I have written a lot about developing interest and the importance of considering your visual composition. I hold these principles to be of the highest priority when creating art, not out of some sense that art is formulaic and that it can be made by recipe like some kind of elaborate color by number. These ideas are important to infuse into your art because they encourage viewer engagement, and viewer engagement is *the* most important element of creating art.

Art does not exist without the view, without a human mind to consider the forms and content of a piece of art the is is only so much wood and steel. The actual painting or sculpture is only half of what art is, the viewer is the other half. They bring the art to life, they bring to it all of their prejudices and opinions and shape the resulting conversation. You begin the conversation with your piece, sharing your point of view; an opinion you might have, maybe an issue you see as important. The viewer continues, and often finishes that conversation, by exploring your creation considering is form and the message, if there is one, developing an opinion of the subject matter, or at the very least your artwork and you.

This is not always a pleasant experience, as creators we often have trouble letting go of our work, there is always something else that could be added, or a detail the could be changed. In the end no matter how we feel about the piece, once we put the work out into the world, in a gallery or online, the conversation is out of our hands and the work will either shine or pass into obscurity, and more often the latter. If you are very lucky most of your work will find a small audience some times of just one, and the conversation will continue on with them.

No matter what your luck is like, or who your target audience is you should be aware, as a creator of art, that it is in this conversation the the power of art lies. If you aren’t aware of this relationship than you will be at quite a disadvantage when trying to develop strategies for sharing your ideas or engaging the viewer. And even if your only goal is to make something pretty you will be hard pressed to get people to consider you art long enough to decide on its beauty if it is not interesting as well.

**And that’s my take on art and the viewer.**