

**MediaArHistories** / Edited by Oliver Grau.—(Leonardo).—Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, March 2007.—475 p.: ill.—ISBN-13: 978-0-262-07279-3 (cl., alk. paper): \$40.00.



As increasing numbers of institutions offer both studio and theoretical coursework in new media art, a need exists for studies that link this emerging field to traditional art historical frameworks and at the same time consider its innately transdisciplinary nature.

*MediaArHistories* is an attempt to fill this need. The editor is dedicated to elevating and integrating the volume's subject into mainstream academic curricula and exploring its relationships with cultural and media studies, film studies, computer science, and philosophy. While other books published within the past few years have contributed to the emergence of media art as a contemporary discipline, *MediaArHistories* stands to become a central reference volume in the field.

The fundamental premise of the volume is that media art has no singular, linear history, but rather stems from a multitude of cross-disciplinary influences. This theme is explored in an introduction by Grau and twenty-one essays by a diverse group of scholars including Rudolf Arnheim, Dieter Daniels, Christiane Paul, W.J.T. Mitchell, and Barbara Maria Stafford. Most essays include black-and-white reproductions of

works discussed within the text and the book also includes numerous color plates. One distraction from the overall quality of the volume is that it does not include an index or list of figures, which limits its value to those seeking information on particular artists or works. This fact aside, *MediaArHistories* will be a valuable addition to any academic or museum library.

Many of the essays consider the necessity to re-invent the traditional discipline of art history in order to broaden its parameters to include works in which technology, science, and art are on equal footing. Of particular interest to art and visual resource librarians may be essays that explore the historical developments of audiovisual media, including ingenious Islamic automated devices of the thirteenth century, magic lanterns and phantasmagorias, Duchamp's experiments in media art, and the transformation of cinema to interactive video art. Especially noteworthy is Christiane Paul's contribution, "The Myth of Immateriality: Presenting and Preserving New Media," which examines the challenges of presenting, collecting, and preserving media works and the ways in which the roles of curators, artists, and even viewers are changing accordingly.

Many of the book's essays were originally presented in 2005 at Refresh!: The First International Conference on the Histories of Media Art, Science and Technology. With the second conference scheduled for November 2007, one hopes that new scholarship of a similarly elevated caliber concerning media art will be forthcoming.

Tracy Bergstrom, Special Collections Librarian for Digital Projects, Theodore M. Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, tbergstr@nd.edu

Copyright © 2008 ARLIS/NA