

Dear Young Artist,

Yes, I think you can do both, participate in the art world and maintain your integrity. But your success in doing it depends on your relationship to your art.

I've been teaching at Bard College for more than twenty years. I've also had the opportunity to meet graduate students at several institutions over the years. More and more, I see students who are driven by a desire to have a show in Chelsea and be a successful artist. Certainly not all students, but I've seen a definite shift.

This is understandable, of course. However, for me, it has little to do with why I make art. I believe that art is made to explore the world and the culture, to explore the chosen medium, to explore one's self. It is made to communicate, in the medium's language, a perception, an observation, an understanding, an emotional or mental state. It is made to answer, or try to answer, questions. It is made for fun. In short, it is made in response to personal needs and demands.

A student might see a great work of art and say to himself, "This is a great work of art. I want to make a great work of art, too." And so, the student sets out to try to do so. And if he has some talent, he might produce something that looks just as though it were a work of art - almost convincing. If one didn't know any better one might actually mistake it for a work of art. The only problem is that the great work of art



that you may be using your moral dilemma as an excuse for not engaging in your work and that you are using your vulnerability to deflect criticism from me. Cut it out!

Good luck and best wishes,

Stephen Shore  
Tivoli, New York