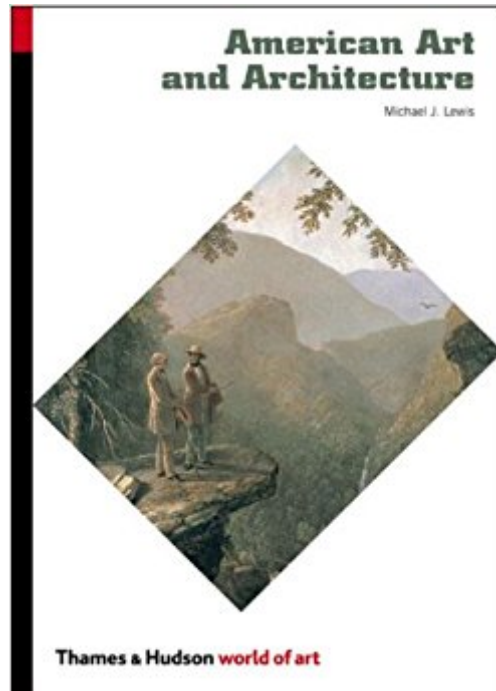




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American Art And Architecture (World Of Art)



Synopsis

An accessible, concise, and beautifully written survey of American art and architecture from 1600 to the present. This new survey provides a complete history of American art and architecture from its seventeenth-century colonial beginnings to the latest installation and video work. Structured chronologically, the book defines the characteristics of the different periods and highlights the consistent forms, techniques, and styles that mark the art and architecture as distinctively American. Michael J. Lewis charts the ways in which American artists and architects both adopted and diverged from earlier European models to create an original visual language of their own. He also shows how that language in turn came to influence and eventually dominate art and architecture around the world. Professor Lewis integrates discussions of both buildings and works of visual art, revealing the shared social and aesthetic concerns that underlie the two. Vernacular, religious, secular, and corporate architecture appears alongside paintings, sculpture, photography, and new-media art. All the major American artists and works from the seventeenth century to today are included, such as epic history paintings by Benjamin West and John Singleton Copley; sublime landscapes by Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, and Frederick Church; society portraits by John Singer Sargent; groundbreaking abstract expressionist and pop art by Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, and Andy Warhol; and challenging sculptural, installation, and video works from more recent years by Robert Gober, Fred Wilson, and Matthew Barney. In architecture, dozens of different building types are illustrated and discussed, from the earliest colonial houses and churches to the most spectacular modernist and postmodernist houses, stations, museums, and iconic skyscrapers. 275 illustrations, 175 in color

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michael J. Lewis is the Faison-Pierson-Stoddard Professor of Art History, Williams College.

The author of this book is so preachy and self-important that it becomes exceedingly difficult to parse the information woven into his needlessly flowery language. As a casual read on art, it may be tolerable, if a bit boring and pretentious. But as a college text book this thing is downright unbearable. Made simple homework assignments extremely difficult due to the cryptic nature of the information in the book.

This book is a textbook for a graduate level class that my daughter is taking and we are reading the book together. At first, it was hard to appreciate the ties the author made between paintings and buildings, but 3/4 of the way in, I like it now. The author also gives an overview history of the times with an enjoyable spare prose that helps me very much with understanding his message. I think this book can be a jumping off point for other readings about Art in America.

The book is fine - detailed account of American art - but I was disappointed with the delivery time - it took 5 business days (7 days in all, including the weekend). I had paid extra for a 2-5 day delivery as I was leaving town on travel. Also, the cover of the book was bent as the book was posted in a soft padded envelope. I would like to suggest the seller provides better packaging in future.

not that great

required read.. gave it away..

I am teaching american art history to high schoolers. It is ALMOST impossible to find an art history book that isn't 600+ pages. So, this book has several things going for it. It is a small size. It is not expensive. The writing is accessible and understandable. It reads quickly and moves through topics smoothly. It is about 1/2 colored pictures. It includes a lot of architecture. NOT a lot of photography, almost zero sculpture. On the down side...boobs. While I know that there is and always has been nudity in art, it is a tough sell for me to be able to use this book in high school class. Here's a list of the "nudes" so you can judge for yourself if this is the book for you. Watson and the Shark by

Copley, Adriadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos by Vanderlyn- this one is passable, the caption about why she might feel the way she looks, pushes it over the edge, The Greek Slave by Powers, William Rush Carving by Eakins, Female Figure Hopping by Muybridge, Morning in a City by Hopper, Le Violin d'Ingres by Ray, and Pantocrator by Desiderio. Now those are generally boobs or butts. Fine, they are all females....but whatever. The three that make this so difficult to use, mainly because I fall in the camp of "wasn't there anything else by this artist you could use?" are these: Male and Female Nudes with Red and Purple by Pearlstein (full female frontal), Thomas by Mapplethorpe (the only male nude), and S.O.S. Scarification Object Series by Hannah Wilke- LOTS of small pictures of her topless. I know it is a stretch to teach art history to high schoolers. I know I'm just going to have to deal with the "why nudes" questions. I just wish that especially those last three could have been left out to make this book more appealing to a broader age audience. Perhaps Prof. Lewis can consider that in further editions.

Professor Lewis has undertaken a very ambitious project and has accomplished his mission with an astonishingly clear, easy to read and engaging review. The study of American art and architecture is a hobby for me and I have read several texts on this subject prior to this one. I say this to frame my comments as coming not from a professional or scholarly point of view but not from a novice, either. I am not certain that this would be a good entry point for this subject if only because the author covers so much ground in the space allotted. For the reader who is familiar with well known works and the lives of the characters discussed here, the book provides a flowing narrative that connects the developments in both art and architecture to the historical events of the times. There is little attempt to dig into the psychological or political underpinnings in any great detail, a trait of some of the other reviews in the field that can often make the going a bit tough. (I find this to be a problem with some of the Oxford series books). The illustrations are not the high point of this book. They are adequate and serve to reinforce the text, which I think is the point here. The brief glossary and comprehensive index were helpful when trying to return to a point discussed in brief detail which returns later in the text.

Lewis is a champ. A great writer who renders the entire chronology of American Art accessible to the casual reader, but with excellent historical analysis at the same time. Love it.

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