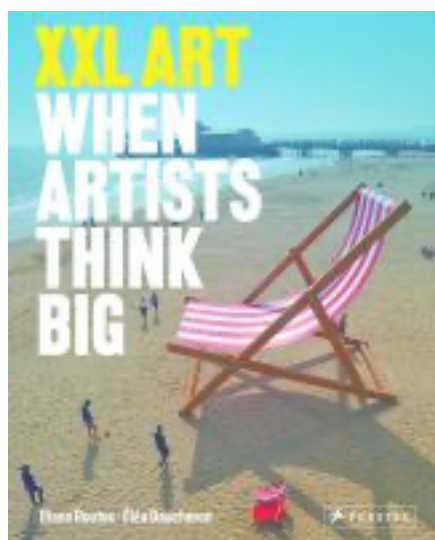


XXL Art: When Artists Think Big

by Diane Routex and Éléa Baucheron. Prestel, October 2014. 176 p. ill. ISBN 9783791349824 (cl.), \$35.00.

Reviewed January 2015 Virginia Feher, Head Librarian and Assistant Professor, University of North Georgia Libraries, Oconee Campus, Virginia.Feher@ung.edu



By the authors of *The Museum of Scandals: Art that Shocked the World*, this publication explores large-scale art within a variety of genres. *XXL* is divided into four sections, each with an introductory one and one-half page essay. "Art in the Countryside" features land art as well as rural large-scale art; "Conquering the Cities" focuses on large urban outdoor art; "Pushing the Boundaries" highlights monumental art displayed indoors; and "Transforming the Museum" centers on art in situ.

Each of the four sections is organized by artist, with a less than one page essay about the artist and his or her art, and with at least a full-page image of an example of the artist's work. Forty-eight artists are represented, both living and deceased, from varying countries and

continents. Artists who have earned their place in art history are included, such as Jean Dubuffet, Alexander Calder, and Christo/Jeanne-Claude, while younger contemporary artists are also included, such as Baptiste DeBombourg, Florentijn Hofman, and Osgemeos. *XXL* is printed on good quality paper and has ample high quality color plates. Additionally, *XXL* offers a table of contents at the beginning and an artist index at the end.

This book should not be mistaken for a serious work of scholarship. While the prose is accessible, the essays lack authority. The text contains an abundance of adjectives synonymous to "big," and some points are made using an exclamation mark to increase emphasis, creating a sensational rather than a scholarly tone.

XXL purports to fill a gap in art history scholarship—the "largely unexplored" subject of art with "imposing dimensions." However, compared to other books on large-scale art genres, *XXL* lacks focus and depth. *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974*, published in 2012 by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, provides an in-depth examination of early land art within the context of the "first large-scale museum exhibition of land art." *Large Scale: Fabricating*

Sculpture in the 1960s and 1970s, published in 2010 by Princeton Architectural Press, includes not only images of large-scale sculptures but also photographs of the fabrication process.

XXL is not recommended for academic libraries, even though the plates might be useful for those interested in looking at images of large-scale work. The text distracts from the visual quality of the book and would be a negative example for students who are learning research and writing skills. Because of its visual appeal, XXL might be suitable for a public library or the layperson.