Igor Zabel Contemporary Art Theory

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The writing of history is neither a neutral nor an objective undertaking. One might say it is always about the construction of an image for a given historical period or development. This construction will necessarily leave some things out and emphasize other things, while drawing connections and tracing lines of development between them. Today, if we open any book on 'modern art' published. We will not find any of the artists we think of today as the most important figures in the evolution of modern art but, rather, artists who are now viewed as second-or third-tier figures or who have been completely forgotten. We will discover, to our surprise, that the line of development we consider to be the history of modern art was in its own day something marginal, while today wiew has pushed aside artists and movements that in their own day were considered central.

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Program Documents Series

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The East, the West, and between

Igor Zabel (1958–2005) was a Slovenian curator, writer, and cultural theorist. This important translation of his writings will enrich the international critical field through Zabel's extraordinary analytical and emphatic thinking and writing. As well as texts dealing with international issues, his writings can serve as a methodology model for research into Eastern European art practices, which often share common stand points and problems.

The selected texts are divided into four chapters: "East-West and Between" (dialogue and perception of the Other in the context of the complex relations established after the fall of the Wall in 1989), "Strategies and Spaces of Art" (strategies of representation and theories of display, the role of the curator, and the new understanding of the white cube), "Ad Personam" (individual artists and art from Socialist Realism and conceptualism to postmodernism and contextual art, particularly in Slovenia and South-Eastern Europe), and "Extras" (selected columns on arts and culture). The volume is introduced by Igor Spanjol.

Igor Spanjol is a curator at the Moderna galerija Ljubljana. Zoja Skusek is the editor of Zabel's writings in Slovenian. Barbara Borcic is an art historian and the Director of SCCA-Ljubljana Center for Contemporary Arts.

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