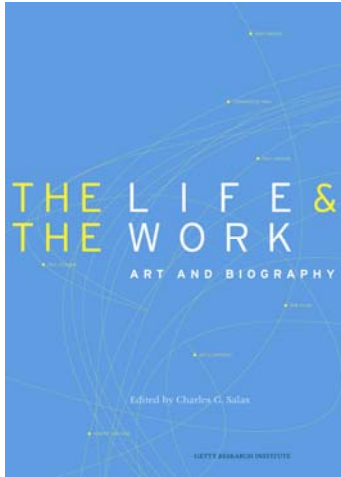


The Life and The Work: Art and Biography / Edited by Charles G. Salas.--Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, August 2007.--176 p.: ill.--ISBN-13: 978-0-89236-823-5: \$45.00.



The Life and the Work is a collection of seven essays on the theme of "biography," that were presented at the Getty Research Institute in 2002-2003. The premise of the publication, as presented by editor Charles Salas (head of the Research and Education Department at the Getty), is the notion that despite Roland Barth's proclamation that the author is dead, the life of an artist does in fact influence the work. The life influences how the work is executed and how it is perceived, and conversely the work encourages insight into the life. Several of the essays address and grapple with how the field of art history has traditionally handled biography, while the rest directly examine the work of artists through biography.

Readers who have some grounding in literary theory will be well-positioned to follow the arguments presented in many of the essays. Those with less familiarity of the subject will appreciate the generous amount of supporting references. Refreshing insights into the lives and work of overly-examined artists (e.g., da Vinci, Cezanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, and Warhol) will be gained if one is a dedicated reader, willing to

slog through the very dense and rather dry style of writing presented by most of the authors. Debora L. Silverman's exploration of Van Gogh and Gauguin is particularly noteworthy for her nuanced view of the work, and the friendship between the two artists, through the lens of "religious formation," noting that art historians too often "oversecularize the avant-garde." While three of the essays are without illustration, the other essays are amply illustrated with both black-and-white and color reproductions. In his essay, Thomas Crow creatively presents images of Warhol's work along with his own text, in order to make a point about allegory. In doing so, Crow offers the reader a poetic rendition of allegory that virtually becomes a work of art in itself.

Overall, *The Life and the Work* is a welcome addition to the discussion on biography and subjectivity as related to the visual arts. It is recommended for any academic library collection that has a research-level emphasis in art history, as well as for art museum libraries.

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