



# Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts

By Amelia Jones

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*Seeing Differently* offers a history and theory of ideas about identity in relation to visual arts discourses and practices in Euro-American culture, from early modern beliefs that art is an expression of an individual, the painted image a "world picture" expressing a comprehensive and coherent point of view, to the rise of identity politics after WWII in the art world and beyond.

The book is both a history of these ideas (for example, tracing the dominance of a binary model of self and other from Hegel through classic 1970s identity politics) and a political response to the common claim in art and popular political discourse that we are "beyond" or "post-" identity. In challenging this latter claim, *Seeing Differently* critically examines how and why we "identify" works of art with an expressive subjectivity, noting the impossibility of claiming we are "post-identity" given the persistence of beliefs in art discourse and broader visual culture about who the subject "is," and offers a new theory of how to think this kind of identification in a more thoughtful and self-reflexive way.

Ultimately, *Seeing Differently* offers a mode of thinking identification as a "queer feminist durational" process that can never be fully resolved but must be accounted for in thinking about art and visual culture. Queer feminist durationality is a mode of relational interpretation that affects both "art" and "interpreter," potentially making us more aware of how we evaluate and give value to art and other kinds of visual culture.

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#### **About the Author**

**Amelia Jones** is Professor and Grierson Chair in Visual Culture at McGill University in Montréal. Her recent publications include major essays on Marina Abramovi? (in TDR), on feminist art and curating, and on performance art histories, as well as the edited volume *Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (2003, 2010). Her most recent book is *Self/Image: Technology, Representation, and the Contemporary Subject* (2006), will be followed in 2012 and her major volume, *Perform Repeat Record: Live Art in History*, co-edited with Adrian Heathfield, is due out in 2011.

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