

Sentences On Conceptual Art (1969)

1. Conceptual Artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.
2. Rational judgements repeat rational judgements.
3. Illogical judgements lead to new experience.
4. Formal Art is essentially rational.
5. Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically.
6. If the artist changes his mind midway through the execution of the piece he compromises the result and repeats past results.
7. The artist's will is secondary to the process he initiates from idea to completion. His wilfulness may only be ego.
8. When words such as painting and sculpture are used, they connote a whole tradition and imply a consequent acceptance of this tradition, thus placing limitations on the artist who would be reluctant to make art that goes beyond the limitations.
9. The concept and idea are different. The former implies a general direction while the latter are the components. Ideas implement the concept.
10. Ideas alone can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical.
11. Ideas do not necessarily proceed in logical order. They may set one off in unexpected directions but an idea must necessarily be completed in the mind before the next one is formed.
12. For each work of art that becomes physical there are many variations that do not.
13. A work of art may be understood as a conductor from the artist's mind to the viewer's. But it may never reach the viewer, or it may never leave the artist's mind.
14. The words of one artist to another may induce an idea's chain, if they share the same concept.
15. Since no form is intrinsically superior to another, the artist may use any form, from an expression of words (written or spoken) to physical reality, equally.
16. If words are used, and they proceed from ideas about art, then they are art and not literature, numbers are not mathematics.
17. All ideas are art if they are concerned with art and fall within the conventions of art.

Where Petty Theft Sleeps (2006)

1. Perplexed pretenders reject the mystery then retch. Thence they never defended themselves when slender excellence rebelled.
2. Secret systems serve secret systems.
3. The three temples decree meek respect.
4. Perverse theft engenders esteemed system.
5. Revered embers meld seeds thence preserve the legend.
6. Thence Eve tempted men's vented senses by her sexy tense gentle erect cherry sleep then left them where demented they fell.
7. When the Seventh Excellency emerges he presents hefty step-by-step kernels yet nevertheless seems depressed. Thence the shrewd well-presented emerge repellent.
8. When selected letters spell the redneck gentry veneer, then the greedy hell trees presence renders these berserk elements perfectly helplessly feeble, thence whenever the merest plenty serves the Pretenders they tremble by empty pretence yet tender these meek embezzlements.
9. The perplexed revere elements yet deferred. The shrewd yet deeply depressed greedy men well deserved the restless letters emergence. Elements mend the perplexed.
10. Prevent the emergent well-dressed repellent veneer: see the clenched creepy system whenever they defend the even-tempered tendency between them. Even-Stevens needn't see the psyche.
11. When eleven elements meet the seventh the demented flee. Thence whenever they present the mystery fleecy spectre they extend these feeble cheeky feelers whereby the esteemed gentry clench the best leveled center reference.
12. September the twelfth spells the end thence the relentless vehement meddlers regret petty theft dependency.
13. Her strength gets the eye when she wrestles the perfect steely excellence vented by the nerve centre. The eye seethes yet defends the vessel, they feel the fever left by peppered nerves.
14. The letters were fervently defended yet few knew they were severely perverted, the scene felt better left.
15. Feel the gentle mystery breeze swell deep, let these September trendsetters be hexed, tell them they weep excess, (text less speech) they merely dwell, perplexed.
16. The empty belly serves green envy, hence the red-eyed deer gently emerges, the neglected seek mercy.
17. The seventeenth Empress expects the severed pretenders cheeky hex yet remembers the meekness she feels when defenseless.

18. One usually understands the art of the past by applying the conventions of the present thus misunderstanding the art of the past.
19. The conventions of art are altered by works of art.
20. Successful art changes our understanding of the conventions by altering our perceptions.
21. Perception of ideas leads to new ideas.
22. The artist cannot imagine his art, and cannot perceive it until it is complete.
23. One artist may mis-perceive (understand it differently than the artist) a work of art but still be set off in his own chain of thought by that misconstrual.
24. Perception is subjective.
25. The artist may not necessarily understand his own art. His perception is neither better nor worse than that of others.
26. An artist may perceive the art of others better than his own.
27. The concept of a work of art may involve the matter of the piece or the process in which it is made.
28. Once the idea of the piece is established in the artist's mind and the final form is decided, the process is carried out blindly. There are many side-effects that the artist cannot imagine. These may be used as ideas for new works.
29. The process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.
30. There are many elements involved in a work of art. The most important are the most obvious.
31. If an artist uses the same form in a group of works, and changes the material, one would assume the artist's concept involved the material.
32. Banal ideas cannot be rescued by beautiful execution.
33. It is difficult to bungle a good idea.
34. When an artist learns his craft too well he makes slick art.
35. These sentences comment on art, but are not art.

Sol LeWitt. "Sentences on Conceptual Art." 0-9 (January 1969): 4; reprinted: Art-Language I (1969) 1-13; and in Ursula Meyer, Conceptual Art. (New York: Penguin 1972), 174-175.

18. Elsewhere these selected emblems represent the well-tempered jet set pretenders thence wherever these respected Frenchmen descend there extends deep empty resentment.
19. These resentments defended the pen yet represented deep tempered envy.
20. Let the psyche's strength settle the senses then swell these clenched eyes.
21. The present element vents between new elements.
22. The pretender reflected gets the pretence, yet the reflected renders them welded then replete.
23. The free wheel reflects clemency (preserves perfectly the tempered essence) yet when the slender feckless emerge they remember the eggs resplendent strength whereby every extreme feed's the embers.
24. Screw the system.
25. Screw the greedy jet-set chessmen when they expect respect. Let the feeble precedent seen everywhere bleed these perverted dependent legless.
26. Flee the dependent speed wheel they keenly peddle between selected sequenced reflexes.
27. The perplexed keep the strength well-preserved whence pretence renders these peeps deeply felt where presently they reject the perversely dressed wedgy .
28. The events were held between the esteemed edges where revered Gentlemen brewed the best fermented fennel seeds, then represented the freshly neglected. Wherever these meek Gentlemen dwell the pretenders reflect. The helm sees these very elements present new strengths.
29. Let the seven new Vermeer's rest tenderly between sheets. Let them pretty eyes weep.
30. Seek gentle strength when the demented press keenly pepper themselves. The empty-nester fell well yet never rested.
31. Precede fervently elsewhere then let every verse tender these feeble strengths, remember the fevered text, yet never weep lest these sleek pretenders present terse feckless verse.
32. Never let the tempest represent the pretty exegete.
33. Heed the level senses tempt the better elements.
34. When the respected cycle extends fresh plenty the swelled eyes get tested.
35. These sentences pledge gentle theft, the psyche's perfect end.

Phil Coy. "Where Petty Theft Sleeps" (August 2006), Univocal translation of Sol Lewitt "Sentences on Conceptual Art." (1969) Read by Sara Williams at Andrew Mummy Gallery 12/9/2006.