FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Art

Making Art a Practice: 30 Ways to Paint a Pipe: How to Be the Artist You Are
Cat Bennett
Findhorn Press
978-1-84409-607-7
(August 1, 2013)

This inspirational book encourages artists to view art as worthy of the effort required to master it.

Early chapters of *Making Art a Practice: 30 Ways to Paint a Pipe,* by Cat Bennett, include essays about the artistic process and how to unleash creativity, followed by thirty themed practice sessions, for which Bennett uses Magritte's "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" ("This is not a pipe") painting as a metaphor and the basis for her words of inspiration for artists of all skill levels.

The practice sessions are not instructional but offer words of encouragement and inspiration. For example, in one practice Bennett discusses the benefit of establishing rituals, in another she urges artists to enjoy the creative process by viewing artistic expression as a journey rather than a destination.

There are many additional exercises in the appendix, and they are more specific than the thirty previous practices. They include sketching exercises, such as going to a café and sketching people, or making a collage of images that represent some aspect of your life. Yet, they are still general enough that they can be adapted to many different types of artists, and they can also be repeated often, resulting in different results each time. As a result, the book will appeal to a wide range of artists, and can be useful as an activity workbook, as well. Other appendices include a supply list and a description of how to start an art club.

Bennett uses a positive and reassuring tone to motivate readers, advising them not to talk themselves out of their artistic endeavors before they even get started. Primarily, she suggests readers view art as a worthy pursuit, and her philosophy is that art is most rewarding when artists are authentically expressing who they are through their work. Bennett assures artists that perseverance through rejection and disappointment pays off. As a fellow artist, Bennett, an

illustrator for more than twenty-five years, working with clients such as *The Wall Street Journal* , *Time*, and *The Boston Globe*, shares some of her own experiences, which establishes her credibility and forms a rapport with readers.

A unique aspect of Bennett's approach is her reliance on yoga concepts to encourage artists to nurture a creative mindset, specifically by having a one-pointed focus, using meditation, and being nonjudgmental of one's own work, particularly during the early stages of the creative process. She says, "In starting something new or in the midst of a project, we can put assessment aside and just notice what shows up. If we don't act on inspiration immediately, it can vanish in an instant. It can become hard to get it back then. Don't argue or fuss, just jump on board."

This inspirational book will appeal to anyone with a creative and artistic spirit.

Maria Siano