

Listening to Tim Hutchings speak was an experience, to say the least. I think the most important aspect of his personality that allows him to do what he does is his unapologetic curiosity. Tim said that he “finds pleasure in breaking the social norms,” and I think an attitude like that is what really makes an artist successful. His flow chart of work he’s done since getting his undergraduate degree just illustrates how many disparate aspects of reality he’s intrigued by. Curiosity is really the most important tool an artist has; it’s the inciting factor for creation.

One thing Tim said that I found intriguing was that he like to “break the social space,” which seemed to explain a lot of his fascination with performance and lifestyle art. Much of his art that he showed us didn’t resonate with me, in fact to my mind it seemed pointless and needlessly edgy, but when he talked about his reasons behind being intentionally off-the-cuff and performing oddly, I found myself fascinated. This man clearly doesn’t care what anyone thinks of him, he doesn’t want to play by the rules and I admire him for his courage. I think that perhaps that’s where true innovation and creativity comes from, from the ability to look past social convention and dare to examine what a different reality might be like. Often during his talk, Tim would touch on a concept he found intriguing—a thought that was driving the kind of art he pursued—but it always seemed as if he brought it up as a brief explanation only to throw it away in the next breath. He never seemed to walk to talk about these driving ideas, these philosophies of human connection, storytelling, space, politics, and normality. His lack of enthusiasm when discussing these subjects gives me the sense that all his passion is poured into his art, and that to hear him talk passionately about his inspiration, one would have to look first and foremost at what he has created.

Tim’s talk seemed to me to ramble and wander without much of an aim, but it was enjoyable and seemed representative of Tim himself. AS much as I was intrigued by his desire to enflame his audience, I really wish he had spent more time talking about his game creation—the art and the storytelling that he puts into those. I am personally fascinated with board and card game illustration—I mean, how does one even get a job like that!? I was very intrigued by the designs he did show us and his ability to vary his art style based on what kind of theme his game has. I love that concept of illustration, but I am also enthralled by the way Tim talked about game creation and concept. He wants his games to break something between people: barriers, or boundaries, or inhibition, or something. He creates games that force people to interact in a controlled way, with rules and goals, so that we can, in a sense, analyze what human interaction is all about. I was particularly enticed by the “Crow Funeral” game and definitely hope to play that with my friends. I have been hearing more and more recently about games that are meant to help people with disorders or trauma cope with their grief and fear, so I was attentive to his description of his game “visiting room.” There’s just something wonderfully curious about the idea of using a fake character to express real emotional trauma.

Later in the day I got an opportunity to join the sculpture class and play one of Tim’s games. I reminded me of many theatre games I’ve played. It’s the kind of game that emphasizes thinking on your feet, commitment to a character, and, at its very base, creativity. The game itself seemed oddly constructed—a conglomeration of the rambling of this awkward man trying to help others see the world in the same way he does. Logistically, the game was bulky, but the passion for the subject matter was evident in the very existence of the game, and I think that’s what I really understood from hearing Tim speak: passion and the ability to research and work hard at a job that you’re most likely unqualified for are the keys to success in the arts.