Signifying Art: Essays on Art after 1960

Signifying Art: Essays on Art after 1960 considers the work of a generation of “respondents” to the New York School, including Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and Cy Twombly, who reintroduced pictorialism and verbal content in their paintings and assemblages. Their work, Marjorie Welsh argues, often alludes to the history of art and culture.

Also examined are the work of Minimalist and Conceptual artists, particularly Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt, who sought to make objective and theoretical artifacts in response to the subjectivity that Abstract Expressionism had promoted. By interpreting the work of these artists in light of contemporary issues, Welsh offers a fresh reevaluation of some of the major trends and production of postwar American painting.

Marjorie Welsh is a New York poet and painter, as well as an adjunct associate professor at the Pratt Institute. She has contributed to Art in America, Partisan Review, and Salmagundi, as well as to several volumes on contemporary art, including Writing the Image After Roland Barthes, Uncontrollable Beauty: Towards a New Aesthetics, and also to the Encyclopedia of Aesthetics.
This book is dedicated
to my mother
and to the memory of my father
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AND THEIR CRITICS

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This series presents a broad range of writings on contemporary art by some of the most astute critics at work today. Combining the methods of art criticism and art history, their essays, published here in anthologized form, are at once scholarly and timely, analytic and evaluative, a record and critique of art events. Books in this series are on the “cutting edge” of thinking about contemporary art. Deliberately pluralistic in approach, the series represents a wide variety of approaches. Collectively, books published in this series will deal with the complexity of contemporary art from a wide perspective, in terms of both point of view and writing.

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Contents

List of Illustrations ........................................... ix
Sources of Previously Published Essays ................. xi
Introduction ....................................................... 1

I. NARRATING THE HAND

1 Pail for Ganymede: Rauschenberg’s Sculpture ........... 11
2 Texas, Japan, Etc.: Rauschenberg’s Sense of Place ..... 26
3 The Art of Cy Twombly
   Early Paintings ............................................ 35
   A Discourse on Twombly ................................... 38
4 The Art of Being Sparse, Porous, Scattered:
   Roland Barthes on Cy Twombly ......................... 45
5 Narrating the Hand: Cy Twombly and Mary Kelly ..... 59
6 When Is a Door Not a Door?: Jasper Johns ............... 76
7 Jasper’s Patterns ............................................. 84
8 Frame of Mind: Interpreting Jasper Johns ................. 98
9 The Specter of Art Hype and the Ghost of
   Yves Klein ................................................... 118

II. EXPRESSIONISM AND OTHER EXPRESSIVITIES

10 Harold Rosenberg: Transforming the Earth ............. 127
11 The Art of Philip Guston
   Underworld Overcoat .................................... 146
   I Confess .................................................... 150
12 Gestural Aftermath
   Worrying Man (Jonathan Borofsky) ................... 159
   Food for Centaurs (Tom Nozkowski) .................... 162
CONTENTS

Style Makes the Mark (Jonathan Lasker) 166
Body's Surplus (David Reed) 168
13 Contesting Leisure: Alex Katz and Eric Fischl 173

III. IDEAS OF ORDER
14 Indeterminacy Meets Encyclopedia: Kestutis Zapkus 183
15 A Greenberg Retrospective 201
16 Abstractions: Barnett Newman and James Turrell 206
17 A Literature of Silence: Nancy Haynes 212
18 Boulders from Flatland: Jene Highstein 217
19 Box, Aspects of: Donald Judd 222
20 Quality Through Quantity: Donald Judd 238
21 Maquettes and Models: Siah Armajani and Hannes Brunner 253
22 Ideas of Order: Sol LeWitt 257
23 Contextualizing “The Open Work” 276
Notes 287
Index 318
List of Illustrations

17. Philip Guston, *Untitled* (drawing), 1968 147
23. David Reed, No. 275 (detail), 1989 171
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

27. Kes Zapkus, Rations, 1984 195
30. Jene Highstein, Flying Saucer (drawing), 1977 219
31. Donald Judd, Untitled, 1962 226
32. Vladimir Tatlin, Corner Counter-Relief, 1914–15 227
33. Donald Judd, Untitled, 1976 233
34. Installation photograph of Black, White and Gray at the Wadsworth Atheneum, 1964 239
35. Donald Judd, Untitled, 1964 247
36. Sol LeWitt, Modular Cube/Base, 1968 261
37. Sol LeWitt, Untitled 4-Part Set ABCD, 1966 263
38. Sol LeWitt, Installation of Incomplete Open Cubes, 1974 265
42. Siah Armajani, Basement Window Under Front Door Steps, 1985 280
Sources of Previously Published Essays

These conference papers, articles, and reviews, or slightly modified versions of them, have appeared in the following publications acknowledged here.

1. “Pail for Ganymede” was written on the occasion of the exhibition organized by Julia Brown Turrell, and it was published in the catalogue *Rauschenberg Sculpture* (Fort Worth, TX: Modern Art Museum, 1995), pp. 85–127.


5. Written for the conference “Assembling Alternatives” that was organized by Romana Huk for the University of New Hampshire in 1997, “Narrating the Hand” was to be published in *Annals of Scholarship* 13 (forthcoming).

6. “When Is a Door Not a Door?” is an abbreviated version of a lecture given first at Fondation Royaumont, Asnères-sur-Oise, France, in 1990 and subsequently published in this form in *Art Journal: The Constructed Painting Issue*, which was guest edited by Curt Barnes (Spring 1991), pp. 48–51.


xi SOURCES OF PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED ESSAYS


17. “A Literature of Silence” is a catalogue essay for *Nancy Haynes*, which was written on the occasion of an exhibition at the John Good Gallery in New York in 1993.

18. “Boulders from Flatland” was written for the catalogue of drawings by Jene Highstein on the occasion of an exhibition at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in 1996.
19. “Box, Aspects of: Donald Judd” has not been published previously.

20. “Quality Through Quantity: Donald Judd” has not been published previously.

