

What is an artist?

Is an artist “a crafts person”?

Is an artist “a person (or thing) who creates a work of art”?

Is an artist “anybody who chooses to make art”?

Is an artist “just someone, whichever one”?

Is an artist “a clever person who makes marks and dots”?

Is an artist “someone who paints pictures out of bits and bobs”?

Is an artist “a person that tries to paint pictures of weird things and who is also a musician”?

Is an artist “either a person who makes pictures (the good ones are usually french); a person who sits around painting naked models; a person who draws; or a person who makes musical stuff for an album”?

Is an artist “someone who’s a cultural dj”?

Is an artist “an empty signifier”?

Is an artist “a person who does something really random and calls it art”?

Is an artist “an entertainer”?

Is an artist “a petit commodity producer”?

Is an artist “a creative talent that expresses capacity through different activities like painting, cinema, photography, sculpture, etc”?

Is an artist “someone technique skilled”?

Is an artist “someone who through images or feelings (preferably pleasant ones) call peoples’ attention”?

Is an artist “someone who produces images (or objects) aesthetically pleasing”?

Is an artist “someone who does something”?

Is an artist “someone who intervenes in the world with strategies which might be material or immaterial, to re-negotiate perception and processing of experience (being these strategies undertaken with the intentionality of it being art)”?

Is an artist “a regenerator”?

Is an artist “someone who is authorized”?

Is an artist “a representative of institutional interests”?

Is an artist “a contextualized someone”?

Is an artist “someone who creates simply in order to prolong his/her existence”?

Is an artist “someone whose goal is to deliver sensibility to the world”?

Is an artist “someone who is not only creative but someone who manages to draw a line between time and history”?

Is an artist “someone able to do something different from the others (as long as contextualized within a space and time)”?

Is an artist “someone who can show the others how different the world can be”?

Is an artist “someone who produces something that makes you think and look differently”?

Is an artist “someone capable of turning everything into something original”?

Is an artist “someone who sees what others don’t”?

Is an artist a visionary or a magician (or even both)?

Is an artist “someone with talent”?

Is an artist “someone who have his/her own freedom”?

Is an artist “a hero”?

Is an artist “a genius”?

Is an artist “someone with soul”?

Is an artist “a state of being concerned with faith and thus very close to religious life”?

Is an artist “a fucker”?

Is an artist “someone who creates because of the need of self-express”?

Is an artist “someone obsessed by self-satisfaction”?

Is an artist “a fighter who can do anything to feed his/her addiction (addicted to find something that he/she don’t even know what it is)”?

Is an artist “a persons infected with a chronicle illness (art)”?

Is an artist “someone that on top of everything loves what he/she does”?

Is an artist an “a disorientated lover”?

Is an artist “someone with a frustrated ego”?

Is an artist “someone who is an opportunist, liar, utopianist, elitist, optimist, pacifist, liberal, conservative, perfectionist”?

Is an artist “someone who is (i) involved in thinking about/making art work and is (ii) intelligent and foolish in equal measure”?

Is an artist “someone who tries to understand and makes sense of the universe, using all the available means, creative or innovative ones, but most of all those which convey the contents of his/her idea”?

Is an artist “someone skilled in expressing knowledge and life experience through art”?

Is an artist “someone who first and foremost have to have a fine art academic education”?

Is an artist “a confident character that can at least speak english (an International language), has manners at the table (someone who knows how to use a knife and a fork), and therefore able to close interesting deals”?

Is an artist “an entrepreneur”?

Is an artist “ a person that creates value”?

Is an artist “someone with a liberal profession that uses art as a working tool”?

Is an artist “someone who can sell work and live by that income”?

Is an artist “someone with more than one body”?

Is an artist “a dichotomous being: on the one hand traditionally being on the margins of culture (whatever that is) or society (through which critique can occur), and on the other hand producing a socially and culturally recognizable form... i.e. art. Therefore an artist is a contradiction of self-alienation and the wish for acceptance”?

Is an artist “an artist”?

Is an artist a person who “tells” another human being that he/she/they love another human being/life form, and, therefore, spreads love into this world?

by Joana Bastos, 2008 - ongoing

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This paper follows a performative methodology: Q&Q. Suggesting that an answer is implicit in a question, assuming that a question instigates another question.

The importance of this exercise is to give oneself an active response towards the dilemma, by both acquiring knowledge and thus fundament the dilemma or by sorting out one self’s definition. The concern is not what an artist is or what art may be but rather questions relating the social responsibilities (if there are any?) as cause of the dilemma.

The question “What is an artist?” was made to a broad range of individuals: art related specialist, art students (Foundation, BA, MA and PhD), artists, curators, economists, psychologists, philosophers, children, etc. The intention of this research question was ‘what’ was answered and not ‘who’ answered it.

Take part on this research by emailing me yours (in case they don’t match with any of the aboves) bastos.joana@gmail.com