



# Art

A play by Yasmina Reza

**Friday & Saturday**

**February 23-24 &**

**March 2-3, 2007**

**8 PM Johns Auditorium**

Free and Open to the Public  
For information and reservations  
please contact (434) 223-6266

# Art

By Yasmina Reza  
Translation by Christopher Hampton

The play will be performed in one act (approximately 75 minutes)  
with no intermission.

We would appreciate your turning off all electronic devices, including  
those used for texting, as the light disturbs other audience members.

## Cast (in order of appearance)



*Marc*  
Evan Nasteff



*Serge*  
Alex Mayberry



*Ivan*  
Drake Huzek

## Production Team



*Director, Costume  
& Sound Designer*  
Shirley Kagan



*Assistant  
Director*  
Benjamin M. Brown



*Assistant  
Director*  
Sam Gibbs



*Technical  
Director*  
Matt Dubroff



*Stage  
Manager*  
Scott Dalton



*Stage Manager,  
Light Board Operator*  
Kevin Jones



*Set Design*  
Brad Stoller



*Props*  
Marian Kidd



*Lighting  
Designer*  
David Sherman



*Sound Board  
Operator*  
Grant Hall

Special thanks to Professor David Lewis for help and guidance on the "Antrios" painting.

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## *Director's Note*

*Art* was one of the first in a recent tidal wave of Broadway hits to have provocative one-word titles which beg contemplation. Indeed, besides art's immediate meaning as an object (in this play's case, a painting), the term carries with it various other definitions such as trickery and even the archaic second person singular form of being. These secondary definitions elevate the term beyond the literal and into the realms of ideas and emotions.

At a key moment in *Art* we see Marc and Serge, two old friends, entangled in a life-defining discussion. Serge, who before the action of the play purchases an arguably monochromatic painting, defends his choices in life and in artistic preference, claiming he doesn't have time for frivolities but is obliged to "go straight for the essentials." Marc retorts with a sardonic "As in painting . . . where you've ingeniously eliminated form and color. Those old chestnuts." The battle over how much can be pared away from an object, idea, or emotion before it loses its integrity forms the core of this play. It is a battle that perhaps cannot be won, as expressed by the most put-upon of the three friends, Yvan. His poignant and slightly broken final observation is that "nothing formative in the world, nothing great or beautiful in the world, has ever been born of rational argument."

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## Cast and Staff Biographies

**Benjamin M. Brown, Assistant Director**, is a freshman at Hampden-Sydney and is planning to double-major in medicine and public health after his undergraduate studies. This play is his second experience with dramatic production at H-SC. He assistant-directed *The Life and Death of Richard the Third* in the previous semester. Ben is captivated by the vast possibilities that can be manifested on the stage. He is also a member of the Pre-Health Society, Jiu Jitsu Club, International Club, and a hospital volunteer.

**Scott Dalton, Stage Manager and painter of the "Antrios" painting**, is a senior returning for his sixth production at H-SC, with *Art* being his first behind-the-scenes role. Previous performances include *Macbeth*, *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*, and the one-act plays *Frumpled Fairy Tales*, *The Traveler*, and *Forming Good Men and Good Citizens*. He is a native of Farmville, VA, and is a double major in Economics and Commerce and Fine Arts with a concentration in Visual Art. Scott would like to thank Shirley Kagan and the awesome fine arts department for all of the great memories and for making his college career an AWESOME experience. Thanks!

**Matthew R. Dubroff, Technical Director**, has been teaching theatre at Hampden-Sydney College since 1999. He has directed and designed numerous productions here. Last fall he directed *The Life and Death of Richard the Third* and performed in *Pine Barrens* with Theatre Nohgaku. Dubroff is a teacher of the Alexander Technique and the Wu Style of Tai Ji. With a specialty in Asian Theatre, Dubroff is a founding member of Theatre Nohgaku, a theatre troupe dedicated to performing Noh plays in English. Dubroff would like to thank everyone for their involvement in and support of theatre at H-SC.

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**Sam Gibbs, Assistant Director**, came to Hampden-Sydney College after attending Maggie Walker Governor's School in Richmond, Virginia. He is currently a sophomore at Hampden-Sydney and plans to double major in English and Fine Arts. *Art* marks his fifth production here at H-SC. Sam previously acted as assistant director for *Noises Off* and *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*. Last semester he directed his first one-act for the Jongleurs and will put together another one-act later this semester for Shirley Kagan's directing class.

**Drake Huzek, Yvan**, is a sophomore at Hampden-Sydney College. Although this is only his second production on the H-SC stage he has appeared elsewhere in a number of roles ranging from Fagin in *Oliver!* to Uncle Louis in *Lost in Yonkers*. He feels privileged to be given the chance to act and he would like to thank his girlfriend Blair and his family for their continual support in doing what he loves.

**Kevin Jones, Stage Manager & Light Board Operator**, is a freshman here at Hampden-Sydney who is double-majoring in Economics and Commerce and Fine Arts with a concentration in Theater. This is his second time participating in a main stage play here at H-SC, his first as Lord Hastings in *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*. This is his first experience with stage managing. He would like to thank the cast and crew for their amazing job on a very interesting and complex piece. He would also like to thank Shirley Kagan for allowing him to join such an amazing and diverse team for this experience.

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**Shirley Kagan, Director and Costume & Sound Designer,** marks her tenth year teaching theatre at Hampden-Sydney. This production is the 15th she has directed here. She also works in Richmond as director and actor, and with the Richmond Shakespeare Theatre every chance she gets. She sends special congratulations to Evan Nasteff on this, his thesis production, and wishes to thank the supportive community in which she feels proud to work.

**Marian Kidd, Props,** is a junior at Prince Edward County High School. This is her 7th experience with the Hampden-Sydney Theater Department, and 3rd with Shirley Kagan. After graduating, she plans to go to college for music. She also enjoys running, playing racquetball, and helping the theater department any way she can. She hopes everyone enjoys the show.

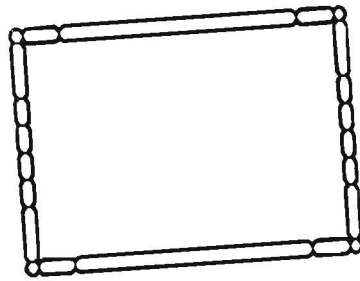
**Alex Mayberry, Serge,** is a junior performing in his 10th production at H-SC. He is majoring in Classical Studies and Fine Arts (Theatre) and would like to thank his wife, Katie, and anybody else who deserves it.

**Evan Nasteff, Marc,** says, "I don't know how many plays I've been in. I have lost count. They have all strung together to complete one of the most euphoric experiences I have ever had in my life. I have had the opportunity to laugh (a lot), learn, and even teach. There is nothing else I can articulate. All I can do is genuinely thank everybody who has ever had a hand in H-SC theatre and has helped make it what it is today. To everybody whom I've ever been in a production with—it is my goal to make this performance reflect all the amazing times I had with you. On a lighter note, thanks also to *Art* for being absolutely hilarious. That is all."

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**David Sherman, Lighting Designer**, is a sophomore from Walnut Cove, North Carolina. *Art* is the third main stage production for David, who assistant-directed *Gagarin Way* and played the 1st Murderer in last semester's *The Life and Death of Richard the Third*. David also has been in both directing class and Jongleur one-acts during his two years here at H-SC. David enjoys working along with Brad Stoller and the rest of the tech crew on building sets for productions here at Hampden-Sydney College. This is David's first lighting design experience and he would especially like to thank Brad and Professor Kagan for allowing him this opportunity. Enjoy the show and God bless!

**Brad Stoller, Set Design**, is designing his sixth set at Hampden-Sydney, where he has also taught introduction to theatre and playwriting. In his life in Charlottesville he is a member of two improvisational theatre companies, teaches the Alexander Technique, and has a small practice of drama therapy with autistic spectrum children.



### Reflections on H-SC Theatre

(H-SC students who are coming to this play because they have to: don't worry; this play is shorter than a Disney movie. And if *any* of you know *anything* about me, you are aware that I know my Disney movies. Stay for an hour fifteen. You'll be glad you did.

Glad we got that out of the way.)

I'm Evan; I play the role of Marc, and this role was my senior thesis. Before you think I got off easy, making all of this happen has been no easy task. Well if it wasn't, then why do theatre at all, you may ask? Remember when you were a kid and loved to pretend things? Yeah. I just never grew out of that phase. Joking aside, I do theatre because it really is that fun on a regular basis, and, at Hampden-Sydney, it's helped to enhance my education as well. Being in Shakespeare plays like *Richard III* and *Macbeth* have given me deeper insight into English and History classes where they've come up. *Rashomon*, a Japanese play based on the movie by Akira Kurosawa, taught me about an entirely new culture. *Noises Off!* taught me how to be comfortable in public with my pants down. And lest I forget, every single theatrical experience makes you do better on tests. It's true: memorizing lines will help you retain information better when you study!

So a little over a month ago, I brought all my experience in the theatre, of which I have much, to this new play, *Art*. I brought my experience in doing comedy, my experience working with actors who I am close friends with, and my experience working with the one and only Shirley Kagan. I brought all of this to the table, and I wasn't prepared at all. No one ever is, which is why I should've known: another thing about theatre is that each day is unique and you'll never see anything coming. At its core, *Art* is hilarious, but there's so much more to it than that, so much more I never saw coming, and with each new day at rehearsal something new was discovered. I've learned so much this past month, about drama, comedy, real life, relationships, and so much more; and Hampden-Sydney has graciously given me the opportunity to share what I've learned with you.

As a play, *Art* is a lot like the painting its plot centers around. This painting, this "Antrios," as you'll soon see, is white. At first glance, that's all it looks like. A *white painting*. By the end of the play, however, you'll realize that there's more to it under the surface. It's got greys, it's got yellow lines, it's got a lot more to it than one initially thinks.



On to my point. As a play, *Art* is like the painting. At first glance, it's just guys sitting around talking. They talk, they eat, they drink, they fight, they make fun of each other—your typical healthy relationship. As someone who's rehearsed this play about a hundred times over by now, I can say that I felt this way the first few times we ran through it. It didn't take long for me to realize, however, that like the painting, there is so much more to this play.

The painting, the Antrios, becomes a focal point of the plot, and it causes a lot of pleasure and pain as *Art* runs its course. In case it hasn't been made clear, this painting is pretty white; therefore, as there's nothing on the canvas to fuel the flames of argument for any of the characters, it holds up a mirror and shows them the destruction of their own friendship. As one character becomes increasingly upset that another loves this *nothing* of a painting, it becomes clear that he is using the white painting as a blank sheet, a pad on which he can pour out his words of pent up aggression.

This is why there's so much more to *Art*. As I've come to see, it's not even about the painting, or any art, at all, despite its name. It's the anatomy of a friendship that's lasted a very long time, perhaps longer than it should have, and then again perhaps not. When you get to the end of our performance, you will have to decide that for yourself.

And that's another great thing about *Art*! I'm on a roll! In the same way the painting holds a mirror up to the characters and their friendship, will it hold a mirror up to you? Are you *still* friends with somebody, and, damn, when you think about it, you don't even know why? Have you recently blown up at a friend, a parent, or a significant other about absolutely nothing? Have they recently done it to you? Did it destroy your relationship with that person, and if it didn't, do you wish it had? What's your favorite color? All these questions are examples of what *you* might see when you look at this painting and what it does to the characters that surround it.

So watch, think, stay awake, but most important of all, laugh. Because despite all this nonsensical rambling with sprinkles of coherent thought, *Art* is a comedy, after all. You're supposed to enjoy it and laugh. I have; all the way home. It's a testament to how funny the play is that, no matter how much time I've spent thinking about it, no matter how many times we've rehearsed it over and over; I can't get through this play without laughing. I hope you won't be able to either.-

Evan Nasteff, Class of 2007