

ART
FROM
MONA
that is
arguably
immoral



MUSEUM OF OLD
AND NEW ART



Check out the two works of art illustrated on the opposite page.

Let me ask you a few questions.

Which one is better?

Which one is more moral?

And do you think that the morality of the artist is relevant to the morality of the art?

My guess is you think the painting at the top is both better, and more moral. It's circumspect, painted in a recognisable Baroque style (you might even think you recognise the painter), and the guy at the centre of the picture is pretty Christlike. Whatever your religious persuasion, you probably think that's an honourable image. The picture at the bottom is painted in a somewhat sexy *National Geographic* style. Would your appraisal change if I told you it was a *National Geographic* illustration?

So what if I told you that the guy that painted the original of the picture at the top was a murderer?

Is it still good?

Is it a bit less moral? Or not moral at all?

My guess is because you recognise the imagery, and probably the artist Caravaggio, it hasn't changed your opinion much. Yes, Caravaggio killed someone when he was drunk, but they were different times, and he contributed a great deal to western art. It's still a great painting.

Is murder worse than child molesting? Our courts certainly think it is, and you probably agree. (The custodial sentence imposed for murder is far greater. After all, there is no remedy for murder. An abused child may well recover.)

Caravaggio was also a child molester. Do you view his painting differently now? He painted lots of erotic kiddie portraits (here's one: *Amor Vincit Omnia*, or 'Love Conquers All', including, apparently, decency). So, now we know that's he's a kiddie fiddler, we might not be so happy to hang him on the walls. For artists, kiddie fiddling is worse than murder. But he still gets a leave pass. After all, he is Caravaggio.



AMOR VINCIT
OMNIA, 1601-2
Michelangelo Merisi
da Caravaggio

The guy that executed the portrait (it wasn't in *National Geographic*) was Donald Friend. Famous in these circles, marvellous technician, but no Caravaggio. He was a kiddie fiddler, too. Does he get a leave pass? He's been copping some flak around Australia, recently. Most of his stuff has been taken off the walls of our state galleries. If they had a Caravaggio, do you think they'd take that down?

But what if Friend was the superior artist? Would he get to stay on the wall then?

He was the superior artist. Caravaggio used mirrors and other tricks, which he concealed (so he was a cheat, too). He pieced together lots of little paintings using different mirrors and lenses, so he didn't need much skill at all, really. You probably don't believe me, but humour me for a while. Look at the arms of the figure on the right. Notice that the hands are the same size—there is no perspective. That's because they were modelled separately, and the mirror system he used could only do life-sized stuff. So now, does Caravaggio go, and Friend stay?

If Friend is in, consider this:

Donald Friend was homosexual. Many male homosexuals practice rimming. Rimming is a sexual activity wherein one person licks the anus of another person.

Now fill in the missing letter: SO_P.

You probably chose 'A'. That's because 'soap' can make you clean, and you are pretty likely to be thinking that 'rimming' is dirty. The other, slightly more common choice is 'u' to make 'soup'. I could easily have primed you to fill in the blank with a 'u' by, for example, saying male homosexuals are often gourmets. And I also didn't choose the word 'gay' because had I, the cheerful connotation of 'gay' might have primed you to react differently to 'rimming'. And now I've got you thinking (using System 2 instead of System 1, as I explain in a moment) you probably can see that there is no reason why rimming should be confined to male homosexuals, since every couple could choose to practice it. I've rimmed my wife. Do I have to wash my mouth out with soup?

Our mind is a lazy beast. It's hard work (literally: thinking hard uses more energy) to think things through; for example, to compose a sentence that

credibly transmits an idea. Some psychologists call that sort of cognition 'System 2'.

'System 1' thinking, is automatic, quick and effortless. Examples of System 1 thinking are recognising a friend, and recognising the emotional state of that friend. Knowing the answer to '1+1' (and being able to count) is System 1. Being attracted to an attractive person is System 1. Expressing disgust is System 1. Expressing a political leaning (being a liberal, for example) is System 1.

Multiplying 24×32 is System 2. Developing a strategy for cheering up an unhappy friend is System 2. Coming up with a good pick-up line is System 2 ('I think you're so hot I'm prepared to put the effort into invoking System 2' won't cut it). Concealing disgust is System 2. Contemplating an alien perspective is System 2.

When you are doing System 2 work, when you are carrying a cognitive load, other decisions default to System 1. So you are more likely to be bigoted if you are doing arithmetic. And you are more likely to eat the cheesecake.

System 1's job is to make quick decisions, and to invoke System 2 when decisions need more processing, but it'll act if System 2 is unavailable (busy, or lazy).

System 1 can prepare us for the future. If we see food we like, we will recognise 'soup' in a context where it can be confused with 'soap'. And, as a wonderful experiment by John Bargh showed, when we see words that we associate with age, we walk more slowly, as if we are old. This is called 'priming'. And although you don't think you do it, you do it. Moral choices are rarely black and white; the choices you make are influenced by your mind's make-up, and your decision-making is influenced by your unconscious. In a referendum on school funding, voters are more likely to be supportive if their vote is cast in a polling station in a school.

I gave you a cognitive load, and a description of an activity that may disgust you. It's quite likely that, at least for a moment, you thought the art of Donald Friend should be taken down. And then with the explanation of how arbitrary our moral value is, he was (slightly) redeemed.

So if, as I believe, Caravaggio wasn't a great artist, and in fact was a fraud, why is there still residual respect for him in this exposition? I don't think

Friend is doing so well. After all Friend was 'just' a pederast. Caravaggio was a pederast and a murderer. And a fraud.

Caravaggio *did not* paint the painting reproduced at the start of this introduction. Staff at Mona painted it, using the optical techniques that we believe Caravaggio used. So, is it still relevant if he was a fraud? After all, this isn't his picture. And, if it ever was, is it still relevant that he was a kiddie fiddler, and a murderer?

But now, I'm pretty sure no one would hang this picture. Now we know it's a worthless fake.

But the painters of this worthless fake never killed anybody. And never fucked any little boys. Surely, if the image is the same, the painting should now be redeemed, and held in greater esteem?

—David Walsh

TIM, 2006-8
Wim Delvoye





TAXIDERMIED KITTENS' TEA PARTY (detail), c. 1890
Walter Potter



150 ACTION, HOBART, 17.6.2017
Hermann Nitsch

THE MORGUE (BLOOD TRANSFUSION RESULTING IN AIDS), 1992
Andres Serrano



UNTITLED, 2005-6
Boris Mikhailov



UNTITLED (OSAMA), 2002-3
Wim Delvoye



FAMILY OF THE FUTURE 9, 1997
Oleg Kulik

Next:
OLYMPIA, PARTS I AND 2 (stills), 1938
Leni Riefenstahl





PART ONE.

**FURTHER NOTES, DOCUMENTS
& MEMORABILIA**

*from the Second Hoard, recently unearthed,
of remains belonging to the ill-fated
Natural & Instinctive Pesticide Research
EXPEDITION.*

Herein collected under the title of the

**CODEX
BUMBOOZIATICUS ; ~**

*are the private diaries, intimate papers, secret confessions,
philosophies, enigmas and insinuations, (profusely
illustrated by the renowned artist Donald Friend)
written by various Members of the Expedition.*



*Edited and arranged by certified adepts of the Batsyomban
Society for the Re-diffusion of Cosmic & Morality.*

MCMLXXX



*An Officer of the Secret Police in Uniform;
Note the Cock Hat, embroidered Phallicrypt and rose-
dyeed Testicles. He holds a flamingo-breasted
Hoot-Owl.*

THE STORY OF THE VIVIAN GIRLS, IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL, OF THE CLANDECO-ANGELINNIAN
WAR STORY, CAUSED BY THE CHILD SLAVE REBELLION; also known as IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL, 1950-60
Henry Darger





AURES RUBRI CUNICULORUM, CAPITA FETARUM MUSUM, PALPEBRAE VACCAE (BEET-DYED RABBIT
EARS, HEADS OF BABY MICE AND COWS' EYELASHES), 2013

Heide Hatry



IN THE NAME OF GOD (BIBLE), 2005
Gregory Green

IN THE NAME OF GOD (KORAN), 2005
Gregory Green



MY BEAUTIFUL CHAIR, 2010
Gregg Taylor and Dr. Philip Nitschke

GOLD FISH, 2007
Zhang Peng



YO YO NO. 3, 2006
Zhang Peng



Previous:
ECONOMICAL STUDY ON THE SKIN OF CARACANS, CARACAS, VENEZUELA, SEPTEMBER, 2006
Santiago Sierra

MORCUE SERIES: NEW YORK, 2000-5
Stephen | Shanabrook





LEDA AND THE SWAN
Possibly Italy, Roman, 1-100 CE
LEDA AND SWAN, 1960
Sidney Nolan

I542, A FLOOD (still), 2018
Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni



PUPA, 2005
Fiona Hall





HEAD OF TA-SHERET-MIN (detail), 2014
Matthew Barney

MUMMY AND COFFIN OF TA-SHERET-MIN (detail)
Egypt, Late Period, end 26th–28th Dynasty, c. 664–399 BCE

AJAX AND CASSANDRA, 1886
Solomon | Solomon





FALCON 'MUMMY' FIGURE (detail)
Egypt, possibly Late Period to Ptolemaic, c. 664–30 BCE

SECRET MACHINE (still), 2009
Reynold Reynolds



L'IMBÉCILE (THE IMBECILE), 1961
Max Ernst



UNTITLED, 1991/2011
Janis Kounellis



Matthew Barney / Michelangelo
Merisi da Caravaggio /
Henry Darger / Wim Delvoye /
Max Ernst / Donald Friend /
Gregory Green / Fiona Hall /
Heide Hatry / Jannis Kounellis /
Oleg Kulik / Boris Mikhailov /
Hermann Nitsch / Sidney Nolan /
Zhang Peng / Walter Potter /
Reynold Reynolds / Leni Riefenstahl /
Andres Serrano / Stephen J
Shanabrook / Santiago Sierra /
Solomon J Solomon / Greg Taylor
and Dr Philip Nitschke

2

Copy of Caravaggio's *Supper at Emmaus* (1601), painted at Mona as part of the exhibition *Hound in the Hunt*

CODEX BUMBOOZIATICUS (detail)
1980

Donald Friend
Born 1914, Sydney, Australia, where he died in 1989
Gold leaf, gouache, ink and wash on paper, 138 pages
63 x 50 x 6 cm overall (closed)
Mona
2015.044

4

AMOR VINCIT OMNIA
1601–2
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio
Oil on canvas
156 x 113 cm
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

8–9

TIM
2006–8
Wim Delvoye
Born 1965, Wervik, Belgium; lives and works in Ghent, Belgium
Tattooed human skin
180 x 40 x 25 cm
Studio Wim Delvoye

10–11

TAXIDERMIED KITTENS' TEA PARTY (detail)
c. 1890
Walter Potter
Born 1835, Bramber, England, where he died in 1918
Wood, paper, oil paint, ceramic, cloth, wire and taxidermied kittens
Display case 159 x 192 x 64.8 cm
Collection of the Museum of Everything, London

12–13

150 ACTION, HOBART,
17.6.2017
Hermann Nitsch
Born 1938, Vienna, Austria; lives and works in Prinzendorf an der Zaya, Austria and Asolo, Italy
Performance for Dark Mofo, 2017; duration 03:00:00

14–15

THE MORGUE (BLOOD TRANSFUSION RESULTING IN AIDS)
1992
Andres Serrano
Born 1950, New York, NY, USA, where he lives and works
Cibachrome photograph, edition 2/3
125.7 x 152.4 cm
Mona
2008.075

16–17

UNTITLED
2005–6
Boris Mikhailov
Born 1938, Kharkov, USSR (now Kharkiv, Ukraine); lives and works in Kharkiv and in Berlin, Germany
Colour photographs
64 x 43.8; 28.9 x 20.3; 28.9 x 20.3 cm
Mona
2008.110; 2008.107; 2008.108

19

UNTITLED (OSAMA)
2002–3
Wim Delvoye
Born 1965, Wervik, Belgium; lives and works in Ghent, Belgium
Tattooed pigskin
Mona
2008.055

21

FAMILY OF THE FUTURE, 9
1997
Oleg Kulik
Born 1961, Kiev, Ukraine; lives and works in Moscow, Russia
Digital print, performance-based photograph
136 x 150 cm
Mona
2008.149

22–23

OLYMPIA, PARTS I AND 2 (stills)
OLYMPIA I TEIL—FEST DER VÖLKER (FESTIVAL OF NATIONS)
OLYMPIA 2 TEIL—FEST DER SCHÖNHEIT (FESTIVAL OF BEAUTY)
1938
Leni Riefenstahl
Born 1902, Berlin, Germany; died 2003, Poecking, Germany
Documentary films of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games: black-and-white 35mm film transferred to digital video; duration 01:51:00 and 01:36:00, looped
Reproduced and screened with the consent of the International Olympic Committee

24–25

CODEX BUMBOOZIATICUS (selected pages)
1980
Donald Friend
Born 1914, Sydney, Australia, where he died in 1989
Gold leaf, gouache, ink and wash on paper, 138 pages
63 x 50 x 6 cm overall (closed)
Mona
2015.044

26–27

THE STORY OF THE VIVIAN GIRLS, IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL, OF THE GLANDECO-ANGELINNIAN WAR STORM, CAUSED BY THE CHILD SLAVE REBELLION; also known as IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL (one double-sided page)
c. 1950–60
Henry Darger
Born 1892, Chicago, IL, USA, where he died in 1973
Watercolour, carbon tracing, ink, pencil and collage on pieced paper
45.7 x 114.3 cm
Collection of the Museum of Everything, London

28–29

AURES RUBRI CUNICULORUM, CAPITA FETARUM MUSUM, PALPEBRAE VACCAE (BEET-DYED RABBIT EARS, HEADS OF BABY MICE AND COWS' EYELASHES)
2013
Heide Hatry
Born 1965, Sindelfingen, West Germany; lives and works in New York, NY, USA and Berlin, Germany
Silver halide print
55.9 x 83.8 cm
Mona
2017.036

30

BIBLE BOMB #1854 (RUSSIAN STYLE)
2005
Gregory Green
Born 1959, Brooklyn, NY, USA; lives and works in Tampa, FL, USA
Religious book with mixed media
23 x 14.5 x 6.3 cm
Mona
2008.142

31

IN THE NAME OF GOD (KORAN)
2005
Gregory Green
Born 1959, Brooklyn, NY, USA; lives and works in Tampa, FL, USA
Religious book with mixed media
24.7 x 16.5 x 4.2 cm
Mona
2008.143

32–33

MY BEAUTIFUL CHAIR
2010
Greg Taylor and Dr Philip Nitschke
Born 1959, Bega, NSW, Australia; lives and works in Melbourne, Australia; and born 1947, South Australia
Interactive installation: leather armchair, Nitschke Euthanasia Machine, Persian floor rug, glass coffee table, standing lamp
Dimensions variable
Mona
2010.015

34

GOLD FISH
2007
Zhang Peng
Born 1981, Shandong Province, China; lives and works in Beijing, China
Type-C photograph
120 x 120 cm
Mona
2008.013

35

YO YO NO. 3
2006
Zhang Peng
Born 1981, Shandong Province, China; lives and works in Beijing, China
Type-C photograph
120 x 120 cm
Mona
2008.014

36–37

ECONOMICAL STUDY ON THE SKIN OF CARACANS, CARACAS, VENEZUELA, SEPTEMBER, 2006
2006
Santiago Sierra
Born 1966, Marid, Spain; lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico
Set of 35 black-and-white photographs, edition 2/3
Mona
2008.084

38–39

MORGUE SERIES: NEW YORK
2000–5
Stephen | Shanabrook
Born 1965, Cleveland, OH, USA; lives and works in New York, NY, USA and Moscow, Russia
Impressions from wounds cast in dark chocolate
58.5 x 58.5 x 5 cm
Mona
2008.066

40

LEDA AND SWAN
1960
Sidney Nolan
Born 1917, Melbourne, Australia; died 1992, London, England
Polyvinyl acetate on hardboard
91.5 x 122 cm
Mona
2005.008

41
LEDA AND THE SWAN
Possibly Italy, Roman, I–100 CE
Cast bronze
13.1 x 9.7 x 3.8 cm
Mona
2004.094

42–43
1542 – A FLOOD
THE UNMANNED, Season I,
Episode 7
2018
Fabien Giraud and Raphaël
Siboni
Born 1980, Caen, France; lives
and works in Paris
Born 1981, Romorantin-
Lanthenay, France; lives and
works in Paris
Real-time video computed
by generative adversarial and
convolutional neural networks;
duration 00:26:00

45
PUPA
2005
Fiona Hall
Born 1953, Sydney, Australia;
lives and works in Hobart,
Australia
Type-C photograph
121.2 x 115.3 cm
Mona
2008.100

46–47
HEAD OF TA-SHERET-MIN
(detail)
2014
Matthew Barney
Born 1967, San Francisco, CA,
USA; lives and works in New
York, NY, USA
Cast zinc
38.8 x 113 x 220.3 cm overall
Mona
2015.026

MUMMY AND COFFIN OF
TA-SHERET-MIN (detail)
Egypt, Late Period, end
26th–28th Dynasty, c. 664–399
BCE
Human remains, linen wrappings,
wood, plaster, pigment, beaded
net covering
Mummy 154 x 29 x 18.5 cm;
coffin 174 x 47 x 39 cm; bead
mask 16.2 x 22.5 cm
Mona
2003.185

49
AJAX AND CASSANDRA
1886
Solomon | Solomon
Born 1860, London, England;
died 1927, Birchington, England
Oil on canvas
304.5 x 152.5 cm
Art Gallery of Ballarat
Purchased 1887
1886.7

50–51
FALCON ‘MUMMY’ FIGURE
(detail)
Egypt, possibly Late Period to
Ptolemaic, c. 664–30 BCE
Animal remains, cord, fabric,
resin and traces of pigment
44 x 9 x 8 cm
Mona
2003.206

52–53
SECRET MACHINE (still)
2009
Reynold Reynolds
Born 1966, Central City, AK,
USA; lives and works in Berlin,
Germany and New York, NY,
USA
HD video projection transferred
from 16mm and digital stills;
single-channel duration
00:14:00; two-channel duration
07:00:00
Mona
2008.158

55
L’IMBÉCILE
(THE IMBECILE)
1961
Max Ernst
Born 1891, Brühl, Germany;
died 1976, Paris, France
Bronze, marble base
70 x 40.6 x 24.3 cm
Art Gallery of New South Wales,
Sydney
Gift of Beverley Horwitz in
memory of Stanley Horwitz,
2002
134.2002

56–57
UNTITLED
1991/2011
Jannis Kounellis
Born 1936, Piraeus, Greece;
1956 to Rome, Italy, where he
died in 2017
Bowl of water with goldfish and
knife
Dimensions variable
Mona
2011.003

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