

Method Painting, Method Poem, Method Music (First Methodicist Manifesto)

A large number of tautologies seen in every art and every science of the twentieth century, which democratic systems have given rise to, should now be talked about again as a single principle, by being reduced to method, not to form. Meaninglessness, which is what tautologies mean, does not excuse sensualism nor the mob, and it rather requests stoicism and discipline for its authorization.

Method painting is a colored plane which is overlaid on method itself, prohibiting chance and improvisation. However, real colors which cause pleasure will sometimes be replaced scrupulously with other materials.

Method poem is a row of letters which comes to method itself, prohibiting personalization and absorption. However, real letters which epicize lyric will sometimes be alternated scrupulously with other signs.

Method music is a vibrating time which embodies method itself, prohibiting expression and tempo. However, real vibrations which vary eros will sometimes be exchanged scrupulously for other events.

These method arts, on the one hand, return to the tradition which each form depends on, and on the other hand, sing in chorus a single principle in the same age. We, methodicists, doubt liberty and equality which have produced license and indolence in arts and sciences, and reinstate logics as ethics.

Supplement 1

Motoaki Shinohara has been calling his own compositions method poems since about ten years ago. While respecting his activities, we use the words with a broad reinterpretation.

Supplement 2

Those in favor of this manifesto can forward it to acquaintances on your own responsibility, adding "In favor, Name, (profession)" at the end. Those partially in favor and those not in favor can also do in the same way. Or, you can of course forward it without adding your name.

January 1, 2000

Drafter: Hideki Nakazawa (artist)

Draft observer: Shigeru Matsui (poet)

Draft observer: Tomomi Adachi (musician)

Methodicism Q & A

by Hideki Nakazawa, artist (Method No. 15)

[Q1] What is individuality for method artists?

A: Individuality is not requested, because method should be universal. Method painter A's works and method painter B's works are not necessarily to be distinguished from each other. This is similar to the works by Picasso and Braque during the period of analytical cubism.

[Q2] What is beauty in method art?

A: Art has been separated from beauty since the era of Courbet. Methodicism refers to authority, but not to beauty. Therefore, method art has no connection with either formalistic or algorithmic beauty.

[Q3] Can method art touch humans' heart?

A: I do not know, because it does not intend to appeal to humans' feelings. Rather, apathy or apatheia, or Stoicism, is close to methodicism. Still more, it does not intend to be mysterious. Simple arithmetic is sufficient to make method art come into effect.

[Q4] Method art seems to be closed to ordinary audience, doesn't it?

A: I am sorry, but method art is made for logic like mathematics, not for audience like entertainment.

[Q5] Methodicism has no destination, does it?

A: No. The reason is that methodicism itself is the destination, and that method itself is the goal. "The next" does not exist. Or, if ever "the next" exists, I would have already done it.

[Q6] Methodicism cannot surmount modernism, can it?

A: Methodicism is a form of modernism. So methodicism "does not" surmount modernism, not "cannot." In this connection, methodicism is against postmodernism. Methodicism is also against the moratorium that refuses to accept either postmodernism or modernism.

[Q7] Methodicism is merely the adaptation of the early twentieth century's avantgarde, isn't it?

A: Yes. Methodicism has an aspect of neoclassicism, if you call the avantgarde classics. We do not want to add anything new to art history in this meaning. We just want to keep looking at the tautology in which modernism has resulted.

[Q8] Methodicism has still room for selecting methods by each author's taste, doesn't it?

A: Maybe yes when you consider methodicism a necessary condition. This case is similar to Berg's dodecaphony, in which his taste is evident. However, methodicism has little room for selecting methods by each author's taste when you consider it a necessary sufficient condition. This case is similar to Webern's dodecaphony, in which dodecaphony itself is evident rather than his taste. I have the same opinion with the latter case.

(The above Q & A were exchanged mainly in the class "Methodicist Manifesto" at Bigakko.)

Against This Spoiled Age

by Hideki Nakazawa, artist (METHOD NO. 18)

Has anything changed since January 1, 2000, when we published the First Methodicist Manifesto? I dare to say "Nothing," even after the September 11, 2001. Cheap sensationalism or sensualism, for example, is still rampant in the New York's art scene. No discipline exists, nor aesthetic canon, except the P. C. (Political Correctness). Yes, you may find very conceptual and pretty systematic works sometimes, but I am disappointed because most of those are depending on humor or wittiness, rather than on logical inevitability. Postmodernism, which includes postcolonialism, is still overwhelming even today, January 1, 2003.

Thus I believe the three Manifestos of Methodicism* to be still effective. Against this spoiled age, we must obey discipline which we have settled to call "method." I suppose this thought is not so queer, if anything, being universal and international. Or, you can find many examples of such world criticism in the past, e.g. neoclassicism.

But this thought has an aspect of being originated in today's Japan, where most of culture surrendered to America and the West. Of course, Japan has its own tradition which Japanese people are proud of, but that is not a mirror of today's Japan. The reality is rather the cultural backwardness; to say more accurately, lack of political power in culture, especially in words. The fact is that loan words from America are tremendously increasing in every aspect of Japanese language from daily conversation to treatises. This fact ironically suggests that Japan is an incredibly "advanced" postmodernistic and globalized country. But we, at least the Methodicists, have no scope for joking.

Such impatience, derived from the self-knowledge of backwardness, may have led us to extreme radicalism. We did not select the way to nationalism, adopted logic instead. Yes, Methodicism is neomodernism in another word. We regard ourselves as modernists, who are reductionists on the context of aesthetics. Since the word "radical" has the meaning of "root" in its origin, radicalism is equal to reductionism if we consider logic as the roots. We use the word "method," just because logic resulted in tautology during the twentieth century.

Again, such impatience, derived from backwardness, may have led us to extreme radicalism. I have once read a text by Hisao Matsuura, arguing the relationship between radicalism and backwardness seen in the Russian Avant-garde and the Italian Futurism. It seems to me that we are in a similar situation again almost a century later. There is no mystery if today's Japan yields "true" reductionism, as the Methodicism.

*NOTE: The First Manifesto on January 1, 2000, the Second on January 1, 2001, the Third on January 1, 2002. Visit aloalo.co.jp/nakazawa/method/