



Art and the Power of Placement

By Victoria Newhouse

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Where and how an artwork is presented can enhance it or detract from it, or even alter its meaning. Depending on the display, painting and sculpture can denote a religious, political, decorative, or educational significance, as well as aesthetic and commercial value. Just how powerful the effect of placement can be is demonstrated in this book by in-depth case studies and comparisons of art installations around the world and from antiquity to the present, all richly illustrated.

Author Victoria Newhouse continues the investigation she began in her last book, *Towards a New Museum*, of the critical relationship between container and contents. Not limited to museums, Newhouse branches out to explore noteworthy displays of art in commercial galleries and in private homes and gardens, as well as in a number of unusual venues. She concludes with some guidelines for display that apply as much to the hanging of a picture in a private interior as to the installation of a museum show.

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Editorial Review

From [The New Yorker](#)

In this brisk and lavishly illustrated study, our responses to works of visual art are shown to depend, much more than we realize, on the way they are presented. A classical Greek sculpture that once stood in for the god's presence becomes, when transported to imperial Rome, a symbol of conquest. Soft wall textures and muted tones in a museum temper the light and bring out the colors in Impressionist paintings, while hard surfaces dull and flatten them. In a fascinating chapter on Jackson Pollock, Newhouse demonstrates how the tendency of many museums to provide larger and larger wall spaces, in order to accommodate the increasing size of contemporary art works, has done Pollock and others a disservice. Pollock's greatest paintings, mounted on walls that are either too long or too high, can lose much of the explosive energy that made them famous.

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About the Author

Victoria Newhouse is an architectural historian and the author of *Towards a New Museum* and *Wallace K. Harrison, Architect*. She also founded and directed the Architectural History Foundation, a nonprofit publisher of scholarly books.

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