the shape of things

by Neil LaBute

Directed by Megan Carr

Summer 2025

ARTISTIC VISION

Themes

- Appearance vs. Reality
- Autonomy & Agency
- Power of Art
- Ethics of Change
- Love vs. Apathy
- Temptation & Deception

Style

Contemporary Realism - The characters, setting, and language is applicable to the real world. Highlights the closest and least suspecting threat we face, ourselves. Reveals the psychological states of characters through extreme concievable scenarios.

Mood

A suspenseful intimate and real portrayal of life with unpleasant dark undertones

Tone

Psychological Drama

Vision Informs

- Staging: The movements are intimate and realistic, leaning on tension building through relationship changes.
- Actor Performance: Leaning on natural instinct through the hidden motivations of each character.
- Design Elements: The environment slowly becomes infected with change until nothing of what was remains.

ARTISTIC VISION

Thesis Statement

This play is about how ethically irresponsible artists can make deeply impactful art through nefarious means and the affect it has on others.

This play is about how much humans are able and willing to change through manipulation and molding of society, another person, and themselves.

World

The small, midwestern liberal arts college in the United States is not big enough for Evelyn, but just right for Adam. The town is quaint, quiet, and normal for the early 2000s. Most of the college students are lower middle class and working while studying. At the end of the semester, Evelyn has her final capstone project for her fine arts degree and she wants to leave a mark, wants her project to mean something. Evelyn is bold, opinionated, and confident. Adam is reserved, witty, and deeply insecure. A relationship ensues changing each of their lives.

Moodboard



ARTISTIC VISION

Dramaturgical Research: Neil LaBute



Neil LaBute (born March 19, 1963) is a prominent American playwright, screenwriter, and film director known for his cynical, dark-humored, and often brutal explorations of human relationships, cruelty, and misogyny. He gained prominence with his 1997 directorial debut In the Company of Men, following studies at BYU, Kansas, and NYU. LaBute is frequently associated with gritty realism, often focusing on the dysfunctional interactions between men and women. Many say that Pulitzer-Prize winner David Mamet was a strong influence on him.

LaBute has proven that he has his hand on the pulse and minds of everyday and ordinary people (not heroes or villains), just average people who sound and behave horribly for no reason, and you cringe all the more because you know and identify with those characters.

ARTISTIC VISION

Dramaturgical Research: Controversial Artist Marina Abramović



Since the beginning of her career in Belgrade during the early 1970s, Marina Abramović has pioneered the use of performance as a visual art form. The body has always been both her subject and medium. Exploring the physical and mental limits of her being, she has withstood pain, exhaustion, and danger in the quest for emotional and spiritual transformation. This particular blend of epic struggle and self-inflicted violence was borne out of the contradictions of her childhood: both parents were high-ranking officials in the socialist government, while her grandmother, with whom she had lived, was devoutly Serbian Orthodox. Though personal in origin, the explosive force of Abramović's art spoke to a generation in Yugoslavia undergoing the tightening control of communist rule.

Pulled from Guggenheim New York

ARTISTIC VISION

Dramaturgical Research: Controversial Artist Marina Abramović

Rhythm 0 (1974)



n Rhythm 0 (1974), she invited audience members to do whatever they wanted to her using any of the 72 items she provided: pen, scissors, chains, axe, loaded pistol, and others. This essay in submission was played out to chilling conclusions—the performance ceased when audience members grew too aggressive. Truly ephemeral, Abramović's earliest performances were documented only by crude black-and-white photographs and descriptive texts, which she published as an edition years later, choosing the most iconic images to represent the essence of her actions. Since 1976 she has utilized video to capture the temporal nature of her art.

Pulled from Guggenheim New York

ARTISTIC VISION

Dramaturgical Research: The Art of Manipulation

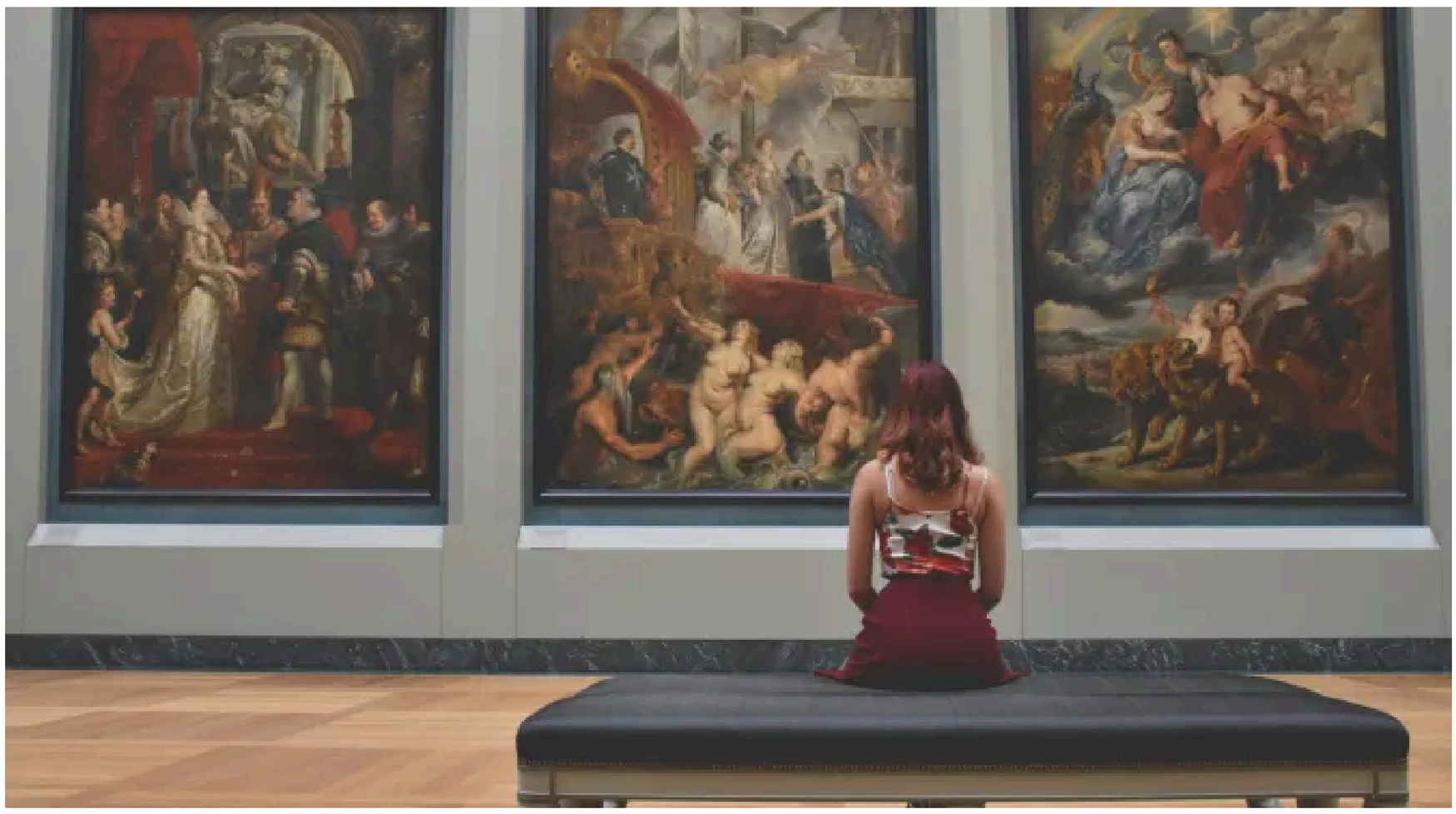


Manipulation is one means by which environments are altered to correspond to characteristics of individuals. We conducted two studies to identify the manipulation tactics that people use to elicit and terminate the actions of others. Factor analyses of four instruments revealed six types of tactics: charm, silent treatment, coercion, reason, regression, and debasement. Tactics of manipulation showed strong individual difference consistency across contexts. The charm tactic, however, was used more frequently for behavioral elicitation, whereas the coercion and silent treatment tactics were used more frequently for behavioral termination. Manipulation tactics covaried significantly across self-based and observer-based data sources with personality scales of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Ambitious-Lazy, Arrogant-Unassuming, Quarrelsome-Agreeable, and Calculating and with characteristics of subjects' social environments. We draw implications for an interactionist framework of person-environment correspondence, for an expansion of the taxonomic task that faces personality psychology, and for identifying links between personality and other scientific disciplines.

Pulled from the National Library of Medicine

ARTISTIC VISION

Dramaturgical Research: Subjectivity vs. Objectivity



You can say art is subjective, but you should also criticize it for its flaws objectively. Likewise, some art is new and original, but it can lack conventional appeasement. You can say art has value, but you should also look at what it steals and who it harms.

Truly, art is “subjective,” and so that gives it some freedom from scrutiny. Nevertheless, the merit of different critical approaches is forever appealing, as it sheds light on literary meaning. Whether that be New Criticism, New Historicism, or Gender Studies, a work of art can be interpreted in many ways. These approaches inform society of art’s value and doesn’t devalue it necessarily, neither does it validate inappropriate and irresponsible beliefs. Such beliefs about art that in our current system values money and shareholder profits over social history and experience.

Pulled from The Writing Post

WHY THIS STORY?

This show speaks to our responsibilities as artists, and serves as a reminder to how our art can affect people. I am someone who loves to do what it takes to create art, but acknowledges how I create is just as important as what I create.

This show is also a study of the power of love, and how far people will go to be loved. You shouldn’t have to change yourself for someone. You shouldn’t use love as a tool or a weapon. You shouldn’t create art at the expense of someone or something else.

When do you step over the line?

SCHEDULE

The Shape of Things Schedule

Date	Time	Who	Agenda	Where
M 6/30	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Read-through	Rehearsal Hall
W 7/2	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Table-work	Rehearsal Hall
M 7/7	6:30-10:30	Adam & Evelyn	Scenes 1 & 2	Rehearsal Hall
W 7/9	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Scenes 3 & 5	Rehearsal Hall
H 7/10	6:30-10:30	Adam & Evelyn	Scenes 4 & 6	Rehearsal Hall
M 7/14	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Scenes 7 & 8	Rehearsal Hall
W 7/16	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Scenes 9 & 10	Rehearsal Hall
H 7/17	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Working Run (OFF-BOOK)	Rehearsal Hall
M 7/21	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Run	Ed Cabell
W 7/23	6:30-10:30	FULL CAST	Run	Ed Cabell
H 7/24	6:30-10:30	FULL COMPANY	Tech Watch	Ed Cabell
S 7/26	10AM-10PM	FULL COMPANY	10/12	Ed Cabell
M 7/28	6:30-10:30	FULL COMPANY	Dress Rehearsal	Ed Cabell
W 7/30	6:30-10:30	FULL COMPANY	Dress Rehearsal	Ed Cabell
F 8/1	6:30-10:30	FULL COMPANY	FINAL DRESS	Ed Cabell
S 8/2	7:30PM	FULL COMPANY	PERFORMANCE	Ed Cabell








patagonia
Budweiser