

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AESTHETICS / Edited by Michael Kelly.--New York, NY: Oxford University Press, August 1998.--4 vol., 2208 p.: ill.; ISBN 0-19-511307-1 (cl., alk. paper): \$495.00.

Editor Michael Kelly proclaims that the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* is the "first English-language reference work on this scale devoted to aesthetics." In fact, other recently published reference sources, such as *The Dictionary of Art* (New York, NY: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996) and *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London, England: Routledge, 1998), treat selected aesthetic topics ("Foucault," "Hegel," "Japanese Aesthetics," "Renaissance Aesthetics") but from within their respective disciplinary frameworks. The *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1973-74), broader in scope but over a quarter century old, provides an interdisciplinary overview of key topics, including aesthetics, and thus comes closest in methodology and intent to what Kelly and his contributors have accomplished here. Kelly, who is Managing Editor of *Journal of Philosophy* and Adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia University, proves his assertion that "aesthetics is uniquely situated to serve as a meeting place for numerous academic disciplines and cultural traditions," and has produced a valuable resource in the process.

For purposes of the encyclopedia, aesthetics is defined as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature," a broad definition that accommodates about 600 alphabetically arranged essays on topics ranging from the expected, such as "Baroque Aesthetics," "Style," and "Winckelmann," to welcome surprises such as "Camp," "Jokes," and "Play." The encyclopedia's scope provides opportunities to analyze culture outside the realms of art and philosophy, so articles on literary and musical theory as well as legal issues and technology are included. Coverage is from ancient times to the present, although Western aesthetics, from its inception in the eighteenth century through its evolution to the present, forms the central historical focus of the work. Non-Western aesthetic traditions are treated in overview essays ("African Aesthetics," "Chinese Aesthetics"), and incorporated in comparative discussions of aesthetic concepts and issues.

The types of topics treated include individuals, concepts, periods, theories, issues and movements, with more than 500 scholars from academic backgrounds in philosophy, art history, literary theory, psychology, feminist theory, sociology, and anthropology forming the core of the contributors' pool. Most contributors are university faculty, including eminent scholars such as Rudolf Arnheim of Harvard University, Arthur C. Danto of Columbia University, and Oleg Grabar of Princeton University. Contributors' credentials and essays are detailed in a Directory of Contributors. An excellent, clearly legible, seventy-page index facilitates navigation of the four volumes.

Essays vary in length from a single page, such as one on Johann Caspar Lavater, an eighteenth-century Swiss theologian best remembered for reviving the pseudoscience of physiognomy, to thirty-five pages for Immanuel Kant. More complex topics are preceded by editorial headnotes and clarified by multiple essays--Kant, for example, warrants nine. Essays are preceded by cross-references, and entries for alternate spellings and synonyms direct the reader to appropriate essays. They are followed by bibliographies that range

from minimal to extensive, and sometimes do not include the most appropriate citations; it is difficult to understand, for example why "Roman Aesthetics" warrants seven entries, only one of which is in English, while "Truth" is allotted more than sixty. The work is sparsely illustrated, a limitation made more apparent by the choice to use standard illustrations for well-known art movements, such as the Hans Namuth photograph of Jackson Pollock painting that accompanies "Abstract Expressionism" or George Braque's *Le Portugais* that illustrates "Cubism," at the expense of unillustrated topics such as "Computer Art" or "Outsider Art."

Well-written and scholarly, the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* is nonetheless accessible to the lay reader trying to decode the intricacies of Structuralism, as well as to the browser drawn to entertaining, but intelligent and thoughtful essays on food or kitsch. A particular strength of the work is the inclusion of articles of current topical interest, such as "Cyberspace" or "Digital Media, Hypertext and Virtual Reality," and the scholarly treatment of topics such as "Appropriation," "Camp," "Gaze," and "Genius," which did not warrant essays in *The Dictionary of Art*. The quality and unique focus of the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* make it a valuable complement to other reference sources in the humanities. It is highly recommended for all art libraries.

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