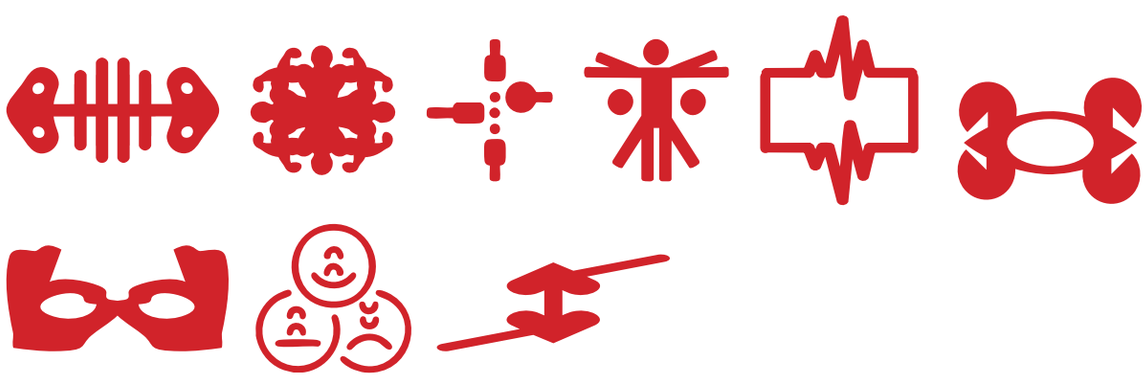
written response
Based on SUSAN SONTAG -“On Style”
Against Interpretation
London: Penguin
[1965] 2009
pp. 15-36

THE STYLE *MANIFESTO*

“Quote + Manifest + Icon”



In this written response work, I am going to “re-present” the main arguments and ideas of Susan Sontag’s “On Style”.

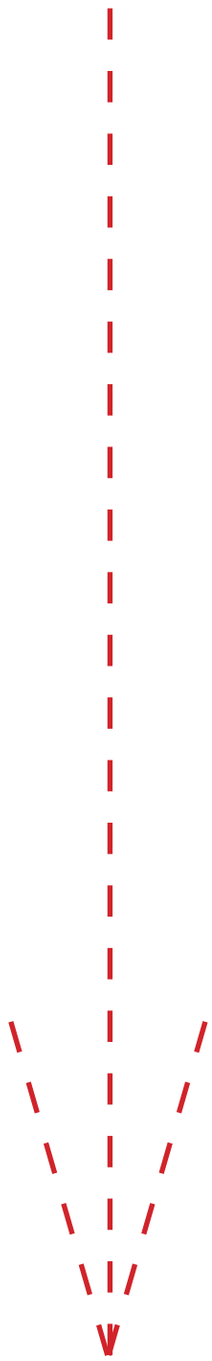
In the essay, Susan Sontag examines the nature of style and form in art, emphasizing that style is not merely decorative but the living, ethical, and perceptible essence of a work. I am going to use the *Conditional Design Manifesto* structure to transform Sontag’s arguments and manifesto statements.

Each statement is supported by three elements:

1) Quotes (8 groups with key statements)

2) A manifest (that highlights the importance of the idea)

3) An icon (that visually represents a central word or concept, often connected to the body, soul, form, or experience)



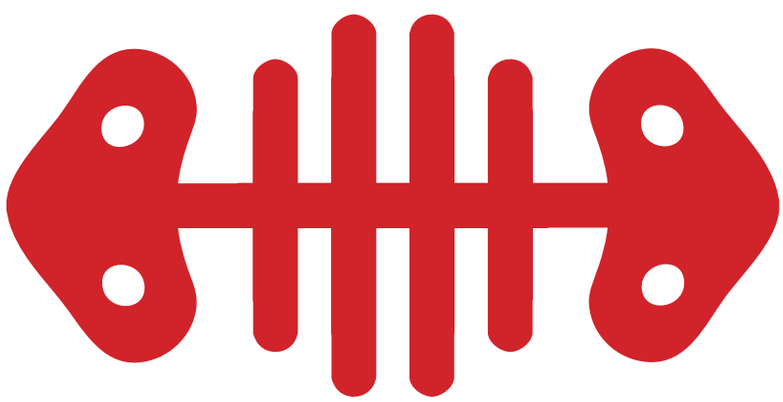
Why the body?

I see a connection between Sontag’s vision of art and the idea of something living and human. Each manifesto statement presents art as alive and sensual. I combine text and visual symbols to experiment with Sontag’s philosophy.

1 “Most of the same critics who disclaim, in passing the notion that style is an accessory to content maintain the duality whenever they apply themselves to particular works of literature.”
(p.15)

“No affirmation of the organic relation between style and content will really carry conviction… until the notion of content is put in its place.”
(p. 21)

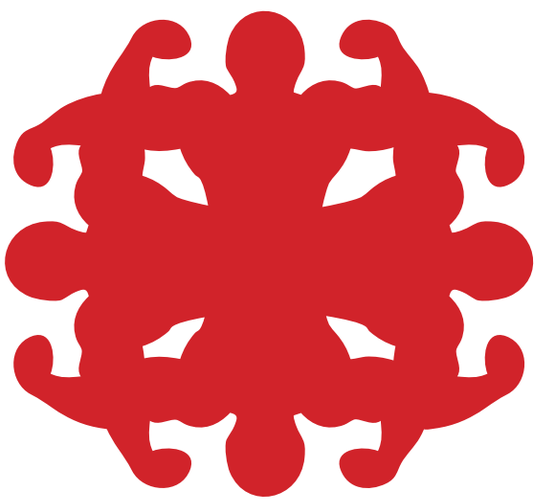
Style is not
an accessory!
It is the *skeleton*
of meaning!



2 “To speak of style is one way of speaking about the totality of a work of art.” (p.18)

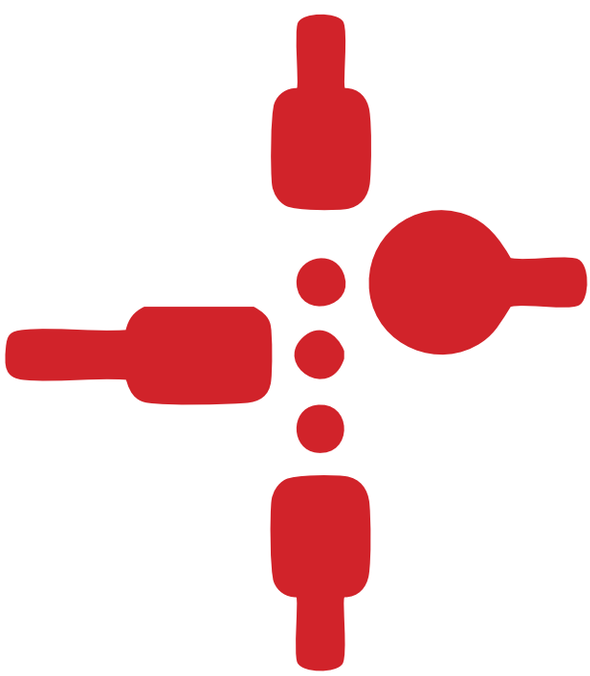
“The knowledge we gain through art is an experience of the form or style of knowing something, rather than a knowledge of something.” (p. 22)

Art doesn’t “express”...it *embodies* ideas!



3 “To treat works of art as statements… is putting art to use for such purposes as inquiring into the history of ideas, diagnosing culture, or creating social solidarity. Such a treatment has little to do with what actually happens when one looks at art appropriately.” (p. 21)

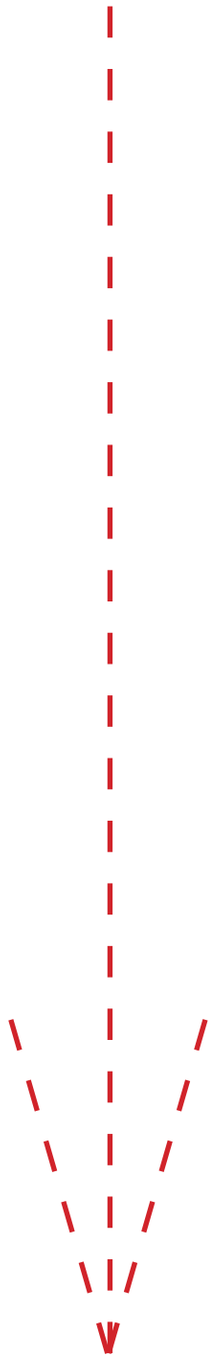
The separation of *form* and content is an act of dissecting art!



4 “Expressiveness—that is, style—rightly takes precedence over content (when content is, falsely, isolated from style).” (p. 22)

Style is not a *mannerism*. It is the condition of being!





5 “There is no neutral, absolutely transparent style.”
(p. 17)

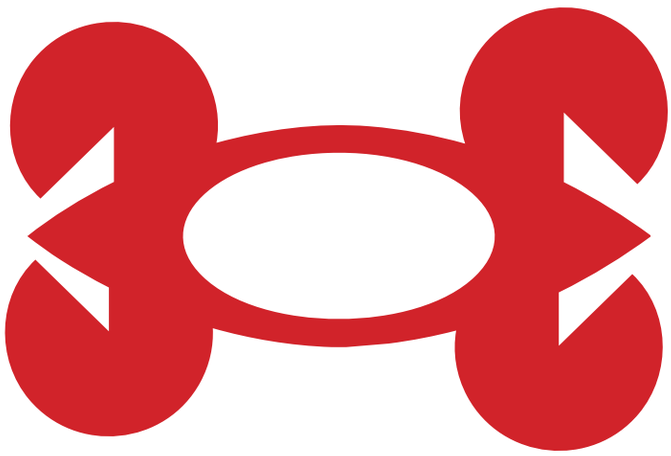
“The metaphor of the work of art as a statement loses its authority…”
(p. 22)

A work without style has no *pulse*!



6 “Behind the ambivalence toward style is, ultimately, the historic Western confusion about the relation between art and morality, the aesthetic and the ethical.”
(p. 23)

Appearance is not superficial. It is substance itself!



7 “Of course, we never have a purely aesthetic response… But neither would it be appropriate for us to make a moral response to something in a work of art in the same sense as in real life.”
(p. 23)

Every *gesture* of an artist is an ethical act of form!



6 “A work of art encountered as a work of art is an experience, not a statement.” (p. 21)

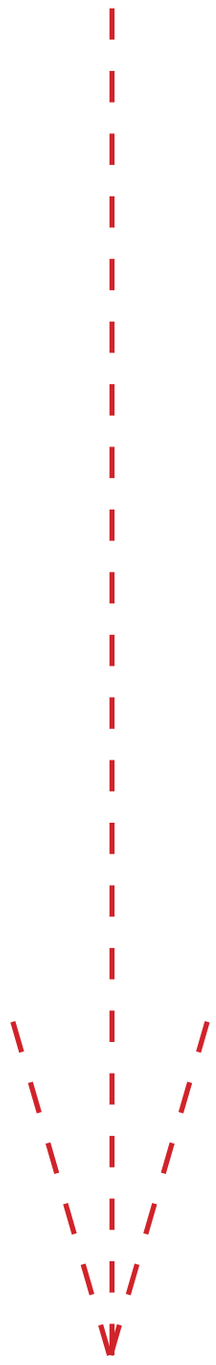
Style cannot be explained – it can only be *felt*!



8 “Art is seduction, not rape. A work of art proposes a type of experience… But art cannot seduce without the complicity of the experiencing subject.”
(p. 22)

Let art *live* as form! Let critics sense it before they interpret it!





References:
Sontag, S. (2013).'On Style' Against Interpretation; London: Penguin [1965] 2009; pp. 15-36

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510 words