake and the right to wholeness a monstrous joke. The whole world is conducted like an amateur band.

And who raised the question of sincerity?

Just a moment, ladies and gentlemen, while we shovel on more coal.

Who of us is the most sincere? Those of us who purify and crystallize ourselves through the filter of personal emotions? Or all those 'artists' whose only concern is to ingratiate themselves with the amorphous crowd of a scanty audience? – An audience of retrograde idiots and blacklegging art dealers?

My madness has not been reckoned with.

Truth never occurs outside our own selves. Life is but a system open to the rains that fall at intervals. Things have no conceivable intrinsic value and their poetic parallels only flourish in an inner dimension.

We seek truth not in the reality of appearances but in the reality of thought.

MMA 1921

We must create. Man no longer imitates. He invents, he adds to the facts of the world, born in Nature's breast, new facts born in his head: a poem, a painting, a statue, a steamer, a car, a plane ...

We must create. That's the sign of our times.

VH 1922

Impose aesthetic limits.

Create art from one's own abilities.

Don't reincorporate old values but create anew.

MMA 1921

The past we are leaving behind us as carrion. The future we leave to the fortune-tellers. We take the present day.

NG | AP 1920

No more retrospection! No more Futurism!

Everyone silent, open-mouthed, miraculously illuminated by the vertiginous light of the present; unique and electronically sensitized to the upwardly moving 'I'.

– please turn over

Forever renewed yet forever the same. Let us honour the avant-garde. Let us love our unparalleled century.

Our egotism is now supreme, our confidence unswerving.

In my glorious isolation, I am illuminated by the marvellous incandescence of my electrically charged nerves.

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

MMA 1921 ~ Manuel Maples Arce, *A Strident Prescription*

VH 1922 ~ Vicente Huidobro, *We Must Create*

NG|AP 1920 ~ Naum Gabo / Anton Pevzner, *The Realistic Manifesto*

SUPREMATISM / CONSTRUCTIVISM

Above the tempests of our weekdays, Across the ashes and cindered homes of the past, Before the gates of the vacant future, I proclaim today to you artists, painters, sculptors, musicians, actors, poets... to you people to whom Art is no mere ground for conversation but the source of real exaltation, my word and deed.

NG | AP | 1920

I have transformed myself in the zero of form and have fished myself out of the rubbishy slough of academic art.

Objects have vanished like smoke; I have destroyed the ring of the horizon and got out of the circle of objects: this accursed horizon ring that has imprisoned the artist and leads him away from the aim of destruction.

The savage was the first to establish the principle of naturalism: in drawing a dot and five little sticks, he attempted to transmit his own image. This first attempt laid the basis for the conscious imitation of nature's forms. Hence arose the aim of approaching the face of nature as closely as possible. The more his awareness embraced nature, the more involved his work became, and the more his experience and skill increased. But his consciousness developed only in one direction, towards nature's creation and not towards new forms of art.

Forms move and are born, and we are forever making new discoveries. And what we discover must not be concealed. It is absurd to force our age into the forms of a bygone age.

Life must be purified of the clutter of the past, of parasitical eclecticism, so that it can be brought to its normal evolution.

Art should not advance towards abbreviation or simplification, but towards complexity.

The Venus de Milo is a graphic example of decline. It's not a real woman, but a parody. Angelo's David is a deformation.

All the masters of the Renaissance achieved great results in anatomy. But they did not achieve veracity in their impression of the body. Those artists were officials making an inventory of nature's property, amateur collectors of zoology, botany and archaeology.

The living was turned into a motionless, dead state.

KM | 1916

The savage happily drawing the outlines of a bull or a deer on a piece of stone, the artists of antiquity and of the Renaissance, the Impressionists, the Cubists, and even the Futurists – they are all united by the same thing: the object.

OR | 1917

Look at a ray of sun... the stillest of the still forces, it speeds more than 300 kilometres in a second. What are our earthy trains to those hurrying trains of the galaxies?

NG | AP | 1920

- please turn over

We live in an abstract spiritual creativity.

Objects died yesterday. We are creators of non-objectivity.

AR 1919

Intuitive form should arise out of nothing. Such forms will not be repetitions of living things in life, but will themselves be a living thing.

Nature is a living picture, and we can admire her. But in repeating or tracing the forms of nature, we have nurtured our consciousness with a false conception of art.

To reiterate Nature is theft, and he who reiterates her is a thief. An artist is under a vow to be a free creator, not a robber. Only in absolute creation will he acquire his right.

To create means to live, forever creating newer and newer things. There should be a miracle in the creation of art!

I say to all: Abandon love, abandon aestheticism, abandon the baggage of wisdom, for in the new culture, your wisdom is ridiculous and insignificant.

Only dull and impotent artists veil their work with sincerity.

Art requires truth, not sincerity.

KM 1916

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

NG|AP 1920 ~ Naum Gabo / Anton Pevzner, *The Realistic Manifesto*

KM 1916 ~ Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Manifesto*

OR 1917 ~ Olga Rozanova, *Cubism, Futurism, Suprematism*

AR 1919 ~ Aleksandr Rodchenko, *Manifesto of Suprematists and Non-Objective Painters*

DADAISM

Here we cast anchor in rich ground. Ghosts drunk on energy, we dig the trident into unsuspecting flesh. We are a downpour of maledictions as tropically abundant as vertiginous vegetation; rubber and rain are our sweat, we bleed and burn with thirst, our blood is vigour.

I say unto you: there is no beginning and we do not tremble, we are not sentimental. We are furious wind, tearing the dirty linen of clouds and prayers, preparing the spectacle of disaster, fire, decomposition. We will put an end to mourning and replace tears by sirens screeching from one continent to another. Pavilions of intense joy, and widowers with the sadness of poison. To lick the penumbra and float in the big mouth filled with honey and excrement.

I destroy the drawers of the brain and of social organization; I spread demoralization wherever I go and cast my hand from heaven to hell, my eyes from hell to heaven.

TT 1918

One dies as a hero, or as an idiot,
which is the same thing. The only word which is not ephemeral is the word death.

You probably enjoy life. But you've got some bad habits. You're too fond of what you've been taught to be fond of. Cemeteries, melancholy, the tragic lover, Venetian gondolas. You shout at the moon. If you weren't so cowardly, sinking under the weight of all those lofty thoughts and nonexistent abstractions you've been forced into, all that nonsense dressed up as dogma, you'd stand up straight and play the massacre game, just like we do. But you're too scared of no longer believing. You don't understand that one can be attached to nothing and be happy.

GRD 1920 *a*

We see everything, we love nothing.
We are indifferent.

We're dead but we're not rotting because we never have the same heart in our breast, nor the same brain in our head.

And we suck in everything around us; we do NOTHING.

PE 1920

I am against systems;
the most acceptable system is on principle to have none.

Abolition of logic: Dada.

Abolition of memory: Dada.

Abolition of archaeology: Dada.

Abolition of the future: Dada.

TT 1918

Dada is still shit,
but from now on we want to shit in different colours to decorate the art zoo with all consular flags. Dada is neither madness, nor wisdom, nor irony.

TT 1920

Dada Means Nothing.

TT 1918

And you are all idiots.

TT 1920

You are all complete idiots, made with the alcohol of purified sleep.
You are like your hopes: nothing. Like your paradise: nothing. Like your
idols: nothing. Like your political men: nothing. Like your heroes: nothing.
Like your artists: nothing. Like your religions: nothing.

FP 1920

No more painters, no more writers, no more musicians, no more sculptors, no
more religions, no more republicans, no more royalists, no more imperialists, no
more anarchists, no more socialists, no more Bolsheviks, no more politicians,
no more proletarians, no more democrats, no more bourgeois, no more
aristocrats, no more armies, no more police, no more fatherlands, enough of
all these imbecilities, no more anything, no more anything, nothing, NOTHING,
NOTHING, NOTHING.

LA 1920

Before I come down there among you to tear out your rotten teeth,
your scab-filled ears, your canker-covered tongue.
Before I rip off your ugly, incontinent and cheesy little dick –
Before I thus extinguish your appetite for orgasms, philosophy, pepper and
metaphysical mathematical and poetical cucumbers –
Before all of that –
We're going to have a great big bath in antiseptic –

And we're warning you –
It's us who are the murderers –
Of all your little newborn babies...

GRD 1920 b

What we need is works of art that are strong, straight, precise and forever
beyond understanding. Logic is a complication.
Logic is always wrong.

Married to logic, art would live in incest, swallowing its own tail, still part
of its own body, fornicating within itself.

TT 1918

The best and most extraordinary artists will be those who every hour snatch
the tatters of their bodies out of the frenzied cataract of life; who, with
bleeding hands and hearts, hold fast to the intelligence of their time.

To sit in a chair for a single moment is
to risk one's life.

RH 1918

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

TT 1918 ~ Tristan Tzara, *Dada Manifesto 1918*

TT 1920 ~ Tristan Tzara, *Manifesto of Monsieur Aa the Antiphilosopher*

FP 1920 ~ Francis Picabia, *Dada Cannibalistic Manifesto*

GRD 1920 a ~ Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, *The Pleasures of Dada*

GRD 1920 b ~ Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, *To the Public*

PE 1920 ~ Paul Éluard, *Five Ways to Dada Shortage or two Words of Explanation*

LA 1920 ~ Louis Aragon, *Dada Manifesto*

RH 1918 ~ Richard Huelsenbeck, *First German Dada Manifesto*

SURREALISM / SPATIALISM

Beloved imagination, what I most like in you is your unsparing quality.

The mere word 'freedom' is the only one that still excites me.

Among all the many misfortunes to which we are heir, we are at least allowed the greatest degree of freedom of thought. Imagination alone offers me some intimation of what *can be*, and this is enough to devote myself to it without fear of making a mistake.

We are still living under the reign of logic. The absolute rationalism that is still in vogue allows us to consider only facts relating directly to our experience.

Under the pretence of civilization and progress, we have managed to banish from the mind any kind of search for truth which is not in conformance with accepted practices.

From man's birth until his death, thought offers no solution of continuity. Yet a part of our mental world has finally been brought back to light: the dream.

An ordinary observer attaches so much more importance to waking events than to those occurring in dreams. Thus the dream finds itself reduced to a mere parenthesis, as is the night.

When will we have sleeping logicians, sleeping philosophers? I would like to sleep, in order to surrender myself to the dreamers; in order to stop imposing, in this realm, the conscious rhythm of my thought. Can't the dream also be used in solving the fundamental questions of life? Is the dream any less restrictive or punitive than the rest?

The mind of the man who dreams is fully satisfied by what happens to him. Look at children... They set off each day without a worry in the world. Everything is near at hand, the worst material conditions are fine. The woods are white or black; one will never sleep.

AB 1924

Dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd.

AB 1929

Kill, fly faster, love to your heart's content.
Let yourself be carried along. And if you should die, are you not certain of reawakening among the dead?

I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*.

AB 1924

Reason does not create. In creating shapes, it is subordinate to the subconscious. The subconscious, that magnificent well of images perceived by the mind, harbours the notions that make up man's nature. The subconscious shapes, composes and transforms the individual.

LF 1946

I believe in the pure joy of the man who sets off from whatever point he chooses, along any other path save a reasonable one, and arrives wherever he can.

Farewell to absurd choices, the dreams of dark abyss, to rivalries, the prolonged patience. Farewell to the flight of the seasons, the artificial order of ideas, to the ramp of danger, to time for everything! May you only take the trouble to *practise* poetry.

This summer the roses are blue; the wood is of glass. The earth, draped in its verdant cloak, makes as little impression upon me as a ghost. It is living and ceasing to live, which are just imaginary solutions.

Existence is elsewhere.

AB 1924

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

AB 1924 ~ André Breton, Manifesto of Surrealism

AB 1929 ~ André Breton, Second Manifesto of Surrealism

LF 1946 ~ Lucio Fontana, White Manifesto

POP ART

I am for an art that is political-erotic-mystical,
that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum.
I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all.
I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap
& still comes out on top.
I am for an art that imitates the human, that is comic,
if necessary, or violent, or whatever is necessary.
I am for all art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and
extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and
blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.
I am for art that comes out of a chimney
like black hair and scatters in the sky.
I am for art that spills out of an old man's purse when he is bounced off a
passing fender.
I am for the art out of a doggy's mouth, falling five stories from the roof.
I am for the art that a kid licks, after peeling away the wrapper.
I am for art that is smoked, like a cigarette; smells, like a pair of shoes.
I am for art that is put on and taken off, like pants; which develops holes, like
socks; which is eaten, like a piece of pie, or abandoned with great contempt,
like a piece of shit.
I am for art that limps and rolls and runs and jumps.
I am for art that coils and grunts like a wrestler.
I am for art from a pocket, from deep channels of the ear, from the edge of a
knife, from the corners of the mouth,
stuck in the eye or worn on the wrist.
I am for art under the skirts, and the art of pinching cockroaches.
I am for the art that comes down out of the skies at night, like lightning,
that hides in the clouds and growls.
I am for art that unfolds like a map; that you can kiss, like a pet dog.
Which expands and squeaks, like an accordion; which you can spill your dinner
on, like an old tablecloth.
I am for the art of sweat that develops between crossed legs.
I am for the art of dead birds.
I am for the art of bar-babble, tooth-picking, beer-drinking,
egg-salting, in-sulting.
I am for the art of falling off a barstool.
I am for the art of underwear and the art of taxicabs.
I am for the art of ice-cream cones dropped on concrete.
I am for the majestic art of dog-turds, rising like cathedrals.
I am for art falling, splashing, wiggling, jumping, going on and off.
I am for the art of meows and clatter of cats and for the art of their dumb
electric eyes.
I am for the white art of refrigerators and their muscular openings and closings.
I am for the art of hearts, funeral hearts or sweetheart hearts, full of nougat.
I am for the art of the finger on a cold window, on dusty steel or in the bubbles
on the sides of a bathtub.
I am for the art of teddy-bears and guns, exploded umbrellas, burning trees,
firecracker ends, chicken bones, and boxes with men sleeping in them.
I am for the art of slightly rotten funeral flowers, hung bloody rabbits, bass
drums & tambourines, and plastic phonographs.
I am for Regular Price art, Spend Less art, Eat Better art, ham art, pork art,
chicken art, tomato art, banana art, apple art, turkey art, cake art, cookie art.
I am for an art that is combed down, that is hung from each ear, that is laid on
the lips and under the eyes, that is shaved from the legs, that is brushed on the
teeth, that is fixed on the thighs, that is slipped on the foot.
Square which becomes blobby.

CO 1961

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

CO 1961 ~ Claes Oldenburg, *I am for an Art...*

FLUXUS / MERZ / PERFORMANCE

No to spectacle.
No to virtuosity.
No to transformations and magic and make-believe.
No to the glamour and transcendency of the star image.
No to the heroic.
No to the anti-heroic.
No to trash imagery.
No to involvement of performer or spectator.
No to style.
No to camp.
No to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer.
No to eccentricity.
No to moving or being moved.

YR 1965

Life is an artwork and the artwork is life.

The more we know, the less we understand, the better it is.
I welcome whatever happens next.

Fluxus is a way of doing things, and a way of life and death. Fluxus is inside you, it is part of how you are. Fluxus is bigger than you. Fluxus has made an art of nothing and vice versa. Fluxus makes absolutely no sense. Fluxus hasn't even taken place yet. Fluxus is a pain in art's ass.

EW | PC | JC | DH | AB | LM | EA | TS | BV 1963-1987

Purge the world of intellectual, professional and commercialized culture!

Purge the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art. Promote Non Art Reality to be grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals. Promote a revolutionary flood and tide in Art. Promote living art, anti-art.

GM 1963

But after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?

Maintenance is a drag; it takes all the fucking time. Clean your desk, wash the dishes, clean the floor, wash your clothes, wash your toes, change the baby's diaper, finish the report, correct the typos, mend the fence, keep the customer happy, throw out the stinking garbage, watch out don't put things in your nose, what shall I wear, I have no sox, pay your bills, save string, wash your hair, change the sheets, go to the store, say it again, go to work, clear the table, call him again, flush the toilet, stay young...

Now, I will simply do these maintenance everyday things,
and flush them up to consciousness, as Art.
Everything I say is Art is Art.
Everything I do is Art is Art.

MLU 1969

I demand the principle of equal rights for all materials, equal rights for able-bodied people, idiots, whistling wire netting, and thought-pumps.

- please turn over

Take gigantic surfaces, cloak them in colour and shift them menacingly. Bend drilling parts of the voids infinitely together. Paste smoothing surfaces over one another. Make lines fight and caress one another in generous tenderness. Flaming lines, creeping lines, surfacing lines. Let points burst like stars among them and dance a whirling round. Bend the lines, crack and smash angles, choking revolving around a point. Roll globes whirling air they touch one another. Collapsible top hats fall strangled crates boxes. Make nets firewave and thicken into surfaces. Net the nets. Make veils blow, cotton drip and water gush. Hurl up air soft and white through thousand candle-power arc lamps.

Then take wheels and axles and make them sing. Find a sewing machine that yawns. Take a dentist's drill, a meat grinder, a car-track scraper. Take buses and pleasure cars, bicycles, tandems and their tyres. Take lights and deform them as brutally as you can.

Make locomotives crash into one another, make threads of spider webs, dance with window frames and break whimpering glass. Explode steam boilers to make railroad mist. Take petticoats, shoes and false hair, also ice skates, and throw them into place where they belong, and always at the right time.

For all I care, take man-traps, automatic pistols, infernal machines, all of course in an artistically deformed condition. Flexible tubes are highly recommended. I demand the total inclusion of all materials, from doubletrack welders to three-quarter size violins. Even people can be used.

I demand the complete mobilization of all artistic forces to create the total work of art.

Mighty erections of aquatic giants.

KS 1919

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

YR 1965 ~ Yvonne Rainer, *No Manifesto*

EW | PC | JC | DH | AB | LM | EA | TS | BV 1963-1978 ~ Emmett Williams, Philip Corner, John Cage, Dick Higgins, Allen Bukoff, Larry Miller, Eric Andersen, Tomas Schmit, Ben Vautier

GM 1963 ~ George Maciunas, *Fluxus Manifesto*

MLU 1969 ~ Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Maintenance Art Manifesto*

KS 1919 ~ Kurt Schwitters, *The Merz Stage*

CONCEPTUAL ART / MINIMALISM

Ideas can be works of art.

SL 1969

In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive and it is purposeless. No matter what form the work of art may finally have, it must begin with an idea. What it looks like isn't too important. It is the process of conception and realization with which the artist is concerned. Once given physical reality by the artist the work is open to the perception of all, including the artist.

SL 1967

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

All current art is fake, not because it is copy, appropriation, simulacra or imitation, but because it lacks the crucial push of power, guts and passion. All of man is fake. All of man is false. Not only because he cheats and lies with charming ease and hates and kills with determined speed, but also because man's new cyber form is Man as God.

Speed is over time and place. Speed is power. Speed permits misinformation, disorients time and place, and is a fierce and uncompromising ruler. Our obsession with high speed leaves no time or place for return. It is now already too late and today is yesterday with its memory already lost.

Cate, how can we go forward, when action is to watch action? When the eyes are locked in a fixed gaze. When knowledge becomes information. When words are stumbling blocks and have lost their representation. When discourse is opinion. When you don't have to know anything, and you think you know everything. When to reflect is gazing in the mirror. When to contemplate is thinking about yourself. Cate?

Well, Cate, perhaps all this could be dealt with if man were not facing a black hole; the realization that his absolute function, his primary sense of being has been snatched from him.

Man was once original, held and contained a certain authenticity. But now all that is dead, finished. Man is disposable and dispensable. Cate?

ES 1999

And what about art? Can it hold up these harsh blows? Cate?

ES 2004

Certainly not, Cate, for art is what surrounds you. Art does not come from 'nowhere' or for that matter anywhere. Creativity does not pop into the head. There are grounds, forces, powers that create and make art a hazardous journey of leaps, crevasses, errors, daring and courage. Cate?

ES 1999

- please turn over

I see. And what about Conceptual Art? It is the objective of the conceptual artist to make his work *mentally* interesting to the spectator, and therefore usually he would want it to become *emotionally* dry. Cate, there is no reason to suppose, however, that the conceptual artist is out to bore the viewer?

Well, Cate, it is not only the expectation of an emotional kick that would deter the viewer from perceiving this art. Conceptual art also isn't necessarily logical. Logic may be used to camouflage the real intent of the artist, to lull the viewer into the belief that he understands the work, or to infer a paradoxical situation – such as logic vs. illogic. Cate?

I see, so some ideas are logical in conception and illogical perceptually. And as far as I understood the ideas don't need to be complex. On the contrary: most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple. But you're saying that it doesn't really matter if the viewer understands the concept of the artist.

Cate, once it is out of his hand the artist has no control over the way a viewer will perceive the work. Different people will understand the same thing in a different way. For instance, art critics use a secret language when communicating with each other through the medium of art magazines: 'primary structures', 'reductive', 'ejective', 'cool', or 'mini-art'.

'Mini-art' sounds interesting. It must refer to very small works of art. Or maybe the mini-artist is a very small person...

Thanks very much, Cate.

You're welcome. Thank you.

So conceptual art is one way of making art; other ways suit other artists. Conceptual art is good only when the idea is good. Idea, form, context. Idea: The existence of an idea is necessary and sufficient for the existence of art. Form: The existence of form is necessary but not sufficient for realizing an idea. Context: The existence of context is necessary but not sufficient for form through which an idea has been realized.

AP 1969

SL 1967 ~ Sol LeWitt, *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art*

SL 1969 ~ Sol LeWitt, *Sentences on Conceptual Art*

ES 1999 ~ Elaine Sturtevant, *Shifting Mental Structures*

ES 2004 ~ Elaine Sturtevant, *Man is Double Man is Copy Man is Clone*

AP 1969 ~ Adrian Piper, *Idea, Form, Context*

FILM

Imagine an eye unruled by manmade laws of perspective, an eye unprejudiced by compositional logic, an eye which must know each object encountered in life through an adventure of perception.

How many colours are there in a field of grass to the crawling baby unaware of 'green'? How many rainbows can light create for the untutored eye? How aware of variations in heat waves can that eye be?

Imagine a world alive with incomprehensible objects and shimmering with an endless variety of movement and innumerable gradations of colour.

Imagine a world before the 'beginning was the word'.

Allow so-called hallucination to enter the realm of perception, accept dream visions, daydreams or night-dreams. There is no need for the mind's eye to be deadened after infancy.

SB 1963

Nothing is original.

Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Devour old films, new films, music, books, paintings, photographs, poems, dreams, random conversations, architecture, bridges, street signs, trees, clouds, bodies of water, light and shadows.

Select only things to steal from that speak directly to your soul. If you do this, your work, and theft, will be authentic. Authenticity is invaluable; originality is nonexistent.

And don't bother concealing your thievery – celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what Jean-Luc Godard said: 'It's not where you take things from – it's where you take them to.'

JJ 2002

Shooting must be done on location.
Props and sets must not be brought in.
Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot.
The camera must be handheld.
The film must be in colour. And special lighting is not acceptable.
Optical filters are forbidden.
The film must not contain superficial action.
Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden.
Genre movies are not acceptable.

The director must not be credited.

I swear to refrain from personal taste. I am no longer an artist.

I swear to refrain from creating a 'work', as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings.

I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations.

LVT | TV 1995

- please turn over

Fact creates norms, and truth illumination.

There are deeper strata of truth in cinema, and there is such a thing as poetic, ecstatic truth. It is mysterious and elusive, and can be reached only through fabrication and imagination and stylization.

WH1999

QUOTED MANIFESTOS

SB 1963 ~ Stan Brakhage, *Metaphors on Vision*

JJ 2002 ~ Jim Jarmusch, *Golden Rules of Filmmaking*

LVT | TV 1995 ~ Lars von Trier / Thomas Vinterberg, *Dogma 95*

WH 1999 ~ Werner Herzog, *Minnesota Declaration*

EPILOGUE

I am at war with my time, with history, with all authority that resides in fixed and frightened forms.

I am one of millions who do not fit in, who have no home, no family, no doctrine, no firm place to call my own, no known beginning or end.

I declare war on all icons and finalities, on all histories that would chain me with my own falseness, my own pitiful fears.

I know only moments, and lifetimes that are as moments, and forms that appear with infinite strength, then 'melt into air'.

I am a constructor of worlds, a sensualist who worships the flesh, the melody, a silhouette against the darkening sky.

I cannot know your name. Nor can you know mine.

Tomorrow, we begin together the construction of a city.

LW 1993

QUOTED MANIFESTO

LW 1993 ~ Lebbeus Woods, *Manifesto*