



Defining Contemporary Art: 25 Years in 200 Pivotal Artworks

By Daniel Birnbaum, Cornelia H. Butler, Suzanne Cotter

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In the mid-1980s the sprouting of new movements that had driven modern art since the nineteenth century finally went dormant, sputtering out with a last few half-hearted lels ('pattern painting', 'neo-geo', 'commodity art'). But this was not the end of art history -- far from it. In the years since, art's creative development has remained more vibrant than ever, resulting in a staggering diversity of new forms.

Defining Contemporary Art responds to this unique landscape with an innovative approach to art history. Assembled and written by eight of the most prominent curators working today, all of whom have both witnessed and shaped this period, *Defining Contemporary Art* tells the story of the two hundred pivotal artworks of the past twenty-five years. These artworks include not only the most talked out pieces but also the quietly influential works, those which may have been overlooked at the time of their making but which went on to change the paradigm of their era. Arranged year by year, these two hundred works provide a true chronological depiction of creativity in our era, forming a mosaic in which readers may find their own patterns..

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Editorial Review

Review

"...the reader is tempted with an array of dazzling images and supporting essays to tease out their own grand narratives. Whether you are an art historian, collector or a casual art peruser, this survey of the past 25 years from a curatorial perspective is certainly a feast for the eyes." - *The Huffington Post*

"...not only addresses the obstacle of pinning down the nebulous term "contemporary art," but also manages to pull off a legible presentation of it in a single book. . . Ultimately, *Defining Contemporary Art* functions as both a demonstration of contemporary curation and a poly-contextualized historical view." - *Art Log*

About the Author

Daniel Birnbaum is Director of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Formerly Curator of Portikus and Rektor at the Staedelschule in Frankfurt, he has also organized numerous international exhibitions, including the 52nd Venice Biennale (2009) and the 1st Moscow Biennial (2004).

Cornelia Butler is Curator of Drawings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. From 1996 to 2005 she was Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, where her exhibitions included 'Robert Smithson' (2004), and the major touring exhibition 'Wack!: Art and the Feminist Revolution' (2007).

Suzanne Cotter is Curator of Exhibitions at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. From 2002 to 2010 she was Senior Curator of Modern Art Oxford, where her exhibitions included 'Out of Beirut' (2006) and 'Pawel Althamer: Common Task' (2009). In 2011 she co-curated the 10th Sharjah Biennial.

Bice Curiger has been Curator at the Kunsthaus Zurich since 1993, and is Artistic Director of the 53rd Venice Biennale (2011). She is also Editor-in-Chief of Parkett, which she co-founded in 1984, and Publishing Director of Tate etc. magazine.

Okwui Enwezor is Director of the Haus der Kunst in Munich and Adjunct Curator at the International Center of Photography in New York. His exhibitions as an independent curator include 'The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945-1994' (2001-02), and he served as the Artistic Director of the 7th Gwangju Biennial (2008), Documenta 11 (2002) and the 2nd Johannesburg Biennial (1999).

Massimiliano Gioni is Associate Director and Director of Exhibitions at the New Museum, New York, and Artistic Director at Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan. In 2010 he curated the 8th Gwangju Biennial. As a member of the Wrong Gallery he co-curated the 4th Berlin Biennial (2006) and numerous artist projects in New York.

Bob Nickas is an independent curator based in New York. He has organized more than eighty exhibitions since 1984 and served on the teams responsible for Aperto at the Venice Biennale in 1993 and the 2003 Biennale de Lyon. From 2003-06 he was Curatorial Advisor at PS1 Contemporary Art Center in New York.

Hans Ulrich Obrist is Co-Director of Exhibitions and Programmes and Director of International Projects at the Serpentine Gallery, London. He has been co-curator of such international biennials as Manifesta 1 (Rotterdam, 1996), the 50th Venice Biennale (2003) and the 2nd Guangzhou Biennial (2005).

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