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Conceptual Art A&I (Art And Ideas)



Synopsis

What is art? Must it be a unique, saleable luxury item? Can it be a concept that never takes material form? Or an idea for a work that can be repeated endlessly? Conceptual art favours an engagement with such questions. As the variety of illustrations in this book shows, it can take many forms: photographs, videos, posters, billboards, charts, plans and, especially, language itself. Tony Godfrey has written a clear, lively and informative account of this fascinating phenomenon. He traces the origins of Conceptual art to Marcel Duchamp and the anti-art gestures of Dada, and then establishes links to those artists who emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s, whose work forms the heart of this study: Joseph Kosuth, Lawrence Weiner, Victor Burgin, Marcel Broodthaers and many others.

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Customer Reviews

"Tony Godfrey's book is the intelligent, well argued, comprehensive and beautifully presented survey of Conceptual art we have been waiting on for years. It is both accessible and easily readable while at the same time conceding little intellectual high ground. This is an exquisitely designed paperback which both looks and feels the business. Buy it, steal it, or get your local library to buy it. This is that rare thing - an indispensable classic that is a must for anyone interested in understanding the roots of contemporary art."-Contemporary Visual Arts "Authoritative."-Christie's Books "More than just a compilation of sources, documents, and images... Osborne offers an original, challenging, reinterpretation of Conceptual Art... A solid contribution to the burgeoning re-examination of Conceptual Art."-Barry Schwabsky, BookForum On the Art & Ideas series "Art &

Ideas has broken new ground in making accessible authoritative views on periods, movements and concepts in art. As a series it represents a real advance in publishing."-Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate London "The format is wonderful and offers what had long been missing in academic studies: usable manuals for specific themes or periods... I am definitely not alone in welcoming Art & Ideas as a precious set of teaching tools."-Joachim Pissarro, Yale University "Phaidon's series may prove to be the pick of the crop. It boasts expert but undogmatic texts and a wealth of illustrations."-The Sunday Telegraph

Tony Godfrey is Programme Director of the MA in Contemporary Art at Sotheby's Institute, London. His books include *New Image Painting in the 1980s* and *Drawing Today*.

i havent quite begun it but from paging through randomly it looks comprehensive, written in plain English and well suited for someone like me who eschews high and mighty intellectualisation but appreciates a well informed picture of the language of conceptual art.

This book is great!

None

If you want to know anything about the conceptual art movement, chances are better than not that the information can be found here. This is an extremely detailed, sharply analytical book loaded with photographs. I found it a very enjoyable read, learning about the creativity of so many of the conceptual artists.

If you're one of those people who enjoy going to art musuems, but find yourself scratching your head at the piles of plastic bones, jars of fat, or sound boxes that endlessly repeat "chatter chatter chatter" installed in dark rooms, this book will be of great assistance. Conceptual art is simply a different world. It's not a pretty painting or a beautiful sculpture (though "pretty" and "beautiful" are relative to the extreme); it's more of a reaction to these things, a response to the notion of what art is, or a heightening and re-evaluation of the question "what is art?"The best "explanation" of conceptual art in this book is by the philosopher Arthur C Danto. He suggests that at some point art moved from the purely aesthetic to the purely philosophical; without a theoretical background it is very difficult to see why a Brillo box or a neon light that glows and pulsates the words "Eat and Die"

is considered art. The "art" is in the concept, not necessarily in the physical work itself. Conceptual art is thus highly intellectual (usually), abstract, and typically doesn't aim for the mere appreciation of a physical object. That many of the artists mentioned in this book use concepts from philosophers like Wittgenstein doesn't refute the claim that conceptual art inhabits an almost purely mental or philosophical realm. To appreciate it, the viewer must go beyond the basic act of seeing. The book begins with some introductory remarks concerning conceptual art, then discusses its origins in the work of Duchamp, Dada, and cubism. The bulk of the book concentrates on what is considered the peak of conceptual art, or the years 1966 to 1972. Apart from the artistic developments of the times discussed, political and social developments are detailed in parallel. This brings out the political side of conceptual art which many felt (and feel) is the true aim of all conceptual art. Along these lines there are some disturbing images such as the piece "Q: And babies? A: and babies" which is a photograph of dead bodies (adults and children) in a ditch taken during the Vietnam war. There is also an entire chapter dedicated to women and conceptual art - which contains another disturbing piece entitled "rape scene", a chapter about conceptual artists using photography, and a discussion about the dissolution of the art object, and almost the artists themselves, as a "progression" of art in the twentieth century. A particularly fascinating discussion revolves around the debate as to whether art is or is not a commodity, and that conceptual art's attempt to remove the commodity from art was doomed to failure from the start. Parts, smaller parts, of the book discuss art in other countries.

These are mostly cursory discussions, but are still interesting for their own part. The final chapter discusses conceptual art in the 1990s, and conceptual art's legacy in general. For modern museum denizens there are many familiar names mentioned here in connection with conceptual art:

Duchamp, Man Ray, Magritte, Warhol, Bruce Nauman, Ad Reinhardt (with his great "What do YOU represent" cartoon of 1945), Piero Manzoni (who literally had his own excrement canned), Claes Oldenburg, John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Frank Zappa, Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys, even Laurie Anderson, and many others far too numerous to list. One of the more interesting projects discussed is Hans Haacke's "Manet-PROJEKT 74" in which Manet's "Bunch of Asparagus" of 1880 was to be displayed next to placards describing the political and economic status of the individuals that have owned the piece since its original sale. The Wallraf-Richartz museum in Cologne did not appreciate the concept and rejected it, likely due to the fact that the last placard described an individual's, one who had helped the museum acquire the Manet, known ties to the Third Reich. This is conceptual art being both political and self-referential (not to mention historically fascinating). Throughout, the pictures and layout are incredible (as is typical for Phaidon). The text can get pretty thick at times when it describes some of the pieces. At other times it seems to be brief, as if the author was trying to

get in as much as possible. Overall the discussion is a good one and will enlighten anyone looking for guidance through the maze of bizarre objects that live in modern museums.

Writes about the movement and ideas in plain, clear language, drawing links between the ideas and the social backdrop of the times. Handles a visually unappealing art movement assuredly with his writing.

This book is a superb introduction to not just Conceptual Art, but the way of thinking and looking at Art in general. It provides the reader with background information and contextualizes the artworks and the artists included. Covers the timeline from Dada to the recent yBa (Young British Artists) and describes the evolution of Art in this century. It was easy to read and understand. An inspiration!

A great history of conceptual art. It was easy to read and understand. A few topics I found interesting were "Duchamp and Data", "Varieties of Conceptual Art", "Women Conceptual Artists" and "Political and Institutional Contexts." A great book for anyone who is interested in conceptual art.

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