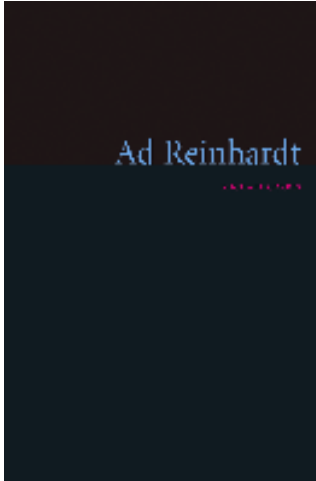


Ad Reinhardt/ Michael Corris. -- Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, March 2008.--256 p.-- ISBN: 978-1-86189-356-7: \$39.95.



After the Nazi-Soviet agreement was signed in 1939, the majority of artists and intellectuals in the United States renounced their affiliation with Stalin and the Communist Party. Ad Reinhardt did not participate in this disassociation. Rather, he supported Party groups, and drew cartoons for Communist publications such as the *New Masses* and *Soviet Russia Today*. It is Reinhardt's unwavering allegiance to leftist ideology that art historian Michael Corris chooses to examine in this book.

Corris works to reframe Reinhardt's life and work within the context of his leftist and Communist associations that began in the inter-war era. Focusing on Reinhardt's politically charged cartoons and illustrations, Corris reconstructs the trajectory of both the artist's ideology and his art. Previous art historical analysis emphasized the pivotal role of Reinhardt's black paintings; here, works that had previously been seen as peripheral to the artist's oeuvre—graphics, cartoons, illustrations—have been given center stage.

In addition to charting the formal, conceptual and ideological evolution of Reinhardt's work, Corris examines Reinhardt's works in relation to that of other artists. He makes the case that while Reinhardt was set apart from the earlier generation of the New York School, he functioned as a precursor for the later generations of Minimal and Conceptual artists, by engaging an entire generation of intellectuals in his perceptual and ideological investigations. The explication of the relationship of Reinhardt to the modernist tradition is an essential aspect of this study. Of equal importance is Corris's exploration of the relationship of then-contemporary art critics to Reinhardt's work and the affect of his art and thought on the critics. For example and in great detail, Corris explains the influence Reinhardt had on the seminal, feminist critic Lucy Lippard.

While Corris's text takes previous scholarship on Reinhardt to a new realm, dissecting the intersection of his art practice and political activism, it is too didactic in its program to serve a general audience interested. With no illustrations and little explanation of art historical concepts, art movements, and related contemporary artists, this study will be of marginal interest to the non-specialist, who is interested in learning of Reinhardt's life and the significance of his work. Vital for its pioneering stance, *Ad Reinhardt* will be most valued by scholars.

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