**授課紀錄**

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| 授課時間 | 民國101年5月1日 (星期二) 下午1525-1710 | | | |
| 授課地點 | 臺東大學台東校區C301教室 | | | |
| 授課師資 | Jamse L.S. Edwards | | 紀錄 | 李家瑩、李昶亨 |
| 上課形式 | 教師授課 | 1 時 30分 | 共計 1 時 30 分 | |
| 議題討論 | 0 時 0 分 |
| 上課學生 | 25人 | | | |
| 請假學生 | 20人 | | | |
| 授課大綱  (至少60字，並以條列方式敘述) |  | | | |

**授課之講演內容(至少1000字敘述)**

Uselessness is the essence of what is known as art. Gautier’s famous statement ‘Art for art’s sake’ expressed this early in the 19th century. The paradox of endemic uselessness and the extremely high prices art can fetch is an irony giving welcome space to many an artist, be he dreamer or trickster (both necessarily talented) and the inevitable combinations these entail. As regards the trickster, the category of art known as fine art, to which such as the Mona Lisa belongs, specifically the choice of adjective ‘fine’, marvellously introduces mediocrity or gnosis, namely a selfish or elitist assertion of access to this area of human activity, which, intriguingly, can have the consequence of pandering to the observer while freeing the artist.

In my experience as a designer of high-performance boats I have come to see that they bear comparison with the Mona Lisa: boats can be extremely costly and likewise useless; wonderfully impressive, both in conception and material presence, yet completely wasteful resulting in them being both paid for by the wealthy and freely enjoyed by the poor, just as it is with the Mona Lisa. While it is the very same uselessness that has enabled critical acceptance of the gnostic claim to art above made by many fine artists, it also displays the sometimes valid heart of patronage. In this regard it must be understood that had the Mona Lisa by some canny alignment of reality been the source code for a great scientific discovery it would not have been artistically compromised, although in our world of fine art it may have not been recognised as fine art.

But there is an important difference. With a little imagination, and without any claim for the superiority of my field in the greater field of art being argued for here, when fine art is examined in relation to yachting it becomes clear that the fine artist’s claim to a higher artistic status is structured on a preference for largely inactive material objects, yielded esoterically and ultimately statically (for exhibition) by such as sculpture and painting, over the almost limitless totality of material dynamism in space and time, yielded spatially and dynamically by yachting or by music and drama and most importantly any other human activity including what is known as ‘work’.

In a way reminiscent of the Emperor’s Clothing it is clear that the gnostic claims of fine art adopt an erroneous, arbitrary and egotistical value-judgement in pursuit of an exclusive status.

Gnostics insist they are unique or special. In this way the subjective and petty claim of marketing fame, ‘I’m worth it’ is the premise of elitism in what we know now as fine art; which makes it the simple, common, age-old affair of ego. Elitist claims of fine artists have an intimate relationship to tribalism and are closely connected to war through the ages. They are nothing more than idiotic.

Although this piquant, embarrassing and destructive affair of ego gives rise to an exclusive fine art, my expose’ is not really new. Artists of all kinds have played with it for hundreds of years, during which time obtaining high prices for art has become part of a game, making duplicity into a valid art. But then my ultimate intention is not to expose this, which I only do to argue for the relevance of prodigality in art; for the salient nature of skill and insight employed within the total freedom of uselessness in creation and criticism as the functional logos of art. This is an understanding that is also to be found in the Daodejing, where it is well expressed by the injunction that to do nothing is everything. It is only in the infinite fields of prodigality that the artist can work with immense dedication and skill to do nothing yet have a claim to greatness worthy of the word fine. While some art will inevitably be finer than others, no materials or fields of skill can be deemed to be so: no intended usage or purpose can be claimed to be the essential requirement of art and hence fine. In the same way, the plethora of English translations and renditions of the Tao Teh Ching (Daodejing) vary seemingly wildly so that the same chapter in one cannot be recognised in another, while they each retain a relevance in time and place and person reading that makes them one.

The simple truth is that great art is clearly not confined to what has revealingly been defined as the fine arts, a title which all too easily presumes to include all that can be deemed to be fine in art. To claim it is so confined is perverse. After all, fine art as we know it now demonstrably results in volumes of trite decoration and derivation being studied and acquired with self-reflective veneration of personal significance (gnosis). Fine art is often being taught and sold in the claim of individuality, vision, revelation, talent and artistry or many other verbal confections of the kind, at silly prices to wannabe’s. Too much of it has an unhealthy quantity of hysterically introverted self worship.

The topical unimportance of fine art as witnessed so often by the contrived appearance and behaviour of artists themselves; its common subjugation to petty and precocious aims such as fame, self-expression, advertising, decoration and speculative investment in our world, is testimony to the validity of this argument.

This enables the introduction of a helpful phrase in association with artistry:Innovation Engineering: I.E.