



# An Artistic Philosophy

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I believe that Austrian composer Arnold Schoenberg hit the nail on the head when he said, "If it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art." It took me quite some time to realize exactly what he meant. At first, I was a little flustered; I thought that yet another self-righteous composer was just flexing their philosophical muscles and claiming that their art just is too intellectual for mere simpletons. That's not what he meant, and I'm about to explain why.

If it is art, it is not for all,  
and if it is for all, it is not art.

~Arnold Schoenberg

The simplest answer: not every single person living on the earth at a given time can possibly have the same emotional connection to a work of art. We all perceive things differently based on our life experiences. A large group of people can have similar experiences, thus creating a collective approval or disapproval of a certain work of art. Even though there are sides that approve or disapprove of the work, each member of that group has their own reasoning why they didn't like it. Taking it even further, a passage of music or brushstroke on a painting can be agreed upon by two different people, but both have their emotional reasons for liking or disliking that aspect. (This answer may not seem that simple, but I promise that it is much simpler than other explanations I've come across.)

During the two years of my masters degree program, nearly every class I took had involved some kind of weekly debate over philosophical and psychological aspects of music. Honestly, I had a tough time keeping up with these debates. I found that I had a radically different viewpoint than most of the class. As a result, I shied away from sharing my viewpoints out of fear for being mocked. These debates did, however, make me rethink my opinions and positions on the topics. I had always been so grounded in the history and theory of the music that I never considered the opinions of those around me. It was always about what history had said about these works, not what people were saying now.

So, what does any of this have to do with anything? Well, it has to do with the reasoning for everything I create. I enjoy a lot of art that is commonly viewed as stale, outdated, intimidating, and intellectual in this modern age. Because I enjoy it so much, that is what I write about. I'm also here to say that I'm certainly not the only one who enjoys the art that I enjoy. Yes, we all have our varying opinions on the works within these genres and styles, but that goes for any art-form (including the ones you enjoy! Shocking... I know!). I debated on writing a summarized list of art I enjoy and don't enjoy, but that defeats the purpose of my message. What is that message?

Enjoy the art you enjoy and dislike the art that you don't enjoy. It's alright to have your own artistic opinions, and you should never feel ashamed of them... if they are not harmful to others. Don't judge others for having differing tastes than you. Instead, acknowledge that it is not for you and let the other person enjoy it. Instead of arguing with someone or stewing over the tastes of others, move on to something that you enjoy and let them move on to theirs. Art is just too subjective to fight over.

Now, I say this with one additional request. Try to look at the art that you don't enjoy from a different angle. Give it one more shot. If you still don't like it, great! At least you kept your mind open. It's so easy to be stay with what you're comfortable with, but sometimes art is meant to be uncomfortable and ugly... that's what is so beautiful about it.

This philosophy has absolutely influenced my writing style. I want people to look at classical music, literature, visual art, dance, and other art-forms for what they truly are. It's art! I want all my readers to see it as art they can approach, either for the first time or their twentieth, and then make a new opinion about it without just dismissing it as intimidating or old. That even goes more modern art that's considered to be too off-putting.

Just remember that it's OK to like or dislike someone's opinion, but don't judge others for disagreeing with you. Have debates and not arguments. Share art with others and let others share art with you. If it is art, then it won't be for everyone.