ART IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF HOPE

& OTHER QUOTES BY ARTISTS
An air of mystery surrounds the inner lives of painters, sculptors, photographers, and other visual artists. Many are private, protecting their solitude and time to focus on their practice. While we are familiar with the works they create, the individuals behind the art are often more elusive.

*Art Is the Highest Form of Hope* collects hundreds of moments when artists have stepped away from their tools and materials, studios and foundries to share their intuitive perceptions, hard-earned advice, and unvarnished opinions. They weigh in on subjects as diverse as color, discipline, day jobs, inspiration, light, sex, failure, collaboration, and more.

The profound sits beside the practical as the artists’ inner worlds emerge. They tell us what ignites their imagination and why art is essential. But they also reveal the persistent, longstanding challenge of balancing the inspired with the mundane.

It is easy to relate to Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec when he is despondent after two rainy days prevent him from painting outside. Time collapses with the shared experience of dealing with moody weather and “unsettled” skies. It is humbling to learn that Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, and Judy Chicago (to name just a few) struggled to make ends meet—that artists have always forged ahead tirelessly regardless of public and financial recognition. In the encouraging words of Vincent van Gogh, “One must go on working silently, trusting the result to the future.”

What is striking is how many artists’ revelations, admissions, and philosophies are universal, transcending centuries and the creative process. When Salvador Dali reframes failure by writing that “mistakes are almost always of a sacred nature,” his message resonates beyond the world of art. And we can all learn from the rules of life Laurie Anderson shares: 1. Don’t be afraid of anyone. 2. Get a really good BS detector and learn how to use it. 3. Be really tender.

These excerpts were discovered in a variety of sources—diaries, letter collections, notebooks, interviews, monographs, etc. If “quotable quotes are coins rubbed smooth by circulation,” as Louis Menand writes in *The New Yorker*, this collection offers insights that haven’t been recycled and worn smooth over time. Source notes can be found in the back of the book for those inspired to read the words in context.

“Art is the highest form of hope” is a quotation by Gerhard Richter, and its own small packet of wisdom. Art has spanned time and cultures, lifted us up, and brought us together. Or, in the eloquent words of Dorothea Tanning, “Art has always been the raft on to which we climb to save our sanity.” This book is also a raft—whether you read the collection from beginning to end or dip into any one section, you’ll be enlightened, amused, inspired, and transported.
YOU ARE AS GOOD AS YOU EVER WILL BE AT THE MOMENT.

DRAW LINES, YOUNG MAN, MANY LINES, FROM MEMORY OR FROM NATURE; IT IS IN THIS WAY THAT YOU WILL BECOME A GOOD ARTIST.

DON’T PRETEND THAT YOU’RE NOT PROUD OF YOUR WORK.

CONSTANTIN BRÂNCUŞI

JEAN AUGUSTE DOMINIQUE INGRES

APRIL GORNIK
LET FRUSTRATION FUEL INSPIRATION.

SONIA BOYCE

THE MINUTE SOMETHING WORKS, IT CEASES TO BE INTERESTING. AS SOON AS YOU HAVE SPELLED SOMETHING OUT, YOU SHOULD SET IT ASIDE.

ROSEMARIE TROCKEL

IF A PAINTING DOESN’T WORK, THROW IT OUT.

FRANZ KLINE
Make sure to allow people to take care of you.

Mickalene Thomas

Keep your eye on your inner world and keep away from ads and idiots and movie stars, except when you need amusement.

Dorothea Tanning

The advice that I give people wanting to know how to “make it” as an artist, based on my own limited experience with that, is to create self-initiated public projects that aren’t intended for a commercial gallery context.

Harrell Fletcher

Sit down with a pencil and paper and think about what your life is about. What you are about. Don’t even take a camera into your hands before you figure that out.

Tina Barney

Take a canvas. Put a mark on it. Put another mark on it.

Jasper Johns

Don’t get rid of negative emotion, but just use it...like the salt in your food.

Yoko Ono

Sometimes in a hostile situation you stick around, because hostility itself is important.

Dorothea Lange

Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in so doing, you will, in good time, discover the hidden things which you now inquire about.

Rembrandt

I feel like I can give a lot to younger painters by just telling them to relax.

Elizabeth Peyton

Cultivate a well-ordered mind, it’s your only road to happiness; and to reach it, be orderly in everything, even in the smallest details.

Eugène Delacroix
FIND YOUR EYES.

Alec Soth

FOR THE NEXT WEEK TRY THE BEST YOU CAN TO PAY ATTENTION TO SOUNDS. YOU WILL START HEARING ALL THESE SOUNDS COMING IN.

Robert Irwin

STARE. IT IS THE WAY TO EDUCATE YOUR EYE, AND MORE. STARE, PRY, LISTEN, EAVESDROP. DIE KNOWING SOMETHING. YOU ARE NOT HERE LONG.

Walker Evans

Alec Soth

Advice