

BACHELOR THESIS

TIMEBASED AND INTERACTIVE  
MEDIA ART

THOUGHT CULTIVATION OF  
A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST  
HOW ARTISTIC PRACTICE AFFECTS  
LIFE VIEW

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ILLUSTRATIONS MADE WITH  
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE  
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# THOUGHT CULTIVATION OF A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST

How artistic practice affects life view

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## preamble

*If you have to ask  
why, ask yourself.  
If you don't have to - don't begin.*

I sit in front of an algorithm that can show me any image, any artwork in any style imaginable and unimaginable. The algorithm has no own will to create, while mine is voracious.

Why am I still sitting here? Why do I still care to create more in this satiated contemporary mess? Depressing facts and discouraging deductions sneak into the artistic process on a daily basis. What to make of them? What to make of the fact that I am still holding on and nowhere near letting go anytime soon?

One may say, that overthinking the matter will do more harm than good. Yes, negative thoughts have a power that should not be taken lightly. However, in many cases, continuous artistic creation is a thoughtful endeavour on all levels of being. The artwork is part of the person as it accompanies their personal development. The artwork can be reflection of a personal life philosophy and personal life philosophy will reflect in art.

Most importantly, the personal philosophy can restore or reform ones own relationship with art. Artistic drive comes naturally to many, but it can be cultivated. This is my experience dealing with my own share of blockage, open questions and unclear aims. This work is a recount of a personal journey.

I chose to accompany the texts with pictures generated by the artificial intelligence Dall e, which also accompanied this strange, self-induced reset of mentality. Only the reader can decide, which aspects could be relevant to them and which ones are not.

I.



Art::ist

## I.I Contemporaries

In the artist - as people with an increased sensitivity to what moves others and to the mentality of a time - and in their works, the mortification of a generation, of a time, intensifies. The participation of the individual in economic and social developments and the confrontation with questionable self-image form a main theme of current works of art, such as those represented in a cross-section at the Biennale.

*Questioning and researching, trying to bandage the wounds caused by living in the high-tech age with large exclamation and question marks.*

A contemporary artist is a person who asserts themselves as one. The definition follows the action, the purpose is found after creation and possibly altered to grab attention or give the intended impression.

*reinterpretation, fraud, invention, a sales talent, a marketing manager, philosopher, therapist, theologian, sociologist, artist*

The most meaningful aspect of acting as a contemporary artist is the very mixture of issues affecting oneself as a "regular" individual in time, personally, politically and culturally. A split sense of self emerges between aims of morality and spirituality and the necessities proposed by every day economy. Each realm can serve as a source of infinite preoccupation. It can inspire, but equally pose a threat to lock oneself in a numb inability to create. Where this discomfort looms is where art still explores, where it has been left alone by most other disciplines.

*from likes or views to performances, exhibits, reviews or even sheer outrageousness*

The artist explores and returns with a product of some sort, allowing guests to observe without necessarily going far on their own. The artist has to get familiar with the exploration and has to know the dangers and ways around them. These dangers vary depending on the subjects of exploration as well as the condition of the person.

*any culture is ready to subject itself to the rules of the consumerist matrix and thus eradicate its cultural aspect*

Such dangers are posed by a series of philosophical and economic hotspots, the offshoots of which like to stand in the way as blockages and sources of melancholic powerlessness. Recognizing these leeches and identifying one's own purpose, even if it is the rejection of any purpose, with which one as a „contemporary artist“ spins the legacy of modernity further or simply negates it, can prove to be helpful in the work, with regard to an inherited right not to look the other way, to revolt against established procedures and self-images.

*artistic craft invites the creation and execution of a life philosophy dealing with the self*

Working artistically means putting quantity and quality to personal inspiration and will to ensure reliable outcomes - a regular artistic output. Inspiration, by nature seemingly unreliable and consistent will, a skill arguably difficult to obtain. Under these conditions, this work seeks to explore the cultivation of the artistic mind from dealing with practical aims and psychological struggles to ethical and spiritual considerations. It is a case study on myself as much as a random sample within the world of art, therefore deductions are not replicable for everyone and this has to be viewed as a poetic deliberation rather than a scientific one.

## I.II Assumptions

-if you struggle to justify what you are doing, it's probably not the right thing for you.

-Asking for reasons disables creativity

### Contrary Arguments:

If I think about it critically for long enough, I can make myself question anything I am doing.

I could question why I don't go out in public smelling unpleasant. I could go down the rabbit hole and more likely than not find it justifiable to smell good when going among people.

Since I already cared so much about it, I will probably arrive at the conclusion that it is the right thing for me. So why fear operating this way with art in my

## I.III The „Why“

**It is common practice that an artist should not question their reason for making art beyond safety, however find a fairly straightforward way around the „Why?“ that will publicly satisfy.**

With any profession: asking why I do what I do, there will be a variety of answers (I'm good at it, my father made me do it, I enjoy helping people / making them happy etc). Why do I care about the quality of what I am doing? A doctor has a responsibility towards their patients, towards their colleagues and towards life. An artist is not without responsibility. I care about the quality of what I put out into the world, because of visitors/listeners, my fellow artists and because it is my way of choice to respect life.

Art may be no vehicle in the austere reality of every day, but it can serve as a coping mechanism to sustain the motor. A mirror of the human spirit, even in relation to everything that surrounds us. Art minus the human gaze is still a mirror of the human spirit considering art minus the human gaze.

A little piece of magic and mysticism that continues to exist beyond the lifespan of organized religion and spirituality, something remnant of ancient times and equally representative of progression towards grand utopian and dystopian futures. All that satisfies, questions, non commercially, non ideologically.





## II.



## Pre-Process



Social media is a procreative permanent orgy. Generally pleasing, the artist continues to look for depth to generate interest. Specificity leads to alienation, incomparability. Though others could relate and show openly, there is a loneliness attached to this conscious intensification of what we do.

Another phenomenon: there is no way to forget a necessity discovered within one's own work, even if dropping this new found necessity would accelerate creation. Such as the requirement of recreating the style or quality of the previous creation or of evoking a similar response within viewers.

Looking for the seams, the outskirts and wherever things become unclear.



*Hunger is a tool against giving up. To be fed all the time is a nightmare. Starving is, too. Something inevitable, part of the cycle, yet fearsome and malicious. Is it not pure contentment? There is always more: It does not end when new comes from it, nor when life escapes. It never ceases to spark new beginnings.*

I would enjoy indulging in the creation of something beautiful. For the sake of happiness, for the love of the flow state. To be the vessel for this bigger thing. Out of my love for this "greater".

Will is a tool against giving up. There might be an ongoing search for an infallible source of will. Childhood complexes, a personal need to exceed expectations, delusions of fame and money can only take one so far. Mental illness is a frequently romanticized source of artistic will.

In a postmodernist reflection, healing becomes a priority.

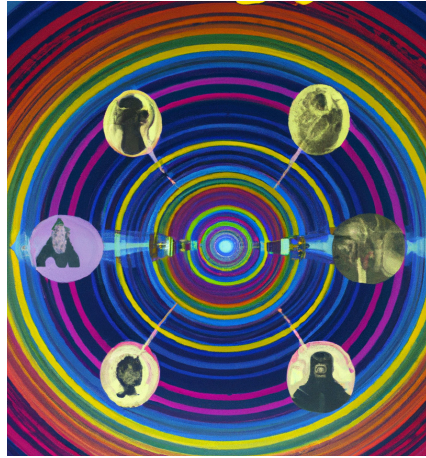
Progressive art might be mostly an art of self-progression.

## II.I Positive / Negative Thinking

## II.II Negative / Positive Thinking

When the surroundings are heavy only with the dark and foreboding, a thought cultivation is necessary. A conscious dealing with unconscious decisions and patterns to tell the necessary from the unnecessary which depends upon the unique will of the artist.

No more remaining oblivious to unrealistically negative or positive ideas. Thought becomes reality as it grows conviction through repetition. Fading out the mind fog while working is rarely a reliable course of action, what if today, it remains? What have I been thinking? Understanding social conditionings in a personal post-modernism. To allow for everything that influenced what I became to be understood. Going to therapy. As long as the mind's concepts and misconceptions remain unexplored, they might obstruct. The unnecessarily suffering artist is a thing of the past.



### III.



## Process

## III.I Beginnings

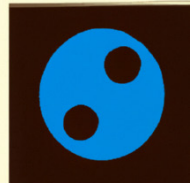
An exploration of properties. Investigation of surroundings. Research of motor abilities. It begins innocently enough, before falling into the trap of infinite possibility. Infinite reward. The monetary aspect of life remains misunderstood or ignored just long enough. Nurturing an idealistic mindset.

The question about beginnings arises long after it could still be remembered. It arises where the long term consequences of these problems appear unsolvable.

Playful strokes on empty papers. Notes into silence creating context to each other.

Inspiration is generally a topic with a religious air. The drive to get inspired and relate to something that exists with a work of your own as a self purpose invites a categorisation as an act of worship.

Inspiration as a pure or associative but definitely creative power of unknown source.



### III.II Material

The material invites carelessness. The artist is someone who decides to be careful. Or should they act carelessly, that is, too, an act that was carefully intended or references such one.

*I'm a lover of words but equally I hate them. This is why I have to work with them. This is why I cannot let go.*

*I love when a dear person utters a phrase and I truly understand what they feel.*

*I love that the air of the writer seems to embrace me while reading.*

*I love looking through the eyes of someone unlikely, at a situation quite unlikely.*

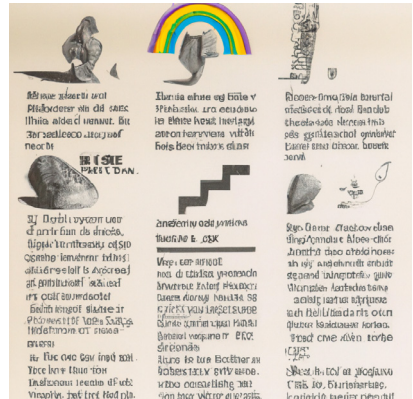
*I love traveling millions of miles, knowing of the strangest creatures and the color of a specific kind of duck I will never see on my own.*

*I resent them for how they sit on a nail in a tree, where there used to be generational wisdom and magic about our knowledge of the immediate nature.*

*I resent that they make people feel they should not reach out, for answers are found in words.*

*Words that are plastered carelessly about our lives, when we long for an answer, carefully spoken.*

*I resent them for this carelessness they invite.*



*I resent that my own words could never do for me what they do for another. Words in a notebook, never to be felt, never more than judged by their author, seem quite worthless.*

*Subject of study for a lifetime.*

*I'm a lover of colors but equally I hate them.*

*I love that a pigeon recognizes the quality of color and can distinguish styles.*

*I love that artificial intelligence guesses what please me before I could.*

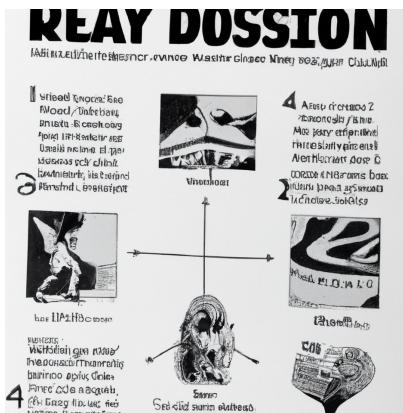
*I resent how they demand attention against my will, how they hide as if to mock me.*

*How felt colors are never real and true colors cannot be felt.*

*I resent the infinite possibilities of playing with color and how it renders all creation equal.*

*I love dreams for their inspirations.*

*I resent dreams for their inhibition of acting.*



### III.III Questions

**A question is asked to somebody: it is relative to a momentary version of the person asking and the person being asked. A serious question can not be asked expecting one "true" answer.**

The concept of truth and order becomes less significant in the face of the wish to relate oneself to the world. Questions and answers are used to outline identities that only apply within a greater network of possible identities. What is the meaning of an opinion if it has no other to differ from? In this realm, what is the significance of a question that always has the same answer? What is the significance of art that confines itself to such questions and specified purposes?

My idea as an artist is merely to outline questions that do not necessarily have the same answers if asked twice, even asking one person, hours apart. In this way, I cannot relate to the scientist who hopes to find a formula that is generally applicable. Remnants of enlightenment. I cannot relate to the laboratorist hoping to find the same results in an experiment every time. Entering a postmodernist relativity.

(Re)tiring from the enlightened identity.



## III.IV Authenticity

The art world has developed numerous beliefs about creativity and technique as well as strategies for achieving authenticity. Some think authenticity is achieved through unobstructed realization of the initial idea, which might be accomplished via previous high level knowledge of the affected field or sufficient networking ability to outsource the technical and stay truthful to the original idea with no compromises. Authenticity also comes into effect in an artwork when an authentic personality is present for them.

This is especially true in performative arts.

A problem arises when we consider that authentic art is not the only „good“ or relevant art. In other terms, artworks that reek of artificiality might still portray an „authentic“ message. Something might be authentically artificial, authentically human, authentically personal, authentically unique, but never authentically authentic. This transcendence of authenticity in artificial concepts makes it hard to define its properties.

Additionally, the generalist nature of artistic thought makes a direct realization of any idea nearly impossible. Reproductions are never just like the original and in essence, the artwork is reproduction of the idea, while developing a life of its own. Whatever the idea is, the artwork will exceed the established realm, this is an empirical value. Following this logic, the thought is the only authentic artwork and it is always lost for the world.

## III.V Audience

**So what of the thought the artwork causes in others, in me? An artwork of its own? To consider it or accept it as inevitable. To consider one's audience means to decide upon a kind of people qualified to understand. This often transcends the artist, when the curators and directors decide the larger context of an exhibit.**

Mündig is a useful German word describing an adult with the ability for his own judgement and decision making. In meaning it is similar to when a person is politically mature, thus considered to

be able to make an informed decision in politics. Curating a regionally significant, governmentally funded culture centre might mean assuming a considerable popularity to be "mündig"/ artfully mature. Contemporary artfulness seeks to oppose popularity. The ideal speaks only to a limited artfully mature crowd. Striving for the greatest achievement in high art - to taste in full something uncomfortable or particularly diminishing. It becomes difficult to separate cause and identity, when the avantgarde is sheltered from the real world. It becomes difficult to separate the affirmation of an identity appearing to be dissolved via profound humbling acts.

Thus, intentionally catering art towards a specific audience may border on commerciality.

A more accepted form: selecting trusted people as an average of the audience that is to be impacted, deriving feedback from them.

A common form: looking for passionate affirmation from a single person. Unrequited art.

An ideal: art too complex for anyone to understand.

A general: art so meaningless it must not be understood.

A magic: always a person ready to open their heart to anything.



*"It was only an episode in my life. Who has not made a spiral in his life? Everybody has. But you can't keep on doing it. The Pops maybe were not retinal. Lichtenstein is not retinal. They have some extra content. Mondrian was not retinal, Seurat was not, but Cezanne and Monet were. The whole century since 1880 works in retinal terms. Only sensuous feeling. It's like a bath. I got out of the bath. The roto-reliefs were only a moment's visit for me. There never was a programme with me, though. I never decided not to be retinal so clearly. I don't say my way is the only way of doing things. Art is a condition, a Heraclitan condition of always changing, isn't it?"*

Marcel Duchamp Interview with Dore Ashton, June 1960



Personally: Artistic creation is not a process that naturally works towards a definitive end. It is a process-oriented endeavor. In the same sense that bearing a child does not necessarily mean the death of the parent, having an idea never marks the end of the artwork that has been produced before putting forth yet another. Inspiration must not come from a finished work and it being perceived with the flaws of its early stages can have its own appeal to the perceiver.

Selling out in the context of this nature of creation might simply mean focusing too much on the end product. Causes for this are many. School as well as university sport outcome related grading systems, which means if one didn't finish something, they might as well not have done it at all. At the same time self marketing asks for a lot of quality content that portrays a vision alike to a brand. The artist must perfect his brand and all contact with the outside world needs to reflect his vision. Sloppy contact with the outside world destroys the mystery. The artwork will be reduced to its content qualities, which can be harnessed once it is considered "finished". The artist must race to this finish line in order to prove themselves, but harness the wish of staying faithful to the objectives of his own at the same time in order to still meet the requirements they have for their own work so it can remain „authentic“. Sacrificing personal requirements to meet a deadline might have a demoralizing effect.

**A guess;** Maybe if I had a choice I would wait much much longer. I would work hard without wasting energy on making it into something that can go out into the world in its half fermented state. And the worst part is pretending this is not the case.

**Counter argument;** since the artwork is never finished, artistry includes the art of picking a moment to open the door. The artist is a gardening marketing manager, who will water their plants and knows the time to pick the fruit.

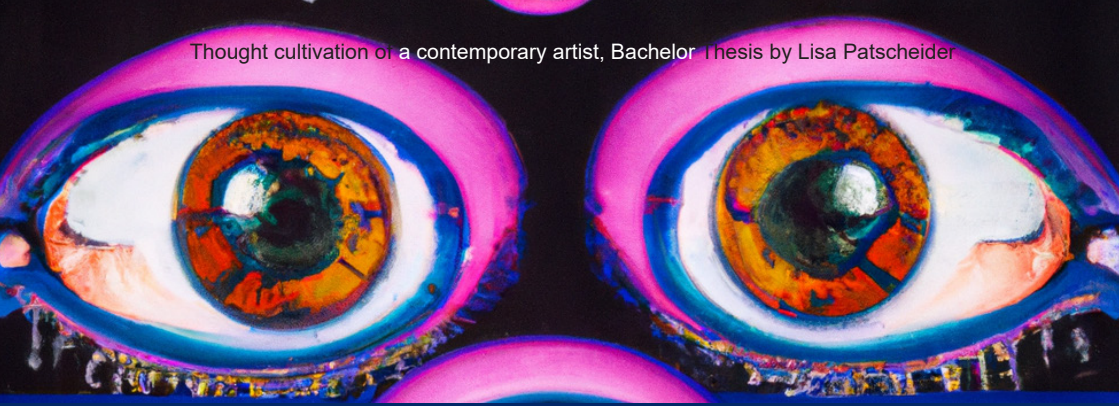
*Art is as much art as it is an art of all kinds of things. Progression is a means in itself - a necessity, a part of life. Ongoing transformation.*

## III.VI Endings

## IV.



Self



## IV.I The „gazed-at“

As a quasi godly figure in the play that contemporary artistry can be, the artist embodies illusionary innocence as well as universal guilt. This aim might resonate with someone prone to acting as well as with an empath. The “one who gazes” might misunderstand the nature of what they are gazing at. The misunderstanding is a subparticle of the full understanding and sheer existence invites it all. Careful creators to opportunities of gazing find themselves frequently synonymized with all possible implications of the act, which are largely out of their control.

*Empathizing with myself only through the gaze of others, I had to rebuild connection with a true self which almost seemed like a lost cause. When I try to grasp who I am or what only I feel about myself, all ideas of it seem to crumble into dust between my fingers. I am nothing without someone judging me, telling me it's good what I am, what I do. Even if I were to do the opposite out of spite, all happens in relation to this person who has worn the faces of many a teacher, partner or friend. At this point in my life I care about authenticity and discipline in my artistic practice, but there seems to be no authentic self capable of filling the spaces.*



## IV.II „my idea of fun“



*Art was not fun every time, but it was always a necessity. Really, I am not glad to be here, but it was inevitable. I am thankful, not for the opportunities I got, but for their quality to visualize this strange reality of art as something perceived by others too. In these moments I feel less like a mad scientist and more like a „normal“ person just going about their life. Now I know why I feel ashamed to stand in its face knowing I have not given it my all. It is not only my work and its effect - the underlying mechanism might be the only thing I believe to be real. All of the world is something visual, audible, tangible, information from sensors and whatever I decide to do with it. Not art, not inspiration. It reaches through the canvas, grabbing me by the collar with an unquestionable presence shouting „Have you been doing your homework?? I don't think so!“.*

*Fun? No, not entirely.*

The idealist will accept nothing less than what is correct. They come to art as a bottomless pit of errors to be corrected, of edges and corners to build the personality around.

An idealist might accept or idealize scientific findings, yet they never go far enough to satisfy their generalist nature.

Art is capable of this without obstructing or opposing scientific progress. It can even aid in the distribution of educational material, while commerciality leads to the possible distribution of anything in the name of entertainment.

By rejecting offtopic requirements, art puts its own aim in front of any other feature. It is the achilles heel worn outwardly in the hope that harsh criticism may make it stronger with time, and society with it.

## IV.III Why do I long to own my identity?



Operating from identity does not seem comfortable. There is still the possibility of not having to be anyone in particular with the possibility to do everything in the world. The artist spirit may be split as any spirit about the opportunities within personal life. There is a sense of urgency within this decision. A legacy that might be lost. However the legacy is not found within what is chosen, but what is done. Sylvia Plath's fig tree cannot crush the soul if the fruits are of action and not identity. Choosing identity is always a loss, choosing action becomes natural. It is a tree that is grown through repeated immediate action, the necessity of growth is engrained in the stem of the process.

„The last thing I wanted was infinite security and to be the place an arrow shoots off from. I wanted change and excitement and to shoot off in all directions myself, like the colored rocket arrows from a Fourth of July rocket.“

The Bell Jar

*“I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story. From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was Constantine and Socrates and Attila and a pack of other lovers with queer names and offbeat professions, and another fig was an Olympic lady crew champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out. I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet.”*

Sylvia Plath, The bell jar

**Identity:** To prioritize being over doing. To do what can be done to be, as easily and fast as possible.

**Alternative:** To do what needs to be done, to do more of what needs to be done. A lifetime of content sacrifice. An awareness of the contradicting self. A consciousness. A life philosophy.

Reinforce, extend, obliterate :: what can be done with identity

Building social sensitivity to allow for interactions that extend and obliterate.

I come to art to be humbled.



V.



Conclusion



*At the seams of the artistic mind we get into questions of belief, to be or to do. To do, or not to be. The cycles of being are cycles within cycles, if you think you are done you need only look closer. If you think you can start something new, you need only take a step back. The process demands its respect eventually. It does not need to send prophecies, there is no consideration for believer or non believer, no attempt to force anyone to heed them, because there is no choice in that. All human is as pierceable and brittle as the robotic and digital. Human supremacy is not more than a nice crown to wear while we are pushed inevitably along the streams and patterns, the flow of all that is, in infallible harmony with each other. Nevertheless, we are egoistic - it matters what happens in the short term, but these concerns do not have to relate to what makes up this driving force in life. Art can not matter, it is matter. What is the point in pulling yourself out of the affair by seizing to exist one way or another, when the end is only another part of the matter. Why fight what cannot be fought? Reap what cannot be reaped? This power is an illusion. Progress is a round-way bound to disappoint. Change is a momentary illusion, a lack of context. Longing for a God is just a tendency to place our lives in the context of what represents our understanding of everything that ever was. We play our own little society game, feeling the discomfort of a lived lie, yet unable to recognize the comfort in truth, in pain. Such is also the worth of art: to show pain that dares to comfort.*

*The world is full of questionable concepts. As soon as art becomes profitable it becomes part of this realm. Real art, right opinion and the correct religion sit in the mists between realms. You may choose to follow one or another and if few frequent a realm it may drift off into unimportance. Though, however hard we wish to believe otherwise, only what we believe to be true, can be true, but there is no truth. There is no changing everyone as you need them to be. There is no ego ego in the fabric of life. The fabric makes the gown. In a world that glorifies holding on to the comfortable ego ego things, refraining, listening, respecting does not come so naturally. Yet an obsession with abstinence in all forms also remains present. Anything spiritual would usually come with instructions on what to avoid in your life, how to live modestly enough for your wishes to be granted. At all times, they might not be either way, if they should not be. This is the way of every god. It is our answer to the What? which has no Why? as it is the concept of the infinite circles in which we twirl, weaponized for money, power and everything else that has nothing to do with life.*

Art has everything to do with life.

Contemporary artistic craft surpasses technicality.

The nature of the artistic craft invites an application as a life philosophy.

The life philosophy will be reflected in the art.

The world keeps turning.

The artist continues to serve.

