

High art, for centuries, has dominated museums, galleries and historical texts. Scholars use canonised artists and old masters as a barometric indication of ‘good art’, which appeals to an elitist audience that ultimately becomes the judge of the intrinsic qualities of art. In turn, high art proves to be the preference of a specific societal class, one that mistakenly holds more power and legitimacy.

High art flourishes because of its complicated and exclusive nature, as it never fails to offer faint references of didactic nature, that of course can only be decoded if the viewer has received a high class education.

This ultimately and inevitably turns into an echochamber of what the elite deems noteworthy. As a result what counts as high art, for other classes or cultures is brutally disconnected from the art world. These ideologies are heavily reinforced by the art world, whose doors are permanently shut to lower classes.

What the lower classes lack, in order to gain access, is two vital aspects; money and time. Nevertheless, over the last years the stomach turning fear of acknowledging the contributions of lower classes to the arts has come to the surface, through the aestheticisation of poverty. The revolutionary move of readymades forced gallery goers question what is supported and what is snobbishly rejected by the institution. The acceptance of the readymades, however, is a mere result of their marketing as the new masters, the new wave of important art. These ideas are completely forgotten about when using cheap materials is not a choice by the high society to inflict pretentious institutional critiques, but is rather a way of living. This way of living, amidst its aestheticisation, for many artists is not a choice, as their entrapment in a low income class forces them to create with cheap materials, for an audience that understands and recognises these materials. Their aesthetic qualities are shunned for lacking obscure references to past century poetry, and their target crowd is considered parochial and uninformed but their reality is undeniable and touches a big audience.

In an attempt to escape the bourgeois gaze, Cheap and Low aims to subvert these notions, and celebrate previously disregarded art, deemed as ‘cheap’ and ‘low’.