



Forgetting the Art World (MIT Press)

By Pamela M. Lee

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Forgetting the Art World (MIT Press) By Pamela M. Lee

It may be time to forget the art world--or at least to recognize that a certain historical notion of the art world is in eclipse. Today, the art world spins on its axis so quickly that its maps can no longer be read; its borders blur. In *Forgetting the Art World*, Pamela Lee connects the current state of this world to globalization and its attendant controversies. Contemporary art has responded to globalization with images of movement and migration, borders and multitudes, but Lee looks beyond iconography to view globalization as a world process. Rather than think about the "global art world" as a socioeconomic phenomenon, or in terms of the imagery it stages and sponsors, Lee considers "the work of art's world" as a medium through which globalization takes place. She argues that the work of art is itself both object and agent of globalization. Lee explores the ways that art actualizes, iterates, or enables the processes of globalization, offering close readings of works by artists who have come to prominence in the last two decades. She examines the "just in time" managerial ethos of Takahashi Murakami; the production of ethereal spaces in Andreas Gursky's images of contemporary markets and manufacture; the logic of immanent cause dramatized in Thomas Hirschhorn's mixed-media displays; and the "pseudo-collectivism" in the contemporary practice of the Atlas Group, the Raqs Media Collective, and others. To speak of "the work of art's world," Lee says, is to point to both the work of art's mattering and its materialization, to understand the activity performed by the object as utterly continuous with the world it at once inhabits and creates.

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Editorial Review

Review

Pamela Lee makes a major contribution to our understanding of art's globalization through her brilliant exploration of 'worlds' as a medium and 'worlding' as a process by which unruly networks of financial, political, and spectacular forces are crystallized as works of art.

(**David Joselit**, Carnegie Professor, History of Art, Yale University)

For those who want to chart the difference between the world and world markets, for those nostalgic for genuinely intellectual depth in art criticism, and for those wanting to understand the outer, digital limits of art, this book will be your guide. *Forgetting the Art World* sets a new stage -- a picture theory for art practice.

(**Molly Nesbit**, Professor of Art History, Vassar College)

Pamela Lee presents an exciting, highly original discussion of what constitutes an art world at the beginning of the twenty-first century. *Forgetting the Art World* examines not only the processes sustaining the reciprocal relationship between globalization and contemporary art, but also what the art world needs to forget in order to assume its current condition. The analysis is timely and provocative, and will be essential reading for anyone concerned with contemporary art.

(**Alexander Alberro**, author of *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*)

About the Author

Pamela M. Lee is Professor of Art History at Stanford University and the author of *Object to Be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark* and *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s*, both published by the MIT Press.

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