



The Power of Art

Searching for Magic
In Dark Times

Love of Life

The Power of Art

Olivia Laing explores sorrow, loneliness, art, and much more in her memoir, 'In The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being

“There are so many things that art can’t do. It can’t bring the dead back to life, it can’t mend arguments between friends, or cure AIDS, or halt the pace of climate change. All the same, it does have some extraordinary functions, some odd negotiating ability between people, including people who never meet and yet who infiltrate and enrich each other’s lives. It does have a capacity to create intimacy; it does have a way of healing wounds, and better yet of making it apparent that not all wounds need healing and not all scars are ugly.

If I sound adamant it is because I am speaking from personal experience. When I came to New York I was in pieces, and though it sounds perverse, the way I recovered a sense of wholeness was not by meeting someone or by falling in love, but rather by handling the things that other people had made, slowly absorbing by way of this contact the fact that loneliness, longing, does not mean one has failed, but simply that one is alive.”

Olivia Laing

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Jack Sasner
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written by Steven Kloves for the screenplay of the 2004 film adaptation of the third installment of J.K. Rowling's beloved book series

Searching For Magic in Dark Times

In Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, headmaster Albus Dumbledore explains to the students of Hogwarts the value of staying positive, even when hope seems to be lost.

“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”

Albus Dumbledore

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Sadie Bell
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“Without cafes and newspapers, it would be difficult to travel. A paper printed in our own language, a place to rub shoulders with others in the evenings enable us to imitate the familiar gestures of the man we were at home, who, seen from a distance, seems so much a stranger. For what gives value to travel is fear. It breaks down a kind of inner structure we have. One can no longer cheat — hide behind the hours spent at the office or at the plant (those hours we protest so loudly, which protect us so well from the

pain of being alone). I have always wanted to write novels in which my heroes would say: “What would I do without the office?” or again:

“My wife has died, but fortunately I have all these orders to fill for tomorrow.” Travel robs us of such refuge. Far from our own people, our own language, stripped of all our props, deprived of our masks (one doesn’t know the fare on the streetcars, or anything else), we are

Love of Life

completely on the surface of ourselves. But also, soul-sick, we restore to every being and every object its miraculous value. A woman dancing without a thought in her head, a bottle on a table, glimpsed behind a curtain: each image becomes a symbol. The whole of life seems reflected in it, insofar as it summarizes our own life at the moment. When we are aware of every gift, the contradictory intoxications we can enjoy (including that of lucidity) are indescribable.”

“There lay all my love of life: a silent passion for what would perhaps escape me, a bitterness beneath a flame. Each day I would leave this cloister like a man lifted from himself, inscribed for a brief moment in the continuance of the world... There is no love of life without despair of life”.

Albert Camus