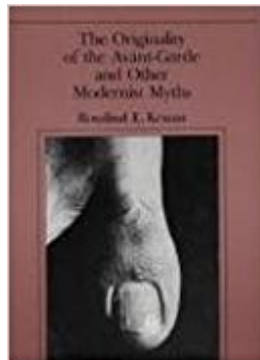




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# The Originality Of The Avant-Garde And Other Modernist Myths (MIT Press)



## Synopsis

Co-founder and co-editor of October magazine, a veteran of Artforum of the 1960s and early 1970s, Rosalind Krauss has presided over and shared in the major formulation of the theory of postmodernism. In this challenging collection of fifteen essays, most of which originally appeared in October, she explores the ways in which the break in style that produced postmodernism has forced a change in our various understandings of twentieth-century art, beginning with the almost mythic idea of the avant-garde. Krauss uses the analytical tools of semiology, structuralism, and poststructuralism to reveal new meanings in the visual arts and to critique the way other prominent practitioners of art and literary history write about art. In two sections, "Modernist Myths" and "Toward Postmodernism," her essays range from the problem of the grid in painting and the unity of Giacometti's sculpture to the works of Jackson Pollock, Sol Lewitt, and Richard Serra, and observations about major trends in contemporary literary criticism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

All of her observations are unfailingly original and provocative. (Art Documentation) Krauss's essays, for their erudition, for their interpretations (particularly of artists whose work we thought we knew well), and for their siting of the art within the fullest possible range of discourses, stand as paradigmatic models for contemporary criticism." (J. T. Paoletti, Wesleyan University)

Rosalind E. Krauss is University Professor in the Department of Art History at Columbia University,

where, from 1995 to 2006, she held the Meyer Schapiro Chair in Modern Art and Theory. She is a founding editor of *October* and the author of *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Myths*, *The Optical Unconscious*, *Bachelors*, *Perpetual Inventory*, *Under Blue Cup* (all published by the MIT Press), and other books.

The content of the book suits my needs. The physical condition of it did not meet my expectations. I find myself considering the purchase of it in hard back. This was not a successful sale.

As Hal Foster... writes, Miss Krauss cannot be blamed of the conceptual limitations of the time... if read within a historical context, this book is very enlightening and very compromised with structural analysis, as it is with its by-products (of which, we often make so much of a deal these days) ... this includes early -and pure- examples of deconstructivist meta-texts. It seems to me that her efforts have not been scaled to the dimension they have. It is (still) a formidable introduction for anyone interested in really getting involved in post-structural thinking. A sort of golden thread for the roots of contemporary thought. Her, "sculpture on the expanded field", is illuminating, don't miss it. I really regret having rated "the optical unconscious" 4 stars, it must also be 5. Such risks taken by an art historian must not be taken lightly. She has taken first, as few others, the steps to construct--- the difference---.

There are few books that have transformed how we think about art. There are few books about art that transform how we think about the human condition, about our mortality, our time-frame, our heroism and dreams. This is a book about art's specific achievements, about the smallest detail of a single gesture of a single artist, that does both of the above. When the history of art history is written, Krauss's book remains one of the decisive achievements of the discipline.

This book was very good from an art student point of view. It is very revealing of some subtle changes that took place early in the 20th century and became part of the collective-art-unconscious. You just don't get this sort of insight from an art history class. Thank you Ms. Krauss.

Many distracting comments in several of the chapters.

While this book deals with some incredibly interesting subject matter, overall it tends to fall flat, partially due to Krauss's outmoded *Weltanschauung* and belief (although probably unconscious) in

transcendental/idealist aesthetics. Although if you like Hal Foster this would be right up your alley.

Don't let the number of syllables fool you - Krauss' words are far too big for her britches. Sarcastic and often defensive in tone, this polemic falls short of the academic masterpiece it is often purported to be. Her characterization of Mondrian's artistic program as an obsession with the grid betrays either an ignorance of or indifference to the artist's own (extensive) writings that is shocking for a critic of such high repute. While I support Krauss' broader aim of knocking Modernism out of its traditional ivory tower, her willingness to forego evidence in favor of argument does nothing to further the cause.

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