

Student 3: Low Merit

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If these backpacks were to be released as just another design in their range, there would be no price increase – the spots themselves do not have any large amount of monetary value, and they would not be seen as monumental in any way – polka dots are not uncommon decoration in fashion. It is the fact that the spots are in fact those of Damien Hirst, meaning that having his name included seems to justify a significant price increase.



The \$55,000 backpacks designed by Hirst and 'The Row'

Hirst has a large team of hired assistants create the actual pieces of work for him. Even though it is his assistants that have made the work, it is Hirst that is credited, Hirst's name that significantly boosts the market value and Hirst that receives the extravagant amount of money people pay to own the work. . Even Hirst himself admits that his name comes with a hefty price tag.

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The second value placed on Hirst's "*For the Love of God*" is spiritual value. Hirst has said that death is a main theme in essentially all his works as it has always fascinated him. '*For the Love of God*' is no exception with the work being akin to a 'Memento Mori'.

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This is an artistic or symbolic reminder that death is inevitable, which correlates with the explanation of the piece on Hirst's website which states that "*For the Love of God* acts as a reminder that our existence on earth is transient." Rudi Fuchs observed that the work was "Out of this world, celestial almost, it proclaims victory over decay." In an interview with Hirst he stated that the mood of the piece was "Hopefully uplifting, I thought it'd be a lot darker than it is and it seems really...kind of light and celebratory and kind of happy...I thought there would be much more horror and death but it seems to offer victory over death". Although this is supposedly Hirst's intended meaning of the work, and there are those who wholeheartedly believe it, I believe that any spiritual value that has been placed on the work is completely overshadowed by the financial value placed. When Google searching Hirst's "*For the Love of God*", the amount of articles focusing almost exclusively on the price tag, the number of diamonds and the extravagant wealth that Hirst possesses is overwhelming. Other than perhaps mentioning a short quote from Hirst about the piece, spiritual value seems to take a back seat. The quotes used are also heavily repetitive; I have read the words "victory over decay" countless times when researching the piece. It has been used so many times but it has never been explained with detail as to what it really means. This is because people are more interested in marvelling over its exorbitant price tag than dissecting its spiritual meaning. As Stephen Moore says, "Hirst's work was always interesting only to the extent of what people were willing to pay for it".

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The title given to the work does not even refer to its meaning and is in Mark Hudson's words, "A meaningless spin". This revelation comes from Hirst explaining why he chose the title of "*For the Love of God*" – apparently his mother asked him "For the love of God, what are you going to do next?". Having a title that has absolutely nothing to do with its meaning does not help to project its spiritual meaning out into the world, instead it aids people with reasons to doubt whether the work even has a meaning at all, and whether its commercial value stands alone.

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