

“We need art to help us to live and to die”

How do we define art? I remember when I was twelve years old, my parents sent me to the YMCA to learn how to draw. That's how I first met with the beautiful thing called, “art”. Even so, I used to narrow-mindedly think that the term “art” was only for an artist who expressed one's imagination by drawings and paintings, like Leonardo Di Vinci. In some point, I also used to think that “LDV” was just a painter. That's what at least I learned from my high school history class. As I grew up, I realized that art wasn't just paintings, but it has enormous impact on our lives. In a way, we all find a connection between art with creativity. On that account, human society is moving forward because we, human, create. Utterly, I was unaware of the involvement and importance of art in our society. It was very recently, that I began to see the world in different viewpoint and realized the significance of art and its impact and involvement that drive us from prehistory to what we are today. Since then my understanding in the definition of art has dramatically changed, which I now believe that *“art is the expression of human creative skills, or ideas or imagination, in visual or in auditory forms that use commonly to communicate with other human beings”*. But why do we need art, and what's the matter? The answer is simple, “Art makes us human” and therefore, we need art in our lives. With that idea in mind, I am absolutely agreed with Alain de Botton, the writer of *“We need art to help us to live and to die”*.

In order to understand the need of art, we must first understand the essence of it and what it brings to us as individuals or as society. In ancient times, our ancestors used the method of art to record the emotions of society or the phenomenal events, personal achievements, or failures and ideas through their paintings or sculptures to communicate with future generations. Furthermore, art describes the soul of one's culture in a certain period in a certain place or civilization, which bridges the gap between multiple cultures around the world. Through art, we gain a better understanding of knowledge and cultures in the past, and gives us insight into diverse cultures of contemporary day because language that art represents is universal.

Furthermore, the society in which we inhabit is an outcome of creativity and innovation. We are surrounded by countless human creation. At home, table, chair, bed, you name it, all the things that surround you is literally designed and created by someone, somewhere. All old and new creations basically base on creative mind that pretty much related to the nature of art. If you look at all these megastructures that built in the ancient time, that are also telling the story of architecture perspective, while all paintings and sculptures are telling certain stories at the certain period of a certain person or certain events, in which overall, telling us how the elegance of its civilization was. Moreover, creating art improves quality of health and life by producing a variety of neural networks within the brain that reduce negative emotions, stress and anxiety, and improved medical outcome.

We live in a fast-paced world of quick decisions and fragmented thoughts. Being good at creating art helps you become a better problem solver in all areas of your life. It change the way you approach a problem. Instead of your thinking for the solution that comes from a linear, or logical perspective, your creative attitude solving the solution from all angles. Just like when you look at one painting and perceive many different interpretations. Creativity helps you see things

differently and better with uncertainty. Some study suggests that creative people are better able to live with uncertainty in terms of their ability to adapt thinking for the flow of the unknown.

When we think about art, the first thing that come on our mind is, museum. In a way, museum is a place where we collect, preserve and showcase all objects and materials of art, cultural, religious and other historical importance from ancient times that were created mostly by man, or by nature. And of course, we also have contemporary museums that showcase modern art. However, most collections are from ancient period, and thus it allows us to ensure understanding and appreciation for diverse groups and cultures in mankind. Certainly, it is only tangible stargate that link back to our past. Further, they serve to help future generations comprehend their history and recognize the achievements of our ancestors. Our ancestors, in other hand, left the messages to future generations through art. For instance, the famous paintings by Leonardo Di Vinci, “The Last Supper”, which is covering an end wall of the dining hall at the monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Italy, left us the message that bloodline of Jesus Christ might be still active and living among us. At least, Dan Brown, author of “Da Vinci Code”, interpreted the painting in certain way in his fiction novel. Whether, the novel is telling us the truth story or just fiction, but thanks to LDV, we all know that Jesus at least had a good meal before his crucifixion. Above all, “Da Vinci Code” novel was very intriguing and stood out in the crowd. That say, writing can be considered as another form of art.

However, in my defence to the need of art in our society, art is not just for paintings, it increase our self awareness and it can be lead to more success both personally and professionally. To the certain extent, art gives you freedom to express and bondless to let you have your own meaning or no meaning at all. This is the quote by Norwood MacGilvary from his article, called ‘Art and John Doe’. It say, *“Art can truly be judged by you, the individual, as far as you yourself are concerned, by only one measure. It is not a static but an energy measure. Do not ask what the art is or ought to be, for this is debatable and will inevitably lead to endless argument. Ask only what it does – not what it does to somebody else, for this again is only hearsay, but what it does to you. No matter how good a painting may be by any and all theoretical esthetic standards, if it does not do something special to you, Mr. John Doe, then it means about as much to you as a rumor of a love affair on Mars heard in a convention of Psychologists.”* Accordingly, living in purely functional world would definitely be lack meaning for us as human beings. We need to express ourselves through art and we need to surround ourselves with the expressions of others. Viewing the art of others can give rise to emotions within us and help us explore and interpret what we are feeling. Therefore, we need art in our live simply because we can express and see our human emotions, history, morals, philosophy, religion, ideas and values, through art.

Word Cited

MacGilvary, Norwood, '*Art and John Doe*', originally published in Pittsburgh, Architectural Club's '*The Charette*' with excerpt reprinted in *The Architectural Forum*, May 1939.