



DEALING WITH ART AND THE ARTIST WITHIN

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The color wheel is perhaps the most common method to make children aware of the wonders of color. Who hasn't made one during their early childhood in school? The introduction to the primary, secondary and tertiary colors thru the color wheel is an experience shared by children of yesterday and today. I have seen my kids working on their own color wheel projects for Art, which has now become integrated with Music and Physical Education.

I have also helped my kids create their art projects using egg shells. I particularly dislike having to crush the eggshells and color them in various hues. It takes a certain kind of patience to guide your child as he glues the eggshells onto the pattern, but I have found it a unique opportunity to bond with my children. I wonder if Van Gogh's mom was also able to enjoy such activities.

Visual art has emerged from various ancient movements to more contemporary pop art. We've had famous and highly-celebrated pop artists like Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, and Tom Wesselmann. Their works have influenced much about contemporary living, including Swatch watches and clothes and apparel. The abstract way they view contemporary life in general has enabled them to produce art works that fetch millions in dollars. What most likely sets them apart from us ordinary mortals is their ingenious perception of such everyday things as a can of tomato soup or a collection of everyday objects, faces, etc.

Although pop art seems to have a less orderly approach, it still does not take away the fact that it has readily established itself as a popular visual art form. Perhaps those among us who have been used to the flowing lines and sensual rhythm of ancient artists' works might feel a little lost in the varying challenges of understanding pop art. But we need to understand that art, like everything else in life, also evolves with the times. And artists undergo much of the evolution process to be able to come out as their own.

Those who've visited a Museum of Modern Art know very well how contemporary art has influenced advertising, the news, product innovations and many other things. Pop art aims to define popular culture in ways that the artists themselves perceive them to be: common and at the same time irreverently exaggerated. Perhaps pop artists consider popular culture to be rather an unnecessary nuisance that they must both hurdle over and describe for people adequately.

Whatever a pop artist's objective is, it is still a relief that we have been blest with the works of such artists as Rembrandt, Monet, Dali, and Van Gogh. They soothe us with the emotional truth and fluid lines of their creations and give us a peek into the beauty there is in simplicity of presentation and color.

Let us, as parents, allow the artists in our kids to find their own niches. Let us teach them that art inspires people in countless ways, some in greatly lovelier manner than others.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you like art? Why or why not?
2. Why is art essential in life?
3. Be able to describe your childhood art classes in school. What do you remember most about them?
4. If you could articulate your feelings about your career in a painting, what will you paint?
5. How has art influenced your life?