

Some quotations selected by Jeffrey Saldinger

I walk, I look, I see, I stop, I photograph.

Leon Levinstein

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Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.

Gustav Mahler

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For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass and simply for those moments' sake.

Final sentence of Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*

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The photographs . . . are little gifts from the world, hidden in its chaos, hidden in a piece of time.

Henry Wessel

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I have always concentrated on a far narrower field of subject matter than most other painters, so that the danger of repeating myself has been far greater. I think I have avoided this danger by devoting more time and thought to planning each one of my paintings as a variation on one or the other of these few themes. Besides, I have always led a very quiet and retiring life and never felt much urge to compete with other contemporary painters. My only ambition is to enjoy the peace and quiet that I require in order to work.

Giorgio Morandi

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[Rudolph] Serkin's philosophy [was] seeking the perfection beyond precision -- the truth of the noblest, most honest effort.

Alex Ross

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During [Clarence White's] long, fruitful career it seems that he made not one memorable statement concerning his sources, his intentions, or his methods. . . . Surrounded [at Columbia University] by theorists, prophets, and publicists, White remained merely an artist.

John Szarkowski in *Looking at Photographs*

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One does not choose one's subject matter; one submits to it.

Flaubert, cited in *L'Histoire de France*  
(*Photographs by Ralph Gibson*)

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Like most artists I am deeply offended by the application of public approval as a standard for the evaluation of art. . . .it is not the degree of communicability that constitutes the value of art to the public. It is its basic intent and responsibility. . . .a work that is tawdry and calculating in intent is not made more worthy by being easily understood.

Ben Shahn, *The Shape of Content*

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From Robert Adams's essay "Writing"  
in  
*Why People Photograph*

Photographers, like all artists, choose their medium because it allows them the most fully truthful expression of their vision. Other ways are relatively imprecise and incomplete. . . . as Robert Frost told a person who asked him what one of his poems meant, "You want me to say it worse?"

C.S. Lewis admitted, when he was asked to set forth his beliefs, that he never felt less sure of them than when he tried to speak of them. Photographers know this frailty. To them words are a pallid, diffuse way of describing and celebrating what matters. Their gift is to see what will be affecting as a print. Mute.

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I don't put labels on it, I just sing. . . .it's all in the ear of the listener. Let them decide.

Nancy Wilson, quoted in her *New York Times* obituary, December 15, 2018

As an artist I aspire to be as remarkable as Leonardo da Vinci. To be fantastic, astonishing, one of a kind. I will never get there. He's the one who stopped time. I just did *Singin' in the Rain*. It's pretty good, yes. It's better than most, I know. But it still leaves you reaching up.

Stanley Donen, quoted in his *New York Times* obituary, February 24, 2019

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[Don Nice] was once asked about the meaning of his Hudson River works. “I’d rather think of the paintings as meaningful rather than having meaning. Meaning is a specific message, but by *meaningful* I mean some reference to something beyond definition, something we can’t pin down, nor should we.”

Don Nice, quoted in his *New York Times* obituary, May 7, 2019

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I’m tired of words. You strive to be accurate, and then words come along and falsify everything.

Amos Oz, “All Rivers”,  
*The New Yorker*, January 14, 2019, p.49

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There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep yourself open and aware to the urges that motivate you. Keep the channel open. . . . No artist is pleased. [There is] no satisfaction whatever at any time. There is only a queer divine dissatisfaction, a blessed unrest that keeps us marching.

Martha Graham