



Your Everyday Art World (MIT Press)

By Lane Relyea

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Over the past twenty years, the network has come to dominate the art world, affecting not just interaction among art professionals but the very makeup of the art object itself. The hierarchical and restrictive structure of the museum has been replaced by temporary projects scattered across the globe, staffed by free agents hired on short-term contracts, viewed by spectators defined by their predisposition to participate and make connections. In this book, Lane Relyea tries to make sense of these changes, describing a general organizational shift in the art world that affects not only material infrastructures but also conceptual categories and the construction of meaning.

Examining art practice, exhibition strategies, art criticism, and graduate education, Relyea aligns the transformation of the art world with the advent of globalization and the neoliberal economy. He analyzes the new networked, participatory art world -- hailed by some as inherently democratic -- in terms of the pressures of part-time temp work in a service economy, the calculated stockpiling of business contacts, and the anxious duty of being a "team player" at work. Relyea calls attention to certain networked forms of art -- including relational aesthetics, multiple or fictive artist identities, and bricolaged objects -- that can be seen to oppose the values of neoliberalism rather than romanticizing and idealizing them. Relyea offers a powerful answer to the claim that the interlocking functions of the network -- each act of communicating, of connecting, or practice -- are without political content.

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Your Everyday Art World (MIT Press) By Lane Relyea Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #865476 in Books
- Published on: 2013-08-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .69" w x 5.38" l, 1.26 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 264 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Your Everyday Art World is a smart account of the functionality of the art world in the context of information-age capitalism. Relyea's sharp readings of trends, exhibitions, and artworks attend closely to the interweaving of the social and the economic in the art world's 'networked culture' of platforms, flexibility, and mobility, demonstrating how closely its values adhere to those of contemporary neoliberalism.

(Frazer Ward, author of *No Innocent Bystanders: Performance Art and Audience*)

Don't worry: this isn't yet another 'sociology of the art world.' In writing that is conversational in the best -- Socratic -- sense of the term, Lane Relyea offers a compelling analysis of the rise of networked connectivity and DIY agency in contemporary art, and the extent to which they shape our actions as art world denizens.

(Sven Luttkien, Assistant Professor, Art History, VU Amsterdam)

With prose of galvanizing punch and verve, Lane Relyea details the ways in which the flesh of art responds to the new spirit of capitalism, providing a Benjaminian jolt of homeopathic recognition. At once highly personal and rigorously engaged, this book is a model of committed criticism and a must for anyone committed to the long front of culture -- including to writing well about art.

(Judith Rodenbeck, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art, Sarah Lawrence College; author of *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings*)

That Relyea manages to build this examination from a wide lens, taking such a sweeping range of information and artists into account, pushes what could be a topic of limited interest into the realm of compelling theory, provocative while resisting any easy conclusions and ultimately finding insights that extend beyond the world of contemporary art.

(*Publishers Weekly*)

By locating the effects, tropes and techniques of post-Fordist regimes upon our art worlds, its institutions, and subjects, *Your Everyday Art World* brings a healthy dose of skepticism to many of the modalities of contemporary agency that artists and art institutions presume and have come to rely upon, perhaps too optimistically. Despite the ways Relyea himself limits the application of this critique, the book offers a strong counterpunch to the neo-entrepreneurial ideology that does indeed shape too many of our institutions and our romanticization of a "network society." As a result, *Your Everyday Art World* is a valuable text that should be taken up, argued over, and made use of.

(Ashley Hunt X-TRA)

Ultimately, *Your Everyday Art World* is a sophisticated, incisive and deeply engaged book, and Relyea's

willingness to be polemical and take a position provides an example that more art historians and critics would do well to follow.

(Saelan Twerdy *C Magazine*)

About the Author

Lane Relyea is Associate Professor and Chair of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University and the Editor-in-Chief of *Art Journal*. His essays and reviews have appeared in such journals as *Artforum*, *Parkett*, *Frieze*, *Art in America*, and *Flash Art*.

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