

THE DOODLE AS ORIGIN OF ABSTRACT ART

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Consider that the initial essence of abstract painting and sculpture rests in the origin of the artist's doodle.

The artist begins with a doodle...the essential mark of the individual human being. At the beginning, the mark begins as a line or even a shape, but already the mark has a specific character. It then takes a direction or pattern that repeats itself over and over becoming a doodle. The child draws it, the adult develops it, often with obsession, and yet the creator feels it's ease with a mindless sense that it could carry on like this forever.

However, when the artist engages in this activity seriously, developing it with purpose and intention, and bringing to it the "artist's eye", it becomes it's own entity, a painting, a sculpture, a work of art. When complete, it distinguishes this individual artist from everyone else.

This awareness started early for me. At the family telephone stand we could always tell who had been there last...the marks that created circles, shapes, lines, angles and appeared to be nothing but a scribble. Except, we knew who's was who's.

Unfortunately, it's very name, "doodle", diminished it's meaning. To the individual it appears to be nothing, but in time, it does develop into handwriting and then sometimes even into a rather calligraphic signature. The doodle mark will still be there. A letter from an old friend is immediately recognized, even before it is opened...and decades later it is still the same...in fact, even more so.

When the artist makes this mark, it is a gesture...but not just a simple gesture. It is a statement of intention, a mark that is purposely developed with the desire to find completion. It has purpose. There is an intention in the artist to express something. The doodle looks for a place to begin, and finding a way, remembering the intention, it gathers itself into a work of art.

It is the intention that carries the gesture of a doodle in a work of art.

The intention is to describe a feeling...a moment...a person...an event...a sunset.

The intention is the constant with which to let loose, to become an entity...to become a final work of art.

And what of the "artist's eye"?

In becoming a sculpture, the spine of the doodle must be insinuated. Form can emerge and move in any direction, but the "artist's eye" knows it must always obey a spine in order to stabilize itself.

In most works color will assist the intention...color can be like the voice of the intention that indicates feeling and expresses mood.

The boundaries of the canvas can describe the limits and the demands of good composition. The willingness of the clay body will determine balance and what's feasible. The "artist's eye" knows when these basic tenets of good composition and respect for material are minded, the intended expression manifest, and the work of art completes itself. In this way an abstract work of art expresses the experience and intention of the artist.

Why do we "know" the work of one artist is distinct from the other? Consider the "doodle as origin". Understanding this concept of "doodle as origin" explains essence, distinction, faith in one's own mark, and the mark of the abstract artist.

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