

# Dominic Rouse



"In Quotes"

To see the light we must first acknowledge that we are in the dark.

Colour is everything, black and white is more.

The only person I am trying to take advantage of is myself.

Leave behind on the fabric of this planet a pattern of yourself.

You bring your baggage to my work and I'll bring mine.

Art is the exploration of the human mind by the human mind. It is the servant of self and one can do oneself no greater service.

Art is the politics of self, the companion of solitude.  
Silence is the imagination's amniotic fluid. Genius is  
solitude refined.



Art is the antidote to the human condition.

Making art is like walking a very fine line. To one side lies indolence and on the other, the fear of success.

Art is not made by the wise but by men and women in search of wisdom and to search at all is wisdom enough.

Were it not for the pain to be found in the wider world I might not have sought sanctuary in the confinement of my own where I discovered an endless supply of the raw materials needed to make the images I do. I found reality a little unsettling so I created a disturbing world in order to make this one appear a little less unnerving.

I do not choose to make my images. They choose me to get made. I make images for the hard of hearing.

Images ooze out of me like puss from a running sore.

I am interested in the unseen and the obscene. An appreciation of the obscene leads to a greater understanding of beauty and the exploration of self leads to a greater understanding of others. Language is the limit of our understanding. Art is not.

It helps to get a handle on my work, if you are a lapsed Catholic with a repressed longing for reconciliation with Holy Mother Church. Perhaps God bestows the gift of art upon those who cannot reach Him using the more conventional paths. Making art is the closest one can get to The Almighty without actually having to be good.

Art has often been defined as the search for Truth and Beauty but I would define photography as the exposition of the fallacy we know as Truth and I might add that Beauty is measured in degrees of deceit, the greater the beauty the greater the deceit. Nonetheless, I am addicted to Beauty though unfortunately I am a habit that Beauty has managed to kick. It is discomfoting to know that if all that existed was beautiful, Beauty would cease to exist.



Viewers seek explanations from the artist but he is not the man to help them. The only person who can explain a piece of art to you is yourself.

I would not presume to tell another how to think though I do occasionally take it upon myself to encourage others to think for themselves. For many this is a new experience.

My images are the companions of my thoughts and I am often told that my thoughts are strange but it is better to have odd ideas than none at all.

Is it my imagination or is it dark in here?

I think of my ideas more as assailants than as friends or benign visitors but I much prefer my own madness and my own lies to the madness and half-truths of others. I cannot imagine a life without imagination.

I hope that I am a free thinker. What is the point of thinking another man's thoughts? We wouldn't eat another man's regurgitated food, why would we repeat his thoughts? The goal of thought is to free oneself from others.

I am attempting death by thought; thinking existence into oblivion.

I am not interested in recording what happened yesterday or today but what could happen at any time but never will. It is impossible not to be contemporary unless one has a time machine.

When a man says to me - as one did recently - that he would not buy one of my images because if he hung it in his house it would make him want to cry every time he saw it, I mark it down as a sale.

Every year I set out to make the perfect image and every year I fail. You can have no idea how enjoyable failure can be. If I can lie on my death-bed worrying about all the imperfections in my latest image I will have lived a good life.

I would give up everything without a murmur except the right to make my images.



If, as has been suggested, some of my images are evil then they are, at the very least, original sins. As somebody who has made images all his life I can assure you that they are not dangerous. The offence is not in my work; it is in the reaction to it. It is the viewer that poses the threat.

Unless the truth be sinful it should not be possible to find fault with a man who views the world through a camera.

The fears we have of others are the fears we have about ourselves cunningly repackaged to increase their appeal.

That every work of art that is censored in a given age becomes in time valued and benign, informs us that the morals of today are no guide to the morality of tomorrow and further reveals the exquisitely transient nature of the certainty which moralists of every age so confidently profess. Indeed there is no surer sign of ignorance than certainty. If Christ had indulged in certainty He would not have agonized in Gethsemane.

It is here amongst the happily destitute that I can continue my survey into the human condition with the least disturbance to myself and others knowing that when one conducts a survey one can never be certain of the result. Indeed certainty prevents one from surveying at all, which is how error is fed. Those who tell you that they have the answers are not asking the right questions.

Only those completely lacking in imagination are able to confuse reality with its depiction.

The fewer imaginative people there are the better I say  
because it leaves more room for me to run around in.

To take a piece of paper, coat it with a gelatin in which are suspended a million silver halides and then to allow, first light and then chemicals to caress it in such a way that it leaves an imprint of one's soul is an exquisite joy that no amount of criticism can diminish. I do not have ambition as such, every completed piece is an ambition achieved.



One might argue that because of the prevalence of the camera and its overuse - because every day throughout the world millions of images are made by millions of people - the ability to produce a memorable image using a camera is a far greater achievement than to do so using paints, brushes and a canvas where competitors are fewer.

The union of the photographic discipline with the freedom of expression known to painters now granted to us by the digital domain has the potential for genius.

I sometimes wish that I could paint badly. There appears to be money in it.

The only way to make art is to completely ignore the possibility of profit. Those who have tried to make art with an eye to financial gain have never achieved the compromise.

Misguided love is better than no love at all and infinitely preferable to a guided missile. In fact there is no such thing as a guided missile. All missiles are misguided.

That both Hitler and Churchill could paint a little gives some indication of the dangers of weekend artists.

What is war photography if it is not pornography for power-hungry perverts?

We should not be photographing people because they are famous but because they are human.



All photographs of children are disturbing because they are premonitions of us. A child is a tragedy waiting to happen; Man is the tragedy in progress. It is not possible to corrupt the young, to be born human is corruption enough.

Innocence corrupts.

Consider the thousands of years that passed between the time the first lines were made on cave walls and the glories of The Renaissance and, remembering that photography is not yet two hundred years old, forgive us our unpolished scrawls.

There is nothing more calculated to destroy an individual's ability to appreciate the beauties of the photographic arts than a degree in the History of Art.

An artist sets out to reveal the truth but he rapidly discovers that there is no such thing so he is left to give his honest impressions of the lies which is the closest we have to a truth. An artist who is only interested in the truth will soon find himself unemployed.

Whatever he may tell you to the contrary an artist is ultimately a spectator of self because there is no subject more revealing.

The power of art is driven by that unclear reactor which is at the core of us all.

We must uninvent our gods if we are to reinvent ourselves.



To ensure the long term future of Hell, Satan went to God and said "I have created Man and if you can take him from me I will kneel down and worship you again."

It is better to live in a one room hovel on the outskirts of Paradise than a luxury apartment in downtown Hell.

In the Britain of today most of what passes for Art is indeed no such thing. Rather it is a ruse invented by the talentless to avoid manual labour which is, of course, an art in itself. The talented seek a means of self-expression in some imaginative form whilst the talentless seek solace in the norm. In Britain an imaginative man is an outlaw.

Craft, it is said, is the visible edge of art and should you find yourself in the presence of work in which it is difficult to discern any craft then you will probably find that it is equally hard to discover its art. The overwhelming desire of the technological age for immediate gratification has led many who claim to be - and who are, unfortunately, acclaimed as being - artists, to eschew the disciplines of hard-earned craft skills.

This indiscipline in the arts has allowed the sciences and their attendant 'facts' to gain the intellectual ascendancy which formerly belonged to men and women of imagination. Science offers knowledge without understanding. Art offers, to those who seek it, a wisdom that extends far beyond the limits of mere empirical fact.

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