

THREE DISCIPLINES

One interesting way to measure the world or the success of artwork is to use the philosophy of three disciplines. This comes from many sources and is many centuries old. One set of names for them is

the **physical** discipline
the **emotional** discipline
the **conceptual** discipline

also known as the disciplines of the **head, hand and heart**.

Another application of these terms to the art world is:

conception philosophy [*probe, ponder, research, aesthetic problem...*]
the investigation and the intent, resulting in content
construction production [*practice, procedure, craftsmanship...*]
all the technical skills, the *visual* component of the visual arts, form
communication presentation [*passion, presence, resonance...*]
making work that evokes a meaningful response, accessibility, impact

Art, like life, requires a **balance** between these three disciplines. It is easy to spot someone who is deficient in any one of these, and we even have names for those who spend all their time and energy involved with just *one* discipline. These people are very out of balance. For overt physical discipline types, we use the term 'jocks'. Overly conceptual types are called 'nerds'. And emotional based personalities are called 'emo'.

To have successful artwork, let alone a successful life, you have to engage yourself in all three disciplines. It is only when you have achieved a balance between them that you can start to move towards the fourth discipline, spirituality. This discipline cannot be approached directly, because that just generates contrived activity, and actually moves one away from spirituality.

Artwork that just looks good but has no 'content' or intention is just of the physical discipline.

This is all the interior design in the world, not that there isn't a need for that.

Artwork that is all feel, maybe all beautiful fluff or angry rage, but has no craftsmanship to back it up, is of the emotional discipline and becomes too personal. It is usually meaningless to an audience, but it may be therapeutic for the practitioner.

Artwork that is full of interesting ideas but is unintelligible to others lacks the communication and accessibility needed to speak to others. This is just conceptual discipline.

Good conception through research produces meaningful aesthetic problems to work on.

Good construction with craftsmanship produces artwork with form.

Good communication produces a meaningful response, which is work with impact.

There must be communication as a two-way exchange of energy between artist and audience, indicating a resonance between these two parties. If there is no communication, then none of the content or form gets through, and there is no art.

Disclaimer: While all language in this document may seem hard and fast, it is only language designed to start conversation. It is evident that there is no clear delineation between these endeavors. Each involves some aspects of the others. All the terms here are merely signposts on a highway of infinite grey, with no absolute black or white.

