

The Soul Renaissance – A Vision Of World Harmony.

“Set your mind free in calmness, combine your energy with openness, harmonise with things naturally, and do not allow selfish bias therein. Then the world will be orderly” – The Inner Teachings of Chuang Tzu

Harmony is different to peace. Harmony accepts what we are all in different places in life. It doesn't expect us all to be on the same page. Peace is good, but it could be said that it has become synonymous with a utopia that is never to come. If peace is expecting us all to pick up the flute and learn to play it at the same time, then harmony is identifying who has what instrument, and allowing the orchestra to conduct itself. Peace can be likened to a single beautiful chorus, Harmony is an eclectic mix of voices that somehow works together.

From a religious, and political perspective, it would be nice to just bang some heads together and say “Just get along will you!” This is kind of happening in some places, but generally, it tends to leave the rest of us feeling a little disempowered.

Contemplation and creativity are the two unifying factors that will bring about world harmony. We are able to create, in our own unique way, whilst respecting each others way of creating.

The Place of Art in The Soul Renaissance

Art has been at the forefront of every significant cultural shift. One has to ask the question why that is.

In the past, collaborations of artists, poets and musicians have said the things that have needed to be said to said. They have had the courage to say the un-sayable, to paint or write what is on everyone's lips, but they weren't bale to say.

In this new cultural movement, **you** are the artist. You are the creator of your own life. Together, in collaboration, we can co-create a world of Harmony.

Post Modernism is Finished

Post modernism was a reaction to modernism, It spent most of its time trying to define itself. The hallmarks of postmodernism were disintegration of modernist values, separation, and a sense of meaninglessness. If Modernism was a finely engineered vase, post modernism shattered it.

The things is, it had to be shattered. The upshot of Post Modernism was a recreation of the unique self. Separate, alone confused, but at least unique.

We are now entering an age of integration, interconnection, and connection to that divine part of ourselves. In this movement, the unique self is connected back to the divine.

The Soul Renaissance

The Soul Renaissance is not something that is being forced to happen. Like any Cultural Movement, all it is doing is bringing awareness to something *that is already happening* in the world around us.

You may be surprised to hear this, but if you turn off the TV for 5 days and just talk to those around you, I think you'll find the following:

1. A strong and deep yearning for meaning and purpose

This is expressed in many ways. Many are bored and yearn for something more, maybe a change of lifestyle or career. There is a huge boom in the mind/soul/body and personal development markets and a huge increase in world travel. There is a general sense of wanting to throw of constriction and discover something new.

Many people buy Art because they like the story behind it. People love to tell stories. My personal belief is that part of our deep yearning is to have our own stories told. This makes life meaningful.

2. A greater sense of interconnection/integration

There is a merging of western and eastern beliefs like never before. There are more Interfaith Groups than ever before. Technological advances mean that the knowledge contained in every culture is made known to all other cultures. There are distinct overlaps and patterns in this knowledge. Esoteric fields of science and physics are starting to concur with seemingly opposite fields of spiritual beliefs. There is more blending of cultures in each country than there has ever been before. (This has had two results. The first is a fear and insecurity in identity, the second is a fantastic melting pot of wide and varied experiences.) There is a rapidly growing sense that every action affects someone else. This is being reflected in a desire to have a sustainable future for the planet. It is now abundantly clear just how much man affects his ecosystem.

3. A yearning for authenticity

People are sick of the plastic, the fake, the insincere. They are sick of spammed inboxes and overwhelming junk mail. Advertising is continually hard on the mind in the false promise of paradise in a product.

People want to experience their own paradise, in their own authentic way. That may be by reaching to the past and owning a unique Old Master, or by getting back to basics through camping, travel, or gardening.

This too links with story. When we know our own story, we can feel less insecure in world filled with the stories of others.

Some of you will resonate with this. Some of you wont. And that's fine.

Areas of Crisis In The Art World

It struck me from Art College onwards that Art in the public eye is in somewhat of a crisis.

At one end of the spectrum Art has become so intellectualised and high brow as to make it inaccessible to most people. Tracey Emin's "bed", Damien Hirst's "sheep in formaldehyde..." these pieces have their place, but it is not at the centre of attention at the Art World.

The Art World has become a place of overwhelming competition. Competing artists, competing galleries, competing publishing houses. It is a world fraught with landmine after landmine of purely commercial intentions. Major publishing houses bully the Art World into looking at their portfolio of artists as the latest investment opportunity. They prey upon the nervousness of art buyers who need to have a meaningful investment piece on their walls.

Many people at this time are nervous about buying art. Why is this? Because we seem to be in some weird in between stage. Thanks to post modernist thought, no-one seems to know what is in "fashion". It is as though we are all waiting for something. There is no overall leadership, meaning, direction or vision.

A knee jerk commercial reaction to this has been the mass production of prints. These are often "safe" works of art that tend to be copies of the previous favourites, or pieces designed to fit in with a brown leather sofa and magnolia walls.

We have moved away from three key things that, most people would agree, have to be at the centre of Art:

1. Something that inspires and uplifts
2. Something that displays mastery of craftsmanship
3. Something with a powerful message that resonates deeply in those who see it

There are many artists that surround you now with an amazing wealth of creative talent. There is probably one that lives down your street. Many struggle to make a living unless they are able to battle the politics of galleries or publishing houses, have a good deal of business acumen or are extremely well connected.

I am not excusing those Artists who are lazy and not willing to get off their arse and do something about their gift! (If you are one, then get off your arse, and do something!)

The final knock on effect is that many people also seem to have divorced any sense of creativity from their own lives. They think “Creativity is for artists and composers, and that’s that”. This is not true. We can be involved in a creative act in every single moment of our lives. True creativity is to take something ordinary, invest it with your personal energy, and to transform it into something extraordinary.

It has been said that union with God is living an ordinary life in and extraordinary way.

In summation, this is our current situation:

1. Meaningless high brow art in the public eye
2. A competitive commercial art world and mass production of prints
3. Ghettoised creative souls struggling to make a living
4. Most people are convinced they “aren’t creative”

Art is no longer about the Artist. Its about you.

The Soul Renaissance is about the beauty, truth and divinity that you already contain and aspire to.

The Soul Renaissance is about you recognising you are the Artist of your own life, and unleashing your latent powers of creativity. It is about experiencing the fact that the walls between spirituality and creative energy are paper thin.

The Soul Renaissance is about seeing Heaven on Earth and encouraging connection to your Creative Source through practising stillness. Through you helping me, and me helping you to live an ordinary life in an extraordinary way.

Calls to action (and inaction)

If any of this resonates with you, then here are a few things you can do.

1. Feel free to sign up for Soul Inspirations
2. Try practising stillness on a regular basis Email louis@artwithsoul.co.uk to find out how.
3. Spread the word amongst your network.
4. Find out what your vision of harmony, and capture it in on canvas on a Soul Expression workshop. With this we build the Soul Mosaic (<http://louisparsons.typepad.com>)
5. Be part of the Soul Renaissance project

I am meeting with thought leaders all over the world, and asking them one simple question. “What does world harmony look like to you?” Then I am creating artwork based on what is shared. All of these images will be shown at exhibitions, and online.

Thanks for reading this.

I look forward to being part of this creative project with you.

