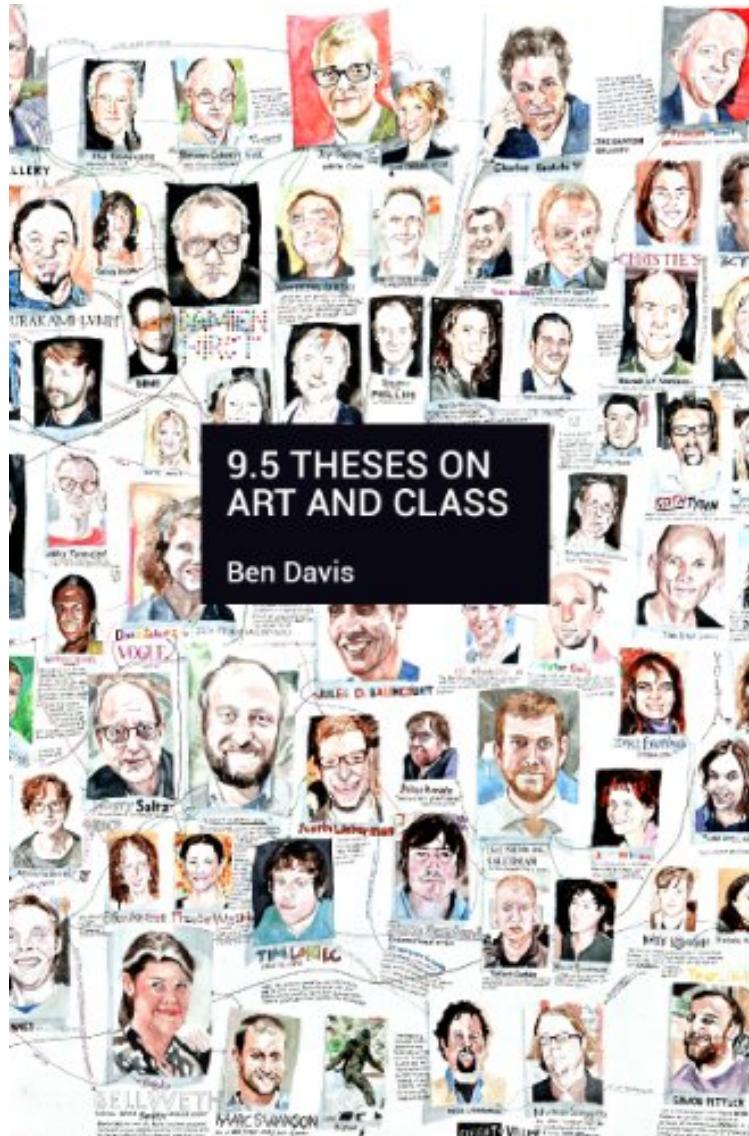


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Ben Davis : 9.5 Theses on Art and Class before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 9.5 Theses on Art and Class:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. An art critic for our time in historyBy Malvin "9.5 Theses on Art and Class" by Ben Davis provides a valuable post-Marxist perspective on contemporary art. Mr. Davis is an influential critic and editor whose essays on the relevance of art to the socio-economic struggles of our time are presented here in book form. This thoughtful book should appeal to readers both within and without the art community who want to contemplate the meaning of art and the possibility of a better future. The book is divided into four sections. 'Art and

'Class' suggests that art today is a middle-class vocation in which artists balance professional ambition and personal agency in a precarious manner. Mr. Davis advocates for greater public art education and local control in order to help artists and their works become more widely accessible to working class audiences.'Art and Politics' talks about how interpretation lies beyond the artist's control, confounding the political intentions of many artists and their works. Mr. Davis believes artists would be wise to align themselves with social movements and produce art that communicates authentic feelings and aspirations. The author also encourages his peers to criticize art with greater awareness of the social context in which it has been made.'Art and Its Audiences' discusses growing social inequality with the production and consumption of art. Mr. Davis explains how most artists struggle even as the fine art market has exploded: access matters as the industry has become dependent on patronage from the wealthy few. Mr. Davis believes that street art represents an empowering, populist response to growing socio-economic exclusion and decay. The author goes on to share his thoughts on the barriers that women artists face and how artists have helped support the Occupy movement.'Art and Theory' explores the realities of commerce versus theories about art's higher purpose. Interestingly, Mr. Davis contends that fine artists strive to create intellectual 'distance' in their works in order to distinguish themselves from the massively commercialized art of pop culture. Noting that hyperbole has substituted for serious criticism as art publications and dealers hustle for dollars from the superrich, Mr. Davis proposes a new methodology. Such a criticism must reject the kind of superficial, clever and cynical postmodern abstractions that tend to alienate general audiences from the art world and instead focus on the realities of our time in history. In the powerful Conclusion, Mr. Davis reiterates that artists must be understood in the context of today's brutal neoliberal world. Successful artists who escape the alienated condition of their labor through the act of autonomous creation serve as examples and give inspiration to us all. As the church-sanctioned art of yesteryear appears antiquated to postmodern eyes, Mr. Davis foresees a society that will become far more creative once it has thrown off the chains of capitalism. The author reasons that a contemporary art world that is no longer beholden to the privileged few will find fuller expression in a more peaceful, just and egalitarian society.

I highly recommend this excellent book to everyone. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

An Important Book
By CHL
This is a terrific book which I was loaned by a friend and then bought for my art history student daughter. The missing 5th star is just because I found the first couple of essays a bit of a tough read but then they do set up the author's theses. The essays shed great insight into the recent history of the art world and its politics. Overall, I think this is an important book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Accessible and great read
By Niko
This book is amazing. The essays are accessible and easy to read. It is not overly academic and full of art jargon. I appreciate the breadth of topics the author incorporates into the book.

9.5 Theses on Art and Class seeks to show how a clear understanding of class makes sense of what is at stake in a broad number of contemporary art's most persistent debates, from definitions of political art to the troubled status of "outsider" and street art to the question of how we maintain faith in art itself. Ben Davis currently lives and works in New York City where he is Executive Editor at Artinfo.