



# Art and Knowledge

*James O. Young*

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Almost all of us would agree that the experience of art is deeply rewarding. Why this is the case remains a puzzle; nor does it explain why many of us find works of art much more important than other sources of pleasure. *Art and Knowledge* argues that the experience of art is so rewarding because it can be an important source of knowledge about ourselves and our relation to each other and to the world. The view that art is a source of knowledge can be traced as far back as Aristotle and Horace. Artists as various as Tasso, Sidney, Henry James and Mendelssohn have believed that art contributes to knowledge. As attractive as this view may be, it has never been satisfactorily defended, either by artists or philosophers. *Art and Knowledge* reflects on the essence of art and argues that it ought to provide insight as well as pleasure. It argues that all the arts, including music, are importantly representational. This kind of representation is fundamentally different from that found in the sciences, but it can provide insights as important and profound as available from the sciences. Once we recognise that works of art can contribute to knowledge we can avoid thorough relativism about aesthetic value and we can be in a position to evaluate the avant-garde art of the past 100 years. *Art and Knowledge* is an exceptionally clear and interesting, as well as controversial, exploration of what art is and why it is valuable. It will be of interest to all philosophers of art, artists and art critics.

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