

Why Art?

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Not an Easy Question...

- Not offering concrete answers
- Look at my life as a tool to get at these questions
- Examining the questions I have asked and the answers upon which I have landed
- Hopefully... this will be useful in approaching your own questions

A Different Path

Son of the first Latino California Supreme Court Justice.

The son of farm workers, Cruz Reynoso has devoted his life to ending discrimination, fighting for immigrant rights, and promoting equal opportunity. Through his efforts to address social inequality in his rural community, his leadership of the pioneering California Rural Legal Assistance Program, his tenure as the first Latino on the California Supreme Court, and his service on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, he has been a strong force for change and a passionate voice for our Nation's disadvantaged. Respected for his legal expertise and renowned for his compassion, Cruz Reynoso has earned his place as one of America's most distinguished lawyers, jurists, and social reformers.

Decree for the Presidential medal of Freedom by
President William Jefferson Clinton August 9, 2000



Three Quotes One Story

Mrs. Millet wrote:

“What talent & creativity you have! You possess a gift that most of us only dream about. However, as I understand it you are equally gifted in the debating field. It is for that reason, and the fact that job prospects in the future are so uncertain, I asked you to keep all of your avenues in college wide open.”

Mr. Millet wrote:

“The other Reynosos [referring to my siblings whom he had also taught] were extraordinary- you are different! You are the guy who acts, talks and performs as his Dad would like- a Lawyer! But- no, that is not good enough- you have to go and take my wife’s class and become some kind of fruit cake designer. What a waste- you and Saddam.”

Or as a high school friend put it:

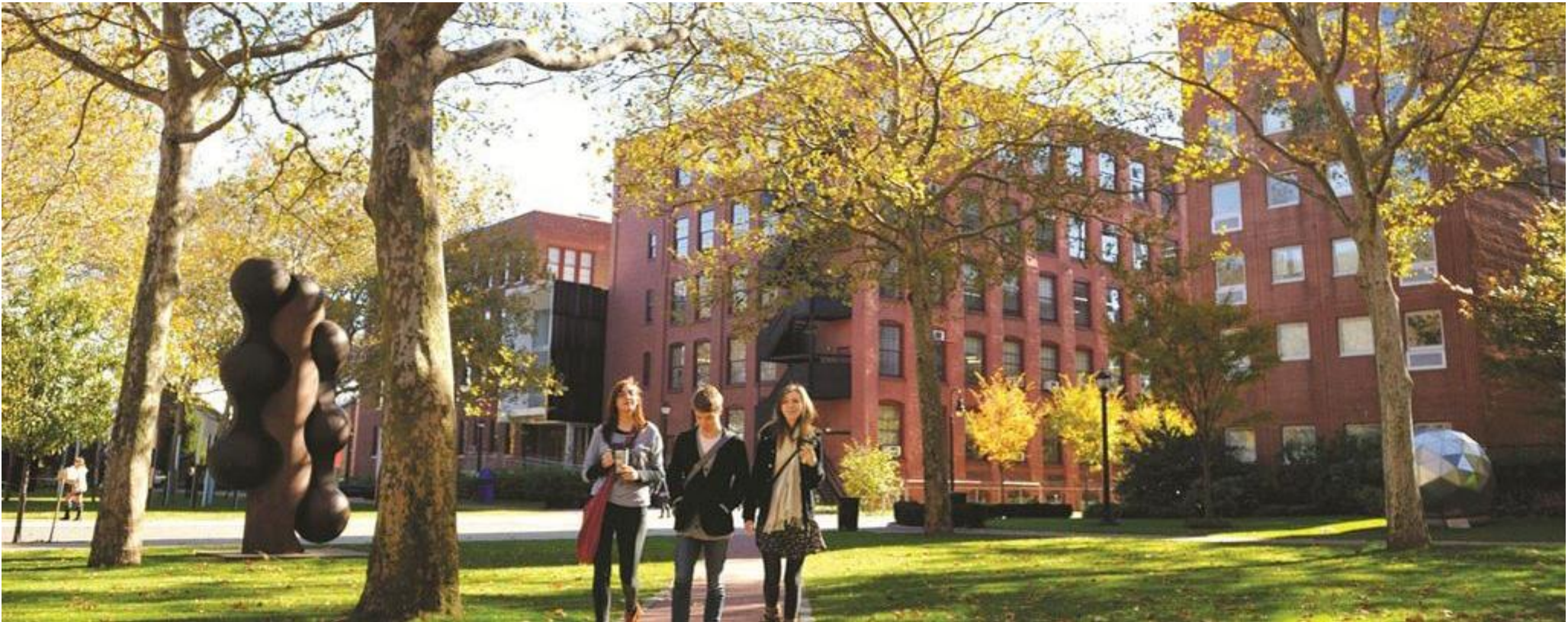
“You better become a lawyer or I will cry.”

Crook in the Path

- Started College as a Double Major in Philosophy & Economics.
- Made some mistakes- married by 19, father by 20.
- Depression, dropped out of school.
- “You can do anything you want, but not everything.”

NYC or Bust

Transferred to Art School in NYC... but the existential choice came later.



In Search for Meaning...Significance

Medal of Freedom

September 11

Painting Pretty Pictures

Art seemed Frivolous

Dave Hickey (Air Guitar) argued that it was and that we should embrace that frivolity. But, I wanted meaning.

Might a life of legal practice and service be more meaningful?



The Third Generation

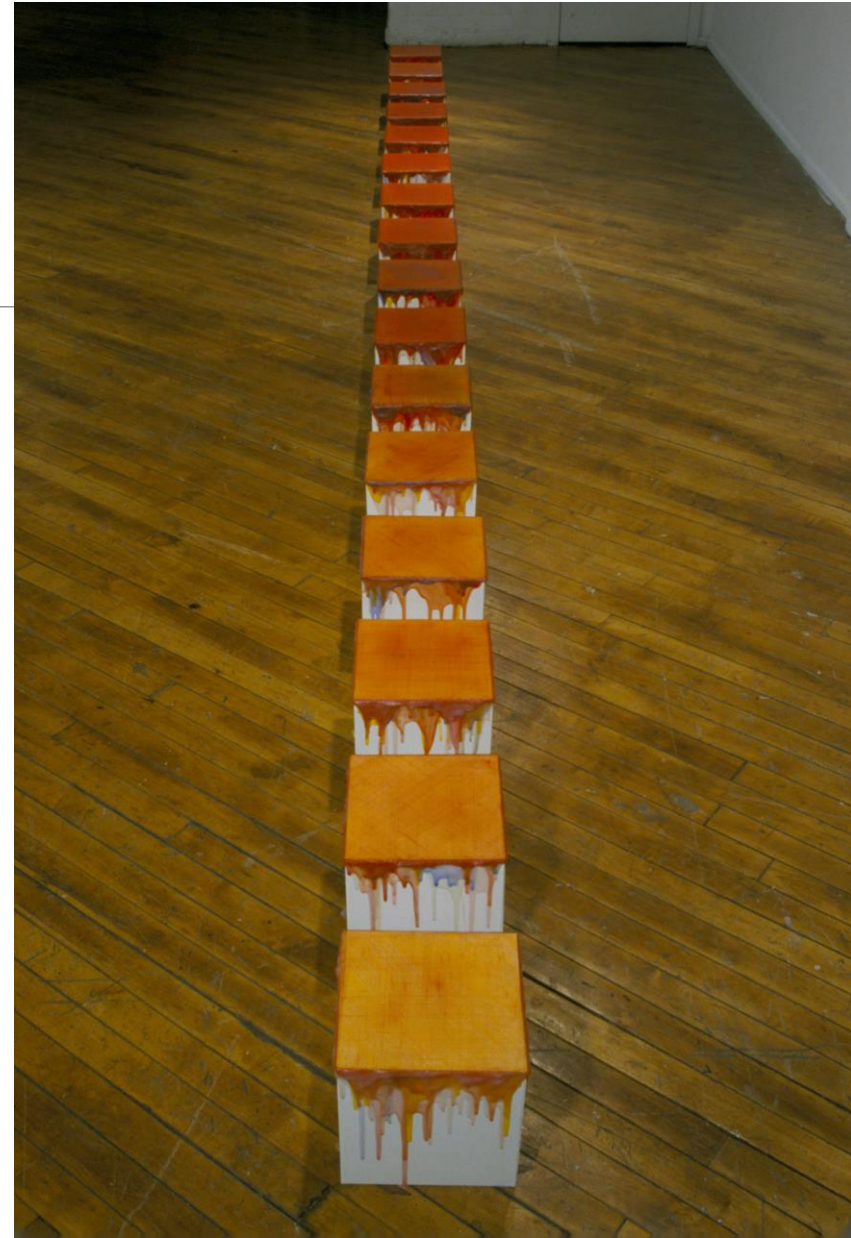
I have always thought there was something inherently noble about the high arts. Be it music, dance or the visual arts these forms of communication have always seemed to strive towards the heart of the human condition; but, not through polemics or trite rhetoric. The arts always seemed to be a pure pursuit of what it means to be human. They seemed to seek, not just to describe the nature of humanity, but to display it for all to experience.

I feel so naïve.

“I must study war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons must study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study paintings, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.” - John Adams

A Thesis Statement

In the end, I am content that Dave Hickey is wrong. Art may not be practical but that does not mean that it is frivolous. Often, what is truly essential is not pragmatic. Its value cannot be found in how it increases the physical value of our life but the spiritual. Beauty, by its nature, has the ability to touch our souls. Here, I do not refer to prettiness, a superficial and fleeting feature, but to the quality of beauty which is both pleasurable to the eye and the mind.



A Thesis Statement

I believe in beauty. Just as the created world is endowed with tremendous beauty I seek to infuse my work with a similar beauty. Ultimately, this beauty challenges the nihilism of today's mind. Joy, peace, hope and purpose are all present, even celebrated, in my work. Ideally, communion with my work can provide the viewer with a shadow of the passion which produced the work and be a catalyst for further, deeper contemplation.



A Thesis Statement

My art is worship. Not in a corporate sense, but private. Each piece is an act of reverence towards my Creator. Each creative act of mine is homage to the Creator of my soul. Each stroke of the brush is an act of devotion. Nothing is more essential to the human experience than our relationship to the Author of our lives, the Potter of our body, the Poet of our soul.

It is not frivolous.



Happily Ever After?

- Top of the World.
- Hard Fall.
- Redirect.



Artist & Scholar



Living in the junction of
Art Practice, Art History,
Religion, & Philosophy.

The Best Laid Plans.

A Question of Calling

What is...
a job,
a career,
a vocation,
a calling...
and what is the
difference?



Calling: Not Just for Preachers



No Secular~Sacred Divide

Visual Theology- Visual Language

Logos vs. Rhēma

- Logos= Expression of Thought
- Rhēma= Uttered in speech or writing

“Art can capture things for us where words alone fail. Art can both remind us of what we have forgotten and help us to see what we have never understood.”

–Colin Harbinson

God Values Art

1. Creation
2. Scripture
3. Bezalel:
God “filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship” (Exodus 31:3)
4. Tabernacle & Temple
5. Brazen Serpent and Christ
6. Ezekiel 4, 5, & 12



The Artist

Your Calling Matters Even If:

- The Church Doesn't Recognize It
- It Doesn't Pay the Bills
- It Isn't Pragmatic
 - Pragmatism can be an Idol
 - God's Love is Prodigal

Remember:

- Your Creativity Reflects the Imago Dei
- Artists Do Theology
- Art Can Be Prayer



The Church

Remember:

- Artists are Christians too
- Artists aren't some weird OTHER
- Artists speak a language the church needs to learn
- Artists can be a bridge to our culture
- Artists' divergent thinking can strengthen our understanding of God



The Culture

- Art Has Always Been
- Beauty Matters
- Art can be a gateway to transcendence
- When the church neglects quality art we weaken our cultural voice
- Culture making not Culture waring



“A hunger for beauty is
at its heart a hunger for
God.”

- Michael Card