

Foreword

"In any case, we live in a world of suffering in which evil is rampant, a world whose events do not confirm our Being, a world that has to be resisted. It is in this situation that the aesthetic moment offers hope. That we find a crystal or poppy beautiful means that we are less alone, that we are more deeply inserted into existence than the course of a single life would lead us to believe."

John Berger, "The White Bird"

It seems like, with our hands out in front of us, we're stumbling through the dark looking for answers, for the truth. And maybe this is just a rite of passage, something all generations must go through to reach their crux. But, nonetheless, here we stand in it, this is our reality.

During his journeys through rural Europe, writer and art critic John Berger found that out of their reality, the peasant communities that populated the land created art -- a white bird made of wood placed in suspension from a beam near a window. The faithful craft and placement of this bird not only illustrated the world around them, but also symbolized their aspirations for a new world, a new reality. Though adversity and swift change often came to splinter their contentment, the art they made preserved their hope for a better life.

Through this anecdote, John Berger tells us true art should endure. But we know that truths do not. *You no longer love that boy. Your loved one is no longer with us. You no longer possess your own freedom.* So, if not the truth, then we ask ourselves: what is it that art seeks to capture? Is it the reality of the moment? Is it the disease? The cure?

No, indeed, we do not have the answer. But here's our offer. Art is an illustration, a panorama, something that sears, stitches and brailles a reality into our very beings. Art can feel like a stone on our chests, the daydreams that flutter in our heads, or like standing still in the breeze. Art has a way of gently touching the tip of our noses, so that we at least look and say, "oh shit, this is reality."

In your hands, you possess art – through literature and through artworks. This art is the preservation of hope. This art is pure, mundane, subverted, diseased and cured reality. This art is the image of us stumbling through our rite of passage. And as we continue to stumble in the dark, searching, bruising shins and egos, we will eventually find our crux

our braille
our truth
and even our

ends.