

Tools

Adamson, Glenn, 2010, Book, *The Craft Reader* Berg. ISBN 978-1847883032

Information

Images

Abstract or Description:

The *Craft Reader*, edited by Adamson, was praised by Barry Schwabsky in *The Nation* (2010) for its open-minded, 'kaleidoscopic mix of materials', 'put[ting] just enough order into them to shake things up, but not enough to nail them down.' Covering the period from the early 19th century to the present, it includes 80 primary texts as well as newly commissioned writings. The anthology is organised chronologically but is also thematic, with sections examining issues such as craft's putative opposition to industry; the revival and even outright invention of 'traditional' crafts; and theorisations of craft's relations to fine art.

Another novel feature of the anthology is its geographical and topical breadth. Though such canonical thinkers as Adorno, Gropius and William Morris are represented, *The Craft Reader* includes texts from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and considers unexpected contexts in Europe and America (such as Soviet auto factories and French chocolate makers). Through this selection, the book greatly expands the frame of reference for craft studies.

The texts were selected by Adamson from books, magazines, exhibition catalogues, how-to guides, conference proceedings and online sources. This required an intensive period of research (over 300 texts were identified for possible inclusion).

Adamson wrote long introductory essays for each section of the book, as well as contextual texts for each extract.

Unlike most scholarly anthologies, *The Craft Reader* is more than a collection of relevant primary texts: it is also a novel conceptual and historical structure for this emerging field of study. The book has been received in these terms, having found a large readership among practitioners and students, and garnering positive reviews in non-academic publications such as *Modern Painters*, *Art in America*, and *Crafts*, and in scholarly journals such as the *Journal of Modern Craft*, *Art Journal*, and *Craft Research*.

Subjects: Creative Arts and Design > W700 Crafts

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