

Rootist Art

Rootism is a universal process that allows the participant to visually map their consciousness. This is possible through the utilization of phenomenal information and countless present moment decisions which are manifested through mark making. This process results in a novel way to visually transmit meaningful unique information without the need of symbols. Rootist art ultimately aims not to express feelings, but rather the experience of feeling itself. This essay is an explanation of the principles and the parameters of the process, followed by a brief exploration of the philosophy and importance of the movement.

Part I : The Principles

Part II : The Process

Part III: The Purpose

Part I: The Principles

The following section outlines the necessary principles to create Rootist art. These principles are not subjective, rather they are intrinsic parameters uncovered while exploring the mechanisms involved with creating Rootist art. It is imperative that participants of Rootist art understand these principles in order to fully harness the power of the process. Hopefully the need for such structure will become clear as these principles are explained.

The Principles of Rootist Art

- **The process is universal**
- **Both creators and observers must be willing to feel**
- **Every mark made in the process carries equal value**
- **Both creators and observers must be willing to set aside the formal critical language and design principles of art**
- **The use of symbols is prohibited**
- **Creators must be aware of the principles and process of Rootism before creating it**

Principle: The process is universal

The first principle of Rootist art is the most important, and perhaps because of that, it is also the most difficult to accept: Rootist art is a universal process. Rootism requires no level of artistic talent or creativity, no minimum level of education or intelligence, nor is there a prerequisite of suffering or revelation. All that is required to participate in Rootism is a willingness to be open and be affected: To feel.

There are two ways to participate in the Rootist process: create or observe. The roles of creator and observer are of equal importance, as they are dependent upon one another, and have no prerequisite other than earnest participation; anyone can choose to be one, the other, or both. The Rootist process provides creators with a framework which utilizes their affect and


intuition to visually manifest their present-moment experience of feeling. With each mark made the creator is encoding information about their subjective experience onto a surface. Once enough marks are made, a probabilistic visual system, unique to the creator and constructed purely of phenomenal information, emerges. Unlike other forms of visual communication that use language or other symbols which need to be translated in order to extract meaning, the visual system created by the Rootist process only needs to be observed. Observers of Rootist art are participants who are willing to view Rootist artwork openly with the understanding they will be affected.

Principle: A willingness to feel

The reason feeling/ affect is the basis for Rootist art is because it is the most fundamental common component to our existences. We do not know if our subjective experiences feel similar (i.e. your loneliness feels the same as my loneliness), but we do know that conscious experience is felt. We all feel our existence. Every single aspect of a conscious experience must be felt. This does not mean every aspect can be categorized as a discrete feeling or emotion, but it does mean anything you think or consciously interact with must produce feeling.

There are inherent problems in communicating solely with symbolic information, and Rootism offers an alternative approach to transmitting our existence, but intrinsic in that approach is an understanding and willingness to embrace feeling. Feeling is presented in this essay as being a choice, and that should be clarified: we do not possess a choice to feel or not, as explained in the previous paragraph, however our receptivity to feeling is a choice we must make over and over. One can embrace only familiar feelings and dampen or dismiss all that feels frightening or challenging, or we can embrace all feeling as equally important and beneficial. It is a spectrum we continually choose how to embrace. Rootism urges creators and viewers to consider we are best served exploring the full depth of feeling, and recognize all feeling (both familiar and foreign) carries invaluable information about both the individual and people as a whole. Because Rootism is dealing strictly with phenomenal or non symbolic information the goal is to utilize and preserve that information in its fundamental state for the entire process. Therefore without a willingness to engage earnestly through feeling/ affect Rootist art cannot be created.

Principle: Each mark carries the same value

A more abstract, but just as critical principle of Rootism is that every decision, or every mark made, carries the same value. This is not a quantifiable value, rather an understanding that each decision made by the creator is of the same importance. The reason this is such an important concept is it liberates the creator from having to decode their own message. Implicit in Rootism is an acknowledgment that the creators and viewers are not consciously aware of *what* information they are transmitting, because if they were that information would be symbolic. For example, if someone wanted to convey a feeling of love toward another person they might choose to draw a heart . In order to do this the creator would not draw the love they are

feeling, instead they would draw the necessary lines (components) in order to properly represent the symbol they have chosen. This limitation of having to both choose a symbol and understand the components in which to properly construct it moves the creator further and further away from an encompassing transmission of the original feeling. Rootism, however, frees the creator of those limitations. The creator does not need to know the content of the information they are sending, and therefore there is no need to establish a hierarchy of value between the marks/decisions. The creator is free to let their present moment feeling (affect) guide their mark in whatever way intuitively feels right. Couple this freedom with the creator being unburdened of the formalism of visual art and one is left with a process that allows as much subjective freedom as possible to transmit phenomenal information.

Principle: Relinquish the familiar

Intention is critical in all creation. The need to eliminate a formal analysis and interpretation of Rootist art is similar to the reason why symbols are prohibited: neither are necessary in transmission of phenomenal information. A formal language for understanding and interpreting symbolic and other non-representational art is critical to decoding the message of the work or isolating/ highlighting the aesthetic design principles in an attempt to determine the overall “success” of the work. Intentions like attempting to achieve a likeness, conveying a narrative, a specific emotion, or statement, trying to elicit a response, or trying to capture beauty are all timeless and worthy pursuits of creation. Rootism, however, is not concerned with any of these intentions. It should be noted Rootism is not meant to replace or compete with any of these, it simply operates without them.

The result (the art) of the Rootist process is not the goal, only to engage the principles and process earnestly and honestly. If the creator can remain present and open in the moments of decision/ creation then that is all they have control over. As counter intuitive as it may seem, the creator does not have control over the final result (in the sense that the final result can be predetermined) , however the creator is making every decision along the way. In order to give the creator the ability to create as subjectively as possible all limiting parameters must be eliminated. The most important of these is the use of symbols as discussed previously. Formal critical language and design principles are also limiting parameters that must be set aside. Concepts like composition, movement, color theory, perspective, depth, etc are all limiting to the creator. These concepts all possess a symbolic structure which inherently restrains the creator from being able to make decisions freely. Once these restrictions are removed, the creator may freely use the phenomenal information of the present moment to inform and guide each mark made. With each mark the creator is manifesting their phenomenal experience into physical information. This information is not meant to be interpreted as symbolic information which is then translated into discrete components to produce a shared meaning. The final system created by the Rootist process is simply meant to be experienced; to be felt. As the phenomenal information is now visually mapped, any attempt to interpret it further would require the use of symbolic information.

Principle: The use of symbols is prohibited

The prohibition of symbols within the process of creation is necessary because Rootism deals solely with phenomenal information. This is a type of information that cannot be fully described symbolically, and perhaps is most familiar to us in the form of feeling, affect, or emotion. Physical information (which can be described symbolically) cannot fully encapsulate all of information because, by definition, it must contain a shared meaning. This is how our conscious thoughts arise (although we are not sure how) and what makes humans so apparently unique: Our ability to create complex symbolic thoughts and reflect upon our own feeling. However, by its nature phenomenal information precedes symbolic thought and therefore must be described by a different type of information. This type of information requires no shared meaning and because it is the result of affect (which is a fundamental component of consciousness) it is experienced without any intrinsic symbolic correlates. Meaning what we feel cannot be fully described by physical information alone

The Rootist process is structured so that the creator uses affect to drive their decision making process. These decisions manifest themselves as marks on a surface. By utilizing affect alone, the creator ensures their information is not diluted or misconstrued; which is inevitable with the use of symbolic information.

Principle: Awareness of Rootism

Although this principle may seem redundant or self-evident it is an important aspect to expound upon for several reasons. To put it most simply: No one can create Rootist art without knowing they are creating Rootist art. The main reason for this is Rootist art is not classified by its visual components. Without symbols nor the formal critical language of art, there is no way to properly describe what a Rootist painting should look like. The only way to formally identify a piece of Rootist art is to know the creator engaged in the process described in this essay. In order to transmit phenomenal information visually, and preserve as much as possible, the creator must act intuitively as well as intentionally. Because intention is intrinsic to consciousness, an awareness of the principles, process, and purpose of Rootism will inevitably affect a person's decision making. So even if an artist were to have produced a piece in a way they felt was similar to the Rootist process, they could not claim it to be after the fact. Secondly, the ultimate goal of Rootism (which is discussed in section III) transcends the individual creator and therefore an understanding of the role of the individual relative to the whole is imperative. Additionally, these principles are necessary to set the physical and philosophical parameters by which intuitive decisions can flourish to reveal a form of communication that is unobscured by the limitations found in our more comfortable methods of communicating.

Part II: The Process

Though certain aspects of Rootism may seem convoluted and perhaps a bit esoteric, the actual creation process is deceptively simple.

To begin, choose a mark-making tool and a surface to work on. There is no better or worse choice, just choose the tools that stimulate you the most; be that through new challenges or familiarity. The goal is to create an environment in which the act of creating feels accessible.

Turn your conscious attention inward and use the feeling of the present moment to guide your decision making. There is no need to name, understand, or reflect upon what you are feeling in the present moment, just use your intuition to make a mark that feels right to you. One decision at a time. One mark at a time. One moment at a time. This cannot be stressed enough: the only influence on the next mark you make should be YOUR intuitive decision of what feels right. Everything else that influences you: your environment, your past, your abilities, your trauma, your education, your beliefs, your fear, your love, everything will be intrinsically woven into your decisions. You don't need to know what information you are transmitting, you only need to focus on feeling the present moment.

As you become more comfortable with the idea and action of expressing your conscious present moment in the form of a mark, the act of creation will begin to flow naturally and unfiltered. The result of the Rootist creation process cannot be predetermined, however each decision is in your control (relatively speaking). By consciously remaining aware of the feeling of the present moment, you can relinquish the limitations of formalism and self-doubt. You do not need to worry about what you are creating, if it is good or bad, or whether or not the content of what you are creating is compelling or clearly transmitted. The person you are both physically and psychologically, in all its complexity and uncertainty, will ALWAYS reveal itself once enough marks (decisions) are made. This unique information, non-symbolic and phenomenal in its origin, will manifest itself as a system of recurring visual relationships. These relationships are not symbols, they are not meant to be reduced into components. The visual system created by your countless intuitive marks is a reflection of how you feel and construct your existence. Your perspective, your feeling of "right now", is just as important and just as powerful as anyone's perspective. Every individual's unique present moment is of equal value and contains unique precious information that can benefit anyone willing to be affected by it. The goal of Rootism is to visualize your conscious feeling so you may capture it in its original form, encompassing all the phenomenal information of the moment, without it being distorted or diluted by attempts to describe it with symbolic language.

How the process manifests itself will be unique to each creator, and beyond the exclusion of symbols, there are no visual attributes to describe what a piece of Rootist art should or should not look like.

Part III: The Purpose

In its most basic form, the Rootist process is a single act repeated countless times. This act of consciously making a mark on a surface is guided solely by a unique type of information: phenomenal information. This is the information that helps construct your conscious experience; the information of the present moment. What makes this information so special is you are the only person able to experience it. This is because it is co-created by you and your interaction with your internal and external environments. It is Now, and you are the only person who can transmit it. Our seemingly mystical ability to reflect upon and consider our own existence is what makes us distinct as humans. The Rootist process is a way to capture and share this phenomenal information without the use of symbols. It is a process available to anyone and allows the participant to map our most elusive quality: what it feels like to exist.

Rootism requires only a willingness to participate and does not claim to have any definitive answers; this is because the goal of the process is not to formulate a shared meaning, but rather visually record the experience of the present moment. It is not meant to convince the reader to abandon their beliefs and swear allegiance to someone or something new. The Rootist process is meant to explore the conscious Self and offer a new way to connect and learn about humanity. It aims to reveal the fundamental visual relationships that, when given enough information, will always appear; simply from the creator following their intuition. However, unlike unbridled intuitive mark-making which has likely existed as long as any form of visual art, Rootism asks the participants to follow six principles to guide an otherwise subjective process. Rootism requires these principles because they have shown to be logically necessary to create an inclusive process of subjective expression.

Rootist art gives a practical purpose to creating and viewing art. This purpose has always been present, and is accessed to varying degrees using more traditional forms of art, however due to their symbolic nature their effectiveness to communicate phenomenal information is inherently limited. There is a universe of meaningful information waiting to be experienced and shared; Rootism offers just one method to freely access it.

The power of Rootist art is not found in certain individuals with a particularly distinct skill set, rather it is found in the relationships formed by everyone who chooses to participate; both the creators and the viewers. The more people who choose to create and view Rootist art, the more deep and complex the entire system becomes. The more perspectives mapped and shared, the more information transmitted, the more our humanity is revealed in an undiluted visual continuum. When the system is viewed as a whole we do not see symbols of concepts, ideologies, and beauty that need to be translated to find a shared meaning. Instead we are able to see and feel our shared existence and humanity without the obfuscation inevitably created by symbolic communication. There has never been an art movement in which the content of individual works directly and equally contributes to the strength and complexity of the entire group; which is itself a visual system. Your perspective strengthens and informs mine. We change each other. We change together.