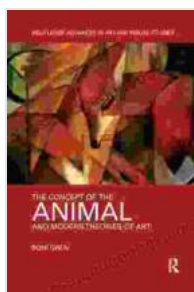


The Concept of the Animal and Modern Theories of Art: Routledge Advances in Art

The concept of the animal has undergone significant transformation in modern thought, particularly within the realm of art theory. This shift has been driven by a range of interconnected factors, including the rise of animal studies, posthumanism, object-oriented ontology, and the increasing recognition of animal agency and subjectivity.



The Concept of the Animal and Modern Theories of Art (Routledge Advances in Art and Visual Studies)

by Juliet B. Schor

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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In this article, we will delve into the concept of the animal in modern theories of art, exploring its significance, implications, and recent developments. We will examine how contemporary artists are engaging with the animal in new and innovative ways, challenging traditional notions of representation and redefining the boundaries between human and non-human.

The Animal in Art History

Throughout art history, animals have been depicted in a variety of ways, from naturalistic representations to symbolic and allegorical figures. In the Renaissance, animals were often used as symbols of Christian virtues or vices, while in the Baroque period, they were frequently depicted as objects of beauty and wonder.

In the 20th century, the animal began to be seen in a new light, thanks in part to the rise of modernism. Modernist artists such as Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque fragmented and distorted animal forms, challenging traditional notions of representation and suggesting a new understanding of the animal as an autonomous being with its own agency and subjectivity.

Animal Studies and Modern Art Theory

The emergence of animal studies in the late 20th century had a profound impact on modern art theory. Animal studies scholars began to question the traditional anthropocentric view of art history, which had tended to marginalize or exclude animals from consideration.

Building on the work of philosophers such as Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, animal studies scholars argued that animals should be seen as active subjects with their own unique perspectives and experiences. This new understanding of the animal led to a re-examination of the role of animals in art history and the development of new theoretical approaches to the representation of animals.

Posthumanism and Object-Oriented Ontology

Posthumanism and object-oriented ontology are two additional theoretical frameworks that have influenced the concept of the animal in modern art

theory. Posthumanism challenges the traditional humanist focus on the human subject, arguing that non-human entities such as animals, plants, and objects have their own unique agency and subjectivity.

Object-oriented ontology takes this argument a step further, asserting that all objects, regardless of their status as human or non-human, have their own unique being and are capable of affecting the world around them.

These theoretical frameworks have led to a renewed interest in the materiality of art and the role of non-human entities in the production and reception of artworks.

Contemporary Art and the Animal

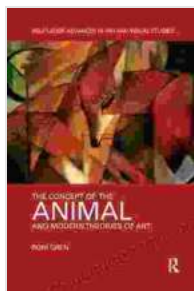
Contemporary artists are increasingly engaging with the concept of the animal in innovative and challenging ways. Artists such as Francis Bacon, Damien Hirst, and Jeff Koons have created works that explore the relationship between humans and animals, often blurring the boundaries between the two. Other artists, such as Donna Haraway and Stelarc, have used their work to critique the exploitation of animals and to advocate for their rights.

These artistic practices reflect the growing awareness of the role of animals in our society and the need to rethink our relationship with them. By engaging with the animal in new and innovative ways, contemporary artists are challenging traditional notions of representation and redefining the boundaries between human and non-human.

The concept of the animal in modern art theory is a complex and evolving one. As our understanding of animals changes, so too does our understanding of their place in art. Contemporary artists are at the forefront

of this exploration, challenging traditional notions of representation and redefining the boundaries between human and non-human.

The work of these artists is not only aesthetically innovative but also ethically and politically significant. By engaging with the animal in new and challenging ways, they are helping to raise awareness of the role of animals in our society and the need to rethink our relationship with them.

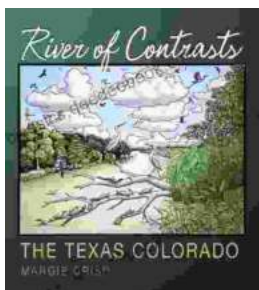


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