

(Read and download) Relative Values: Or What's Art Worth?

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Louisa Buck, Philip Dodd : Relative Values: Or What's Art Worth? before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Relative Values: Or What's Art Worth?:

Why do we value art? In what ways do we assess its value? Why do we care so much about the signature of the artist on a painting? What relation does the financial value of a work of art bear to its aesthetic value? How are our perceptions of works of art influenced by viewing them in museums? These and other questions are answered in this book which spans past and present and travels the world to enquire into the nature of art. Accompanying a BBC television series, this book evaluates artists from Michelangelo to Andy Warhol, looks at museums from the Louvre to the Seibu department store's contemporary art gallery in Tokyo, considers the role of collectors from Lorenzo de Medici to Charles Saatchi and analyzes the way in which art is a source of wealth, power, prestige, beauty and even spirituality. This illustrated investigation into the way we value art aims to make us look afresh at the visual arts around us.

From Publishers Weekly ``How can we justify the commitment and passion lavished on objects which look unsubstantial and seem to be of no practical use?' This is just one of the questions addressed in this excellent primer on the shifting meaning--and hence value--of what we label ``art.' Written as a companion to a BBC series, this

accessible, intelligent book avoids the sophistry and fatuousness of Morley Safer's controversial 60 Minutes report on contemporary art, although it really should have been updated for U.S. release (much space is devoted to Mass MOCA, a project on semipermanent hold). Each of the five chapters is devoted to an important part of the valuation equation, including the development of the relatively recent myth of the artist as suffering genius rather than mere craftsman. Another chapter examines the art market and how "it does not merely sell art commodities but actively helps to define what counts as art." The motives of collectors and patrons come under scrutiny, and the final chapter focuses on museums, "which separate and enshrine the aesthetic properties of all artworks . . . by ensuring that their value is not debased by contact with objects lacking this exclusive glamour." The authors strengthen their contentions by including both contemporary and historical anecdotes, which serve the separate purpose of making this a very engaging read. Copyright 1994 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sA lively and contentious companion book to a six-part BBC television series that probes the question "Why do we value art so highly?" In clipped, sound-bite style, the authors examine the mechanisms of power that give fine art its metaphoric and economic glamour: critics, museums, auction houses, collectors, and the mass media. Buck is a journalist with art-historical training; Dodd edits a film and television journal, Sight and Sound. Graphically, they've given the book a visual noise worthy of MTV: The text is set near boldface and photographs and quotes fashion implied ironies. Smart art-historical revisionism doubles as pop-culture critique as the authors cite Kirk Douglas's depiction of Vincent Van Gogh in Vincente Minelli's 1956 film Lust for Life to skewer the more serious biographical stereotype of the "artist-as-genius." Elsewhere the authors speak of museums as creators and guardians of the "present orthodoxy," enshriners of status-quo social values. They cite figures like David Rockefeller, formerly chairman of the Museum of Modern Art and currently chairman emeritus, to demonstrate that art collecting is a "byword for power," in other words, that art, allegedly a spiritual good, is intimately tied to material wealth. Disparate artists are examined for their skills in politicized public manipulation, including Jacques Louis David, Jackson Pollock, Leon Golub, Jenny Holzer, and Jeff Koons. Throughout, the authors raise good, tough questions. Their answers, doggedly polemical, have less bite. They arrive at the unsurprising conclusion that "art, its meaning and value, are made, unmade and remade throughout history." Pointed British brattiness and cut-up compositional verve give this book style points. A thin volume, it ends--happily--before it runs out of gas. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.