

11-1-1930

Comment

John Ely Briggs

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest>

Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Briggs, John E. "Comment." *The Palimpsest* 11 (1930), 515-516.

Available at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/palimpsest/vol11/iss11/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the State Historical Society of Iowa at Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Palimpsest by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Comment by the Editor

THE NATURE OF ART

Whoever perceives beauty and truth is an artist. Without the sense of inherent design, the skill of creation is futile. No matter how facile a person may be in the use of brush, chisel, or pen, the result of his effort will be ugly and wrong if his comprehension is feeble or his vision is faulty. Art exists as much in the understanding as in the expression of things that are vital and right.

Life, and all that life can promise, seems as transient as the seasons. The law of existence is change. Yet in the universe of men and things, essential harmony prevails, as if some fundamental order or design controls the evanescent realities of time and place. Amid ephemeral confusion, truth and beauty may be found — the ever-present symbols of eternity. When all else seems inconsequential, then the symphony of concord proclaims the permanence of verity, as a lighthouse indicates the land.

Art is the discovery of eternal truth and beauty, and the method of art is selection. From the dross of circumstance, the artist gleans the precious gold of character. Whatever is typical and true he sees in terms of beauty, but the abnormal he ignores.

From the colors of the rainbow he derives the substance of vitality, solid bronze and flawless marble supply the tangibility of form, and sound is recomposed to represent emotion.

Being the expression of reality, art acquires the quality of permanence from the subjects it portrays. When time and change have swept away the life of former years, the statues and the pictures still survive. If the story of the past is to endure, it must be told in truth and beauty.

J. E. B.