

ANALECTS OF AN ARTIST VOL. 1

In honour of a fluid man.

If someone were to ask “what is the true meaning of being an artist?” it would be expected, then, that an artist would be able to answer this swiftly and with conviction. Unfortunately this is often not the case. An artist should ask themselves this question every day, so as to be prepared. Should they give the answer they give themselves, their answer will always be true.

Art should not be a response but a reflex.

Two artists are having a discussion. One says to the other “Your work is great, I am going to make you as an artist, my artwork. Any work you ever make, or have made, will now be considered a part of my work”. The other laughs and replies “well that cannot be, any work I make, is my work alone. This idea you propose is not an artwork, I will not accept it”

“You may not accept it, but what if others will? You must accept that should others consider you my artwork, then, to them, so you shall be?”

“I accept that. But what if I declare you as my artwork, and anything you make is to be considered a part of my artwork?”

“Then my work, still remains my own, as I have already declared that anything you make as art, is mine”

“What if another artist were to come along and declare you as their artwork?”

“Then they would be copying my work. In declaring me their work, and any work of mine now to be considered theirs, they would expose my original work. Granted, I accept, should others consider me this other artist’s work, of me being their work, and by proxy your work also, even in the light of the knowledge of it originally being my artwork, then to them, so it shall be”

“Does that not bother you?”

“No. I would accept it wholeheartedly, I would, as an artwork, kill this artist. And as it would be considered their work, such an act, would be a suicide”

“So I must kill you in order to cease being your artwork?” “No, I would never cease to be this other artist’s work, even after their’ death, but it would discourage others from copying my work again.”

An artist one day made a masterpiece, a masterpiece being a work that achieves, completely, the artist's artistic pursuit and is accepted as such.

More works than shows is far better than more shows than works.

Be weary of the idea of a 'practice'. The link between all of the works of an artist is the artist themselves.

Know why you make Art.

Your art is not my art nor mine yours.

Art should not always be marvelled at as entirely existing within the human domain. Is it far more marvellous to see it as what it really is – an extreme of nature. To divide humans from nature is to think as one's self as a god – and you, my friend, are no god.

Art, like all things, has a nature. In dealing with art its nature should be examined. These inherent natures should not be denied, but they may be changed.

Ideally no artist should fear their own ideas.
Those that do, should do them.

Too many artists concern their work with the failure of others.

There should be no physical requirement in being an artist or making art.

It is commonplace for artists to tell lies and make them believable. It is far greater to tell the truth but make it unbelievable.

Being an artist is not an achievement.
Making art is not an achievement.

In reality no artwork is better than any other.

An artwork is made entirely in the mind. If one's mind is lazy when making the work, the work will be unclear.

No artwork should be seen as anything more than it really is. It is what it is, so to speak.

A wise artist will make accurate presumptions about the presumptions of their audience and intercept them.

The phrase 'art changes lives' should not be taken lightly.

A successful artist is one who dies content.

For an artist who makes clear their stance; and will stand by it for a life time, even if their stance is questionable, dismissed, or in some cases, wrong – their artistic resolve should be admired.

An artist should invent their own language, but one that others can easily learn.

No artist can be loved without also being hated by others. Welcome hate as a good sign.

In the mind, ideas must be sculpted into artworks. In traditional sculpture, finer works are made by taking away, rather than adding to.

In making an artwork, one should consider all visual information. Any visual detail not relevant to the idea should be removed – or its relevance considered, and accepted as part of the work.

It is healthy to approach serious art lightly and light art seriously. Or rather, it is healthy to approach all art the same.

Don't waste your time with unanswerable questions.

Many say art is that which cannot be explained in words. Those that do should remain quiet.

There are essentially two ways the idea for a new work is created. Either the artist takes time to contemplate a new work, or the artist waits – trusting in their own mind to give the idea to them. This difference in approach is vast.

An artist should always consider whom they are making the work for, but should also consider if they are really doing so for themselves. Do not be ashamed of the inherent selfishness of being an artist.

If an artist is to think of their own artworks as their life's work then they should be prepared to defend those works to the death.

Regardless of the content of the work, an artist should be having fun with their friends either in the production or showing of each others work.

The pursuit of a 'style' is the pursuit of imitation.
Have no style.

An artwork can be anything the artist wants it to be. In understanding this, can we begin to see how little art itself has achieved.

Many say 'everything has been done' – this is ridiculous.

An artwork should be aware of itself as an artwork.

Be bold. But not too bold.

If an artist is to use a sketchbook, it is advisable to only use one side of every page. For one day those pages may be torn from their binding and displayed in frames or cabinets. It is wiser to waste blank pages now, than full ones later.

The greatest hope for an artist should be that they inspire, either by succession or opposition, the following generation of artists to surpass them.

An artist should primarily concern themselves with their works.

When titling a work, one should approach this matter like naming a puppy. The work will respond to its true name.

Never trust an artist.

To a young artist who is deeply resolved and fiercely ambitious – rise slow.

When contemplating the exact form a new work should take, one should make their decisions in the most direct way in keeping with the original idea, disregarding their own vanity and selfishness. Unfortunately the way of the artist is selfish and vain.

From one idea, numerous potential permutations are possible. Even if many artists begin with the same idea each will take their own path to a different result. In this we find understanding of others.

Those artists whose reason for making work is a disdain for art itself, though it often takes them a long time, will eventually feel contempt toward themselves and cease making work.

Never know what you are going to do next. But know where you want to be in the end.

Only be an artist if you have to.

