

Press release.

That Theatre Company celebrates its 20th season with:

ART by YASMINA REZA

Feb 20 – march 23, 2019.

Krudttønden

Serridslevvej 2

2100 Kbh Ø

mon-fri: 8pm / Sats: 5pm

Playing time: Approx 80 minutes without an interval.

Benjamin Stender, Rasmus Emil Mortensen and Peter Vinding

Directed by Ian Burns

Three young Danish actors are about to play in the English premiere in Denmark of the Tony Award winner for Best Play and the Olivier Award winner for Best Comedy.

Art is subjective, and value is determined entirely by complex vagaries of taste.

Reza clearly asks whether aesthetics is now inextricably confused with market value: when we read that a painting has been sold for countless millions in the auction room, do we somehow rate it more highly? Reza also explores the connection between taste and friendship. Is it possible to enjoy a real relationship with someone whose views on art, books, or theatre for that matter, are radically different from our own? If you embrace modernism, and I'm a traditionalist – as happens with Serge and Marc – is there any real foundation for friendship?

Friends becoming strangers

The play starts with Marc bluntly spitting out his views: it ends with Serge telling a necessary lie in order to preserve their relationship. Reza is examining whether private relationships and public affairs depend upon a certain skilful hypocrisy. Reza's point is that we only continue to function as social beings by playing the accepted rules of the game.

Set in Paris, the story revolves around three friends—Serge, Marc and Yvan — who find their previously solid 15-year friendship on shaky ground when Serge buys an expensive painting. The canvas is white, with a few white lines.

Serge is proud of his 100,000 Euro acquisition, fully expecting the approval of his friends.

Marc scornfully describes it as "a piece of white shit", but is it the painting that offends him, or the uncharacteristic independence of thought that the purchase reveals in Serge?

For the insecure Yvan, burdened by the problems of his impending doom (wedding) where he is stuck in an insoluble problem and his dissatisfaction at his job as a stationery salesman, their friendship is his sanctuary, but his attempts at peace-making backfire. Eager to please he laughs about the painting with Marc but tells Serge he likes it. Pulled into the disagreement, his vacillations fuel the blazing row.

Lines are drawn and they square off over the canvas, using it as an excuse to relentlessly batter one another over various failures. As their arguments become less theoretical and more personal, they border on destroying their friendship.

Ian Burns
Artistic Director
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