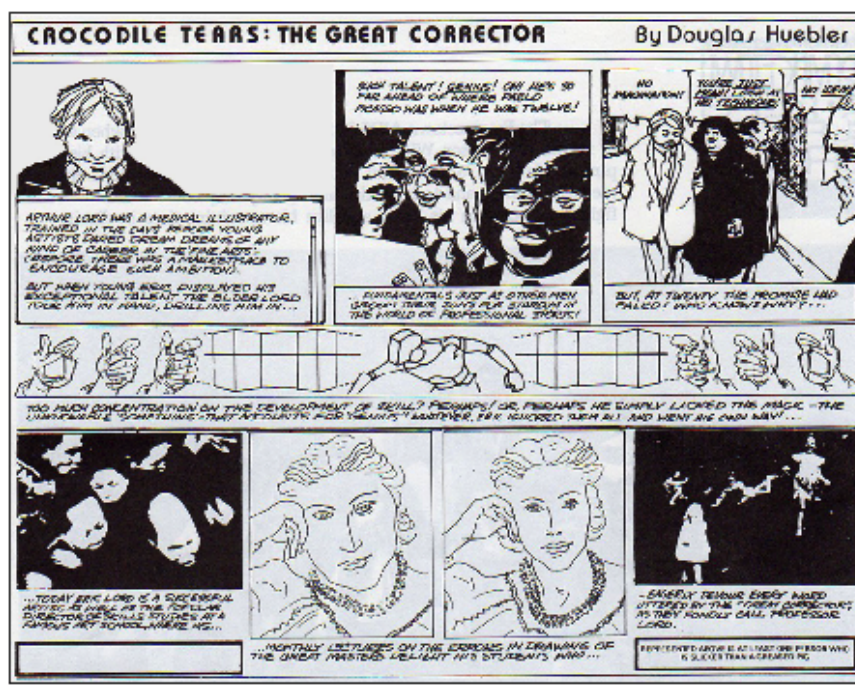
Editorial: Do Art and Humor Play Well Together?

One of the more difficult accomplishments in fine arts is to blend humor with art and still be taken seriously.

Mischa Richter, one of the great *New Yorker* cartoonists and also a fine artist, used to complain

that Honoré Daumier was known primarily as a cartoonist during his lifetime and was not as highly regarded for his fine art as he is today.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and conceptual artist Douglas Huebler (1923-1997) come to mind as two artists who could get away with humor. Douglas Huebler was one of the leading founders of the conceptual art movement. In 1969, he participated, with Joseph Kosuth, Robert Barry, and Lawrence Weiner, in a landmark exhibition of conceptual art curated by Seth Siegelaub; this was the first group exhibition in which the catalogue was the exhibition. As part of the show, Huebler issued one of his most famous statements: "The world is full of objects, more or less interesting; I do not wish to add any more." He then started producing works in numerous media often involving documentary photography, maps and text to explore social environments and the effect of passing time on objects. In 1971, he began "Variable Piece #70 (In Process) Global," for which he proposed his intention "to photographically document the existence of everyone alive." In the 1980s and '90s, Huebler began incorporating painting into his conceptual art pieces, creating an art teacher persona he called "the Great Corrector," who took works by masters like Henri Matisse, and attempted to "make them better." Huebler had museum shows all over the world, and was represented by Leo Castelli for many years. Today Huebler's estate is represented by the Paula Cooper Gallery.



Douglas Huebler
Variable Piece #70: 1971 (In Process) Global, Crocodile Tears: The Great Corrector (Conceptual Comic Strip), 1984
collage and ink on paper, 11 1/16 x 15 7/8 in.
(28.1 x 40.3 cm)

We want to publish at least one cartoon in every magazine issue of Inspicio that will give us a fresh perspective on the art world and make us smile a little.

Is there a place for cartoons about art? Is there a place for humor to be incorporated into art? I suspect, like with any form of art, the bottom-line is that no matter what the medium or the message, the question becomes: "Is it good enough to be admired on its own aesthetic merits?" ■

– *RSE*