Abstract Art (Movements in Modern Art Series)


Type of Research: Book
Creators: Gooding, Mel

Description: An historical and typological survey of abstract art in the twentieth century, rejecting the widely accepted notion that the story of abstraction can be traced as a succession of stylistic trends each set within its own art historical context, offering instead readings of specific works by artists as diverse as Kasimir Malevich, Wassily Kandinsky, Naum Gabo, Piet Mondrian, Willem de Kooning and Lucio Fontana, and treating them as exemplary of particular tendencies within the overlapping histories of abstraction.

The central issues addressed by the book concern the philosophical distinctions that underlie the various manifestations of international abstract art, and the critical weaknesses of a history of abstraction that dealt with it as a series of discrete 'movements'. This publication offers readings of specific paintings and sculptures treating them as exemplary of particular tendencies within an overlapping, non-linear history of abstraction. Defining distinctions between types of abstract art that may appear similar, and discovering underlying correspondences between those that may seem different, enables the reader to identify links between abstract works across traditional art-historical periods.

The primary critical approach used isolates individual works, and analyses them specifically in their historical and philosophical contexts. Following an introduction that explores the problems of definition in an historical context, the book is divided into four main sections: dealing with the great metaphysical abstractionists of the early twentieth century; tracing the relations of Cubism to photography; investigating Tatlin's materialism and the international constructivisms of de Stijl, El Lizitsky, Gabo, Moholy-Nagy and Vordemberge-Gildewart; and exploring the diverse transformations of the abstract idea in art effected in post-war New York and Europe, including considerations of Abstract Expressionism, European existential abstraction, abstraction and the visible natural world, and the spiritual abstractions of such artists as Ad Reinhardt, Klein, Fontana and Agnes Martin among others.

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It was the first abstract style of modern art. Cubist paintings ignore the traditions of perspective drawing and show you many views of a subject at one time. The Cubists believed that the traditions of Western art had become exhausted and to revitalize their work, they drew on the expressive energy of art from other cultures, particularly African art. There are two distinct phases of the Cubist style: Analytical Cubism (pre 1912) and Synthetic Cubism (post 1912). Futurism was a revolutionary Italian movement that celebrated modernity. The Futurist vision was outlined in a series of manifestos that attacked the long tradition of Italian art in favour of a new avant-garde. They glorified industrialization, technology, and transport along with the speed, noise and energy of urban life. An Italian movement in art and literature, founded in 1909 by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, aiming to capture the dynamism, speed and energy of the modern mechanical world. Impressionism. A term coined by Russian artist Kazimir Malevich in 1915 to describe an abstract style of painting that conforms to his belief that art expressed in the simplest geometric forms and dynamic compositions was superior to earlier forms of representational art, leading to the “supremacy of pure feeling or perception in the pictorial arts.”