

Maya Lin

Quotes

*Artist, Art, Thinking, School, War, Architecture, Memorial, Parent, People,
World, Cutting, Want, Chinese, Brain, Goal, Different, Loss, Past, Resistance,
Would Be*

I try to give people a different way of looking at their surroundings.
That's art to me.

~Maya Lin

Sometimes I think creativity is magic; it's not a matter of finding an idea, but allowing the idea to find you.

~Maya Lin

A lot of my works deal with a passage, which is about time. I don't see anything that I do as a static object in space. It has to exist as a journey in time.

~Maya Lin

I probably have fundamentally antisocial tendencies. I never took one extracurricular activity. I just failed utterly at that level. Part of me still rebels against that.

~Maya Lin

To fly we have to have resistance.

~Maya Lin

An artist fights to retain the integrity of a work so that it remains a strong, clear vision. Art is and should be the act of an individual willing to say something new, something not quite familiar.

~Maya Lin

Our lives are given meaning by our actions-accomplishments made while we are "here" that extend beyond our own time.

~Maya Lin

If we forget what used to be, then we've lost an ability to really be sensitive to our surroundings.

~Maya Lin

You have to let the viewers come away with their own conclusions. If you dictate what they should think, you've lost it.

~Maya Lin

I didn't have anyone to play with so I made up my own world.

~Maya Lin

OK, it was black, it was below grade, I was female, Asian American, young, too young to have served. Yet I think none of the opposition in that sense hurt me.

~Maya Lin

Growing up, I thought I was white. It didn't occur to me I was Asian-American until I was studying abroad in Denmark and there was a little bit of prejudice.

~Maya Lin

To me, the American Dream is being able to follow your own personal calling. To be able to do what you want to do is incredible freedom.

~Maya Lin

I like to think of my work as creating a private conversation with each person, no matter how public each work is and no matter how many people are present

~Maya Lin

If we can't face death, we'll never overcome it. You have to look it straight in the eye. Then you can turn around and walk back out into the light.

~Maya Lin

When I was building the Vietnam Memorial, I never once asked the veterans what it was like in the war, because from my point of view, you don't pry into other people's business.

~Maya Lin

All my work is much more peaceful than I am.

~Maya Lin

Our parents decided not to teach us Chinese. It was an era when they felt we would be better off if we didn't have that complication.

~Maya Lin

Nothing is ever guaranteed, and all that came before doesn't predicate what you might do next.

~Maya Lin

My goal is to strip things down so that you need just the right amount of words or shape to convey what you need to convey. I like editing. I like it very tight.

~Maya Lin

Art is very tricky because it's what you do for yourself. It's much harder for me to make those works than the monuments or the architecture.

~Maya Lin

Architecture is like a mythical fantastic. It has to be experienced. It can't be described. We can draw it up and we can make models of it, but it can only be experienced as a complete whole.

~Maya Lin

Sometimes you have to stop thinking. Sometimes you shut down completely. I think that's true in any creative field.

~Maya Lin

It's only in hindsight that you realize what indeed your childhood was really like.

~Maya Lin

To fly, we have to have resistance. It's all about turbulence. Reacting to images of wave patterns in fluid motion.

~Maya Lin

I really enjoyed hanging out with some of the teachers. This one chemistry teacher, she liked hanging out. I liked making explosives. We would stay after school and blow things up.

~Maya Lin

I loved logic, math, computer programming. I loved systems and logic approaches. And so I just figured architecture is this perfect combination.

~Maya Lin

Even though I build buildings and I pursue my architecture, I pursue it as an artist. I deliberately keep a tiny studio. I don't want to be an architectural firm. I want to remain an artist.

~Maya Lin

When I was very little, we would get letters from China, in Chinese, and they' be censored. We were a very insular little family.

~Maya Lin

Some artists want to confront. Some want to invoke thought. They're all necessary and they're all valid.

~Maya Lin

Math, it's a puzzle to me. I love figuring out puzzles.

~Maya Lin

I loved school. I studied like crazy. I was a Class A nerd.

~Maya Lin

You couldn't put me in a social group setting. I'm probably a terrible

anarchist deep down.

~Maya Lin

My dad was dean of fine arts at the university. I was casting bronzes in the school foundry. I was using the university as a playground.

~Maya Lin

The definition of a modern approach to war is the acknowledgement of individual lives lost.

~Maya Lin

I had very few friends. We always ate dinner with our parents. We didn't want to go out. American adolescence was a lot wilder than I would have felt comfortable with.

~Maya Lin

I was probably the first kid in my high school to go to Yale. I applied almost as a lark. Then, when I got there, I was the dumbest person in your class.

~Maya Lin

It was a requirement by the veterans to list the 57,000 names. We're reaching a time that we'll acknowledge the individual in a war on a national level.

~Maya Lin

Warmth isn't what minimalists are thought to have.

~Maya Lin

I went through withdrawal when I got out of graduate school. It's what you learn, what you think. That's all that counts.

~Maya Lin

You should be having more fun in high school, exploring things

because you want to explore them and learning because you love learning-not worrying about competition.

~Maya Lin

My grandfather, on my father's side, helped to draft one of the first constitutions of China. He was a fairly well-known scholar.

~Maya Lin

Competitions are what you do as a good exercise.

~Maya Lin

I started studying what the nature of a monument is and what a monument should be. And for the World War III memorial I designed a futile, almost terrifying passage that ends nowhere.

~Maya Lin

My parents are both college professors, and it made me want to question authority, standards and traditions.

~Maya Lin

How we are using up our home, how we are living and polluting the planet is frightening. It was evident when I was a child. It's more evident now.

~Maya Lin

I'm as much interested in the form-making as well as getting you to think about what we're doing to the world around us.

~Maya Lin

We were unusually brought up; there was no gender differentiation. I was never thought of as any less than my brother.

~Maya Lin

The process I go through in the art and the architecture, I actually want

it to be almost childlike. Sometimes I think it's magical.

~Maya Lin

It terrified me to have an idea that was solely mine to be no longer a part of my mind, but totally public.

~Maya Lin

I left science, then I went into art, but I approach things very analytically. I choose to pursue both art and architecture as completely separate fields rather than merging them.

~Maya Lin

I deliberately did not read anything about the Vietnam War because I felt the politics of the war eclipsed what happened to the veterans. The politics were irrelevant to what this memorial was.

~Maya Lin

I saw the Vietnam Veterans Memorial not as an object placed into the earth but as a cut in the earth that has then been polished, like a geode.

~Maya Lin

If you don't remember history accurately, how can you learn?

~Maya Lin

The role of art in society differs for every artist.

~Maya Lin

I cannot force a design; I do not see this process as being under my conscious control.

~Maya Lin

I was always making things. Even though art was what I did every day, it didn't even occur to me that I would be an artist.

~Maya Lin

I always say I'm no different than a 19th-century landscape painter, it's just that we have these incredible tools to look at the Earth and look at the world around us differently.

~Maya Lin

The only thing that mattered was what you were to do in life, and it wasn't about money. It was about teaching, or learning.

~Maya Lin

war is not just a victory or loss ... People die.

~Maya Lin

I'm not in a hurry to do a lot of projects. I am very resolved in each project I take on.

~Maya Lin

You really can't function as a celebrity. Entertainers are celebrities. I'm an architect. I'm an artist. I make things.

~Maya Lin

I do not think you can find a reason for everything you make.

~Maya Lin

To fly, we must have resistance.

~Maya Lin

Every memorial in its time has a different goal.

~Maya Lin

For the most part things never get built the way they were drawn.

~Maya Lin

It's funny, as you live through something you're not aware of it.

~Maya Lin

Some of your teachers are actually closer in age to you than you think.

~Maya Lin

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