

# James Whistler Quotes

*Art, Artist, Men, Flower, Said, May, Paint, Hands, Two, Photography, Strong,  
Intelligence, Mean, People, Mother, Sweat, Progress, Dear, Might, Bed*

The world is divided into two classes - invalids and nurses.

~James Whistler

An artist is not paid for his labor but for his vision.

~James Whistler

To say to the painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano.

~James Whistler

We look at a painting to know the painter; it's his company we are after, not his skill.

~James Whistler

If other people are going to talk, conversation becomes impossible.

~James Whistler

I always ask at once, 'Do you drink?' and if she says 'No,' I bow politely and say I am sorry but I fear she will not suit. All good cooks drink.

~James Whistler

As music is the poetry of sound, so is painting the poetry of sight and the subject-matter has nothing to do with harmony of sound or of color.

~James Whistler

Mauve is just pink trying to be purple.

~James Whistler

For art and joy go together, with bold openness, and high head, and ready hand - fearing naught and dreading no exposure.

~James Whistler

I am not arguing with you - I am telling you.

~James Whistler

You shouldn't say it is not good. You should say, you do not like it; and then, you know, you're perfectly safe.

~James Whistler

I can't tell you if genius is hereditary, because heaven has granted me no offspring.

~James Whistler

Paint should not be applied thick. It should be like a breath on the surface of a pane of glass.

~James Whistler

It takes a long time for a man to look like his portrait.

~James Whistler

I maintain that two and two would continue to make four, in spite of the whine of the amateur for three, or the cry of the critic for five.

~James Whistler

If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this.

~James Whistler

The rare few, who, early in life have rid themselves of the friendship of the many.

~James Whistler

People will forgive anything but beauty and talent. So I am doubly unpardonable.

~James Whistler

An artist's career always begins tomorrow

~James Whistler

A student of James McNeill Whistler tells the great artist, 'I tend to paint what I see.' Whistler replies, 'Ah! The shock will come when you see what you paint!

~James Whistler

It is for the artist... in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features.

~James Whistler

Work alone will efface the footsteps of work.

~James Whistler

The vast majority of English folk cannot and will not consider a picture as a picture, apart from any story which it may be supposed to tell.

~James Whistler

Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that nature is usually wrong.

~James Whistler

Can't a person be born where they want to be born?

~James Whistler

I remember that at one time I always made a drawing before going to bed!! - Of myself I mean - though I finally destroyed most of them.

~James Whistler

Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress.

~James Whistler

A picture is finished when all trace of the means used to bring about the end has disappeared.

~James Whistler

To say of a picture, as is often said in its praise, that it shows great and earnest labour, is to say that it is incomplete and unfit for view.

~James Whistler

The work of a master reeks not of the sweat of the brow - suggests no effort - and is finished from its beginning.

~James Whistler

Art happens-no hovel is safe from it, no prince may depend upon it, the vastest intelligence cannot bring it about.

~James Whistler

Listen! There was never an artistic period. There was never an art-loving nation.

~James Whistler

Nature is usually wrong.

~James Whistler

If silicon had been a gas I should have been a major-general.

~James Whistler

The explanation is quite simple. I wished to be near my mother.

~James Whistler

Over and over again did the Attorney-General cry out aloud, in the agony of his cause, 'What is to become of painting if the critics withhold their lash?

~James Whistler

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