1995

Fear of symbols (Eldon Garnet's proposal for a public art project for the site of a condominium)

Garnet, Eldon

Suggested citation:

Fear of Symbols

by Eldon Garnet
One more option in the interpretability of life is the personal. In this area, we are concerned with the ability to interpret and understand the personal experiences and lives of individuals. This involves the ability to create a model that can predict and explain the outcomes of personal experiences and decisions.

In this context, we can consider the role of personal narrative in the interpretation of life. Personal narrative is the story of a person's life, told in their own words. It is a way of understanding and making sense of our own experiences, and it can also be used to understand the experiences of others.

The personal narrative is a fundamental component of personal identity. It is the story that we tell ourselves about who we are, and it is the story that others tell about us. It is the story that we use to make sense of our experiences, and it is the story that others use to understand us.

The personal narrative is also a powerful tool for understanding and interpreting the experiences of others. By listening to the personal narratives of others, we can gain insight into their lives and their perspectives. This can help us to understand their experiences and to connect with them on a deeper level.

In conclusion, personal narrative is a fundamental component of personal identity, and it is a powerful tool for understanding and interpreting the experiences of others. It is a way of making sense of our own lives and the lives of others, and it is a way of connecting with the world around us.
letters

As a curator of "Revenge, Greed, Blackmail," at the Edmonton Art Gallery last summer, I would like to respond to "Questioning Banners," the discussion between Joyce Mason and David Ganeau in C 44. The piece exemplifies a very complex exhibition and a difficult set of decisions.

While the article implies that a divergence was done to Allan MacKinnon, it fails to put the exhibition in any context. What was "RGB" about? (Youth culture?) What were its components? (T-shirts, chapbooks and banners.) What agreement existed between Cousins (artist) and me (curator)? (Many, including one that the bomb recipes would be non-functional.) Where was the work designed to be exhibited? (Throughout rural urban Alberta?) How did the exhibition accommodate these locations? (By being subtly subversive rather than in-your-face.) Some of these questions would have filled our work of the concerns.

I also question how the issues around the exhibition are situated. The oppressive eye of "the state" was not the impetus for refusing to accept MacKinnon’s work in the exhibition of Charles Cousins. The work arrived three weeks late, on the night before an already postponed installation date. As curator I chose not to exhibit the work because it was neither integral to the exhibition nor cohesive enough to be shown on the inside of the gallery. It was difficult decision made in consultation with both Cousins and gallery director Alf Boguhy. Unfortunately, MacKinnon was unavailable when a quick decision was needed.

The issue of the article merely raised, rather than exploring, perhaps the most crucial: what are the rights of an artist? Contracted by another artist? Furthermore, in mentioning issues of censorship in the introduction, the discussion that follows is set in a context that conflates issues of censorship and artists’ rights. There were obviously no more complicating pragmatic factors in this exhibition. Credibly, my article "Artists and Art Institutions: Adversaries or Allies?" in the fall issue of Finalgamut does explore a number of these tensions between artists and institutions.

There remains a more general rationalization of why a civic gallery would be unwilling to put up directions for home-made bombs facing a civic square, although recent bombings in Canada and the devastating explosion in Oklahoma, perhaps this is obvious. While art that explores how individuals can make civic space is timely, what MacKinnon delivered through Cousins was merely uncivil.

Jeffrey Black, former curator, Edmonton Art Gallery

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