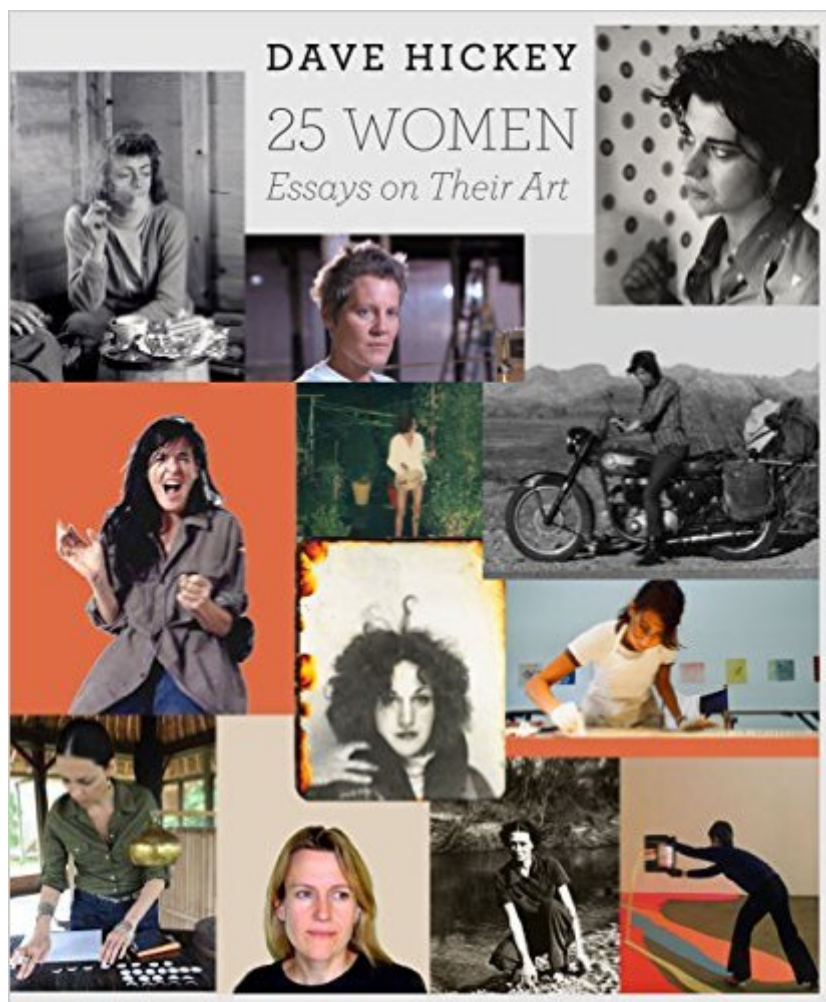


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# 25 Women: Essays On Their Art



## Synopsis

Newsweek calls him "exhilarating and deeply engaging." • Time Out New York calls him "smart, provocative, and a great writer." • Critic Peter Schjeldahl, meanwhile, simply calls him "My hero." • There's no one in the art world quite like Dave Hickey—and a new book of his writing is an event. *25 Women* will not disappoint. The book collects Hickey's best and most important writing about female artists from the past twenty years. But this is far more than a compilation: Hickey has revised each essay, bringing them up to date and drawing out common themes. Written in Hickey's trademark style—"accessible, witty, and powerfully illuminating"—*25 Women* analyzes the work of Joan Mitchell, Bridget Riley, Fiona Rae, Lynda Benglis, Karen Carson, and many others. Hickey discusses their work as work, bringing politics and gender into the discussion only where it seems warranted by the art itself. The resulting book is not only a deep engagement with some of the most influential and innovative contemporary artists, but also a reflection on the life and role of the critic: the decisions, judgments, politics, and ethics that critics negotiate throughout their careers in the art world. Always engaging, often controversial, and never dull, Dave Hickey is a writer who gets people excited—and talking—about art. *25 Women* will thrill his many fans, and make him plenty of new ones.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: University Of Chicago Press (January 14, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0226333159

ISBN-13: 978-0226333151

Product Dimensions: 7.6 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #234,986 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #35 in [Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes > Women in Art](#) #604 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > United States](#) #963 in [Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Criticism](#)

## Customer Reviews

I like Dave Hickey. I thought *Air Guitar* was a very good book. I've seen Hickey lecture and felt the same about his performance. So I am profoundly disappointed with this virtually unreadable

exercise in post-modern gobbledygook that pretends to act as serious art commentary. Here's a representative sentence: "Photographs supply an intellectual mise-en scene for Clemin's meticulous articulation of coextensive but conceptually distinct haptic spaces in which the image of nature, the objecthood of the work, and the activity of the artist reflexively signify one another" thus disrespecting the artificial division between the three domains of representation. "He can go on like this for pages. Here's the thing, a critic can use an artist's work as an opportunity to engage and enlarge the reader's sense of the visual experience of looking at art, or he can use it as a spring board for self aggrandizing prose based self-gratification, indulgent, flatulent, and intentionally obfuscatory. What Hickey has done here is wallow in the worst excesses of post-modern nonsense; appropriating the language of cloistered academic literary deconstructors while at the same time sneering at those inside those institutional walls. Well, it's boring to read, creates no added value to the work or ideas of the artists, and seems only intended to inflate Mr. Hickey's already bloated ego. And he doesn't even focus on especially interesting artists. Apparently recognizing this he offers an astonishingly misconceived dialogue between himself and Elizabeth Peyton, surely the worst portrait artist of the last 100 years. I was excited to get this book. I'm a fan of Joan Mitchell's work, I'm not averse to Bridget Riley, and a few of the remaining artists are tolerable. But the lion's share of his choices are mediocre at best and irrelevant in the main. There is great art writing. Robert Hughes taught us how it was done. Simon Schama perfected it. Ruskin was able to define the concept of the sublime such that anyone could use it to understand the works of Turner. Mr. Hickey has devolved into a parody of art criticism. By choosing the work of indifferent artists he finds it necessary to cloak his ideas in impenetrable language to disguise the shallowness of his choices.

As a female artist it is hard to find texts on recent game-changer alpha artist women. While it is easy to find writing on great male artists of our time, it's not so easy to find the women pushing at the same boundaries. Hickey remedies this in this book of essays, commissioned by the women for exhibition catalogues etc. over the years. We are introduced to 25 unique artists (who happen to be women) - they cannot be neatly summed up by art genre/styles/gender/taste, nor are they particularly alike in their work. What makes them of interest is their ability to follow their instincts and make the work they want to make, regardless of fashion, market, or theory. Hickey talks about their art through the lens of personal encounter and direct analysis, revealing artists worthy of more attention than has previously been acknowledged. The writing gave me a new appreciation of the work of Linda Benglis, Mary Heilmann, and Joan Mitchell, Roni Horn, Vanessa Beecroft and Elizabeth Peyton, whilst introducing me to the important work of Sarah Charlesworth (an essay so

full of insight I'm still trying to unpack it). Forget the critics going on about Hickey's ego or why his gender should preclude him from publishing such a text- this is a book about great art that needed to be written, with the blessing of the artists involved. It is a valuable resource.

Interesting look at women artist in 20th century.

Hickey has the most original prose voice in contemporary art criticism. In a field where also rans are ubiquitous Hickey shows what is possible with genuine talent.

Great book with Dave Hickey in fine form with valuable insight into 25 women artists

Wonderful book on Wonderful artists!!

Incredible read. Hickey at his best

Great witty writing.

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