

Parachute: The  
Anthology  
(1975–2000) [Vol. III]  
Photography, Film,  
Video, and New Media

Program  
Documents Series

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An anthology in four volumes

In 1975, a small group of enterprising, discontented members of the international art community in Montreal posed the following question: "What do we know of contemporary art outside of Quebec, in Canada or abroad? Do we even know what contemporary art exists in Montreal? How does information about art circulate?" By way of an answer, the artistically unconventional and theoretically cutting-edge magazine Parachute was founded by Chantal Pontbriand and France Morin. The first significant critical reception of the work of artists such as General Idea, Jeff Wall, Stan Douglas, among many others, appeared in Parachute. Similarly, figures such as Thomas Crow, Thierry de Duve, Hal Foster, Reesa Greenberg, and Serge Guilbaut—all of whom have helped define the parameters of art history, theory, and practice—published rigorous, highly pertinent essays in the journal early on in their careers.

After the two volumes entitled "Museums, Art History, and Theory" and "Performance & Performativity," the essays collected in this book focus on photography, film, video, and new media. These contemporary genres par excellence were discussed in some of the earliest volumes of Parachute. Photography received particular attention in the early 1980s, film and video later in that decade and through the beginning of the 1990s. The authors question the ontological status of photographic and moving images in relation to the other arts, their exhibition, as well as their genealogy. Discussing what were then still relatively new and overlooked artistic fields, these texts are particularly useful as signposts to how these new media and works were approached.

The essays discuss works by artists such as Eija-Liisa Ahtila, James Coleman, Nan Goldin, Bill Viola, and Rodney Graham. The texts by Georges Didi-Huberman, Douglas Crimp, and Laura Mulvey, written in the early 1980s, are among their most seminal.

A contemporary art historian, critic, and curator, Chantal Pontbriand co-founded Parachute in 1975 and edited its 125 issues until 2007. The anthology is an invaluable document of the changes and transformations in both art practice and writing from 1975 to 2000.

The book is part of the "Documents" series, co-published with Les presses du réel and dedicated to critical writings.