

“Why is Art Important?”

I was asked this by Ms. Peg Pasternak of Lahser High School in Bloomfield Hills, MI where she teaches. It turns out this is something I think about a great deal, so in this short PowerPoint I have put some of the points down that I think help to argue a justifiable case for creativity in our world. I know that it's not a comprehensive list of things, but it's a start that if you wish to add to please post your edits to the relevant post on creativeleadership.com. Thank you!



Art Teaches Us

- *Beauty is not the goal of all art.*

There is a stereotype that art is about what is to be considered “beautiful,” but that is incorrect. Art is about understanding a particular subject(s) with extreme intensity, and then expressing that intensity with the available means to the artist – be that pencil, paint, clay, wood, computers, concept, electronics, politics, economics, etc.
- *Emotions matter in all directions.*

An artist creates their work based upon experience and passion; the audience understands it from their own experiences and passions which often differ. Art teaches you to be emotionally connected to your work as an individual, and to also reconcile the emotional connection that will result with a judging audience.
- *Sometimes there is no single, right answer.*

Math/sciences teach the way to the single correct answer based upon logic and rules that are “black and white.” Art teaches you to be open to multiple perspectives and interpretations that are often “gray.” In the ultra-complex world we live in today, students need to be prepared to work comfortably in the “grayness” of society.



Art-Thinking is Rising

- Author Daniel Pink – featured on Oprah, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, etc. on the rising importance of the right-brained people in a left-brain dominated economy in need of new models with which to invent our future.
- Dean Roger Martin of Rotman School of Business – consultant to Reuters, P&G, RIM (Blackberry), etc. on the approach of integrating “design-thinking” into corporations as a way to foster innovation at the top.
- President John Maeda of Rhode Island School of Design – speaking to the World Economic Forum and leading corporations on the transformative power of “creative” leaders that will lead us through the chaos.



Examples of Art-Thinking **Global** Impact

- MIT Media Laboratory – founded in 1985 and was the first major research institution to combine artists/designers with engineers/scientists to inspire the development of TV, movies, magazines, and newspapers to become “digital” and inspire the World Wide Web.
- IDEO – co-founded in 1991 by Professor David Kelley at Stanford and first introduced the integration of mechanical design, industrial design, and business practices as the “design thinking” approach widely used by corporations, cities, and nations worldwide.
- Rhode Island School of Design – founded in 1877 during the Industrial Revolution and first fostered the birth of ultra-creative talent across all fields. Graduates of RISD were featured in the recent TIME magazine article on startups that will survive this new economy.



Examples of Art-Thinking **Everyday** Impact

- Engaged parents and families – Few things bring more happiness than an image drawn or object crafted by a loved one. These items are often treasured for life and eternity.
- Timeliness of an encounter – Visiting a Museum, watching a show, listening to a concert, viewing a photograph. Great art emotionally moves you to a different place every time.
- Enhanced cognitive impact – An artist can take an everyday idea and make it into an extremely special moment through the introduction of their humanizing perspective and honed ability to reveal the truth.

