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**Why Art?**

**By Joseph Devon**

**Why Art? by Joseph Devon**

The following is the hardest thing I've ever had to write. If I can get through this, all the way through this, than my little corner of the universe will make sense again and I'll be able to get a good night's sleep. If I don't get through it...well...if I don't get through it then you won't be reading this and I've vanished off into the world of obscurity. The following is the hardest thing I've ever had to write for the very simple reason that I, in no way, feel like writing it.

My father always used to question my interest with art in general, with writing in specific. He used to say, "In an English class, you can argue a point around and around, and at the end of class nobody will have been proven to have the right answer. In engineering, on the other hand, if someone doesn't have the right answer, the god-damned bridge will fall down." His point was blunt it is what's haunting me at this very moment. On one hand, you have the very tangible fields of science with direct and provable facts that produce concrete results in our world. On the other hand there is art, where no right answers exist and the results, if any, are impossible to measure. The question is simple. Why art? Why am I writing this right now? Why not tuck it all away and become a banker? It can't just be because I'm lousy with numbers.

What sets me down in front of my computer time and time again staring at a blank screen that I'm to fill up with words? Is it hopes and dreams of a best-selling book and immortality? I'd be lying if I said it wasn't. But I'd be lying if I said it was, too. Those kinds of hopes and dreams are very much a part of it, but the truth is, those are the things that get me to sit down and stop procrastinating. What happens after I've written the first word, and is still happening after I've written the first sentence, what continues to happen after the first paragraph, the first page, the second page and on and on until the ending has been reached, what happens then has very little to do with fame and fortune. Those thoughts are long gone and have been replaced by a string of images and thoughts constantly being converted into twelve-point Times New Roman font. Thoughts of money have never ended up with me figuring out the perfect setting for a scene. Dreams of fame are not in my skull while I walk down the street talking to myself, working out dialogue. And the bestseller list is nowhere near my mind when I come up with the perfect word to fit a sentence together. The enticement of a reward is not what makes me write, it's what gets me started, after that it's something else entirely.

Writing, like painting, singing, sculpting, dancing, photography and acting is a form of expression. It is an attempt to communicate something inside with the outside world. Something that is important,

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important enough to make me sit down time and time again in front of this Satanic blank screen. There's something inside of you, something inside of every human, that it screaming to get out, a universal truth. No, don't blush. I don't use those words lightly. Whatever you write, I know that it's something huge. I know it because the swarming mass of whatever it was floating through your mind was enough to make you sit down and get past that first word, and the second, and the third, and so on until the ending has been reached. That's a task that requires an enormous amount of will. Something is driving you. Something you want to say. It must be huge; the blank screen is not a hurdle that is surmounted easily.

Does that answer the "Why art" question? No, not really. My father's statement contains far more than just a questioning of why I make myself write. It contains the question of why art is important to begin with. The more tangible fields have produced a great deal in our world, from the wheel to indoor plumbing. What has art produced besides more art? It art even that important? Couldn't we just do

away with it altogether? If you're like me, such a question makes you cringe with horror. Of course we can't do away with art! But have you ever tried to explain to a non-believer why such a thought is ludicrous? It's not enough to take them to a museum and stand next to them enjoying a Van Gogh. That sets you at ease, but it doesn't answer the question. And I can't settle for convincing myself, that won't do it tonight. I know I won't sleep if I stop there, the specter of my father surely won't be happy to leave it at that.

Good news, though. I think I'm closer to an answer than it seems. Dragging a non-believer to a museum is the answer, just not in the way it seems. Your enjoyment of art is the answer. Art is communication; I've already said that. Don't kid yourself, in anything you write there are only two characters, you and the reader. There is a bond established between artist and viewer in which something is conveyed. As I said, something fundamental, even if it's only taking a few characters' lives, tearing them apart, and then rebuilding them again by the end of the book. Something as to the nature of what we're all doing here is passed along, is encoded in each word, in each brush stroke, in each note, something harmonious, usually something simple. But something is passed on allowing you to enjoy, on some unexplainable level, the art of others. And I think that's the answer. In engineering, if the right answer is not present, then the goddamned bridge falls down. But if all the right answers are there in the tangible sense, and the bridge is built, is it worth it even if the lives of those who walk across the bridge are meaningless?

No civilization has ever come into existence without artists. No civilization is complete without them. Without artists, civilization would not exist, we would only be isolated mass, unconnected, left to wander over bridge after bridge, because art is communication between one person and another. Art itself is a universal truth.

If you'll forgive a slight digression, there is a Zen story that bears telling.

Once a division of the Japanese army was engaged in a sham battle, and some of the officers found it necessary to make their headquarters in Gasan's temple.

Gasan told his cook: "Let the officers have only the same simple fare we eat."

This made the army men angry, as they were used to very differential treatment. One came to Gasan and said: "Who do you think we are? We are soldiers, sacrificing our lives for our country. Why don't you treat us accordingly?"

Gasan answered sternly: "Who do you think we are? We are soldiers of humanity, aiming to save all sentient beings."

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I don't have quite the guile that this simple monk had. I have too much respect for indoor plumbing. I don't have quite the guile, but I wish I did because that monk was standing up for me right there. In the battle of tangible verse transcendent, he found both fields to be perfectly equal and necessary. I think I know why.

Art is communication. After all, what is speech but highly stylized singing? Sounds and inflections honed to an exact degree making communication possible. It's all just noise, it's the composition that gives it meaning. And where does writing stem from if not painting? Think about that next time you're writing freehand. Pay attention to you pen as it moves across the page, what are you doing, how are you expressing thoughts? You are painting, painting stokes and lines which encode our language into a readable form. Writing, all writing, scientific or poetic, is painting. It's all art. And what is the fundamental form of engineering, the arch, if not sculpture? Where would modern medicine be without photography? What is geometry if not painting? Math more of the same?

As it turns out, I don't even believe art and science to be as opposed as they first appear. I believe they're the same process at work in two different types of minds. The equations and theories that are taken for granted by science today came from somewhere, and I don't think that Newton watching the apple, Archmedes in his tub, Einstien pondering the atom, I don't think that any of these moments are

any different from the clarity I seek when pondering a plot point. I believe that the world of science came to be while someone pondered the universe on the tangible level. Inspiration struck, and then the insight contained within was captured to be communicated with others. Does that sound so different from what you do? It doesn't sound so different to me. But while the greats of science have pondered the tangible, I ponder the intangible.

Math and science can have their neatly provable formulas and theories. There is no equivalent in the world I've chosen to enter because when I'm sitting in my tub pondering things, it is not the physical world I'm pondering. It is my world within, the world of my heart and soul. My answers are just as real, but they can't be measured in the physical world. My answers are just as real, but there is no way to point to something concrete when dealing with matters of the heart. But my answers are just as real, and they're just as important, I know this because of my father's question.

The engineers can build their bridge, and I'm thankful for them doing it. It's the people walking across that I must look over. For the man walking across who is walking without a clear idea why, for the woman who is terrified of what lies ahead, and even for the child whose dog has just died. I've got answers for you. And if I don't have them now, I'll keep looking until I find them. I'll get them to you just as soon as I find them. I'll get them to you as soon as I can. I'll get them to you just as long as I can continue to write.

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Joseph Devon has written two full length novels and numerous articles and short stories. He currently resides in New York.

**Decorate For Less With Art Posters**

**By Rachael Cleipher**

## Why Art?

If you are looking for great ways to decorate your home or office, then you know as well as I do that you have nearly countless options. There are so many ways to decorate that it can easily be very overwhelming to find the right things that are in the right budget. As an interior designer, I am often meeting with clients who are overwhelmed with their options and who are having trouble staying within a budget. I often suggest art posters to these kinds of clients.

Art posters is a surprising answer for many of my clients that come with questions. They are surprised because they have never thought about the great option that art posters can be. So I suggest art posters and then I show them the samples of art posters that I have all over my own home and office. There are a few main reasons why I suggest decorating with art posters.

First, I love seeing people decorate with art posters because they are inexpensive. Not that you should always choose what is inexpensive for your home or office, but if you are anything like me, then your tastes and personal style are constantly changing. If this is the case, decorating with art posters is a great way to decorate for a time when you know that your tastes will change soon enough. So often people buy expensive pieces of beautiful art and then change their minds within a couple of years. Buying art posters is a great way to stay in a reasonable price range and to give yourself the freedom to explore new options for art later.

Another great thing about art posters is that they come in such a large variety. You can be looking for almost anything and find what you're looking for in the form of an art poster. I love that. I love that a client can be looking for a beach scene or for art that looks like it came from Paris and they can usually find art posters representing what they like.

If you are trying to decorate and you think that art posters might be an option for you, then head to an art posters store and check out your options. It is a good idea to have some thoughts about what you're looking for first. Try to know what style and colors you are looking for. The decision making process will be much easier if you know what kind of art posters to seek.

Rachael Cleipher is an interior designer that often suggests art posters as a great way to decorate.  
See

to learn more.

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