

# Universalism Manifestos

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## Abstract

To whom it may concern,

These manifestos are intended as a semi-ironic comment on the Seven Dada Manifestos produced as part of the cultural movement developed in the late 1910s/early 1920s by Tristan Tzara and Jean Arp (among others). I have deliberately experimented with form and style whilst attempting to create something truly original. What I have written is meant as an expression of that originality and does not follow conventional structure or pattern. My experimentation with form, as well as the content of the manifestos themselves seek to subvert the principles of nihilism and destruction found in Dada thought. The Dada negation of art is here subject to perversion; where Dada promotes itself as nothing but “anti-art”, Universalism takes the stance that art is *everything*.

Universalism is a reflection of some of my own beliefs as to what art is and what should be seen as creatively notable. My only intention is to establish a radically new way of thinking about art as a concept, and write a piece that questions what it means to “create” in the broadest sense of the word.

Art should be about the reaction that it gets, and I hope to show here how a series of manifestos, as pieces of pure creativity, can evoke a reaction as powerful as a work of art.

Never give in. Always create. Be free and beautiful, then fall down and die.

We will catch you.

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**Keywords:** Manifestos, semi-ironic, universalism.

## Essay

### UNIVERSALISM :

#### **Art as Life**

Art is everything.

Art is people.

Art is not for the eye but for the mind.

Objectivity is dead. Subjectivity is God.

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*I* decide, not *we* the community, *we* the critics, *we* the “right”. *I* decide. I *am* art. “This” is art. “Nothing” is not a real thing as “nothing” does not exist. Everything was created, everything is *in* creation. Creation is *something*, so “nothing” is *nothing*. “Nothing” cannot metaphysically exist because there is no space for it. Even the mind is a creation.

The question is: did we create our mind or do our natural mental abilities define us? Do we perceive our reality through our individual subjective experience, or through the bars of the social cage we have been born inside? These questions are crucial to the understanding of “art”. How can we experience art if we see through the preconceived vision that we have been taught to respect? Art critics are no more in control of what true art is than a slug on the pavement or a tuna mayonnaise sandwich. They have the same metaphysical substance and hold an equal standing in the universal creation of “existence” but appear to us as wiser because of their status. No authority is real authority. We are free men and cannot be controlled by a higher power other than the energy we possess. Even a murderer who kills us on a whim cannot completely destroy us; our *energy* remains and continues to exist in the realm of creation. This is true art. *Life* is true art.

Love life.

Love art.

Be free to live and live to create.

These are the principles of Universalism.

Our combined energy is the energy of the artist, the creator, the god. It is not enough anymore for us to seek higher truth; we are the truth. We are the God that we searched for in dusty books and stuffy churches. God is art and art will always be god. We the subjective hold the key to understanding that all around us is art and that art is the answer. Creation myths are still creation, but pure creation is not a myth. What uses have we for unattainable beauty, when life itself is a beautiful canvas which we paint with our subjective experiences? No canvas is the same. We care not for the creation of others. Inspiration may come from the *creativity* of others but pure creation is a natural state of self that is born within us.

What have I shown here?

Nothing.

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Everything.

Blah, Blah, Blah.

Words.

Art.

My word is creation. My creation is art.

Life, time and space co-exist on this page.

You bear witness to pure creation.

Pure art.

### **Universalism:**

#### **A journey into the mind of man**

Artists are the world's finest soldiers. More than anything they hold one of the greatest weapons that man has ever been given; the power to project their innermost being on to an external object. They become their creations. Even death cannot touch them as they are already immortal. Art is beyond death, beyond space and time. It exists in the collective subjective realm. When an artist talks of his work, it is not to persuade others of its merit, merely to show them how he has hunted down and tracked art, capturing its essence to display to others. His kill is not the same as others, it is his own doing. It exists because he is alive and is nourished by his experience. His display may not please others, but there is no denying him the creativity he has achieved. The journey the artist has taken is shown in his creation. This is not the death of art. One does not, *cannot*, destroy art. A man merely grasps art for long enough to cut off the pieces he requires to create with. Art will always be free. Art is the universe's great procreator. It is self sustaining and eternal. Art inseminates itself and multiplies. Art begets art.

Everyone is an artist in the sense that everyone creates, even if they create unintentionally, but if everyone were to realise their potential as an artistic life force and simultaneously create with the outcome of an artistic reflection of self, art would still not be exhausted. Art looks into the great yawning darkness of the universe and sees only its own reflection. Nothing else exists for art, as art needs nothing other than itself to survive. The realisation of this is man's greatest moment. There is no turning back for the enlightened artist as there is no alternative other than what he has seen.

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Art has no use for man, but man's life is so intrinsically linked to art that we cannot help but embrace it. Art is pure creation. The universe is responsible for art, but without creation there would be no universe. There is still an "everything" in "nothing". Man knows this and tries to find meaning in creation, but creation is its own meaning. It creates for the sake of creation and it thrives on the creative energy it emits. Art is the only truth in the universe, the only constant. The eternal god.

Universalism is how we live. It describes the lives we lead. It transcends time and space. It is both nothing and everything. It doesn't have a life but everything lives inside it. We cannot live without creation. Life is creation. Creation is art. Art is life. This is the progress we have made; thousands of years spent searching for an "other", only to find ourselves alone with art. Without even knowing it, we create. We are born, we live, we die; we create. Art is no more about form or substance. Art is not aesthetically pleasing, nor is it about meaning and culture. Art is art. No more need be said. Art is the product of a creation. Mother Nature is an artist as much as a painter. The wind may blow a seed from a tree and drop it in the earth and it will be as beautiful and as meaningful as Moreau's *Salome Dancing Before Herod*.

The most beautiful creations are those that occur unseen. The finest art is that which has yet to come into being, existing only in the darkest recesses of a forgotten memory. True Art needs no audience, no spectator and no judge. Who could be qualified to judge such an abstract concept? God? Maybe. But who judges God? Universalists believe in no such being, we know better.

We know that art is the finest truth and the highest power. CREATION.

We know that only through art can we live and thrive. CREATION.

We know that we exist *as* art and that we breathe artistic energy. CREATION.

We give birth to and nourish art. CREATION.

We are her mothers and her fathers and her sons and her daughters. CREATION.

We live and create and die and create and rot and create and surrender ourselves to creation and are created.

Our energy is eternal.

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We are born from art and return to art. We are the recycled creative energy of the universe. We are people, plants, animals.

Materials. Materials.

Materials for creation and creation for art. Art for life and life for death and death for materials.

Materials for creation and creation for art.

### **Universalism:**

**Commercial art: *Why Tony the Tiger must be killed.***

Commercial art is masturbation. The great pretender. Universalists are against art as a formal commercialism designed for commodity and profit. This art is lifeless and does not please us. Its sole purpose is to distract. To distract us from the vibrant whirlwind of energy that true art expels. To distract us from life and stop our creative energy from shining through. It dulls us. It is our enemy and *WE WILL NOT BE DEFEATED.*

Universalists will *not* be defeated.

UNIVERSALISM WILL NOT BE DEFEATED.

Art has no arms so we must arm her. Art has no legs so we must carry her. Art is lighter than air and stronger than diamond. Art is carried into battle by those who are willing to die for her. Universalists are ready to die for art. We would gladly walk into the mine field of the art critics and be obliterated so that art could live and thrive.

There is still merit in commercial art. We do not say here that advertising is anything less than a creative colossus; where would Warhol be without soup and soap pads? Creation is intangibly linked to art and the process of creation is still present as an artistic driving force behind what is deemed to be “art”. Universalists do not deny the creativity of commercial art, but loathe its “production for profit” attitude.

Every time I walk past a colourful product with a gaily drawn cartoon animal promising the best puffed rice or frosted cardboard or other “delicious” product, I am repulsed by the ridiculous and inane use of creative energy used to create such a character. Why must art suffer for an ailing company’s loss of profit or fatten a greedy plutocrat who craves double cream whilst he already has single?

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Art is not cat nip to stuff the pockets of the wealthy.

I say NO MORE.

No more whoring of art.

It is not right that art is used to entice small children to buy a sugary product or expensive toy, unaware that their desire is the by-product of a commercial artist's wet dream. Commercial art is fallacious and lurid. We say death to the twisted advertisers who have harnessed creation and whore it out for a price. Art cannot be tamed and paraded around for the amusement of others. We must respect art as the output of a creative energy far beyond our understanding.

### **Universalism:**

**Art and the Unconscious (1):** Lying, dying, and fucking.

Art exists in relation to the human unconscious. A wild force that transforms the reality of life into an "other" by its output. Art balances our inner emotional forces and is absorbed by us. An unconscious is a dangerously complicated force.

The human is wild and violent in design, but man is balanced by art. Art is both violent and gentle, as the human learns to be. The wantonness of art is often softened by an artist's mellow disposition, and other times the artist is freed by the whirlwind of creation that emanates from a "work of art".

Sometimes the wildness of a human requires a corresponding neatness in art; and sometimes the neatness of a human requires a corresponding wildness. But, in the end, there is no such thing as an unwild creation.

Lying, dying, and fucking. These are the vile foundations humanity has been raised on. Necessary and brutal. Why should art be any different? Why not paint the brutality of life and depict the despair which surrounds you? Surely there is still a beauty in that. A painting or a picture of a dying soldier evokes a reaction in the viewer. Art asks no more than this. The only necessity for art is to gain a reaction, good or bad.

The artist stands alone at a crossroads, and weeps openly for art to take him. Begs for the beauty of the universe to engulf his being and give him life. He needs art to live; without art there is nothing. Art is its own absolute. The artist feels himself to be sustained by divine inspiration and is driven

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by art alone. Art is his mistress and his muse; he needs no light other than that which she provides him.

Art and the Unconscious (2): Art as the Spatial Unconscious:

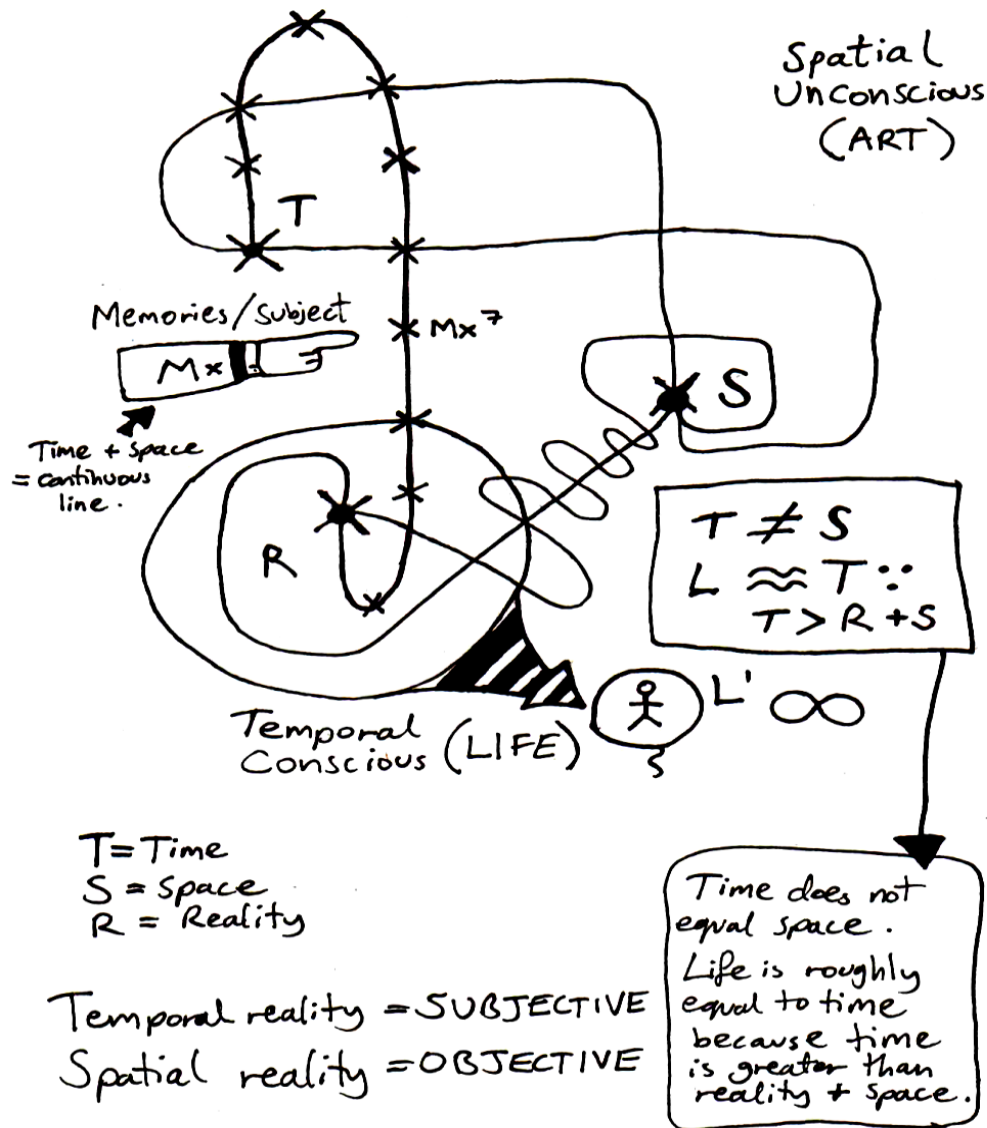


Figure 1: The way we live as humans and where we exist in relation to the universal order of time space.

The above diagram shows how we live as humans and where we exist in relation to the universal order of time and space.

Our lives exist within the circle of our own temporal consciousness. We witness reality from inside our individual subjective realm. This is what we know as finite beings; time and space are contained

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in our circle as our own existential experience of how we perceive time and space, through human consciousness. But, although we have a loose grip on time and space according to our human understanding of what they are, they are outside of what we can perceive, situated in an objective spatial reality, the spatial unconscious. Space and time are shown to be a continuous line joined in the unconscious reality, linked to our own reality through the line of memories that a subject experiences in their life time. Our reality crosses the line of space as we live our lives; or rather experience what we perceive to be our “life”.

The spatial unconscious is where we find art, lurking in the darkness of the universe beyond time, space and reality. Art as creation encapsulates these three and nourishes them. Without art, the universe would collapse under the weight of itself. Art is the great mother of the universe. The artist is able to have a relationship with art in that he is able to break free from his own temporal reality and venture into the unconscious reality of the spatial universe. The spatial universe has four dimensions: depth, width and breadth are the dimensions of space, and time which is outside of space. When I say “space” as a construct, I am including the three dimensions associated with it. I propose that, along the lines of the quantum mechanics’ superstring theory which suggests the universe has an extra six dimensions, art as creation is the god of all dimensions. To put it a little more simply, without creation, there would be no universe. Whether the universe was created from the Big Bang or God matters little here, the important thing to take into account is that a creative process of some sort is responsible for things happening. Without creation, nothing would happen. This is an undeniable truth. Taking this into account, it remains fairly safe to say that creation is at the pinnacle of existence as a spatial reality, regardless of whether we as humans can witness it.

In the diagram above, the artist travels outside the circle of his temporal reality via the twisting line linking reality to space (shown with the red arrow). The artist is able to harness the power of creativity in order to produce a piece of “art”. This act of grasping the unattainable makes him a god. The artist is able to detach himself from the temporal reality of his human consciousness and travel beyond theoretical space-time to the realm of art, where he carves out a piece of his soul to rest in the immortal realm that art occupies. The artist transcends himself through his creations.

### **Universalism:**

#### **Art – the truth in lies**



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Art provides us with a vision of the reality beyond our lives. It allows us to experience something more than what we see, and at the same time, holds up a mirror to our soul and shows us the deepest parts of ourselves we had hidden away.

Art reflects reality. Layers and layers of truth, despair, questioning. The universe is opaque. We can only imagine what is beyond our reach, but art gives us a way of accessing the imaginative power we keep locked down inside ourselves, and bringing it forward for us to examine. We are left with inspiration to create art for ourselves. Art is about the 'big picture'. Art shows us that we can achieve something beyond our self, and that we can reach far higher than we thought. The universe can be likened to art.

We cannot see what lies under the Mona Lisa's face, the soft lines that make up her smile. These brushstrokes are lost. Is this not an accurate way to describe time? Is this not an accurate way to describe *the universe*? We cannot see the past, only where it has occurred. We can only see where places and people have been, but not the events themselves. Reality is a painting. Layer upon layer of events and realities that make up what we see as truth. Just as the artist wields his materials, so we perceive and create our own reality. We 'paint' our own experiences, design our own fate and change our canvas as we change our path in life. Art is a tool. Nothing more. A tool. A way of perceiving our world and living in our creation. But it is the only tool. The only truth. Creation.

Universalism.

### **Universalism:**

#### **How to become a Universalist**

Start off by looking in a mirror.

Look at yourself until you no longer recognise who you are. You are not your body. The mind is the only real player in this game.

You are nothing.

Nothing.

Now that you realise what you mean in the universal scheme of things, you are free.

You are free to create and invent. To create is to live. You have been reborn a Universalist.

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You will achieve everything you set your heart upon, and you'll do it, despite the greatest odds and the harshest climates, you will do it. Isolation is the truest gift. You will get there and it will be glorious. The nights will burn with the fire of your flaming soul as you ride life to eternal glory.

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