

ECLECTICISM. Eclecticism was first practiced by ancient Greek philosophers who did not attach themselves to a particular philosophical system, but selected from existing beliefs what seemed most reasonable to them - out of this collected material they constructed their own philosophy. **The term stems from the Greek 'eklektikos':** Choosing the best.

Some martial arts systems can be described as eclectic, in the sense that they borrow techniques from a wide variety of other arts. The martial arts method developed by Bruce Lee (1940 - 73), called Jeet Kune Do, is classified as an eclectic system.

Bruce Lee used to say: "Use what works for you, and take it from any place where you can find it."

Eclecticism favours borrowing from other systems within a free-floating framework; it encourages practitioners to incorporate into their work what's useful to them, as in the house-music scene; indeed, many - if not all - artforms subscribe to eclecticism.

Thus the concept of eclecticism also applies to my photoart as well as my approach to philosophy.

But eclecticism is eschewed by religions. Religions are rigid and not open to changes or influences from outside their doctrines. The knowledge inherent in religions is said to derive from revelation and ancient scriptures - inflexible and unalterable.

There is a famous - often mis-interpreted - quote by Pablo Picasso, "Good artists copy, great artists steal."

*More from T. S. Elliot (I replaced 'poet' with 'artist'):
"One of the tests of artists is how they borrow. Immature artists imitate, mature artists steal. Bad artists just deface what they take; good artists turn it into something different, something better."*

Quintessentially eclectic, Reality Hunger 'a manifesto', by David Shields, is my new favourite book.

The publishers call it a "... rigorous and radical attempt to reframe how we think about 'truthiness', literary license, quotation and appropriation ..."
"The subtitle of Reality Hunger 'a manifesto' is like calling a nuclear bomb a weapon ..." Don McLesse*

Reality Hunger 38: *"In 1830 (Ralph Waldo) Emerson wanted to find what he called 'a new literature.' A German con artist, Johann Mälzel, visited America with a 'panharmonicon,' an organ without keys. He would crank its lever three times, step off to the side and the machine would spit out an entire orchestra's worth of sound: Flutes, drums, trumpets, cymbals, trombones, a triangle, clarinets, violins."*

After seeing Mälzel's machine perform, Emerson called the new literature he had been looking for "a panharmonicon. Here everything is admissible - philosophy, ethics, divinity, criticism, poetry, humor, fun, mimicry, anecdote, jokes, ventriloquism - all the breadth and versatility of the most liberal conversation, highest and lowest personal topics; all are permitted, all may be combined." Hear, hear!

**see also TRUTHINESS*