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## A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society, 1997-2008

Adrienne Rich

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### A HUMAN EYE

*Essays on Art in Society, 1997–2008*

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ADRIENNE RICH

National Book Foundation Medal Winner

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**Adrienne Rich : A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society, 1997-2008** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society, 1997-2008:

Adrienne Rich is the Blake of American letters. Nadine Gordimer Across more than three decades Adrienne Rich's essays have been praised for their lucidity, courage, and range of concerns. In A Human Eye, Rich examines a diverse selection of writings and their place in past and present social disorders and transformations. Beyond literary theories, she explores from many angles how the arts of language have acted on and been shaped by their creators worlds.

From Booklist Humanitarian poet Rich is a live-wire essayist, taking measure here of what she describes as a

“permeable membrane between art and society.” The title of her latest collection is from Karl Marx: “The eye has become a human eye only when its object has become a human, social object.” And it is this human connection and vision that Rich searches for in the literature she discusses. Strong writing, Rich believes, is about “how we are with each other,” and she finds this encompassing theme in the work of Muriel Rukeyser, whom Rich admires for her “poetics of historical sensibility”; James Baldwin, who was “uncanny” in his prescience; and June Jordan, who believed humor and pleasure are essential to social change. Rich deep-reads poetry written in the shadow of AIDS and during tyranny and war in Iraq, and argues that we must all be “resistant to dogma.” For all Rich’s shepherding us toward compassion and solidarity with those who suffer violence and injustice, she never ceases to praise the mystery intrinsic to poetry and art. --Donna Seaman Rich continues to refuse to separate the artistic from the political, and she articulates in powerful ways how a truly radical political agenda can draw upon an aesthetic vision . . . a vision both unsparing and full of hope. About the Author Widely read, widely anthologized, widely interviewed, and widely taught, Adrienne Rich (1929–2012) was for decades among the most influential writers of the feminist movement and one of the best-known American public intellectuals. She wrote two dozen volumes of poetry and more than a half-dozen of prose. Her constellation of honors includes a National Book Award for poetry for *Tonight, No Poetry Will Serve*, a MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant in 1994, and a National Book Award for poetry in 1974 for *Diving Into the Wreck*. That volume, published in 1973, is considered her masterwork. Ms. Rich’s other volumes of poetry include *The Dream of a Common Language*, *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*, *An Atlas of the Difficult World*, *The School Among the Ruins*, and *Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth*. Her prose includes the essay collections *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence*; *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*; an influential essay, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”; and the nonfiction book *Of Woman Born*, which examines the institution of motherhood as a socio-historic construct. In 2006, Rich was awarded the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters by the National Book Foundation. In 2010, she was honored with The Griffin Trust for Excellence in Poetry’s Lifetime Recognition Award.