

Robert Smithson

Quotes

*Artist, Art, Museums, Eye, Cameras, Development, Language, Architecture,
Past, Ideas, May, Light, Facts, Memories, Elements, Zero, Photography,
Important, Long, Doe*

Cultural confinement takes place when a curator imposes his own limits on an art exhibition, rather than asking an artist to set his limits.

~Robert Smithson

A vacant white room with lights is still a submission to the neutral. Works of art seen in such spaces seem to be going through a kind of esthetic convalescence.

~Robert Smithson

Instead of causing us to remember the past like the old monuments, the new monuments seem to cause us to forget the future

~Robert Smithson

Art history is less explosive than the rest of history, so it sinks faster into the pulverized regions of time.

~Robert Smithson

Museums are tombs, and it looks like everything is turning into a museum.

~Robert Smithson

A work of art when placed in a gallery loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world.

~Robert Smithson

Artists themselves are not confined, but their output is.

~Robert Smithson

Banal words function as a feeble phenomena that fall into their own mental bogs of meaning.

~Robert Smithson

Nature does not proceed in a straight line, it is rather a sprawling development.

~Robert Smithson

Establish enigmas, not explanations.

~Robert Smithson

I am for an art that takes into account the direct effect of the elements as they exist from day to day apart from representation.

~Robert Smithson

Nature is never finished.

~Robert Smithson

Parks are idealizations of nature, but nature in fact is not a condition of the ideal.

~Robert Smithson

The museum spreads its surfaces everywhere, and becomes an untitled collection of generalizations that mobilize the eye.

~Robert Smithson

History is representational, while time is abstract; both of these artifices may be found in museums, where they span everybody's own vacancy

~Robert Smithson

One day the photograph is going to become even more important than it is now.... But I am not particularly an advocate of the photograph.

~Robert Smithson

From the top of the quarry cliffs, one could see the New Jersey suburbs bordered by the New York City skyline.

~Robert Smithson

The museums and parks are graveyards above the ground- congealed memories of the past that act as a pretext for reality.

~Robert Smithson

Abstraction is everybody's zero but nobody's nought.

~Robert Smithson

Language should find itself in the physical world, and not end up locked in an idea in somebody's head

~Robert Smithson

Questions about form seem as hopelessly inadequate as questions about content.

~Robert Smithson

Painting, sculpture and architecture are finished, but the art habit continues.

~Robert Smithson

Photographs are the results of a diminution of solar energy, and the camera is an entropic machine for recording gradual loss of light.

~Robert Smithson

Visiting a museum is a matter of going from void to void.

~Robert Smithson

Some artists imagine they've got a hold on this apparatus, which in fact has got a hold of them. As a result, they end up supporting a cultural prison that is out of their control

~Robert Smithson

For many artists the universe is expanding; for some it is contracting.

~Robert Smithson

Art's development should be dialectical and not metaphysical.

~Robert Smithson

An emotion is suggested and demolished in one glance by certain words.

~Robert Smithson

Language thus becomes monumental because of the mutations of advertising

~Robert Smithson

The scenic ideals that surround even our national parks are carriers of a nostalgia for heavenly bliss and eternal calmness.

~Robert Smithson

Language should be an ever developing procedure and not an isolated occurrence.

~Robert Smithson

History is a facsimile of events held together by finally biographical information.

~Robert Smithson

Artists are expected to fit into fraudulent categories.

~Robert Smithson

Objects in a park suggest static repose rather than any ongoing dialectic. Parks are finished landscapes for finished art .

~Robert Smithson

The slurbs, urban sprawl, and the infinite number, of housing developments of the postwar boom have contributed to the architecture of entropy.

~Robert Smithson

Language operates between literal and metaphorical signification

~Robert Smithson

As long as cameras are around no artist will be free of bewilderment.

~Robert Smithson

Words for mental processes are all derived from physical things.

~Robert Smithson

Mistakes and dead-ends often mean more to these artists than any proven problem

~Robert Smithson

Let's face it, the human eye is clumsy, sloppy, and unintelligible when compared to the camera's eye.

~Robert Smithson

The memory of what is not may be better than the amnesia of what is.

~Robert Smithson

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