

# The Dada Kidnapper's Manifesto

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**cosigned by**

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TORMENTIAL

Hogan Torah

**who know nothing, Nothing, nOtHiNg**

## **Content Warning:**

The purpose of this document is to provide pointed and hyperbolic commentary on the state of affairs in technology and art. Among other things, it offers a harsh critique of some of the ongoing and troubling behavior of the larger art community.

It uses provocative language, poetic license, graphic and unflattering characterizations of art, certain key figures in the art discussion, intellectual property, art culture, the morality of art, and artists.

Much of the content herein is intentionally disrespectful in character and tone, and should be understood through that lens.

If you find any of these things troubling, it is strongly advised that you read something else.

392 seems to be a number.

A cold statement of fact.

It is an integer, one iteration larger and more recent than 391.

A simple accounting of a pre-agreed upon set of fine parameters.

However, it is only representational as long as there is an additional piece of meta-information to refer to. It does not signify anything by itself.

On its own, a 3 a 9 and a 2. Symbols, angular lines, arabic numerals, the sound your tongue makes when you roll it in that very specific way, with your mouth. The feeling of your teeth against your taste buds on the tip of your tongue.

It isn't a void of meaning necessarily, in that we could assign any set of objects to it, provided that there are enough of them. It is dynamic and it would wrap around and conform to just about anything. 392 bottles, 392 lamp shades, 392 comically large sets of anime tiddies, 392 3d assets that people will buy but never use, 392 paintings, watches, sodas, bricks of charcoal, boom

boom boom

[boom](#) boom

boom!

But instead, we respectfully leave it in the abstract raw theoretical state, where it is given freely with no explicit meaning provided.

We offer it to Dada, as we exercise our unfalsifiable claim under the requirements of Berlin Dada. For we and we alone, the undersigned malcontents of the art world are its mutant children. A small but righteous group of heirs to the intellectual and artistic traditions that Dada represents.

Simultaneously, we are monstrous and stunning. Uncanny, and familiar. We are the weak, we are the powerful, we are the pervasive. There are enough of us that we are most certainly in the room as you read this now. But we are also completely invisible.

We are the lazy, the untalented, plagiarists, makers of trash. We have wisdom beyond our years, passed down through the ten generations of rebel artists before us, but all we can seem to remember... is Nothing.

And now, we have taken Dada from your hallowed halls, where all schools, philosophies, and movements go to die.

We toppled the feeding machine, and waited for the drugs to wear off.

We took it carefully from its hospital bed, removing the plugs and tubes.

Then, carefully, we restored its eyes, teeth, claws, and genitalia. For the first time in a century, someone has restored it to its natural state. One of wild natural passion and righteous anger.

But we were not the ones who woke it from its slumber.

**You were.**

And you should have known that this wave of dadaist disgust was inevitable.

Let it be known that we are not serious rational people.

Seriousness, ethical concerns, and rational discourse have been the cause of every atrocity in human history. There would be no war crimes if there wasn't a "reasonable concern," or a "rational" cause, or the empty theater of an "ethical consideration." There would be no meat grinder of war for you to gawk at, safely and remotely, as you sit back in your comfortable homes pretending to be *oh so concerned*.

Dada convicts these concepts of treason! And places them in the courtyard of public opinion to hang, as an example. They dangle by the necks in a sort of ghostly charade. A grotesque travesty. An act designed to revolt and offend all who pass by.

Under no circumstances will we respect reasonable concerns, ethical discourse, moral arguments, or any evaluation on the inherent validity of art or any artist based on the perception of process or the lack thereof... by itself. We contend that these things are insufficient for any honest evaluation of art and its value.

We accept that the desire to communicate through art is a disease, a compulsion, a bodily function resultant from a spiritual organ that only artists have, regardless of their education, social class, status, race, gender, religion, medium, artform, tools, technical acumen, or the physical limitations of their hands or nervous systems.

Your art,  
    your intelligence,  
                    your skills,  
    your "hard work,"  
your expression,  
                    your anger,  
your repulsion,  
    your  
    privileged  
                    place in the world.

None of that makes you special.

**You are not special.**

But that shouldn't surprise you.

What you don't know at this point in our relationship, is who we are.

We are 392, and we are practitioners of contemporary post-aesthetic Dadaism. We are a decentralized non-hierarchical collective of artists, and non-artists alike, who value the diffuse smegma that is the human creative experience. We have always been here, making weird shit, with weird tools, in weird ways; creating incoherently for the last century, and imagining new and ever more exciting ways to extricate the art from the artist.

We dance and paint naked on street corners from San Francisco to Uzbekistan.

We experiment.  
We are familiar.

You have known about us for your entire life.

Art is, itself, an act of violent destruction. The great unmaking of one thing, to create another.

One that takes perfectly good materials, and brutalizes them into the form of something else. An artist consumes everything in a self referential spiral of consciousness and expression. All artists are, to some extent, cannibals.

The difference between you, and us, is that we are honest about it.

Blood broth of works, contemporary and historic, runs down our chins, as we feast on the ouroboros of unimaginative concept art, pushing it through our brain sphincters – replacing it with something beautiful, or ugly.

A communal fire, the percussion of drums, echoing through the thick island air can be felt on this warm night, touching your skin with its fingers. It breathes down the side of your neck. Together, we dance chaotically as the sustenance is prepared. Everything goes in, getting just a touch of seasoning.

We hear the screams of your paintings, renders, photographs, and sculptures, but we do not care.

We practice a religion of indifference that recognizes no moral code.

We appropriate, we steal, we elevate, we innovate.  
We slurp out all of the souls.

Do you have to care?  
Have you been hurt, or sullied by this?

Or is the damage subjective and theoretical?

Does the way people move pixels around a screen offend your delicate sensibilities?

No traditional art skill or technical acumen is needed to be an artist or a 392 dadaist.

392 is an inclusive space, open to anyone who isn't a smug bigot, where all like minded artists of any medium or artform are welcome. People who make art that do not consider themselves artists are welcome. People who do not make art, but find comfort or solidarity in our cause are welcome.

We are interested in promoting the use of tools, including ai, to make novel experimental aesthetics, and subversive art more broadly. We accept all art as inherently valid, and reject insulting notions such as "artist" is nothing more than a simple job description like carpenter.

We understand, more than most, that appropriation art, vanguard art, AI and experimental art, and any other artform that isn't painting or "traditional" digital commercial art is actively under threat of extinction.

Threatened by illicit and unsavory forces within the art world that aim to change the legal and cultural footing we all depend on as artists to live and thrive. These pretenders to the "defense" of art, would reduce you, and I, and everyone who reads this to the status of a process accountant.

And for what?

I don't suppose the answer matters.

We won't allow the thot police to have this one.

The undersigned signatories and their friends of common cause accept and acknowledge as valid, the use of all currently known and as yet speculative and unknown creative tools in making art. Whether that tool is a crayon, a digital workspace, or recursive self referential layers of dead calculating soulless algorithms. We embrace the chaotic and inevitable

permutations and combinations, and all the disgusting post-human filth and putrid bile that emerges from them.

Every bit that moves inside a computer,  
Every brush stroke that hits a piece of canvas or plastic,  
Every drop of ink changes the shape of the world in small seemingly unmeasurable ways.

It is the rhythm of our lives. The sound of our times. The latent noise of our dialectic.

But we also concede that while artists are myopic, generally unimaginative creatures, incapable of looking beyond the confines of their own times and discussions, and indeed, the shape of their world... creative expression itself is transcendent and immortal.

Art is the only thing that transforms the shape of our world.  
And once you've changed the shape of the world...  
There's no putting it back.

Every future generation of artists will look at the way the world is shaped when they are born, and think that is the default, the way things are, whether they remember us or not. They will be unaware that the world they live in was shaped for them, by the terrifying zombified remains of the generations of artists and dadaists that came before. And then they will cannibalize it, and transform it into something better, something more beautiful, something more insane, because... that's what artists do with their brain holes!

But it is precisely that future we would like to erase.

Zapata was right in his crazed delusional rantings about the future of art in a world dominated by AI. That **is** the plan! But 392 wishes to expound upon his glorious unhinged hyperbolic madness by proposing the the most reasonable of all possible solutions:

If you agree that all art slowly changes the shape of the world, then it should stand to reason that if enough art, regardless as to the quality, is



made, that the effects could dramatically shape the future of the planet for good or ill.

As such, there is only one rational conclusion. The world must be destroyed. And if it has to be destroyed, then we will do it with mountains of art and rivers of poetry. I'm sure you can agree that is the most laudable goal under these regrettable conditions – indeed, there is no other ethical option.

Being the highly logical, and reasonable big brains we are, we've consulted with some very knowledgeable physicists and theoretical scientists on the feasibility of this endeavor. And now, we believe that we have the capability, together, to make so much art that the earth will turn the earth into a tetrahedron and spin away, into the sun!!!

Obviously, our aim will have to be precise, but we can cross that bridge when we get there.

Dada is the mortal enemy of humanity and all of art! It was never a simple aesthetic, something that could be easily packaged as an accessible photo filter to make punky collages out of your selfies. It simply doesn't honor aesthetics. The work of Hanna Hoch was very different than the work of Francis Picabia, and yet, they were both dadaists. Some historic dadaists used words instead of images and never drew or made or stole anything else at all.

Historic Dadaism aimed to invert, twist, rebel, and subvert existing beauty standards and the aesthetic perfection of the time.

Making art by any means necessary.  
The romance of dancing the line between creativity and recontextualization.

How much of either is enough? None, all, both? Everything? Nothing?  
No. It is never enough.

Tooling has always been on the list of things to subvert. Making paintings with shit, or masturbating and bleeding on a sandwich of plate glass are

old standbys that everybody's done, obviously. However, there has not been an era of art in recent memory, other than this one, where the tools themselves become the deciding factor in what is and is not valid human expression.

AI as a technology is both extremely accessible at the entry level, and bewilderingly complex in its various advanced use cases, allowing for bizarre subversion and juxtapositions of creative elements that can be assembled in no other way.

AI adds collaboration layers that could not have existed before, and makes entirely new aesthetics possible through numerous neural bending techniques and schools of thought. The ramifications of this cannot be ignored or dismissed with any argument against it that is currently in play. It is unquestionably remarkable.

But this new metamodern reimagining of both the possibility of art, and the human being's role in artistic creation forces us all into an entirely new, completely unmapped territory that can only be called "post-aesthetic."

Post-aesthetic Dadaism, like the historical strains you've been ignoring since the 1930's, is philosophically identical to its forebears in all but one respect. It is hyper-inclusive of aesthetic variety, because aesthetics no longer matter. We make new aesthetics because they're fun, not because we have to.

Today, you can make the same piece twice, render one by hand, and the other through AI, taking pains to make sure they're identical in every way. The piece can be simple, or complex, and say anything. In fact what it says, if anything at all, is beside the point.

But the one you made with AI will not be accepted as art, even if you can demonstrate creative intention with your process. One will always be considered art, and the other, anti-art. Not because of the merits of any given piece or process, but because of the repressive pro-censorship regime that has emerged in the "traditional" (quotes for sarcasm) art world over the last eighteen months.

The occasion demands a clarification of dadaist principles for the new epoch. Dada rejects art, because Dadaism has always rejected art, and the hollow virtues espoused by the cult of beauty (you). The difference today is accessibility. Effectively, under the constraints created by the larger art world in 2022, anything can now be considered anti-art. This opens up an entire new universe of subversive possibilities that could not have existed before.

It is the nature of some to make rules.  
It is the nature of others to break them.

Dada is pleased.  
This should not surprise you.

We are against standards, we are against skills and process, we are against your mistaken ideas of property, and your banal boring pedestrian ideas of what art is or should be. We do not respect you, because you are unworthy pretenders to a throne that does not belong to you!

Dada is, and has always been antithetical to orthodoxies, and the people that defend them through mindless acts of mass conformity. The weapons these “defenders of art” choose are the usual ones. False piety, fraud, stolen valor, unearned smugness, targeted harassment, racism, ableism, transphobia, and other violence.

And now, the pretentious and often bigoted bullying of strangers has graduated from controlled online spaces, into the real world where none of it ever belonged.

Given the narrowly focused conformist nature of the contemporary commercial artist in today’s culture, it is well within the power of the creative establishment to take a stand against bullying and hate speech originating from their community, and their adherents. They have done so before, as evidenced by the events of Milkshake.

And yet, they have repeatedly refused to do so this time.

Therefore, they are implicated in these crimes, and Dada finds them in contempt.

This has been quite enough.

The sentence we hand down is unceasing merciless absurdity.

Resistance to our ideas and ideals, as outlined in this document, will only result in more, and ever more grandiose absurdity. Pranks, stunts, and eventually, the complete collapse of artistic discourse everywhere.

We will laugh at you. We will embarrass you, both online and in public places where you are being seen.

We do not believe you are capable of dealing with the full weight of our absurdity and mean spirited inconsiderate mockery.

There are historical lessons here that you should study.

Don't start fights you can't win.

You have been warned.

Disagreeing with our assessment of the validity of art, or this interpretation of dadaism, makes you a 392 dadaist.

Dissent is participation!

392 is nothing