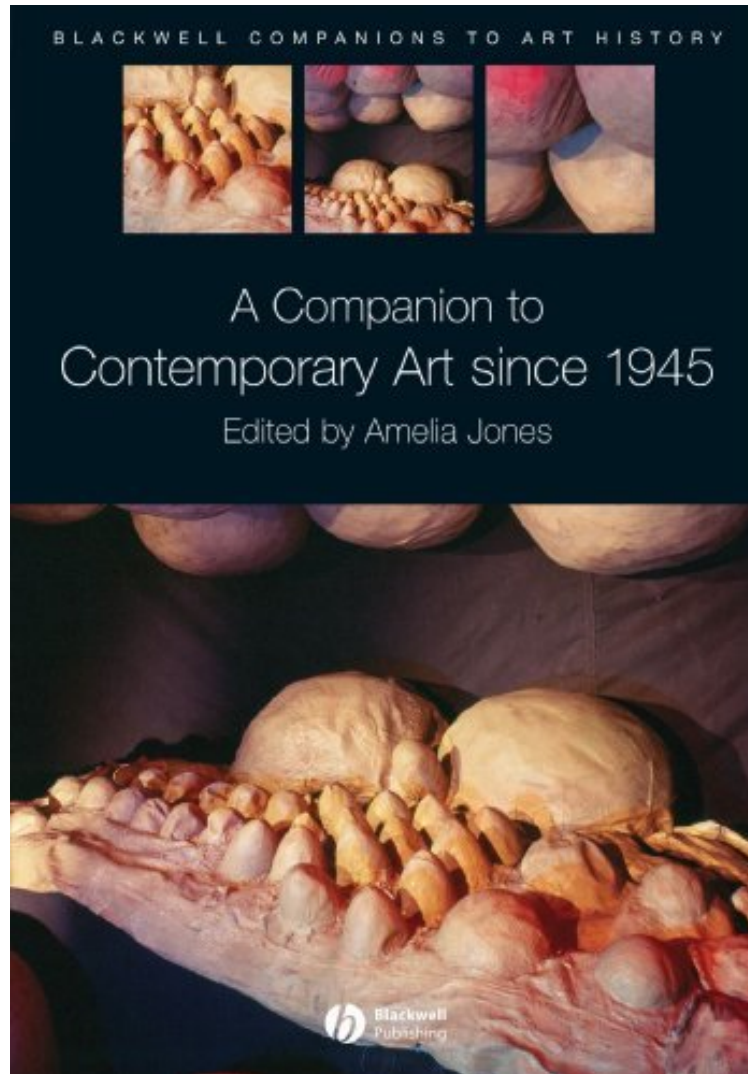



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A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945 (Blackwell Companions to Art History)

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From Wiley-Blackwell : A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945 (Blackwell Companions to Art History)
before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945 (Blackwell Companions to Art History):

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Splinters of analysis, not synthesis
By Wayne Dynes
In the years following the end of World War II, advanced American art, incarnated by such figures as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, came to the fore. Yet criticism lagged as the writers rallied in the first instance to defending the new art from the strictures of the old fogies. In this way a sort of rudimentary theory emerged, typically represented by Clement Greenberg's concepts of two-dimensionality and flatness. In short, advanced art was undertheorized. After

1968 this lack was addressed by a massive importation of French theory, as seen in the work of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan. Yet this verbal barrage did not fit the art works very well, a problem that haunts this book. In addition, many younger artists and critics held that art must be socially significant. As social movements proliferated, ranging from African American and Hispanic to feminist and LGBT, the narrative became fragmented. The fundamental problem with this book, however, is that the writers, most of them, oscillate between analysis and history, on the one hand, and cheer-leading, on the other. The effect is confusingly kaleidoscopic, yielding only splinters of analysis and not the synthesis that most are seeking.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Supplemental Essays on Fresh Art History By Dr. Debra Jan Bibel The reader will be sometimes disappointed, sometimes fascinated, sometimes frustrated, sometimes bored, and sometimes delighted with this extensive series of essays on the art world in America and Europe since WWII. As with most anthologies, the success of each chapter and section depends on the author's prose under editorial guidance. Only a few essays flow with life. Often I was crushed by dense boredom of unwarranted trivia and expansive interpretive perspectives (sometimes a cigar is just a good smoke) and disgruntled that favorite art movements are scarcely touched or entirely missed. Also, the heavy compensatory sociological discussions of feminism and gay/lesbian movements in art are highly repetitious. It quickly became apparent that the emphasis of the art scene here is on installations, performance, and multimedia conceptions over simple canvases and sculptures. Political agendas and the propaganda of rebellion take center stage. The artists themselves and the process of creation are mere ghosts. Despite such criticism, the book does discuss nicely aesthetics, ethnic diasporas, and also the new technology of digital imaging, electronics, and new materials. The scope of the book covers my entire life period, and I have followed the progress of the discussed movements since my youth. The book brought back memories and offered new insights. The Companion is just that, supplemental literature, and is not encyclopedic. I would not recommend the book for the general readership; instead, the art historian will find the book useful, particularly as an important reference, as notes and sources for further readings are included.

A Companion to Contemporary Art is a major survey covering the major works and movements, the most important theoretical developments, and the historical, social, political, and aesthetic issues in contemporary art since 1945, primarily in the Euro-American context. Collects 27 original essays by expert scholars describing the current state of scholarship in art history and visual studies, and pointing to future directions in the field. Contains dual chronological and thematic coverage of the major themes in the art of our time: politics, culture wars, public space, diaspora, the artist, identity politics, the body, and visual culture. Offers synthetic analysis, as well as new approaches to, debates central to the visual arts since 1945 such as those addressing formalism, the avant-garde, the role of the artist, technology and art, and the society of the spectacle.

"This Companion represents a move away from the more traditionally conceived broad surveys of contemporary art available to date, and is refreshing in its innovative approach to this complex subject ... essential reading for students and scholars of contemporary art history, visual culture, and visual theory, and general readers just wishing to develop their understanding of this complex subject." Reference s ldquo;Provocative, wide-ranging, and impressively inclusivehellip;a welcome and important addition for the understanding of the art of our historical present and a boon companion for the general reader, the artist, the student, the art historian and the critic alike.rdquo; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, University of California, Santa Barbara ldquo;By keeping its finger on the pulse of the present, while commenting on the recent past, this book reminds us why contemporary art, and contemporary art history, matters." Geoffrey Batchen, City University of New York

From the Back Cover This ambitious reference work charts the major works and movements, the most important theoretical developments, and the historical, social, political, and aesthetic issues in contemporary art since 1945, primarily in the Euro-American context. Dual chronological and thematic coverage of the major issues enables the reader to engage with multiple perspectives on current art movements and conceptual issues, and to consider future directions in the field. Topics covered include culture wars, public space, diaspora, new technologies, the artist, identity politics, the body, poststructuralism, and visual culture. The Companion also covers debates central to contemporary art practice and theory such as those addressing formalism, the avant-garde, and the society of the spectacle. Bringing together leading cultural critics and scholars from art history and allied fields to comment on the crucial historical and theoretical issues and debates that have conditioned our understanding of the contemporary visual arts, this volume offers new approaches toward the analysis of the visual arts in general. A stellar reference work, it is written for students and scholars of contemporary visual culture, art history, and visual theory, as well as the general reader interested in the development of this interdisciplinary field.

About the Author Amelia Jones is Pilkington Professor in the History of Art at the University of Manchester. She has curated many exhibitions and is the author of *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp* (1994), *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (1998), and *Irrational Modernism: A Neurasthenic History of New York Dada* (2004).