



What is the Role of the Artist in Society?

In case you need a reminder...

artworkarchive.com excerpts)

Artists work to illuminate the margins and make societal changes. Rather than the word "role", I prefer "commitment". All of these acts can illuminate what lies hidden or repressed in the margins or shadows. New ideas can be brought to life. These ideas can lead to small or large changes in attitudes and even society. (Ginny Sykes, Chicago)

Artists are a vehicle for expressing universal emotion. Art is about connecting with people's emotions. It's personal and at the same time, universal. (Lesley Birch, UK)

I believe that the artist's role, above all things, is to be as true to themselves as they can — within society, the community, and the world at large. This sounds like a cliché but is in itself much harder than it seems. Being an artist involves wearing all sorts of masks, just like any other job, but the difference is we have the lingering responsibility to unearth the truth of things. Sometimes we will seem vulnerable, sometimes we will make mistakes. But the main thing is not to give up. This resonates with people on a personal and global level because it is not only empowering but starts from inside ourselves. (Nina Fraser, Portugal)

We live in an ever more intricate society where every individual regardless of its specific role plays an important part in the social biodiversity of the world. Artists have been crucial from the very beginning of our existence. From prehistoric cave paintings to frescos around the world, to scientific drawings, to the avant-garde movements, artists have contributed to expanding human evolution from many different perspectives. This expansion, much like the universe, is still going on and artists still play an important role. I see myself as part of a community whose work as a global force contributes to this human growth. There is a crescent complexity in the way the art world evolves and the myriad agents who orbit around it are intimately interlaced with artists and their production. (Bruno Castro Santos, Portugal)

I take my role as an artist very seriously, although I still have endless amounts of fun and experience great joy in my studio. I try to be very thoughtful and socially and politically aware of my surroundings. Whenever I experience feelings of discomfort in my life, I need to find an answer by transforming those feelings through my art. An artist's role is almost that of an Alchemist — capable of transforming a few humble materials into objects which are imbued with spiritual and aesthetic value and then possibly also material value. (Aleta Michaletos, South Africa)



I'd like to give you all an invisible gift. A gift of a silent minute to think about those who have helped you become who you are today. Some of them may be here right now. Some may be far away...but wherever they are, if they've loved you and encouraged you and wanted what was best in life for you, they're right inside yourself. You deserve quiet time on this special occasion to devote some thought to them. So let's just take a minute in honor of those who have cared about us all along the way. One silent minute. Whomever you've been thinking about, imagine how grateful they must be that during your silent times you remember how important they are to you. It's not the honors and the prizes and the fancy outsides of life which ultimately nourish our souls. It's the knowing that we can be trusted, that we never have to fear the truth, that the bedrock of our lives from which we make our choices is very good stuff.

—Mr. Rogers (as in The)

The makings of a GREAT summer...

[Tips from CollegeXpress](#)

1. Get a job

The thought of spending your summer working may sound terrible, but it's the best way to start saving money. There are plenty of [places that hire teens](#) for seasonal work. Most of these jobs are extremely simple for good money. This is a great opportunity to start saving money for college or a car. Plus, summer jobs look really good on your résumé and applications.

2. Apply for scholarships

Use your no research papers or studying for your next big test free time to apply for scholarships. [There are great scholarship opportunities](#) everywhere. Need ideas? Try: website called [CollegeXpress](#). You can also head over to [Niche](#), [Unigo](#), and [Fastweb](#). There are plenty of internship opportunities listed on these websites too that will look great on college résumés.

3. Find a new hobby

If there's something you've wanted to try but have never gotten around to, there's no better time than the summer. Try a new sport, learn to play an instrument, or start shooting photography.

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Thoughts from SPCPA alumni...

It's okay to cry. Take a moment. Shed the tears. Pick yourself up and live again. – Kennadi Hurst 2013

“...we learn to ask ‘why?’...to see first how the world works and then to put forth our own response or contributions to it...we have learned to roll with the punches...we have experienced changes in the people around us...we have received the gift of knowing that no act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted ...through thick and thin, what will remain is the empathy we have realized and the convictions we now hold---the belief that our work and our lives are meaningful.” – Chance Gilliam 2015

“...We have a chance to make a difference. Art has taught us how to be socially aware, critical thinkers. This is a skill that will benefit us throughout our entire lives...let us try to change our world for the better...always practice compassion and kindness to others...Keeping that open mind and open heart will bring us countless opportunities... whatever you do in life do it with passion.” –Sam Mistry 2015

“Push-ups. The motion of dropping to the ground and pushing yourself back up. Life is a huge push-up. As a nation of artists (we) are all on the downside of that push-up right not. Remember, just like the wands in *Harry Potter*, (artists) may not choose the life, the life may choose you. When you've fallen on that floor, take a second to lay there, but push yourself up. No matter what you do or wherever you go, always be ready for another repetition.” – Naveh Shavit-Lonstein 2017

“Change is necessary, though it sucks while it is happening. I encourage you, though, to think about this – if it weren't for _____, we wouldn't have pretty much all of these incredible _____ that are here right now. That means that you wouldn't have been able to build relationships, grow your network, create memories, or gain the skills you've learned without _____.” – Aniya Spears 2018

TMoaGS continued...

4. Visit colleges

[Turn your college search into a vacation!](#) Travel around and check out your local colleges or plan a road trip to explore some out-of-state campuses. Check out your favorite college's website and register for a tour, or just explore the campus on your own.

5. Make a difference in your community

Volunteering not only looks great on college applications, it is a great way to help people and build character. Inquire at your local food pantry, place of worship, or nearby animal shelters about volunteer opportunities. You could also get involved in activism in your local community. Rallying for positive change feels good and makes a real difference.

6. Take a class

There are many classes available over the summer, and not all of them are academic. Many school districts offer summer classes for credit. Your local community college might also offer classes for college credit and could even exempt you from some high school courses. There are also cooking classes, photography classes...almost anything that caters to your interests. Virtual classes, like massive open online courses ([MOOCs](#)), are often free (and fun!). [edX](#) is a great place to start your search for these online courses.

7. Work on summer assignments

Most schools recommend some form of summer reading, and many AP and honors classes require summer assignments. With over two months to complete the assignments, it's easy to fall into the trap of “just doing it later.” Make a plan of when and how you're going to complete the assignments to prevent cramming the night before school starts.

Doing any (or all) of these things can result in having a summer that doesn't result in spending too much time with “nothing to do.”. Come back to school with something to brag about, like your cool internship or your experiences volunteering at (fill in the blank) or learning about (fill in the blank) or seeing (fill in the blank) or creating (fill in the blank). You get the idea. YOU are in charge.