

# Refinement, how much does it cost?

Steve Carr

*Enchanté*

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The proposition Steve Carr presents here is not about perfection per se, it is about the creation of perfection, or moreover, which processes could be utilised in the pursuit of representing perfection? This is a Platonist journey toward the perfection of forms envisaged through the aesthetic philosophising capacity of a suburban property developer. The illusion of perfection is that which is strived for in this instance, not by the artist, and therefore not within the work itself, but by and through his subject. The outcomes represent the search for excellence, with its cultural capital drawing from predictable precedents. This perhaps alludes to a 'new world' quest for cultural legitimisation through an almost impulsive reflex to emblazon finesse through a reductive process of estranged emulation. This, upon numerous occasions can involve a rampant, and often irrelevant insertion of European terms, often en Français, and even the very proliferation of the use of italics in general. Such a flirtation between languages hopes to connote a certain aptitude to oscillate, not only between languages, but importantly, between ways of thinking, rendered elegant through a cursive and bespoke typeface, as if to have been written with a quill.

*Enchanté* marks a shift, not only for the turkey, but also for the artist. Frequently operating as the performer within many of his works, upon this occasion the artist has completely extricated himself both as actor and as subject. This work is about documenting a process and to this end, the engagement of anyone other than a dedicated and consummate professional would be half-baked, so to speak. This is not about the artist performing a ritual, but of having the ritual performed. It is an act of recording a particular process, through the most technologically sophisticated means, of a cultural activity before its methodologies are rendered obsolete. It is the pursuit of creating a singular vision, a moment, within which perfection has been captured, revealing the magic, yet also the toil involved. It is concerned with attaining excellence, while undeniably vesting itself within a context that is now considered to be synonymous with the abandonment of qualitative contemplation. The nineteen eighties, or more specifically, the mannerisms and detritus which

manifested during this period has been frequently and popularly maligned. It is this reflex that this project operates in resistance to, reacting against the ubiquity of derision while not basting over some of the peculiarities of such an idiosyncratic decade, with its emphases on affluence, decadence, scale and gratification.

To be clear, these aspirations have not disappeared, they are merely more covert, more subtle in their demonstration, yet undeniably integrated. A case in point is perhaps the turkey itself. The embellishment of the poultry, in a visually aesthetic sense is quite evident within the performance as various strategies are enacted toward beautification. A frozen turkey is used so that it may better maintain its form, being lightly roasted in the initial instance, to prepare the skin for the application of pigment applied with decisive brush strokes. The surface is then spot cooked in order to tighten up the skin and create the perfect burnish. Add a couple of miniature chef hats to hide the unsightly bones, waft a little cigarette smoke upon the turkey to replicate steam and voilà! The turkey used within this work is necessarily organic, but not for reasons of ecology or taste. It would appear that today's turkeys have been so genetically modified, that they in fact blister under such culinary techniques, having already been subjected to such rigorous techniques of enhancement.

Like a perverse demystification of finery itself, this project revels in a nostalgia for a certain kind of illusion of opulence, a grandiosity with tragic underpinnings. The turkey is monumental, and to this end representational of a certain kind of ceremoniousness, one that is concerned with sharing, yet equally concerned with a kind of showing, of one's taste, one's wealth, one's very understanding of fine cuisine and good taste. Epilogue

The occasion of this exquisite exhibition of refined and tasteful modern day art masterpieces provides a significant opportunity to reflect upon one's own sense of decorum and sophistication. What better way to ascend the status of one's refined sensibilities within the considerations of the similarly well bred, than to subtly, yet noticeably embark upon the procurement of one of these delightfully enchanted signifiers of good aesthetic judgement. If not for oneself then most certainly for the legacy of ones familial dynasty, to be regarded, indeed revered, as patrons of the arts and as such, the very ambassadors of civility.