

Escape from New York exhibition
Sydney Non Objective, Sydney, Australia, 2007
Letter to Sydney Non Objective

“I’m not a reductive artist,” he said. “I’m a generative artist.”

Robert Smithson

Change is not a comfortable idea; art today is obviously not the art of yesterday and will probably not be the art of tomorrow. There is in art of our time and our place in constant state of change, departure, convulsions and spasms, but whether these are death throes or painful but normal cramps of delivery in a new birth is not easy to determine. Over the past couple of weeks, after receiving Rossana and Mathew’s invitation to reflect about the notion of “reductive art”** in New York, I have been conducting a wholly unscientific investigation into the state of the art world in the city. I turned to a number of people working in what is known as creative professions – architects, designers, artists and others working in the field, between the ages of 25 and 45. I wouldn’t be lying if I said that they are among the leading lights of their generation. They make up what we could call the “creative class”. Does that mean that their opinions will shape the soon-to-be opinions of the rest of the art world? Unfortunately, the answer to this question is no. Their shared opinion that is nothing less than a bombshell: a dismissal of the “artist”*. Are we too “Manhattan-centric” to accept that our status as the capital of the art world diffuses to other turfs around the world?

Gallerists, curators, museum director, and collectors: Listen to what they’re saying. Because this should redraw the entire mental map of the art world in the city, which hopefully will, succeed in attracting the creative individuals. And they will not be won over in the old way. Sky-high salaries are not enough. Flashy duplex apartments or vast villas are not enough. We want something more. We demand values, such as – read this carefully! – Openness, tolerance, equality of opportunity and diversity.

Analia Segal

* artist: a person who practices any of the various creative arts

** “reductive art” for me is:

- 1 tending to present a subject or problem in a simplified form,
- 2 art that strives very hard, works conspicuously to eliminate all information, but essential form and the perception of form by artist and then by viewer.
- 3 the intersection of activism and life.
- 4 search for clarity.