
This volume of fourteen essays (including the introduction and epilogue) explores an area that has not often been explicitly written about in art history, the relationship between classical myth and art. Unlike the relationship between Western art and Christian religion and iconography, for example, the editors maintain that in the past the influence and use of classical myth has been accepted but not dissected by art historians. This volume uses contemporary art to bound the conversation, and as a stand-in to some extent for the broader area of the relation of classical myth and Western art in general.

The book approaches the subject across a wide variety of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, video, and a broad cross-section of artists. The volume is divided into three sections, each looking at the use of classical myth in contemporary art from a different perspective. The first section, Myth as Meaning, includes the artists Kara Walker, Cy Twombly, Yayoi Kasuma, Bracha Ettinger and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. The second section looks at Myth as Medium, exploring for example Roy Lichtenstein and the Temple of Apollo and Philomena in the work of Tracey Emin and Ghada Amer. The third section, Myth as Method, explores the art of Duane Hanson, Bas Jan Ader, and Francis Alÿs, among others.

The authors and editors are well-published in areas of contemporary art. They have covered artists including Lichtenstein, Keifer, Cézanne, Duchamp and many more. They are versed in areas of contemporary theory, including feminism, psychological aspects of contemporary art, moving images, and beyond. The majority of them are current faculty members at various universities in the U.S., Canada, and Europe and all are actively involved in dialogues around contemporary art and society.

This is a scholarly tome, written at a level appropriate for advanced undergraduate or graduate students. There are extensive footnotes, a bibliography and an index. It is well illustrated, but unfortunately the majority of the illustrations are in black and white, with only a few in color. This is the only shortcoming, however, and as this volume addresses an interesting yet apparently under-explored area of art history, it is recommended for libraries serving scholars and advanced students.

Amy Lucker, Library Director, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, amy.lucker@nyu.edu