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Women, Art, And Power And Other Essays (Icon Editions)



Synopsis

Women, Art, and Power; seven landmark essays on women artists and women in art history; brings together the work of almost twenty years of scholarship and speculation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Linda Nochlin is Distinguished Professor of Art History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has taught at Columbia University, Stanford University, Williams College, and Hunter College.

I purchased this book for an Art class that I am taking. It is a good read.

These essays give a terrific grounding in feminist theory...even though they were generally written a long time ago....the book was published in 1988...a good place from which to launch one's understanding of not only women and art but social history in general and how it shapes one's life and opportunities...

Thank you very much. I certainly will look forward to doing more business with you in the near future.
Joan

I choose this for my class, it is a really good book. and this book is 100% new. I love it.

This volume is a collection of seven of Linda Nochlin's occasional essays written in 1971-1988, and all having to do, in one way or another, with women and art. The first of them is the title essay, which Nochlin characterizes in her introduction as "an ongoing and open-ended project," which she finally brought to an end in 1988, and which discusses the various interrelationships between women, art and power in several works from the end of the 18th century until the 20th. The object is to analyze the ways in which power operates on women and art and contrives to conceal its very operations so that the existing conditions appear naturally ordained and immutable. It is a good general introduction to Nochlin's thinking. The concluding essay in the book, the by now famous "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" from 1971, was the first to appear chronologically and is the seminal piece that started the whole business of feminist art history. (I realize that "seminal" may seem an inappropriate term in this context, but Nochlin herself uses it in reference to Susan Sontag's equally fundamental 1964 article "Notes on 'Camp'" (p. 115).) It is imperative to understand how Nochlin meant this question. First, it was not posed from a male perspective, to which a feminist rejoinder might have been "Well, there have been some, but the men would never admit to that." Nor was it meant to beg the definition of "greatness." Nor was it in any way a "male-chauvinist distortion of history" (p. 150). What Nochlin was asking is why, in fact "there ARE no women equivalents for Michelangelo or Rembrandt, Delacroix or Cezanne, Picasso or Matisse. . ." (p. 150). It is important to recognize that the absence of great women artists is an objective, social and historical fact, because that means that the causes of that situation must be sought also in objective, social and historical facts. That there have been no great women artists is not because women lack the talent, drive, imagination or whatever, but because social organization has not allowed them to emerge. One example: up until the end of the 19th century and the emergence of abstract art, close and prolonged study of the nude model was an absolutely necessary part of every art student's training, but social ideas of proper decorum prohibited women from following such study: "nice" women didn't do that. This is not some sort of conscious male conspiracy; it is due simply to "the very nature of our institutional structures themselves and the view of reality which they impose on the human beings who are part of them" (p. 152). That awareness is at the basis of all the essays in this collection, as it is in all of Linda Nochlin's work. In "Eroticism and Female Imagery in Nineteenth-Century Art," for example, what she is after is not some "mere personal fantasy" but the "socially determined concomitants and conventions of erotic imagery" (p. 136). A model of her usual procedure is her analysis of Berthe Morisot's painting "Wet Nurse": acknowledging at the very beginning the painting's astonishing formal daring and extraordinary

facture--"almost Fauve before the fact," as she puts it (p. 37)-- she immediately delves into the social meaning of its equally innovative subject matter. One can of course regard this canvas naively, as a baby being suckled by its wet nurse, a charming genre scene, but Nochlin shifts the focus a bit to concentrate on the nurse, and--lo!--the picture becomes not a beguiling family cameo but a work scene, just as surely as contemporary pictures of laundresses, iron-workers, or stone-breakers are work scenes. The context then is the social history of wet-nursing in the 19th century and its wider implications in women's attitudes to motherhood, to the compatibility of motherhood and work, etc. To read these essays together and to see them in their own context is to realize all the more that "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists" was a really loaded question when it was asked forty years ago, and something like the Big Bang of feminist art history. This is now such an established discipline, its fruits have been so convincing and enlightening, and it has become such an essential part of our historical discourse that it seems as if it must always have been there. But it wasn't; before Linda Nochlin's early work, and the efforts of others which it inspired, there was no such thing as feminist art history, and for that reason alone the essays gathered here are of fundamental historical importance.

The product is worth the price, it looks very beautiful. I am very satisfied with it, since received, I have been using. Overall, I am very satisfied with it. Overall I highly recommend this to anyone who is looking for lights for decoration. Good deal! Recommend! it's really bad. These work great! it has a good cost performance. does exactly what it says for a great value

Nochlin's collection of essays really hits the mark. Accessible to both the casual art lover and the aficionado, "Women Art and Power" is a truly stunning contribution to the canon of feminine art theory.

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