



## Modern Art in America 1908-68

By William C. Agee

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**Modern Art in America 1908-68** By William C. Agee

### A radical re-evaluation of American modernism

The importance of American artists in the history of modern art is well-known and well-documented, from Jackson Pollock to Mark Rothko and Andy Warhol. However, the work of such artists did not spontaneously appear after World War II, nor was it simply transplanted from Europe. There is a longer, subtler history of the development of modernism in relation to American artists, as well as teachers, patrons and collectors, which can be traced through the first half of the twentieth century.

William C. Agee's analysis includes artists working in the first half of the century, such as Arthur Dove, Stuart Davis, Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, Georgia O'Keeffe, and John Marin, as well as a discussion of the continuity between this period and the artists who went on to become celebrated internationally, such as Arshile Gorky, Edward Hopper, Helen Frankenthaler, Willem de Kooning, Morris Louis, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and Donald Judd.

Agee also integrates the work of certain European artists who became central to modern American art. Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, Marcel Duchamp and Piet Mondrian as well as Josef Albers and Hans Hofmann became influential teachers (and eventually American citizens), impacting strongly on the likes of Stuart Davis and many others, who have not necessarily been compared or connected to the European art canon previously.

As a radical re-evaluation of art history from the early twentieth century to the late 1960s, this brilliant new account of American modernism is a must-read for students and scholars of art as well as all those interested in modernism and its wider cultural history.

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### Review

"That rarity of rarities, an opinionated but not eccentric scholarly history by a veteran museum curator whose every page crackles with original thinking and bears the stamp of a preternaturally sharp eye." —*The Wall Street Journal*

"Illuminating... *Modern Art in America* is a magisterial book - rich, readable, and resplendent - that promises radically to realign our understanding of a visual age more native and deeply complex in its making than has hitherto been shown." —*Art Quarterly*

"The quirkiness of *Modern Art in America* is part of what makes it so valuable. It's not only a heroic effort, but also an intensely personal record of the meditation of one of our most acute and thoughtful observers on the art he cares most about, over a lifetime." —*The New Criterion*

"Perfect for modernist art geeks eager to question everything they think they know or, really, anyone interested in learning more about this fascinating period in art history." —*BOOOOOOOM!*

"In his taut survey *Modern Art in America 1908-68*... William C. Agee highlights the importance of early trends... Excellent reproductions and crisp typography complement the lucid prose." —*The Wall Street Journal*

### About the Author

William C. Agee taught at Hunter College since 1988 until his retirement in 2014 and was awarded an endowed chair in 2004, the Evelyn Kranes Kossak Professor of Art History. Prior to Hunter, he held directorships at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and at the Pasadena Art Museum. Agee has published numerous articles and monographs in conjunction with exhibitions he has organized on artists such as Stuart Davis, Morgan Russell, Donald Judd and many others, as well as on aspects of modern art in America. His books include *American Vanguard: Graham, Davis, Gorky, de Kooning, and Their Circle, 1927-1942* (2011) and *Coming of Age: American Art, 1850s to 1950s* (2006). Agee is based in Yonkers, NY.

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