

Dear Peucinian,

First of all, I would like to note that this week's disputation will be held in the Peucinian Room in the basement of Sills Hall, instead of the usual Third floor of Mass Hall.

Last week, after a hard fight, it was resolved that not all is fair in war. This week we exchange matters of the sword for matters of the brush, the bass, the ballet slipper, and the book.

### **Resolved: Art Is For The Artist.**

**Affirmative: Nikolai Gogol**

**Negative: Harriet Beecher Stowe**

Is art primarily a personal practice of self expression, discovery, and distillation? Oscar Wilde writes in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* “Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the colored canvas, reveals himself.” Art can also be brought into existence by an artist for the delight in its making.

Or, rather, is art not so much distillation, but communication? There is a well beaten analogy that works of art are like children, gestated in a studio and then sent out into a life of their own where their parent's actions and ethics are only part of their identity. Art not only preserves and presents some aspect of an artist, but can (and should) be used to inspire piety or action or pondering in others, and it is the piety and pondering and politics that come from encountering a work of art that give it its power and worth.

Attached, are three appetizers to stimulate the curious

hunger in our brains and provide common reference works to chew on. One is a video of an undoubtedly familiar artist at work, another a revolutionarily personal piece of poetry, translated by another master, and the last a series of kitchen utensils made and used by the same fellow who made the mobile in the library. Other forms of art that could be brought in to this question include (but are absolutely not limited to) the remix, religious iconography (does the artist or the congregation benefit more), propaganda, the bad poems you wrote in middle school and never showed anyone, oral storytelling, and the portrait.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkRS3wDg1xU>

**Please come at 7:30 in business attire (whatever combination of skirt, trousers, collared shirt, tie, blazer, dress, sweater, vest, sweater-vest, suspenders, and relevant accessories suit you).** Bring your burning questions and deepest convictions.

Pinos Loquentes Semper Habemus,

Aesop