

Life is a game — Introductory text to the series "Anconette del cuore"

Life is a game independent of reason,
it crosses the physical limits of reality to flow out into the spirit.
Life is a free game, and art is a toy
that abandons the role of fetish
to return to its playful and sacred nature,
because only "serious" play (the play played by children)
can raise us to those heights of beauty and holiness
that are barred to reason.

We must not take it too seriously, it is only our life,
a dance with plenty of stumbles,
a fury full of caresses,
a sublime game that cannot be lost.

If our whole social, cultural and artistic construct is born in the first instance as
play, we may imagine that playing and living are the same thing.

Life is the game of knowing nothing,
where one comes from and where one is going,
an open world, open outcome game.

Playing ought to be the first commandment; Italy ought to be a
republic founded on the courage to play at life.

In Toy Story 2, Stinky Pete is an old prospector doll who has never been taken
out of his original box, has never lived, and sees his display in the museum
in Tokyo as the only possibility of redemption for his existence.

If we do not play our life,
no one will be able to enjoy it,
not even afterwards,
even if kept in mint condition,
never used.

The game and the toy are a metaphor of our power over the world around us, the memory of

our being omnipotent and creators of the future that awaits us.

The little altarpieces I have made are caskets of our past playing, in perennial memory of our having been children, of our having created ourselves around that child who still dwells in us.

The little altarpieces are caskets of memories, space-time windows able to stop time at a precise instant, in a moment of intimate contemplation and meditation.

They can lend themselves to holding the owner's objects or icons of a time that is no more; they are boxes of past time, immortal icons, vows to profane divinities, little flags on the line of time, ex-votos, with images, music, perfumes, words, whispers; they are suggestions, evocations of time past.

Their sacredness lies in their being born closed, secret, hidden from everyone's eyes but ours. Their interior, gilded and lacquered, represents the heart, the child inside us, the music and the sound of that breath of time of our life.

The little altarpieces are strongboxes of the heart's memories.

The box that contains our heart has suffered the weathers of life, like the Romanesque church; the box that contains our heart has nothing beautiful about it, it is rusted, and only with the right key can it be opened.

Cult arose and grew as sacred play, poetry was born in play and continued to live in play-forms, music and dance were pure play, wisdom and knowledge manifested themselves in sacred contests, the conventions of noble life were founded on forms of play; culture in its earliest phases is played, culture develops in play and as play.

Johan Huizinga

After you have held your child lovingly in your arms, you will be able to look deeply.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Visualise yourself as a child of five, and invite that child to be with you — the boy or girl who is still alive in you

Thich Nhat Hanh

A thing that contains neither usefulness nor truth nor any value of comparison, and has no harmful faculty either, is best judged according to the grace it has and the pleasure it gives.

Such a pleasure is play.

Plato

In the Platonic dialogue *Nomoi* (The Laws), it is said: [...] man [...] is only a plaything made by the gods, and indeed this is his best part. In consequence of this conception, every man

and every woman must live playing this game as well as possible.

Plato

Wherever there is working and producing, we are not together with the divinities and we are not ourselves divine. The gods do not produce, nor do they work.

Byung-Chul Han

In the midst of the financial crisis, something happened in Greece that looks like a sign from the future. Some children discovered a large bundle of banknotes in a ruined house and put them to a wholly new use: they began to play with them and to tear them up.

These children somehow anticipate our future: the world is in ruins. Among these ruins we play — like those children — with banknotes, and we tear them up. Those Greek children profane money, capital, the new idol, by putting it to an entirely different use, namely by playing with it. Profanation suddenly turns money, so fetishised today, into a toy.

Byung-Chul Han

Qui nolet fieri desidiosus, amet.

(Let him who would not become idle, love.)

Luca Mottese · Torino 2018

mottese.com — Original text in Italian