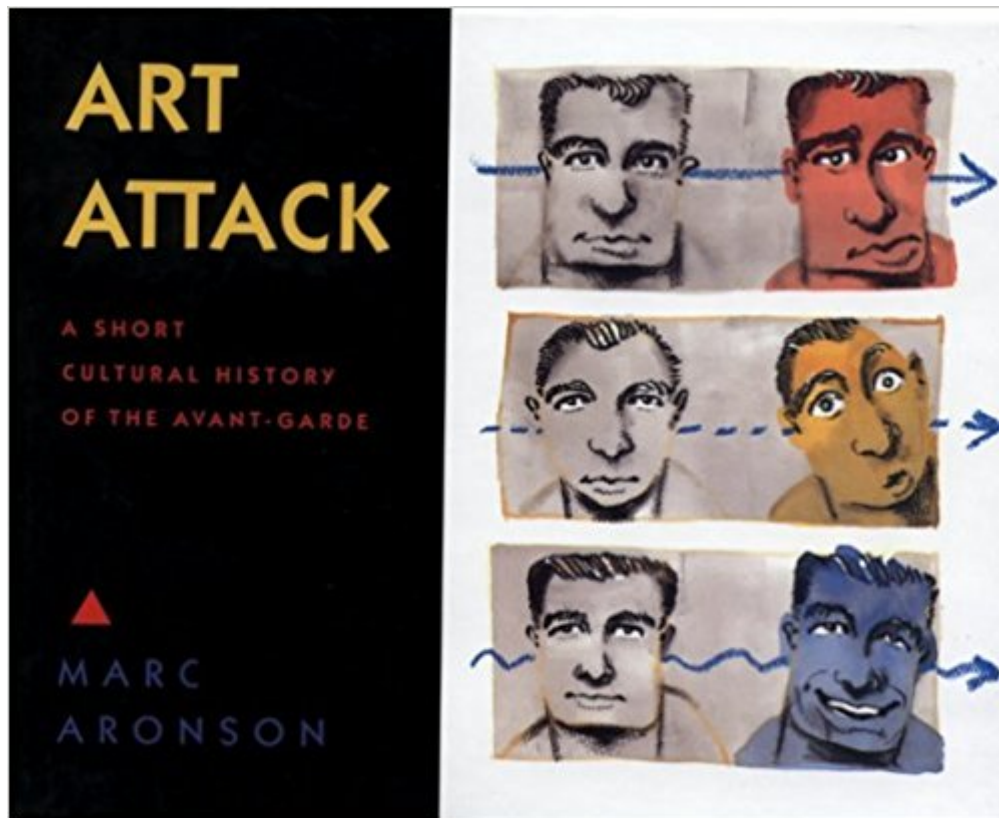




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# Art Attack: A Brief Cultural History Of The Avant-Garde



## Synopsis

In the army, the advance guard is the first wave of soldiers who rush into enemy territory, risking their lives to map out the terrain. In the arts, the avant-garde consists of people who have devoted their talents, even their lives, to seeing the future and to confronting others with their visions. This intriguing introduction to modern art examines the avant-garde from its nineteenth-century origins in Paris to its meaning and influence today. It presents the visionaries who took the greatest risks, who saw the furthest, and who made the most challenging art-art that changed how we imagine our world. From cubism to pop art and beyond, this is the story not only of those risk takers, but of their creations and of the times in which they lived. Notes, bibliography, index.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Aronson combines traditional art historical narrative with his personal passion for all of the arts to make a convincing case that pop art, surrealism, dadaism, cubism, abstract expressionism and all the other "isms" of convention-defying avant-garde art can be intelligible to young readers.

Ambitious yet accessible, this volume describes virtually every artistic movement challenging the social, political and cultural status quo from the 1830s to the present, each within its historical context from the bohemians of 19th-century Paris to the Generation Xers and cybertechies of

today. Scores of excellent black-and-white illustrations emphasize Aronson's points without distracting from the challenging text, and augment the lucid and compelling discussion. The author threads throughout the book suggestions for musical accompaniment ranging from Scott Joplin to Philip Glass and Sinead O'Connor, as well as literary references to Rimbaud and Kerouac, among others, and to the World Wide Web, and subtly portrays a multifaceted artistic movement awaiting the next generation's imprint. Critically acute yet tenderly sympathetic toward adolescent (and adult) curiosities, this survey will amply reward the adventurous, passionate and precocious reader. Ages 11-up. (June) FYI: For more information on the book, check out this Web site: <http://freenet.vcu.edu/education/literature/artattack.html>. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 9 Up-A deep and thoughtful social history of 20th-century art that rewards readers with an understanding of the historical forces that produced the art of their own times. Through chapters filled with names and events, and illustrated with carefully selected black-and-white artwork, the text weaves together the poetry, music, dance, and painting of Europe and America from 19th-century France through the World War generations to the sea change of the 1960s. The final chapters bring the story into the present age of computers and technology. The book opens with an account of the shock produced in the art world by the Armory Show of 1912. After a look back to the roots of the avant-garde in the bohemianism of 19th-century France, other beacons of change are highlighted, such as Nijinsky's erotic ballet performance in Rite of Spring in 1913 and the breakthrough paintings of Kandinsky and Malevich, Mondrian, and Warhol. The impact of rock and roll, Woodstock, punk, and New Age music are chronicled along with the work of John Cage and the minimalists. In fact, what is unique and appealing in Aronson's cultural history is his placing of experimental and popular music within the art world. At the beginning of each chapter, he suggests music appropriate to the paintings and performances under discussion. Extraordinary connections are offered: Dada and rap, Jackson Pollack and jazz, Jean-Michel Basquiat and Philip Glass. Any reader serious about today's music and interested in modern art can find in the suggested links and descriptions, as well as the notes on each chapter, the guidelines for a serious study of contemporary culture. An exceptional resource. Shirley Wilton, Ocean County College, Toms River, NJ Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

As mentioned by the reviewers above, this book is intended for teens. However, non-enthusiasts and adult readers that want to know more about the history of modern art will enjoy it as well. Basically, the author has attempted to show how modern artists have affected modern society and vice versa.

Unlike many art history books, this book talks about music, theater, dance and subcultures in society, such as the beats and the hippies. Accordingly, you end up with a fuller picture of the scene. The author has also attempted to make the impact of these works understandable to teens by using examples from the world as teens know it today, such as rap music, Internet, etc. All in all, teens interested in the art scene will find this book interesting and engrossing. Why 4 stars, rather than 5? I would prefer 4.5 stars, but that's not an option. My main objection to this book is the author's tendency to mythologize the avant garde artist and to whitewash some of their problems. But I would still recommend this book.

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