

# Day 17 - Kwame Nana-Ato

Henry Matisse, Andy Warhol, le Corbusier- These are people Damien Hirst is being compared to now. Off course he happens to be the first person to achieve some things in the art world, like being the first living artist to have sold the most expensive artwork, and also the first artist to get all money for an artwork being sold in an auction house. With these achievements, he has become a well-known and internationally acclaimed artist. As it is said, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. There's no doubt that with all the noise going on about Hirst, he has chunked some power. Has this power corrupted him leading to his sudden down the drain sale in the art market, or is it just a phase of up and down, fame and defame success ladder story? I don't think that Hirst has overexposed himself; I think he has over-produced himself. His high priced works and fame in the art world was not because he wanted it to be so, the gurus in the art world made him so. His exposure is mainly due to how people want to price the work of the artist. I don't think that artist work for money, I think it's the collectors auction houses, etc that do focus on the money aspect.

As everyone will, if a market for "goods" is in high demand, the desire to make more to meet the demand is what is most likely to be done. That way, there is always something to give when it is requested for. When I was in Rome, I interned with an artist, whose works cost 14,000 to 20,000 euros. He always made sure he had a number of works already made when demand was high and in the low season we worked on new ideas. In the case of Hirst, he might have over produced too much. Art lovers are such that with time they begin to look for a new style from the same famous artists whose works they buy and if the artists do not come up with new ideas, the same old art becomes boring and the market for that becomes slow. Hirst certainly overlooked that and thought that with how much he was making for these pieces, they were hot cakes and he overproduced them.

I can't be happy enough to express my joy for Hirst's "Beautiful Inside my Head Forever" not because it made a sale of almost \$200 million, but because for the first time, an artist has gone out of the box and circumvented the galleries who almost always ends up with about half of what the work sells for. Most people think that Artists have an objective view such as creating fame or pleasing a certain audience who expect some sort of ideal art, or even that artists wish to become part of a history that can be modified by anyone. One thing that caught my attention was when it was said that Hirst said "I hate the way when you walk into a gallery and say you want to buy a Damien Hirst they say: 'Who are you?' I much prefer to be in a shop where you can just go in and buy it." To me, this says a lot about Hirst. He is doing art for the sake of its appreciation and for the love for it. I wouldn't want to say that it is quite unfortunate that people have placed a high value on his art and has in turn made him to look like an artist looking for money. Hirst, has started having low sales on his work and the interesting to me is that in all of his interviews, he has not mentioned or shown worry about the fact the his works are not selling as high as they used to. The people who are sounding the news of this are the very same people who added value to his work. An artist is free to do what he wants because it is coming from the heart. Normally most an artist turns to specialize in a medium or two mediums or even more. Damien Hirst is a sculptor and the fact that he is trying to paint does not mean he has to do so to please what the public wants from him. Artists are curious, and like to explore, most artists, once they gain public recognition become acquainted to the style that made them successful and for most of their artistic career do not try something new. Hirst on the other hand seems to be doing what he wants to do, something that makes him happy first, especially as he looks to an artist that greatly influenced him, Francis Bacon.

Prior to reading this, I was not a fan of this man "Mr Damien Hirst" but after the reading, I am a fan not only because he has set new standards in the art world, but I tend to also find him rather humble and still inclined to what art really is, as most people will have turned on a newly complete lifestyle. .  
*And he has a sense of humor too.....*