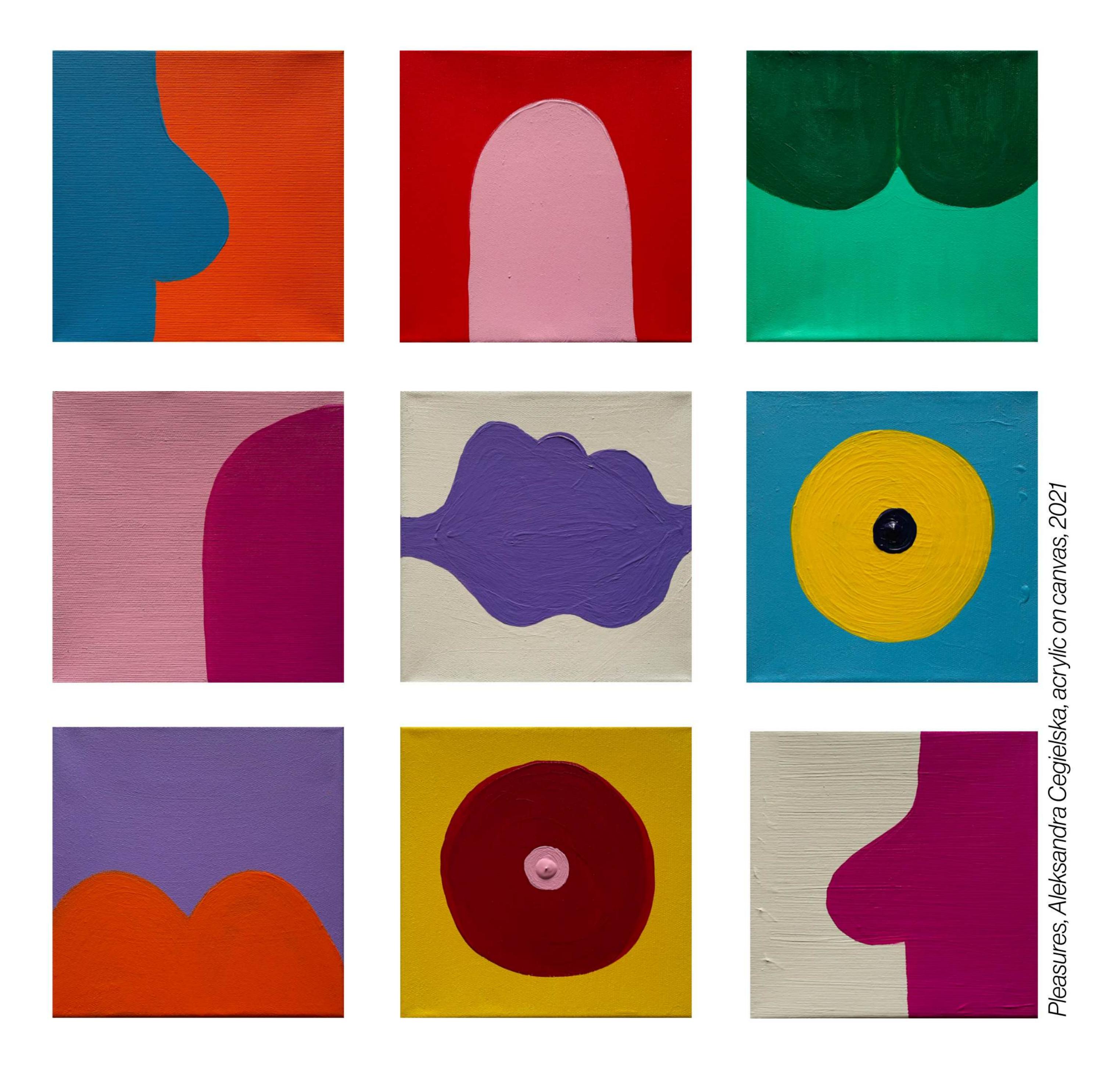
Is art for everyone? Probably not.

But perhaps that's the wrong question. Instead, we might ask: Can art be made accessible to everyone, without losing its complexity, its subversiveness, its intimacy?



If "art for everyone" means stripping it of its nuance, flattening it into a product that offends no one and risks nothing - then no, that kind of art isn't worth fighting for. But if it means making space for multiple voices, for the messy, the non - academic, the poor, the bold, the quiet, the offline, the awkward, the outsider - then yes, art could belong to more of us. Not because it must - but because it can. And when it does, it becomes something more powerful than luxury or critique. It becomes a language we all might one day speak.

Let's be honest: art, for most of its recorded history, wasn't about expression - it was about power. And power wasn't in everyone's hands.

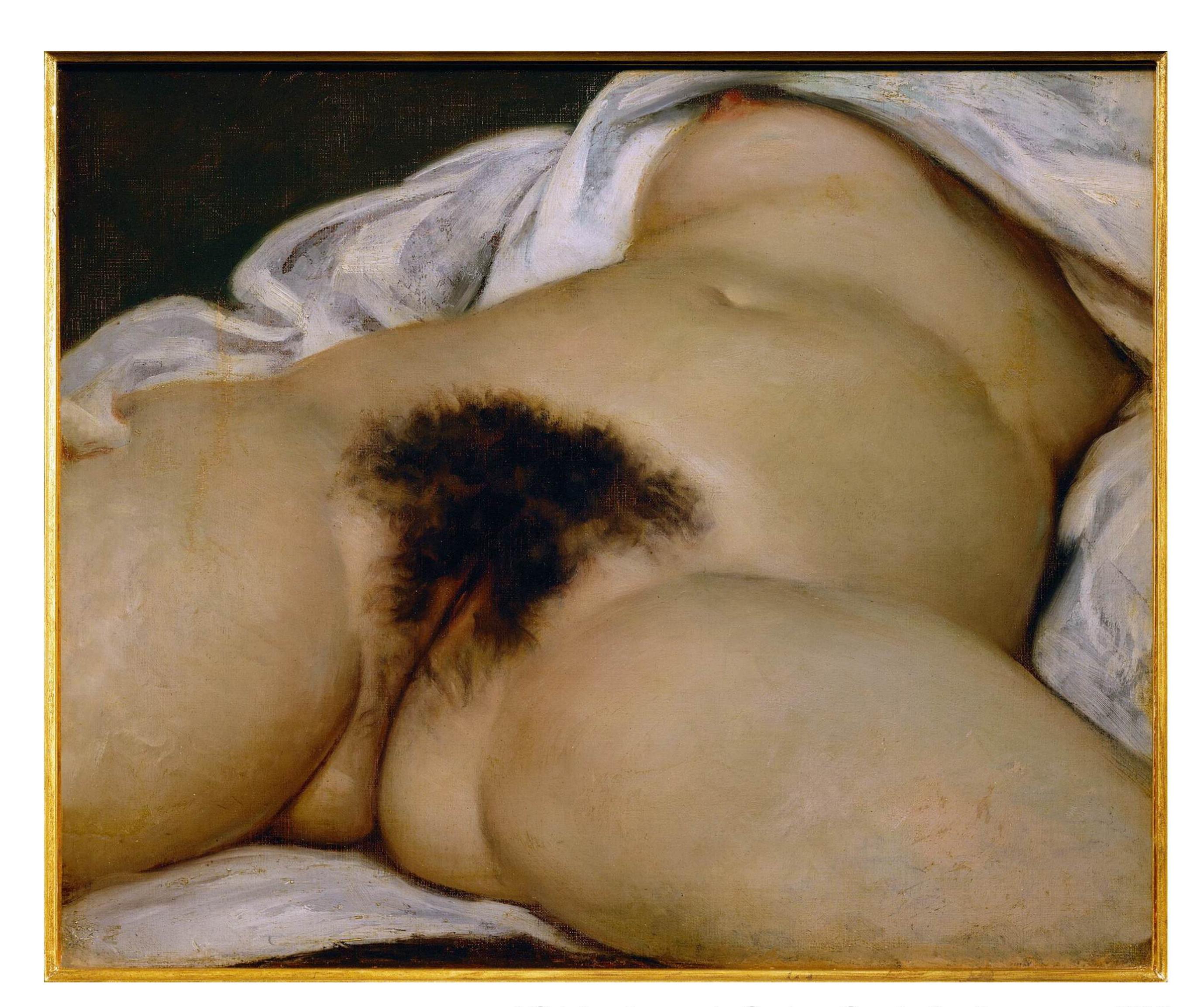
The great masterpieces of Western art?
Commissioned by kings, the Church,
the state. Painted mostly by men, for men,
about men. Gods, saints, rulers - rendered
in oil and marble to signal dominance,
wealth, immortality. Women, if present,
were muses or metaphors. Silent, draped,
idealized. Their naked bodies pinned like
butterflies, admired but never heard.

Take Courbet's L'Origine du monde (1866). A raw, confrontational image of a woman's genitals - painted by a man, for a male collector, hidden for decades, whispered about with scandalized admiration. Her body is framed, but her name isn't. No eyes, no voice, no identity. Just flesh as spectacle. And yet this painting sits reverently in Musée d'Orsay today. Taught, protected, canonized.

Meanwhile, when women depict their own bodies - blood, birth, sex, shame - they're called radical, uncomfortable, sometimes even vulgar. Still. A century and a half later. For centuries, women didn't get to paint. Not professionally. Not canonically. And if they did, they weren't exhibited. They weren't collected. They weren't remembered. Women didn't write the canon - they were written out of it.

Art wasn't democratic. It was a technocracy. The few decided what counted. They still do. But that's only half the story. Art has also been a tool of survival. Coded resistance. A hidden language of the silenced. From embroidery in convents to graffiti in the streets - people have always found ways to speak through image when speech wasn't safe. Quilting circles were not just crafts - they were networks. Prison tattoos weren't just rebellion - they were memory. In this way, the unofficial histories of art are perhaps more powerful than the canonized ones.

AUCION DIASEC history



L'Origine du monde, Gustave Courbet's, oil on canvas, 1866

Maybe art has always required a believer, a buyer. Someone who owns the wall. Someone who wants to show off. Someone who needs to be seen believing. So the question is not only who made the art, but who got to see it?



Modernism promised change. New ideas. New forms. Duchamp flipped a urinal on its back and called it art. Fountain (1917) became a turning point. Concept over object. Idea over execution. Suddenly, anything could be art.

But even revolution had its gatekeepers.
Some scholars argue the idea for Fountain came from Baroness Elsa von Freytag
Loringhoven - a radical Dadaist who lived her art through performance, poetry, and raw materiality. Duchamp got the credit.
She got lost in the footnotes. That's how the archive works - it preserves names that fit, and erases those that don't.

Even as art opens up, it rarely changes who's allowed inside. Because while everyone can create, not everyone is encouraged to belong. Not everyone has the map, the language, the right kind of education or access. Even contemporary spaces often replicate the exclusions they claim to challenge.

And yet... people create anyway. They always have. Because the need to make art isn't optional. It's not luxury - it's biology. Like Maslow's hierarchy of needs: after food, shelter, safety... comes expression. Creativity is self-actualization. It's how we process joy, grief, identity, contradiction.

In this sense, art is universal. But access to art? Still not.

The world we live in - is art still a mirror?

Let's test the mirror:

when you walk into a museum, do you see your life reflected?

Your family, your fears, your ancestors? Your wounds, your hunger, your language?

If not, who is that mirror for?

Who gets to decide what art is?

Let's talk about gatekeeping.



Major museums, blue-chip galleries, biennales, and art fairs hold a monopoly on taste. They decide what is valuable culturally and economically. They select the "important" artists, the "right" aesthetics. They write the catalogues and organize the retrospectives. The same families, names, and institutions keep resurfacing, making the canon look like a dinner party no one else was invited to.

The Venice Biennale, for example, sells itself as a global dialogue. But its format national pavilions curated by elite panels - often mirrors the same power imbalances it claims to critique. Who gets a pavilion? Who gets curated? Who's considered "relevant"? And why do the same few countries always hold the prime real estate?

And then there's Art Basel. The apex predator of the art market. What started in Switzerland has grown into a global brand - Miami, Hong Kong, and recently Paris. Here, art is traded like stock. Prices matter. Visibility means value. No room for risk unless it's backed by reputation. Even activism, even discomfort, must now be marketable.

Collectors don't just buy art—they decide what survives.

And critics? They translate the experience into legitimacy. A good review can elevate. Silence can erase. Some artists wait years for a paragraph. Others are born into praise.

It's no longer about creation it's about curation. And curation is never neutral. It's politics in soft shoes.

But outside the spotlight, something else is growing. A network of gallery weekends across cities like Amsterdam, Berlin, Warsaw, Vienna, Zurich - is a quieter revolution. Artist-run spaces. Emerging galleries. Experimental formats. More open, more porous, more public.

These weekends offer an alternative to the mega-fair monoculture. You don't need a VIP pass. You can walk into a backstreet studio and discover something raw, unpolished, urgent. Here, the art asks different questions. Not "Will it sell?" but "Does it matter?"

You might see works made from hair, broken tiles, worn shoes. You might hear poems in dark staircases or find video installations projected against forgotten walls. You might sit on the floor with strangers listening to someone read from their diary.

The audience isn't always polished. The artists don't always explain. And that's the point. The discomfort is part of the intimacy. Here, you're allowed to be lost. To ask dumb questions. To feel before you understand.

But with popularity comes danger. As gallery weekends attract collectors, sponsors, and media, they risk becoming the very thing they sought to resist. Branded, packaged, tiered. Local authenticity traded for international clout. A new Art Basel, just in cooler shoes.

The question is: Can this model grow without being co-opted? Can we scale intimacy? Can the underground survive exposure? Is the fight even worth fighting for if we've already know art is not for everyone?

Art is not for everyone and...

So, is art for evryone? No. First, because access was denied for most of history. Entire groups were excluded - not only from making art, but from even being considered capable of it. Women painted in shadows, if at all. The working class didn't have the tools, the time, or the recognition. Colonized people were exoticized, not canonized. And if you weren't part of the elite art machinery, your work likely vanished without a trace.

Now, more people feel the urge to create not because it's trendy, but because it's survival. Art has moved down from the palace walls and landed squarely on Maslow's pyramid. After food and shelter comes the need to speak. To process. To exist. But that doesn't meanthe system has caught up.

Second, because the institutions that control visibility - museums, art fairs, foundations - are still stuck on loop. They preach inclusion while clinging to old hierarchies. Their programs diversify faster than their boards. Their press releases sound radical; their practices stay polite. The same elite still decides who gets to be seen, collected, remembered.

This creates a gap. The public is supposedly invited - but doesn't feel welcome. Viewers feel lost, not because they're uncultured, but because the space wasn't built for them. Art becomes a performance of access. And even the so-called alternatives - offspaces, open calls, gallery weekends - risk becoming the same system, just rebranded in cooler fonts.

Third, not everyone is interested - and that's not a crisis. Art isn't a soccer game. It's not a Chanel bag. Not everyone will understand it. Not everyone can afford it. And not everyone wants to. That's fine. We don't need to force universal relevance onto something that was never meant to be universal. Some people will never walk into a gallery. Others will step in, look once, and never return. And that's okay.

But if "art for everyone" means making space for more voices, more contradictions, more messy, untrained, unfiltered expressions- then maybe art doesn't need to be for everyone to still belong to more of us.

That's not utopia. That's the work.



it shouldn't be