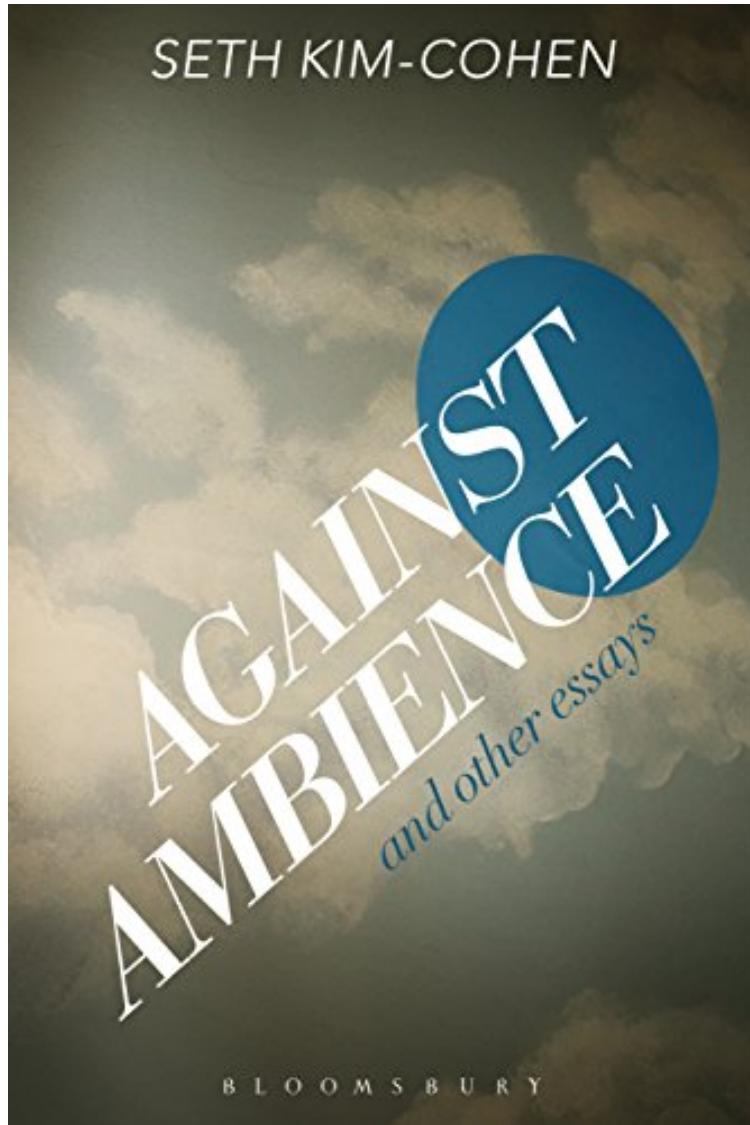


(Free) Against Ambience and Other Essays

## Against Ambience and Other Essays

*Seth Kim-Cohen*  
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**Seth Kim-Cohen : Against Ambience and Other Essays** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Against Ambience and Other Essays:

Against Ambience diagnoses - in order to cure - the art world's recent turn toward ambience. Over the course of three short months - June to September, 2013 - the four most prestigious museums in New York indulged the ambience of sound and light: James Turrell at the Guggenheim, Soundings at MoMA, Robert Irwin at the Whitney, and Janet

Cardiff at the Met. In addition, two notable shows at smaller galleries indicate that this is not simply a major-donor movement. Collectively, these shows constitute a proposal about what we wanted from art in 2013. While we're in the soft embrace of light, the NSA and Facebook are still collecting our data, the money in our bank accounts is still being used to fund who-knows-what without our knowledge or consent, the government we elected is still imprisoning and targeting people with whom we have no beef. We deserve an art that is the equal of our information age. Not one that parrots the age's self-assertions or modes of dissemination, but an art that is hyper-aware, vigilant, active, engaged, and informed. We are now one hundred years clear of Duchamp's first readymades. So why should we find ourselves so thoroughly in thrall to ambience? Against Ambience argues for an art that acknowledges its own methods and intentions; its own position in the structures of cultural power and persuasion. Rather than the warm glow of light or the soothing wash of sound, Against Ambience proposes an art that cracks the surface of our prevailing patterns of encounter, initiating productive disruptions and deconstructions.

"This fantastic new collection of essays confirms that Seth Kim-Cohen writes about sound and unsound, sense and nonsense, like no one else. Kim-Cohen polarizes?not just his readers, but his subjects and, inevitably, himself. The Big One-Thing is always cracked in two. Easy magic canrsquo;t get a break. But make no mistake. Kim-Cohen is a lover of intensities: litany becomes a hard bright joy, pleasure heaves its darkness into view. That love of intensity? faith, really?is what lets him break down the lsquo;superjokersquo; of rock rsquo;n roll without spoiling its punchline. An astonishing feat. We could all take a page." - Seth Brodsky, Assistant Professor of Music and the Humanities, The University of Chicago, USA"Against Ambience and Other Essays is like one of those bombs the anarchists dreamed of back at the birth of modernism: exploding whole worlds with a single throw. In their case, some wood panelling was splintered, tuxedoes were spoiled, and a few (usually the wrong) people injured. But Kim-Cohen here, once again, pulls off the more utopian dream?and with aplomb." - Craig Dworkin, Professor of English at the University of Utah, USA"[Against Ambience and Other Essays is] a polemical air horn that might just wake celebrants of ambient art from their nostalgic dream of decontextualized sensory immersion." - Lytle Shaw, Professor of English, New York University, USAAbout the AuthorSeth Kim-Cohen is Assistant Professor of Art History, Theory and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA.