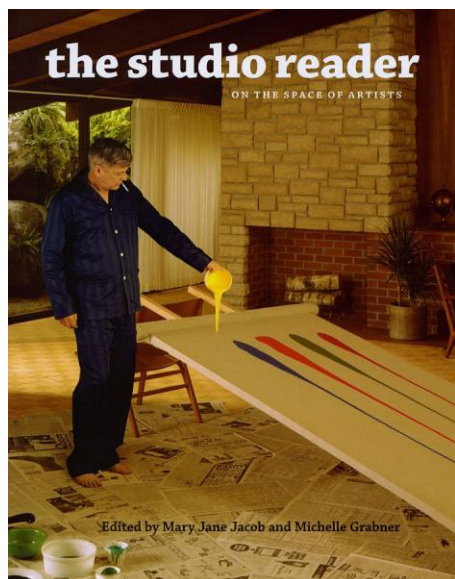


The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists, ed. by Mary Jane Jacob and Michelle Grabner. University of Chicago Press, June 2010. 376 p. ill. alk. ISBN 9780226389615 (pbk.), \$25.00.



This anthology was initiated with Michelle Grabner who first investigated the role of the artists' studios through an exhibition she organized, *Picturing the Studio*, which ultimately became the focal point for the College Art Association's ninety-eighth conference. With an introduction by Grabner and preface by Mary Jane Jacob, both School of the Art Institute of Chicago faculty, the goal of this compilation of essays is to "revisit the studio and resituate it in contemporary times." The mixture of art historical essays and reflections from practicing artists meets this goal and may appeal to those libraries who serve both art history and studio art departments as it addresses the myths and realities of artistic production.

The forty-eight essays are divided into topics addressing the studio: as resource; as set and setting; as stage; as lived-in space; as space and non-space. It was not clear whether these topics were given to the contributors as a focus for their essay before they wrote or if the topics were generated after the essays were submitted. The reflective essays written by practicing artists about their studios, denoted by a different font from the art historical essays and by a lack of footnotes in most cases, contrast not only visually, but also in style and content, to the essays written by art historians and critics. Some of the iconic artists represented are John Baldessari, Bruce Nauman, Buzz Spector, and Carolee Schneemann and some of the better known art critics and historians represented are Mary Bergstein, Svetlana Alpers, and Robert Storr. This sharp contrast between the two types of texts is not addressed as a goal of the anthology, but emerges as a dominant theme as one reads a scholarly or critical text immediately before or after a more reflective text. Another recent publication about the artist's studio in contemporary times is *Inside the Painter's Studio* by John Fig, which may be more appropriate for those libraries serving only studio artists since its focus is narrower in scope.

About one quarter of the essays in *The Studio Reader* have been reprinted from exhibition catalogs, journals, or monographs. The book's images, some documenting artists' studios and some of works of art, are large but are not in color. A table of contents, list of contributor biographies, illustration credits, and index are present. The unique approach of this anthology to its subject matter and price point makes it hard to pass up for academic art libraries serving both studio art and art history departments.

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