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Quotes by Cocteau, Jean

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Jean Maurice Eugne Clment Cocteau (July 5, 1889 - October 11, 1963) was a French poet, novelist, dramatist, designer, boxing manager and filmmaker. He was born at Maisons-Laffitte, France, a small town near Paris. His versatile, unconventional approach and enormous output brought him international acclaim.

The actual tragedies of life bear no relation to one's preconceived ideas. In the event, one is always bewildered by their simplicity, their grandeur of design, and by that element of the bizarre which seems inherent in them.

- Cocteau, Jean

One of the characteristics of the dream is that nothing surprises us in it. With no regret, we agree to live in it with strangers, completely cut off from our habits and friends.

- Cocteau, Jean

Everything one does in life, even love, occurs in an express train racing toward death. To smoke opium is to get out of the train while it is still moving. It is to concern oneself with something other than life or death.

- Cocteau, Jean

Man seeks to escape himself in myth, and does so by any means at his disposal. Drugs,

alcohol, or lies. Unable to withdraw into himself, he disguises himself. Lies and inaccuracy give him a few moments of comfort.

- Cocteau, Jean

An original artist is unable to copy. So he has only to copy in order to be original.

- Cocteau, Jean

I am a lie who always speaks the truth.

- Cocteau, Jean

Life is a horizontal fall.

- Cocteau, Jean

The greatest masterpiece in literature is only a dictionary out of order.

- Cocteau, Jean

We must believe in luck. For how else can we explain the success of those we don't like?

- Cocteau, Jean

A film is a petrified fountain of thought.

- Cocteau, Jean

The Louvre is a morgue; you go there to identify your friends.

- Cocteau, Jean

All good music resembles something. Good music stirs by its mysterious resemblance to the objects and feelings which motivated it.

- Cocteau, Jean

Mystery has its own mysteries, and there are gods above gods. We have ours, they have theirs. That is what's known as infinity.

- Cocteau, Jean

The joy of youth is to disobey; but the trouble is that there are no longer any orders.

- Cocteau, Jean

When a work appears to be ahead of its time, it is only the time that is behind the work.

- Cocteau, Jean

Poetry is indispensable --if I only knew what for.

- Cocteau, Jean

Such is the role of poetry. It unveils, in the strict sense of the word. It lays bare, under a light which shakes off torpor, the surprising things which surround us and which our senses record mechanically.

- Cocteau, Jean

Art is science made clear.

- Cocteau, Jean

One must be a living man and a posthumous artist.

- Cocteau, Jean

If a hermit lives in a state of ecstasy, his lack of comfort becomes the height of comfort.

He must relinquish it.

- Cocteau, Jean

A car can massage organs which no masseur can reach. It is the one remedy for the disorders of the great sympathetic nervous system.

- Cocteau, Jean

There is always a period when a man with a beard shaves it off. This period does not last.

He returns headlong to his beard.

- Cocteau, Jean

True realism consists in revealing the surprising things which habit keeps covered and prevents us from seeing.

- Cocteau, Jean

Style is a simple way of saying complicated things.

- Cocteau, Jean

What is line? It is life. A line must live at each point along its course in such a way that the artist's presence makes itself felt above that of the model. With the writer, line takes precedence over form and content. It runs through the words he assembles. It strikes a continuous note unperceived by ear or eye. It is, in a way, the soul's style, and if the line ceases to have a life of its own, if it only describes an arabesque, the soul is missing and the writing dies.

- Cocteau, Jean

Tact is knowing how far to go too far.

- Cocteau, Jean

Tact in audacity consists in knowing how far we may go too far.

- Cocteau, Jean

Wealth is an inborn attitude of mind, like poverty. The pauper who has made his pile may flaunt his spoils, but cannot wear them plausibly.

- Cocteau, Jean

The extreme limit of wisdom --that's what the public calls madness.

- Cocteau, Jean

It is not I who become addicted, it is my body.

- Cocteau, Jean

If an addict who has been completely cured starts smoking again he no longer experiences the discomfort of his first addiction. There exists, therefore, outside alkaloids and habit, a sense for opium, an intangible habit which lives on, despite the recasting of the organism. The dead drug leaves a ghost behind. At certain hours it haunts the house.

- Cocteau, Jean

Take a commonplace, clean it and polish it, light it so that it produces the same effect of youth and freshness and originality and spontaneity as it did originally, and you have done a poet's job. The rest is literature.

- Cocteau, Jean

What the public criticizes in you, cultivate. It is you.

- Cocteau, Jean

If it has to choose who is to be crucified, the crowd will always save Barabbas.

- Cocteau, Jean

I have a piece of great and sad news to tell you: I am dead.

- Cocteau, Jean

Since the day of my birth, my death began its walk. It is walking toward me, without hurrying.

- Cocteau, Jean



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