

A Case For Blue Balls

An Essay By Natalie Moffett-Gallegos

Jim Dines' *Technicolor Heart (The Big One)* is centrally located on the intersection of WSU-Pullman's largest pedestrian mall and its largest roadway. Ostensibly a large blue heart decorated with everyday objects painted in fantastical colors, the background of the heart is cracked and rough, while the various objects attached to it seem to be placed and colored randomly, providing even more texture and confusion to the already anatomical structure. Lacking defining shading in the curves of the piece, *Technicolor Heart* resembles a scrotum, and its looks are not much differentiated by closer inspection of the attached pieces of cables, crushed cans, tools, and other assorted objects.

The use of oil enamel is particularly anatomical in its application, rather than being used for its rich hues and purity of color, it is caked on in thick layers to the point of cracking. This craquelure also resembles the texture of the thin skin found on joints and other sensitive areas, further enhancing the anatomical appearance. While the blue enamel was a decent color match to the peerless Palouse sky, the fading experienced over the years rarefies the days that the heart blends into the sky. As a stand-out against the green field on which it sits, the addition of multicolored found objects seems particularly public even from a distance.

Do not mistake these choices as error, *Technicolor Heart* does a fantastic job of placing the surrounding area into whimsical proportions; When viewed from across the street its shape becomes more romantic and less confrontationaly testicular. Being an inverted triangle, it helps to counteract the rising forces of the landscape and buildings around it. Its composition of vertically oriented found objects leads the eye in an up-and-down motion that is congruous with the tall buildings and trees as well as re-enforcing the connection of the sculpture with the sky. The surrounding cherry trees cast a pleasant lacy edge on the sculpture that changes the shape of the heart as you approach and integrate it into the landscape as as an extension of the campus body. As you cross the street, the anatomical references become more clear, forcing the mind to adapt and expand to hold two allegedly incompatible truths; *Even Blue Balls Can Be Beautiful*.

It is the surprising anatomical nature of the heart, and its connection to the surrounding space, that create evocative art. In a world increasingly censored and divided for the ease of advertising, more people could do to interact directly with the anatomy of the world. Yes, *Technicolor Heart* looks like a pair of blue balls, and its form never hurt anyone. Acknowledging that fact, and embracing frank discussion on it, are our greatest tools to fighting censorship and division, our anatomy is as natural and multifaceted factor of life as possible and embracing its realities are not optional.

Trying to hide the truth, to deny facets of the self, are sure roads to the type of constipation that ultimately leads to tribalistic conflict.