

'Art' Audition Packet

13th-15th of October 2022

YCA PAGE: <https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/art-1>

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The Show

Marc's friend Serge has just bought a modernist painting, *an Antrios*. It's a canvas about five foot by four: white. The background is white and if you screw up your eyes, you can make out some fine white diagonal lines.

Serge is one of Marc's oldest friends. He's done very well for himself, he's a dermatologist and he's keen on *art*. Marc's an aeronautical engineer who seems to take some sort on incomprehensible pride in running modernism (and Serge) down. And Yvan's... getting married?? there?? playing go-between??

Marc hates the painting. Serge hates that Marc is taking it so seriously. Yvan doesn't understand what's the big issue and tries to get in the middle to calm the other two down, which only makes everything worse. In the repartee, the recriminations and accusations, the discoveries and truths finally told that follow the play investigates what happens when the unspoken agreements and assumptions we make about our relationships with the people closest to us turn out to be false and if in the end we can prove to each other that we care.

Note: this play includes brief allusions to hypothetical violence and a short scene of mild staged combat.

A full script is attached to the YCA page in case you are interested in reading it before joining the team/auditioning but there's no expectation to do so.

The Rehearsal Team!!



Btw this is a wig from a show... (hi Madi :)

Director: Carson White

Pronouns: any

Class Year/College: Franklin '25

Major: TAPS...

Favourite Play: *After Life*

Favourite Musical: *Les Misérables*

What time they got to bed last night: [REDACTED]

Bio: Carson does a stupid amount of theatre. He wants to be a professional director and is super excited to start doing that for the first time again at Yale. Outside of theatre, Carson... walks to other rehearsals.

Why this show: Partly stubbornness (ask me). Mostly because it's a study in how we will always fail to own any part of other people and a navigation of how we can care for each other nonetheless. It's also just really funny.

Email/Number: carson.white@yale.edu; (+44) 7802 731591 (if you can't iMessage, Facebook messenger, WhatsApp and Instagram also work!)



Name: KaLa Keaton

Pronouns: she/her

Class Year/College: Silliman '25, objectively the best btw

Major: ER&M or AFAM

Favourite Play: *After Life*

Favourite Musical: *Once on This Island*

What time you got to bed last night: 4 am, yes I am okay

Bio: KaLa doesn't know why her friends are always surprised when she says she does theatre. She's also confused if not giving theater kid vibes is a good or bad thing considering she's loved technical theater since middle school. Storytelling is her passion, and she loves seeing the script come to life and mature into a full production right in front of her--even if she sees it a million times.

Why this show: Because Carson asked and Carson is cool. He can also walk in heels way better than me, so he has my respect as director. :)

Email/Number: kala.keaton@yale.edu; 919-448-4182



Name: Mikayla Johnson
Pronouns: she/he
Class Year/College: Saybrook '23.5
Major: THST and ER&M
Favourite Play: *Les Blancs* by Lorraine Hansberry probably
Favourite Musical: whichever is playing on my phone rn
What time you got to bed last night: see the question is *really* where did I fall asleep/did I make it to my bed?
Bio: Mikayla J is a graphic and theater artist based in Texas. When not in some sort of dancing, singing, acting rehearsal or general meeting, Mikayla is drinking tea, telling stories or asking people strange questions.
Why this show: Three reasons: I think it's a strong text and would be even stronger put up, I want to try directing, and I

like to have fun.

Email/Number: mikayla.johnson@yale.edu; (830)391-7236

Check out our [YCA page](#) to see all the other cool people involved with this project so far!!

Getting involved with prod [please do!]

We would be thrilled to find a role for anyone interested in any area of this production but, in particular, are keen to get involved:

- Assistant Stage Manager
- Makeup Artist
- Set Designer
- Costumes Crew

Values

The following are things I think are important for me to articulate as a director and which I will be bringing into rehearsals and this production.

- I will not be perfect. Things will not always go perfectly. That is ok!
- This is my first time directing at Yale.
- This rehearsal process is going to be short but fairly intense – we need to take care of each other.
- Your wellbeing is more important than this show - it is my job to figure out how to modify my plans not yours to acquiesce to whatever I want.
- Stanislavsky is terrible, most things are Stanislavsky at heart - I will use Stanislavsky. Point out if/when Stanislavsky being terrible is affecting you and we will stop using him.
- Designers and technicians are as important as actors. They help you; actors, my expectation is you will do the same.
- I am a queer. I am gender non-conforming. I am bringing that into this play and its process. The *lowest* bar is that you will get people's pronouns right.
- Discrimination of any form is unacceptable.
- Rehearsal, design, and technical theatre should be a joy. Whether theatre is an extra-curricular or career for you it should not be painful/burdensome.
- I would like to make community with all of you. Theatre has been a safe haven for me – that I continue to help grow those spaces is so important to me.
- Everyone should get something out of every show they do. If that stops being the case with 'Art', let me know and we will course correct.
- I will pretentiously put the quote marks around art for the entirety of this process. Feel free to make a lot of fun of me the one time I will inevitably forget during tech week.
- Everyone voice in the room should be adding something.
- As I'm trying to find my language as a director I ask you to trust me a little and forgive me for the exercises that don't work.
- You will have your ways of working as an actor, an artist, or a person - if you want to use them, I will. That said experience is not expected or a necessity.
- Disagree with me.
- I have a huge ego (I want to be a director after all), but also not really - I'd so, so much rather you told me the truth about what you think of something.
- Communication, clarity, and transparency I think are a way to fix and prevent so many problems. That's why I include this. I am less scary than this possibly makes it seem.

Rehearsal Timeline

Note: We will not be asking for information on other shows you've auditioned for/your other commitments or taking those into account during our casting, aside from comparing casting trees¹ as part of YDC Casting Cycle². The number/nature of the commitments you make is your decision to take alone. We've included this timeline so you can have as detailed a knowledge of the time commitment this play will be. It is, however, flexible and if you have any concerns/questions about it feel free to shoot us an email or tell us during auditions!

11th of September

Casting Day! – we will start calling selected auditionees at noon

Readthrough in the evening (ideally 7-9pm) – if you are auditioning, please try to keep space free here but if you cannot, we'll work something out.

12th-18th of September

Group and character work. Dramaturgy and design presentations. Call time: roughly 8 hours

19th of September - 8th of October

Minimal table work, group work, blocking, fixes, runs etc. Call time: 10-12 hours per week

We will try to have our first off book run on the 1st of October.

9th of October: Load-in

Load-in will begin at 9am and continue until the start of Q2Q w/breaks for meals.

9th-12th of October: Tech

Tech rehearsals will run from 6-11pm at a max.

Sunday afternoon and evening will be taken up with focus, Q2Q and other tech-focussed elements. Monday we'll continue with that and hopefully run the show once and go over fixes.

Tuesday we'll possibly run the show twice. Wednesday will be invited dress and photo run.

13th-15th of October: Performances

Performances will be at 8pm, with a 2pm matinee on the 15th and should last around 75 minutes. Call time will likely be an hour and a half before.

15th of October: Strike

Strike will happen immediately following the final performance on Saturday evening and will hopefully be finished by midnight :)

¹ All the shows that are casting in September after auditions (and callbacks) will draw up a table of who they're interested in offering parts. In the event that an actor decides for whatever reason they don't want/can't accept the role teams will have a second (and usually third option) ready for each character.

² <https://collegearts.yale.edu/organizations/yale-drama-coalition/resources/casting-policy> for more information of what this is if you don't know!

Audition Information

Our audition process will be broken down into three parts: the workshop, a first-round and callbacks.

If you're considering auditioning, we'd be super grateful if you could fill out [this form](#) so we can get to know you a little better!

Audition workshop:

This will be an hour meet and greet with our rehearsal team. Bottom line is, for people who haven't done (much) Yale theatre before, first-years or not, it's very confusing and auditioning in September is particularly A Lot™. While you can always email me (carson.white@yale.edu) with questions about this show, Yale theatre in general, whatever else you need, the audition workshop is a dedicated time where we'll introduce you to the show, our team, our plans for rehearsals, and in particular the audition process. Come with any and all questions you have! This hour will be geared towards explaining things for first-time theatre makers at Yale/other relative newcomers, but anyone is welcome – even if you just want to say hi after Summer Break!!

If there's time and anyone would like to have a go we might a little mock of the audition process - if anyone would really like to see exactly what an audition might entail but isn't ready to get up and do that in front of everyone else, someone on the rehearsal team can "audition" as well!

Note: Coming or not coming to the audition workshop truly will not affect whether you get cast. The beginning of the semester is ridiculously busy – if you can't/don't have the energy/don't think you need to come, that's 100% cool!

First-round auditions:

There are actually going to be two options for this:

- 1) We'll have two hour-and-a-half sessions that will essentially just mimic a rehearsal (sign up [here](#)). We'll start with a warm-up and some general exercises, introduce a technique or two, have a quick break and then move to working on some of the duologues. If you're going to choose this option you **don't** have to prepare each of the duologues, but it might be a good idea to at least read through them – as long as you're familiar with one we can make sure that's what you're working on! Depending on numbers we might do this as a group or in pairs or some other suitable combination. The main thing we will be looking for is a responsiveness to feedback, willingness to experiment, and how you play off the other people in the room.

If you're only able to make part of the session that's totally ok as well – just please put a note next to your name on the Google Sheet sign up!

- 2) A more "normal" audition. You'll sign up for a 15-minute slot on our [YCA audition page](#) where we'll ask you to prepare one of the monologues and one part in one of the short dialogues attached at the end of this document. Memorization is **not** required. Your monologue and duologue half do **not** have to be for the same character. Choose whichever sides speak to you

most/show your talents as an actor best – your character choices will not be a limiting factor in our casting. Carson will then give you a note or two and ask you to read one or both pieces again (or possibly to cold read another one of the sides if you're comfortable with that). You will also be able to ask any questions you have about the sides though some basic context is provided for each.

Why?

Personally, I've found the second option, the more usual audition process, to be dissatisfying as an actor. Hopefully, this alternative might be slightly less stressful, a bit more communal and fun and will give you the opportunity to work and respond to feedback more than a regular audition would.

But also it'll hopefully give you an ability to get a sense of me as a director and the kind of stuff we'll be doing in rehearsals so you can gauge better if you'll find the project enjoyable/fulfilling to work on. And if not, at least you'll hopefully walk away with a little knowledge of another one of the million weird and wacky ways directors try to do their job and maybe some friends.

We're offering both because I know some people prefer the individual focus/privacy of a more normal audition and for timing reasons!

Note: If you're not happy with your audition (of either form), you are more than welcome to sign up for another if there are slots left or to coordinate with our amazing stage manager, KaLa, to find a makeup time. Please also reach out at any point if there is anything we can do to make the process easier for you – auditioning, especially in the September Casting Cycle, is stressful and difficult and we want to do everything we can to make it less so for you.

We will have copies of the sides at auditions/callbacks but if you want to print your own copies individual documents of each side are attached to our [YCA audition page](#) for printing!

Callbacks:

We will try to organize one or two group callback sessions that will last roughly two hours depending on availability, and like the first first-round audition option which will mimic a rehearsal environment. But we'll work on the trio scene at the end of this document instead of the duologues.

Audition Timeline

YDC Season Preview³: Location/Time TBD

Audition Workshop: Sunday 4th @ 2pm, Humanities Quadrangle Courtyard

First-round Auditions: Saturday 3rd-Tuesday 6th

If you're comfortable with Yale audition processes and the information provided about this show, feel free to sign up for an audition before our workshop!

Sign up on [YCA](#) for the individual slot and this [google sheet](#) for the group sessions!

- Saturday 2-4:30pm (Individual slots), Bass L70
- Monday 5-6:30pm (Group option 1), LC 102
- Monday 9:15-10:45pm (Individual slots), Bass L70
- Tuesday 7-8:30pm (Group option 2), LC 102

Callback Notification: by Wednesday 7th @ 12pm (via email)

Callbacks: Thursday 8th-Friday 9th, most likely LC 102

If you're asked to come in for a callback, please respond as quickly as you can on Wednesday to our questions about availability so we can schedule these as easily as possible.

September Casting Day: Sunday 11th

All shows casting in the YDC's September casting cycle will gather and start calling actors at noon to offer roles. You will hear back via email later in the afternoon/evening if we were unfortunately not able to cast you

³ The Yale Drama Coalition runs a Season Preview every September – an orientation of all the plays so far planned to go up that year. We'll be there if you want to chat! Location/Time TBD!

The Characters

The three characters in this play are men. While for rights and sense reasons we won't be changing that, I have no interest in casting three men to play these roles. As long as you are comfortable portraying a man on stage we welcome actors of any and all gender identities to audition. Similarly the racial and ethnic identities of the three men are never specified. While that means that they were most likely conceived of as white (and have predominantly been portrayed by white actors since), we encourage actors of any racial and ethnic identity to audition. This is all to say that we want to build a diverse team to tell this story and, BIPOC, queer, and first-time theatre-makers, we want you. If there is anything we can do to make that happen/make that easier, please reach out.

Note: All three characters are involved in a brief moment of staged combat in the script. If we get the chance, we will work through this moment with one of the UP Intimacy and Violence Coordinators to make sure we stage it in a way that everyone is comfortable with. Otherwise we will diverge slightly from the stage directions to remove the physical confrontation. However, we will still prioritise your wellbeing and safety in this moment (and all others) which even if it were staged without explicit physical violence still carries a heavier emotional weight.

Marc (late 50s-early 60s) is an aeronautical engineer, arrogant, overbearing, self-righteous. He decided to hate modern art one day and has never made a singular effort to understand it since. This disparagement and bewilderment have only intensified as Serge, the man he's loved for most of his life, his best friend, has grown more and more enamoured with it.

Serge (late 50s-early 60s) is a rather-successful dermatologist. He's made enough money in recent years to venture into the world of modern art, becoming a connoisseur, a man who increasingly uses words such as *deconstruction* in regular conversation. He is a pretentious ass, but there is something genuine about his love for the Antrios he has bought. He can be cruel but is perhaps the most honest of the three - at least about the things they don't talk about.

Yvan (mid 50s) is a sales representative. He's had a profoundly mediocre career up until this point and has just made a switch into the stationery business of his to-be uncle-in-law. Yes, Yvan is getting married, entirely because his mother sat him down for tea one day and said in no uncertain terms it would happen before she died or else. Yvan's a people-pleaser, melodramatic, self-pitying, highly emotional, passive aggressive. It is obvious to everyone in his life but himself that he is queer.

sAudition Sides

Monologues

Marc

Context: This monologue comes right after an argument between Marc and Serge (the end of which is the duologue side for the two of them) in which they first vocalise their dislike for the other's "new" affectations: the seriousness with which Serge treats modern Art and Marc's taking everything Serge does so seriously and personally.

(To the audience) Could it be the Antrios, buying the Antrios?

No -

It started some time ago...

To be precise, it started on the day we were discussing some work of art and you uttered, quite seriously, the word *deconstruction*.

It wasn't so much the word *deconstruction* which upset me, it was the air of solemnity you imbued it with.

You said, humourlessly, unapologetically, without a trace of irony, the word *deconstruction*, you, my friend.

I wasn't sure how best to deal with the situation, so I made this throwaway remark, I said I think I must be getting intolerant in my old age, and you answered, who do you think you are? What makes you so high and mighty?...

What give you the right to set yourself apart, Serge answered in the bloodiest possible way. And quite unexpectedly.

You're just Marc, what makes you think you're so special?

That day, I should have punched him in the mouth.

And when he was lying there on the ground, half-dead, I should have said to him, you're supposed to be my friend, what sort of a friends are you, Serge, if you don't think your friends are special?

Serge

Context: At this point in the play Serge has shown both Marc and Yvan the painting. Marc's reaction in the end was simply to say, 'Because it is. It's shit. I'm sorry'. This is right before the argument that contains the Marc and Serge duologue side. Marc has returned to Serge's house and they both are trying to be reconciliatory.

(To the audience) As far as I'm concerned, it's not white.

When I say as far as I'm concerned, I mean objectively.

Objectively speaking, it's not white.

It has a white background, with a whole range of greys...

There's even some red in it.

You could say it's very pale.

I wouldn't like it if it was white.

Marc thinks it's white... that's his limit...

Marc thinks it's white because he's got hung up on the idea that it's white.

Unlike Yvan. Yvan can see it isn't white.

Marc can think what he likes, what do I care?

-

(To Marc) All right, listen, it's just a picture, we don't have to get bogged down with it, life's too short... By the way, have you read this? (He picks up De Vita Beata by Seneca and throws it on to the low table just in front of Marc). Read it, it's a masterpiece.

Incredibly modern. Read that, you don't need to read anything else. What with the office, the hospital, Françoise, who's now decreed that I'm to see the children every weekend - which is something new for Françoise, the notion that children need a father - I don't have time to read any more, I'm obliged to go straight for the essentials.

Yvan

Context: Yvan is getting married to a woman he really shouldn't. He, Marc and Serge are going out for the evening in an attempt to smooth everything over and the following monologue is the start of his fumbling, panicked excuse for being an hour late.

So, a crisis, insoluble problem, major crisis, both stepmothers want their names on the wedding invitation. Catherine adores her step-mother, who more or less brought her up, she wants her name on the invitation, she wants it and her step-mother is not anticipating, which is understandable, since the mother is dead, not appearing next to Catherine's father, whereas my step-mother, whom I detest, it's out of the question her name should appear on the invitation, but my father won't have his name on it if hers isn't, unless Catherine's step-mother's is left off, which is completely unacceptable, I suggest none of the parents' names should be on it, after all we're not adolescents, we can announce our wedding and invite people ourselves, so Catherine screamed her head off, arguing that would be a slap in the face for her parents who were paying through the nose for the reception and particularly for her step-mother, who's gone to so much trouble when she isn't even her daughter and I finally let myself be persuaded, totally against my better judgement, because she wore me down, I finally agreed that my step-mother, whom I detest, who's a complete bitch, will have her name on the invitation, so I telephone my mother to warn her, mother I said, I've done everything I can to avoid this, but we have absolutely no choice, Yvonne's name has to be on the invitation, she said if Yvonne's name is on the invitation, take mine off it, mother, I said, please, I beg you, don't make things even more difficult, and she said, how dare you suggest my name is left to float around the card on its own, as if I was some abandoned woman, below Yvonne, who'll be clamped on to your father's surname, like a limpet, I said to her, mother, I have friends waiting for me, I'm going to hang up and we'll discuss all this tomorrow after a good night's sleep, she said, why is it I'm always an afterthought...

(This monologue continues for another two pages – if you'd like to see the rest of it email Carson and they'll send it to you)

Duologues

Marc and Serge

Context: This excerpt starts about a third of the way into Marc and Serge's first conversation since Serge initially showed Marc the painting. They began trying to put things right, but it went downhill fast after Marc took offense to Serge telling him he ought to read Seneca. The harsh truths about what they have been feeling since Serge bought the Antrios (and beneath the surface long before) are beginning to emerge.

Serge The fact of the matter is, you've quite simply lost your sense of humour.

Marc Probably.

Serge You've lost your sense of humour, Marc. You really have lost your sense of humour, old chap. When I was talking to Yvan the other day, we agreed you'd lost your sense of humour. Where the hell is he? He's incapable of being on time, it's infuriating! We'll miss the beginning!

Marc ... Yvan thinks I've lost my sense of humour? ...

Serge Yvan agrees with me that recently you've somewhat lost your sense of humour.

Marc The last time you saw each other, Yvan said he liked your painting very much and I'd lost my sense of humour...

Serge Oh, yes, that, yes, the painting, really, very much. And he meant it... What's that you're eating?

Marc Ignatia

Serge Oh, you believe in homeopathy now?

Marc I don't believe in anything. Where are you going to put it?

Serge Haven't decided. There. Or there? ... Too ostentatious.

Marc Are you going have it framed?

Serge No! ... No, no...

Marc Why not?

Serge It's not supposed to be framed.

Marc Is that right?

Serge The artist doesn't want it to be. It mustn't be interrupted. It's already in its setting. Look... you see...

Marc What is it, Elastoplast?

Serge No, it's kind of Kraft paper... Made up by the artist.

Marc It's funny the way you say artist.

Serge What else am I supposed to say?

Marc You say the artist when you could say the painter or... whatever his name is... Antrios...

Serge So? ...

Marc But you say the artist, as if he's a sort of... Well, anyway, doesn't matter. What are we seeing? Let's try and see something with a bit of substance for once.

Serge It's eight o'clock. Everything will have started. I can't imagine how this man, who has nothing whatsoever to do - am I right? - manages to be late every single time. Where the fuck is he?

Marc Let's just have dinner.

Serge All right. It's five past eight. We said we'd meet between seven and half-past... What d'you mean, the way I say artist?

Marc Nothing. I was going to say something stupid.

Serge Well, go on.

Marc You say the artist as if... as if he's some unattainable being. The artist... some sort of god...

Serge Well, for me, he is a god! You don't think I'd have forked out a fortune from mere mortal! ...

Marc I see.

Serge I went to the Pompidou on Monday, you know how many Antrioses they have at the Pompidou? ... Three! Three Antrioses! ... At the Pompidou!

Marc Amazing.

Serge And mine's as good as any of them! If not better! ... Listen, I have a suggestion, let's give Yvan exactly three more minutes and then bugger off. I found a very good new place. Lyonnaise.

Marc Why are you so jumpy?

Serge I'm not jumpy.

Marc Yes, you are jumpy.

Serge I am not jumpy, well, I am, I'm jumpy because this slackness is intolerable, this inability to practice any kind of self-discipline!

Marc The fact is, I'm getting on your nerves and you're taking an out on poor Yvan.

Serge What do you mean, poor Yvan. Are you taking the piss? You're not getting on my nerves, why should you be getting on my nerves?

-

He is getting on my nerves. It's true.
He's getting on my nerves
It's this ingratiating tone of voice. A little smile behind every word.
It's as if he's forcing himself to be pleasant.

Serge and Yvan

Context: Serge has showed Marc the Antrios and gotten the opposite reaction he'd hoped for. Marc has forewarned Yvan that Serge has the Antrios and his pretensions have reached a dangerous peak. Yvan said that he'd get Serge to acknowledge the ridiculousness of what he has done. Yvan is at Serge's house and after some small talk and a brief discussion of how Marc is, Serge has just offered to show Yvan his latest acquisition.

Serge exits and returns with the Antrios, which he turns around and sets down in front of Yvan. Yvan looks at the painting and strangely enough doesn't manage the hearty laugh he'd predicted. A long pause, while Yvan studies the painting and Serge studies Yvan.

Yvan Oh, yes. Yes. Yes.

Serge Antrios.

Yvan Yes, yes.

Serge It's a seventies Antrios. Worth mentioning. He's going through a similar phase now, but this one's from the seventies.

Yvan Yes, yes.
Expensive?

Serge In absolute terms, yes? In fact, no.
You like it?

Yvan Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Serge Plain.

Yvan Plain, yes... Yes... An at the same time...

Serge Magnetic.

Yvan Mm... yes...

Serge You don't really get the resonance just at the moment.

Yvan Well, a bit...

Serge No, you don't. You have to come back in the middle of the day. That resonance you get from something monochromatic, it doesn't really happen under artificial light.

Yvan Mm hm.

Serge Not that it is actually monochromatic.

Yvan No! ...
How much was it?

Serge Two hundred thousand.

Yvan Very reasonable.

Serge Very.

Silence. Suddenly surge bursts out laughing, immediately followed by Yvan.

Crazy, or what?

Yvan Crazy!

Serge Two hundred grand!

Hearty laughter.

Serge You know Marc's seen the painting.

Yvan Oh?

Serge Devastated.

Yvan Oh?

Serge He told me it was shit. A completely inappropriate description.

Yvan Absolutely.

Serge You can't call this shit.

Yvan No.

Serge You can say, I don't get it, I can't grasp it, you can't say 'it's shit'.

Yvan You've seen his place.

Serge Nothing to see. It's like yours, it's... What I mean is, you couldn't care less.

Yvan His taste is classical, he likes things classical, what do you expect...

Serge He started in with this sardonic laugh... Not a trace of charm... Not a trace of humour.

Yvan You know Marc is moody, there's nothing new about that...

Serge He has no sense of humour. With you, I can laugh. With him, I'm like a block of ice.

Yvan It's true he's a bit gloomy at the moment.

Serge I don't blame him for not responding to this painting, he hasn't the training, there's a whole apprenticeship you have to go through, which he hasn't, either because he's never wanted to or because he has no particular instinct for it, none of that matters, no, what I blame him for is his tone of voice, his complacency, his tactlessness. I blame him for his insensitivity. I don't blame him for not being interested in modern Art, I couldn't give a toss about that I like him for other reasons...

Yvan And he likes you!

Serge No, no, no, no, I felt it the other day, a kind of... a kind of condescension... contempt with a really bitter edge...

Yvan No surely not!

Serge Oh, yes! Don't keep trying to smooth things over. Where d'you get this urge to be the great reconciler of the human race? Why don't you admit that Marc is atrophying? If he hasn't already atrophied.

Silence.

Yvan and Marc

Context: Serge has shown Marc the painting and he has come to discuss the serious matter of what to do about their mutual friend.

Marc What are you doing?

Yvan I'm looking for the top of my pen.

Marc All right, that's enough.

Yvan I had it five minutes ago.

Marc It doesn't matter.

Yvan Yes, it does.

Marc Stop it. Buy another one.

Yvan It's a felt-tip, they're special, they'll write on any surface... It's just infuriating. Objects, I can't tell you how much they infuriate me. I had it in my hand five minutes ago.

Marc Are you going to live here?

Yvan Do you think it's suitable for a young couple?

Marc Young couple! Ha, ha...

Yvan Try not to laugh like that in front of Catherine.

Marc How's the stationery business?

Yvan All right. I'm learning.

Marc You've lost weight.

Yvan A bit. I'm pissed off about that top. It'll all dry up. Sit down.

Marc If you go and looking for that top, I'm leaving.

Yvan OK, I'll stop. You want something to drink?

Marc A Perrier, if you have one.
Have you seen Serge lately?

Yvan No. Have you?

Marc Yesterday.

Yvan Is he well?

Marc Very.
He's just bought a painting.

Yvan Oh yes?

Marc Mm.

Yvan Nice?

Marc White.

Yvan White?

Marc White.
Imagine a canvas about five foot by four... with a white background... completely white in fact... with fine white diagonal stripes... you know... and maybe another horizontal white line, towards the bottom...

Yvan How can you see them?

Marc What?

Yvan These white lines. If the background's white, how can you see the lines?

Marc You just do. Because I suppose the lines are slightly grey, or vice versa, or anyways there are degrees of white! There's more than one kind of white!

Yvan Don't get upset. Why are you getting upset?

Marc You immediately start quibbling. Why can't you let me finish?

Yvan All right. Go on.

Marc Right. So, you have an idea of what the painting looks like.

Yvan I think so, yes.

Marc Now you have to guess how much Serge paid for it.

Yvan Who's the painter?

Marc Antrios. Have you heard of him?

Yvan No. Is he fashionable?

Marc I knew you were going to ask me that.

Yvan Well, it's logical...

Marc No, it isn't logical...

Yvan Of course it's logical you ask me to guess the price, you know very well the price depends on how fashionable the painter might be...

Marc I'm not asking you to apply a whole set of critical standards, I'm not asking you for professional valuation, I'm asking what you, Yvan, would give for a white painting tarted up with a few off-white stripes.

Yvan Bugger all.

Marc Right. And what about Serge? Pick a figure at random.

Yvan Ten thousand francs.

Marc Ha!

Yvan Fifty thousand

Marc Ha!

Yvan A hundred thousand.

Marc Keep going.

Yvan A hundred and fifty? Two hundred?!

Marc Two hundred. Two hundred grand.

Yvan No!

Marc Yes.

Yvan Two hundred grand?

Marc Two hundred grand.

Yvan Has he gone crazy?

Marc Looks like it.

Yvan All the same...

Marc What do you mean, all the same?

Yvan If it makes him happy... he can afford it...

Marc So that's what you think, is it?

Yvan Why? What do you think?

Marc You don't understand the seriousness of this, do you? Don't you see that suddenly, in some grotesque way, Serge fancies himself a 'collector'.

Trio (for callbacks)

Context: Marc and Serge essentially entirely dismiss Yvan's three-page rant about his wedding that he gives when he finally arrives an hour late for dinner and go back to arguing about Seneca. When Yvan tries to get in the middle of it and diffuse the situation their attention sharply turns back to him and his life.

Serge You want my opinion about your women problems?

Yvan Go on.

Serge In my view, the most hysterical of them all is Catherine. By far.

Marc No question.

Serge And if you're already letting yourself be buggered around by her, you're in for a hideous future.

Yvan What can I do?

Marc Cancel it.

Yvan Cancel the wedding?

Serge He's right.

Yvan But I can't, are you crazy?

Marc Why not?

Yvan Well, because I can't, that's all! It's all arranged. I've only been working at the stationery business for a month...

Marc What's that got to do with it?

Yvan It's her uncle's stationery business, he had absolutely no need to take on anyone, least of all someone who's only ever worked in textiles.

Serge You must do what you like. I've told you what I think.

Yvan I'm sorry, Serge, I don't mean to be rude, but you're not necessarily the person I've come to for matrimonial advice. You can't claim to have been a great success in that field...

Serge Precisely.

Yvan I can't back out of the wedding. I know Catherine is hysterical but she has her good points. There are certain crucial qualities you need when you're marrying someone like me... (*he indicates the Antrios.*) Where are you going to put it?

Serge I don't know yet.

Yvan Why don't you put it there?

Serge Because there, it be wiped out by the sunlight.

Yvan Oh, yes.
I thought of you today at the shop, we ran off five hundred posters by this bloke who paints white flowers, totally white, on a white background.

Serge The Antrios is not white.

Yvan No, of course not. I was just saying.

Marc You think this painting is not white, Yvan?

Yvan Not entirely, no...

Marc Ah. Then what colour is it?

Yvan Various colours... There's yellow, there's grey, some slightly ochrish lines.

Marc And you're moved by these colours?

Yvan Yes... I'm moved by these colours.

Marc You have no substance, Yvan. You're flabby, you're an amoeba.

Serge Why are you attacking Yvan like this?

Marc Because he's a little arse-licker, he's obsequious, dazzled by money, dazzled by what he believes to be culture, and as you know culture is something I absolutely piss on.

Brief silence.

Serge ... What's got into you?

Marc How could you, Yvan?... And in front of me. In front of me, Yvan.

Yvan What d'you mean, in front of you? ... What do you mean, in front of you?
I find these colours touching. Yes. If it's all the same to you.
Stop wanting to control everything.

Marc How could you say, in front of me, that you find these colours touching?

Yvan Because it's the truth.

Marc The truth? You find these colours touching?

Yvan Yes. I find these colours touching.

Marc You find these colours touching, Yvan?!

Serge He finds his colours touching! He's perfectly entitled to!

Marc No, he's not entitled to.

Serge What do you mean, he's not entitled to?

Marc He's not entitled to.

Yvan I'm not entitled to? ...

Marc No.

Serge Why is he not entitled to? I don't think you're very well, perhaps you ought to go and see someone.

Marc He's not entitled to say he finds these colours touching, because he doesn't.

Yvan I don't find these colours touching?

Marc There are no colours. You can't see them. And you don't find them touching.

Yvan Speak for yourself!

Marc This is really demeaning, Yvan!...

Serge Who do you think you are, Marc? ...
Who are you to legislate? You don't like anything, you despise everyone. You take pride in not being a man of your time...

Marc What's that supposed to mean, man of my time?

Yvan Right. I'm off.

Serge Where are you going?

Yvan I'm off. I don't see why I have to put up with your tantrums.

Serge Don't go! You're not going to start taking offense, are you? ... If you go, you're giving into him.
Yvan stands there, hesitating, caught between two possibilities.
A man of his times is a man who lives in his own time.

Marc Balls. How can a man live in any other time but his own? Answer me that.

Serge A man of his time is someone of whom it can be said in twenty years' or in a hundred years' time, he was representative of his era.

Marc Hm.
To what end?

Serge What do you mean, to what end?

Marc What use is it to me if one day somebody says, I was representative of my era?

Serge Listen, old fruit, we're not talking about you, if you can imagine such a thing! We don't give a fuck about you! A man of his time, I'm trying to explain to you, like most people you admire, is someone who makes some contribution to the human race of... A man of his time doesn't assume the history of Art has come to an end with a pseudo-Flemish view of Cavillon⁴...

⁴ KAH-vye-ohn

Marc Carcassonne⁵.

Serge Same thing. A man of his time plays his part in the fundamental dynamic of evolution...

Marc And that's a good thing, in your view.

Serge It's not good or bad, why do you always have to moralize, it's just the way things are.

Marc And you, for example, you play your part in the fundamental dynamic of evolution.

Serge I do.

Marc What about Yvan?...

Yvan Surely not. What sort of part can an amoeba play?

Serge In his way, Yvan is a man of his time.

Marc How can you tell? Not from that daub⁶ hanging over his mantelpiece?

Yvan That is not a daub?

Serge It is a daub.

Yvan It is not!

Serge What's the difference? Yvan represents a certain way of life, a way of thinking which is completely modern. And so do you. I'm sorry, but you're a typical man of your time. And in fact, the harder you try not to be, the more you are.

Marc Well, that's alright then. So what's the problem?

Serge There's no problem, except for you, because you take pride in your desire to shut yourself off from humanity. And you'll never manage it. It's like you're in a quicksand, the more you struggle to get out of it, the deeper you sink. Now apologize to Yvan.

Marc Yvan is a coward.

*At this point, Yvan makes his decision, and exits in a rush.
Slight pause.*

⁵ KAR-kas-sohn

⁶ A painting that just isn't done very well.