

Field Notes on the Visual Arts

Seventy-Five Short Essays

What is the relation of art and history? What is art today? Why does art affect us? In *Field Notes on the Visual Arts*, seventy-five scholars, curators, and artists traverse chronology and geography to reveal the meanings and dilemmas of art. Organized under eight major headings—Anthropomorphism, Appropriation, Contingency, Detail, Materiality, Time, and Tradition—*Field Notes on the Visual Arts* brings together voices that are generally separated both inside and outside the academy and makes clear that the work of art is both meaningful and resistant to meaning.

Karen Lang will be Slade Professor of Fine Art at the University of Oxford (2019–20)

“Beginning with Elizabeth King’s luminous essay on facial expression in sculpture, and including Linda Connor’s observations on the ‘dumbfoundedness’ of photographs, Susan Hiller’s on dreams, Blake Stimson’s on the fetishism of art historians and Tom Huhn’s on the Classical basis of mimesis, this sparkling wunderkammer of a book offers a wealth of fresh perspectives on visual art.”

Nancy Princenthal, author of *Agnes Martin: Her Art and Life*, winner of the PEN/Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award for Biography

“For anyone interested in current debates around artistic theory and practice, perusing Field Notes on the Visual Arts will be like entering a particularly enticing candy store. Again and again, an unexpected association leads to a daring insight, a brilliant idea is followed by surprising analysis of an image. History and the present, scholarly rigor and accessibility, analytical contemplation and praxis: the volume manages to find just the right point of equilibrium between all these possible angles and directions. This collection of essays is a truly global enterprise, with contributions from all continents and innumerable cultural contexts.”

Prof. Itay Sapir, University of Quebec, Montreal

“The essays in this book provide an amazingly rich resource for thinking about the visual arts in just about every possible form—including painting, photography, sculpture, film, printmaking, architecture, video, textiles, ceramics—and from almost every conceivable angle. There is hardly a page here that does not contain insights and perspectives. Witty, irreverent, provocative, teasing, this is a book that gets you to stop and look, to notice and to take delight. One could hardly ask for more.”

Dr Christopher Hamilton, King’s College London

“In Field Notes on the Visual Arts, seventy-five leading voices respond to the diversity of images, objects, genres, and their changing meaning in different historical and cultural constellations. In a spirit akin to Aby Warburg in the tables of his image atlas, Karen Lang navigates through this opulent complexity with a compass of challenging headings, composing eight sites of reflection. The discourse on visual art is transformed into a journey of intellectual pleasure.”

Prof. Dr Sigrid Weigel, former Director of the Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung Berlin (Center for Literary and Cultural Research)

Karen Lang

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EDITED BY

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