

Readymades, Locusts, Waffle House, and a Horror Film Shot Entirely on Zoom

## *Eashan's Thoughts #1*

Readymades, Locusts, Waffle House, and a Horror Film Shot Entirely on Zoom are all part of this week's edition of Eashan's Thoughts.

Hello! My name is Eashan Reddy Kotha and you signed up for this newsletter because you wanted to become more knowledgeable about art, culture, tech and more. Be sure to move this email to your primary tab and add me to your contacts so things don't get lost in spam!

Hey fam! 🙌 Welcome to the first edition of Eashan's Thoughts.

Here's what I've got for you this week.

### Art Piece Quick Talk



**A Feeling of Impermanence** 🎨

The above painting is one that was made by the conceptual artist On Kawara. On Kawara's work thematically focused on the idea of time. Kawara's "Today" series especially meditates on the passage of time marked by the action of painting. Every canvas in the series is literally the month, day, and year presented in sans serif font.

That's it.

Even wilder to me was the fact that if Kawara didn't finish his painting of the date by the end of that same day, *he would destroy it*. If he did manage to finish the painting, he'd store it, sometimes with a newspaper clipping from that day and log it into his 100-year calendar.

The very first painting in this series was completed on January 4, 1966. The canvas never really changes size either. One exception however, were the three days surrounding the Apollo 11 lunar mission, when Kawara painted the dates on large canvases (his close friends say he loved space related things).

Kawara's style is reminiscent of "readymades," which were part of an art movement pioneered by Marcel Duchamp. Briefly, readymades were simply objects from real life. Just by arranging these real life objects, an artist could turn them into *art*.

For Kawara, each date served as a readymade. They existed, and thus, by capturing their essence into his work, he presented a corpus of works that were meditative on the ideas of time and space. That's why I love this piece. It's straightforward, it makes you question it and it exists in a space of its own.

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## An Original Poem 🖋️

The rays of the sun  
blanket the field  
like shaving cream  
whilst a farmer shaves  
the earth with the blades  
of his machine

☀️ I like reading observational poetry because they give you an interesting perspective you hadn't considered before. They can depict the different aspects of nature which endures over millennia, and compare it to humankind which has only been around for a short period on the global time scale. Hence, I wrote a poem inspired by that style. If you know of any works similar to this, please do let me know. I'd love to check it out.

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## Quick Productivity Tip

"Busyness" doesn't mean "Business" 🤖

- Just because you're "busy" doesn't mean you're doing productive work. Unless your job requires it; answering emails immediately, responding to your social media notifications as they happen, and attending meetings **seem** more important they actually are.
- Try and check yourself when you're doing these low-output tasks. You'll be surprised how many concerns sent to you via email resolve themselves if you just give them enough time. Let it marinate.

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## Quote of the Week 🗣️

*I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.* – Maya Angelou

This quote resonates with many because it's applicable to so many aspects of our lives. Years after events occur, most of us don't recall the specific words we used when we were at it or every specific action we performed. However, we remember how excited we were to be there. How hyped we were to see our favorite artist perform. The feeling of the music reverberating in our heads. Emotional footprints leave heavier tracks than physical ones. They endure longer too.

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## Interesting Tidbits From My Research 🧑🏫

I've been working on a piece on locusts. I was just curious about them after I saw a tweet on a swarm descending in India. Let me tell you this: locusts are actually ridiculous. Here's a few crazy things I've learned:

- Locusts exist in two phases that are **physically distinct**. In one phase, the locusts hang out as individuals. In the other...they form swarms "with eat as much food as

35,000 people *every day*. From [Vox](#)

- Swarms can swell to [70 billion insects](#)—enough to blanket New York City more than once—and can destroy 300 million pounds of crops in a single day. From [National Geographic](#)
- Oh, and have I mentioned that locusts get activated into "swarm mode" when a few of them get together and their hind legs get brushed? That brush sends signals to their little locust brains and sets off a bunch of reactions which leads to them becoming more aggressive, more swarm-loving, and their *brains* become physically bigger. Yeah, I know.

You can read the full write up on my [website](#) or on Substack!

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## Maker's Lab

Putting together a newsletter is pretty fun! I love finding things that interest me and curating them. I'm always trying to improve my writing because I see writing as a form of thinking and if you can write clearly, you can think clearly. Writing is also a form of expression so if I can improve my writing, I can express my ideas a lot more effectively.

I recently committed myself to an endeavor to [write 1,000 haikus](#). I coded in a progress bar on the poetry section of the site and it wasn't too bad. I just had to use the Wordpress plugin to edit the header/footer section.

Starting in May 2020, I began using Twitter as a tool. I wanted to take an active approach to my feed and use it to surface tweets that were more deliberate and useful. I also felt that I wanted to provide value with my tweets. By providing value and exchanging ideas with others, we become more attuned to different sensibilities and get inspired. I started out fresh with a new account June 2019 but just never used it. In March, I had 20 followers who were basically random friends who I'd let in on my account.

As of today, I have 155 followers on Twitter. I'm interested to see where it stands in a year.

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## The Weekly Tweet

I saw this [wholesome tweet](#) recently and I love it. It shows a bunch of people having a good time at a Nigerian wedding. Seriously. Rocking out.

*Side note: I've been meaning to get more into rock music so if you happen to have any recommendations, hit reply and let me know!*

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## Recommended Reading

1. "Wait, I can explain":  [Undress or fail: Instagram's algorithm strong-arms users into showing skin](#)

Key points from this:

- Researchers did a study of Instagram's algorithm with 26 volunteers, asking them to use a browser add-on and follow a diverse set of content creators. The add-on works by periodically opening up Instagram and checking the home page. Theoretically, the posts that show up should reflect the diversity of the content creators' posts. However, this was not the case. Posts with pictures of women in undergarment or bikini were **54% more likely** to show up in the newsfeed. The number drops to 28% with pictures of shirtless men. On the other hand, foodie pictures and nature pictures were calculated to be 60% less likely to show up in the feed. You can find the original data [here](#). The story goes further to consider biases in AI, namely how it fails to consider subtleties in the images posted, causing many inaccurate flags.

2. Amusing:  [What do Waffle Houses Have to Do with Risk Management?](#)

Key points from this:

- Waffle House is known for being open 24/7. They're extremely resilient because they tend to stay open during extreme weather conditions. Even when they need to close down, they're quick to reopen. FEMA uses the Waffle House Index to track how local economies are doing. This blog post by Dan Stoneking of FEMA brings up some more interesting details. And if you were curious, the Waffle House Index went red due to the coronavirus, closing at least 418 locations out of its 2,000 by the end of March.
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## Media Recommendation

For a media recommendation, I have to recognize the number 1 movie at the US box office. It's a horror film shot on Zoom. Script written in a day. Shot over 5 days. A runtime of 29 minutes. You have to admire the effort. If you get around to seeing it, let me know what you think.

[Unsubscribe Film on Vimeo](#)

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## Wrapping Up 😊

If you're enjoying getting my thoughts, I'd love it if you shared it with a friend or two. You can send them this [link](#) so they could join. :)

Next week's edition is for paying subscribers.

If you see anything that you loved reading, feel free to let me know! I'd love to hear your ideas, feedback or questions. Just hit reply.

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