

Why I Introduce Art to People

A single painting can change a person's life.

For me, that painting was by Jean-Michel Basquiat. 1990 年、パリ。

It was Paris, in 1990.

The moment I walked into a gallery, one painting caught my eye. Beside it, a monitor was playing. I still remember the scene vividly.

And I had a sudden thought:

I want to take this painting home.

It lasted only a brief moment, yet the feeling has never left me.

At that time,

I had no knowledge of art,

and certainly no courage to acquire a work.

But looking back now,

I believe that was the moment

I stepped through the door into the world of art.

Sometimes I still wonder—

what might have happened if I had bought that painting then,

even if it meant losing everything I had.



Encountering a new work of art
is like encountering a new world.

At the same time,
it is also a moment
when you discover yourself being moved.

When you stand in front of a work of art,
there is a moment when the heart responds first,
before logic.

And in that instant,
the way you see the world shifts, just a little.

I believe that sensation
is profoundly important.

The sensibility to feel art
gives people the power to judge.

And this is not only about the art world.

It is about work.

Relationships.

Society.

Life itself.

Every day,

we make countless decisions.

What to believe.

What to choose.

What we consider beautiful.

Through encounters with art,

that sensibility is gradually refined.

And that sensibility

ultimately enriches our lives.

This is what I truly believe.

Speaking of Basquiat, in 2017

there was major news when Yusaku Maezawa purchased one of his paintings for approximately 123 million dollars.

When I saw that news,

for some reason, it did not feel distant from me.

A memory from long ago

quietly resurfaced.

Paintings truly possess

a power that cannot be measured by money.

Art has the power

to change a person's life

and transform the way the world is seen.

I believe I understood that
in that very moment.

When I encountered Basquiat's work,
it was only two years after his passing.

Since then, his works have been collected
by museums around the world,
have energized the auction market,
and his reputation continues to grow.

A message from one individual
reaches the world.

And behind that
are not only the artist's talent,
but also the people who believed in the work.

Art,
even beginning with the power of an individual,
can move the world.

I truly believe that.

Today, I run a gallery in Fukuoka, Japan.
And in 2015,
I launched the first art fair in the city.

At the time, there was something
I had long been feeling.

Japanese art is extraordinary.
Yet I wondered whether its value
was fully connected
to society and to the world.

I felt it needed to open up more.
It needed to look outward.

I wanted more people
to share values
that could connect with the world.

That is why an art fair was necessary.

An art fair
opens art to society,
brings it into the city,
and connects it with the world.

For me, it was
the most powerful way
to move art toward the future.

And I imagine a certain future.

A future where more people in society
possess the sensibility to feel art.

People who can recognize beauty.
People who can sense what truly matters.
People who see the world through their own judgment.

I dream of a society
where more people like this exist.

Just as it happened to me,
anyone can one day find themselves
standing before the door to art.

If this place
can become one of those doors.

And if from this city
a new current of art begins to emerge.

Nothing would make me happier.