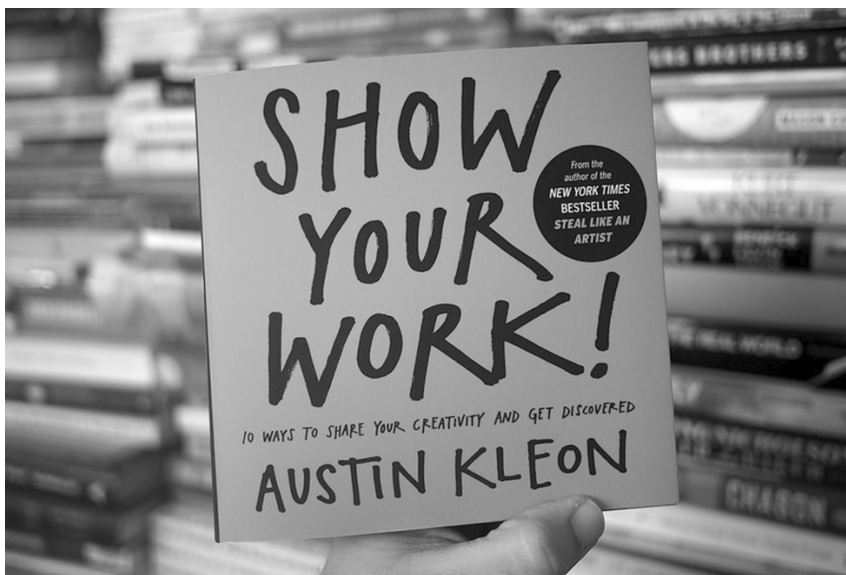


Show Your Work!



- 1 There are a lot of destructive myths about creativity, but one of the most dangerous is the “lone genius” myth: An individual with superhuman talents appears out of nowhere at certain points in history, free of influences or precedent, with a direct connection to God or The Muse. When inspiration comes, it strikes like a lightning bolt, a lightbulb switches on in his head, and then he spends the rest of his time toiling away in his studio, shaping his idea into a finished masterpiece that he releases into the world to great fanfare. If you believe in the lone genius myth, creativity is an *antisocial* act, performed by only a few great figures – mostly dead men with names like Mozart, Einstein or Picasso. The rest of us are left to stand around and gawk in awe at their achievements.
- 2 There is a healthier way of thinking about creativity that the musician Brian Eno refers to as “scenius.” Under this model, great ideas are often birthed by a group of creative individuals – artists, curators, thinkers, theorists, and other tastemakers who make up an ecology of talent. If you look back closely at history, many of the people who we think of as lone geniuses were actually part of “a whole scene of people who were supporting each other, looking at each other’s work, copying from each other, stealing ideas, and contributing ideas.” Scenius doesn’t take away from the achievements of those great individuals; it just acknowledges that good work isn’t created 35, and that creativity is always, in some sense, a collaboration, the result of a mind connected to other minds.

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