

Who Am I?

Paul Sargent

OS24



Throughout my life, I have searched for an answer. Who am I? Why am I here? Am I just another face in the crowd of the world, or not? I understand that this is a subject not taken lightly, yet through expressive artwork, questions have begun to unravel themselves. Knowing that one's meaning in the world is quite a large question to answer, I have decided to focus on certain things that make me, the man I am today. Discovering that the loves and interests of people are a huge character defining study, I will redirect the process and engage in a study of why I like the things I do. My work will study my interests, and answer why the interests effect me so much, ergo giving me a better understanding of my mind and complex personality. By concentrating on subjects that I have an attraction to, I will find it much easier to harvest inspiration, and then channel that inspiration into my work. Then, once done, I will trace my steps back through my artwork, and decipher what my methods and thoughts were during the span of my work time, inevitably answering my ever long question, who am I?

My childhood would be a good place to start, I can still remember me as a young boy, always noticing colors, picking up objects that had an alluring hue to them, and trying to point them out to others, even strangers. It takes little to prove that I was a color maniac in my younger days. I vividly remember watching a home movie of my childhood with my mother. On screen was a small boy guiltlessly bouncing in a chair located in the center of a kitchen. I felt as if I was watching someone else, but I wasn't. With nothing but a diaper around my waist, I giggled in that kitchen chair; in front of me a play set easel and a pad of paper. I would strike my brush into my little watercolor tray, then slash the small piece of paper with such determination and childishness, that my mother holding the camera, would begin to laugh hysterically. After the wound was gashed into the paper's shallow skin, and would bleed its marvelous tinted blood, I raised my hand and pointed to the area that I had just recently decimated with my child-like artistic genius to declare the color of it, so all might hear my voice and know that it was its true color.

As it can be said with little effort, I was very childish, but being the way I was I let myself go free and explore my world through the eyes of a young boy, and cherished that single day as the cornerstone to my life through art.

Another thing I will always remember are my favorite colors. Remember the day when someone asked you what are your favorite colors? Nether do I. But my love for them has never faltered. My three most favorite colors are Jubilee Yellow, Crisp Orange, and Blood Red. Every time I dwell upon these three colors, I let it swell in my mind, I let it expand to every corner of my thoughts, I can see it. I can feel it. I can smell it. I know it is an odd statement to say, but it truly does occur. Think of your favorite color, now take a few seconds away from this paper and flood your cranium with it, if you can see it, then you can feel it, then you can smell it. What does it smell like? When I think of orange, I smell blasts of citrus as if I broke the hardy skin from an orange and its succulent mist flooded my senses.

As you can see, color is not just a pigment or a shade, it holds life. Chloroplasts are green; they are the life of all plants. Blood is red; it is the source of all life in mammals and reptiles. The point is we have such a deep connection with color. In a way, color has a life of its own. We see it every second of every hour of every day in our lives. We touch it. We smell it. We taste it. We see it. Just from the mention of a color that we have a connection to triggers a phenomenon where our mind begins to bend and create thoughts off of those colors. To give an example of what I mean by that, I will pick another one of my most favorite colors. Yellow is the color of happiness and the twin of the term mellow. When I clear my mind of all thought and let yellow grip my every cell, I begin to see a picture. I see yellow covering the sky of a cool October

afternoon. I see a small room in a quiet Victorian farmhouse. Towards the middle of the room, I see a yellow sundress of a beautiful woman, on the table next to her is a tart, lemon meringue pie. In front of the woman, I see golden yellow curls on the head of a young lass in front of the mirror trying ever so hard to mimic her mother's beauty. Then to the back of the room there are deep yellow curtains flowing in the calm autumn breeze. Put that all together. The beauty our minds can develop just by the mere mention of a color and its place is just astounding.

My mind constantly harvests these thoughts in a never-ending spiral of philosophical debates where I question all of these major ideas about color. Well this has opened quite a few doors within my mind, but my answer still hangs in the air.

Next, I will look at not the love of color, but music. Music in my opinion is one, if not the most, powerful thing humans have developed over the ages. To put this in perspective, music has the ability to change emotion. Emotion is the most dominating primal instinct we have. Music is a great force, and we have Pythagoras to thank for that. Pythagoras lived in ancient Greece, being an Ionian Greek Philosopher and a man of many thoughts, he was considered, and still is, one of the greatest minds in the history of man. Pythagoras and his followers met in secret away from the ruling power, able to explore the entire mind had to offer. Pythagoras was the man who invented the Pentagram, being the five-lined star. But not only did the Pentagram have unique mathematic properties, it was also the birth of music. Pythagoras found that there were four different sized lines that fell under the golden rule. Through simple fractions, Pythagoras created octaves, and then instruments. Music evolved into what it is today, a masterpiece of symphonic genius, ranging from smooth acoustic to edgy rock. Music has paved paths through history, from peasants to kings, bards and emperors. Nothing is more influential than the power of music. I am a person who loves all. Of course, there are some that I prefer more than others, but in the end, music affects me in such an odd way. I don't mean that I am a brainless zombie whenever Bing Crosby is on the radio, but my mind is emptied by the tranquil melodies and then filled with the beautiful sounds of music. I am not so much brainless, as I am transcending to a realm of that music in my mind.

To fully understand who I am, my life has been a never-ending quest for inspiration. I have an addiction to searching for answers that might open my mind and show me why I act the way I act. Like a child that plays with fire, I attempt to harness powerful elements of the human life, harvest them in my mind, and then extract the raw material that is inspiration. Through a series of deep thoughts and experiments I begin to craft and forge art. Not only can I create art from any raw mental material, but also art can be forged from other art by the simple act of combination. You could be recreating a picture of aquatic life from a photo you saw once. Add a bit of a neon techno element to the art and it has changed from a sea creature extravaganza, to a flashy, luminescent, 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea, masterpiece. My underlying message here is that, yes, you can create art of raw inspiration, but you shouldn't always rely solely on thought process. Don't let it be where your goals come from; let it be your starting point for things even greater. To demonstrate, I am currently working on art that is based off of color as well as music, but that is not the end. I will then find ways to combine those works as well as a couple others to create completely different art than I had pictured in the beginning. Why? Because I feel that if I were to let go of all mental barriers that my subconscious perfectionist has created, I will see my mind's capabilities. If I put my whole self into my art then in a way I will be able to see myself through my work and answer my ever lasting question: who am I?

Inspiration is all around us. Artists view the world in a completely different way than others. A bird singing, a fish swimming, cars zooming, bees buzzing, people walking. These

scenes are infested with opportunity for art, but the gift artists have is that we can not only *view* the opportunity, but also *extract* it and use it. Like I said before, art is all around us; music and color are but a part of the world's beauty.

I have many plans for this project, so many that the hardest task for me to carry out in this final project is to filter and prioritize them. Given that this project is meant to expand my mental limits through studies and experiments, I have thoroughly enjoyed all that has offered me. I have struck upon an art form that I feel will continue to amaze and amuse me for decades to come. Yes, this paper is meant to test our knowledge of our subjects, and yes the world is meant to read my studies through my words, but to be completely frank, this paper is for me. I have seen myself grow as an artist; I have seen myself continually test my experience through new thoughts and practices. This paper isn't just a series of words strung together meant only to be handed to a teacher, or a compilation of my thoughts upon what my assigned prompt was; this is a paper not written for any purpose but my own reflection. This paper's thoughts and ideas have come from the years of experience I have gained while under the banner of "the artist". No, this isn't a paper meant to be read by the hundreds of people that will, I'm not even sure if this is a paper at all. This is my mind, filled with the beauty and splendors the world has to offer, and what I make of them. I am an odd person from the start, but I have noticed through my work that I am much more than that. I love bright colors. I love the different sounds of music. I have a fancy for deep thoughts, and when my mind is set free, countless possibilities arise. I still haven't answered my question, and I'm sure I will never do so. But through this paper I have gotten closer to my answer than I ever have before. I have asked it before and I will ask it again, who am I? Why am I here? Am I just another face in the crowd of the world, or not? No, I am a man whose mind is an organized mess. I am a man whose thoughts reach the outer walls of human understanding. I am a man whose hands were crafted to reflect the beauty of this world to the eyes of others. I am a man whose love runs deeper than any chasm. I am Paul Sargent.

Research Sources:

Color: <http://library.thinkquest.org/27066/psychology/nlcolorpsych.html>

Colors on Behavior: http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/17063

Music and the Brain: <http://www.cerebromente.org.br/n15/mente/musica.html>

Pythagoras info.: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oT_Bxgah9zc