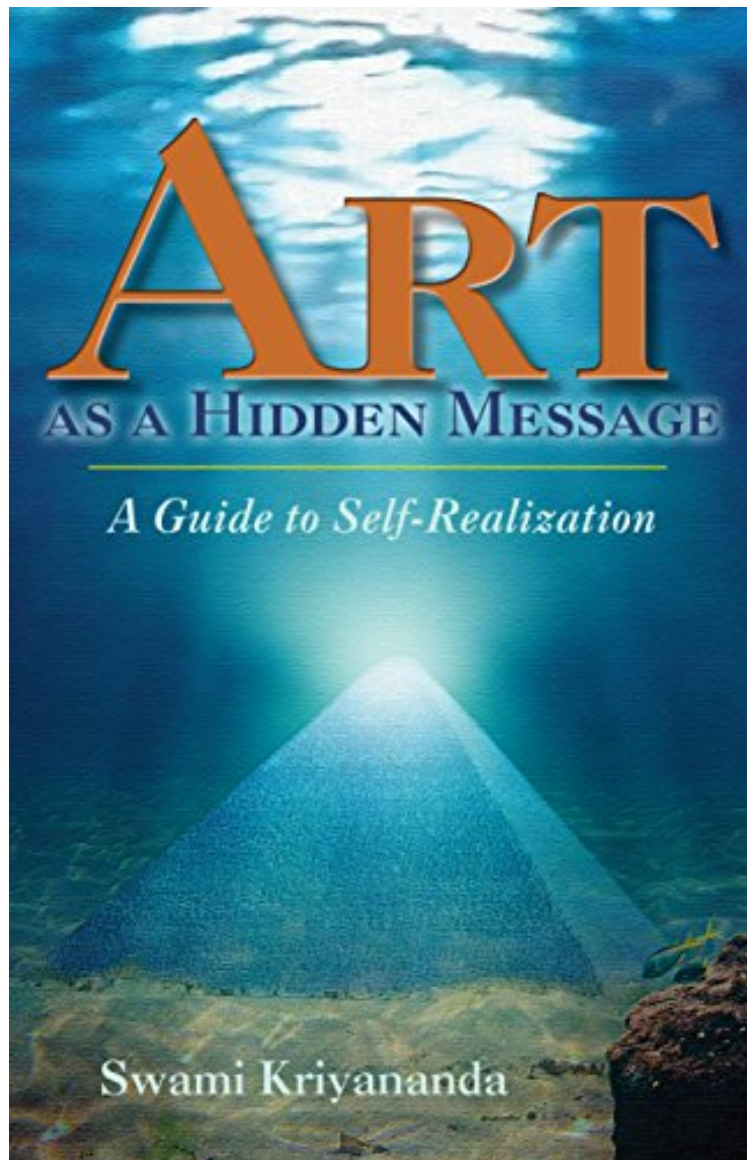


Art as a Hidden Message A Guide to Self Realization

J. Donald Walters

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J. Donald Walters : Art as a Hidden Message A Guide to Self Realization before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Art as a Hidden Message A Guide to Self Realization:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. InsightfulBy Edward J. BartonJ. Donald Walters takes on a very deep topic in this easy to read, easy to digest work. His own spiritual and artistic background combine to present a view of the arts that conveys a deeper meaning than the surface. In some cases, the author is extremely critical of some "modern" art forms - likening them to pyramids or icebergs where the bulk is floating above the water for all to see -

eliminating the subtlety and depth of meaning. He also makes a strong case for art as a receptive, rather than a creative, process by the artist. A good read with interesting perceptions and conclusions. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Finally--an anthem for beauty and meaning in the arts! By George Beinhorn Finally...an anthem for beauty and meaning in the arts! I sent a copy of this book, in an early manuscript edition, to Sir Kenneth Clark, the late doyen of British art historians. Lord Clark thanked me, remarking that he'd "found myself much in agreement with it." And, no wonder; where Clark ferreted meaning from the clutter of Western art in his celebrated television series, "Civilisation," Walters's subject is even wider: the arts as a force for personal change. And he's found a marvelously clarifying key in the concept of Self-realization. Pick up a puppet by the head, and everything becomes order; lift it by an arm and it's a jumble. Similarly, Walters shows that if we grasp the arts from the focusing perspective of human fulfillment, we'll have free sailing. At least, if we understand where human fulfillment actually lies. And Walters is sublimely qualified to talk about human potentials. In an alternate persona, he's known Swami Kriyananda--one of the most prolific and lucid interpreters of oriental philosophy and spirituality for the West. When I was at Stanford in the '60s, I wish I'd had "Art as a Hidden Message," because it would have saved me a great deal of time. This book is quite amazing for the way it finds the essences in philosophy, the arts, and spiritual practice; and Walters makes it all immensely enjoyable. With such a vast subject before him, you'd think he'd run out of breath, but he never does. This is Michael Jordan of the mind. "Art as a Hidden Message" is a great Groovy Book. I suspect Walters will eventually be honored as brilliant synthesizing minds. That's okay, but don't wait--this is a stunningly universal, immensely satisfying book. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Walters liberates the arts from meaninglessness. By A Customer Nearly 20 years ago, I sent an early edition of this book (titled "Meaning in the Arts") to the late Lord Kenneth Clark, doyen of British art historians. The renowned author of the "Civilisation" book and TV series courteously responded, saying that he found himself "much in agreement" with Walters's views. Despite its somewhat "new-agey" title (the book is, after all, addressed primarily to working artists, and not to academe), it's the most inspiring and profoundly insightful book I've ever read about the arts. Definitely, it has the power to help return the arts, and society, to a sense of meaning. After Lord Clark's "Civilisation" was published, numerous readers wrote to thank him for restoring their sense of meaning, to the extent that he'd dissuaded them from committing suicide. "Art as a Hidden Message" has that kind of power. I'm confident that Lord Clark, were he alive today, would find himself still in agreement with the views expressed in this much-expanded edition.

This book is a blueprint for the future of art. Creativity is at the core of who we are as individuals and therefore also at the core of who we are as a society. Topics include the need for the arts and science a perfect partnership the importance of clarity how to draw divine inspiration through intuition the secrets of creativity Self-realization through art.

"J. Donald Walters has provided a manual for creativity as spiritual practice. Insightful, inspiring and imaginative, Art as a Hidden Message reveals the sacred dimension of artistic expression and opens a new world of meaning and purpose." About the Author Art as a Hidden Message offers a blueprint for the future of art, and shows how art can be a powerful influence for meaningful existence and positive attitudes in society. With insightful commentary on the great musicians, artists, and creative thinkers of our time, Art as a Hidden Message presents a new approach to the arts, one that views both artistic expression and artistic appreciation as creative communication. J. Donald Walters shows the importance of seeing oneself and all things as aspects of a greater reality, of seeking to enter into conscious attunement with that reality, and of seeing all things as channels for the expression of that reality. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 - The Arts as Communication Unfortunately, obscurity is the vogue nowadays. The artist feels superior to his public when he can get them to admit that they haven't fathomed him. He feels further sustained in his self-esteem if a handful of esthetes, anxious to demonstrate their own sophistication, claim to "sense" what he is saying. It is all an ego game, not unlike Hans Christian Andersen's story, The Emperor's New Clothes. I remember a man whose habit it was to make obscure remarks, then chuckle significantly at his own wit. I never got the point of those remarks, but assumed that I must simply be missing something. Then one day I understood what it was he was chuckling about. To my astonishment, it was utterly banal. His other statements, I then realized, must have been equally so. In fact they'd always seemed so, but I allowed myself to be hoodwinked by those knowing chuckles. To offer the fruits of one's inspiration to others in the form of art, is one of the best ways for removing blocks to clear perception in oneself. This is a final justification for returning to a genre of art that seems almost forgotten nowadays: art that can be cherished, not merely endured. Unsophisticated humor often says it best. A couple of rustics once visited a modern art gallery and were chuckling at the exhibits before them. "Say, Zeke," said one, "why did they have to go and hang that one?" "I guess," Zeke replied, "It was 'cause they couldn't find the painter." Sooner or later, I suspect, someone--perhaps only a little child as in The Emperor's New Clothes--will explain, "I see now what all the fuss has been about. Those artists were only trying to stir up a bit of excitement. But they haven't really been saying anything at all!" Chapter 3 - Art and Science: A Perfect Partnership A young would-be composer once asked Mozart, "What do I need to do to write a symphony?" Mozart replied, "The symphonic form is

difficult. You'd need to practice writing simpler forms first, such as sonatas. Once you've gained proficiency in those, try writing chamber music. Only after you've learned the limitations and possibilities of numerous instruments will you be ready to try your hand at symphonies." "But," the young man objected, "You didn't follow that procedure. You wrote symphonies from the very beginning." "True," replied Mozart, "But then, you see, I didn't have to ask that question." The rules for competence in any field are there to be discovered, whether on some deep level of memory (perhaps from some former lifetime) or by a simple process of trial and error. Since they are spelled out in the classrooms, they are more readily accessible to formal students, but for every rule there had to be someone, at some time, who discovered it. When finally it entered the textbooks it was because enough people agreed it worked. The rule wasn't accepted as canon merely because someone with sufficient influence declared, "It shall be done this way."

Chapter 8 The Source of Inspiration For all artistic creation is like flowing water: Its flow is downhill. Whatever point it reaches after its first emergence onto a mountainside can only be lower than that initial point. Artistic expression is filtered inspiration. Observe how the process works: First there is the filter of the artist's own understanding, of his individuality, which is to say, of the uniqueness of his being. Whatever his inspiration, moreover, he must seek to attune himself to it with as little ego-intrusion as possible, that he understand it as a truth in itself. Second, there is the medium the artist uses, through which he must strive to capture the intensity of the inspiration he experienced. Herein he proves his skill as an artist, for it is not easy to hold onto an inspiration while struggling with the limitations of material reality. Perfection, at this stage of expression, is impossible. No one can commit exactly to mere canvas or paper anything so insubstantial as an intuition. Third - at least in the case of music - comes the consciousness of the interpretive artists: the soloists, the conductors, the musicians. With literary works, they must pass through editors, publishers, typesetters, illustrators, and printers, all of whom place on them the stamp of their own personalities. Sculptors and painters may not seem to have this third "filter" of presentation to deal with, but in fact the very atmosphere of the room in which their works are displayed influences the impact of their work on the public. Composers and playwrights, however, are in the worst situation at this stage, for they are almost wholly at the mercy of interpreters, who may succeed in turning even a joyous work into one that resembles a dirge. Fourth in the process come the filter of critical opinion, whether favorable or unfavorable. At this point, a work often becomes shrouded by almost impenetrable veils of misunderstanding. It must endure comparison, whether favorable or unfavorable, to the works of others, which causes people to forget altogether the artist's own, special inspiration. His work must also steer a course through the white waters of people's prior conditioning. It is all too seldom that people get to experience, or are even able to experience, a new work of art in itself. Fifth and lastly, there is the filter of public reaction. An artist may lay bare his soul but if the person viewing his painting or listening to his music has just eaten several hot dogs with mustard and relish and is feeling a bit queasy; or if he has a child tugging at his arm, pleading, "Daddy, c'm on, I wanna go home!"; or if, glancing at the work he thinks, impressionists-bah!" without giving this particular impressionist an opportunity to tell his own story: What chance has the poor artist for a fair appraisal?