



Beyond the Brillo Box: The Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective

By Arthur C. Danto

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In this collection of interconnected essays, Arthur C. Danto argues that Andy Warhol's Brillo Box of 1964 brought the established trajectory of Western art to an end and gave rise to a pluralism which has changed the way art is made, perceived, and exhibited. Wonderfully illuminating and highly provocative, his essays explore how conceptions of art—and resulting historical narratives—differ according to culture. They also grapple with the most challenging issues in art today, including censorship and state support of artists.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In Danto's view, artists' feelings of belonging to a continuous tradition vanished around 1965, one year after Andy Warhol's Brillo Box. In the current "post-historical" epoch, he writes, postmodernists make pathetic stabs at reconnecting with the past, when what is really necessary is an art responsive to human needs. In these often heavy, academic lectures and essays for journals and catalogues, the Columbia philosophy professor and Nation columnist interprets Pop Art as "a sacramental return of the thing to itself" and applies his definition of artworks as symbolic expressions to a discussion of African "primitive" art and Chinese painting. One challenging essay deals with Western art's "master narrative," comprising the Renaissance's "narrative of recovery," the Enlightenment scenario of progress and modernism which, for Danto, began when Van Gogh and Gauguin turned for inspiration to Japan, Egypt and Polynesia. Elsewhere he defends the National Endowment for the Arts' sponsorship of the controversial Robert Mapplethorpe exhibit and delves into minimalism, museum architecture and pluralism in the arts. Illustrations.

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Review

"[Danto is] the one contemporary thinker about art that every intellectual interested in the subject must read."--Carlin Romano, "Philadelphia Inquirer"

From the Inside Flap

"Arthur Danto is the most radical writer on art in America—radical because his prose is clear, because he is indifferent to fashion, because he loves art."—Richard Sennett

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