

Lewis Mumford

Quotes

*Men, Art, Goal, Mean, People, Order, Cities, War, Self, Expression, Science,
Long, Peace, Progress, Dream, Creativity, Life, Running, Humanity, Needs*

A certain amount of opposition is a great help to a man. Kites rise against, not with, the wind.

~Lewis Mumford

Traditionalists are pessimists about the future and optimists about the past.

~Lewis Mumford

The cities and mansions that people dream of are those in which they finally live.

~Lewis Mumford

Adding highway lanes to deal with traffic congestion is like loosening your belt to cure obesity.

~Lewis Mumford

A day spent without the sight or sound of beauty, the contemplation of mystery, or the search of truth or perfection is a poverty-stricken day; and a succession of such days is fatal to human life.

~Lewis Mumford

Every generation revolts against its fathers and makes friends with its grandfathers.

~Lewis Mumford

A man of courage never needs weapons, but he may need bail.

~Lewis Mumford

Forget the damned motor car and build the cities for lovers and friends.

~Lewis Mumford

Restore human legs as a means of travel. Pedestrians rely on food for fuel and need no special parking facilities.

~Lewis Mumford

To curb the machine and limit art to handicraft is a denial of opportunity.

~Lewis Mumford

Life is the only art that we are required to practice without preparation, and without being allowed the preliminary trials, the failures and botches, that are essential for the training...

~Lewis Mumford

The chief function of the city is to convert power into form, energy into culture, dead matter into the living symbols of art, biological reproduction into social creativity.

~Lewis Mumford

Our national flower is the concrete cloverleaf.

~Lewis Mumford

Life is an art we are required to practice without preparation, a score that we play at sight even before we have mastered our instruments.

~Lewis Mumford

The way people in democracies think of the government as something different from themselves is a real handicap. And, of course, sometimes the government confirms their opinion.

~Lewis Mumford

Every new baby is a blind desperate vote for survival: people who find themselves unable to register an effective political protest against extermination do so by a biological act.

~Lewis Mumford

However far modern science and techniques have fallen short of their inherent possibilities, they have taught mankind at least one lesson; nothing is impossible.

~Lewis Mumford

The ultimate gift of conscious life is a sense of the mystery that encompasses it.

~Lewis Mumford

The last step in parental love involves the release of the beloved; the willing cutting of the cord that would otherwise keep the child in a state of emotional dependence.

~Lewis Mumford

Today, the degradation of the inner life is symbolized by the fact that the only place sacred from interruption is the private toilet.

~Lewis Mumford

Misery, mutilation, destruction, terror, starvation and death characterize the process of war and form a principal part of the product.

~Lewis Mumford

Humor is our way of defending ourselves from life's absurdities by thinking absurdly about them.

~Lewis Mumford

The right to have access to every building in the city by private motorcar in an age when everyone possesses such a vehicle is actually the right to destroy the city.

~Lewis Mumford

Today, the notion of progress in a single line without goal or limit seems perhaps the most parochial notion of a very parochial century.

~Lewis Mumford

He who touches the soil of Manhattan and the pavement of New York, touches, whenever he knows or not, Walt Whitman.

~Lewis Mumford

Nothing endures except life: the capacity for birth, growth, and renewal.

~Lewis Mumford

In war, the army is not merely a pure consumer, but a negative producer.

~Lewis Mumford

The timelessness of art is its capacity to represent the transformation of endless becoming into being.

~Lewis Mumford

By fashion and built-in obsolescence the economies of machine production, instead of producing leisure and durable wealth, are duly cancelled out by the mandatory consumption on an even larger scale.

~Lewis Mumford

The great city is the best organ of memory man has yet created.

~Lewis Mumford

The wonder is not that so much cacophony appears in our actual individual lives, but that there is any appearance of harmony and progression.

~Lewis Mumford

The earth is the Lord's fullness thereof: this is no longer a hollow dictum of religion, but a directive for economic action toward human brotherhood.

~Lewis Mumford

By his very success in inventing labor-saving devices, modern man has manufactured an abyss of boredom that only the privileged classes in

earlier civilizations have ever fathomed.

~Lewis Mumford

The vast material displacements the machine has made in our physical environment are perhaps in the long run less important than its spiritual contributions to our culture.

~Lewis Mumford

For most Americans, progress means accepting what is new because it is new, and discarding what is old because it is old.

~Lewis Mumford

The fact that order and creativity are complementary has been basic to man's cultural development; for he has to internalize order to be able to give external form to his creativity.

~Lewis Mumford

Nothing is unthinkable, nothing impossible to the balanced person, provided it comes out of the needs of life and is dedicated to life's further development.

~Lewis Mumford

The artist has a special task and duty... reminding people of their humanity and the promise of their creativity.

~Lewis Mumford

War vies with magic in its efforts to get something for nothing.

~Lewis Mumford

A society that gives to one class all the opportunities for leisure, and to another all the burdens of work, dooms both classes to spiritual sterility.

~Lewis Mumford

Don't take the will for the deed; get the deed.

~Lewis Mumford

Utopias rest on the fallacy that perfection is a legitimate goal of human existence.

~Lewis Mumford

Idealism and science continue to function in separate compartments; and yet 'the happiness of man on earth' depends upon their combination.

~Lewis Mumford

I'm a pessimist about probabilities, I'm an optimist about possibilities.

~Lewis Mumford

Order and creativity are complementary.

~Lewis Mumford

A picture was once a rare sort of symbol, rare enough to call for attentive concentration. Now it is the actual experience that is rare, and the picture has become ubiquitous.

~Lewis Mumford

One of the functions of intelligence is to take account of the dangers that come from trusting solely to the intelligence.

~Lewis Mumford

The Fujiyama of Architecture? at once a lofty mountain and a national shrine.

~Lewis Mumford

Architecture is either the prophecy of an unformed society or the tomb of a finished one.

~Lewis Mumford

In our entrancement with the motorcar, we have forgotten how much more efficient and how much more flexible the footwalker is.

~Lewis Mumford

Geneva has the sleepy tidiness of a man who combs his hair while yet in his pyjamas.

~Lewis Mumford

Chaos, if it does not harden into a pattern of disorder, may be more fruitful than a regularity too easily accepted and a success too easily achieved.

~Lewis Mumford

One's worst enormities remain within, and it is only one's vulgar commonplaces of error and folly that turn into murders and suicides, treasons, infidelities, and betrayals.

~Lewis Mumford

Safety razors make it hard to grow beards in America: America would be a better place if there were a few bearded, savage, terrible old men.

~Lewis Mumford

Without leisure there can be neither art nor science nor fine conversation, nor any ceremonious performance of the offices of love and friendship.

~Lewis Mumford

If mankind is to escape its programmed self-extinction the God who saves us will not descend from the machine: he will rise up again in the human soul.

~Lewis Mumford

In vulgar usage, progress has come to mean limitless movement in space and time, accompanied, necessarily, by an equally limitless

command of energy: culminating in limitless destruction.

~Lewis Mumford

If we never met again in our lives I should feel that somehow the whole adventure of existence was justified by my having met you.

~Lewis Mumford

The self holds both a hell and a heaven.

~Lewis Mumford

It has not been for nothing that the word has remained man's principal toy and tool: without the meanings and values it sustains, all man's other tools would be worthless.

~Lewis Mumford

Neither democracy nor effective representation is possible until each participant in the group...devotes a measurable part of his life to furthering its existence.

~Lewis Mumford

This metropolitan world, then, is a world where flesh and blood is less real than paper and ink and celluloid.

~Lewis Mumford

The mind reproduces itself by transmitting its symbols to other intermediaries, human and mechanical, than the particular brain that first assembled them.

~Lewis Mumford

Faith in the creative process, in the dynamics of emergence, in the values and purposes that transcend past achievements and past forms, is the precondition of all further growth.

~Lewis Mumford

War is both the product of an earlier corruption, and a producer of new corruptions.

~Lewis Mumford

Genuine [economic] value lies in the power to sustain or enrich life

~Lewis Mumford

Henceforward, I shout to the heavens, I shall deliver no more lectures on behalf of good causes: I am the good cause that denies the need for such lectures. Avaunt, importuning world! Back to my cell.

~Lewis Mumford

When vitality runs high, death takes men by surprise. But if they close their eyes to this possibility, what they gain in peace they lose in sensibility and significance.

~Lewis Mumford

We have lost faith in the formal powers of the mind, not, as some suppose, because our universe is too difficult to grasp, but because we lack the inner principle of order.

~Lewis Mumford

War is a specific product of civilization.

~Lewis Mumford

Every work of art is an abstraction from time; it denies the reality of change and decay and death.

~Lewis Mumford

Not sense data or atoms or electrons or packets of energy, but purposes, interests, and meanings, constitute the underlying facts of human experience.

~Lewis Mumford

Growth and self-transformation cannot be delegated.

~Lewis Mumford

Each person is a temporary focus of forces, vitalities, and values that carry back to an immemorial past and that reach forward into an unthinkable future.

~Lewis Mumford

In its revolt against congestion and sordor, a space-hungry generation has, I fear, developed eyes that are bigger than its stomach.

~Lewis Mumford

War is the supreme drama of a completely mechanized society.

~Lewis Mumford

New York is the perfect model of a city, not the model of a perfect city.

~Lewis Mumford

What plethora of material goods can possibly atone for a waking life so humanly belittling, if not degrading, as the push-button tasks left to human performers?

~Lewis Mumford

The final goal of human effort is man's self-transformation.

~Lewis Mumford

Unfortunately, once an economy is geared to expansion, the means rapidly turn into an end and "the going becomes the goal."

~Lewis Mumford

I would die happy if I knew that on my tombstone could be written these words, "This man was an absolute fool. None of the disastrous things that he reluctantly predicted ever came to pass!"

~Lewis Mumford

Trend is not destiny.

~Lewis Mumford

Every transformation of humanity has rested upon deep stirrings and intuitions, whose rationalized expression takes the form of a new picture of the cosmos and the nature of the human.

~Lewis Mumford

Only when love takes the lead will the earth, and life on earth, be safe again. And not until then.

~Lewis Mumford

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