

The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art

Charles Merewether

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Charles Merewether : The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Archive: Documents of Contemporary Art:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Solid Read.By GraehoundI ordered this as a required textbook for my one of my critical theory MFA classes. So far, it has been a useful, compelling read on the purpose and tendencies within archives and archivists. I highly recommend this text to anyone with a curatorial perspective in the fine arts; it is a relatively easy, upfront, quick read that still picks apart meaty topics.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy marlysi love this book! i really like all the small articles and stories

The significance of the archive in modernity and in contemporary art; writings by Sigmund Freud, Michel Foucault, Hal Foster, and others, and essays on the archival practice of such artists as Gerhard Richter, Christian Boltanski, Rene Green, and The Atlas Group. In the modern era, the archive -- official or personal -- has become the most significant means by which historical knowledge and memory are collected, stored, and recovered. The archive has thus emerged as a key site of inquiry in such fields as anthropology, critical theory, history, and, especially, recent art. Traces and testimonies of such events as World War II and ensuing conflicts, the emergence of the postcolonial era, and the fall of communism have each provoked a reconsideration of the authority given the archive -- no longer viewed as a neutral, transparent site of record but as a contested subject and medium in itself. This volume surveys the full diversity of our transformed theoretical and critical notions of the archive -- as idea and as physical presence -- from Freud's "mystic writing pad" to Derrida's "archive fever"; from Christian Boltanski's first autobiographical explorations of archival material in the 1960s to the practice of artists as various as Susan Hiller, Ilya Kabakov, Thomas Hirshhorn, Rene Green, and The Atlas Group in the present. Not for sale in the UK and Europe.

Contemporary art constantly requires the construction of new lineages, new histories, to render it critically intelligible. The idea of the archive is currently at the centre of such activities. This anthology offers an illuminating mix of texts, interlacing analysis with artists' writings...and a useful antidote to sentimentalizations of the past. (Peter Osborne, Director of the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Middlesex University, and editor of *Conceptual Art*) The Archive is a collection of pivotal essays on the role of archives in modern art and history...The book's playful design employs pull quotes resembling children's lettering, street-art manifestos or eye exams. One such is from Walter Benjamin's essay, 'A Short History of Photography,' showing the inspirational potential of archival material: 'Utrillo painted his fascinating views of Paris not from life but from picture postcards.' (Susan Salter Reynolds *Los Angeles Times*) About the Author Charles Merewether is an art historian and writer on contemporary and postwar art who has taught at universities in the United States, Central and South America, and Australia. Collections Curator at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles from 1994 to 2004, he is Artistic Director and Curator for the 2006 Sydney Biennale.