## Bob Nickas Theft Is Vision

The Stars and Stripes: Now on Sale Everywhere

If you wanted to buy the Jasper Johns painting Three Flags (1958), you would have to spend about \$25 million. Not that the Whitney Museum would ever part with the most iconic work in their collection. When they acquired the painting in 1980 for a cool million, it was the highest neight for a living. When they acquired the painting in rogon for a cool million, it was the highest price paid for a living American artist. Those are probably the most expensive stars and stripes in the country. The only flag that might command a higher price would be the one left on the Moon in rofog—if in fact is actually was, and if it's still there. Johns had been painting the flag since the mid-'jos, unaware of the readymade and Marcel Duchamp, whom he would eventually meet in 1950. The image of the flag, as Johns has been famously quoted, came to him in a dream; in effect, drawn from both the unconscious and the everyday. Also unknown to Johns

everyday. Also unknown to Johns was that while he was painting flags in his New York studio, Robert Frank was driving across the country

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Program **Documents Series** 

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## Looking at art

Gathering together essays and interviews from 1995 to today, this book offers both an insight into Nickas' vision on contemporary art and a portrait of the American art scene over the last few decades. Structured like a novel, this publication traces recent art production to Pop art and Appropriation art; reflects on the importance of Warhol, On Kawara, and Punk in contemporary culture; pays homage to overlooked figures such as Cady Noland, Jamie Reid, and Steven Parrino.

Working independently, Bob Nickas has realized numerous exhibitions for galleries and museums since 1984. He is a regular contributor to "Artforum," and served until 2006 as Curatorial Advisor at P.S.1 in New York.

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

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