

What is art and being an artist? The limits of what we have to Understand by art. And who may be considered artist?

By Soli Madsen, artist, art teacher, gallerist (France/Denmark)

I will start by saying something rather obvious but important: all artists began by being amateur's years ago.

Carl-Henning Pedersen, the famous Danish painter, said once: " Art is giving out everything you've got, that is giving your whole soul. If you do so, then you'll never need any artistic education!" But is it really that easy and that sure?

I don't think so, but I do agree that if you don't pour out the very essence of your soul, you'll never become an artist! Only an amateur, that wants to be seen and be applauded at.

Art costs blood; I mean your blood as an artist. All your joys but also your most secret pains .If not, it may be decorative and noticeable in your home or at a show, because of strong colours or funny shapes, but only that. Of course, Art is subjective. Nobody can be sure of how great an artist has become (or will become), after some years of hard and eager work. But...if you just forget his/her pictures or sculptures after 5 minutes; it is NOT a good sign.

But if you go on thinking about them, even dreaming about some of them, wishing you owned one or several of them, then they have made an impact on you, and this is Art. An artist has just shown you his/her secret treasure: the depth of his/her inner world, that isn't so secret anymore, so now you have come to realize something that you share with him /her, but you didn't know it until now! It has become more real because it feels more conscious after this "revelation". Souls have just met. But it can also have been an unpleasant revelation! It rang a bell; it could even wake you up at night! Some sublimation has taken place, both in the artist's heart, by conveying his /her emotions, but also in you, the spectator, because he/she made you think, feel and react.

But some artists have become so infatuated with themselves, that they absolutely believe, that it's only what THEY or their best artist friends produce, that is real Art! Only works, that is akin to theirs.

So, in Copenhagen here in March 2013, we have just experienced the very ugly other side of the medal! An Art Show became a very ridiculous SCANDAL! The scandalous thing was that ALL the works were representing something FIGURATIVE!!!" Dear me", meant the gallery owners that visited the show," that is completely old-fashioned and in fact beautiful! And of course, we live in an ugly world, so beauty must be totally banned from any exhibition! That can't be Art! The Fine Arts, Les Beaux Arts, is OUT!!!" So one of the exhibiting artists received death threats, and many others got harassed, especially over the Internet. Those gallery owners were sure they knew better than God what Art isBut just maybe THEY were wrong, for Art should indeed tell about our reality, also the beautiful side of it, and we might feel the better for it. I don't want any escapism, just a fair portion of any part of life.

When an artist has shown that he/she is able to master form, colours, lines, composition and depth, whatever the style or motif, and when he /she can express his /her feelings and thoughts, so we can react, then it IS ART. If we feel his/her works are genuine, personal, original, not repetitive, then I call it Art. I don't even need to know if the artist is going to start a kind of New School and be famous ever after. He/ she have attained the right level, if my soul got touched. Never mind if some foolish snobs decree that this artist is NOT an artist.

A true artist receives the most wonderful reward possible, after years of hard work: not so much what he/she got out of it financially speaking, nor the prizes and medals that he /she might have received, (though of course he/she has to make a living).No, his/her reward is that his/her soul has been TRANSFORMED through perseverance. He /she can in fact transform the world by showing his/her true self. This transformation will never end. The artist will never need to know nor measure how long this transformation will last, because it is a part of life itself. He /she has given his/her own present to Society, regardless of how rich or poor that made him/her.

So I will now thank YOU from the bottom of my heart, all artists present here in front of me!

