



Audio Description Notes for 'Art'

WELCOME

Welcome to the Guthrie Theater's production of 'Art' — a satire on friendship. The play was written by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton and directed by Kimberly Senior.

My name is Elana Centor, and I will be your audio describer for this performance, which is approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes with no intermission.

The creative team for this production includes:

- Scenic Designer: Brian Sidney Bembridge
- Costume Designer: Raquel Barreto
- Lighting Designer: Xavier Pierce
- Sound Designer/Composer: Mikhail Fiksel
- Dramaturg: Elissa Adams
- Vocal Coach: Keely Wolter
- Fight Director: Aaron Preusse

This production contains mature language.

SYNOPSIS

Serge begins his foray into contemporary art collecting with a spendy purchase he's eager to show off: an unframed white canvas with barely-there white diagonal lines. When his close friend Marc regards the modern painting with ridicule, Serge is deeply insulted. Their mutual friend Yvan tries to keep the peace but becomes entangled in their disagreement, which launches hours of heated discussion and leads the three men to wonder why they're even friends in the first place. This Tony Award-winning satire crackles with comedic energy and invites the audience to contemplate existential questions about life, friendship and what happens when the opinions and worldviews of people we love clash with our own.

SETTING

The play is set in modern-day Paris, France.

STAGING

The play takes place in the main room of the apartments of three friends. The only thing that changes to distinguish the three homes is the artwork. The set is minimalist, and the designs of the chairs and bench are considered artworks in and of themselves. The room is set at an angle similar to the angle of the lines in the painting that is at the heart of the play.



At 11 o'clock are two transparent Lucite chairs. The chairs have arched backs and wide legs that create a geometric silhouette. They are positioned at a 45-degree angle. In between the chairs is a cubed natural wood end table that is open on two sides.

In the center of the room is a square wooden coffee table with a marble top. It is positioned in front of the chairs at a matching 45-degree angle.

On the other side of the coffee table near the front right side of the stage is a white leather tufted bench. It is approximately 6 feet long and 18 inches wide.

The floor is a chevron hardwood.

One apartment belongs to Serge. No art is in the room. The only artwork is the white painting he brings on and off the stage. The unframed canvas painting, as described by his friend Marc, measures approximately 5 feet by 4 feet and has several fine, white diagonal and horizontal lines across it. At different times, Serge sets the painting on one of the Lucite chairs or leans it against the bench.

Another apartment belongs to Marc. He has a classic landscape painting in an ornate frame.

The final apartment belongs to Yvan. The art piece in his apartment is abstract, consisting of a gray speckled rectangle above a solid blue rectangle with a smaller cinnamon-colored square overlaid on top of both.

CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

All three characters are middle-aged men.

Serge is played by **Robert O. Berdahl**. Serge is dressed in casual dressy attire. In the opening scene, he wears a tweed sports jacket with an ocher turtleneck, dark dress slacks and leather loafers. In later scenes, he wears sweaters that appear to be cashmere.

Marc is played by **Patrick Sabongui**. In the opening scene, Marc is dressed in shades of gray and wears jogging pants, a fleece-like vest and a white shirt. In later scenes, he still has gray pants but wears a ribbed black sweater.

Yvan is played by **Max Wojtanowicz**. He is the most casually dressed of the three friends. He wears green New Balance shoes, white socks, jeans and a plaid shirt. In one scene, he wears a sweater vest over the shirt. In a later scene, a burnt-orange blazer covers the shirt.



THINGS TO KNOW

- ‘Art’ won the 1997 Olivier Award for Best New Comedy and the 1998 Tony Award for Best Play. The play has been produced in 45 countries and translated into over 30 languages.
- The Guthrie produced Yasmina Reza’s *God of Carnage* in 2011 and held a celebration of translator Christopher Hampton’s work in 2012 that included productions of three of his plays: *Appomattox*, *Tales From Hollywood* and *Embers*.
- Kimberly Senior is a freelance director whose award-winning work has been seen in 15 states and more than 200 productions, including the Broadway production of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar. She has said that while ‘Art’ is a one-act play, the second act is the conversations the audience will have after the curtain goes down.

ABOUT THE ART IN ‘ART’

- Playwright Yasmina Reza chose a fictional artist named Antrios as the creator of the controversial painting that divides Marc, Serge and, eventually, Yvan. However, the painting references the work of real-life painters, notably American painters Robert Ryman and Robert Rauschenberg. Ryman, who died in 2019 at the age of 69, once said, “I make paintings. I’m a painter. White paint is my medium.”
- Robert Rauschenberg created a series in 1951 called *White Painting* with house paint and rollers. They had completely flat surfaces devoid of any human touch as a joke about the artistic merits of Ryman and his ilk.