



Experiments in Modern Realism: World Making in Postwar European and American Art

Alex Potts

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This major study offers a new understanding of the aesthetics and politics of postwar European and American art. Questioning the widespread assumption that the most innovative practices were non-representational, it shows how a powerful realist impulse operated alongside a strong commitment to abstraction. Alex Potts makes the case that the ambition to create work that engaged with the everyday and political realities of the world motivated much of the period's vital experimentation with medium and artistic process.

Experiments in Modern Realism is a refreshingly unorthodox account of the artistic and political impulses shaping the diverse practices that emerged in mid-20th century art. The wide variety of both canonical and lesser-known work it features ranges from free-form paintings by Dubuffet and De Kooning and assemblages by Rauschenberg and Fahlström to actions and happenings by Beuys and Kaprow. Engaging the fields of history, literature, politics, cultural theory, and art history, this book is a remarkably probing analysis of postwar art from one of the most important voices in art history today.

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