

Art in Life

Looking for the most expensive painting to decorate your living room with? Can you actually afford it and have the space for it? Are you searching for Art in the galleries and museums only? But, 'Art' does not mean only paintings or drawings. Art encompasses much more than this. It transcends boundaries created by the restrictive and formal definitions of performing arts and visual arts.

Art is not confined within the walls of the galleries. Art is within you and your surroundings. Art is in the scientific creations, in the new-age gadgets without which you feel you cannot survive. How many of us will buy an ugly mobile phone, kitchen mixer, bicycle or car? The symmetry needed in art and architecture is based on geometry and trigonometry. A perfect statue of a human being cannot be sculpted without the knowledge of the human body. And, the human body is the most beautiful, complex, artistic and scientific creation of the world.

It is the balanced mix of science and art that attracts the artist within us.

The artist lies within those children who doodle on your drawing room walls. Stopping them from drawing on your walls will, ultimately, restrict their creativity. Paint the rooms after they have grown up. After all, how long will they remain children? Your visitors have been children once upon a time, they will understand. The artist is within all the imaginary games the children play. They may bloom into perfect stage or screen actors or writers. There is a popular story (a true incident) of a Kindergarten teacher asking a girl, who is busy drawing, "What are you drawing?" The girl replies without looking up, "God". The teacher exclaims, "But no one has seen God?" The girl says, confidently, "Now, they will." When we are restricted, we lose confidence, and consequently, creativity. Taking risks is essential to creativity otherwise art and the artist will not evolve. It is important to evolve, or else the repetitive styles and forms will bog us down. Art has emerged from the walls of the primitive caves to the computer monitor and iPad; from the peacock's dance to the modern Hip Hop; from the nightingale's voice to the latest singing sensation discovered in the current reality TV show. No evolution, no art. And what will life be without Art?

Imagine a room with no windows. Imagine waking up in the morning and not being able to see the sky (even if it is just a slice of the blue expanse). Imagine not being able to hear the music of the rains, the colourful birds and animals or the waves lapping and lashing on the seashores. Imagine never seeing the dance of the butterflies or the peacocks, not seeing or inhaling the scent of the vibrant flowers and feeling the fresh air on your face. If you can imagine this, you will understand what life will be without art. We take these for granted and we don't stop and listen to these small mercies we have been blessed with. But the day it is all gone? It will be a bleak world, indeed.

Art exists in our daily lives – in the patterned bed sheets or tablecloths; on the flower vases; in the carpets or durries; in the small colourful stone that you have picked up from the riverbed or the shell on the seashore; on the book covers; on the pack of cards; in the potted plant that you unerringly water everyday; in the way you cut your vegetables and cook or make your bed; in the photographs, films, posters, hoardings and advertisements; in the graffiti on your boundary wall; in the way you comb your hair, trim and polish your nails or design your costume for the next play.

It is easy to convert daily objects into objects of art. The drawings or sketches, which you otherwise may throw away along with your drawing book, can be laminated and made into tablemats. The pieces of wires, ribbons and streamers can be used in your flower arrangements. The Japanese Ikebana (flower arrangement) and Origami (paper craft) are good examples of optimum use of items of daily use. Our grandmothers used to do a quality check on how well we could darn torn clothing. The stitches had to be so fine that it would not look as if the cloth had been mended. That is, also, art.

Art is inspirational. A beautiful painting or photograph makes one feel good. Posters in workspaces or schools encourage workers and students. Music played in the car, keeps the driver alert and makes the journey more enjoyable. Soft instrumental background music in offices and homes results in increased productivity and de-stressing. Even cows give more milk when the slow rhythms of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony or Simon & Garfunkel's Bridge over Troubled Waters are played to them. However, dark art can disturb emotions and cause anger and depression.

Art creates to express the Soul, to give form to the imaginative mind and makes its own beauty and joy visible and audible to the world, even when its theme is tragic and pathetic. Soul is intrinsic to the success of this creation. One can be technically perfect but the rendition will fall flat if the soul is missing. A creation of a passionate soul is bound to leave a permanent impression. Art is right there, in front of you, in you. You have to recognize it, feel it and use it aesthetically.

Sravasti Ghosh Dastidar