Why is art like an alligator?

If you are one of the 124 people who filled out this survey, thank you. We were delighted by your enthusiastic responses. Your answers were much funnier than expected. Who knew there could be so many ways to answer a simple question like, “How many stop signs can you find in this picture?” Nobody got it right, but it turns out some things are better than right.

Here we present you with all the responses. Overall, we find cautious pessimism (potato), creativity motivators (wall), irritation with meaningless complications (artspeak), and an acceptance of our snicker-worthy japes and exhortations.

Voluntarily filling out a survey seems to be an example of free will within limits: fun for some, uncomfortable for others, a possible cause of suspicion, surprise, or a challenge. “WHY,” is the final question for just about everything.

**Survey Results**

- Future
- Professions
- Beauty
- Propaganda
- Feel
- Say
- Time
- Wall
- Type
- Theorists
- Gender
- Issues
- Going
- Believe
- Stop
- Use
- Dirt
- Success
- Freedom
- Intention
- Bollards
- Idiot
- Guns
- God
- Picture
- Wrong
- Why

*Why is art like an alligator?* was created by BURNING BOOKS for Axle Contemporary as part of Currents New Media 2021 Festival.
Which of these do you see in your future?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4.

Pie chart showing:
- Option 1: 61.7%
- Option 2: 19.2%
- Option 3: 9.2%
- Option 4: 10%
Which of these professions has been most lucrative for you?

- Influencer: 38.9%
- Gig Worker: 30.1%
- Podcaster: 13.3%
- Content Creator: 
- TikToker: 
- Instagrammer: 
- YouTuber: 
What is the nature of your beauty?

- Chtonic: 46.5%
- Empyrean: 19.3%
- Percipient: 19.3%
- Galvanic: 14.9%
Who said "All art is propaganda."

- Ayn Rand: 50%
- Lenny Bruce: 9.3%
- Charlie Chaplin: 8.5%
- Pablo Picasso: 9.3%
- George Orwell: 50%
- Norman Mailer: 9.3%
- Susan Sontag: 9.3%
- Jean-Paul Sartre: 9.3%
- Lady Gaga: 9.3%
Which photograph most reflects how you feel today?

1. 34.2%
2. 20.8%
3. 31.7%
4. 13.3%
What does this say?

- YOLO: 25.6%
- FOMO: 23.1%
- FUD: 7.7%
- OMG: 28.2%
- IRL: 7.7%
- IDK: 7.7%
- Klaatu Barada Nikto: 7.7%
What slows down time for you?

- A pandemic
- a tree
- an economics lecture
- answering questionnaires
- Being focused
- being sick
- Being totally absorbed in an activity
- Being with people I care about
- Birds
- Birdwatching
- Birdwatching
- Bitch slapping Joe Biden
- Bleeding.
- Bleeding.
- Boredom boredom
- breath
- Cake
- CBD
- Chantal Akerman films
- Children
- clocks
- clouds
- coffee
- composing music
- concentration
- Conflict
- DMT
- Doctors waiting rooms.
- Doing nothing
- DOPE
- "Down time," whenever it happens, goes at its own speed, which cannot be altered.
- Dreaming of 2's day, early Morning
- Dressing well.
- Entropy
- Everything
- Fear of sleep.
- fear, anticipation, and observation
- fire
- Grocery shopping, hotel rooms, ellipsis
- Herschell Gordon Lewis movies
- Holding a handstand for time
- Hope
- Hot weather slows down time in a good languorous way. Exercising in a gym slows down time in a boring way.
- insomnia
- Listening to a breeze.
- looking for answers
- Love
- Love
- love
- Love!
- Lying in a all-grey hospital room waiting to go under
- lying on my back holding my breath at the bottom of an exhale underwater looking up at the light on the surface of the water from underneath
- making 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When Chekhov was asked where he finds his material, he said, as a final resort “If you look long enough at anything, say just that wall in front of you—it will come out of that wall.” . . . What is your wall?

- a bird
- A blade of grass
- A book, or a song
- A compost pile - sometimes the edges of a parking lot
- a dark green wall
- A difficult person stonewalling.
- A fireplace
- A paper bag.
- A sky
- A wall
- A wall
- A wall
- A wall
- a word and its history
- adobe
- An accumulation of glances.
- Anything
- back of the closet
- Bias
- Birds
- Blank computer screen
- Bob Ashley’s writing
- Boredom
- Boredom
- Clean laundry
- coffee
- Consciousness
- Couch
- Dark Side o’ the Lids
- Darkness
- Depression
- dirt/garbage
- electricity
- emptiness
- Everywhere
- Existence
- Existence
- Fatigue
- Flaubert
- Found objects
- Frame stucco.
- good books
- Hey certain true
- horizon
- huuuu?
- hunting and gathering in my collections of unfinished junk
- Hypnagogic and hypnapompic and dream states
- I’ll get back to you on this
- Instagram
- iPad
- It’s a rabbit hole...
- le monde
- light
- Listening to jazz
- Lying in bed late at night looking out into the darkness
- math
- Mind, Mind’s Eye, Dreams, Liminal Space
- MUD PIEs
- My anus.
- my dreams
- My empty easel
- My fabric collection
- my memory
- My mind
- natur
- Nature
- Nature
- New Mexico sunsets
- noise
- Nudity
- Oh no!
- pages of books
- Pain
- painting
- Patterns in words and in nonhuman nature.
- Process
- Process
- puns
- Red Dirt
- running water
- sleep
- sleep
- Sleep
- space
- Stillness
- Stucco
- Suffering
- Sun, wind, shadow
- tbh climate change and my rage at earlier generations for not doing better for us
- tending the grounds
- That wall in front of me
- that window next to you
- That’s Wall, folks.
- The back of my eyelids.
- The back of my eyelids.
- The boundary between me and you.
- the clock ticking
- the elm tree outside my window
- The ground
- The Internet
- the landscape
- The moon
- The news
- The nighttime sky
- The Pacific Ocean
- the shower
- The sky
- the space between stars
- The window above my writing desk.
- this is a trick question
- Time
- Trees
- um... a wall?
- Walking by the ocean
- water
- Weed
- wherever I happen to be
- window
- wood
What type are you?

- Type 1: 40.3%
- Type 2: 14.3%
- Type 3: 42.9%
- Type 4: 

Images:
1. Strange face
2. Face with a mouth
3. Face with dollar signs
4. Face with geometric shapes
Which of these theorists has influenced your lifestyle choices?

- Freud: 14 (12.5%)
- Reich: 9 (8%)
- Jung: 55 (49.1%)
- Marcuse: 9 (8%)
- Maslow: 26 (23.2%)
- Skinner: 17 (15.2%)
- Gurdjieff: 14 (12.5%)
Which image is gender neutral?

- box of screwdrivers: 49.2%
- the produce aisle: 28%
- mouse trap: 17.8%
- two shrouded cars: (not applicable)
Please click on all the issues that are of critical importance to you at this time. This will give the false impression that you are actually doing something.

deforestation: 89 (78.8%)
racial injustice: 93 (82.3%)
dark money: 76 (67.3%)
healthcare for all: 95 (84.1%)
gun regulations: 81 (71.7%)
corporate accountability: 78 (69%)
poverty and homelessness: 93 (82.3%)
renewable energy: 85 (75.2%)
sex trafficking: 77 (68.1%)
sustainable resources: 88 (77.9%)
voter suppression: 86 (76.1%)
white supremacy: 88 (77.9%)
What keeps you going? (choose 3)

- coffee, milk, cereal
- DRUGS / READING / RAKU
- food & water
- fun
- fun
- fun
- fun
- fun
- fun, Fun only, but I had to choose Other to explain myself.
- fun, love
- fun, love
- fun, love
- fun, love, art
- fun, love, berries
- fun, love, breakfast
- fun, love, Burning books
- fun, love, Burning books
- fun, love, Coffee
- fun, love, community
- fun, love, Dreams and the Unconscious
- fun, love, Fear of disappointment
- fun, love, hate
- fun, love, hate
- fun, love, hate
- fun, love, hate
- fun, love, hate, curiosity
- fun, love, hate, Money
- fun, love, Hearing songs in everything.
- fun, love, Hope
- fun, love, Life
- fun, love, multiple choice questions
- fun, love, pizza
- fun, love, Sleep
- fun, love, solving problems
- fun, love, Surrealism
- fun, love, Synchronicity Serendipity
- fun, love, the unknown
- fun, love, You
- fun, stupidity
- fun, work, hate
- fun, work, hate
- fun, work, hate
- fun, work, hate
- fun, work, hate
- fun, work, hate
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
- fun, work, love
What is the strangest thing you actually believe?

- A variation of simulation theory
- ants are smarter than we are
- art
- astral travel
- belief is just relief spelled with an upsidedown one-legged R
- Birds talk to me
- Birds talk to me
- Creativity
- Creativity
- dick click chaney and donald trump have the same father
- Energy
- everything happens for a reason
- fate
- goodness will prevail
- how can humans look into the past and see such naivete, but then look at the present & future with such arrogance?
- humanity is not entirely irredeemable
- humans are animals
- I am accompanied etheerealy by six dragons in highly saturated hues.
- I believe that relativity applies to each and every one of us.
- I can really fly.
- I don’t believe anything strange
- I exist
- I exist outside of my physical body
- I have a soul
- I have magical powers
- I have no strange beliefs, only transcendental ones.
- I stop watches
- I talk to dead people
- I’m amongst enemies
- I’m not really that old.
- I’m worthless
- if I knew I would stop believing it
- In energy manifesting between people
- It’s all going to be ok
- karma
- lakes are persons
- life has meaning
- Mares.
- Mind over matter.
- Mind over matter.
- my eyes change color
- My father was reincarnated into a seal.
- myself
- Myself
- N.A.
- Not strange, no one is unique. We are all similar
- Not sure.
- one day there will be no violence
- prayer, but only 1 prayer
- Quantum entanglement
- ranked choice voting is a good idea
- Reincarnation
- Robin Williams was just trying to cum
- Santa Claus
- Santa Claus
- Science and God are both real.
- Several politicians
- Shapeshifting
- Someday I will get to live by the ocean in a vital community
- Someone will come to help
- stones have souls
- Tat tvam asi
- That all life is interconnected to the extent that we share a universal subconscious
- That all people are good
- that anything is worthwhile
- That Donald Trump is human.
- That glowing health is dependent on consumption of copious quantities of butter
- that hard work and best intentions pay off
- That I am conscious
- That I matter
- That I will die and be forever dead
- That I’m still here
- that it’s worth it
- that my answer will actually make a difference
- That my mustache is like Samson’s hair
- that my twin brother and I could communicate telepathically as children
- That none of the things I believe are strange
- That people actually don’t like me
- That the universe was designed with me in mind
- That there are ghosts, and that they are good.
- That there is a library in the time space continuum that contains the thoughts and experiences of every sentient being. Akashic Records!!!
- That there is an unseen entity that creates each being
- That there is hope
- That there is no such thing as Randomness
- That twiddling my thumbs helps me remain calm
- That we are all connected
- that we can all live peacefully together
- that we can talk with the dead
- That we’ve ALL been here before
- the earth is round
- The first and last words of a book tells story. Same as the sentence first and last. Why? Because that in stone those words and Waze people see the whole middle differently than each other.
- The hereafter is a comfort but I don’t believe it.
- The imagination is a network of galactic portals
- the infinite parallel universe thing
- The most important things are all invisible
- The truth.
- The value of narrative construction
- theocratic anarchism
- There are things in the same place as us we don’t see or know about and they probably didn’t have a clue about us either.
- There is beauty in everything.
- there is spiritual connection between people before and after death
- There will be a future that is not dystopian
- This survey
- ur mum
- WALKING BAREFOOT IN GRASS FOR ELECTRIC BALANCE
- We are between worlds
- We are so tiny, in the scope of the universe, that our minds can’t even comprehend how small we are.
- We can get through this.
- We live in our own simulations
- we're not alone in the universe
- Well that depends on who you ask!
- Woop.
How many stop signs can you find in this picture?

- One
- One
- One
- 1
- 3
- no <3
- 4
- Eleven
- eleventy twenty forty
- 12
- 12
- 15
- 15 or so
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 18
- 18
- 18
- 19
- 19.5
- 20
- 20
- 21
- 21
- 21
- 22
- 22
- 22
- 22 and 4 halves.
- 23
- 23
- 23 (And I am not a robot!)
- 24
- 24
- 25
- 25
- 25
- 25
- 25
- 25
- LOL ;-) 25 but that was one pass of counting so I’d
guess there are a few more than that. I’m
mostly enjoying the effect of all of them
collaged together!
- 26
- 26
- 26
- 26
- 26
- 26
- 26
- 26 maybe - I don’t like counting things
- 27
- 27
- 27
- at least 27
- 27ish
- 29
- 29
- 30
- Thirty
- 31 + the infinitude of stop signs in our own minds,
  maaan
- 31 I am not a robot.
- 36
- 37
- 37
- 42
- 45
- 100
- 333
- 3000
- 69420
- 69420
- 8753
- a lot
- A lot
- A lot
- a lot
- a whole bunch.
- All of them
- all of them
- almost all of them
- are there any?
- brain hurt... <exiting visual cortex> <reboot soft>
- Enough.
- enuf
- fuck off
- I hate these things; they favor visual acuity.
- I only see pots
- Infinity +1
- Lots
- Lots
- lots
- lots of them
- Many
- many
- many
- More than enough
- more than I am willing to count
- More than I want to count
- More than needed
- multiplicity
- None
- Not interested in knowing
- Several
- Signs of what?
- so many
- some among others
- There is only one stop sign
- There’s no way I’m going to complete this
task - I’m not your monkey
- too many
- Too many
- Too many to try and count.
- Too many to waste time counting them
- Too many.
- who cares?
- why is a mouse when its spinning
Which of these do you use?

- **effluvium**: 20 (18.2%)
- **pseudopodia**: 17 (15.5%)
- **ectoplasm**: 29 (26.4%)
- **telekinesis**: 38 (34.5%)
- **asphaltum**: 25 (22.7%)
- **ebullition**: 32 (29.1%)
- **recrudescence**: 18 (16.4%)
- **nystagmus**: 15 (13.6%)
- **parataxis**: 48 (43.6%)
- **anastasis**: 20 (18.2%)
Which of these dirt piles has the most dirt?

- Option 1: 72.2%
- Option 2: 16.5%
- Option 3: 
- Option 4:
To what do you attribute your success?

- The conceptual rigor of my ideas.
- Pulling really hard on my bootstraps.
- The names of the schools I attended.
- Having beautiful hair and a great smile.
- Networking, networking, networking.
- The color of my outer surface.
- My Instagram account.
- My astrological chart.
- I am a genius.
- Dumb luck.
What does "freedom" mean to you?

- no government: 64.9%
- no death: 21.6%
- no shoes: 9%
- no nothing: 0%
Choose the statement below that you think best describes this artist's intention.

- To explore the intersection of self-similar patterning and the vastness of liminal space to provide both a sense of comfort and a glance at hopelessness.
- To reimagine personal identity by investigating nostalgic memories interpreted through emotions and objects placed in a dangerous yet familiar space.
- To engage the viewer's perceptions by examining the relationships between individual and collective psychology and the politics of spatial control.
- To confront the duplicity concerning informed consent in a place where the tension between movement and structure, freedom and control, loses ground.
Have you ever paid attention to bollards?

- No: 28.2%
- Yes: 71.8%
Have you ever voted for an idiot?

- yes
- of course

82.6%
17.4%
How many guns do you own?

- less than one: 68.7%
- more than ten: 28.7%
- not sure: 28.7%
The phrase "under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance by the U.S. Congress on June 14, 1954.
A bad breakup
A beautiful contemplative woman
A beautiful girl
A beautiful woman in an interesting neighborhood.
a city very different from the one in which we ostensibly live
A femme looking dreamily through a toy store window at the latest edition
of Tangrams
A fire escape
A friend
A friend
A friend
A fun neighborhood
a literary figure or trope
a manatee
A Melody with paper birds in front of a black and white street scene.
a moment in time
A photograph hanging in space
A poet
A polar bear and a lady
a reflection
A sick album cover
A street and 5 people.
A summer day in NYC
a sweet melody in the chaos
A swimming pool
a very old friend
a window breaking
A woman wondering why she exists in that moment
A young Melody?
an unrepeatable event
beautiful decay
black and white
Brooklyn
Chaos
Chaos
Chaos
Chaos
Chaos
Chaos
cityscape
cityscape
Creation
Crystal meth
Crystal meth
Death
Decay
Decay
Decay on the photo
Feminist art
Fire escape, window, two people walking, three people looking at the viewer. Melody looking suspiciously.
Fragmented memories
fragments of a dream
gentrification
Gentrification and 7 year bad luck
glare
hope
Humans
Life going on
Lisa Straussfeld
Marginalized neighborhood
Melodie
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody
Melody in an urban landscape with other people on the street. A reflection it appears.
Melody in San Francisco early 1980s, 2 pedestrians, 2 looters on a stoop, graphic distortion
Melody in street seen through dirty window
Melody!
Michaelsisms
my friend
my grandma's missing ring
my old apartment building
My sister-in-law, Melody.
Mythical City Scene
Neighborhood
Not sure
NYC
Observers and pedestrians
Passengers.
people
people
People just living
people, windows, a very wide sidewalk.
reflection
reminds me of the maybe Simone Forti piece where she left the audience and walked across
the street while a recording played of what she was gonna do
seeing
shattering
Snow, leaves, tarps
Soho
Soho
Someone I knew when she was very young.
spaceship
Street art
Summer Carnahan
Sunlight on urban buildings
the associative matrix glitch
The familiar and the unknown; despair and chaos; understanding and separation.
the inevitability of change
The profusion of alacrity that dominates the zeitgeist
The reimagining of personal identity by investig-
inging nostalgic memories interpreted through emotions and objects placed in a dangerous yet familiar space.
things failing
too much
two ducks kissing
Unchained Melody by the Righteous Brothers
urban blight with Melody in the foreground
Urban decay
wind crying mary
windows
windows
Women of glitch art
You
yung melodee
When did things go wrong?

- When money was invented. (20.7%)
- When art schools were invented. (4.3%)
- When art fairs were invented. (3.4%)
- When the artist’s statement was invented. (21.8%)
- Other: (50%)
  - Abrahamism
  - Agriculture
  - All of the above
  - Art critiques
  - Birth
  - Clickbait surveys in artsy language to hide the true intent
  - Day 2
  - Gunpowder.

I don’t feel qualified to answer this (compared to my extreme qualifications in dirt estimation, for example)

- In the beginning
- industrial revolution
- is something wrong?
- It was clearly wrong when it all began
- Light bulb, telephone, automobile, television, atomic bomb, it is all downhill.
- Mesopotamian agricultural revolution
- Not sure.
- Nothing is wrong.
- Nothing is wrong.
- the big bang
- They keep going right and wrong simultaneously
- Things have gone exactly as they were supposed to, unfortunately.
- Things haven’t gone wrong.
- this is a cute survey but reflexive anti-art world propaganda is boring
- Wait, things are going wrong?
- when agriculture was invented
- when agriculture was invented
- When agriculture was invented.
- When art became a thing and not a process
- When art was separated from life
- When art wasn’t re-invented.
- When evolution forgot a key hominin survival attribute.
- when government was invented
- when greed and hate were invented
- When he tried to push it just a little bit further
- When humans arrived
- When I forgot my keys.
- When I was born
- When I was born
- when invention was invented
- When invention was monetized for artist’s statements, to be fair
- When minding the store started
- When people got jealous of artists.
- When people started believing the artist’s statement said something.
- When questions were invented.
- When race was invented
- When religion was invented.
- when the concept of self was invented
- When the concept of wrong was invented
- When the OJ Simpson/Kardashian reality TV was started.
- When the roaring 20s ended.
- When there became too many humans
- when they created Patriarchy, duh
- When we climbed down from the trees.
- When we kept repeating our mistakes
- when we started to commodify art
- Whenever
- Whenever
- yes.
Why are you completing this questionnaire?

- Because I like both & respect your interventions
- I love Burning Books
- I love my friend Michael
- I love you
- I miss you
- I miss you two
- I thought this was a loan application. Inmit?!
- I want to know what other people said
- I was asked to
- I was intrigued by the art piece 998. Besides being beautiful & delicate it is also about communication.
- I'm not.
- In order to put one grain of sand on the scale in favor of inclusive fun. Art is Keen!
- inertia
- insomnia
- It is like eating sunflower seeds, I can't stop.
- It makes me laugh
- It's a good distraction
- It's more fun than doing the dishes
- It's the best thing on the internet
- Its fun
- It's quirky and fun, and my lovely friend Elisa suggested it
- It's so much better than many other things to do in this moment. I love my M&Ms.
- I'm bored
- I'm completing this questionnaire because it made me curious
- I'm high and postponing bedtime
- I'm very whitty. You should have my opinions.
- Joy.
- Joyful tangent on a Monday
- Love
- Love
- Love.
- Love.
- Love.
- Michael asked me to.
- my daily regimen of exercises in futility
- My painful existence
- My painful existence
- Out of pure love!
- Procrastination.
- QR code told me to
- Revenge bedtime procrastination
- so people will think i am fascinating and with it.
- so that I don't miss the deadline
- test driver
- The BB asked me to
- the obligations of friendship
- The odds of winning the lottery are less than being struck by lightning.
- there is not why, I do
- thought I could be clever but you got there first.
- Also, procrastination.
- to distract myself from brooding
- To learn about the world and my role in it
- to say hi to you two
- To slow down time, to dwell in beauty, to concretize the ineffable.
- Waiting for my delayed flight to take off
- waiting for my spanikopita to bake
- Why not?
- why not?
- Why not? And I love you guys.
- Will I complete it? It's getting long.
Thanks again . . .

for letting us cajole you into participating in *Why is art like an alligator?*
If you have any complaints, comments, or questions please let us know at: info@burningbooks.org