



Shock and the Senseless in Dada and Fluxus (Interfaces: Studies in Visual Culture)

By Dorothée Brill

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In this thought-provoking work, Dorothée Brill examines notions of shock and the senseless in Dada and Fluxus, pairing two distinctly radical art movements that challenged the very notion and purpose of art. Laying out a genealogy of surrealisms, she addresses the senseless in artistic production as a strategy toward shock—generally considered to be characteristic of the historical avant-garde. Examining the changing correlation between the notions of shock and the senseless in their artistic use in prewar Europe and postwar America, Brill arrives at a new understanding of the overstrained and generally pejorative catch phrase of “shock for shock’s sake.”

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Editorial Review

Review

“Dorothée Brill brings much-needed clarification to some difficult issues, including the roles of shock in art of the modern era, the importance of historical and geographical contexts for avant-garde artistic manifestations, and the differences between Dada and the self-described ‘neo-dada’ Fluxus movement, differences that generate more complex understandings of both.” (Jacquelynn Baas, independent scholar and director emeritus, University of California Berkeley Art Museum)

“Shock and the Senseless in Dada and Fluxus offers an important and extraordinarily fluent examination of the conceptual foundations of two revolutionary art movements of the twentieth century. It is at once provocative and analytical, exhibiting philosophical sensitivity and originality by its suggestive treatment of central aesthetic categories deeply ingrained in the emergence of contemporary art. Wittily illustrated and gracefully written, the book bridges an art-historical gap by a parallel close reading of the major concepts of Dada and Fluxus. A meaningful contribution to the revision of the links between avant-garde art movements from the 1960s up to the present.” (Ursula Frohne, Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität zu Köln)

About the Author

DOROTHÉE BRILL obtained her Ph.D. from the University of London and now holds a position at the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin.

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