

Art Appreciation

The artist stood apart from her work but close enough to hear what passersby had to say. Her friend was standing by her side.

A middle-aged couple stopped to examine one of her paintings. The man said to his wife, "I don't think that this artist paints very well. The people don't look quite right to me."

"Well, you don't want to be too exact; otherwise why not just take a photograph?"

"I just like to be able to recognize what I'm looking at. Besides, doesn't it take more skill to paint that accurately?"

"But the work would have no character, no soul! Your way makes it too easy on the (viewer). I'll bet you kept your coloring strictly between the lines when you were a kid..."

The artist threw an amused glance at her friend, but didn't say anything.

Then a teacher came by with her young class. She began to "interpret" another painting close by the first. She explained the purpose of each element in the work, and concluded with a discussion of the meaning of the cloud which hovered in the sky.

"Good Grief," the artist's friend said. "Is that the right interpretation?"

"Heavens no!" the artist laughed. "It's only a cloud. I didn't mean anything by it."

An art student came by, filled with his newly-gained knowledge of the masters. He spoke to his companions concerning the details of brush strokes, perspective, and the composition of the pigments. He knew so much about technique, but he had no feel for the emotion of the artist.

"It's sad that he knew so much but didn't say anything at all about the subject of your painting!"

"Yes, the point of art is to express yourself; to communicate something to others. He has simply missed the point of it all," the artist said.

A young couple came by, and stopped to comment on a monochrome painting.

"I like to see more colors and hues," one said.

The other replied, "Sometimes too much color distracts from the overall sense of the work."

"I don't care. You can't sell without color!"

After this couple had left, and the artist and her friend had spent an hour or so watching and listening to various groups and their dissenting opinions, they went to get a cup of coffee.

"What about those who criticize your work?" the friend asked.

"Some critics don't love art, but only themselves." The artist replied. "But in others it shows that they are thinking about art, and that's what I'm really after.

"Doesn't it frustrate you that none of them agree on the nature and meaning of your work?"

"I'm disappointed if there is hostility, but otherwise I'm tickled by their love of art."

"But so many are wrong about the meaning of your work! How can you accept all the critics and their ideas?"

"They don't have to understand it perfectly to please me. As long as they truly love art, I don't care if they get all of the details!"