

Life Lessons from the Painting Studio

Or What I Learned About Life by Learning to Paint



Peter Smyth

Everyone would like to become more creative; more imaginative, but where do new ideas come from? For most of us, artists seem to be bursting with never-ending stream of fresh concepts and uncanny insights. But why just artists? Why can't anyone learn to think like them? Can we transform our starchy worn-out approaches, our habitual ways of looking at the world into something that is more authentic and original or are we forever condemned to remain stuck mired in a manic mudhole of mediocrity? Through a series of philosophical narrative essays, *Life Lessons from the Painting Studio* attempts to answer these intriguing questions. At its heart it's a story of ideas, their origins and meanings, as told through the eyes of a young art student as he navigates the often-bewildering world of art school in the 1970s. It gives us the tools to penetrate the blinding veil of conspicuousness we all face by learning to overcome our mental bias and how those sometimes-profound insights apply to everyday life.

Quotes from *Life Lessons from the Painting Studio*:

"The first step towards balance is the recognition of imbalance."

"When things go sideways (but do it in a good way) they're going the way of art."

"Everyone deserves to hold an image of themselves as eternal."

"Because I cultivated a sense of wonder, I was never bored."

"A different kind of music requires a different kind of listening."

"Beauty is a moment in time that reassures us that we are real."

"Like a bottled octopus, meaning assumes the shape of its purpose."

"Mystery represents our relationship with the unknown; without a questioner, no mystery could exist."

"Each of us holds the key to a truth that is ours alone, one whose importance is not yet known and therefore, confers upon us the duty to be expressed."

"Smyth's writing is exemplary throughout ... sparkling and highly polished prose ... He is remarkably skilled at using extremely concrete and vivid examples to convey subtle and deep abstract ideas, an amazingly rare talent ... Excellent work ... Superb on all levels." -- Douglas Hofstadter: Pulitzer prize-winning American cognitive and computer scientist.