

## "Truth" that Sells: Broadcast News Media In Video Art and Art Education

---

Mary Wyrick

Vincent Lanier (1969), Manuel Barkan and Laura Chapman (1967), Laura Chapman (1982), Paul Duncum (1987, 1989), and Dan Nadaner (1985) have written about the implications of using mass media sources in art education. In their writings, each of these authors acknowledged the importance of film, television, and other mass media to student populations in art educational contexts. Even with these precedents and extensive literature in media studies, students today continue to uncritically consume the visual media that permeate their lives. They need to understand how contemporary culture is at least partially shaped by representations in visual media. Whether these representations are discovered in mass media, visual art, or a textbook, engaged criticism in which students question how power constructs "truth" should become central to the art curriculum. To become aware and critical viewers, students must displace the common-sense belief that news, art, and other representations present a transparent reflection of what is "real." Students and teachers need to be educated to question control and definitions of reality in news media that increasingly have one foot in the entertainment industry and another in the

systematic delivery of public information. Teachers should also seek to study contemporary artists and critics that enjoin us to examine ourselves and our institutions to acknowledge the complex of notions that reproduce oppression. In this paper, I will examine contemporary video artists and critics as potential models for student art making and written criticism.

### The New Face of Broadcast News

Rapidly advancing technologies that broadcast twenty-four-hour-a-day news reports impact as never before on local and global communities. While traveling in Yucatan and Chiapas, Mexico, in 1992 (prior to the Zapatista uprising in 1994), I saw numerous apparently indigenous people living in homes with thatched roofs similar to those pictured on the walls of ancient Mayan pyramids in that region. Much to my surprise, many of these otherwise basic homes were equipped with televisions and some had access to cable TV. While visiting Costa Rica in a hotel room that was without hot water, I watched Cable News Network (CNN) broadcasts of dirt track races from Charlotte, North Carolina. Our broadcast news media in the United States, for better and for worse, are not only bringing other cultures to us, but are spreading our culture on a global scale.

CNN's continuous and immediate live visual coverage of world events has changed the face of the news. CNN viewers witnessed the moment troops first landed on the coast of Somalia and were met not by clan factions, but by legions of journalists with cameras and camcorders. Live broadcast tours of battleships, terrorists' attacks, and courtroom drama alike are staged to coopt the broadcast news media. It is easy for broadcast rhetoric to become part of our popular culture because of its accessibility to the public on television and in ensuing printed news journalism. I can, at any time, watch several versions of the news along with viewers all over the world. This immediacy of news broadcasts and the increased accessibility to TV makes it possible for these mediated events to become enmeshed in my own experience. Distinguishing between news rhetoric and reliable information becomes more critical as today's technologies make global communication more accessible.

In addition to mediated news becoming part of the backdrop of my experience, new technologies in interactive broadcasting and access to the "information highway" will enable viewers to actively participate in the global drama. I can already call in to vote in a poll, to speak to a commentator, or to question a speaker simultaneously broadcast on screen. Video images and voice may replace text in the future "on-line" world. Christine Tamblyn wrote that several video collectives, People's Video Theater, Global Village, Raindance, the Video Freex, Optic Nerve, and TTVV formed in the sixties in anticipation of a "'global village' in which everyone would be linked together in a two-way communication system" (1987, p. 34). News media in the nineties continue to become more interactive, and developing electronic technologies will enable news media to spread more deeply into the world's wildernesses. Students need to learn to use news media critically to understand the interrelatedness of current events in their own lives to social issues in other cultures and communities.

### News Media Criticism

Contemporary visual artist Barbara Kruger has addressed how news is constructed and how written criticism can be used to explore representations of truth in news media. Kruger's writing, like her visual art, has related image, idea, and subtext to question objectivity in visual culture. Excerpts of Kruger's writing here encapsulate similar ideas expressed by artists, art educators, and media theorists that will be described later in this paper. Kruger critiqued television news programs, identifying strategies used in news media. In a 1989 review, she discussed a "new brand of stupidity" which "appears to blur the distinctions between what's 'news' and what's not" (p. 9). She began by criticizing the recent proliferation of news magazines, talk shows, and other programming in which news stories are sensationalized. She built on this critique by turning her criticism to the truth claims of "hard" news media, (network news, for example), exposing the subjectivity of any news presentation:

After all, the difference is not always in the story, but in the telling; not in the moment, but in its

representations and how these representations coalesce into an official history—not that one is more informed than another, but that the mode of presentation "legitimizes" or "illegitimizes" the story. Why are we shown one picture and not another? Why this sound bite and not that one? These decisions reveal a web of preferences that are determined by economic and social relations—filtered through the heady discourse of taste—and emerge as opinion, but are never named as such. (p. 10)

Kruger pointed out how selection and omission control information before the broadcast images take shape. She also indicated how power and wealth influence what will be told and serve to maintain the status quo. The danger, for the passive viewer, lies in the expectation and acceptance of news media as an objective source of information. She wrote, "Embalmed in a kind of electronic amniotic fluid, we are frozen like kitties patrolling mouselike movements" (p. 10). Our passivity empowers news programmers who create a theater where "Current events, national struggles, and sexualities are created, renewed, or canceled like sitcoms" (p. 11). Kruger concluded that a power of the representation of the news on television lies in its ability to make us passive.

In an essay about television broadcasting of weather reports, Kruger compared weather reports to other reporting of news, "reported as a series of gestures framed and inflated into 'events'" (1988, p. 13). Writing that the weather report gets caught up in the spectacle of news reporting, with weather reporters, "part Mr. Wizards, part carny schtickers" playing "nature" against "culture" (p. 13), she touched on the tendencies to polarize issues in news reporting. In her analysis, Kruger underscored how often insignificant information is manipulated into pseudo news that will titillate the audience. When viewers are not prepared to critically consume news media, they do not discriminate and are drawn to information with the loudest hype. For Kruger and other artists commenting on broadcast news, even the weather has become carnival. Kruger's ideas about broadcast news and the power of mass media are echoed in the visual art of many contemporary artists and media theorists, and a few art educators.

## Contemporary Video Art and Broadcast News

How do visual artists explore representations of truth in news media? In this section, I discuss a number of ways in which artists, using video art, challenge the objectivity and reliability of information in broadcast news. My descriptions are divided into four sections, each one revealing a different strategy. By appropriating traditional news presentation techniques, artists in the first section show how "News and Nonsense" can take on an air of credibility. In the next section, "Deconstructive Video," artists go beneath surface information to examine underlying assumptions implicit in reporting of information. They also question creation of meaning through technical simulation and pairing of unrelated ideas and images. In "News Manipulation as Intervention," the artists described use specific cases to show how news presentation can skew information. These artists co-opt news presentation techniques to provide alternative and contrasting viewpoints. In the "Disinformation" section, artists, curators, and critics are cited to explain large-scale "spin-doctoring" of information to garner support for the U.S. government. Like Barbara Kruger, all of the artists discussed demonstrate methods that can be used to question media representation and the importance of becoming more actively engaged in viewing and responding to current events.

### News and Nonsense

In an installation, *Sears Style with Psalms*, shown at the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York in March 1992, Soviet artists Komar and Melamid appropriated a televised news broadcast of former President Bush and showed it in a hellish consumer world of Sears and Roebuck discount products. A washing machine, dryer, plastic rubber tree plants, simulated brick and wood siding and other merchandise were arranged, *in situ*, around the gallery. Anonymous stick figure mannequins without faces modeled polyester clothes having what appeared to be bullet holes in the fabric. Silhouette human targets on the walls had also been fired upon, leading the viewer to conclude that repeated small holes were evidence of a gun having been fired into products around the room. Bullet ridden domestic products seemed to fill all niches of the U.S. American landscape

as it was spread about the gallery, and to hold equal place with cultish images of celebrity presidents.

A Sears television with plastic Halloween mask, atop a washing machine, broadcast a news program and other random network programming. One tape, *The State of the Union*, was an altered broadcast news conference tape of a State of the Union address showing a close-up of former President Bush. After each line, the camera panned to the crowd that appeared to be applauding, but a raucous laugh track had been dubbed into the tape in place of the crowd's applause. Occasionally, the camera panned to former Vice-President Quayle, also accompanied by loud synthesized laughter. The artists combined altered broadcasts with merchandise to imply that substance and quality have been usurped in a chaotic consumer culture. The news conference was equated with the glut of products designed for the home that had tenuous and absurd existences on the showroom floor.

In 1979, Chip Lord, Doug Hall, and Jody Proctor made an absurd video, *Amarillo News Tapes*. It was a parody of irrelevant news stories, featuring "Pro-News" casters (the artists) roaming about Amarillo, Texas, taking shots of local architecture and reporting that "Local experts told Pro-News that the usage of architecture is on the rise" (McGee, 1982, p. 8). The "story" is based on observations of people going about their routine affairs, such as "Area residents drove to and from buildings today on roads and streets specifically designed for such purposes" (p. 8). The Pro-News team appropriated the language and visual form of news broadcasting in a mock serious tone to expose the superficiality in news production that can give credence to nonsense.

### Deconstructive Video: Simulation and the Manufacture of Meaning

"Virtual Memories," an exhibit curated by photographer Mike Mandel and shown at the Ansel Adams Center in San Francisco, was devoted to critique of mass media through new video techniques in computer enhanced photography. In many works, broadcast media were appropriated to show how

authentic looking images could be generated. Art critic Christine Tamblyn wrote of the artworks:

George Legrady altered stills captured from broadcast television, interrupting the medium's ubiquitous flow to analyze its ideological premise. In "Fire in the Ashes" (1989), and "Ashes in the Wind" (1989), he analyzed the media's use of cyclical structures to create parallels between human events and natural disasters. Political and economic processes were thereby imbued with the inevitability of fires or floods. Steve Bradley's "Clinical Impressions" (1990), deconstructed the juxtapositions of disparate imagery that occur regularly on commercial TV. The five triptychs contained montages of a map of the Middle East flanked by aspirin ads. Actors dramatizing domestic disputes on soap operas were interspersed with photographs of bomber pilots and Saddam Hussein. (1991, p. 54)

The critic has used the word "deconstructed" to describe the practice of an artist who is examining the effects of the news media's pairing up of seemingly unrelated images. In many artworks and samples of written criticism, artists/critics use deconstruction, a critical strategy based on the belief that language is the basis for understanding, yet language is unstable. "Meaning," therefore, is found in examining underlying assumptions that support truth claims. Many artists critical of news media pair random, blurred computer data and advertising images with news images to show how meanings are manufactured in the media. In many cases, the artists are critical in their implication that media "realities" are based on false assumptions and thus have little connection to the real world.

Fritz Bacher's 1991 video *Serenade to CNN* was a video montage of scenes taken from CNN footage of the Persian Gulf War and scenes of former President Bush receiving standing a cellist. According to critic Alan Bigelow (1991):

Bacher delivered a powerful series of monologues in his persona as an American TV viewer who, after watching nonstop CNN coverage of the war, begins to believe he's the president of an unknown international media network. The narrator's passive/active relationship with the war informed his monologues, which varied from chiding memos to employees, pleading telephone calls to foreign correspondents and paranoid letters to well-known American political figures. Occasionally during these monologues, Bacher interviewed various talking heads—historians, activists, and Iraqi citizens—who were image processed and framed in bright circles or squares within the video. All of these interview subjects had anti-war agendas that had been censored during the Gulf War, either inadvertently or purposely by the news media. (p. 55)

Bacher joined the critique against White House control of reporting about the Persian Gulf War by creating a fiction that demonstrates his own anti-war ideology. He also demonstrated, as did the artists in "Virtual Memories," the ease with which news images can be simulated. Even though he acted as a delusional viewer, he was critical of the inner workings and organization of news production. He dismantled news manipulations, showing how public information is constructed. Bacher used video montage in combining broadcast television and other documentation with their own manufactured images to demonstrate the ease with which images can be altered with new technologies. He also suggested how personal identity can be distorted by media stars made larger than life with scripts, microphones, camcorders and tabloid hyperbole.

#### News and Manipulation: Art As Intervention

In 1977, Tony Ramos made an independently produced video, *About Media*, that investigated production of TV news from the standpoint of the artist's involvement with media events surrounding his arrest for refusing to serve in the Viet Nam war. According to Micki McGee, this video served as intervention in the practice of using staged events in the

production of television news (1982, p. 8). In "About Media," Ramos revealed conventions of television news gathering that create a forced staging of events to mediate how stories are told. Ramos had previously been interviewed by a newscaster about his reaction to President Carter's announcement of amnesty for draft resisters. Ramos had served 18 months in federal prison for his refusal to serve in the military during the Viet Nam War. In Ramos' alternative video, he disclosed how the original newscast was produced, replete with details showing the creation of subtitles, the splicing-in of tapes about his arrest and other action-oriented media events, and the uncaring off-camera conversation among the technical crew. Through his video, Ramos demanded that the audience see through the over-produced visuals to empathize with his personal experience. He implied that a flaw in some news reporting lies in its absence of counter arguments and unpopular opinions. He showed how editing and other production techniques could be employed to use video as a form of protest. Whether or not students choose to engage in this kind of activism, it is important that they understand the struggles of their contemporaries and the potential for changing viewpoints of others through using media criticism as protest.

In her performance video Born to Be Sold: Martha Rosler Reads the Strange Case of Baby M (1988), Martha Rosler assumed different characters to comment on the highly publicized story of the "Baby M" case. The case involved a surrogate mother, Mary Beth Whitehead, who unsuccessfully sued a prominent couple to regain custody of her child. The video was produced for public access cable television, and humorously addressed the legal, technological, and social systems interacting in the case. Rosler portrays possible viewpoints of individuals in the story who were not represented in mainstream news media, such as "Baby M," who addressed the viewer from a crib. Wearing an exaggerated baby bonnet, a placard which read "Melissa Stern," and alternately speaking and sucking on a pacifier, Rosler performed in the "talking head" format of news programs. These role playing performances were mixed with clips of actual television news broadcasts on the case that included close ups of news casters speaking directly into the camera. Rosler enacted how the news casters reinforced the privileged position of the couple through simple techniques

such as referring to them as "Dr. and Mr." while repeatedly naming the surrogate mother "Marybeth." Rosler used familiar conventions of news presentation to show how the child custody case revealed the political hierarchies that shape the lives of individuals such as "Baby M."

### Disinformation

The theme of the "Disinformation: the Manufacture of Consent" exhibition at the Alternative Museum in New York was the control of information by governmental agencies (Rodriguez, 1984). The topic of "disinformation" was addressed in various ways in video installations that are discussed in this section. "Disinformation" was defined by Linker as the "media's distortion of political events through selective coverage, bias, and deletion of information" (1985, p. 106). In the catalogue for the exhibit, curator Geno Rodriguez defined disinformation as "a technique used by the printed and electronic media in order to create national opinion and consent. It is a technique of half-truths, biased editorialism and deletions of pertinent information. It pretends to be objective and fair. Most importantly it plays on a people's belief in a 'Free Press'" (Paoletti, 1985, p. 133).

In another of Rosler's videos, *If Its Too Bad to Be True, It Could Be Disinformation*, the artist compared broadcast and printed news stories, showing how information was manipulated and obscured by news reporting and presentation. One of the news stories reported practice maneuvers on a military compound on Vieques, an island off the coast of Puerto Rico. Rosler sympathized with Puerto Rican protester Isabel Rosado who believed that the Naval base in Vieques was a drain on resources in Puerto Rico and an emblem of the cultural exploitation of the small island by the U. S. Government. This video was part of the "Disinformation" exhibition. According to art critic Kate Linker (1985), Rosler "combined video installation with newspaper documentation— all thoroughly researched and underlined for effect—to point to the amount, and scope, of media 'deflection'" (p. 106).

Another piece shown in the "Disinformation" exhibit by Terry Berkowitz was entitled *Remote Control*. In this installation, a worn cushioned rocker faced a television covered with bandages that obscured an altered videotape of a broadcast news program. Electronic speakers in the chair emitted mixed sounds that garbled the broadcast news with deliberately monotonous noises. With its poor quality of sound, image, and a shabby armchair, the work appeared to parody high technology. Like many of the artworks that use broadcast footage, Berkowitz alludes to mediation in broadcast news presentation and the passive armchair consumption of news as entertainment.

Video artist Mimi Smith explored the connections between television news and nuclear annihilation in *This is a Test*. Smith showed how trivialized news has become part of a meaningless background noise known as "news speak." As in Berkowitz' bandaged television, Smith critiqued the filtering out of information that occurs in news production. She also recreated an experience of homey television viewing for pleasure, juxtaposing it unnaturally in a museum setting with representations of nuclear destruction. To show how the presentation of "news speak" removes rather than empowers the viewer to deal with the horrible realities in the world, Smith combined drawings, artists' books and videotapes of public performances reiterating news broadcasts (Wye, 1988, p. 66).

Peter Fend's installation at American Fine Arts, *News Room*, dealt with the topic of disinformation and purposeful distortion of news. Art critic Eleanor Heartney wrote about Fend's installation and how it represents a threat posed by control of public information:

For the "News Room" installation, the walls were lined with world maps on which red marks identified trouble spots. A bank of video monitors played clips from various news broadcasts above a long table scattered with newspaper clippings. These included information on some of Fend's pet stories, among them the Iran-contra cover-up and Chernobyl, which suggest the news media's collusion with government

in dissembling and withholding important information.

While perhaps a trifle paranoid, Fend's gallery installation did focus attention on the dangers to functioning democracy posed by a news establishment pulled about by the demands of ratings, advertisers, government sources and an indifferent public which places higher priority on entertainment than on information. (1990, p. 209)

As with many artworks in the "Disinformation" exhibit, Fend suggests that one of the biggest problems of the news media is that it has entered the capitalist marketplace as a commodity that must compete with other products. This view is critical of the news establishment's reliance on advertising for income and on information provided by government sources with a vested interest in preserving public illusions.

Many of the artists in this section demonstrate in their work how the media is a tool used by the powerful to maintain access and authority to deny access to the disenfranchised. It is through parody and appropriation of these media that many artists and writers expose how individual struggles are hampered or enhanced by manipulations in the news media. If the audience is to model artists and writers to access visual culture and address their struggles, they need to go beyond becoming consumers. They need to become engaged viewers, developing and activating a visual literacy that cuts across various forms of visual culture.

### News that Sells: The Need for Media Literacy

The need for education toward media literacy to offset "disinformation" and consumption of news as entertainment has been powerfully articulated by media theorist Stuart Ewen. Ewen critiqued the news coverage of the Persian Gulf war and the attempts of the Bush administration to control the images and information gathered by teams of reporters. He discussed how the Viet Nam war was the first "living room" war people could experience at home by watching television. According to

Ewen, the Bush administration blamed the loss of the Viet Nam war on the public outcry which arose as a result of the horrifying news images and resolved to prevent similar public opinion crises. In his criticism, Ewen details how coverage of the Persian Gulf crisis was carefully orchestrated and censored by the Bush administration.

In his book *All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture*, Ewen (1984) questioned how news has entered the realm of popular culture by becoming an entertainment commodity. He analyzed how visual news presentation has been adversely affected by the stylization of broadcasters, newsroom sets, camera angles, and graphics, all designed to attract viewers and good ratings. In televised news broadcasting and printed journalism as well, "truth must be transformed into drama, a thriller, entertainment. Within such a context, the truth is defined as that which sells" (p. 265). Ewen believes the power of news to utilize new technologies in information gathering and transmission has been compromised by its increasing tendency to merge with the corporate world. While broadcast news has always required sponsorship, news has become more influential as an instantaneous force in the marketplace and through popular news magazine programming. Ewen argues that we need to teach news and media criticism to help viewers become critical consumers who demand complete coverage that is more than entertainment from news broadcasters.

### Connections Between Media Literacy and Socially Critical Art Education

Visual art education could serve to educate critical consumers of mass media while using media studies to enhance understanding of the artistic process and its potential for social change. Beginning with Vincent Lanier's (1969) description of socially critical art education, Paul Duncum (1987) built on research of Dan Nadaner (1985) and Laura Chapman (1982) to assert that we must look at "issues of power and domination" in culture (p. 14). He used the word "interventionary" to describe art education that is neither passive nor "reactive," but that is

directed at "being at the centre of social issues and ethical considerations" (p. 22). Duncum advocated a dynamic use of popular culture in the classroom, maintaining that "cultural standards are the product of argument as much as agreement" (p. 213). Here, he defined a cultural dynamic in which people not only consume but can be educated to use mass media to challenge social norms. In his 1989 article, "Clearing the decks for dominant culture: Some first principles for a contemporary art education," Duncum cited mass communications theorists such as J. W. Carey (1989) and D. McQuail (1987) to support his identified need for using mass media in art educational contexts. Referring to Carey, who suggested that mass media be studied as a site where culture is made and transformed, Duncum further argued that students are familiar with and value what he calls "dominant culture," or popular mass culture. According to Duncum, many art teachers reject popular culture as a subject for study and do not take into account the complexity of establishing boundaries between "high" and "low" artforms. He showed how the boundaries between "fine" and "popular" arts have been blurred through history (Shakespeare's plays, he pointed out, were performed for mass audiences). He advocated that to:

seek an insider's experience, with a collaborative model of production, to respect students for how they cope with the conditions imposed upon them, to acknowledge the perennial nature of dominant culture content, and to recognize the changing political and social contexts in which cultural standards are established, maintained, and revised are first principles for a socially relevant art education. Such an art education would both earn the right and possess the potential to contribute critically to the meanings, values, and beliefs students form with dominant culture. (1989, p. 214)

Duncum has set a useful precedent for advocating use of mass media in art education. He has also defined a collaborative model in empowering students to critically consume and utilize their own cultural literacy in contemporary media.

News broadcasts, available to students through TV and radio, can be used with study of contemporary art to engage in cultural criticism that draws on students' own cultural literacy. Visual artists in this paper used strategies that can be modeled by students to help them critique and change their communities. Students can first study news to critique representations of issues as far ranging as war and reproductive rights. Deconstruction can be used by students to question assumptions and to critique the effects of the news media's pairing up of images, text, and events to render "truth." Students can go on to study contemporary artists and their responses to current news sources to provide a springboard for debate and a critical framework for discussion of socially relevant issues in the classroom. Video artists dealing with news media can be used in class to study parody and caricature, and to critique the promotional techniques of telecast media operatives that create news. Like Ramos and Rosler, students can critique news presentations using video and performance to expose the social stratification that is often masked in mass culture. Students can critique other issues and explore in their own art production how representations in media reproduce a class system or other hierarchies in their own schools and communities.

The contemporary artworld is a fertile resource for engaging teachers and students in an engaged cultural criticism. Some argue that the artworld as an institution is not a valid site for cultural critique since it caters to an elite audience and is driven by the same market economy that commodifies the news. In spite of the art market, art museums and galleries are public places that school children, tourists, collectors, and senators visit. Educators can learn about and promote using galleries, museums, and other cultural institutions as laboratories for engaging students directly with meaningful art and art criticism. Today's artworld is a diverse terrain of studio art making, criticism, and activism where emphasis often shifts from the visual art object to the praxis of the artist within a political context. When students study how contemporary art reflects cultural context of the times, they can better understand the art and see how political issues are inextricably linked within their own lived experiences. Through writing and making art about

political issues, students can learn how cultural expectations are learned and rewarded in nurseries and newsrooms.

Contemporary political issues are grounded in struggles that are not new, but are constant themes in art and other school subjects. Students need guidance to understand art and mass media as cultural production with embedded social and ideological dimensions. To gain such understanding, students should develop skills in dialectically approaching truth seeking, in seeing wider contexts, in making connections between seemingly unrelated events, and in telling untold stories. Critical study of news media combined with study of artists using those media provides students with strategies for criticism and eventual social transformation. Contemporary activist art and criticism can help enable teachers and students to reconstruct and defend plural, fair and progressive systems.

### References

- Barkan, M. & Chapman, L. (1967). *Guidelines for art instruction through television for elementary schools*. Bloomington, IN: National Center for School and College Television.
- Bigelow, A. (1991). Fritz Bacher: Serenade to CNN. *High Performance* 55, 14 (3), 55.
- Carey, J. W. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.
- Chapman, L. (1982). *Instant art, instant culture: The unspoken policy for the nation's schools*. New York: Teacher's College.
- Duncum, P. (1987). What, even Dallas? Popular culture within the art curriculum. *Studies in Art Education*, 29 (1), 6-16.
- Duncum, P. (1989). Clearing the decks for dominant culture: Some first principles for a contemporary art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 31 (4), 207-215.
- Ewen, S. (1984). *All consuming images: The politics of style in contemporary culture*. New York: Basic Books.
- Ewen, S. (1991). Stuart Ewen on the Gulf War: A report from the couch. *Artforum*, 30 (4), 13.

- Golomschtok, I. and Glezar, A. (1977). *Soviet art in exile*. New York: Random House.
- Kruger, B. (1987). Remote control. In B. Wallis (Ed.), *Blasted allegories: An anthology of writings by contemporary artists*, pp. 395-405. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Kruger, B. (1988). Remote control. *Artforum*, 24 (5), 11-12.
- Kruger, B. (1989). Remote control. *Artforum*, 27 (8), 9-11.
- Lanier, V. (1969). The teaching of art as social revolution. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 50 (6), 314-319.
- Linker, K. (1985). Disinformation. *Artforum*, 23 (10), 105-106.
- McGee, M. (1982). Artists making the news: Artists remaking the news. *Afterimage*, 10 (4), 6-7.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. London: Sage.
- Nadaner, D. (1985). Responding to the image world. *Art Education*, 38 (1), 9-12.
- Paoletti, J. T. (1985). At the edge where art becomes media and message becomes polemic. *Arts*, 59 (9), 133.
- Rodriguez, G. (1984). *Disinformation: The manufacture of consent*. [Exhibition catalogue]. New York: The Alternative Museum.
- Rosler, M. (Producer). (1988). *Born to be sold: Martha Rosler reads the strange case of baby M* [Videotape]. New York: Paper Tiger Television.
- Tamblyn, C. (1987). Video Art: An Historical Sketch. *High Performance* 37, 10 (1), 33-37.
- Tamblyn, C. (1991). Virtual memories. *High Performance* 55, 14(3), 54.
- Wye, D. (1988). *Committed to print*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Terry Barrett (1994) *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary***  
 Mountain View: Mayfield Publication Company.  
 200 pages. ISBN 1-55934-147-5 (paper) \$14.95

---

John H. White Jr.

Terry Barrett's newest contribution to critical practice, *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary*, Mountainview, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co. 1994, provides the fields of art criticism and art education with a much needed and long overdue practical introduction to contemporary art criticism. The boundaries within which Barrett is developing this critical mapping are marked by a receding Modernism and an emergent site constructed in relation to Postmodernism, Feminism and Multiculturalism. In this text Barrett judiciously combines two elements that less skillful authors have failed to bring together; a verbal and presentational style which is accessible to incoming undergraduate students and a diverse sampling of engaging contemporary ideas embodied in works of art and critical writing. *Criticizing Art* succeeds in defining a pragmatic base for critical inquiry without collapsing into reductive method.