



Figuring Out Figurative Art: Contemporary Philosophers on Contemporary Paintings

Derek Matravers, Damien Freeman

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In 1797 Friedrich Schlegel wrote that "philosophy of art usually lacks one of two things: either the philosophy, or the art." This collection of essays contains both the philosophy and the art. It brings together an international team of leading philosophers to address diverse philosophical issues raised by recent works of art. Each essay engages with a specific artwork and explores the connection between the image and the philosophical content. Thirteen contemporary philosophers demonstrate how philosophy can aid interpretation of the work of ten contemporary artists, including:

- Jesse Prinz on John Currin
- Barry C. Smith and Edward Winters on Dexter Dalwood
- Lydia Goehr and Sam Rose on Tom de Freston
- Raymond Geuss on Adrian Ghenie and Chantal Joffe
- Hallvard Lillehammer on Paul Noble
- M. M. McCabe and Alexis Papazoglou on Ged Quinn
- Noël Carroll on Paula Rego
- Simon Blackburn and Jerrold Levinson on George Shaw
- Sondra Bacharach on Yue Minjun.

The discussion ranges over ethical, political, psychological and religious concepts, such as irony, disgust, apathy, inequality, physiognomy and wonder, to historical experiences of war, Marx-inspired political movements and Thatcherism, and standard problems in the philosophy of art, such as expression, style, depiction and ontology of art, as well as major topics in art history, such as vanitas painting, photography, pornography, and Dadaism. Many of the contributors are distinguished in areas of philosophy other than aesthetics and are writing about art for the first time. All show how productive the engagement can be between philosophy, more generally, and art.

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