

Assignment: What is Art?

Artist: Janine Antoni

Title: Loving Care

Date: 1992

Media: Loving Care hair dye on canvas



Art as a performance piece:

The methods of certain artists might be perplexing to some. The most known case is the American Abstract Expressionist pioneer Jackson Pollock. From 1947 until his death a decade later, Pollock wanted to be inside his paintings so he avoided easels and stretcher strips. Instead, he unrolled huge lengths of raw canvas on the floor of his barn like studio in East Hampton, New York. Then Pollock literally flung paint (and sometimes also dropped bits of plastic,

metal springs, or even cigarette butts) onto the canvas as he danced all around it, using brushes, sticks, pierced metal cans, his fingers, or anything else he wanted to add color to the picture. This was hardly a glam, Renaissance-style way of putting a painting together. It also wasn't neat; Pollock unavoidably got paint all over his clothes, the floor, and everything else in range.

Many recent works by Janine Antoni have also involved painting in untraditional ways. Her 1992 work *Loving Care* is an example of what is typically referred to as a "performance piece" (because the process of creating this temporary artwork is the most important aspect of it). For this performance at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery in London, Antoni - a young woman with long, dark hair - first stuck her head into a bucket of Loving Care- brand hair dye, then knelt down and made a series of rhythmic, curving, colored marks on the gallery's floor by bending forward and using her hair as a brush. "I soaked my hair and mopped the floor with it." Antoni's technique was obviously intended to cause controversy, and indeed some people remain unsure that this piece constitutes art. However, one could argue that Antoni was simply using a variation on the traditional painter's tool- after all, a sable brush (the kind preferred by many artists, for centuries) is in fact made from a mammal's hair. Moreover, her use of the gallery's floor as her "canvas" could be seen as a logical extension of Pollock's technique.



Bibliography:

Why a Painting is Like a Pizza (p 77-78)

Name:

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

1. Define the word art (what would the dictionary say art means?).
Write it in your own words.
2. Describe the artwork: What does it look like? What colors are used?
What materials are used? Etc.
3. Sum up the article in one paragraph. Basically, pick out the important parts to share with someone who hasn't read the article.
4. What is unusual about this artwork?
5. Form an opinion about whether or not this should be considered art.
Explain why or why not.
6. Write down your reactions to the art. What do you like, or dislike?
Would you have this in your house? Why or why not?
7. Does this count as artwork according to your definition?