



## **Defining the vision of an Artist.**

**Writing is a form of ART, the correlation of visual art and writing**

### **Introduction**

Writing is art in words, just as painting is art in images, and the two are inseparably linked. Writing is an art form, deeply connected to the practice of visual art. The following written piece comes from my own experience as a visual artist and writer. I originally wrote it as a graduation speech for the New York Academy of Art, Class of 2012, and I am now using this to set the tone for our lecture, to set the stage as a parallel to becoming a writer.

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### **So, you want to be an artist? Written by Eric Jean Weiss**

My parents indulged my artistic fantasy, but any talk of being an artist was never taken seriously. The conversation was steered to medical or law school, or teaching as a renowned professor at a prestigious college in Europe like my godfather who held three PhDs and had an immaculate academic record.

Then there was the Atari and the first Macintosh computer. When I logged onto a computer for the first time, it was like all my creative selves, all those experiments and yearnings, stood up and sang together. I have not turned back since that day in high school. I had many moments of doubt, or moments when I feared I was becoming absolutely insane. I did not have an art school available in the small town where I lived. There was no academic environment where exploring my identity, preparing for a current and future life as an artist, was everyday life. I did not have a place where everyone I met, attended class with or had any sort of conversation with, and wanted the same thing. I

grew up in an environment where artists were freaks, and the impracticality of life as an artist far overshadowed the joy of creating. Therefore I got out of there, and I found these things on my own.

In the past, I have had this real love/hate relationship with identifying myself as an artist. When I was five years old I had a “Memory Book” at school “for posterity”, on the space where it said “What do you want to be when you grow up?” next to my school picture, I put down “artist”. You know others were putting “astronaut” and “fireman”. I did not have a true understanding of what that was, but I put it down. I could draw, like a trained seal. The teachers would put stuff in front of me, and say “draw this” and then they would go, “Hey, come here, watch this”. Oh yes, I was quite the oddity. So I guess I associated something positive with being an artist, and that is why I wrote down “artist”.

Art students need to re-commit to live their lives as Artists as they did on the first day they walked in to the compelling world of creativity. However relatively we choose to do this, there is one thing that is undeniable, an unwritten edict; the fact that ARTISTS DO NOT COMPROMISE. This is the reason people raise their eyebrows when you say, “I went to art school” or “I am an Artist”. This is why Artists have this thing that no one else gets to have, it makes us feel superior at times, and fascinates the civilian. Those things that when they grow disproportionate, turns an Artist into a demigod.

Marry yourself to your creative vision, the vision that makes a little boy write “artist” in the space after the question “What do you want to be when you grow up?” and you will live to love what you were meant to be, an artist.

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## **Lecture Introduction**

The following article is a piece that I wrote for Artistik Magazine. This article serves as an introduction to our lecture.

### **Defining the vision of an Artist.** Written by Eric Jean Weiss

#### ***Reality, perception, seeing and interpreting...***

Everyone has its own understanding of art. The reality of what you are seeing is based on your own perception and defines that interpretation.

When we look at an object, usually we do not see it. What we see, what conventions are interposed between the object and us, are symbols that allow us to recognize the object and to distinguish almost any other, for the convenience of life. The person that will fire all

these conventions, is the one who despite the practical use and conveniences of life, strives to see the reality directly without interposing between them, the same shall be an artist.

Just sketch a table to find that, contrary to our first impression, it seems almost never rectangular, but almost always, trapezoidal. Similarly, the Impressionists shocked when dared to paint blue shadows, while the academic had decreed that a shadow is black or brown. If we say that a tree is "green", for example, we give into a common social convention and just look at a "real" tree to understand immediately how the word "green" is approximate. It is no longer here to say that the "appearances" of the tree do not meet the criterion of "green" at the end of an oversimplification, but noted that the tree is "really" not green or at least, not just green. By dint of repetition, however, in saying that the trees are green, we end up believing it, by habit, banality and with ease. When we buy new furniture, its presence in our house catches our eye for a while, but over time, our attention wanes and we come to not even see it at all. This shows in both cases how we interpret what we see and how our perception is affected based on our own reality.

In other words, most people and the artist share the same vision of their environment, but when one merely guesses its contours, the other sees it as it is. This is when there is a difference of degree in the perception of reality between us and the artist. To the extent that the classical theory of art is based on a faithful reproduction of a model, that is to say, the theory of imitation, it seems that the artist defines a sharper assessment, capable of embracing the width of a view as to capture the smallest details. In this sense the artist is an individual who has a clearer and deeper perception of the reality itself compared to the ordinary person.

However, works of art do not carry any imitation of reality; some even seem to deliberately turn away. In this sense, the artist would be defined more by its own vision and his style might be called by his acuity in a perception shared by all. As a result the artist is not one who sees better than others the same object, but one who sees what is radically alien to the common view. Yet if the artist alone sees what concerns himself, we do not understand how its work of art will be of interest to the common people.

Ask yourself this question, when defining yourself as an artist, are you projecting yourself through what is perceived as your art or are you letting your art define the reality of who you really are as an artist?

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# Lecture and Discussion

## 1. Introduction: Vision and Reality

Art has always been tied to the question of vision, how we see, how we interpret, and how we transform those interpretations into expression. Yet, seeing is not a simple act. What we call “reality” is deeply influenced by perception, habit, and convention.

Everyone carries their own understanding of art. That understanding is rooted not only in what is visible but in how our minds filter and interpret the visible world. The role of the artist, therefore, is not only to see but to see *differently*.

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## 2. Perception vs. Convention

Most people, when they look at an object, are not actually seeing it in its raw form. Instead, they see through layers of learned conventions and symbols.

- **Example 1: The Table**

Sketch a table, and you’ll notice that the “rectangle” we assume it to be almost never looks rectangular. Perspective makes it appear trapezoidal, even though we keep calling it “a rectangle.”

- **Example 2: The Tree**

We say, “a tree is green.” But if you truly observe a tree, you’ll realize that “green” is a crude oversimplification. A tree contains countless shades, yellow-greens, dark shadows, light reflections, even hints of blue or red. Yet, through habit and cultural convention, we reduce it to simply *green*.

- **Example 3: Shadows**

Academic painters once insisted shadows must be black or brown. Then came the Impressionists, who painted shadows in blue, purple, or even pink, shocking at the time, but more faithful to how shadows actually look in natural light.

These examples remind us that conventions simplify the world for practical living, but they also dull our perception. Artists challenge those conventions.

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### 3. The Artist's Perception

Where most people settle for approximation, the artist strives to pierce through habit and truly see. This is the distinction:

- **Ordinary perception:** sees what is convenient, what is socially agreed upon.
- **Artistic perception:** sees both the familiar and the overlooked, the obvious and the hidden.

This is why classical art theory emphasized *imitation*: capturing reality with precision. But imitation alone is not the end goal. The true artist perceives not just the outer form but the subtleties, the emotions, the atmosphere, the things most people pass by without noticing.

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### 4. Beyond Imitation: The Artist's Vision

Not all art is a mirror of reality. In fact, some of the most powerful works seem to reject imitation entirely. Abstract art, surrealism, expressionism, these forms deliberately step away from reality, yet they still express truths.

Here lies the paradox:

- The artist does not merely see “better” than others.
- The artist sees *differently*.

Art becomes valuable not only because the artist perceives reality with more clarity, but because they can present a vision of the world that feels foreign yet meaningful to others.

If art only reflected what the artist alone could see, it would remain private. But when an artist shares their vision, others begin to recognize something in it, even if they never noticed it before.

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### 5. Habit, Attention, and the Fading of Vision

Consider how we notice new furniture when it first enters our home. At first, it captures our attention every day. But over time, it fades into the background, we stop *seeing* it. This fading shows how habit shapes our perception.

The artist's challenge is to resist that fading, to continually see the world with fresh eyes, as though it were new.

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## 6. The Artist's Identity and the Question of Vision

At the heart of this discussion lies a personal question every artist must confront:

👉 *When you call yourself an artist, are you projecting your own reality through your work, or are you allowing your work to define the reality of who you are as an artist?*

This is more than semantics. It touches on identity:

- **If you project yourself**, your art is a reflection of your inner world.
- **If your art defines you**, then what you create reshapes who you are and how the world perceives you.

In truth, most artists live in the tension between these two forces.

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## 7. Conclusion: Defining the Vision of an Artist

To define the vision of an artist is not only to recognize sharper perception but to embrace difference in perception. The artist is both an interpreter and a challenger of reality, someone who unsettles our habits of seeing and helps us rediscover the richness of the world.

Art, then, is not simply about showing the world as it is. It is about showing the world as it could be seen.

So I leave you with this question:

- **Do you see as most people see, or do you dare to see beyond the conventions?**
  - **And if you do, will you let your vision define your art, or your art define your vision?**
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## **Bonus article written by Eric Jean Weiss**

An article I wrote on the creative process, exploring how love and passion can serve as powerful sources of collaborative inspiration.

### **Dynamic in love and art ...the creative collaboration**

The art of love and the love of art are largely the art of persistence, the experience is only rewarding if you are learning from your failures and continue on moving forward. Like art, love is a common language that can transcend social boundaries and trigger the inspiration that drives you to succeed.

...But it goes beyond that, ART is about love and hate and the passion that moves your soul in either direction. No one is necessarily prepared for the emotional experience either have to offer, in art as in love, intuition is sometimes enough to navigate through the experience.

The more I think about it, the more I believe that there is nothing more artistic than the feeling of love, it's full of colors and nuances, has various complexities and layers in its composition and everyone has a unique reaction to the experience.

One of the most complicated tasks that concern me the most in love and art is the concept of making the right decision. Whether we are in a creative process or in search of love, every few seconds... we have the opportunity to change our lives and our happiness in the creative and emotional choices that we make. By taking that opportunity, the lives of many others will also forever be changed through our art and feelings, causing an irreversible chain of events.

Making some of those life changing decisions is what sometimes brings me back to my childhood fears. Art has captivated me since early childhood. From my first macaroni and glue project to my most recent attempts at figurative drawing, art has grown from a mild interest to an integral part of what defines me and has enabled me to love in better ways and appreciate life and my surrounding to the fullest.

...Just like love, art expresses complex intangible feelings we can't explain in any other ways.

...Art is love, art is everywhere and they're one and the same.

Feel and fill your heart with that creative desire.

Be who you want to be, love how you want to love, create that life and passion for yourself and then you will become an “artist of life” defined by your own desires and inspirations.