



Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science

By Donald Preziosi

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A general overview of the theoretical and institutional history of the discipline of art history. Refuting the image of art history as a discipline in crisis, Preziosi asserts that many of the dilemmas and contradictions of art history today are not new but can be traced back to problems surrounding the founding of the discipline, its institutionalization, and its academic expansion since the 1870s. “Donald Preziosi has written a timely and incisive study of the methods and assumptions of art history in the modern period. As the book unfolds, one realizes that art history was never as unitary and monolithic as the phrase ‘the *discipline* of art history’ suggests, but is in fact a complicated and highly contradictory range of practices whose disciplinary coherence may be more mythical than real. This is a deliberately discomfiting book; however, for its clear-sightedness, rigor, and wit, it is a book to be welcomed by everyone concerned with the present condition and future direction of visual studies.”—Norman Bryson, Harvard University

“An important and courageous book, *Rethinking Art History* is a rigorous and original contribution to the current post-structuralist and postmodernist debates in cultural studies here and abroad.”—Steven Z. Levine, Bryn Mawr College

“Through this kind of reading of the discourse of art history, Preziosi provides some acute analysis of the metaphors and stratagems which continue to discipline the discipline of art history.”

Donald Preziosi is a professor of art history at the University of California, Los Angeles

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