

*Steve Glines*

### **Cellphone Camera Art**

Art is everywhere. For the most part we ignore it simply for it's ubiquity. When we go to art galleries we are conditioned to see just the individual pieces of art on the wall never the wall. That's usually intended but more often than not there is more art then meets the eye.

We were at the Dorse Museum in Paris several years ago where there are signs everywhere forbidding the taking of pictures. I didn't take this picture because I was standing right next to a museum guard who knew my intentions and politely stood in my way when I lifted my camera: *A very large room painted white and full of very large abstract paintings. One painting is missing but the small plaque on the wall still announces what had been there. An old man with glasses bends down to read the plaque as though it represented the abstracted white space where the missing art once hung.* That's art! The guard understood that and smiled at me. I shrugged, a universal sign of acknowledgement.

From the roof of the same museum is a vista of Montmartre the hill that has become the home of Paris' artists. What could be more appropriate than being treated to such a view:



Up on Montmartre there is a square full of artists selling their work. Of course it was the work itself that drew us up the hill but the ambiance and color was more intoxicating to the senses than the individual works that now grace the walls of this suburban

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American house.

For a portrait artist Montmartre is the promised land. Like the impossibility of finding bad food in Paris it's hard to find "bad art" – whatever that is – and like a hall of mirrors that reflects a thousand realities, the portraits and portrait artists on Montmartre are the embodiment of art itself. We have all seen the self portrait of VanGough – the self portraits in Montmartre are the calling card of many artists.



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When we “did the Louvre” there were also signs everywhere both in French and English forbidding the use of cameras. In the Louvre, at least, the signs were completely ignored and the guards could care less. I



couldn't resist adding my lens to the fray:  
I've seen the Venus De Milo twice in person and hundreds of times in photographs. Why would I want another lousy photo? I wouldn't but a picture of hundreds of people taking a picture of what is better reproduced in the guidebooks is worthy. This universal unconscious act of public defiance is art.

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Closer to home there are art galleries full of paintings and we envy those whose walls will ultimately be filled with this beauty but in the mean time the ensemble is a transient beauty that will fill only a limited space and time never to be seen again except in the images snapped by a cell phone camera:



*Out of the Blue Gallery, Cambridge MA – March 2007*