

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL  
COMEDIES EVER

**NIGEL  
HAVERS**

**DENIS  
LAWSON**

**STEPHEN  
TOMPKINSON**



**'ART'**

By Yasmina Reza Translated by Christopher Hampton

**'YOU'LL ROAR WITH LAUGHTER'**  
From The New York Times

[Art](#) at The Lowry

By Yasmina Reza

Reviewed by [John Waterhouse](#) March 2018

*Art* has apparently grossed an astonishing £200M since its debut in 1996, propelling French playwright **Yasmina Reza** into the premier league of international playwrights and being translated into a host of languages.

There is a parallel to 'Waiting for Godot' (itself having been first performed in French) in that at first glance, all we see are two or three men talking and arguing and seemingly getting nowhere but as with Becket's masterpiece, there is considerable depth to *Art* which leaves the audience pondering its meanings long after watching the show. This is also a play which breaks modern conventions with frequent soliloquies and occasional long speeches.

The initial premise of what actually constitutes 'Art' is a well-worn idea, brilliantly satirised in the 1961 Tony Hancock film 'The Rebel' and the shop 'Grot' in the 70's comedy 'The fall and rise of Reginald Perrin' doing a roaring trade in rubbish paintings at high prices to supposed art aficionados. With *Art*, the concept is taken a stage further (or perhaps lower) with just a virtual blank canvas being the object of attention (even Mark Rothko had some variation in shade and colour). There is inevitable amusement in how this is viewed but the work itself soon takes second place to the three characters' views on art in general, which becomes the key to exploring their complex long lasting association and individual world views;

*Art*

is essentially about people.



~~Art is on at The Lowry until Saturday 31st March.~~