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**John Dewey**

**Art as Experience**



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## Description

Based on John Dewey's lectures on esthetics, delivered as the first William James Lecturer at Harvard in 1932, *Art as Experience* has grown to be considered internationally as the most distinguished work ever written by an American on the formal structure and characteristic effects of all the arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and literature.

## Insightful reviews

Anna: This is an excellent book about art, useful and inspiring to both the artist and the viewer. Published in 1934, it's as relevant today as then, or even more so as we're slipping into an age where art in the purest sense of translating a felt human experience is disappearing.

Brynn: "Art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is." (17)

"'Spontaneity' is the result of long periods of activity, or else it is so empty as not to be an act of expression." (75)

"There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence." (77)

"In other words, art is not nature, but is nature transformed by entering into new relationships where it evokes a new emotional response." (82)

"Every work of art 'abstracts' in some degree from the particular traits of objects expressed. Otherwise, it would only, by means of exact imitation, create an illusion of the presence of the things themselves." (98)

"But whatever path the work of art pursues, it, just because it is a full and intense experience, keeps alive the power to experience the common world in its fullness." (138)

"Significant advances in technique occur, therefore, in connection with efforts to solve problems that are not technical but that grow out of the need for new modes of experience." (147)

"For art is a selection of what is significant, with rejection by the very same impulse of what is irrelevant, and thereby the significant is compressed and intensified." (216)

"Time as empty does not exist; time as an entity does not exist. What exists are things acting and changing, and a constant quality of their behavior is temporal." (218)

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"Language comes infinitely short of paralleling the variegated surface of nature. Yet words as practical devices are the agencies by which the ineffable diversity of natural existence as it operates in human experience is reduced to orders, ranks, and classes that can be managed." (224)

"For, as we have already seen, the more a work of art embodies what belongs to experiences common to many individuals, the more expressive it is." (297)

"For masterpieces themselves can be critically appreciated only as they are placed in the tradition to which they belong." (323)

"He then misses the point of all art, the unity of form and matter, and misses it because he lacks adequate sympathy, in his natural and acquired one-sidedness, with the immense variety of interactions between the live creature and his world." (326)

Constance Dunn: Used it as one of the theory foundations for my thesis. Although idealistic at first skim, pragmatic at its core. A true genius of aesthetic theory and absolutely on point about those individuals who think aesthetically, and deeply, being the foundation of a solid democracy.

Bryan: Profound and sensible.

Kris: OK, so i did not learn the entire thing. yet I learn the 1st 3 chapters for a grad category this summer, and it took me longer to do this than to re-read the complete Twilight series. So i am counting it in the direction of my books this year. Ideas: amazing. Style: sucks. Readability: omygod.

Nikolaus: i discovered this booklet prime me to new concepts on virtually each web page -- and it is a lengthy book. even if i assumed I knew what Dewey was once going to say, he usually shocked me with insights that i might have missed. That said, Dewey's prose is obtuse. it can appear he is by no means met a grammatical build he does not like. Getting throughout the e-book used to be a slog, yet worth it for the content.

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