

Funsky on Art



**Cover illustration
Salvador Funsky:
Hello Dali**

**All Art on loan
from the Musée de Mergel collection**



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Mergel Funsky and Simon Aronson

From: Mergel [mergelfunsky@simonaronson.com]

Sent: Wednesday, May 03, 2006 4:10 PM

To: Virginia Aronson

Subject: Surreal as They Come

Hey Ginny,

Ever since we visited Art Expo I realized I was a much better artist than most of those guys, but Simon says I still need to “establish” my reputation (even though the whole world already knows me from the magic DVD). So, I’m supposed to pick a style, whatever that means. I told Simon I’m in my Blue period, but he says that’s not a style.

I looked up art styles on my computer. Maybe I’m an impressionist because everybody is impressed with me, or a classicist because I’m classy, or a minimalist because I’m short. So I asked Simon if there are any special styles available for imaginary people, and he says because I’m not real, maybe I should be a surrealist. Because they paint what’s in their imaginations and it doesn’t need to make sense, so that’s me exactly!

So I studied up on all the surrealists for about five minutes. Like there’s a guy who draws bent watches (I think his name is Uri Geller??), but I tried his style – and I don’t like melting, my hat doesn’t fit any more.

But finally I found just the right guy, someone who knows what really goes on inside an imagination. So here is my masterpiece.

Mergel



Rene Mergritte:
This is Not a Pipe Dream!

From: Mergel
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2006 11:47 AM
To: director@chicagoartinstitute.com
Subject: Well Hung

Dear Mr. Director:

I read in my newspaper that the Art Institute of Chicago is going to build a new wing. At first I got real worried, because with only one wing you can't fly and the whole Art Institute might crash! But my friend Simon says this is not a flying wing – it's a big room where you can hang more art, sort of like our family room, only bigger.

So I figured you will need a lot more artwork from famous artists, and here I am! I have visited your museum and I think it is a fitting place for people to see my art, so maybe now you can come to my Lincoln Park gallery and view my pictures, to decide which of my masterpieces you would like to hang (you can't have them all!). You can take the 151 bus to get here, only don't pull that cord too many times because the bus drivers don't have a sense of humor.

Simon says it's important that my contributions be in keeping with the Art Institute's existing collection, so I studied your paintings real careful to maintain the continuity, flow and general boredom your paintings have. But there's a little something missing, so I will fix them.

I will send you some slides (but they never do justice to the real image). Once you pick from them, I can make little tags to stick on the wall that say "On loan from the Mergel Funskey collection." Simon says it's classier and safer to refer to "a private collection" so if you want, you can say, "On loan from Mergel Funskey's private collection."

Oh yeah, you have to supply those big frames and you have to do the hanging, and lighting. And at the grand opening of my exhibition, you have to serve those little lamb chops (with pickles). And can I play my trombone?

Very truly yours,

Mergel Funskey
Private Collector of his own Art

PS: And you have to promise that all imaginary people get in free to see my paintings! Imaginary people can't afford those dumb \$12 required donations, because we don't get income tax deductions.

Slides to Follow

First Impressions



Auguste Funsky Renoir: The Music Man

Is this a Degas I see Before Me?



***Edgar Mergel Degas:
Master and Pupils practice the Funsy***

(and NO WISECRACKS. Simon says this is what all professional dancers wear)



**Edgar Mergel Degas:
The Way You Wear Your Hat**



**Gustave Funsy Caillebotte:
Let a Smile Be Your Umbrella**



George Mergel Seurat: Do you Get the Point?



**Vincent Mergel Van Gogh:
Who's Been Sleeping in My Bed?**



**Pablo Funsy Picasso:
This Cracks Me Up!**

From the Artist's Studio – an exclusive interview with Mergel Funsky

Simon: So, Mergel, how does it feel to have this collection of your art finally published?

Mergel: I'd rather have my biography book published, that you and Ginny never seem to get around to.

Simon: Sorry, but I guess we're not very good at the author game. But maybe you can make your reputation as an artist.

Mergel: I've already done that. I'm all over the Internet. It says I'm famous in art.

Simon: Really? Then perhaps people will leave this collection of yours out on their coffee tables, like they do with fancy art books.

Mergel: They'd have to scan their coffee table into their computer first. This is a pdf book. I think that stands for Perfectly Drawn Funksys.

Simon: I didn't know that.

Mergel: There's a lot you don't know.

Simon: That's why I have you in my imagination, to teach me.

Mergel: Maybe you'd better imagine a few hundred more of us.

Simon: Thanks. Well, this is the part of the book where you get to talk to your readers directly, so what can you tell us about your artwork. How did you start drawing?

Mergel: With crayons.

Simon: You've clearly progressed far. Do you have a special technique that you use now?

Mergel: You already know that, because you help me. You're my assistant. It's important for a famous artist to have someone there to wash the brushes, and turn on the computer, and stuff like that.

Simon: Well, how do you begin a new piece?

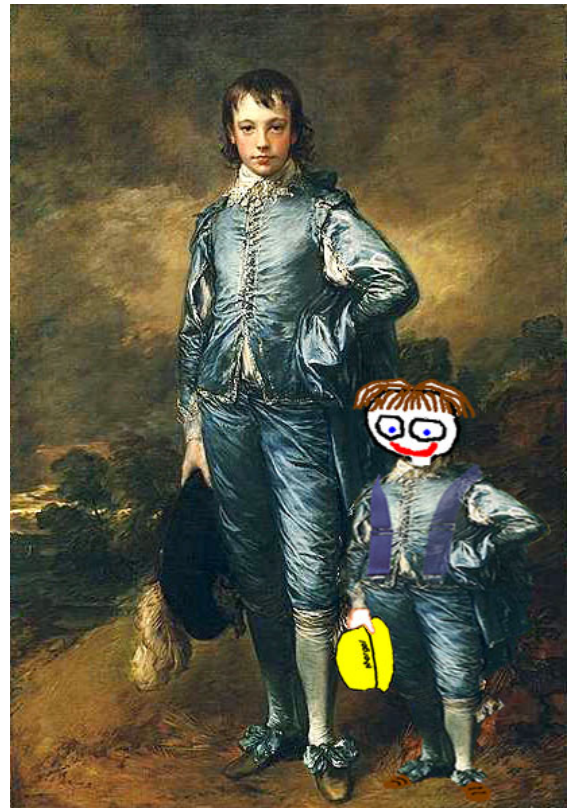
Mergel: Usually with blue. That's my favorite color.

Simon: You're in good company. Picasso had his blue period.

Mergel: Yeah, he probably found me on the Internet and just followed my lead.

Simon: Are you sure the Internet mentions you?

Mergel: I searched, and it says right on Google that "the Blue Boy is a central figure in art." That's me!



Simon: Er, ... right. So, what about inspiration? Your starting idea? Where does that come from?

Mergel: Some people call it imagination, but I call it plagiarism. I start with someone else's art, and then correct their mistakes. Like, if it's not funny – or if it doesn't have me in it.

Simon: Give us an example.



Mergel: Well, when we visited Jonathan Novak's gallery, he showed us this picture of hot dogs, by some guy named Wayne Thiebaud. But, get this – he was charging \$ 85,000 for it! That's way too expensive, because at Costco you can get a giant hot dog for only \$ 1.50, and it comes with a free soda! Of course, in Wayne's picture there are *two* hot dogs, so maybe that justifies a higher price.

Well, I couldn't afford \$ 85,000, even with all my Monopoly money, so I decided to use my imagination to put that hot dog picture in our apartment (I'm an expert on imagining things, because I'm imaginary). But it looked pretty dry and lonely, so I used my art skills to dress it up, and I painted a few more pictures to give the hot dogs some company. And as a bonus, everyone gets to see my closet wall. (If you come to visit, I will give you a tour).

Simon: So your readers get a rare glimpse at the artist's studio, with you actually at work. It looks like a full delicatessen. And you call that one "Painting with Relish?"

Mergel: You're the one who makes up those silly names. I'm too busy working in my Photoshop to worry about dumb titles.

Simon: Every starving artist needs a good PR man.

Mergel: That's another thing. Early in my career I decided not to starve. I can't do good work on an empty stomach. So my studio is right next to the kitchen. Pickles, lamb chops and marshmallows – three of the basic food groups – are important for keeping the imagination fresh.

Simon: Besides starting with someone else's painting, do you ever start with a blank canvas, with an idea of your own?

Mergel: I have lots of blank canvases, in all different sizes – all white. They seem pretty boring to me, but maybe if I call myself Mergel Rothko they might sell.

Simon: Sorry, by "starting with a blank canvas" I meant do you ever draw a picture from scratch?

Mergel: Sure. That's how I drew my mural for Ginny's new office building. I figured she was responsible for her building's design, and I was the main contractor, and you were gopher guy, so I wove all those threads together to make a unified fabric. (Pretty fancy description, huh? I learned that phrase on the Internet.) And we hung it in her building lobby so everyone can see it.



Simon: Yes, if they use their imagination ... I notice that Mergel Funsy appears quite a number of times in that mural.

Mergel: Yeah, it's called a motif. It provides visual continuity and a serenity of familiarity as the eye travels across my mural. (I got that line from the internet too.) And it advertises my construction business. I originally had included my email address, but Ginny said No.

Simon: And what does Darth Vader have to do with anything?

Mergel: That's an important part from my mystery story, which will appear in the book you guys haven't finished yet. Until then, the viewers will have to use their imagination.

Simon: Imagination seems to play a crucial role in your art.

Mergel: I've always been taught to paint what I know, so it's true to life.

Simon: Well, certainly *your* life. In conclusion, let's try to place your works in the overall context of today's art. A noted art critic recently wrote:

"New agencies of value – more personal in nuance – are sanctioned by psychological inquiry as well as an assumption of the inherent sensitivity of the artistic temperament. Such license has resulted in periodic estrangement of the artists within their own contexts. While the indeterminacy of abstraction broke the tyranny of illusionistic narrative, the contemporary world was conversely being fed more determinate imagery. Art is closer in spirit to the intricate diagrams of hermetic thought which guide the initiate towards alternate ways of seeing. The artist shrouds this journey to self-realization within his morphological means. The abrupt and constant alternation between realism and abstraction, between continuous and discontinuous space, the determinacy and indeterminacy of metaphoric forms that are and aren't, that seem to be and yet are not – all function as much to camouflage as to indicate the way of our own personal journeys."

So, Mergel, how does such an observation apply to your work?

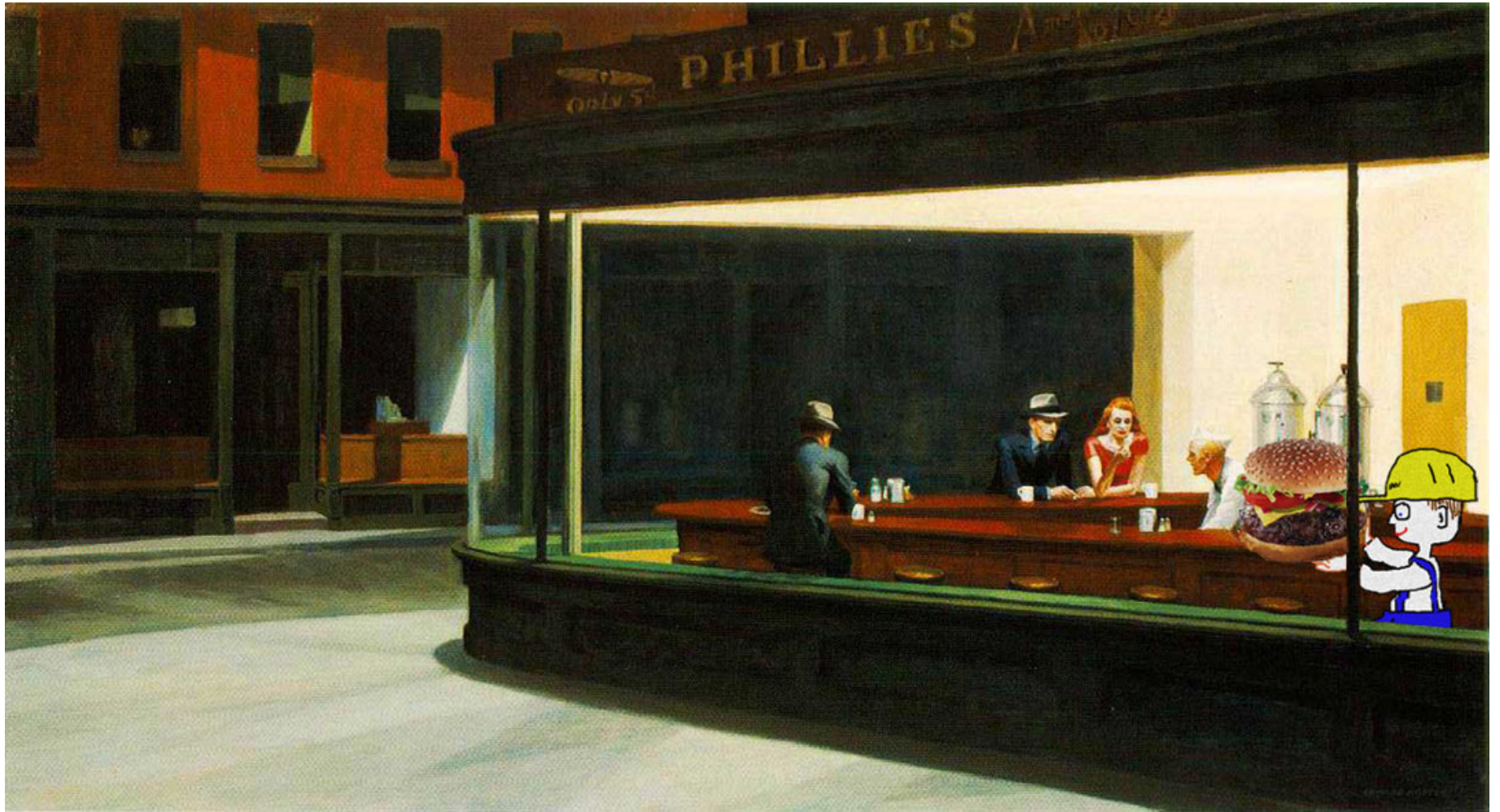
Mergel: That sounds just about right. So long as there's lots of blue in it.

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American Art



**Edward Hopper:
Short Order**



**Grant Mergel Wood:
American Gotcha**



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11.49



11.50



11.51

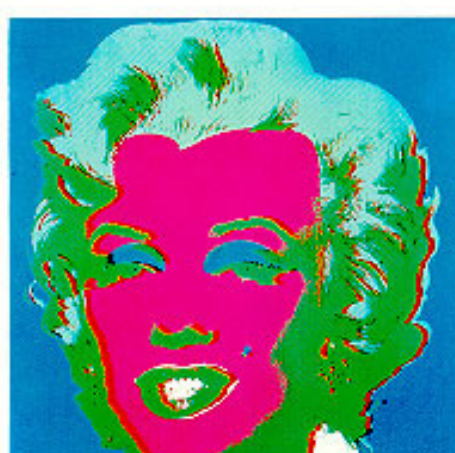
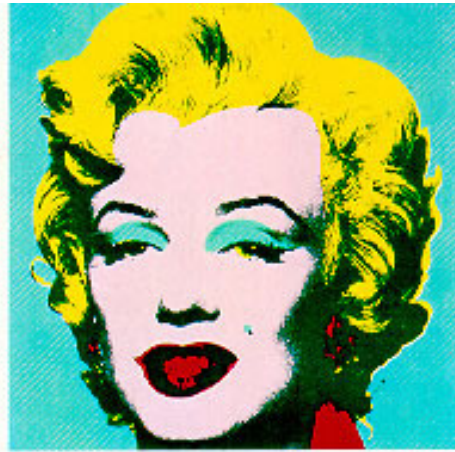


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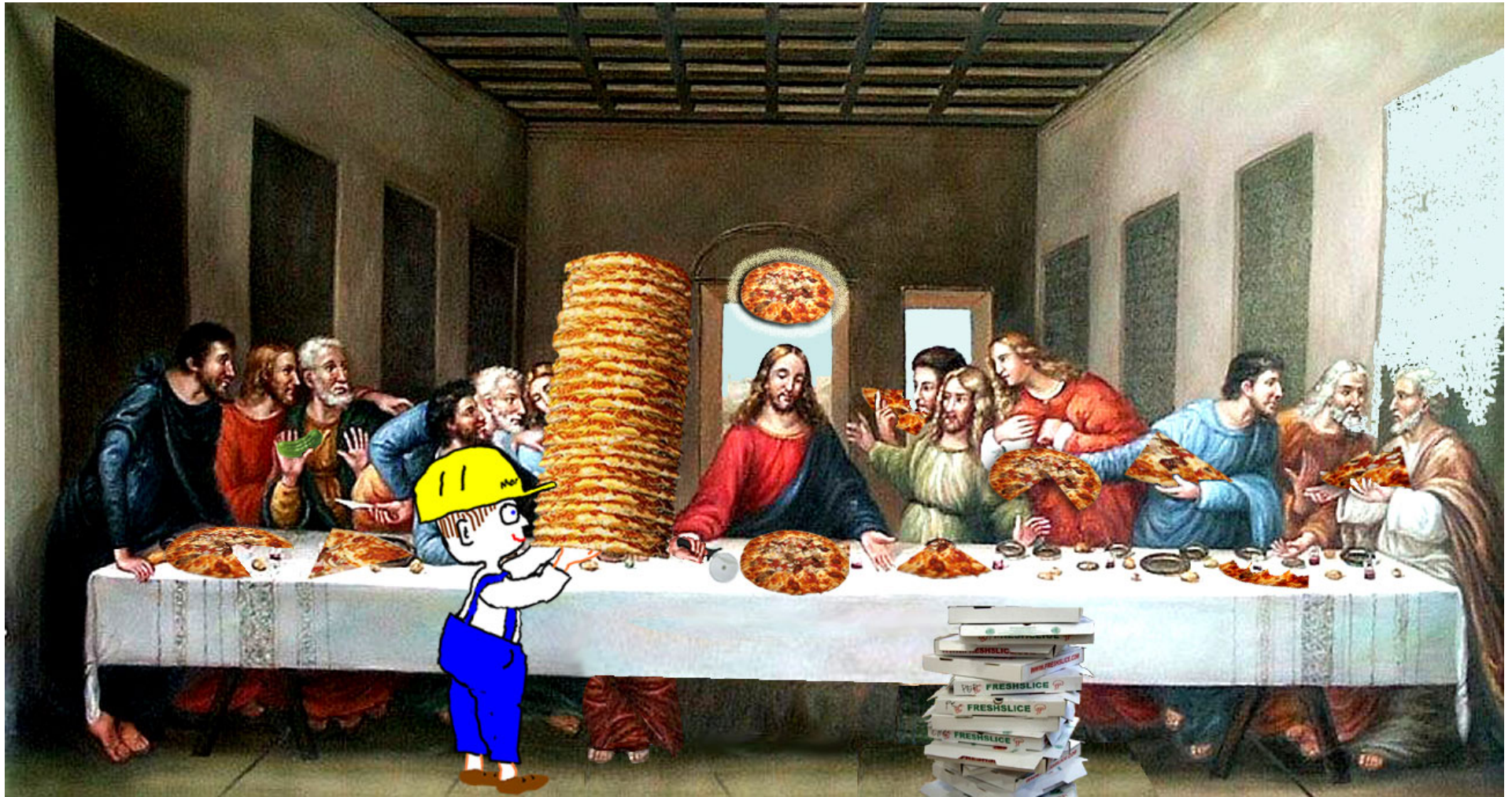
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**Andy Warthog:
Which Five Don't Belong?**

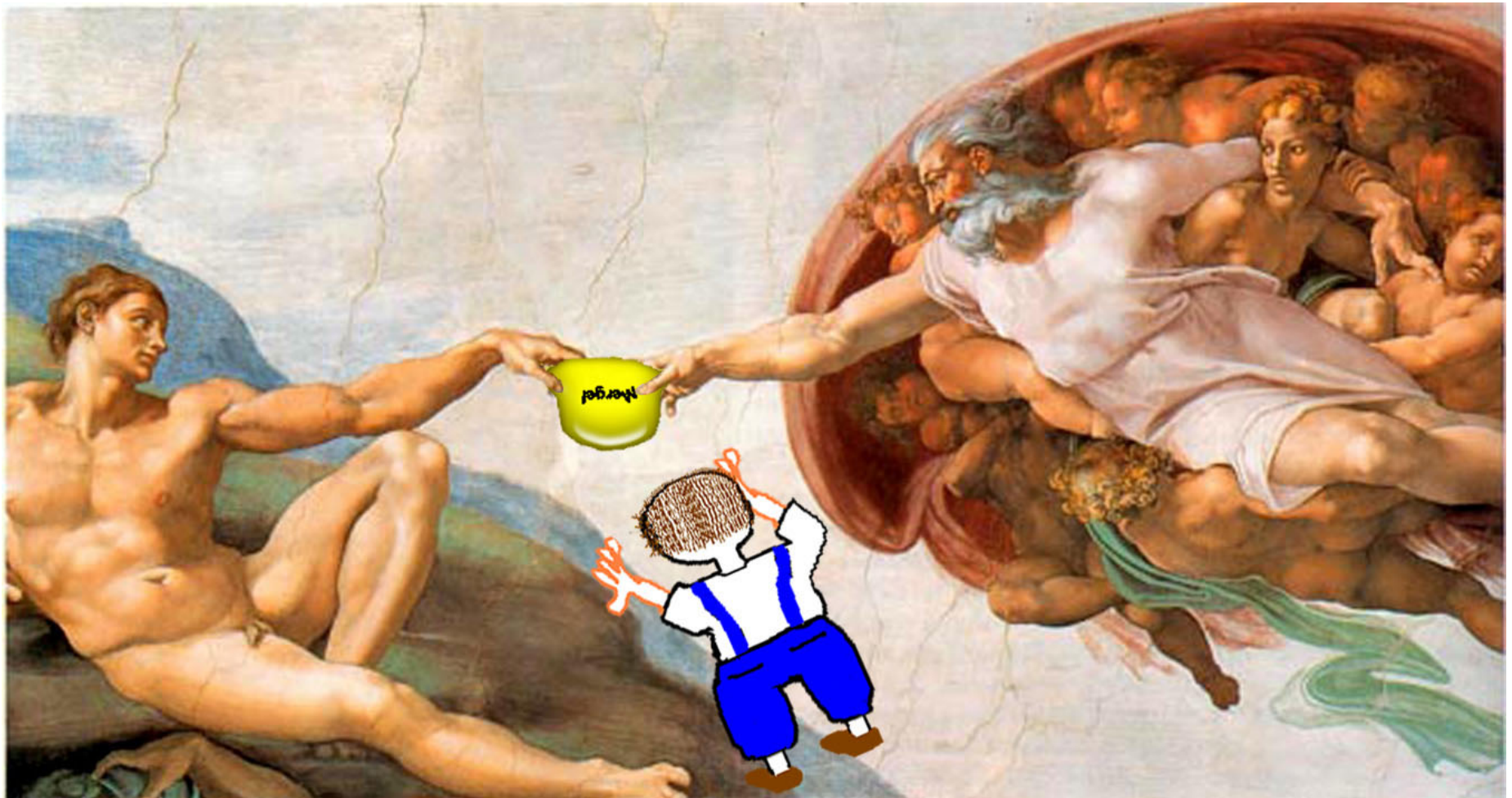


**Andy Warthog:
Mergel Monroe**

Religious Art



**Leonardo Da Funsy:
The First Supper**



Mergelangelo: Sistine Chapeau

(this guy didn't have a big enough canvas, so he painted his on the ceiling! I wanted to do that too, but Ginny said NO)

Classical Period



Botticelli: Funsy on the Half Shell

(Self) Portrait of the Artist as an Old Man



Mergel Funsky: Life Imitates Art

The End



A Pickle Production

