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Words to ACT on:

Refresh Your Spirit for the Year Ahead

***Maxine Heppner:** There is a lot of pressure in contemporary arts training to "find one's own voice." Forget it. Do what you are interested in as fully and completely as you possibly can. The only way to emerge, and then keep emerging, is to **Practice** a Lot, and pay attention to what aspects of "practicing" you most connect with, also what aspects are most difficult, then just keep practicing. What you connect with and what is difficult will keep changing, the important thing is to pay attention. As years go by you will get better at what you do and others will recognize what they call your voice. I don't say anything here about your enjoyment. I think that that is something to check out every year or two. . . asking yourself if this arts practice gives you some satisfaction - if it's all hard and not satisfying then either change your focus to other aspects of your practice or move sideways for a while applying what you know to something else - get really good at skating if you are a dancer who likes to run around in circles - AND if you are influenced by another artist or other artworks, examine them the way you do your practice - try them out for yourself and find out what most connects and what is most difficult but live up to this mantra "DO NOT COPY them!!!" And (this bit of advice sounds self-contradicting but becomes clear when you try it!) Simply by making yourself "not copy" even as you actually do the other artists' form you will be deepening your own.*

Source: The RED Letter, December 2008

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