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A Brief History Of Curating: By Hans Ulrich Obrist (Documents)

Hans
Ulrich
Obrist
*A Brief
History of
Curating*



Synopsis

Part of JRP|Ringer's innovative Documents series, published with Les Presses du Réel and dedicated to critical writings, this publication comprises a unique collection of interviews by Hans Ulrich Obrist mapping the development of the curatorial field--from early independent curators in the 1960s and 70s and the experimental institutional programs developed in Europe and the U.S. through the inception of Documenta and the various biennales and fairs--with pioneering curators Anne D'Harnoncourt, Werner Hoffman, Jean Leering, Franz Meyer, Seth Siegelaub, Walter Zanini, Johannes Cladders, Lucy Lippard, Walter Hopps, Pontus Hulten and Harald Szeemann. Speaking of Szeemann on the occasion of this legendary curator's death in 2005, critic Aaron Schuster summed up, "the image we have of the curator today: the curator-as-artist, a roaming, freelance designer of exhibitions, or in his own witty formulation, a 'spiritual guest worker'... If artists since Marcel Duchamp have affirmed selection and arrangement as legitimate artistic strategies, was it not simply a matter of time before curatorial practice--itself defined by selection and arrangement--would come to be seen as an art that operates on the field of art itself?"

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Customer Reviews

I couldn't resist the title "Curatorspeak" for this review as in fact it is "curatorspeak" in the way that curators talk together. Well, Hans Ulrich Obrist have his model for interviewing people, a kind of laidback easy to read informal conversation. Most of the time it works great and the book gives great insight into the different curatorial approaches that his colleagues and predecessors have

towards exhibition-making. Sometimes, however, the informality of the conversation don't really give you a in depth-perpsective of what the curator he talks to actually thinks about exhibition-making. It could of course be that he doesn't have very deep thoughts on the subject, and maybe he is (bacause it is mainy men) more working from intuition and tacit knowledge. However, all in all it is a great introduction to curators who have been significant contributors to the development of exhibition-making since WW2 and in that respect it fulfills the title "A brief history of curating".

The book creates a history of curating through interviews of important art curators and writers of the 20th and 21st century. Hans Ulrich Obrist is a central figure in contemporary curating and here he proves his commitment to it with a series of references to important curating events of the past and current century. For someone with an interest in curating I can say this is a great book to start increasing your knowledge in the subject and because it is essentially composed of interviews it is very easy to read.

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