



**Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media**, by Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook. MIT Press, March 2010. 354 p. ill. ISBN 978026013888 (cl.), \$34.95.



The authors of *Rethinking Curating: Art after New Media* are both research fellows at the University of Sunderland and curators of new media art. Beryl Graham's doctoral topic concerned interactive media artwork and Sarah Cook focused on the theory and practice of curating new media. Both are founding members of CRUMB (Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss – <http://www.crumbweb.org>). They clearly state that the intended audience is curators of contemporary art, but that the book is also useful for artists and researchers of new media art. Considering the fact that new media art has not been fully explored in existing reference materials, it would also be a valuable addition to a contemporary art library collection.

“New media art” is a term that has been problematic within art historical circles and somewhat vague in its application to curatorial practice. It brings to mind inchoate and transitory collections and exhibitions. The authors attempt to explain more fully how both traditional and emerging practices of curatorship can apply to the display of new media within the museum and other artistic contexts.

The book is conceived as two halves that constitute the characteristics of new media art and the ways of curating new media art. The first half, entitled “Art After New Media – Histories, Theories, and Behaviors” includes sections on terminology, “Space and Materiality,” “Time,” and “Participative Systems.” The second half is entitled “Rethinking Curating – Contexts, Practices, and Processes” and includes sections on interpretation and display, art museum curatorship, collaboration, and other modes of curating. Also included at the end is a section of references and an exhibitions index. There are photographs and explanatory diagrams throughout the text.

*Rethinking Curating* develops several main ideas to explain the process of how “new media” has been applied to curatorship. The authors state their intention to focus on the behaviors constituting new media within curatorial contexts (including interactivity and computability) rather than focusing on medium or the theory behind new media development. They also state that the book is not meant to be a handbook on curatorship but a discussion of its processes. Rather than defining new media, they place it within context and compare it to similar terminology, such as “computer art, electronic art, digital media, and Things That You Plug In.”

This book is a useful exploration of a subject that has not been extensively represented in curatorial or art history literature. Considering that these two authors are at the forefront of new media exhibition and practice, their experience contributes to a useful resource in this still emerging field.

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