

Jean Cocteau Quotes

*Art, Men, Reality, Poetry, Mirrors, Lying, Writing, Fall, Artist, Believe, Children,
Simple, Youth, Death, People, Silence, History, Dream, Knowing, Fashion*

The Louvre is a morgue; you go there to identify your friends.

~Jean Cocteau

I love cats because I enjoy my home; and little by little, they become its visible soul.

~Jean Cocteau

Since the day of my birth, my death began its walk. It is walking toward me, without hurrying.

~Jean Cocteau

Art is not a pastime but a priesthood.

~Jean Cocteau

Style is a simple way of saying complicated things.

~Jean Cocteau

Mirrors should think longer before they reflect.

~Jean Cocteau

The composer opens the cage door for arithmetic, the draftsman gives geometry its freedom.

~Jean Cocteau

Film will only become an art when its materials are as inexpensive as pencil and paper.

~Jean Cocteau

Nothing ever gets anywhere. The earth keeps turning round and gets nowhere. The moment is the only thing that counts.

~Jean Cocteau

If a poet has a dream, it is not of becoming famous, but of being believed.

~Jean Cocteau

The prettiest dresses are worn to be taken off.

~Jean Cocteau

Living is a horizontal fall.

~Jean Cocteau

Emotion resulting from a work of art is only of value when it is not obtained by sentimental blackmail.

~Jean Cocteau

Art is a marriage of the conscious and the unconscious.

~Jean Cocteau

You've never seen death? Look in the mirror every day and you will see it like bees working in a glass hive.

~Jean Cocteau

An original artist is unable to copy. So he has only to copy in order to be original.

~Jean Cocteau

I have seafoam in my veins, I understand the language of waves.

~Jean Cocteau

An artist cannot speak about his art any more than a plant can discuss horticulture.

~Jean Cocteau

A true poet does not bother to be poetical. Nor does a nursery gardener scent his roses.

~Jean Cocteau

I only fear the death of others. For me, true death is that of the people I love

~Jean Cocteau

Children and lunatics cut the Gordian knot which the poet spends his life patiently trying to untie.

~Jean Cocteau

The worst tragedy for a poet is to be admired through being misunderstood.

~Jean Cocteau

French people are Italian people in a bad mood.

~Jean Cocteau

We must believe in luck. For how else can we explain the success of those we don't like?

~Jean Cocteau

What uniform can I wear to hide my heavy heart? It is too heavy. It will always show.

~Jean Cocteau

Poets don't draw. They unravel their handwriting and then tie it up again, but differently.

~Jean Cocteau

May the devil himself splatter you with dung.

~Jean Cocteau

Beauty cannot be recognized with a cursory glance.

~Jean Cocteau

All good music resembles something. Good music stirs by its

mysterious resemblance to the objects and feelings which motivated it.

~Jean Cocteau

Poetry is a religion without hope. The poet exhausts himself in its service, knowing that, in the long run, a masterpiece is nothing but the performance of a trained dog on very shaky ground.

~Jean Cocteau

Art produces ugly things which frequently become more beautiful with time. Fashion, on the other hand, produces beautiful things which always become ugly with time.

~Jean Cocteau

The joy of the young is to disobey

~Jean Cocteau

In Paris, everybody wants to be an actor; nobody is content to be a spectator.

~Jean Cocteau

Do as the beautiful woman: see to your figure and your petticoats. Though, of course, I am not speaking literally.

~Jean Cocteau

The poet is a liar who always speaks the truth.

~Jean Cocteau

Never do what a specialist can do better. Discover your own specialty. Do not despair if your specialty appears to be more delicate, a lesser thing. Make up in finesse what you lose in force.

~Jean Cocteau

We shelter an angel within us. We must be the guardians of that angel.

~Jean Cocteau

There's no such thing as love; only proof of love.

~Jean Cocteau

The eyes of the dead are closed gently; we also have to open gently the eyes of the living.

~Jean Cocteau

Lying is the only art form that the public sanctions and instinctively prefers to reality.

~Jean Cocteau

After the writer's death, reading his journal is like receiving a long letter.

~Jean Cocteau

Mystery has its own mysteries, and there are gods above gods. We have ours, they have theirs. That is what's known as infinity.

~Jean Cocteau

If it has to choose who is to be crucified, the crowd will always save Barabbas.

~Jean Cocteau

The dead drug leaves a ghost behind. At certain hours it haunts the house.

~Jean Cocteau

Since these mysteries exceed my grasp, I shall pretend to have organized them.

~Jean Cocteau

Here I am trying to live, or rather, I am trying to teach the death within me how to live.

~Jean Cocteau

Poetry is a religion with no hope.

~Jean Cocteau

See your disappointments as good fortune. One plan's deflation is another's inflation.

~Jean Cocteau

Alas! I do not believe that inspiration falls from heaven. think it rather the result of a profound indolence.

~Jean Cocteau

A true photographer is as rare as a true poet or a true painter.

~Jean Cocteau

One of the characteristics of the dream is that nothing surprises us in it. With no regret, we agree to live in it with strangers, completely cut off from our habits and friends.

~Jean Cocteau

A film is a petrified fountain of thought.

~Jean Cocteau

Every day in the mirror I watch death at work.

~Jean Cocteau

It seems to me that invisibility is the required provision of elegance. Elegance ceases to exist when it is noticed.

~Jean Cocteau

There is always a period when a man with a beard shaves it off. This period does not last. He returns headlong to his beard.

~Jean Cocteau

The poet is at the disposal of the night. His role is humble, he must

clean house and await its due visitation.

~Jean Cocteau

When a work appears to be ahead of its time, it is only the time that is behind the work.

~Jean Cocteau

Tact in audacity is knowing how far you can go without going too far.

~Jean Cocteau

The extreme limit of wisdom, that's what the public calls madness.

~Jean Cocteau

I've always preferred mythology to history. History is truth that becomes an illusion. Mythology is an illusion that becomes reality.

~Jean Cocteau

Art produces ugly things which frequently become beautiful with time.

~Jean Cocteau

Enough of clouds, waves, aquariums, water-sprites and nocturnal scents; what we need is music of the earth, everyday music..music one can live in like a house.

~Jean Cocteau

Don't for a moment believe He was killing the young; He was costuming angels.

~Jean Cocteau

A car can massage organs which no masseur can reach. It is the one remedy for the disorders of the great sympathetic nervous system.

~Jean Cocteau

The poet doesn't invent. He listens.

~Jean Cocteau

Mirrors would do well to reflect a little more before sending back images.

~Jean Cocteau

It is not I who become addicted, it is my body.

~Jean Cocteau

True realism consists in revealing the surprising things which habit keeps covered and prevents us from seeing.

~Jean Cocteau

Poetry is indispensable - if I only knew what for.

~Jean Cocteau

When I write, I disturb. When I show a film, I disturb. When I exhibit my painting, I disturb, and I disturb if I don't. I have a knack for disturbing.

~Jean Cocteau

Appreciation of art is a moral erection, otherwise mere dilettantism.

~Jean Cocteau

I know that poetry is indispensable, but to what I could not say.

~Jean Cocteau

My only politics have been friendship.

~Jean Cocteau

The only way to kill death is through photography.

~Jean Cocteau

One must not mistake majority for truth.

~Jean Cocteau

The poet never asks for admiration; he wants to be believed.

~Jean Cocteau

If a hermit lives in a state of ecstasy, his lack of comfort becomes the height of comfort. He must relinquish it.

~Jean Cocteau

Artists can no more speak about their work, than plants can speak about horticulture.

~Jean Cocteau

The joy of youth is to disobey; but the trouble is that there are no longer any orders.

~Jean Cocteau

A man's truest self realizations might require him, above all, to learn to close his eyes: to let himself be taken unawares, to follow his dark angel, to risk his illegal instincts.

~Jean Cocteau

Silence moves faster when it's going backward.

~Jean Cocteau

What the public criticizes in you, cultivate. It is you.

~Jean Cocteau

The reward of art is not fame or success but intoxication: that is why so many bad artists are unable to give it up.

~Jean Cocteau

One must be a living man and a posthumous artist.

~Jean Cocteau

The ability to laugh heartily is the sign of a healthy soul.

~Jean Cocteau

The ear disapproves but tolerates certain musical pieces; transfer them into the domain of our nose, and we will be forced to flee.

~Jean Cocteau

My little Renoirs. Matisse describes having seen Renoir make these tiny canvases. When he had finished working, he would use up the color left in his brushes on them.

~Jean Cocteau

Inspiration arrived as a result of profound indolence... I awoke with a start and witnessed as from a seat in a theatre, three acts of a potentially awesome play.

~Jean Cocteau

The smell of opium is the least stupid smell in the world.

~Jean Cocteau

The spirit of creation is the spirit of contradiction. It is the breakthrough of appearances toward an unknown reality.

~Jean Cocteau

The cinema is death at work.

~Jean Cocteau

There are poets and there are grownups.

~Jean Cocteau

We are in a period of such individualism that one no longer speaks of disciples; one speaks of thieves.

~Jean Cocteau

The greatest masterpiece in literature is only a dictionary out of order.

~Jean Cocteau

I have lost my seven best friends, which is to say God has had mercy on me seven times without realizing it. He lent a friendship, took it from me, sent me another.

~Jean Cocteau

Victor Hugo was a madman who thought he was Victor Hugo

~Jean Cocteau

My method is simple: not to bother about poetry. It must come of its own accord. Merely whispering its name drives it away.

~Jean Cocteau

Wealth is an inborn attitude of mind, like poverty. The pauper who has made his pile may flaunt his spoils, but cannot wear them plausibly.

~Jean Cocteau

Youth can only assert itself through the conviction that its ventures surpass all others and resemble nothing.

~Jean Cocteau

Continue reading Proust. His magnificent intelligence is particularly fond of describing stupidity. Which is ultimately exhausting.

~Jean Cocteau

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