



Oscar Wilde, *Lecture on Aestheticism*

On June 30, 1883, Wilde delivered a lecture on Aestheticism to art students of the Royal Academy. The following are some of the highlights pointed out by Wilde.

- “We want to create [art], not to define it. The definition should follow the work: the work should not adapt itself to the definition”.
- “Such an expression as English art is a meaningless expression. One might just as well talk of English mathematics. Art is the science of beauty, and Mathematics the science of truth: there is no national school of either. Indeed, a national school is a provincial school, merely. Nor is there any such thing as a school of art even. There are merely artists, that is all. And as regards the nationality of the artist, art is not national but universal”.
- “Whatever is popular is wrong”.
- “Nothing is worth doing except what the world says is impossible”.
- “To paint what you see is a good rule in art, but to see what is worth painting is better”.
- “What is a picture? Primarily, a picture is a beautifully coloured surface, merely, with no more spiritual message or meaning for you than an exquisite fragment of Venetian glass or a blue tile from the wall of Damascus. It is, primarily, a purely decorative thing, a delight to look at.
- “If a man is an artist he can paint everything”.
- “A picture is finished when all traces of work, and of the means employed to bring about the result, have disappeared”.
- “Art should have no sentiment about it but its beauty, no technique except what you cannot observe. One should be able to say of a picture not that it is ‘well painted’, but that it is ‘not painted’”.

activities



↓ WRITING

Create a mind map on Wilde's concept of art.