



What Good Are the Arts?

John Carey

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Hailed as "exhilarating and suggestive" (Spectator), "thought-provoking and entertaining" (David Lodge, Sunday Times), and "incisive and inspirational" (Guardian), *What Good are the Arts?* offers a delightfully skeptical look at the nature of art. John Carey—one of Britain's most respected literary critics—here cuts through the cant surrounding the fine arts, debunking claims that the arts make us better people or that judgments about art are anything more than personal opinion. But Carey does argue strongly for the value of art as an activity and for the superiority of one art in particular: literature. Literature, he contends, is the only art capable of reasoning, and the only art that can criticize. Literature has the ability to inspire the mind and the heart towards practical ends far better than any work of conceptual art. Here then is a lively and stimulating invitation to debate the value of art, a provocative book that "anyone seriously interested in the arts should read" (Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post*).

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