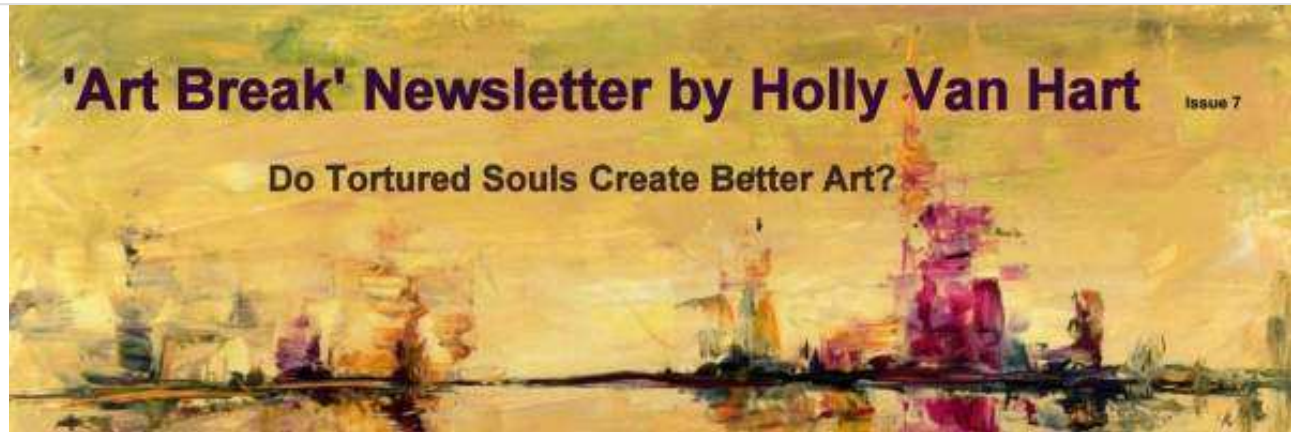


Give yourself an 'art break' and find out whether tortured souls create better art.



Dear Fellow art lover,,

I hope this note finds you well!

The topic of today's newsletter is 'Do Tortured Souls Create Better Art?'. Or, can happy people create masterpieces too? Give yourself a one minute 'art break' and find out more . . .

Holly

## Do Tortured Souls Create Better Art?

Can it be that depressed or angry people bring more passion and creativity to their work than satisfied souls? Or can happy people create masterpieces too?

There are no simple answers to these questions of course, but just for fun let's look at a sample of the world's greatest artists (my personal faves) and explore the question. Here goes . . .



Holly Van Hart

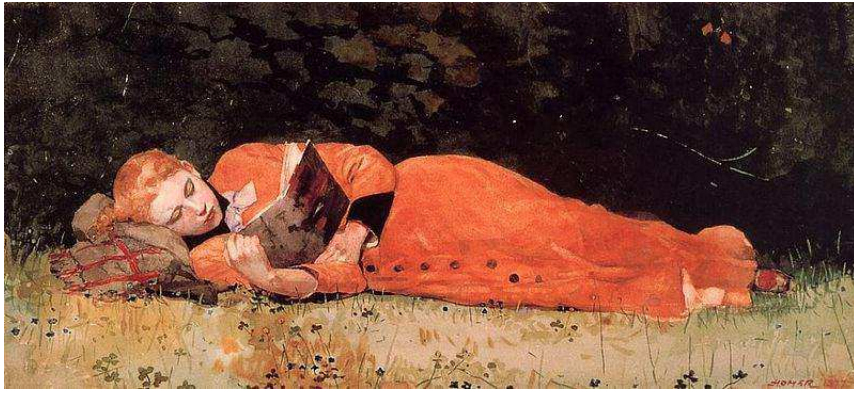
[My Online Gallery](#)

[My "Latest Paintings" Blog](#)

[Friend on Facebook](#)

[Subscribe to Email List](#)





**"The New Novel", Winslow Homer, 1877**

**Winslow Homer** (1836-1910) was considered the greatest American painter of his time. He created extraordinary landscapes, marine paintings, and figures too. Homer was a recluse and a bit odd, but not depressed, enraged or insane. That's one point for 'satisfied souls'.



**"Goat Horn with Red", Georgia O'Keeffe, 1945**

**Georgia O'Keeffe** (1887-1986) revolutionized American modern art with bold abstracts, landscapes and flowers. For decades she lived by herself in New Mexico, and sometimes suffered from serious depression. One point for 'tortured souls'.



**"No. 1 (Royal Red and Blue)", Mark Rothko, 1954**

**Mark Rothko** (1903-1970) was a Russian-Jewish abstract painter who emigrated to the US at the age of 10. He achieved huge commercial success during his lifetime. Rothko was most certainly depressed, drank heavily, took barbiturates, and sadly, at age 66, committed suicide. Add a second point for 'tortured'.



**"Norham Castle - Sunrise", JMW Turner, c 1835**

**JMW Turner** (1775-1851) was a renowned English landscape painter known as "the painter of light". Turner seemed like a fairly normal guy. He had plenty of friends, and wasn't depressed, enraged, or insane. Now it's even, two points for 'tortured' and two points for 'satisfied'.





**"La Grande Vallee XIII", Joan Mitchell, 1983**

**Joan Mitchell** (1925 -1992) was a prominent Abstract Expressionist who lived in Chicago, Manhattan, and Paris. Mitchell was an alcoholic, often depressed, and described many of her paintings as "violent and angry". 'Tortured souls' lead at 3 points to 2.



**"Orange Glow", Holly Van Hart**

This last painting, very very humbly put after the 'greats' above it, is mine. As for me, am I enraged or depressed or feeling like a tortured soul? No, not especially, but on any given day I may be any of those things. (Just ask my husband and children.) Is my art better on those days? No, but I think it is more experimental, sometimes to better effect but not always.

Summing up this totally non-scientific survey . . . The 'tortured souls' are ahead at 3 points (Rothko, O'Keeffe, Mitchell) to 2 (Turner, Homer). Perhaps the conclusion is 'you don't have to be unhappy to create great art, but it helps'.

What do you think?

Do tortured souls create more expressive art?

[Click here to share your thoughts.](#)

All the best,  
Holly

**Related links:**

[JMW Turner: The man behind the masterpieces](#), [Winslow Homer](#), [10 Great Painters Who Were Mentally Disturbed](#), [My Painting Blog](#)

P.S. In case you're wondering, I opted to use the British norms for [quotation marks and punctuation](#) vs the US norms; they make more sense to me.

Please forward this newsletter to any of your friends who might enjoy an 'art break'.

[friend on Facebook](#) | [forward to a friend](#)