

The Tyranny of the Detail by James Beck examines art produced in the modern urban context. A summation of Dr. Beck's concerns regarding art over the last 40 years, it discusses the environment in which recent art originates and is viewed. Essential to the analysis is the isolation and definition of those factors that affect the visual experience and habits of artists and the art public, with particular emphasis on how perception is molded and manipulated by the mass media.

Many impulses that characterize the situation may be traced to the area of food consumption and eating habits. Analogies are drawn between eating disorders and their attendant conditions as they relate to contemporary art, especially obesity and anorexia nervosa. Other topics treated include reproducibility, the primacy of two-dimensional images, the mindset of collectors and the importance of the fragment.

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