



The Importance of Art in a Controversial Society

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Self-expression is a fickle thing. In some cultures, art is meant to provoke an audience and instigate a deeper thinking that one would have to venture beyond to achieve. However, conservative societies do not appreciate such displays. Although it makes sense to not want nudist paintings hanging 8-feet high for reasons of being uncomfortable or feeling awkward, art of all kinds should be celebrated; given that it provokes thought and gives insight into a deeper realm. From artists like Dali to Picasso, things like the subconscious are extremely important in self-expression. People need to think outside of the box to achieve large goals. Therefore, art is extremely important in today's society, but it is difficult to celebrate and even admire in a society where everything is either controversial or offensive.

Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University, Stephen Tepper, argues that "Arts conflicts seem trapped in an outdated mold," he continues by explaining how "It's free speech versus censorship; permissiveness versus community standards; the artist versus the general public; experts versus the great unwashed." Tepper is correct in his evaluation of how art is viewed in today's society. With an "outdated mold" perceived in the form of opinions and unregulated comments, freedom of expression has never been so unavailable. However, how is a society supposed to break out of this mold? While the answer may seem impossible to deduce, many people in today's society learn to appreciate art and are even willing to go as far as casting aside their political views and seeing the perspective of the artist. Appreciating art requires an open mind and lack of judgement.

In addition to open mindedness and freedom of expression, art has never been more important than today, when society is more controversial than ever. For example, Kwan, a known alternative artist, written about my Rik Glauert, stated "art is a way of approaching, reflecting upon, and most importantly, imagining different possibilities as to how we might live." Kwan establishes the importance of art in our everyday lives and how these different forms of expression actually can help society as a whole, by allowing everyone to grow and prosper. This enables people to accept change and be

able to mold to new opinions and styles. These traits are essential in such a controversial society as present today.

In conclusion, art should be appreciated and celebrated, not judged or sullied. Without art, people would hardly resist change, especially in today's society. Art helps individual people grow by allowing everyone to consider the different opinions of the people around them through different shapes, colors, and forms. Many people may not realize it, but art is a monumental breakthrough in society that has been changed and translated to mold to society in every generation. However, art should have no mold. When we learn not to mold art, we learn not to mold each other; thus allowing humans to develop a greater appreciation of society; it all starts with art.

Resources:

<https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2011/08/15/tepper-arts/>

<https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/article/1811263/line-between-traditional-and-controversial-art-blurred-radical>