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The Complexity Lies Within Simplicity

To be minimal, is to be simple. To be simple, is to lack the unnecessary. Who is to deem what is necessary and what is not? What is considered to be extra, and what is considered to be needed? Minimalistic art proposed many questions. The art of minimalism is the infinite interpretations and challenging questions that the artwork inspires. It began in the 20th century, involving brilliant, talented artists, and is now thriving in more ways than oil on canvas.

During the 1950's, abstract expressionism dominated the art world. Artists used abstract art to convey interpretable messages, essentially with deeper meanings. Minimalism arose in opposition to the abstract expressionism movement. Along with minimalistic art, conceptual art flourished around the same time. Artists believed art should be seen for what it truly was. Audiences were expected to analyze the art in order to understand the concept, rather than enjoying the medium itself. Artists also argued that "the importance given to the art object is misplaced and leads to a rigid and elitist art world which only the privileged few can afford" (Tate).

There were many artists active during the movements. Frank Stella, Anne Truitt, and Donald Judd incorporated simple, straightforward colors and techniques in their works. Frank Stella achieved a minimalistic exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, leading to the thriving and the growth of minimalism in the United States. However, the environment surrounding art became a key aspect of minimalism and conceptualism.

A structure by the name of *Circle with Towers*, is currently standing outside of the Dell Computer Science Hall at the University of Texas at Austin. Surrounding it is the building itself along with trees. Comparing the structure, which consists of a circle made of white brick and

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tall towers erecting from the circle, and the environment it is in, it is as if nature is hugging the art, as the art is reaching out to the world. It is also located on a street that many students pass by every day, in which student can interpret something different from the structure. The structure is so simple, yet the idea of endless, diverse interpretations is what makes it complex. The plain, white bricks serving as the modular medium is not the true art, but the questions and ideas challenging it, is. That is the idea of conceptual and minimalistic art.

Minimalism has since spread since the 1950's from art alone to other types of work. Minimalistic art became more than something to look at. It became something to live in. Buildings gained a more aesthetic appeal when they incorporated basic geometric shapes, flat roofs, and selected colors. Grand, detailed buildings will always be appreciated for its intricacy, but minimalistic architecture allowed the appreciation of balance and simplicity.

Even in literature, minimalism exists. The most popular use of minimalism is in poetry. Like visual art, simple words can convey deep meanings. Haikus, for example, consist of limited syllables in a three-lined stanza. In those mere three lines, a moving message can be found. Authors tend to use lengthy sentences to describe a thought, only for it to be followed by one short, simple sentence. That small sentence creates an emphasis; an extended feeling. It is the "moving" factor in poetry, novels, and even in music.

Minimalism has impacted cultures all over the world, in a diverse amount of ways. It began as a visual art movement, then spread until it branched out into forms of music, literature, architecture, and even a lifestyle. Minimalism proposes questions that strike up debates and conversations, as well as inspiring creativity and challenging concepts. The art of

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minimalism is that it *moves*. It moves people. It moves culture. It moves into new forms, to new generations, to new people. Something so simple, can be so complex.

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