

Global Activism: Art and Conflict in the 21st Century

ed. by Peter Weibel. MIT Press, October 2015. 736 p. ill. ISBN 9780262526890 (pbk.), \$55.00.

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This hefty and extensively-illustrated volume takes as its starting point the notion that activism is the first new art form of the twenty-first century. This central thesis allows the editor and contributors to look beyond the traditional definitions of art production to something more deeply imbedded in the realm of activism, which has come to dominate the cultural landscape of the early twenty-first century—including the Arab Spring, Pussy Riot, and Occupy Wall Street. *Global Activism* is not an exhibition catalog, but is more a continuation of the exhibition *global aCtIVISm* at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Media at ZKM | Karlsruhe, (2013-14). Peter Weibel is the director of the museum, organizer of the exhibition, and editor of this volume, and thus the publication follows the thematic structure of the exhibition but also provides an opportunity to expand the discourse and include other projects and artists/activists.

The book is divided into five chapters; each chapter includes several essays by noted theorists, authors, and activists as well as images and other documentation related to the art objects shown in the exhibition, as well as some additional examples. The essays are often thought provoking and challenging, but engage the reader with new ideas about art's place within the context of political agitation and demonstration.

The first chapter, "Activism and the Citizen," outlines the theoretical foundation for the book and the central role of citizens in political conflict. This chapter is probably the most tangentially related to art—focusing more on conflict and political engagement. Here Greenpeace, Adbusters, Anonymous, and Malala Yousafzai are used as some of the examples. However, Weibel tries to maintain a strong link to art by suggesting activist art is different than political

art, inasmuch as it doesn't result in a product, but rather political change and transformation is the end goal. The later chapters have more apparent connections to art practice, especially the final chapter, "'Artivism'—Art and Activism," which illustrates many examples with a more direct lineage to the art world.

Weibel has taken on a monumental task with this publication and covers a great deal of ground. The essays and illustrations provide details about specific contemporary movements, protests, and projects; yet the content also draws parallels to other events in history. Thus offering readers a broader understanding of activist art that feel very much of this moment and will hopefully provide further perspective in the future. For these reasons, the book is a valuable addition to any library that supports research contemporary art.