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Women, Art, And Power And Other Essays (Icon Editions)



Synopsis

Women, Art, and Power#151;seven landmark essays on women artists and women in art history#151;brings together the work of almost twenty years of scholarship and speculation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This volume is a collection of seven of Linda Nochlin's occasional essays written in 1971-1988, and all having to do, in one way or another, with women and art. The first of them is the title essay, which Nochlin characterizes in her introduction as "an ongoing and open-ended project," which she finally brought to an end in 1988, and which discusses the various interrelationships between women, art and power in several works from the end of the 18th century until the 20th. The object is to analyze the ways in which power operates on women and art and contrives to conceal its very operations so that the existing conditions appear naturally ordained and immutable. It is a good general introduction to Nochlin's thinking. The concluding essay in the book, the by now famous "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" from 1971, was the first to appear chronologically and is the seminal piece that started the whole business of feminist art history. (I realize that "seminal" may seem an inappropriate term in this context, but Nochlin herself uses it in reference to Susan Sontag's equally fundamental 1964 article "Notes on 'Camp'" (p. 115).) It is imperative to understand how Nochlin meant this question. First, it was not posed from a male perspective, to which a feminist rejoinder might have been "Well, there have been some, but the men would never admit to that." Nor was it meant to beg the definition of "greatness." Nor was it in

any way a "male-chauvinist distortion of history" (p. 150). What Nochlin was asking is why, in fact "there ARE no women equivalents for Michelangelo or Rembrandt, Delacroix or Cezanne, Picasso or Matisse. . ." (p. 150).

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