You will hear an interview with Alain Botton about art therapy. For questions 1-10 choose the right answer (A-C). Only ONE answer is correct.

1 Alain de Botton's work is ...

A famous worldwide

B collaborative piece

C on display in Ontario

2 According to Alain de Botton ...

A people usually know how to interpret art

B it is necessary to explain what the aim of art is

C there's no point in visiting museums or art galleries

3 When claiming that art is 'therapeutic', he refers to the fact that ...

A it can benefit your state of mind

B it can help treat mental illnesses

C people tend to associate it with leisure

4 He claims that when someone loves an artwork, it is because ...

A it possesses some attributes they lack

B they can actually appreciate its artistic value

C it helps them recall past emotions and sensations

5 Throughout history, art has been used ...

A to educate the population

B as a way to enjoy and value beauty

C to promote people and organisations

6 The interviewer claims taht people are reluctant to visit museums because they ...

A refuse to be bullied by art experts

B feel insecure about their knowledge of art

C are not capable of appreciating works of art

7 The information offered in museums about the exhibits ...

A cannot really help a person appreciate them

B can be very interesting and useful for the visitor

C Is too complex to be understood by an ordinary person

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8 The reason why people don't enjoy art is because ...

A only the highly educated classes have real access to it

B they lack the necessary money and knowledge to do it

C they have been forced to approach it in a restrictive way

9 A work of art usually becomes popular ...

A when it has a high artistic value

B if its creator is a renowned artist

C due to factors not always related to art

10 One of the roles of art throughout history has been to ...

A awaken hidden emotions

B fight for the rights of the underprivileged

C raise awareness about certain problems

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Piya: Art, what's it good for? Well, according to Alain de Botton, plenty. He says art can help us find happiness, forge good relationships, and come to terms with our own mortality. But can we really find that peering into a painting? Here now to help us answer that we welcome back Alain de Botton, philosopher and co-author of Art as Therapy. He's also the co-curator of the exhibition series of the same name that is currently taking place at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Welcome back.

Alain de Botton: Thank you so much.

Piya: Nice to have an exhibit at he AGO, huh?

Alain de Botton: It's such a treat, and they've been so nice.

Piya: OK, we're gonna be talking about the importance of art but I wanna unpack the title of your book a little bit first. Why does art have a therapeutic value?

Alain de Botton: Okay. It's a little shocking to say that art has a therapeutic value because we've grown up with this world and it's very odd when nice and intelligent people will tell you things like art has no purpose, art is there just for art's sake and sometimes when you go into museums you think... what I am supposed to think? what am I supposed to do? Because it's almost like no one's really telling you. It's just art, it's very important but no one quite knows what it's for.

And I think that that's a real problem I think it's possible to say what it's for and the argument put forward in the book is that art is to be therapeutic. Now, what does that mean, therapeutic? I don't mean like lying on the couch five days a week and and and spilling out your childhood, I mean the therapeutic in a loose sense like we would say a vacation was therapeutic or er... this book, reading a book was therapeutic or seeing my mother was therapeutic so generally it enhances life in a huge variety of ways, anything from you know we'll deal with a little melancholy to may make you deliriously happy, to you know may lend er... some interesting thoughts. I've got a kind of rebalancing theory of art, the art that we love contains, in a kind of concentrated form, many of the qualities that we need but we don't have enough of in ourselves and so by getting close to that art you, yo u know, feel back in in in touch with it so even though people will often resist the idea that art is useful, it is actually useful and it sounds odd because we we've just allowed ourselves to fall into this trap that art's kind of got no purpose. For most of human history art was very closely identified with a purpose during the Christian era, in the west, the whole point of art, all this beautiful altar pieces etc. It was all made as propaganda for the church.

Then, there was all sort of propaganda for governments, then there was lots of propaganda for individuals and wealthy families etcetera and, I think, you can still look at a lot of art and say it's got an agenda, it's got something it wants to teach you and that's always a problem it's just that we stop talking about it that way.

Piya: We're gonna look at some pieces a little later and talk about their therapeutic value, if I can put it that way, but you know a lot of people are resistant to go into museums because someone has told them what is and is n't good art or that is bad art and the pressure on the individual to have knowledge and information to to know what good art is is is overwhelming so who gets to decide what is and isn't good art or bad art for that matter?

Alan de Button: I mean. I think you'll see right people often feel quite uncomfortable in in museums, especially large impressive kind of galleries and I think the the thought is what am I supposed to do here? So you come up against a great canvas of about something and you look at the caption it tells you this was painted in X by the painter Y and it was bought and sold by bla, bla, bla... but it doesn't tell you very much else and and this idea that we simply look at dates and you know what it was painted on and who bought and sold it. You can't love a work of art because of that. There's may be reasons very fascinating bits of factual information, historical information. But no one has ever fallen in love with oil on canvas and you know, our argument is we should love art like we love music. Think of the way people behave with music, right?, we use music totally therapeutically, art, basically for economic reasons has been in the hands of a narrow elite who owns museums, who owns the physical things and they've said to us two things: A, it's really important to go and and see them in art museums so you got to pay your twenty dollars to go and see that museum; and B, when you're with us you've got to pay attention to the history, the materials etcetera and that's almost killed popular enjoyment of art. So we've really... I think that organizations have really lost the plot on explaining art.

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Piya: Names like Rembrandt, Picasso... they're familiar to all of us. Why are these artists so particularly important?
Alain de Botton: A lot of it is accident I mean, why is the Mona Lisa the the most famous painting in the world? It's arbitrary it's got to do with quirks of art history, money often etc.
Piya: And the story behind.
Alain de Botton: And the story behind it.
Piya: I want to bring up a painting this is called Woman with a Spade, I've actually never seen this, what therapeutic value does this have?
Alain de Botton: Well one of the functions of art is to help us to care about other people so in the history of art there's some key moments when artists have put on the agenda certain very important injustices but also just issues and they've got them on the agenda not by reporting factually on them but by doing so in a way of reporting on the... in a way that stirs us as as as emotional creatures.
Piya: Appreciate your time thank you lovely to meet you.
Alain de Botton: Thank you so much.
Piya:Thanks for being here.

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