

Day 9 - McKenzie Sullivan

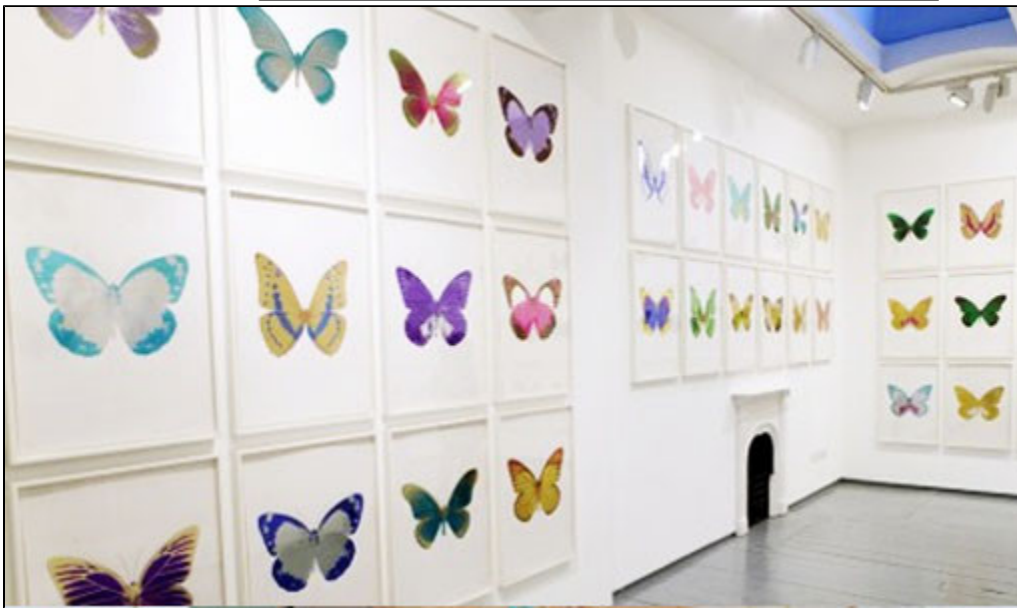
Damien Hirst, like Jeff Koons exploits the "factory-model" as both artists don't actually really physically contribute to the crafting of their artworks. In an interview at Gagosian in 2004 Hirst pointed out that his artworks: the shark, the spots and the butterfly paintings, were produced by a team of assistants. Several assistants work on each painting so no one person is ever responsible for a whole work of art. Hirst typically adds a few brush strokes and his signature. His reasoning behind this rather crafty factory-method is that a buyer would get an inferior painting if it was done by only him. He claims to like the idea of a factory to produce work, which separates the work from the ideas, but that he would never like the factory to produce ideas. Personally I don't think this method is exactly artistically ethical especially at the prices Hirst's work sells for. This method devalues the originality and singularity of the artwork. It seems Hirst is more dedicated to the creative thought process and idea of the work rather than the actual physical creation of the work. I believe it's a cop out to do this. Hirst only partakes in one half of being a true artist. Although the idea may be his, he contributes little to the synthesizing of the idea.

Hirst's factory works similarly to the way high-end couture fashion houses do. Luxury Fashion designers such as Prada, Gucci or Louis Vuitton create couture fashion, which is debuted at fashion week each season. These couture creations are only clothing a certain type of person with a large budget can afford. The designers also create "ready-to-wear" collections which are based on the couture creations, i.e. they have the same colors or patterns etc. but the "ready-to-wear" clothing is much more affordable and not as extravagant. Similarly Hirst creates t-shirts for those visitors unable to afford the million-dollar painting or the signed prints at Gagosian.



For Example: on the left is a piece is a from Alexander McQueen's "Platos Atlantis" Spring/Summer 2010 collection. The Leggings on the right are a "ready-to-wear" take on the Couture collection. They feature the same textiles but retail for much

less.



This Damien Hirst butterfly t-shirt is available at the Gagosian Retail Store.
This T-Shirt and even Hirst's prints are like "ready-to-wear" versions of his "couture" paintings.

Hirst's strategy to create these less-expensive versions of his art are a prime example of how successful he is at marketing himself. He wants to appeal to be accessible to everyone, even those who are not involved in the art world.

Damien Hirst is essentially famous for suspending dead animals, cows and sheep, in steel-and-glass tanks filled with formaldehyde. The works (the most famous being the large shark in a tank called *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*) have made Hirst a "bad boy" of art. Many great claims are made about the depths of his work; not only is he said to criticize Western corruptions of the spirit, such as materialism and indifference toward the natural world, but, it's thought, he is also engaged in a profound meditation upon death. Damien Hirst's art maybe an acquired taste and his talent might be questionably but without a doubt he is one of the art world's most successful marketers. He knows exactly how to manipulate the "wants" of his collectors. I believe Hirst is popular because he reflects his time. He works with ready-mades, shock, and irony to make conceptual points. He appeals to an audience always searching for a new boundary to cross. Hirst capitalizes even when people find his works revolting (bad press is still press!). The disgust in Hirst's works is reassuring that he is still radical and grotesquely "cutting edge." I personally believe Hirst is an expert showboat and a social symbol rather than an actual artist.

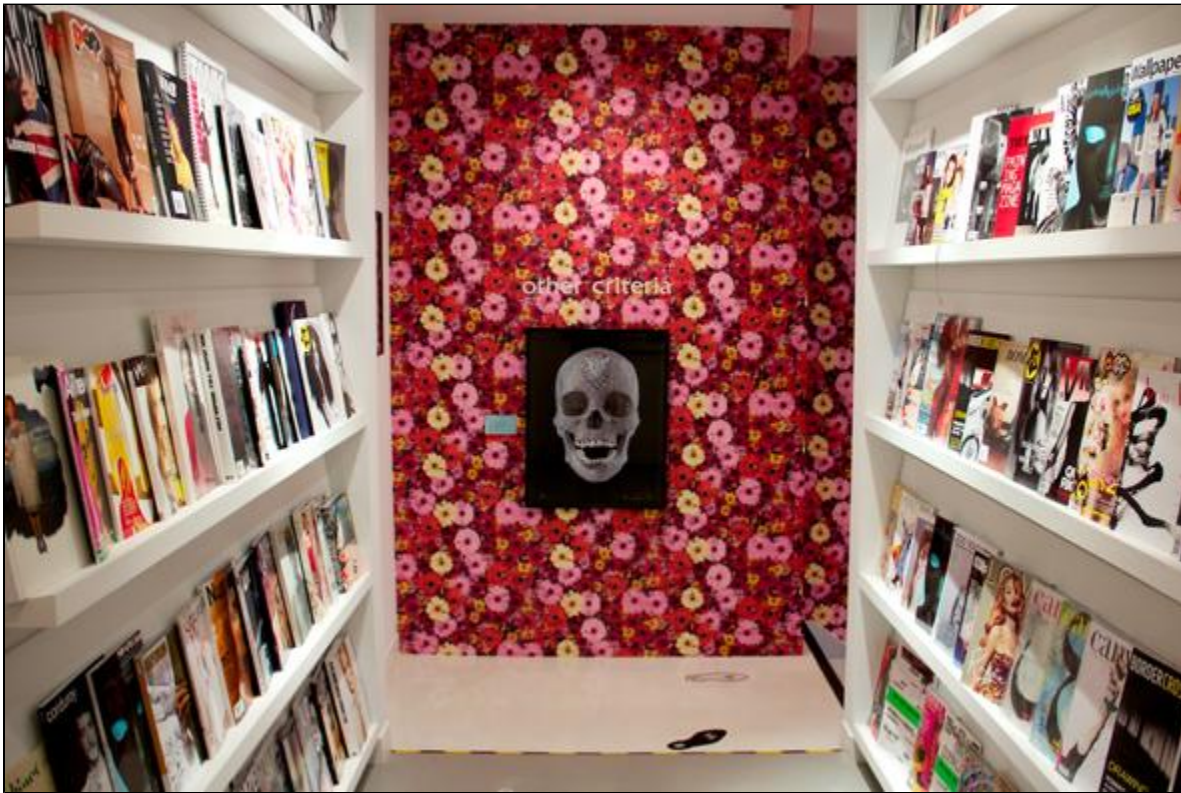


Photo: This is the view of the hallway to the lower level of the "Gagosian Gallery Retail Store" on Madison Ave, in New York.

The Wallpaper is a Damian Hirst creation that has flowers with cigarette butts in them) His art is even wallpaper!



Photo: This is the basement of the "Gagosian Gallery Retail" store which sells signed Hirst prints from \$5,000-\$30,000 USD.