

Systemic Injustice and Innocence Art

by [Sean Bw Parker](#) (August 2025)



Mars: The Bringer of War (Sean Bw Parker, 2025)

You'd imagine the arts would be a place of nurturing support and cathartic expression in a stressful world, wouldn't you? But the reality is that the art world is as riddled with as

much rivalry, bitching, subterfuge, gossip and sabotage as any other part of society.

The difference is that because of its gentle, supportive, 'nurturing' reputation, most of it goes on unseen and unreported on either because it's deeply tedious, or because the people involved aren't as famous as they are in their own minds. To semi-quote the nu-ravers band The Rapture, the arts represent a *House Of Jealous Lovers* to put Moliere's *Tartuffe* to shame.

Since Harvey Weinstein's downfall in 2017, the #MeToo movement has been systematically manipulated as a weapon in both the national and local arts, with rumours of artists' or other professionals' alleged behaviour being 'community'-monitored by gossip and local popularity rather than by evidence. Even when there is some sort of evidence, the imagination of artistic types will do the rest of the work in terms of exaggeration.

Combine these dynamics with a feminised, risk-averse cultural climate, and interesting work comes juddering to a standstill. The intersectionality of indoctrinisation is enormous in this area, meaning gender studies will have gone along with the person's art education to the point they think those principles are more important than the art itself: a safety-first approach to art is the most deadening thing of all.

Outsider Bias also often comes into play, where 'out-group' individuals will find themselves on the wrong end of false allegations due to not being or not wanting to be part of the dominant social group. Andy Malkinson's desire to travel—and seemingly escape the UK—made him a convenient target for Greater Manchester Police, who clearly wanted to 'get their man,' regardless of exculpatory evidence. The fact that Malkinson had returned to the area from which he left, and found himself in negative dealings with the complainants, wouldn't have helped.

The Bureaucracy of Risk has infected British and wider western culture like the most anodyne virus since Tony Blair's millennial cultural revolution, to the point that every art competition or state-sponsored exhibition requires the artist to declare their commitment to (their kind of) social values.

While these cultural tensions strain, the genre of Innocence Art—a term first coined by Dr Michael Naughton of the University of Bristol and the Empowering The Innocent organisation—was formulated in the early years of the 21st century. Innocence Art, rather than being about the kind of innocence talked about in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, is about the emotional, creative, and intellectual impact of being falsely accused and/or wrongfully convicted.

This could be about MeToo-era drunken one-night stands, as in songwriter Ryan Fox's *Allegation*; or about bored writers using their exes as grievance material, as in falsely accused REM and Big Star collaborator Ken Stringfellow's brilliant 2024 album *Circuit Breaker*. It could be the plaintive poetry written by Falsely Accused Day organiser Lyn Crabtree; or the self-portrait of the husband of Spoken Injustice's Anna Doherty, looking desperately out of a prison cell.

Those spuriously accused in death may include Pablo Picasso, Lucien Freud, or (still untried) Jimmy Savile—since Dead Men Can't Sue. Those living may include Jimmy Page, Win Butler of Arcade Fire, Brad Pitt (aeroplane rage?), Donald Trump, or indeed any high-profile male. The revisionism of false allegations reflect the false memory syndrome of the past thirty years, but blown up by journalists looking for a new angle rather than counsellors with an ideological axe to grind.

Innocence Art is how the subconscious mind processes the experience of being flattened by the state machinery of a blithe justice industry, and turns it into something meaningful, communicable, affecting, '*better than this.*' This

art of innocence is a consequence of the systemic injustice seen in newspapers and newsfeeds on an increasingly regular basis, as the human psyche struggles to come to terms with a machinery that appears not to care, and a mainstream media that delights in putting the boot in, whether the individual is maintaining innocence or not.

This can compel cultural figures such as designer Nicole Farhi or actor Tom Conti to contribute to the field, be that in sculpture and exhibition, as in Farhi's case, or committed media messaging, as in Conti's. One problem is that many justice reform organisations are essentially parts of the justice industry that created the miscarriages of justice in the first place, and its staff just looking to put a virtue-signalling notch on their CV's.

Rehabilitation, a noble aim which most of these orgs promote, has nothing to do with the systems of state being designed to create wrongful convictions due to buck-passing, negligence and blank ambition in other directions. Art is about human beings, which is why however much AI is pushed, no one will pay attention to it for very long. Miscarriages of justice tend to be about systems, and while art is quite capable of commenting on systems, systems have no jurisdiction over art: and the people respond to art, but get angry with systems (particularly when they see them going wrong on an increasingly regular basis).

While some crimes can be straightforward, and make their way to the top of the headlines the next day, many other crimes—or allegations of them—are very complex, and in the case of *New Culture Crimes*, political. (New Culture Crimes consist of those deemed to be created mostly this century and in the wake of the Internet, such as alleged hate speech, stalking, upskirting, downblousing, spiking, harassment, coercive control, 'friend rape', malicious communications, human trafficking, the list goes on.)

You will notice that these New Culture Crimes are very nuanced, very they said/they said, and highly subjective. That is because we live in a highly subjective culture, intensifying since the year 2000, which puts the emphasis on the alleged 'victim' since this is easier for the courts, and the falsely accused are fewer in number—even if the falsely accused are in fact the victims of miscarriage of justice themselves.

These New Culture Crimes have humanised systemic injustice, and given subjective grievance dominance, out of the fear of negative headlines having adverse effects on future career prospects for those involved with propagating them. And this is why Innocence Art, one of the very few cathartic valves of expression available, is so vital in culture right now.

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