

Unveiling the Essence of Art with Leo Tolstoy's Masterpiece: A Comprehensive Study Guide

Leo Tolstoy's profound treatise, "What Is Art?", has ignited intellectual discourse and sparked countless debates since its publication in 1897. In this comprehensive study guide, we embark on a journey to delve into the depths of Tolstoy's philosophical exploration of art, its nature, purpose, and impact on society.



Study Guide for Leo Tolstoy's What Is Art? by Course Hero

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 907 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 179 pages

Lending : Enabled



Tolstoy's Definition of Art

Tolstoy's definition of art is rooted in its communicative nature. He posits that art is "a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them."

This definition emphasizes the role of art in conveying emotions and experiences from one individual to another, thereby fostering a shared

human connection.

The Aesthetic Experience

For Tolstoy, the aesthetic experience is an essential component of art. He defines the aesthetic experience as "a special state of the soul in which the emotion caused by the contemplation of beauty is stronger than all other emotions."

He argues that true art evokes an aesthetic response that transcends personal preferences and subjective interpretations, creating a common ground for human understanding.

Art's Purpose and Moral Value

Tolstoy believed that art should serve a moral purpose. He rejected the notion of "art for art's sake" and argued that art should contribute to the betterment of society. According to him, true art should:

* **Promote empathy and compassion:** By conveying universal human emotions, art can break down barriers and foster understanding between individuals. * **Inspire moral growth:** Art can uplift and guide us towards virtuous behavior by depicting the consequences of our actions and the power of love and forgiveness. * **Resist falsehood and hypocrisy:** Art can expose societal injustices and challenge false narratives, thereby promoting truth and integrity.

Tolstoy's Critique of Modern Art

Tolstoy was highly critical of much of the modern art of his time. He believed that it had become divorced from true aesthetic principles and had lost its moral purpose. He particularly criticized:

* **Excessive abstraction:** Abstract art, in his view, failed to convey real emotions and experiences and was therefore devoid of genuine artistic value. * **Emphasis on technique over substance:** He argued that artists had become overly preoccupied with technical skill and had neglected the importance of genuine emotional expression. * **Commodification of art:** Tolstoy lamented the commercialization of art and the transformation of art into a mere commodity for consumption and profit.

Appreciating Tolstoy's Philosophy of Art

To fully appreciate Tolstoy's philosophy of art, it is essential to:

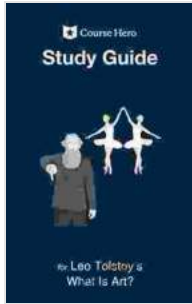
* **Read "What Is Art?":** Engage with Tolstoy's original text to gain a first-hand understanding of his ideas. * **Consider diverse perspectives:** Explore different interpretations and critiques of Tolstoy's work to broaden your perspective. * **Reflect on your own experiences:** Examine the ways in which art has affected you emotionally and intellectually. * **Apply Tolstoy's principles:** Use Tolstoy's definition and purpose of art as a lens to analyze contemporary works of art and their impact on society.

Leo Tolstoy's "What Is Art?" remains a seminal work that has profoundly shaped our understanding of art's nature, purpose, and impact. This study guide has provided a comprehensive overview of Tolstoy's philosophy of art, equipping you with the tools to delve into a deeper exploration of this timeless masterpiece. As you embark on this intellectual journey, may Tolstoy's wisdom guide you towards a more profound understanding of the transformative power of art.

Study Guide for Leo Tolstoy's What Is Art? by Course Hero

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English



File size : 907 KB
Screen Reader : Supported
Print length : 179 pages
Lending : Enabled



12 Pro Wrestling Rules for Life: Unlocking Success and Grit in Your Personal Journey

Step into the squared circle of life with "12 Pro Wrestling Rules for Life," a captivating guide that draws inspiration from the captivating world of professional wrestling....



John Colter: His Years in the Rockies: A True Story of Adventure and Survival

John Colter was a frontiersman and explorer who spent years in the Rocky Mountains during the early 1800s. His incredible journey through...