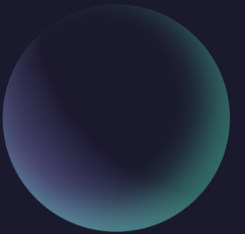




THE HUMAN COMEDY

Mirth and Mockery
in Masterpieces



René Magritte. *Clairvoyance* 1936

Hieronymus Bosch 1450 - 1516

Early Netherlandish



Drolleries

confitebor illi: salutare uultus mei
et deus meus.

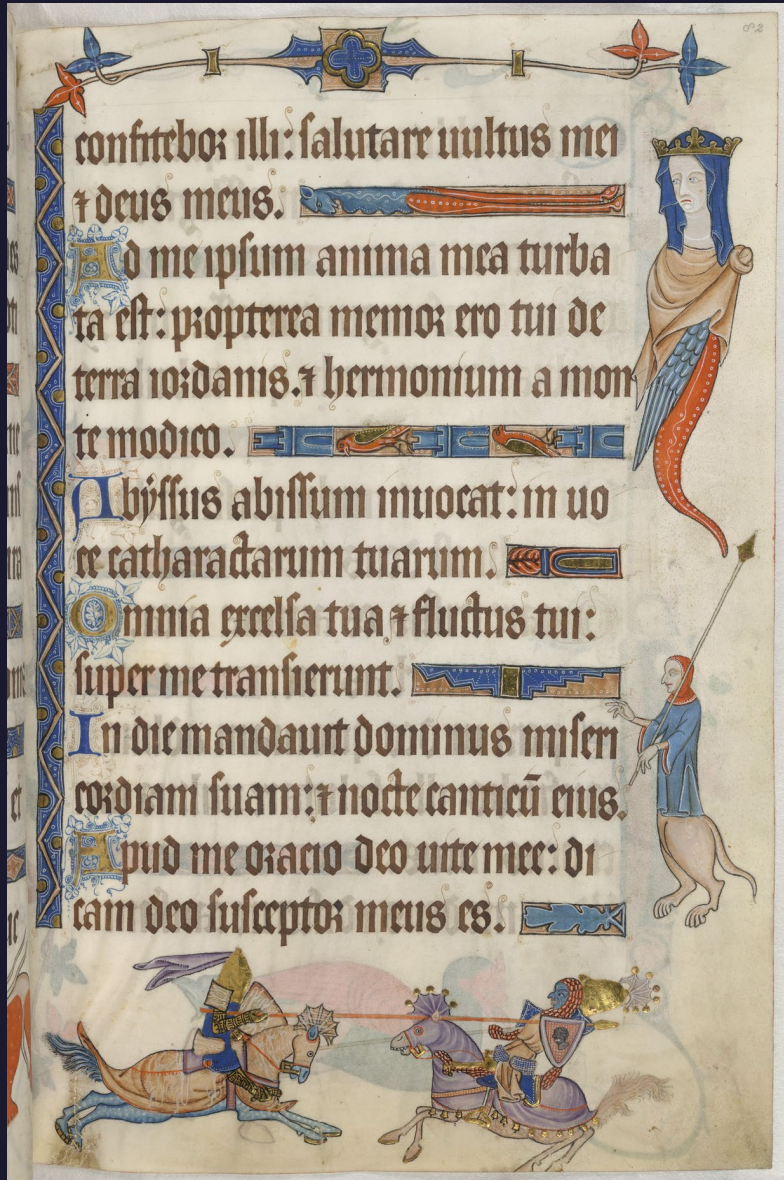
Ad me ipsum anima mea turba
ta est: propterea memor ero tui de
terra iordanis. et hermonium a mon
te modico.

Abysus abyssum inuocat: in uo
ce catharadarum tuarum.

Omnia excelsa tua et fluctus tui:
super me transierunt.

In die mandauit dominus miseri
cordiam suam: et nocte canticum eius.

Apud me oratio deo uite mee: di
cain deo susceptor meus es.



This illuminated manuscript page features Latin text in a Gothic script with decorative initials. The text is accompanied by several illustrations: a woman in a blue and gold robe on the right, a man in a blue robe riding a dog on the right, and two knights on horseback at the bottom. The page is decorated with floral and geometric patterns in the margins.

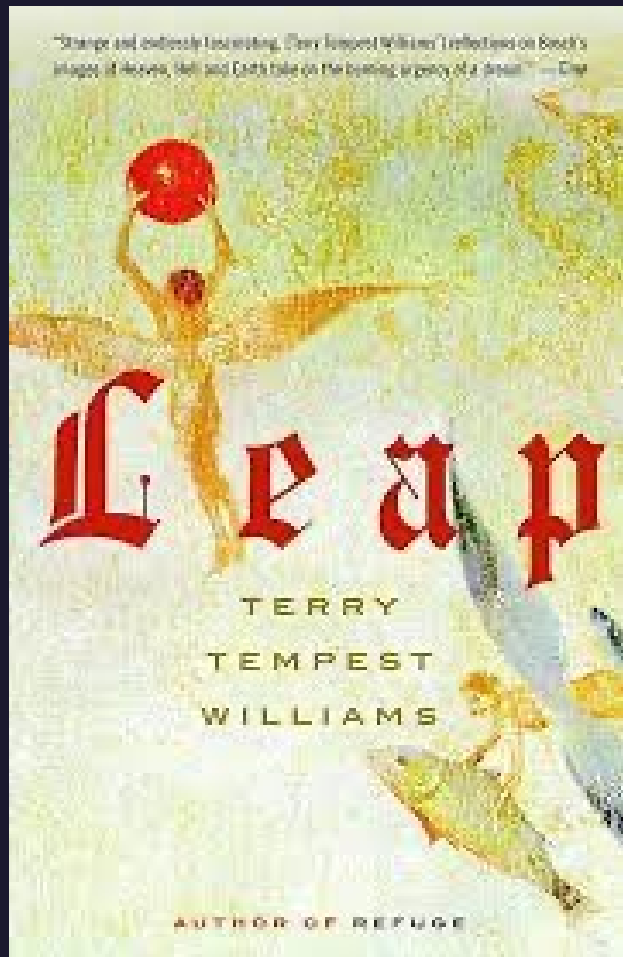


The Garden of Earthly Delights 1510



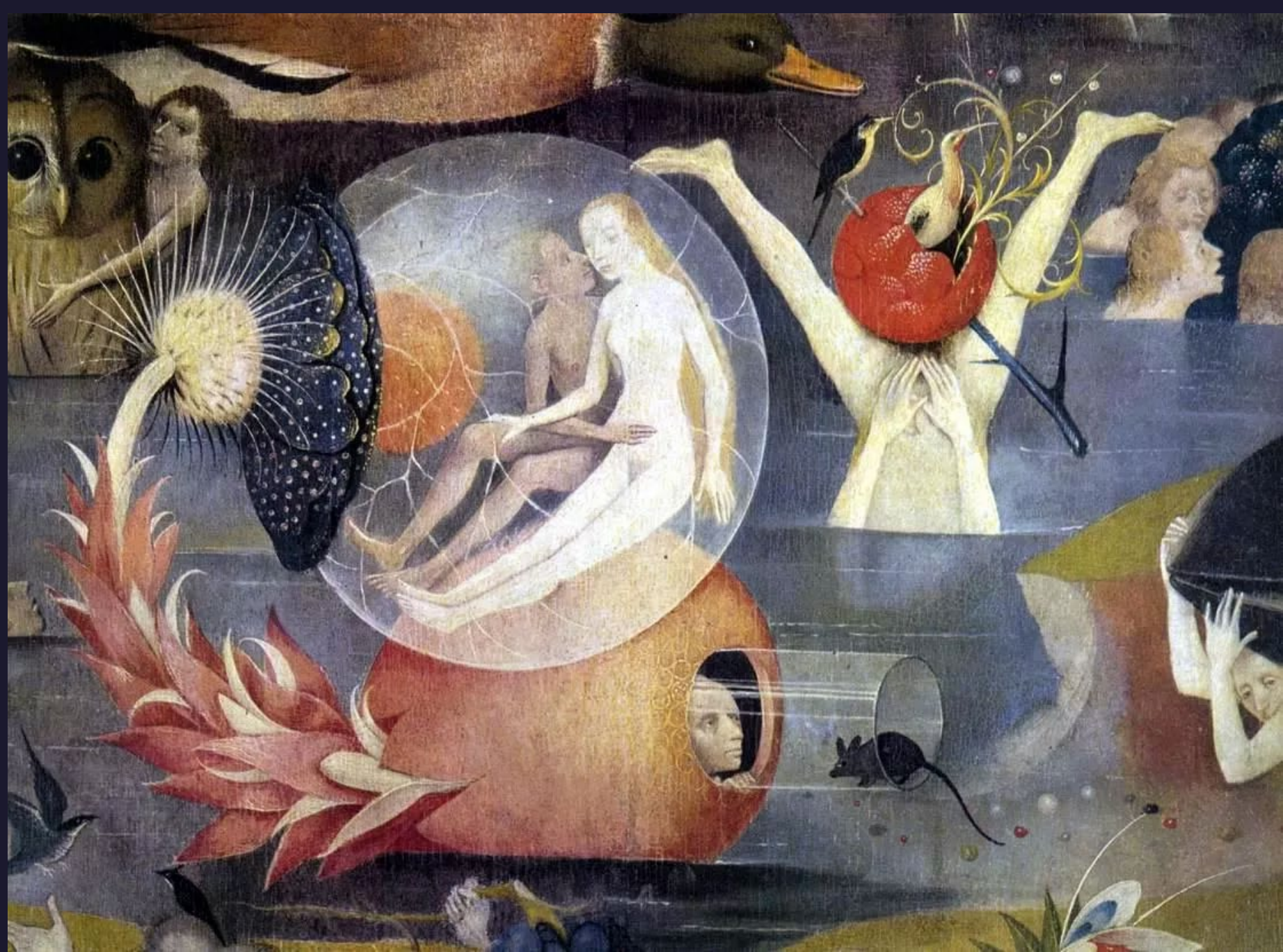
Bosch's penchant for humor and absurdity shines through his masterpiece. Nude figures twist their spindly bodies around one another and perform acrobatic poses, and birds and animals look on or join in the erotic revelry. Levity can even be found in the macabre scenes of destruction on the triptych's right side, where a pair of giant ears wields a massive knife and monumental musical instruments are used as torture devices.





"Strange and endlessly
fascinating... take[s] on the
burning urgency of a dream."
—*Time*

Frolicking in The
Garden of
Mirthly, Earthly
Delights



All Hell Breaking Loose



Babylon 2022



People Magazine
Review:

**Lights! Camera!
Naughtiness!**

**If you ever
wondered how a
Hieronymus Bosch
painting of the
Academy Awards
might look, this is
close**



Fools and Grotesqueries

Quentin Matsys *An Allegory of Folly*

Early 16th Century

In the early sixteenth century fools were still commonly found at court or Sometimes a fool would be mentally handicapped, to be mocked for the amusement of the general public. Matsys has chosen to represent his fool with a wen, a lump on the forehead, which was believed to contain a "stone of folly" responsible for stupidity or mental handicap. In other instances, however, the fool would be a clever and astute observer of human nature, a comedian who used the fool's robes as a pretext for satire and ridicule.

The traditional costume of the fool includes a hooded cape with the head of a cock and the ears of an ass, as well as bells, here attached to a red belt. The fool holds a staff known as a marotte, or bauble, topped with a small carved figure of another fool - himself wearing the identifying cap. This staff would have been used as a puppet for satirical skits or plays, and the figure's obscene gesture of dropping his trousers, symbolic of the insults associated with fools, was once overpainted by a previous owner who found it overly shocking.

The gesture of silence, with the fool holding a finger to his lips, refers to the Greek god of silence, Harpocrates, who was generally depicted in this manner. Silence was considered a virtue associated with wise men .Here, however, Matsys turns the gesture into a parody by juxtaposing it with the inscription 'keep your mouth shut', beneath the crowing cock's head. Matsys is drawing our attention to the Fool's indiscretion..

Matsys' fool is made even more grotesque by his hideous deformities - an exaggerated, beaked nose and hunched back - and thin-lipped, toothless smirk.



Jan Matsys 1509–1575

***Rebus: The World Feeds
Many Fools
About 1530***

The painting is a rebus—a word puzzle—that the artist has challenged us to solve. The key is reading the image like a written text—left to right and top to bottom—and decoding the pictorial signs according to the sound of the words they represent. In the painting we see the letter D, a globe, a foot, and a fiddle above a fool stuffing his mouth with porridge. When said in Dutch, they read “The world feeds many fools,” a popular proverb. These puzzle games were all the rage!

Grotesque Studies by Leonardo Da Vinci 1490's



courtesy of www.leonardoda-vinci.org



Leonardo Late 15th Century

Quentin Matsys
The Ugly Duchess 1513

John Tenniel's illustration
from *Alice's Adventures in
Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll



Tronies

Youth Making A Face 1635

Adriaen Brouwer, 1606 - 1638

Dutch Golden Age artists loved kinetic scenes of daily life, some idealized, others...not so much. The crude, mocking boy in this mugshot by Adriaen Brouwer may stand in for a crude, mocking painter; Brouwer, notorious for his unkempt appearance, once bought a fancy suit for a wedding, showed up for dinner, and immediately started smearing pies all over his clothes. "Since it was the suit, rather than the man wearing it, that had been invited," Brouwer announced, as cited by the National Gallery of Art, "it deserves to feast on the food."



*Anonymous,
Southern
Netherlands,
ca. 1520*



Two Tronies by Rembrandt and Vermeer



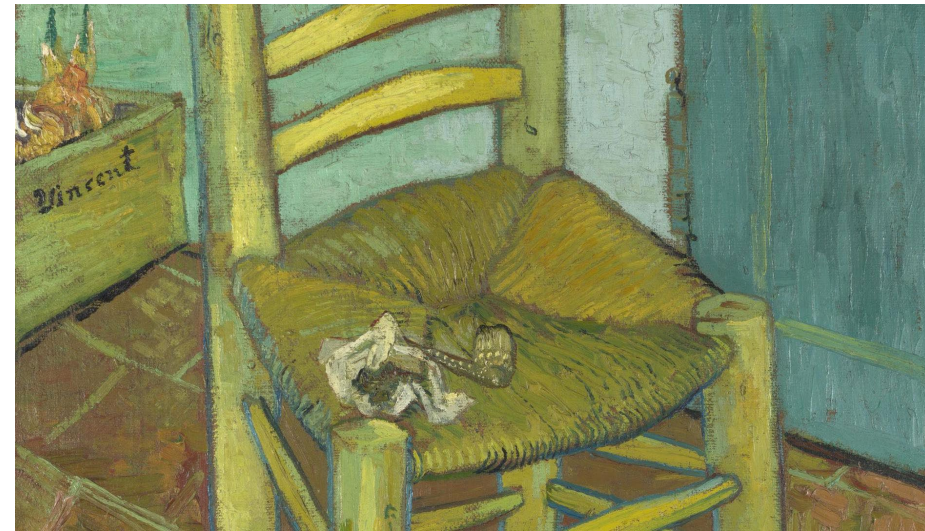
These works were not intended as portraits or caricatures but as studies of expression, type, physiognomy or an interesting character such as an old man or woman, a young woman, the soldier, the shepherdess, the Oriental, or a person of a particular race

The main goal of the artists who created tronies was to achieve a lifelike representation of the figures.. Tronies conveyed different meanings and values to their viewers. Tronies embodied abstract notions such as transience, youth, and old age, but could also function as positive or negative examples of human qualities, such as wisdom, strength, piety, folly, or impulsiveness



**Dutch
Smokers
by
Joos van
Craesbeeck
17th Century**

**and?
19th Century**



Giuseppe Arcimboldo

1526 - 1593



The Waiter 1574

Vertumnus – Rudolf II

1590

Rudolph II Holy Roman Emperor as Vertumnus, the ancient Roman god of seasons who presided over gardens and orchards

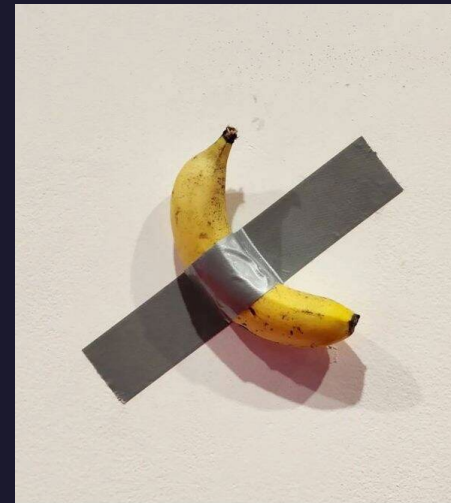


*The
Vegetable
Gardener*
1590



Hiratsuka Yuji Born 1954

Botanists 2009



Son of Man by?? *Comedian* 2019 by Maurizio Cattelan, \$120,000, *Eaten*

21st Century Funny Food Faces



New Yorker David Henry creates extremely weird, borderline-insane self portraits, covering himself with seemingly random items.

Pieter Bruegel the Elder 1525 -1569 Masterpiece Morality

*The Blind
Leading the
Blind*

1568



*Netherlandish
Proverbs*

1559

Also Called
*The Topsy
Turvy World*

For all 126, go to
ReneeFarrington.com

OLLI ART Talk
Meetings with the
Masterpieces





“Fools Get the best cards” (Luck can overcome intelligence)

“To crap on the world” (To Despise Everything)

“The World is turned upside down” (Everything is the opposite of what it should be)

“To lead each other by the nose” (To fool each other)

“There hangs the knife” (To issue a challenge)

This image is a play off the words “Een knip oog,” which means “snip-eye,” or a wink. “Bruegel is winking at his audience , and he expects the viewer to understand that what he has painted in a huge put-on.”



Pieter Brueghel the
Younger
1565 – 1638

*Man with the
Moneybag and
Flatterers*
1592



Jan Molenaer
1610 - 1668

The Five senses
Series: Smell



1637





LOS CAPRICHOS

By Francisco Goya

Might the Pupil Know More? and Until Death



Si sabrà mas el discipulo?



Hasta la muerte.

Detail from *The Burial of the Sardine* 1812



***The Drunken Mason* 1796**



Diego Velasquez

1599 – 1660

The Triumph of Bacchus (or The Drunkards)

1639





**Caravaggio's
Young Sick
Bacchus
(Self-Portrait)
1593**

**A CS Self-
Portrait
1990**

Baroque Chiaroscuro



Photograph

The Drunk Couple and *Mockery of Wine* by the Dutch Master of **Merry Company** Genre Paintings



Jan Steen 1626 - 1679



The Tooth-Puller

1651

The 'doctor's visit' or 'sick girl' was one of Steen's favorite subjects. He would always show the doctors as ridiculous characters, dressed in a completely old-fashioned style. Steen also often made fun of their stupid victims who were fooled by these 'physicians'.

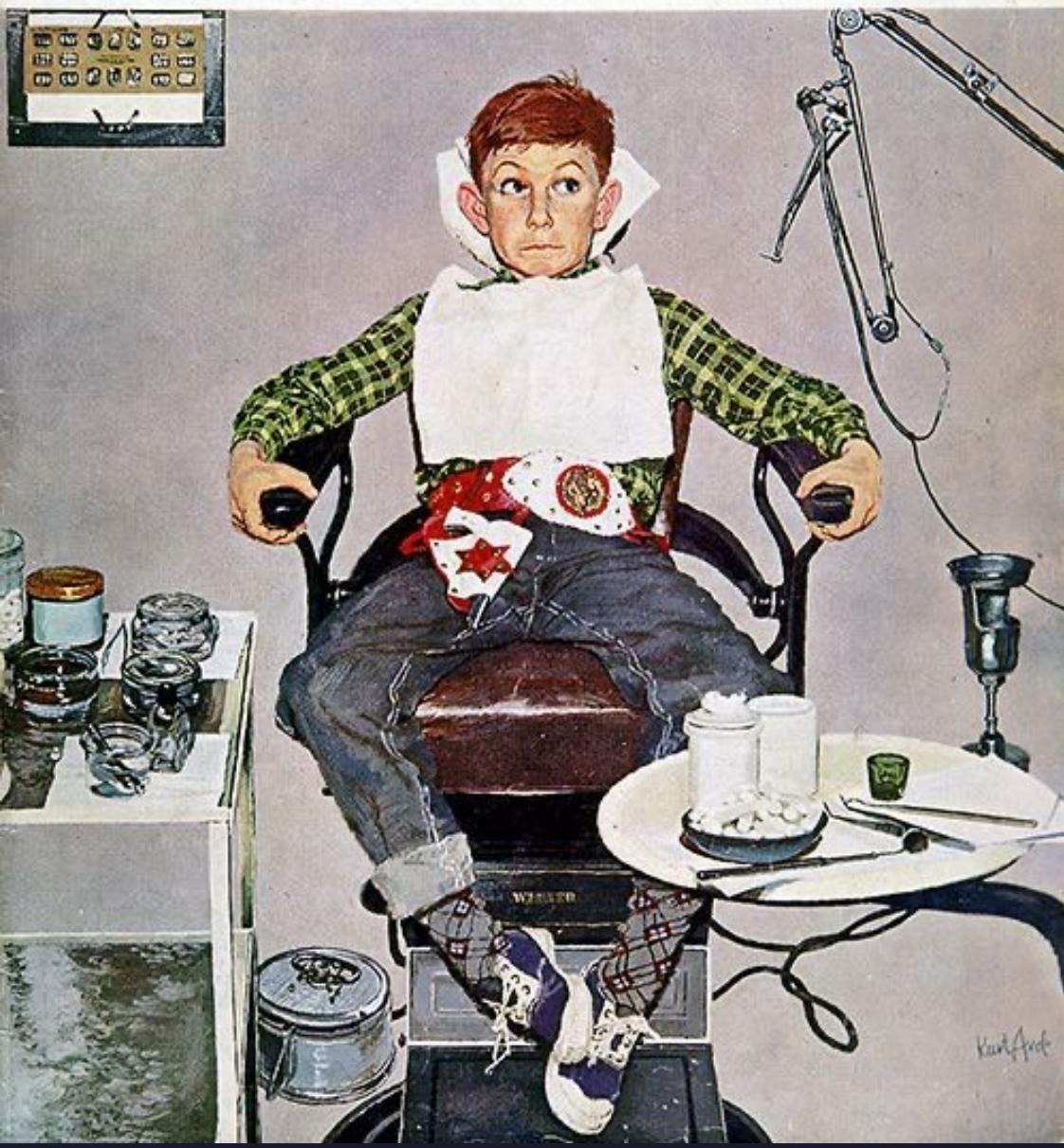
In Steen's early paintings it is mainly poor farmers who are tricked by 'quacks', or fake doctors, and tooth-pullers. The 'doctors' in his later work usually have rich patients.



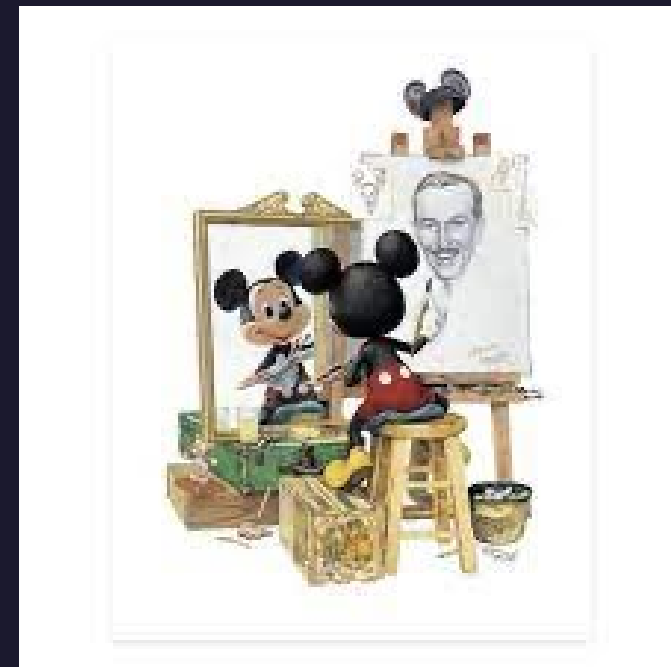
The Saturday Evening
POST
October 19, 1957 - 15¢

I CALL ON DINAH SHORE
By PETE MARTIN

DOES ENGLAND
REALLY NEED A QUEEN?
By MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE



Norman Rockwell 1894 - 1978

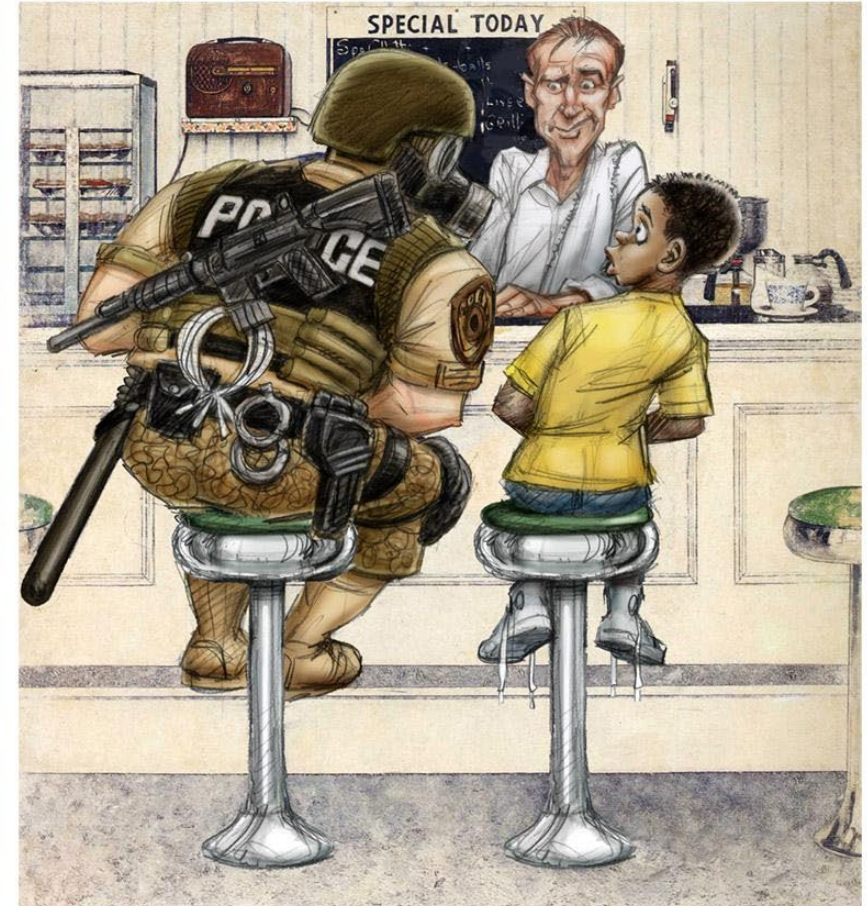


Satire is
Not Always
Humorous

IF NORMAN ROCKWELL DEPICTED TODAY'S AMERICA



1958: "The Runaway"



2014: "The Militarization of Officer Joe"

Honoré Daumier

1808 – 1879

French frivolity in caricature



Caricatures by Mally and Carjat

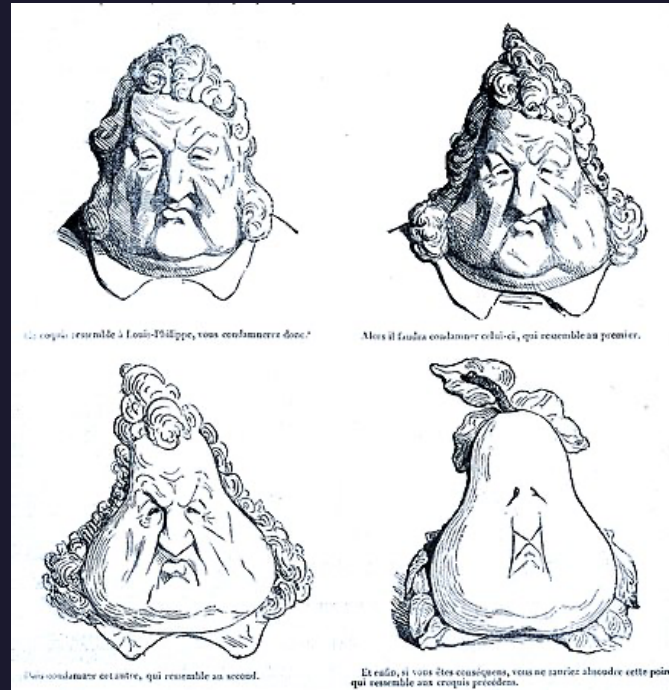
In portraying King Louis-Philippe, the “Citizen King” as a pear in 1834 in *The Past, The Present, The Future*, Daumier alluded to the French monarch’s head shape, his initials and a play on words.



Portrait of the King 1838

Louise Adélaïde Desnos

1807–1878



Gargantua

- Gargantua (1831), lithograph: King Louis Philippe sits on his throne (a close stool), consuming a continuous diet of tribute fed to him by various bureaucrats, dignitaries, and bourgeoisie, while defecating a steady stream of titles, awards, and medals in return.



Gargantua.

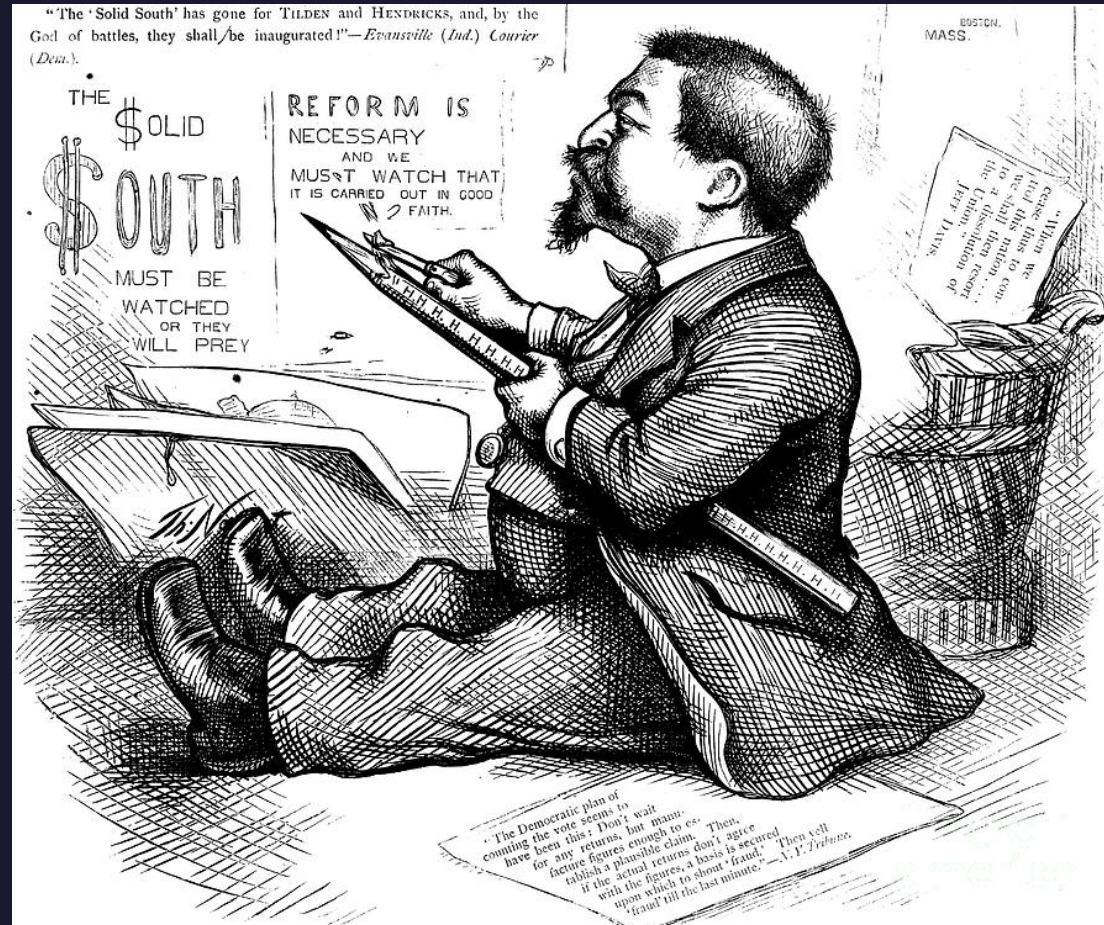
Satirical Cartooning in America



A woodcut attributed to Benjamin Franklin, circa 1754, and is widely considered to be the first political cartoon in American history.

Thomas Nast 1840 – 1902

The “Father of the American Cartoon”



Boss Tweed and Tammany Hall

William “Boss” Tweed quickly became one of the leading, and most corrupt, politicians in New York City. Tweed and his cronies in Tammany Hall—the organization that controlled the Democratic Party and most of its votes—directed local services, controlled elections, and received millions of dollars in kickbacks, bribes, and other forms of brazen corruption.

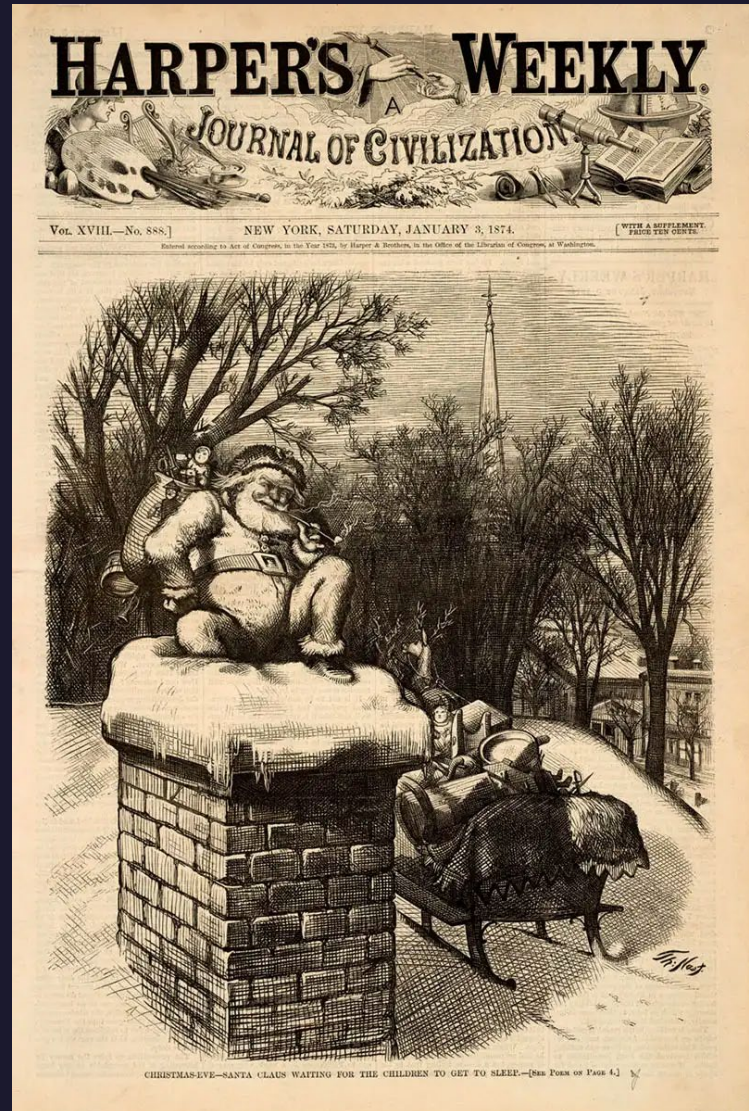
Tweed’s greed drew the attention of Nast whose cartoons drew attention to Tweed and his many illegal activities. Tweed feared Nast’s cartoons to a much greater extent than newspaper articles, because many of his constituents were illiterate, and he even offered Nast a bribe to stop these public criticisms. Nast’s cartoons helped lead to his downfall and arrest in 1876.



The Father of the American Santa Claus

Our modern image of Santa Claus is directly indebted to Nast's dozens of Christmas illustrations for *Harper's Weekly* magazine in the 1860s-80s.

Taking the words of Moore's poem, Nast forged together a new identity for old St. Nick. He brought together the tales of the man who brings presents to children in European folklore and the Saint from the 3rd century CE, forging them into a jolly man who wears red, rides in a sleigh pulled by reindeer, and brings presents to 'good' boys and girls all over the world. The artist also used his own likeness when drawing Santa, leaving us with his imprint on our culture throughout the rest of time.



1874



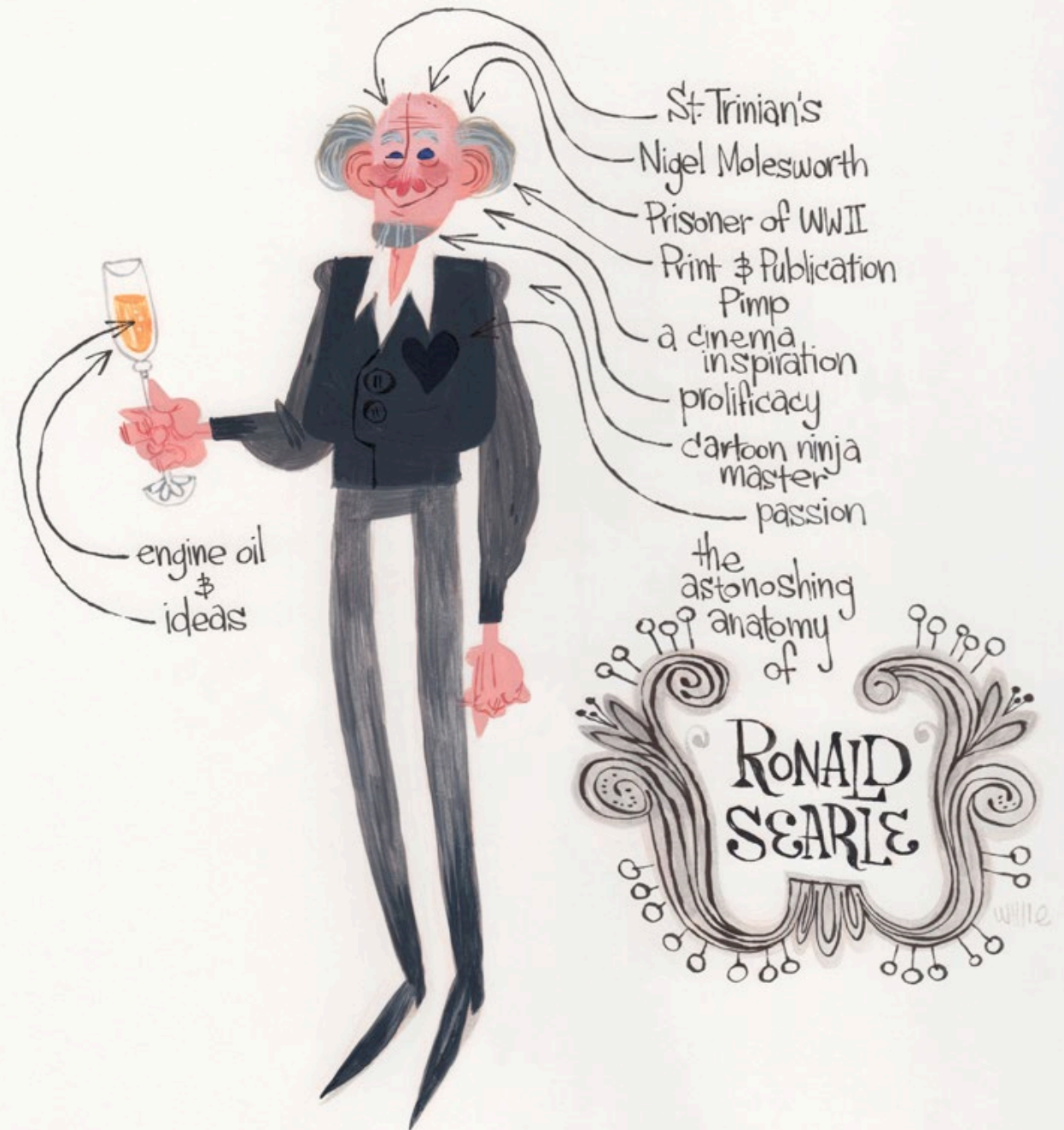
1881

Ronald Searle

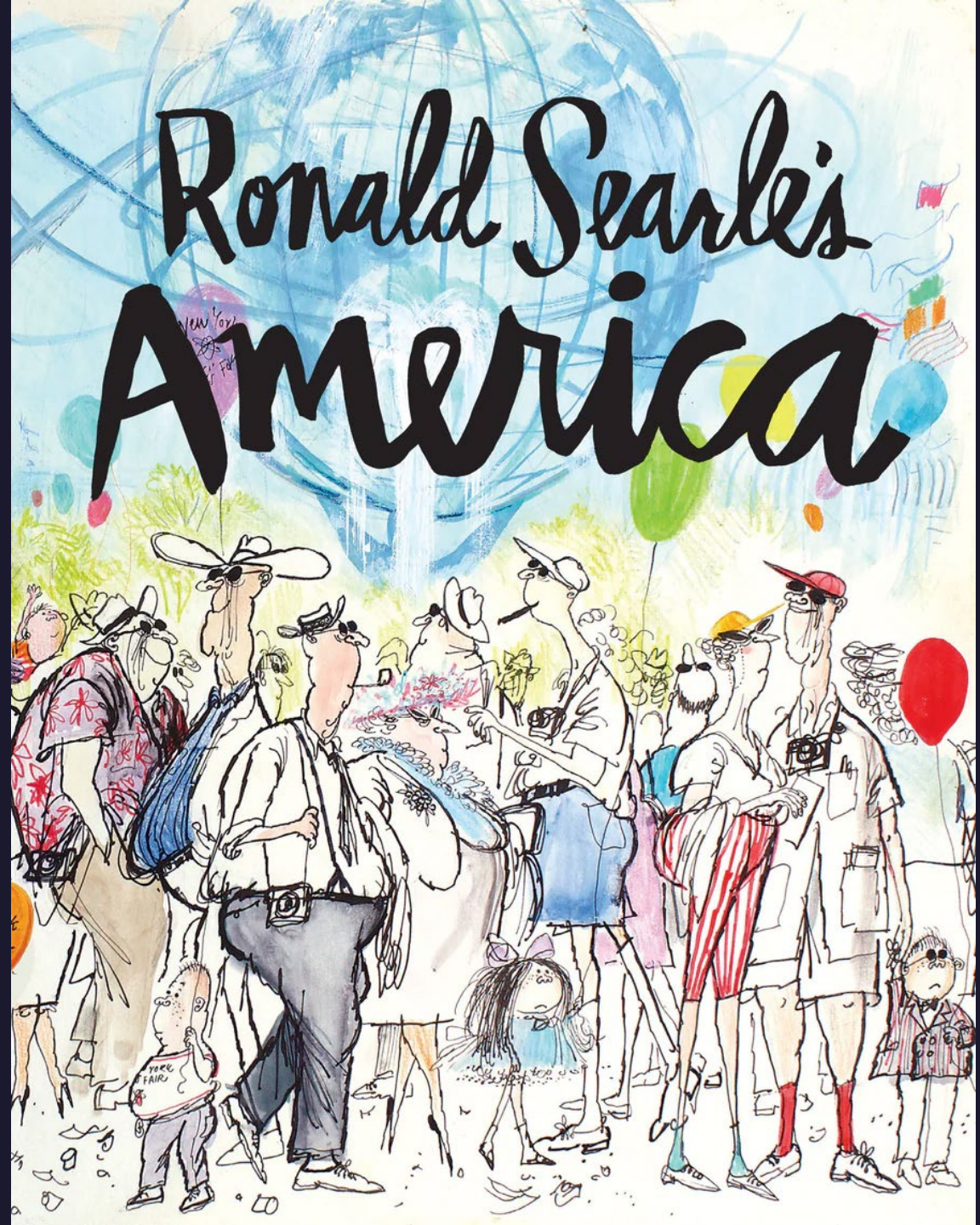
1920 - 2011



Ronald Searle has been called one of the greatest satirical cartoonists of the 20th century. His cartoons capture the full range of work shaped by, in many ways, a life that saw the worst of humankind as a Japanese prisoner of war during World War II. His pieces consistently show his interest in the human condition, illustrating how others see us and how we see others, all delivered with a sharp humor.



Dispatched to America in the early '60s, the golden age of illustrative reportage, Ronald Searle spent several years covering everything—in the form of drawings in his trademark satirical and virtuosic style—from sports to politics, for magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *TV Guide*. Topics included Palm Springs, Las Vegas, the Presidential contest between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon—as seen through the eyes of a caustic Englishman.

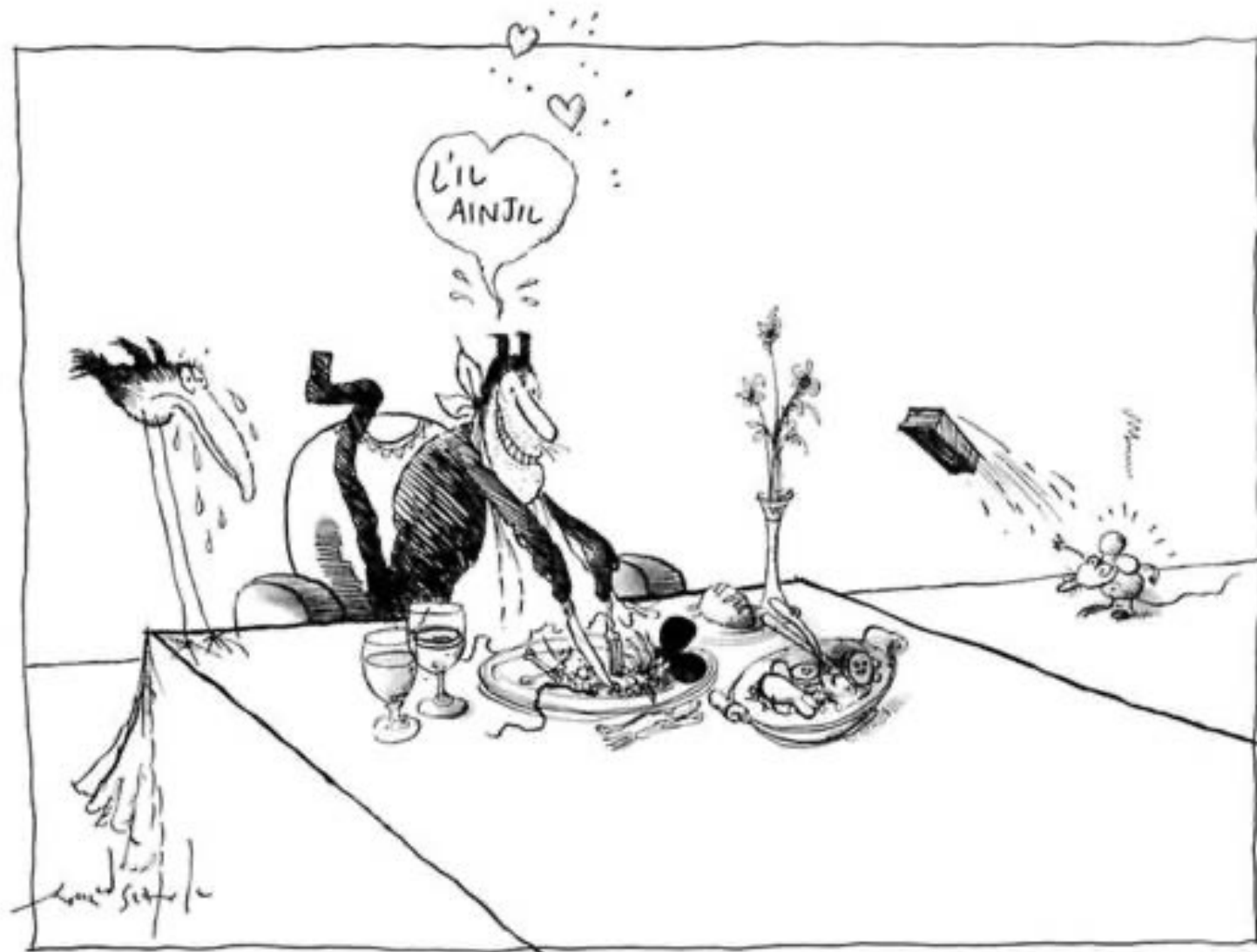


Study For An Urban Project

1972

Searle's color etching, Study For An Urban Project (1972), is an "Homage à Mickey Mouse" and depicts a decrepit, old, crippled, wrinkled, beer-bellied, whiskered Mickey, placed on a plinth in a city square, marked: "Born 19 Sept 1928." For his ridiculing of the human tendency to glorify the banal, Searle was described by the Swiss writer and painter Friedrich Dürrenmatt as "Jonathan Swift with an artist's pen".





CROSSED PATHS

Krazy Kat Meets Mickey Mouse