

0.1 Chapter 5: culture: Art

0.2 Art

1 Art as Therapy



There is widespread agreement that art is very important. But it can be remarkably hard to say quite why, or what it is *for*.

Here at The Book of Life (and its associated arm, The School of Life) we have a particular ideology about art. We believe that art is a tool which should help us to cope with a variety of cognitive frailties: it should help us to understand ourselves, empathise with others, guide us to morality, console us for our sorrows and function as an agent of hope.

The doctrine that art should be for arts sake seems to us to be highly defeatist and pernicious. One is not doing art an injustice by ascribing a clear function to it. Far from it, one is saving it from irrelevance and the melancholy notion that it exists merely as a distraction or an ineffable and mysterious side-show to the main business of love and work. For most of human history, art was in the service of religions. We believe that where once art helped with the problems of theology, it should now assist us with the challenges of psychology.

To this end, we have created a microsite, an online museum, but with a difference. The site functions by taking a reading of your state of mind and then matching you to an art-work, and a caption which will hopefully shift your consciousness in a useful direction.

Please take a look at our demonstration of a new ideology of art: artastherapy.com