

DETRITUS & ART / A personal point of view on Environment and Art

by Rainer Stegmann



Is this art, or waste?

The reader immediately remarks that this is not the right question, since art can also be created from waste, as I have shown in many examples on my previous Detritus art Pages. The question should be whether this was created by an artist or simply happened. I saw this metal plate – I think it was metal – among partly discarded construction materials near an art school on the campus of a university in China. So, it could have been thrown away by an art student and become waste, or it could be construction material spotted with black paint.

The picture shows an abstract painting style with black areas, spots and lines. It reminds me a bit of the paintings of Jackson Pollock (1912-1956). Now, engaging a bit more with this plate, I tend to think it was created by an art student, though I am not sure. The art student may not have been satisfied with their work and may have discarded it among the other material at the construction site.

We may now start a discussion about what is art, but we will not find the answer.

Anyway, does it matter? I think the important question is whether I am attracted to it, regardless of whether it was created by an artist or by accident. The attraction may be triggered by its beauty, content and the kind of creation, or it may simply attract us without a clear explanation of why. In my view, art does not always need an explanation; it raises attention through feelings and emotions.

Whether painted or accidentally created as art from waste, it makes no difference once it is discarded. Maybe the plate will be recycled either as material or, as a whole, as a piece of art. In such cases, it would make sense to give people a chance to get it. In some countries, there are second-hand warehouses for all kinds of discarded products that can give them a second life. If someone buys this piece of art there, it would find its purpose in a second life.

*In the next issue of
DETRITUS, will tell
the story about this
bag ...*

