



Written by bubba

My friend Travis posted **a few thoughts on his blog** about the nature of timeline as it relates to completing what, ostensibly, are artistic products. Here tis:



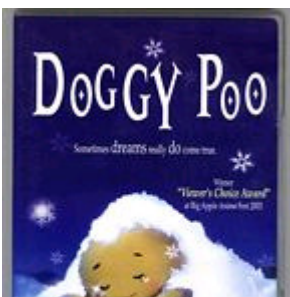
*I was having a series of conversations yesterday and a theme seemed to keep turning up. Is it better to keep working on a project, take as long as you need, in order to turn out something that you are completely satisfied with or should you accept imperfections as part of any project and work on getting it finished in a timely manner? The artist says never compromise the vision. It will take as long as it takes. It's zen. It's art. The pragmatist says create product. Realize that this project is just a piece of the larger goal of developing a body of work. It's the first step down a longer road and the journey will be delayed or never start if you keep languishing in the Purgatory of perfection. Where do you fall on this measuring scale? Are you a director or a film maker? Do you write for*

*yourself or do you want people to see or read the stories you conjure up? I think that we are all working on a timeline. Sometimes we don't even realize it's there. Sometimes it's obviously restricted (like the project I'm working on now), other times you can be lulled into a sense of complacency, feeling like you have all the time in the world.*

*Don't be fooled. Create quality, but create.*

I know where he's coming from, or where this post originated. It was fueled by wading through some afterthoughts about jumping into a project with a marginal script. (At least one of the conversations he's footnoting was with me). I should add - I've read the script. It's not bad, actually a good read. It may have been a bit half-baked but it's a good concept and Travis is improving as a writer for sure. None of this diatribe is reflective of my opinion of him or his life... (unless he wants to use it that way I guess, like I do, duh). No, this is *mine*. It was the implication that the artist and pragmatist are at opposite ends of a measuring scale that made me scrunch up my nose, say 'huh?' and read again. I don't think I agree with that. Why would they be?

I think whether or not a person feels the need to complete something on a timeline depends on their goal, not the creative process or whether they are an artist or a pragmatist. Do I care if I take a year to write what should be a 3 month script? No. What's my goal? To write things I like and think are quality. Trav made reference to the '*larger goal of creating a body of work*'. Sure, that's a larger goal, but it isn't 'the' goal...right? Creating a body of work for the sake of doing it wouldn't warrant reflecting on the process or evaluating the product. Solely amassing pages would be satisfying if that was the case. So what's the goal? To sell something. Maybe that's a few steps down the path but it's the central goal, it's why a body of work seems so relevant.



But let's not overcomplicate; churning out crap for the sake of having a body of work is still churning out crap. Who wants a body of crap? I've written plenty of crap. I don't want it included in any public crap cauldron - it is what it is. Crap. You've never read it. It's not on my site. I don't believe that everything I do should be included in my portfolio, should be read, seen, made, etc. Fuck that. It may be part of *my* process and who I am but it shouldn't be part of how I get defined as a writer unless I want



it to be. And it certainly isn't how I *want* to be defined.

*Do you write for yourself or do you want people to see or read the stories you conjure up?* Ah. The

most critical question I think. Easy to ask. Easy to answer? As an exercise, let's consolidate writing, filmmaking, directing and all similar or peripheral efforts into one job – the 'artist'. Now – let's get to the family of elephants sitting on your couch, my couch, whoever's: Why are you really doing what you're doing? What's your driving force? I mean, *really*, what is it? Everyone has the prescribed set of easily accessible reasons why they/we do what they/we do. "...I just love the creative process...I want to make a statement...I want to breathe life into an industry that is asphyxiating on recycled ideas..." blah blah blah... These answers exist for peer happy hour discussions, emails to family back home and, let's be honest, many times just to feel better about what we're up to, I get that. I'm way too cynical and, **newsflash: so is the rest of the world**, to believe that these finely assembled, idyllic calls to duty are the norm, so back to the elephants:



- *I'm an artist because it separates me from other people.*



- *I'm an artist because I want to get paid.*



- *I'm an artist because I can be pleasingly undefined and hence, cannot be easily judged.*

Whoa...who says these things? No one. Who do these things apply to? Probably everyone at some level. Want to figure out how you really feel about your work, where your real motivations lie? Create something you love and NEVER share it with anyone. You'll find out quickly how much of your goal is invested in your art and how much is rooted in the actions and opinions of others. Here's another one – how much of your life are you willing to invest in your art and by 'invest' I mean immersing yourself in someone else's process and giving up autonomy? It's easy to be a maverick and work outside the box, on your own dime and schedule because you are 100% in charge of that process. Hey, I do that. But would you go to school for 3 years to learn the fundamental craft from professionals? Ok fine, doesn't mean you are or aren't an artist one way or another. The point was to identify the true motives for doing what we do.



Because I think art without honesty is a fraud.

Hey I'm not saying if you do things to make money that you're somehow less of an artist than someone who doesn't. And I'm not saying it's bad to choose the nebulous professional endeavor of 'artistry' because it quenches some part of your mental thirst to be socially acceptable yet delightfully aloof in your respective circles of peer judgement. Not saying that at all. What is an 'artist' anyway? I am. You are. Whatever. There's no real answer here. Are you an artist if you never sell anything you create? God damn right you could be, but not

necessarily. Are you an artist *because* you sell something? Of course not – ever. I guess it all comes down to goals. Want to make films to sell? Maybe you're an aspiring businessman. Want to write to create something interesting? You just might be an aspiring artist. Want to create something interesting that sells? Maybe you're a genius.

I don't live in Hollywood anymore. Where I live, nothing happens. I spend a lot of time swimming around in my private botanical of hidden motives. I never worked in the industry and I have never really given two fucks about belonging anywhere, not in many years anyway. Now that I'm more seriously considering changing career paths it's necessary that I read things like Trav's post and stumble between my soapbox, my cosmetics, my process and my self...hoping eventually to make sense out of it all. I guess the good part is that I only care about writing and that's something that will never go away. It's what meaningful to me. And you know why? Because I think it keeps me honest. Do I begrudge others for churning out a script to have product to market to sell in order to advance? Not necessarily. I even said as much in my post a few weeks ago about the bartender/screenwriter at Hotel Fig. I see that as a process and goal different from mine. But I would begrudge the donning of the '*I'm an artist*' badge, then turning out crap because the central goal was actually to produce something sellable, not something personal, artistic or interesting.

*Don't be fooled. Create quality, but create.* To me, not being fooled means your being honest about your motives, not trying or having to decide between process or product. Doing the former will define the latter. Won't it?

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