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Pretentiousness: Why It Matters



Synopsis

Pretentiousness is for anyone who has braved being different, whether that's making a stand against artistic consensus or running the gauntlet of the last bus home dressed differently from everyone else. It's an essential ingredient in pop music and high art. Why do we choose accusations of elitism over open-mindedness? What do our anxieties about "pretending" say about us? Co-editor of *frieze*, Europe's foremost magazine of contemporary art and culture, Dan Fox has authored over two hundred essays, interviews, and reviews and contributed to numerous catalogues and publications produced by major international art galleries and institutions.

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Customer Reviews

Not so much pro-pretension as such as against the use of 'pretentious' as putdown, in other words against discrimination. In the art world all emperors are equally naked. A case study in that peculiarly English hangup, class, and an interesting pendant to Richard Hoggart's now thoroughly quaint *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), But it won't wash. Pretension means fakery. (Fox plays fast and loose with the term.) Naive and self-exculpatory, Fox's stab at social positioning will doubtless look good gathering dust provocatively on many a poseur's shelves. The critics loved this! (There's a passel of them cited on the [page](#).) But they fell for Hoggart too.

Very interesting look at our political, religious, entertainment and art history. The last chapter was a particularly interesting insight. I very much enjoyed the book.

Just as living organisms evolve with time, so do ideas, customs, language and all aspects of culture. I thought I understood the term "pretentiousness" as referring to behavior that is ostentatious, or acting with exaggerated importance, or being someone other than yourself. In this series of essays, British writer and filmmaker, Dan Fox assigns a different connotation and importance to the term. The inclusion of the term "pretentiousness" within his lexicon refers to creative risk within the arts, theater, music, filmmaking and in the expressionistic realm. David Bowie serves as a model for pretentiousness with his imaginatively innovative and shockingly spectacular performances that enhanced communication with the masses. For myself, I translate this artistic pretentiousness as a form of what is commonly spoken of as creative drive, or what can be referred to as the authenticity of the individual seeking satisfaction and fulfillment. Apparently this mutated word has been adopted to refer to one's reaching beyond oneself, and with new philosophical implications restricted to the cultural arts. To avoid discordance and confusion, the author might pretentiously compose a new word to represent this inspirational magic. Might a scientist, or a dictator driven by overconfidence be considered pretentious. Would Donald Trump fit the pretentious role?.

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