

YOU CALL THAT ART?

If dogs can play poker, then why can't fish perform surgery?

Artist: Martynka Wawrzyniak
This Is Art? Wawrzyniak, a 33-year-old “New York City-based Polish-New Zealander-American editor, photographer, model, and performance artist,” recently started working in a new medium: smell. Her 2012 show “Smell Me” was the culmination of a yearlong art project in which her bodily odors were chemically extracted (with the help of some chemistry students at Hunter College in Manhattan) and “reconstituted for diffusion.” Then the public got to stroll through a posh gallery and sniff Wawrzyniak’s “olfactory-based self-portrait,” which featured the smell of her hair, tears, and underarm sweat.

Artist’s Statement: “I think I’m part canine.”

Artist: Frances Wadsworth-Jones

This Is Art? Wadsworth-Jones thinks it’s “lucky” when a pigeon poops on a person, so she created “Heaven Sent” pigeon-poop brooches. They’re not made with real poop, but with tiny precious gems that she combines to *look* like poop. (She has a collection of hundreds of bird-poop photos she uses as models.) Her art was displayed at the Museum of London, and some of the poop-brooches sold for £2,500 (\$4,250).

Artist’s Statement: “The stain is very intimate.”

Artist: Alexander Selvik Wengshoel

This Is Art? After living more than 20 years with a deformed hip, the Norwegian art student decided to have it replaced. For his senior project at Tromsø Academy of Art, gallery patrons got to watch a video of the surgery and see the deformed hip bone in person. Another part of the project (that no one got to see): to purge himself of the pain the deformed hip had caused him, Wengshoel claims he boiled the “flesh off the bone” and then consumed the meaty broth (along with potato gratin and a glass of wine).

Artist’s Statement: “It tasted of wild sheep.”

Artist: Diemut Strebe

This Is Art? Strebe wanted to “regrow” Vincent van Gogh’s ear (which the Dutch painter famously sliced off in a fit of rage in 1888). But she was unable to obtain a pure DNA sample, so she settled on some tissue from Lieuwe van Gogh, the great-great-grandson of Vincent’s brother Theo (it has 1/16th of Vincent’s DNA). Strebe grew the tissue in a lab and then used a 3-D printer to form it into the shape of Van Gogh’s missing left ear. The ear is being kept alive in a vat of “nourishing fluids,” and is currently on display in Germany. Strebe plans to take the ear on a world tour.

Artist’s Statement: “I use science basically like a type of brush, like Vincent used paint.”

Artist: Anthea Moys

This Is Art? In 2013 Moys played a soccer game against a professional team of men. She lost. Then she entered a 60-mile bike race on a stationary bike. She lost. Those were two of the performance pieces in her weeklong art project in South Africa called “Anthea Moys vs. the City of Grahamstown.” Other events featured her going up against chess masters (she lost) and karate black belts (she lost). Moys, who claims she wanted to combine “conceptual engagement with ideas of play, passion, and failure,” had never tried any of these activities before, which could explain why she lost every contest.

Artist’s Statement: “I’m not very competitive.”

Artist: Anne-Catherine Becker-Echivard

This Is Art? The 43-year-old conceptual artist builds elaborately detailed dioramas—scenes of everyday life featuring figures, each roughly a foot tall. Then she buys fresh fish and chops off the heads, which she uses to complete the scenes, which include fish-headed doctors performing surgery, fish-headed prisoners standing in a snowy prison yard, fish-headed workers in a sardine cannery, fish-headed engineers on a North Atlantic oil rig being attacked by a giant octopus, and (our favorite) a fish-headed reader sitting on a toilet with a *Batman* comic book. Once each diorama is complete, Becker-Echivard photographs it...and then eats the fish for dinner.

Artist’s Statement: “My family and friends think I am crazy.”

Is that a tentacle, or are you just glad to see me? The third right arm of a male octopus...