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Welcome to Hol Art Books' inaugural season. Hol is the only press exclusively dedicated to writing on visual art—classic works of art criticism and history, artist writings and biographies, foreign literature in translation, and the best of contemporary writing.

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—Greg Albers, *publisher*



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MUSEUM LEGS

AMY WHITAKER

An irreverent, highly original look at our rocky relationship with museums and museums' rocky relationship with us.

IF YOU'VE EVER CONSIDERED GOING to an art museum and then thought, errr, I'll do something else... If you've ever arrived at one and left a little glazed and confused... If you've ever thought, I might read an eight-page article about art museums but not a whole book... Then this is your story.

Museum Legs—taken from a term for art fatigue—starts with a question: Why do people get bored and tired in art museums and why does that matter? As Whitaker writes in this humorous and incisive collection of essays, museums matter for reasons that have less to do with art as we know it and more to do with business, politics, and the age-old question of how to live.

Maybe the great age of museums will yet be a great age of creativity and hopeful possibility in everyday life.

Amy Whitaker has an M.B.A. and an M.F.A., in painting, and has worked for MoMA and the Guggenheim. This is her first book.

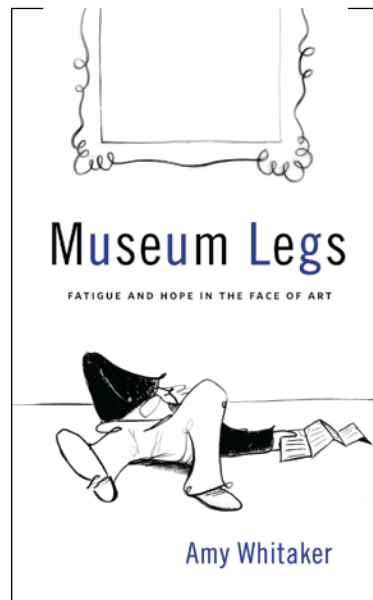
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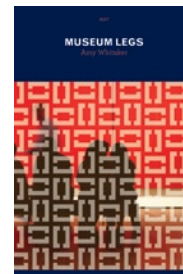
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Debuting at the 2009 Brooklyn Book Festival!

Amy's hitting the road this fall. Email her to talk at your store, museum, or corporate headquarters: museumlegs@holartbooks.com



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NOSTALGIA'S THREAD

RANDALL R. FREISINGER

THE WORKS IN *Nostalgia's Thread: Ten Poems on Norman Rockwell Paintings* offer an accessible and provocative reconsideration of the American experience as depicted in ten of Rockwell's best-known paintings. Arguably the only serious collection of poems inspired by Norman Rockwell's images, they were conceived just prior to the attacks of September 11th, 2001, and written in their wake.

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Randall R. Freisinger is an award-winning poet and Professor Emeritus in Humanities at Michigan Technological University. For his most recent book, Plato's Breath, he received the May Swenson Poetry Prize from Utah State University Press. He lives and writes in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Join the celebration this fall as the **Norman Rockwell Museum** (Stockbridge, Massachusetts) marks its 40th anniversary!

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FRANK GOHLKE

FRANK GOHLKE HAS BEEN A leading figure in American landscape photography for thirty years. Photographing grain silos in Minnesota, the aftermaths of a tornado in Texas and the Mount St. Helens eruption in Washington, and a river's quiet course in Massachusetts, his is a career of deep, unbroken contemplation of the land, and of our livelihood and survival within it.

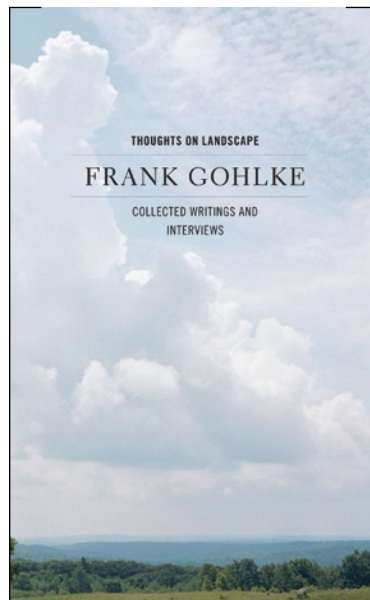
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For & Against: Ranging from staunch opposition to passionate support, this collection of pro and con essays was, remarkably, first published by the show’s own organizers and sold at its Chicago venue. Includes work by Walter Pach, Kenyon Cox, Frank Jewett Mather, Francis Picabia, Theodore Roosevelt and more.

The New Spirit: Collected here are four pamphlets originally produced and sold at the Armory Show. Including excerpts from Gauguin’s provocative Tahitian journal, and Élie Faure’s enthralling essay on Cézanne, these works offer an enduringly original approach to some of modern art’s most interesting artists.



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WHISTLER AS I KNEW HIM

MORTIMER MENPES

*The first-hand biography
of a notorious artist.*

AN INTIMATE, OFTEN ECCENTRIC, PORTRAIT of the infamous 19th-century artist James McNeil Whistler, written by a loyal but estranged follower. Long out of print, this is the first new edition since the book's original publication in 1904, the year following Whistler's death.

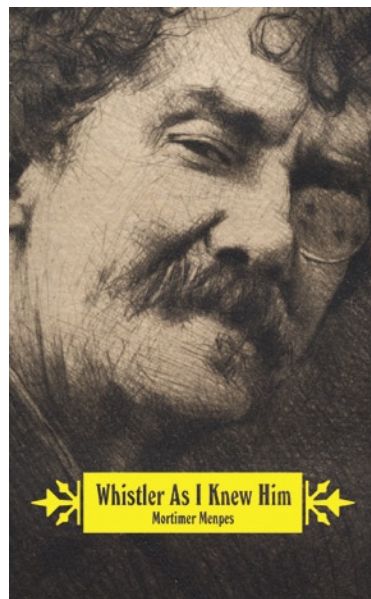
"In reading this remarkable book, with its exaggerations and distortions of fact, its cutting satire, but withal its undercurrent of real affection for and appreciation of, its subject, it is impossible to help wondering what the effect of it would have been upon Whistler himself had it been published during his lifetime." —*The International Studio*, 1904

Mortimer Menpes was, in his own words, "a painter, etcher, raconteur and rifle-shot." Born in Australia, he moved to England as a young man and there met Whistler. For ten years Menpes served as Whistler's assistant until the two had an abrupt falling out.

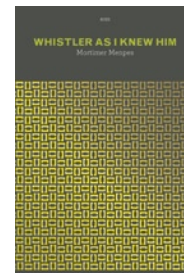


RELATED TITLE

The Gentle Art of Making Enemies,
James McNeil Whistler (1967, Dover)



"A lifelike picture of the gifted and eccentric 'Master' by one who knew him at close range."
—*New York Times*, 1904



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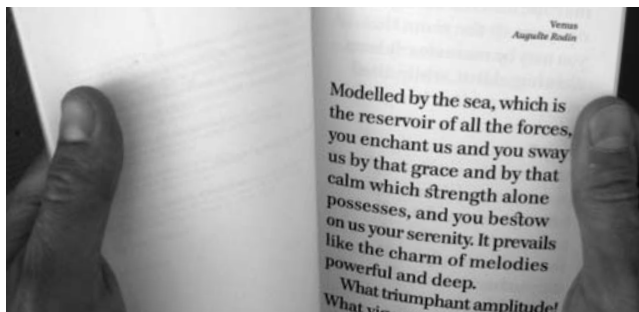
VENUS

AUGUSTE RODIN

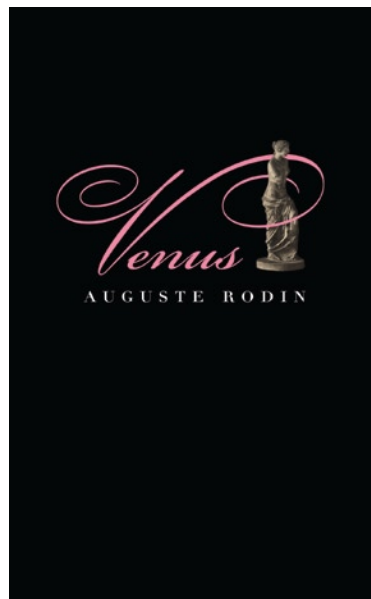
THIS IS RENOWNED SCULPTOR AUGUSTE Rodin's (1840–1917) brief, uniquely passionate ode to one of his medium's great masterpieces, the *Venus de Milo*.

"The galleries of the Louvre revealed to the young artist radiant visions of the antique world; visions of southern skies, and of the sea, and far beyond rose heavy stone monuments, reaching over from immemorial civilizations into times not yet existent." —*Ranier Maria Rilke*

Matching the gregariousness of Rodin's declarations, this modern edition of the original translation has been boldly set, and includes Rodin's *The Dance of Shiva* (p.19).

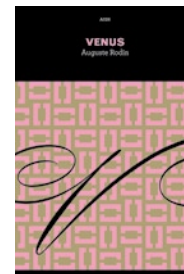


The renowned sculptor's passionate ode to the Venus de Milo.



To the poets, to the seekers, to the quiet artists, in the heart of the city's tumult, you [Venus] give long moments of refuge.

—*Auguste Rodin*



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ESSAYS

THE DANCE OF SHIVA

by AUGUSTE RODIN

in a new translation by Tina Kover

Written in 1913 and first published in 1921, Rodin's *The Dance of Shiva* considers a bronze statue of the Hindu god, through a carefully-crafted set of written impressions. Though looser in form than his other written commentary—*Venus* (p.14)—this short work showcases the unique passion and melodrama of Rodin's written voice.

Tina Kover's translations include *Georges*, by Alexandre Dumas, and *The Black City*, by George Sand. She is currently working on the first English translation of *Manette Salomon*, a French art novel by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, to be published by Hol.

LOOKING UPON THE WHOLE OF SHIVA

In the full flower of life, the flow of living, the air, the sun, the sense of *being* is a rushing torrent. Thus appears the art of the Far East to us!

The human body attained divinity in that age, not because we were closer to our origins—for our forms have remained the same—but because we believed in freeing ourselves completely from the constraints of *now*, and we spun away into the heavens. It is a pleasure sorely missed...

From a certain angle, Shiva is but a slender crescent.

What endowment; what pride of body!

Today it is perpetual beauty in bronze. The imperceptible movement of the light. One can sense the immobile muscles, bathed in luminescence, ready to erupt into action if the light should shift...

The shadows move nearer and nearer, cloaking the masterpiece, lending it the enchantment of the deep melancholy of

darkness, of that place where it has lingered so long...

These hints of perfection! The mist of the body! As in some divine creation, there is no trace of rebellion in this body; one senses that everything is just as it should be. In it, we can understand the rotation of the arm, even in repose, by examining the shoulder blade, its protuberance, the rib cage, the admirable attachment of the ribs, closely contoured to hold the shoulder blade in place, the arm ready for action. The side, the line of the torso continuing; narrow here, strong there, widening to articulate two thighs, two rods, two levers; the angles perfect, the legs delicate as they dance lightly upon the earth...

LOOKING UPON A PROFILE OF SHIVA

They are admirable, these two hands that separate the breast from the stomach in a gesture that could rival that of the Venus de' Medici, shielding her beauty with her arms, in its gracefulness. So, with the same clever movement, does Shiva protect himself.

This straight shadow that divides the torso into two parts, gilding the length of the thighs, one half in darkness and the other entirely in chiaroscuro, within full reach of the shadow. The pubis cannot be seen, cloaked as it is in this darkness...

In sum, it is the virtues of depth, of opposition, of lightness, of power, that matter here—but none of them are worth anything alone; they are useless embellishments except in relation to movement...

These legs with their elongated muscles contain only speed.

The close-drawn thighs, a double caress, jealously guarding the mysterious shadows; the beautiful field of darkness rendered more marked by the light gleaming on the thighs.

FACING SHIVA DIRECTLY

It is a pose often used by artists, but there is nothing common about it—for there is nature in every pose, and such distance! There is, above all, what many people cannot see—the unknown depths, the core of life. There is grace in elegance; beyond grace there is perfection; but this goes farther still. We may call it gentle, but it is powerfully gentle! Words do not suffice...

There are garlands of shadows stretching brokenly from shoulder to hip, and from hipbone to thigh at right angles...

ON ANOTHER PROFILE OF SHIVA

These two legs with their differing illumination; this thigh that casts a long shadow upon the other leg.

If there were no interior perfection, the contour could not be so full and supple; it would be sharp, with that straight shadow.

ON THE SUPPOSEDLY BARBAROUS ART OF SHIVA

The ignorant man simplifies and sees crudely; he draws back from superior art in order to love the inferior; he realizes nothing. One must study more deeply to be interested, and to see...

UPON LENGTHY CONTEMPLATION OF THE HEAD OF SHIVA

This swollen mouth, bulging, abundant in its sensual expressiveness...

The tenderness of the mouth and eye are in harmonious accord.

These lips, like a pleasure lake bordered by noble, thrilling nostrils.

The mouth undulates in moist pleasure, sinuous as a snake; the eyes are closed, swollen, closed amidst a drapery of lashes.

The wings of the nose, delicately drawn against the fullness of the face.

The lips that form words, that move when they escape. Such a succulent serpent in action!

The eyes that have only a corner in which to hide have the purity of line, the tranquility, of twin stars.

The sunlit tranquility of these eyes, the tranquil lines, the tranquil joy of this calm.

The curves converge and end at the chin.

The expression continues with one ending that turns back into another. The movements of the mouth are lost in the cheeks.

The curve that runs from the ear, echoing a small curve that

tugs at the mouth and a bit at the wings of the nose; it is a circle that passes under the nose and the chin, and reaches all the way to the cheekbones.

The curving, upturned cheeks.

STILL BEFORE THE ELOQUENT HEAD OF SHIVA

This eye rests level with its companion in an auspicious shelter; it is voluptuous, luminous.

The eyes, closed in the sweetness of passing time.

These eyes, drawn with the purity of an enamelled jewel.

The eyes, within the jewel-box of the eyelids; the arch of the eyebrows, and that of the sinuous lip.

The mouth, home to the sweetest thoughts, but a volcano of fury no less.

The physicality of the soul imprisoned within this bronze, captive for centuries. The desire for eternity is on these lips, in these eyes so ready to see, to speak.

Life, always entering and leaving through the mouth, just as bees come and go continually from the hive; the soft, perfumed breath.

This lovely lost profile has a profile of its own, but one in which its expressiveness ends—is frozen—leaving the alluring cheeks curving downward to join with the muscles of the neck.

SEATS AS PREVENTATIVES OF FATIGUE

by BENJAMIN IVES GILLMAN
introduced by Amy Whitaker

“Seats as Preventatives of Fatigue” is taken from Benjamin Ives Gillman’s *Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method* (1918) and follows a chapter in that same book entitled “Museum Fatigue”.

Amy Whitaker is the author of the forthcoming book, *Museum Legs* (p.4).

When Benjamin Ives Gillman starts talking about wicker stools as panacea to art fatigue, he sounds like a wonky, no-nonsense pragmatist. In fact, Gillman was much more of a wide-eyed dreamer, more Wallace than Gromit. A lecturer in the psychology of music at Harvard and the longtime Secretary of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (1893–1925), Gillman included this essay, “Seats as Preventatives of Fatigue,” in his 1918 book, Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method.

In particular, Gillman advocates sitting down in front of art. His maxim is “sit to see, stand to rest.” It’s a simple idea, but also exactly the opposite of how museums operate. Museums heap inordinate time and effort into making tools—scholarship and wall labels and exhibition routes—when what people most need is the removal of distraction and tiredness. As Gillman points out, people sit for concerts and plays and then walk to recover. Museums should be no different.

Museum fatigue as a concept rings true for most people who have made it past room eight of an exhibition (only to learn it ends at room thirty-two). A sea of wicker stools in a gallery does not at first seem a Utopian suggestion, but it is a start. Gillman wrote before the bean-bag era, before Frank Gehry, and before it was as hard to find a right angle in a museum as it was a seat. “Sit to see” would be an excellent design brief for a new museum.

What carries through Gillman's essay, almost a hundred years later, is his clear-sighted optimism that, if left to its own devices, art can speak for itself. Rather than prop it up with information, we should simply sit in front of it.

—Amy Whitaker, 2009

WE ARE AT SEA ON the question of the best way to provide seats in a museum until we catch sight of the truth that their foremost office is not to restore from fatigue, but to prevent its advent. They are most useful, not when they afford the greatest ease and when they most exempt the visitor from the temptation to go on examining things, but when they afford just enough ease to make it comfortable to go on looking and are conveniently distributed among the exhibits for this purpose. Do we attend plays and concerts to stand up during the performance and sit down during the *entr'acte*? Is not the reverse the case? Why, then, should we go to see pictures and statues expecting to stand while looking at them and sit down when nature demands an interval of rest? To come into the clear about the proper kind and placing of seats in museums, we must get rid of this exclusively therapeutic theory of their office and take up the prophylactic theory generally adopted when we inspect works of art elsewhere. People have long thought prevention better than cure; but have neglected the patent opportunity to apply the maxim which the fatigues of museum visits offer. To embrace this opportunity is to work for efficiency in exhibition: the next forward step in museum management, succeeding the epoch when immensity and multifarity of exhibits were the aims heedlessly sought. In this limited, but all-important matter of provision to keep the perceptive powers of visitors in all possible freshness, we must see to it that seats should in

the main be supports rather than lounging places and should be abundantly distributed where exhibits can be adequately seen from them.

The seats customarily provided in museums meet neither of these requirements. They are apt to be cushioned ottomans inviting to repose; and to be so placed either in the centre of galleries or along walls that nothing but a general view of the exhibits can be obtained from them. So placed they have their manifest use. Yet the positions chosen are often such that sitting down one becomes a cynosure; when one wants and ought to remain a neighboring eye.

The failure hitherto of museums to regard seats as means preventive of fatigue has a very evident cause. We do not stand up during concerts or plays because they can be easily brought before our ears and eyes as we sit. We do stand up generally in looking at museum exhibits because we must wander among them to see them. But this handicap on museums need not prevent their provision of seats in convenient positions for looking at chosen objects; nor the provision of movable seats for the use of those who may wish to make their own choice of what they shall see at their ease. There must be definite efforts in two directions: first, the provision of a new unit of exhibition consisting of *exhibit plus seat* from which to inspect it in comfort; second, the provision of *easily movable seats* scattered among the exhibits in such a way as to permit of their use at will for the same purpose.

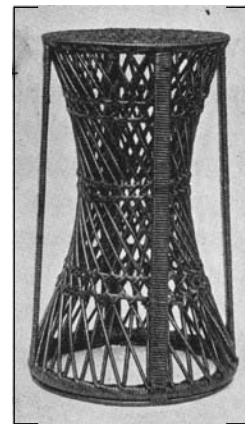
Unless by rare exception these simple expedients have as yet never been attempted in museums; another instance of the rudimentary stage in which the art of public exhibition yet lingers. The discussion, therefore, cannot yet appeal to experience; and the immediate task is that of suggestions toward reducing theory to practice.

The establishment of the new unit of exhibition—*an exhibit plus a seat*—apparently would call for a considerable modification of existing methods of arranging cases. The unit must be so placed as not to obstruct the free passage of other visitors. This demands space and an outlying position, either central or along a wall. The position along a wall has the advantage of possible nearness to a window in the wall and suggests the possibility of lowering its sill so as to give light both stronger and more pleasantly directed. Nevertheless, an almost insuperable objection exists to the use of low side light in museums, in the dazzling and often insupportable glare, direct and reflected, which it throws into the eyes of visitors moving about. It is evident that any low window used for lighting the proposed unit must be alcoved or otherwise prevented from destroying the visibility of other objects beside that shown in the unit.

Movable seats in museums are commonly provided in the form of chairs arranged along walls or placed in groups in the centres of galleries. The arrangement along walls presupposes either that the visitor will be willing, for purposes of rest, to make himself an animate exhibit, or will take the trouble and has the assurance to move the chair. This presupposition attributes more initiative and more boldness to visitors than most possess. The chairs, moreover, are apt to be heavier than can conveniently be moved. Their usefulness along walls may therefore be regarded as minimal; and experience confirms this judgment. Central in a room, the backs of chairs are conspicuous and may interfere with the view of objects among which they are placed. What is wanted in the way of movable seats is some form of tabouret or chair without a back. This would at once be lighter and less conspicuous. It would also be less restful; but if what we seek is a means of forestalling fatigue rather than recovering from it, tabourets need not be condemned on

this account. Further, it is the backs of chairs that suggest the absurd plan of arranging them along walls where no ordinarily constituted person would ever want to use them. Seats without backs, or tabourets, are equally in place in any part of the room. Moreover, in a room like a museum gallery which is apt to contain more or fewer show cases standing on legs, a place offers itself under the cases for storing the tabourets when not in use. So put away, they would be near at hand when needed, while practically out of sight meanwhile. Doubtless it would take years for museum visitors to become as accustomed to finding and making use of tabourets under cases as they now are to other museum appliances, such as catalogues or labels. Perhaps the guardians in the galleries would have to offer them at first, or perhaps an occasional placard would suffice to make visitors aware of the new facility. The plan seems on the face of it worth trying, particularly if some make of tabouret could be found that would at once be light and strong. A form consisting of a willow or rattan seat shaped like an hour-glass suggests itself. That pictured here has been tried with good results at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It is two feet high and weighs but four pounds. Such tabourets could by staining be given any color that the tone of the gallery demands. It would be the guardians' duty to replace them under the cases, or elsewhere, after use.

The part of wisdom would seem to be to add these two new provi-



Museum Tabouret

*Manufactured by
Heywood Brothers and
Wakefield Company of
Boston.*

sions for rest—the unit of *exhibit plus seat* and the *movable seat* or *tabouret*—to the settees, benches, and chairs already in use. These latter have their indispensable office also as places of rest and reflection upon what has gone or is coming. But used thus they answer only a third of the need they were intended to meet.

The question of seats in museums has an important bearing upon one of the chief puzzles of museum management. The authorities of our art museums have hitherto felt more or less helpless before the problem of the use of the museum by the general public. Daily watching the tired and listless wanderers that chiefly populate our galleries, we see plainly how little they gain compared with what can be gained. We become impatient of the statistics that show the comparatively feeble drawing-powers of exhibitions of pictures, statues, and decorative art. Are such things the affair of the exceptionally educated only? Unfortunately for this belief, the exceptionally educated neglect our museums even more conspicuously than the unlettered. There must be general underlying causes hindering the effectiveness of our permanent exhibitions of art. Pondering this question we have surmised that the great need of the public was preparation of mind for what is shown; and we have accordingly multiplied labels and catalogues and guides; and of late years have developed a new museum service in the guise of personal companionship by docents, instructors, and demonstrators. All these things help. Nevertheless, what is more needed is that the works of art themselves shall have the opportunity of making their impression.

To do this they require, among other things, time. Looked at in leisurely fashion, most museum exhibits would prove objects of profitable interest, even to those to whom all books of interpretation may be sealed and all lecturing a weariness.

No one can remain long among beautiful things arranged in stately halls and wholly fail to enjoy and admire both—that is, to be influenced by them and influenced to the identical good purpose for which they were made.

Viewed from this angle, the problem of the use of the museum by the public becomes a problem of inducing visitors to stay. To make them wish to stay is to make them wish to come for the reward they receive by staying. It does not yet seem to have occurred to museum officials to envisage the problem thus, else they would have already united in a movement to change their galleries from places to stand about in to places to sit down in. To induce a man to stay anywhere, he must be made comfortable while there. With a development in the seating accommodations of museum galleries, we may expect to see fewer wanderers gradually becoming exhausted and more spectators gradually becoming interested. Museums will be more efficient with the public both because people in general will get more from them and because more people will come to get it.

Hence, every museum building and installation should be especially studied with a view to a judicious placing of as many seats as possible therein. Niches and bays must be utilized for chairs and benches. Any furniture exhibited must be distinguished from seats for use by installation upon low pedestals. Central vacant places must become vantage-points from which to look about while seated. Single exhibits must be arranged for study from seats set apart for the purpose. Under all cases containing objects demanding minute inspection there must be light stools which visitors can draw out and drop into for a moment. For the purpose of a movable seat the *tabouret* here proposed promises well.

[GUIDE]

Tips from
TATTERED COVER BOOK STORE
with frontlist buyer, CATHY LANGER

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Hol's interest is in books of writing about visual art. Are there books in this area, recent or otherwise, that have been particularly successful for the Tattered Cover?

One trend I can attest to is that people tend to buy narrative books about art that weave history and personalities into the story, for example *Picasso's War*, written by Colorado College grad Russel Martin, or *Brunelleschi's Dome and Judgement of Paris* by Ross King.

As you know there was also a slew of art novels a couple of years ago, *Birth of Venus*, *Lydia Cassatt Reading the Morning Paper*—dare we count *Da Vinci Code*?—*Girl With a Pearl Earring*, to name just a few.

And what's been more of a challenge at the store?

Art criticism is a tough go. It seems like real “art people” get their crit and contemporary fixes from magazines more than books.

And in general, we've had to downsize our art section because customers are holding on to their dollars. But that will change as the economy improves.

Did you choose to downsize the art book section because of the cost of the books (both for you and for the reader)?

We did. Price resistance has been huge this past year. We used to buy more because we wanted to have a really good selection but are not willing to take the risks we used to.

Challenging economic times or not, what advice would you give to smaller independent bookstores buying for their art sections?

I would recommend that a small store have a particular focus if they want to stock art books at all, and that would probably be regional. One of our bestsellers over the last couple of years was *William Matthews: Working the West*, an illustrated volume, with an essay by Annie Proulx, from Chronicle.

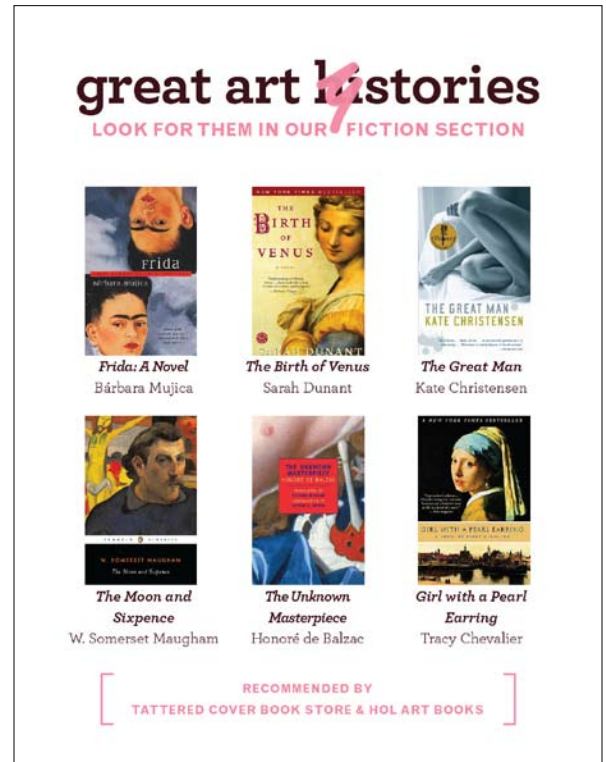
* * *

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Recommended Reading

**ON THE WALLS AND
OFF THE SHELF**

books for THE FALL EXHIBITIONS



Kandinsky

NEW YORK, NEW YORK: Guggenheim Museum
September 18, 2009–January 10, 2010

Concerning the Spiritual in Art, Wassily Kandinsky
(MFA Publications)



One of the big shows opening in New York this fall is the Guggenheim's retrospective for Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944). Billed by the museum as “the first, full-scale retrospective of Kandinsky's career in the United States since 1985,” the show is sure to get attention nationally.

One of the first abstract painters, Russian-born Kandinsky was also a prolific writer. His most famous written work, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, was first published in 1911 and remains a fundamental text on modern art.

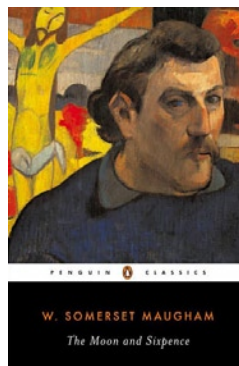
Surprisingly readable, art historian Herbert Read says of the work, “The originality and prophetic vision of this treatise should be fully appreciated. It was the first revelation of a new artistic faith.” It is Kandinsky's unique exploration of “the spiritual life to which art belongs”.

While there is a less expensive Dover edition, the more recent hardcover MFA Publications edition of the original English translation by Michael T. H. Sadler, includes an fascinating behind-the-scenes correspondence between Kandinsky and Sadler, as well as a pair of previously unpublished prose poems.

Gauguin: Paris, 1889

CLEVELAND, OHIO: Cleveland Museum of Art
October 4, 2009–January 18, 2010

The Moon and Sixpence, W. Somerset Maugham (Penguin)



In the fall, current exhibition darling Paul Gauguin, is the focus of yet another show. However, while most have focused on Gauguin's iconic Tahitian paintings, the Cleveland show will focus on work the artist produced in Paris, in variety of media, surrounding a single year.

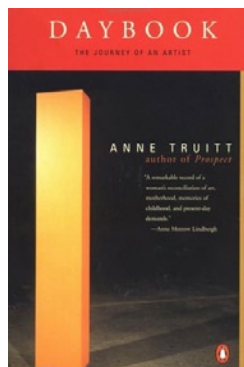
For those interested in exploring the life and motivations of this larger-than-life personality, there are a number of good biographies on the artist, and numerous volumes of his letters and provocative journals (including Hol's own *The New Spirit*, p.10). For the general reader, however, don't overlook W. Somerset Maugham's 1919 novel, *The Moon and Sixpence*, “...the curiously named history of a curious and extremely unpleasant man...”

While those with prior knowledge of the artist will start by (correctly) reminding us of the book's many inaccuracies when comparing it to Gauguin's real life, the lay-reader still stands to gain a rich, if also impressionistic notion of the artist by reading this classic, fictional tale. “[Maugham] has a way of getting beneath the surface and bringing to light what he finds there...” And indeed, while the factual surface details of Gauguin's life are conveniently fictionalized, ignored or forgotten, the underlying character Maugham creates is one worth knowing.

Anne Truitt: Perception and Reflection

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
October 8, 2009–January 3, 2010

Daybook: The Journal of an Artist, Anne Truitt (Penguin)



This fall, a retrospective exhibit of the work of Anne Truitt will open at the Hirshhorn Museum. The artist's first retrospective since 1974, notably it was that first show that compelled her to write what are now regarded as three of the most original and intensely personal artist journals of the 20th Century.

From her introduction to the first, *Daybook*:

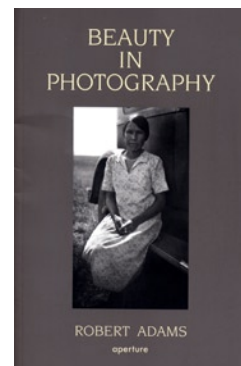
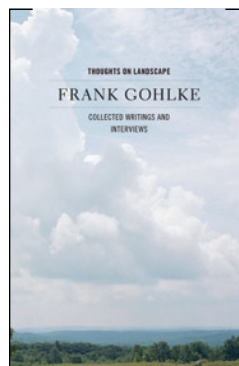
“In December 1973, and in April 1974, I was given retrospective exhibits of my work in sculpture and drawing... The force of this concentrated and unprecedented attention to my work, and to me, swept over me like a tidal wave... I came slowly and painfully came to the conviction that, although I had been scrupulous in trying to integrate the other areas of my life, I had avoided confrontation with the artist. This anguish overwhelmed me until, early one morning and quite without emphasis, it occurred to me that I could simply record my life for one year and see what happened.”

Turn and *Prospect* were to follow, and though unfortunately all are now out of print, for the practicing artist, the 20th-century historian, or others seeking balance and introspection of their own, they are well worth seeking out. Most, thankfully, are available in used copies and at most major libraries.

New Topographics

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA: LACMA
October 25, 2009–January 3, 2010

Thoughts on Landscape, Frank Gohlke (Hol Art Books)
Beauty in Photography, Robert Adams (Aperture)



In January of 1975, the exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* opened at the George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Curated by William Jenkins, the show has become a landmark in the history of 20th-century photography.

A reprise of *New Topographics* opens this summer at the George Eastman House, and in October at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and will travel to seven other venues, through 2012.

In its original exhibition and now, the work of the eight American photographers (Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, Stephen Shore, Henry Wessel, Jr.) and two German photographers (Bernd and Hilla Becher) that made up the show, marks a

dramatic new approach to landscape. Though on the surface, much of the work seemed straight-forward and everyday (and indeed was shot with little to no manipulation on their part) the photographers were presenting an alternate view of the landscape that was often dystopian and always conscious of human impact on the land.

There are precious few books available that explore these photographers and their work as part of *New Topographics*, or the amazing range of influence they've had over a newer generation of artists. Two of the photographers originally involved however, are also talented and prolific writers: Frank Gohlke and Robert Adams.

Both are eminently readable, but where Adams's writing tends toward the purposeful essay, Gohlke's tends toward the philosophic sojourn. Where Gohlke is single-minded in his interest in the landscape, Adams speaks to a broad scope of issues and ideas in the realm of photography.

There are a number of books of Adams's writing available, but the essays in *Beauty in Photography* were written around the time of the first *New Topographics*. It includes the essay "Truth and Landscape" and a series titled "Reconciliations with Geography" which itself includes a brief essay on Gohlke.

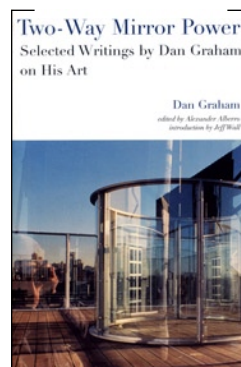
Gohlke's *Thoughts on Landscape* is being published for the first time this fall by Hol Art Books (p.8) and includes Gohlke's complete writings and a broad selection of his interviews from the 1970s to the present.

Dan Graham: Beyond

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA: Walker Art Center

October 31, 2009–January 31, 2010

Two-Way Mirror Power: Selected Writings by Dan Graham on His Art, Dan Graham (MIT Press)



Following stops in New York and Los Angeles, this comprehensive survey of the work of conceptual artist/writer/sculptor Dan Graham, finished its run in Minneapolis.

Since starting work in the sixties with a group of artists interested in exploring the boundary line between word and art, Graham's writing has always been integral to his artistic practice. Like those artists, Graham started out using writing *as* art, but he soon turned to writing *on* art as his primary form. This practice culminated in the publication of his book, *Rock My Religion*, in 1993. The book was Graham's collected cultural criticism on art, film and performance of all kinds. In his 1999 book however, *Two-Way Mirror Power*, the focus is on Graham's writing that is either about or for his own work. Though even then, when it came to distinguishing his commentary from his art, Graham and many others would be hard pressed to precisely define a difference.

As artist Jeff Wall bandies in the closing lines of the book's introduction, "Graham's writing is not writing about art, or even 'art-writing'; rather, Graham's art is an art with writing in it, or, maybe more precisely, an art with the writing it contains glinting in the form of texts."

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