



Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists

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In this day and age, when art has become more of a commodity and art school graduates are convinced that they can only make a living from their work by attaining gallery representation, it is more important than ever to show the reality of how a professional, contemporary artist sustains a creative practice over time. The forty essays collected in *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life* are written in the artists' own voices and take the form of narratives, statements, and interviews. Each story is different and unique, but the common thread is an ongoing commitment to creativity, inside and outside the studio. Both day-to-day and big picture details are revealed, showing how it is possible to sustain a creative practice that contributes to the ongoing dialogue in contemporary art. These stories will inform and inspire any student, young artist, and art enthusiast and will help redefine what "success" means to a professional artist.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Extraordinary. . . . Louden has initiated a public discussion of how an artist can persist. It’s an essential question in a field that no one chooses for its assurance of financial rewards. In many ways, Louden’s book helps us to answer the question, ‘How does an artist make a living today?’ . . . Louden makes an important contribution to the discussion of how art is made now by the vast majority of artists at work. The book is a reality check prompting us to recall that invention doesn’t happen without determination. As these artists’ testimonies so vividly show, history, theory, and criticism are activities dependent ultimately on the hard-won production of art.”

(*Art Journal*)

“Contributions range from predictable to shocking, in-control and overwhelmed. Some artists have full-time jobs; many are parents. . . . [Louden is] telling it like it is.”

(*ARTnews*)

“A strikingly frank book that removes the veil of mysticism surrounding the artistic life.”

(*Hyperallergic*)

"Consisting of 40 essays, this book presents the realities of the creative life over time, as reported by practicing artists. The stories take the form of interviews, narratives, and statements, and convey in frank, authentic form the joys and challenges of being an artist....Aspiring artists and students will be inspired by these essays, and professionals will see themselves in many of the stories being told. Anyone considering a career in art can profit from reading this book. It also provides insight into the world of art as a commodity, and the challenges of balancing business, relationships, and the creative life....Highly recommended."

(*CHOICE*)

"Anyone serious about a career as an artist must read this book."

(Adam Sheffer, partner, Cheim and Read Gallery)

“Too often the story of how an artist makes art and a living is advertised as either a step into an abyss of debt and dementia or a glamorized Bohemia misunderstood by a general public. Yet what these artists demonstrate in this valuable book is that the common bond for us all who aspire to a well-lived life is blood, sweat, and tears. From artists living off sales of their work to those who teach and those who search for paychecks in odd jobs, the desire to create is never extinguished.”

(Franklin Sirmans, Terri and Michael Smooke Curator, Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

“From surprisingly frank sharings on the struggles of starting out as young artists to the challenges of making time and space for creation, the artists in *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life* share with candor and heart just what it takes to be an artist today.”

(Anne Pasternak, president and artistic director, Creative Time)

“Sharon Louden has gathered together in this book an exceptionally diverse range of artists’ experiences in order to illustrate, in a manner otherwise inaccessible, the inherent tensions that artists face in constantly balancing their drive to devote core time and energy to creating new work and their wish to share that work

with the world with the complexities, as well as the joys, of their personal and family lives.”
(Michael Straus, chairman, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts)

“I applaud artist Sharon Loudon for assembling this fascinating compilation of artist testimonies. It provides a refreshing, honest look at the myriad ways that artists shape and feed their lives and evolve authentic, generative practices in a society that does not always make it easy for artists to subsist and fully contribute. *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life* is thus an inspiring, unexpurgated resource for artists beginning their careers as well as any individual seeking to recalibrate his or her daily life to pursue a more purpose-filled existence.”

(Olga Viso, executive director, Walker Art Center)

"Louden's collection offers valuable lessons on striking a balance between the need to make money and the need to make art; for if making art is the primary concern, making money becomes a means to an end—not the end itself. . . . Though written about the unique experience of fine artists, *Living and Sustaining A Creative Life* is worth the read by anyone seeking to build a life of artistic intention without ignoring the need for monetary sustenance."

(Courtney M. McSwain, writer and storytelling consultant)

“Louden’s book, *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life*, is a collection of short personal narratives of 40 female and male working artists, which unfold the everyday realities of balancing the need for being creative with the need for survival. Each story is presented as a small chapter starting with a photograph of a representative artwork. As a result, the book is both interesting to read and visually arresting. The book . . . contribute[s] to an understanding of who artists are and what their work entails.”

(*Work, Employment and Society*)

About the Author

Sharon Loudon is a practicing, professional artist living and working in Brooklyn. Her work has been exhibited at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Birmingham Museum of Art, Neuberger Museum, and the Weisman Art Museum, among other venues, and it is held in the public collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Weatherspoon Art Museum, and National Gallery of Art.

Users Review

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What do you with regards to book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your free time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to do others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Every person has many questions above. They have to answer that question mainly because just their can do in which. It said that about e-book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is suitable. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this particular *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists* to read.

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