

# editor's note

**W**elcome to the pilot issue of what will hopefully become a longstanding love affair with the Mormon arts world. There's a lot going on out there—brilliant, uplifting work, in every medium imaginable—but much of it goes largely unnoticed. I want to change that.

Enter *Mormon Artist*, a magazine dedicated solely to covering the LDS arts community in all of its many facets. We'll showcase artists from a variety of fields—writers, filmmakers, musicians, painters, photographers, dancers, and even glass-blowers, to name just a few—and let you hear from them in their own words what it's like to be both an artist and a Mormon. In every issue we'll also print an essay on Mormon arts, starting this month with James Goldberg's essay "Toward a Mormon Renaissance." And down the road we may of course expand to include other types of content.

I see the purpose of this magazine as falling into three areas: First, to raise awareness and get the word out about what's going on with Mormon arts. Second, to inspire and encourage artists both new and experienced alike to create new work. Third, to connect people—artists to other artists and to those who appreciate their work—and build a larger community, not just in the States but across the globe. I'm sure that among the Saints there are painters in Ghana, musicians in Russia, and writers in the Philippines who are using their artistic gifts to make the world a better place and to build the kingdom. We just don't know about most of them, and that needs to change.

Ambitious? Crazy, probably. But timid, safe endeavors rarely break new ground, and the best things in life almost always involve taking a risk. The Atonement itself was a tremendous risk, placing the fate of the universe in the hands of a single Man who would then be buffeted by temptation, by the sins and afflictions of all humankind, by the jaws of hell itself. But against all odds the Savior did in fact triumph, opening the gates of heaven. Nothing will ever come close to the grandeur and depth of Christ's Atonement, of course, but the same principle holds true for us on a smaller scale: to achieve true greatness, we have to take risks.

Now, this magazine is far from perfect. I have little doubt that ten minutes after we go to press, I'll stumble across mistakes that will turn my face crimson. But we



believe scarlet can turn to snow. Line upon line, issue upon issue, this magazine will get better—better questions, better editing, better design, better everything. It's the Google beta principle: get something out the door, then tweak it until it's amazing. Great art almost never comes out perfect on the first try, which is why we toil and slave away in revision and reworking, progressively getting a little closer to our internal vision. I can't wait to see what this magazine will be like in five years.

As a general philosophy for the magazine, we're aiming for both human and heavenly—not shying away from some of the more difficult parts of life, but still completely faithful to the Lord and His Church. We're not afraid to ask questions—the gospel is rock-solid and can certainly withstand our scrutiny—but always in a spirit of belief, not in the spirit of antagonism that sours our spirits and leaves a nasty aftertaste. We're here to build the kingdom, not tear it down.

You see, I believe that the arts have a profound ability to bring us closer to Christ. Art lifts us up out of ourselves and into a grander scheme of things where we can see more clearly who we are and what God wants us to do. Let's let our light so shine.

—Benjamin Crowder

*We're interested in your feedback on this issue. Let us know what you liked and what you didn't—and if you know anyone we should interview for a future issue, let us know.*

Letters to the editor may be sent to the following address:

[mormonartistmag@gmail.com](mailto:mormonartistmag@gmail.com)