



## Entertainment Vs. Art, by Lariv Athem

In the increasingly information-heavy times in which we live, distractions abound. The word distraction literally points back to a certain losing (dis) of control (traction). We start off with an intention to focus on something, but then a momentary lapse of clarity leads us astray. The drifting isn't just arbitrary there is a subtle attraction, and our attention finds itself diverted. It doesn't help that there are many things vying for our time, some of them designed specifically to reel us in. And then there are times when we actually want to mentally check out. This is what a mindset of entertainment is, seeking amusement over engagement, and appearance over essence.

Of course, there is a major distinction between entertainment and art. Both operate in the domain of aesthetics but the difference is the depth with which we experience and explore. At its crux, art is about recognizing, knowing, and appreciating beauty. It implicates us in ways we don't even realize. Consciously practicing this kind of engagement with art is to hold a certain mindset. Art is an attention to everyday living, a dear friend once told me. Is there art in the way we make our beds, or the way we cut fruit? In the way we see the sunlight bathing the hillside? Bringing this kind of understanding is really about recognizing that we have access to that beauty exactly where we are. It makes the ordinary, extra-ordinary and also, the extra-ordinary, significant. In that sense, art can bring us deeper into our experience of the moment, enriching our perception, and deepening our awareness of the previously unknown, and perhaps even previously unknowable. Something about the process of engaging in this way not only changes what we perceive, it changes how we perceive.

Ultimately, whether we approach an experience with a mindset of entertainment or art is determined largely by what we practice. Entertainment can be repeatedly experienced, but it can't be practiced. Art can. It is conscious, reverent, and limited only by our imagination.  
--Lariv Athem