
Revised and expanded from his doctoral dissertation, Peffer's *Art and the End of Apartheid* examines the works of black South African artists throughout the repressive apartheid era from its institution in 1948 through its demise in 1994. He explores artists and movements at length, focusing on how their art was influenced by the apartheid system and how they, in turn, affected the system with their art. The variety of media employed and discussed includes painting, printmaking, sculpture, performance art and poster art.

The chapters are organized thematically as opposed to chronologically, though they do progress in a forward movement and correspond with major “landmark events” in South African political and social history such as the Soweto uprising of 1976 and the states of emergency in the 1980s. Peffer discusses various themes, including: the space occupied by black artists in the larger South African art scene, “the body in distress” or images of people transformed into an animal state, the work of artist collectives, the iconography of the police truck, biographical investigations of seminal artists, and a look at portraiture and photography in South Africa.

From Gerard Sekoto, “the ‘father’ of black modernism in South Africa,” whose paintings romanticized the urban slum to Thamsanqa Mnyele of the Medu Art Ensemble whose graphic works were infused with social realism, Peffer shows the evolution of South African art during apartheid. Peffer considers the audience, reflecting both the desires of the white, middle-class (“township art”) as well as the anti-apartheid movement’s need for true documentation (“activist art”). In addition, the reader is exposed to white South African anti-apartheid artists including Paul Stopforth and Jane Alexander whose works illuminated atrocities yet still were viewed from the outside. Finally, Peffer also considers the history of photography in South Africa from the nineteenth century to contemporary post-apartheid artists Santu Mofokeng and Zwelethu Mthethwa, exposing “the fraught history of representation in South Africa.”

Peffer, a lecturer in art and art history at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, engages the reader with his sympathetic descriptions of the artists and their works. Unfortunately, detailed descriptions of art works occasionally lack a corresponding image. However, historical events are clearly recounted throughout the book and prior historical knowledge is not assumed. This makes the work accessible to an audience new to South African art and history, but it is written from a scholarly art historical perspective and as such is appropriate for undergraduate or graduate students and researchers in art history or African studies. Recommended for academic libraries with African studies or African Art History programs.

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