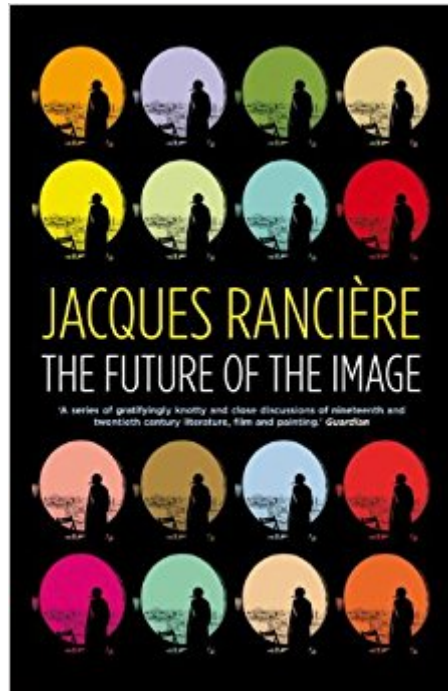




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The Future Of The Image



Synopsis

In *The Future of the Image*, Jacques Rancière develops a fascinating new concept of the image in contemporary art, showing how art and politics have always been intrinsically intertwined. Covering a range of art movements, filmmakers such as Godard and Bresson, and thinkers such as Foucault, Deleuze, Adorno, Barthes, Lyotard and Greenberg, Rancière shows that contemporary theorists of the image are suffering from religious tendencies. He argues that there is a stark political choice in art: it can either reinforce a radical democracy, or create a new reactionary mysticism. For Rancière there is never a pure art: the aesthetic revolution must always embrace egalitarian ideals.

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Customer Reviews

“Like all of Jacques Rancière’s texts, *The Future of the Image* is vertiginously precise.” —*Les Cahiers du Cinéma* “Rancière’s writings offer one of the few conceptualizations of how we are to continue to resist.” —Slavoj Žižek “What we see here is Rancière developing a unique voice as a political theorist.” —*Bookforum* “French philosopher Jacques Rancière is a refreshing read for anyone concerned with what art has to do with politics and society.” —*Art Review* “It’s clear that Jacques Rancière is relighting the flame that was extinguished for many—that is why he serves as such a signal reference today.” —Thomas Hirschhorn “A series of gratifyingly knotty and close discussions of nineteenth and twentieth century literature, film and painting.” —*Guardian*

Jacques Rancière is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris-VIII. His books

include *The Politics of Aesthetics*, *On the Shores of Politics*, *Short Voyages to the Land of the People*, *The Nights of Labor*, *Staging the People*, and *The Emancipated Spectator*. Gregory Elliott is a member of the editorial collective of *Radical Philosophy* and author of *Althusser: The Detour of Theory and Labourism* and *the English Genius: The Strange Decay of Labour England?*.

"*The Future of the Image*" by Jacques Ranciere offers an unique critique and perspective on contemporary art forms ranging from film to painting, photography and theater. As an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris, Mr. Ranciere approaches the subject matter not as an art historian but as an intellectual who is interested in exploring the importance of art in society. This fascinating book succeeds in presenting a sophisticated analysis of the image that can help artists and audiences better appreciate the emancipatory potential of art. Mr. Ranciere reminds us that the autonomy of art was first asserted in the 1760s when highly representational art forms that were based on a shared cultural history were beginning to be abandoned. Mr. Ranciere explains that modern art represents a neo-Platonic discourse that derives its meaning from the interaction between the image and the audience. For example, the canvas is merely a surface upon which the painter's ideals are expressed and communicated to viewers. Mr. Ranciere contends that whether the artist produces figurative representations or abstract symbols, their forms are always endowed with meaning; indeed, art remains art insofar as the image stimulates interpretation. In this manner, the author questions the popular notion that 20th century artists merely strove to emphasize the flatness of the medium for its own sake, and challenges us to look at art anew. Mr. Ranciere contends that modern art can achieve sublimity through varied techniques such as juxtaposition and narration. In particular, Mr. Ranciere believes that the early film noir classic 'The Spiral Staircase' and its depiction of the stalking of a vulnerable invalid is successful in that it symbolically conveys the film maker's horror about the clinical extermination of the weak in Nazi Germany. In such films, Mr. Ranciere sees a dialectical process at work where art helps to humanize us by writing a history that opposes violence and power. I highly recommend this challenging but highly rewarding book to demanding readers who may be interested in the meaning of contemporary art.

Excellent

This book is very stimulating. It's classic French theory applied to media and art. Very of the times.

Ranciere's latest work of aesthetic theory is a highly provocative analysis of the image and its historical transfigurations throughout the history of art. Through an investigation of artistic/historic transformations, Ranciere identifies several "regimes" of art which dictate what can be seen and what can be said in a given epoch. This historical model leads to a remarkably fertile examination of the "aesthetic regime" of art, namely the contemporary period. Ranciere focuses on Godard's Histoire(s) du cinema in terms of an aesthetic assemblage of heterogeneous elements. Ranciere wants to critique the notion of modern art as 'flatness' or 'autonomous' and argues that the aesthetic regime of art represents a very specific relation between the work and audiences. I was particularly struck by the comparison between Mallarme and Behrens in terms of their symbolist impulses. There are also moments where Ranciere is really unclear in this text-particularly in the critique of Adorno and Lyotard. Nevertheless, this is a significant addition to Ranciere's rather extraordinary corpus.

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