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### **Artist's Statement**

The wise artist realizes that they are a student. To be a student of art is to maintain an open mind that will facilitate lifelong learning. As an instructor, I am an advanced student. Compared to the greats of art history, I am a beginner. It is the opportunity presented by each day that keeps the wonder alive for the artist who is willing to explore, question and reconsider.

Virtually all children are artists: the self-consciousness of adolescence deters most from continuing the practice. It is this abandonment of the primacy of the ego that allows the ideal mindset for the artist: to experience, to practice, to discover. The experience of the moment fuels the spontaneity of life and art; rigid thinking and pre-conceived notions can inhibit discovery. Art is about the process more than the finished product, for the product is only a conclusion based on experience.

Time defines our life on earth and must be regarded as a key component in art: it is the freezing of a moment in time that can define a successful work of art. To study a masterpiece painting and become oblivious to the outside world; to suspend disbelief and become emotionally involved in the performance of a play; or to imagine the life of a person depicted in a photograph – these are examples of the power that art has over our temporal cognizance. This is the ability to evoke recollection, elicit response or excite curiosity. Art unexpectedly involves the viewer, listener or reader in a different world, a world that exists in the power of the mind and emotions, a synthesis created between the artist and the audience.

Artists that fail to evolve are not interacting with the passage of time. A mature style that never changes becomes predictable and stale. Failure is part of learning, and to avoid failure ensures a limited understanding of art. The energy of a student work is often preferable to the confident style of one who has failed to question his own self.

Art has no true definition, but it is surely an interaction of the intellect and the emotions. Purely cerebral art lacks the human quality, while undisciplined art cannot express its creator's intentions because of their lack of mental focus. There is a balance between rigor and creativity, between repetitive exercise and chance. It is this subtlety that is somehow Art, that which can be felt or known, but which is so hard to describe.

My own involvement in this process of art continues to evolve. As a student of the arts, I know I remain true to my personal belief that artists must take risks, professional and aesthetic, and that these risks are more important than success. The definition of success, after all, implies a certain finality. Success can be found during the process and is not an object to be pursued in a business-like fashion by dedicating one's career, and life, to a single understanding or interpretation of art.

Goals are very important, of course, and my goal is to develop a skill which I have yet to begin, the art of carved sculpture. For this, I will need instruction and inspiration. This will help keep my curiosity alive. In the meantime, my involvement with other art forms keeps me very active as both teacher and student. I continue to teach adult level painting at the community level, while I also enroll in performing arts classes. I am involved in the community and also sensitive to my own personal development as a creator. Working as a collaborative cartoonist and also as an actor ensures that much of my creativity is partly defined by others – a different perspective that I cannot provide myself. As a photographer, sometimes I must react to a human subject – they help create the finished product. Only as a studio artist am I really alone: alone with my influences and my questions.

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