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Staging the Real and Writing the Unreal

### **Responsibility of an Artist**

Art educates people about the culture. Art is the expression of the souls of the nations. Art in the form of architecture, Victor Hugo states in his novel *Notre-Dame de Paris*, 'is man's first way of recording his thoughts, feelings, and history.' Art of any sort is the reflection and refining the world around the artists. Regardless of whether we need to concede this, or much think about it, it's an essential truth. If the artist is restricted on the kind of art the artist produces according to the society's 'right' or 'moral,' values, then we adequately channel tape the craftsman's hands and lips, consequently enslaving ourselves emotionally and mentally.

With that being said, the artist has a social responsibility that they need to uphold. Artists are emulated. Artists are set up as examples. Artists are placed on the pedestal. Every artist contributes to their capacity in keeping up with healthy development and the well-being of the society.

The social responsibility of an artist does not arise because of the different forms of art they produce. For instance, one artist is presenting pictures, and another sounds one artist is creating words while the other gestures. Social responsibility arises because artists are one of the few men who leave their work behind. As long as a play, script, book or building remains, it remains as the objectification of a man's thoughts, his sentiments, his repressions, his hopes, his hatred and his love. He may himself disappear or expire but as long as his work survive someone will look at them and will interpret as he pleases.

Art is a form of expression and to be able to express the expression in the finest way the artist has to sensitize themselves to mostly everything. It is the artist responsibility to build an emotional connection with the people. Art should be emotionally triggering or satisfying, and people should be able to connect with the craft on the personal and the universal level at the same time. The form of art; script, act or paint may not matter much as the emotional connectivity of the audience with the craft itself. It is fairly just to say that artists are the vehicle for expressing universal emotion.

To be able to manifest the raw emotions through their craft the artist has to bear the overwhelming weight of carrying all this emotion, and the artist does that by retaining the environment of a spot or the memory of an inclination. In tune with it, a playwright's script may get influenced by his family life issues, unhappy love life, struggling academics or anything else as such. Giving a personal touch to arouse intense emotion is what the artist has to pay special attention. In a theatrical play, the actors cannot go expressionless throughout the play. To be able to express, the actors need to embody the character and feel the emotion.

Producing craft that would ignite societal changes or illuminate the hidden or repressed issues in society is the responsibility that falls on the artist. The artwork should be able to provide room for the audience to use that as a medium to express their concerns and voice out their opinions.

A playwright can shed light on the institutional patriarchy and can insist on smashing it, or the artist work can be established in a social issue where communicating the artist's feelings, objectives, and thoughts, in the domain of the individual, social and political, is an activity in conveying their individual experience.

Art reflects the ills and goodness of society. Art is heavily impacted and influenced by the ongoing events in the community. It solely depends on the artist how does the artist interpret the event or a memory. Interpretation is subjective, undoubtedly. But it's not that what the artist has understood, rather how well and just he did that and are people able to relate and connect because responsibility does lie in not only the field of leadership but also in the field of interpretation.

Several art movements in response to the social events that the world experienced, sprung up during a restricted period, usually a few months, years or decades. One of them was Dadaism. This art movement emerged as a response to World War I. A brief introduction to Dadaism art movement- the First World War caused the people to shatter their delusions and false hopes about the sustainability of the world's resources and to come to terms with reality, which gave rise to Dadaism. The primary purpose behind the emergence of Dadaism was to end the war. This is why the paintings based on Dadaism are not aesthetically pleasing but rather, posed questions more than it answered to the public about the world, which seemed to turn into a state of absolute disorder.

Paintings based on Dadaism represented the idea of chaos, purposelessness and absurdity, which in turn, made the audience to get involved in the creation of the artwork in lieu or scan the artwork. It encouragingly questioned the conventional norms of traditional art since Dadaism showed how the perplexing meaningless artworks outraged the onlookers to discover the meaning of the senseless. Therefore, this is just one example of an art movement. The artists who created Dadaist paintings exhibited chaos and vagueness in their craft because they took on the responsibility of interpreting the outcome of the First World War and did justice to the paintings.

An artist responsibility is to challenge the current values and make the audience go through the process of unlearning- if the audience and the artists have been conditioned to pay heed to male voices and stories depicting male dominancy then as a male/female playwright one need to step back, confront and then present the other side of the story.

An artist speaks from a position of privilege, so the kind of lesson one chooses to impart through one's art will be set in stone for the audience. The audience, not even for once will consider giving a second thought about the other perspective. For instance, if a playwright chooses to write plays where women are overshadowed and viewed as mere commodities to use whenever the male desires then the consequence will be nothing but strengthening the seeds of internalized misogyny within the audience. Therefore, the next time the playwright writes about gender equality, the audience will turn their heads and roll their eyes. Another kind of world where women's existence does not matter is what the audience wants to see.

Hence, an artist has the power to influence people. A playwright has to make his choices in a conscious state to create an awareness in the audience. Before writing the play, a playwright needs

to be aware of the restrictions, mindful of the prejudices and aware of the lenses that the playwright wear to see the world through. Undeniably, art cannot always solve problems but can reflect societal issues and can provide with another perspective.

Artist has the responsibility to produce socially responsible art. To do so, an artist has to tap into the heartbeat of their community. Tune in to fellow artists and tune in to community members. In the 21st century artistic world, there is a hype about 'socially responsible theatre,' 'theatre for social change' and 'activism.' Therefore, being mindful of these themes is the responsibility of the playwright to use theatre as a medium to influence public attitudes on specific social issues and policies. However, producing socially responsible content does not at all suggest to perpetuate homogenization.

Art should not be merely digestible to all, or a tool to help to blend different groups around the shared characteristic of human experience. It should make one uncomfortable because that's how the viewer will go through the process of unlearning. If theatre companies attempt to homogenize everyone as opposed to endeavoring to challenge convictions and investigate individual experiences and particular unheard voices—extend the divides and not unravel them.

To produce art that is reflective of the societal issues, the artists need to be true to themselves within the community, society and the world at large. As cliché as it may sound, the artist has to unearth all sorts of masks and come across as someone who considers vulnerability as their strength, raw sentiments as a way to move ahead and revealing inner thoughts to let cognitions develop. It requires courage to take a look within yourself and understanding all sides of you and make peace with your demons. For an artist, this is imperative.

Art can be empowering and triggering if the particular theme of it has emerged from within the artist because at the end of the day it solely depends on the artist in what kind of an artist, he needs to become.

In conclusion, the artist has a social responsibility to uphold in the creation of meaningful and impactful artworks which will assist the general public in advancing their belief system on social issues to promote social advancement. Artists should also ensure social responsibility by displaying consideration of the viewing audience by not creating overly controversial artworks. Creating discomfort within the audience for creating awareness and mindfulness for pressing social issues and creating discomfort within the audience because of morally or religiously offensive artwork are two different things.

An artist should be intimately touched and aware of the needs of the community members and should avoid creating any artwork which will cause resentment among the audience. In tune with it, it's an artist responsibility to be well-informed about the artworks which will cause the public to out a roar and which will push the audience to stand up and do something.

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