



Agnes Martin: Writings

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Agnes Martin: Writings Agnes Martin

Now in its third printing, this collection of letters, journals, and lectures is the standard collection of writings by the artist. "I suggest that people who like to be alone, who walk alone, will perhaps be serious workers in the art field."--Agnes Martin.

Agnes Martin: Writings Details

Date : Published July 2nd 1998 by Hatje Cantz (first published July 1st 1998)

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Author : Agnes Martin

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From Reader Review Agnes Martin: Writings for online ebook

Jaya Miller says

too bad it now costs nearly \$200.00

robomatey says

Her meditations on art and the relationship of the viewer are some of the most thoughtful and kind I've ever read. As uncompromising as she was in regards to her own life and work, this is a gift for the up and coming artist, or any artist that is struggling in the doldrums. Lives in my studio, read a bizillion times.

Sofía says

In which I become a grain of sand.

Rebecca says

love this book!!!!

Alanna Gabin says

The Best Book one shall ever read. Period.

Marissa Perel says

sublime, real

Kelly says

read somewhere this book was 'essential and sever.' so I went out and tracked it down, pre- Amazon, out of print, tracked it down.

this is the book you never stop reading. the book of common prayer for the artist.....

Agnes is our Quaker Saint, if the Quakers would allow such indulgences.

her writing squares her work. she is a whole being.

she talks of always keeping the dragon at bay

Absolutely essential book in my life. One of those books I regard as a magic object when I catch a of breath of it out of the corner of my eye. It always holds the goods.

and it is the book, like Whitman, you have the urge to gift. like the way Bill Clinton gave both Hillary and Monica Lewinsky a copy of Leaves of Grass.....

Reuben says

THE THINKING REED

We need more and different flags.

What is the worm of the world that spoils exultation?

One who has become all eyes does not see.

To try to understand is to court misunderstanding.

Not to know but to go on.

Anything is a mirror.

There are two endless directions. In and out.

Keight says

There is in reality no need for self-sacrifice and no call for it. Do not settle for the experience of others. If you follow others you are in reality at a standstill, because their experience is in the past. That is circling. Even following your own past experience, is circling. Know your own response to your own work and to the work of others.

Agnes Martin's collection of letters, journals, and lectures seems hopelessly out of print, which is a shame since it is a beautiful perspective on art and process. Themes of imperfection and the misguided importance of inspiration are prevalent throughout. She has a simply yet startling deep manner of writing, which feels appropriate in the context of her visual work. I can't understand how a publisher hasn't picked up this up to reprint, but PDFs are not too hard to find online.

Read another quote on my booklog

Rachel Aloise says

A recurring idea throughout these writings is that art can convey an *awareness of perfection in the mind*—perfection remembered, attempted but never fully realized in the creative process. ‘To feel insufficient, to experience disappointment and defeat in waiting for inspiration is the natural state of mind of an artist’ writes Martin, whose views on inspiration are especially compelling.

Inspiration is pervasive but not a power.

It's a peaceful thing. (...)

Do not think that it is unique.

If it were unique no one would be able to respond to your work.

Do not think it is reserved for a few or anything like that.

It is an untroubled mind.

Of course we know that an untroubled state of mind cannot last. So we say that inspiration comes and goes but really it is there all the time waiting for us to be untroubled again. We can therefore say that it is pervasive. Young children are more untroubled than adults and have many more inspirations. All the moments of inspiration added together make what we call sensibility.

I could keep quoting from these writings because literally each page of notes, poems, stories and random musings contain wonderful bits of wisdom. Instead you can access a pdf of the book on Scribd.

The art of Agnes Martin exudes stillness. It opens a vast space for inner experience and direct awareness that she likened to an undisturbed view of the ocean.

This book achieves much the same effect through the meditative quality of the text. A great, great read for anyone in creative work or with an interest in mindfulness and creativity.

Brian says

her writing reminds me a bit of John Cage, which in matters of art, creativity and spirituality, i think of as very high praise.

Luke Storms says

I absolutely love this book.

Hava Liberman says

I found this on scribd, since it was \$70 to buy an actual copy. I really enjoyed Agnes Martin's strange mix of mysticism, story telling, and common sense, (particularly the latter!) Good advice for artists...if you're not a huge fan of conceptual art. I'm always amazed that the most spiritual and mystical artists often produce extremely minimalist and sharply geometric work. What does it mean?

Rikki says

this is one of my all time favorite books. It was like my little bible for a while. I have lost this book, and I swear its going to be the death of me trying to get another copy. If you ever come across this book don't think twice, and if you don't want it for yourself, think of me at least!

Alex Mitchell says

The painter Agnes Martin has always been an inspiration to me ever since I purchased the book called "Writings." About her art, I know very little, and have never seen her paintings in person. Yet, thankfully, her words from lectures to art students have been collected and compiled in "Writings," so that her personal pursuit of self-discovery and truth in art and life remains forever recorded.

If I had to sum up in just a few words the main ideas that Agnes Martin talks about, I would say inspiration, purpose, and happiness. And although she addresses art students in her lectures, I think her words are for anyone who is searching for meaning in life.

"An artist's life is adventurous. One new thing after another. I have been talking directly to artists but it applies to all. Take advantage of the awareness of perfection in your mind. See perfection in every thing around you. See if you can discover your true feelings when listening to music. Make happiness your goal. The way to discover the truth about this life is to discover yourself. Find out exactly what you want in life. Ask your mind for inspiration about everything."

What I especially love about Agnes Martin is her faith in the process of Life itself. She urges us to let inspiration be our guide and to not worry about making mistakes.

"Many people think that if they are attuned to fate, all their inspirations will lead them toward what they want and need. But inspiration is really just the guide to the next thing and may be what we call success or failure."

Our successes or failures are merely the result of our courage to move forward and keep trying. Thus, our happiness comes not from the results of our efforts, but from the process of living an inspired life according to our purpose.

"There is a purpose in our lives and it is in operation every minute. When we are right on the track we are rewarded with joy. We can know the whole truth with a request to our minds. If we are completely without

direction we can withdraw and our minds will tell us the next step to take.”

I find her convictions about Life contagious. I suppose that's because I share many of her views. Ironically, her views, if it had been up to her, would have never been recorded. According to the preface, Agnes Martin was known to discard things that were of no more importance to her, including her paintings. One can only conclude, that what really mattered to Agnes Martin was her dedication and discipline to contribute to the process of Life as an artist, to express the beauty she saw in everything.

“The measure of your life is the amount of beauty and happiness of which you are aware.”
