



# Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries

*Christopher Whitehead*

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## **Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries** Christopher Whitehead

In this pioneering book, Christopher Whitehead provides an overview and critique of art interpretation practices in museums and galleries. Covering the philosophy and sociology of art, traditions in art history and art display, the psychology of the aesthetic experience and ideas about learning and communication, Whitehead advances major theoretical frameworks for understanding interpretation from curators' and visitors' perspectives. Although not a manual, the book is deeply practical. It presents extensively researched European and North American case studies involving interviews with professionals engaged in significant cutting-edge interpretation projects. Finally, it sets out the ethical and political responsibilities of institutions and professionals engaged in art interpretation.

Exploring the theoretical and practical dimensions of art interpretation in accessible language, this book covers:

- The construction of art by museums and galleries, in the form of collections, displays, exhibition and discourse;
- The historical and political dimensions of art interpretation;
- The functioning of narrative, categories and chronologies in art displays;
- Practices, discourses and problems surrounding the interpretation of historical and contemporary art;
- Visitor experiences and questions of authorship and accessibility;
- The role of exhibition texts, new interpretive technologies and live interpretation in art museum and gallery contexts.

Thoroughly researched with immediately practical applications, *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* will inform the practices of art curators and those studying the subject.

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