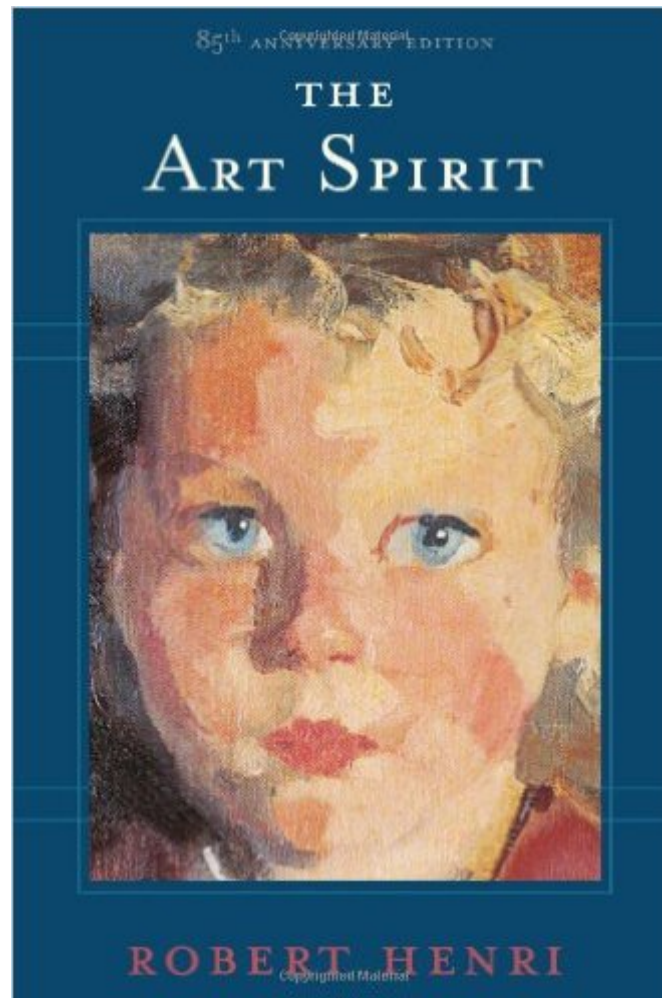


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# The Art Spirit



## Synopsis

Embodying the entire system of Robert Henri's teaching, *The Art Spirit* contains much valuable advice, critical comment, and inspiration to every student of the arts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Henri would not relate directly to his students while they were working; instead he would return to the classroom when it was empty, observe the various works of his students, and leave them notes to encourage and give direction to their work. Mostly these notes were poetic, metaphorical, oblique to the actual work. Henri, this great artistic soul, spoke through the work of his students, to the essential artist in them, deepening their connection to this in themselves and opening the doors for this essential artist to a truer expression. This book is a collection of those notes, to read cover to cover, or to open and read a page for insight into one's art or one's life. I myself have found that I have no apparent artistic ability, but through this much read and much appreciated little book, I have been made into an artist in my own inner and outer life and expression. I live a little deeper and with a greater clarity. My heart is opened with each reading. Every artist, philosopher and Lover of life should have the pleasure of this, the heart of Robert Henri.

My friend who was an artist gave me this book to read. Now it is one of the few that I carry around at all times. Robert Henri saw that there is no division between art and life. To be an artist, or truly alive for that matter, one has to experience life to his fullest. This means finding yourself and the people/things/and way of living that inspire you. When beauty strikes you so, and your full of love

and joy it is hard not to do things beautifully. Henri tells us to find that beauty within us and the rest will follow. And one of the most enjoying things I found about this book was that the authors personality is very bright in every sentence. It made the book a great read. To enjoy this book, you need not to know art but to know life.

"There are moments in our lives, there are moments in a day, when we seem to see beyond the usual. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness. Such are the moments of our greatest wisdom. If one could but recall his vision by some sort of sign. It was in this hope that the arts were invented. Sign-posts on the way to what may be. Sign-posts toward greater knowledge." Robert Henri

Twenty two years ago when I discovered this book I could not have imagined the impact it would continue to have on my life. Robert Henri speaks of both the technical side of art and the art experience. I have re-read this book, a little bit at a time, many times over the years and have found something new to appreciate each time. While I find less and less time in my life for my artwork, I am able to enjoy beauty and clarity in all of it's everyday forms. The trick is to remember to capture it in your mind. When I feel I have lost the ability to appreciate everyday beauty, I pick up this book. It never fails to rejuvenate my mind and inspire me.

I was given this book 11 years ago whilst studying at art college and despite all the many other influences I have had and the many books I have read, this one book remains the most important. In a world in which we are pulled in every direction through media and advertising etc, Henri reminds me of what it is to be a real artist. Time and again his writings inspire me and send me off to the studio with purpose in my step. Here is one quote to give an idea of the importance of this book; 'The country is full of men who are working in the cold, or worse- too much heat- just to get enough to purchase a day's miserable existence. You are working for your character, and your pay is to last you all your life.' Buy it. It will be one of the best investments you have ever made.

I thought this was a very philosophical book that applies to life in general and not just painting. Lots of his quotes are great. Like this one: "Don't ask someone for a critique until you're unable to give one yourself. Then you will be ready to receive it." The main premise in the book is to have the art spirit. That is, instead of just copying what you see, paint what you feel. I think that is something very few painters do. Have you ever looked at a well executed painting but it just didn't do anything for you? This could be why. Really I think this book is a must read for all artists, even non-painters.

The Art Spirit is a classic. No artist should ever be without a copy. This book invites reading time and time again. It brings us back to the principles. The value of things. Right thinking. Relationships. As a practicing artist, I can think of few books that have meant so much.

This is a book of notes, articles, letters and student instruction from the teacher himself (not any ordinary teacher, mind you) about the concept and technique of picture making, the study of art generally and on appreciation. This is an easy read; one that can be read a bit at a time at leisure. It felt like a visit with an old friend. Full of inspiration and a touch of philosophy here and there, it brings it all together. I quote just this once from Mr. Henri: "Art appreciation, like love, cannot be done by proxy: It is a very personal affair and is necessary to each individual." He is giving advice here on not following the critics! I include this to give the reader the "flavor" of the book. I feel this book is a must read for any artist...and a wonderful re-read, over and over again!

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