The October Century

Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism, by Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, New York, Thames and Hudson, 2005; 688 pages, $85.

BY PEPE KARMEL

Over the last 30 years, Rosalind Krauss has established herself as the era's most influential critic of modern art. This influence has been exercised not only through her own numerous publications, her lectures and her teaching, but also through the journal *October*, founded in 1976. Now, together with several colleagues from *October*—Hal Foster, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh—she has published a textbook, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*. While the other three authors receive equal billing, the book represents a kind of summation of Krauss's remarkable scope as critic and *chef d'école*.

To grasp the distinctive character of *Art Since 1900*, it is worth briefly retracing the evolution of Krauss's ideas. Her first book, published in 1971, was on the sculpture of David Smith, an artist championed by her mentor, Clement Greenberg. But Krauss located the originality of Smith's work in psychological and philosophical issues that had nothing to do with Greenbergian formalism. Krauss argued that, whereas traditional sculpture presented figures and objects as forms radiating out from a hidden "core," analogous to the hidden self of consciousness, Smith shifted to a contingent, additive mode of composition, challenging not just conventional esthetics but also the Cartesian idea of the mind-body relationship.[1] Krauss expanded on this premise in her 1977 book, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, a selective history tracing the medium's evolution from Rodin to Minimalism. Here she argued that the achievement of Minimalism was "to relocate the origins of a sculpture's meaning to the outside, no longer modeling its structure on the privacy of psychological space but on the public, conventional nature of what might be called cultural space."[2] As Krauss explained, Minimalist artists were influenced in this direction by a variety of sources, from Ludwig Wittgenstein's attack on "private language" to the "objective," anti-psychological novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet.[3]

Meanwhile, Krauss (together with Annette Michelson and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe) had started *October*. In its pages, Krauss and her colleagues reformulated the critical program of Minimalism in the language of French structuralism. There was an immediate affinity between the two, since in France structuralism represented a revolt against the existentialist idea of the self. Yve-Alain Bois was soon recruited to the *October* group, bringing with him a novel synthesis of structuralism and Greenbergian formalism.[4] With the advent of post-structuralism in the later 1970s, the attack on the idea of the self was rephrased in terms borrowed from Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan. Especially influential was Lacan's discussion of the "mirror-stage," which posits an incurable contradiction between the real incoherence of the self and the factitious unity it achieves when it perceives itself in the eyes of others. In the 1980s, Krauss discovered the writings of the dissident Surrealist Georges Bataille, and restated the subversion of the self in terms of "formlessness," "horizontality" and "base materialism."[5] Taking Lacan and Melanie Klein as points of departure, new recruits such as Hal Foster and Mignon Nixon used psychoanalytic theories about psychic fragmentation to explicate Surrealism and contemporary art.[6] Meanwhile, the academic leftism implicit in the journal's title, a reference to Sergei Eisenstein's film about the Russian Revolution, was bolstered by the contributions of the German scholar Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, who drew on the works of Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno and Peter Bürger to argue that the idea of the independent self was a piece of bourgeois obfuscation, and that the role of true avant-garde art was to expose it.[7]

Over time, the leading writers associated with *October* assumed increasingly important academic positions. After many years teaching at the CUNY Graduate Center, Krauss moved to Columbia, while Bois, Foster and Buchloh found positions at Harvard, Princeton and Barnard, respectively.[8] They are no longer a band of rebels against the establishment. They *are* the establishment. Their writings now constitute a large part of the standard curriculum for graduate students studying the history of modern art. The publication of *Art Since 1900* seems meant to extend their influence to undergraduate education as well.[9]

Art Since 1900 competes directly with existing textbooks by H.H. Arnason, Sam Hunter and other scholars.[10] Alternatively, teachers and students can turn to *Modern Art: Practices and Debates* by a group of British scholars associated with the Open University, four volumes that trace the history of modern art from Courbet to Gerhard Richter in essays exploring topics such as "Primitivism and the 'Modern,'" "Surrealism, Myth, and Psychoanalysis" and "The Politics of Representation."[11] *Art Since 1900* sets out to combine the comprehensive historical narrative of a conventional textbook with the kind of critical analysis found in the Open University series.

When multiple writers collaborate on a textbook, they usually strive to merge their different voices into a single, seamless narrative. In contrast, the four authors of *Art Since 1900* attempt to create a "dialogical" history. Each writer begins by presenting the theoretical approach that will guide his or her discussion of the material.[12] The history that follows is divided into 107 mini-chapters (typically six or seven pages long), each written by a different author. The mini-chapters are headed by key dates and key events ("1915: Kazimir Malevich shows his Suprematist canvases at the '0.10' exhibition in Petrograd"), and are grouped into decades, each with its own table of contents.[13] The narrative begins with the year 1900 and concludes in 2003, although not every year receives its own chapter. In the preface, the authors suggest that the breakup of the narrative into a series of short entries might permit it to be used as a kind of hypertext, so that the reader could pick out the entries devoted to French art or to photography.[14]

Krauss contributes more than a third of the entries in the book. Her range is vast. She writes about Pablo Picasso, Cubism, Futurism, Surrealism, Constantin Brancusi, Walter Benjamin and mechanical reproduction, David Smith, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, monochrome painting, Clement Greenberg, Marcel Duchamp's later work, Minimalism, site-specific art, the changing role of museums, postmodernism and appropriation, critiques of visuality, video art and William Kentridge's animated drawings—topics she has previously addressed in more specialized texts. She also provides insightful discussions of several topics she has not discussed before: the rise of Dada, Alfred Stieglitz's circle of photographers, Farm Security Administration photography, and the influence of existentialism on the art of the 1950s. Krauss has banished the jargon and the attacks on individual scholars that often mar her essays, but she has not lost her gift for withering scorn: the Modern's 1959 exhibition "New Images of Man" is denounced for "promoting a third generation of neo-Expressionists . . . at just the moment when Pop art was to enter the picture and throw all these ideas about the link between the figurative and the expressive onto the junkheap of history."[15]

The other three named authors expand on elements of Krauss's broad intellectual agenda, adding their own interests and insights. Bois writes on Henri Matisse, Piet Mondrian, Suprematism, Constructivism (in its original Russian form and in its later, international incarnations), Clement Greenberg in the 1940s, Barnett Newman, Gutai, Brazilian Neo-Concretism, Lucio Fontana, West Coast funk art, Claes Oldenburg and Robert Smithson. There is a subtle lightness and elegance to Bois's writing: "Mondrian's principle of reduction is that of maximal tension: a straight line is but a 'tensed curve.' The same argument goes for surfaces (the flatter, the tenser)."[16] At his best, Bois recalls Roland Barthes and, like Barthes, he seems to invoke philosophical ideas and social issues for their poetic value rather than their literal truth or falsity.

Buchloh strikes a more moralizing note. He is in favor of Berlin Dada because it's left-wing; Constructivism because it demystifies art; Fluxus and Nouveau Réalisme because they subvert late capitalism; Conceptual art because it criticizes museums and collectors; Viennese Actionism because it strikes a blow against repressive tolerance. He is against Neue Sachlichkeit painting and Neo-Expressionism because they reflect right-wing nostalgia. He is against Joseph Beuys because Beuys is too theatrical and romantic. He is for photography when it attacks the fetishism of the art object, but against it when it celebrates industrial production. He is for the mass media before World War II but against them after the war. He is deeply conflicted about Gerhard Richter. Buchloh's dense and repetitive prose is so clotted with philosophical concepts that the art sometimes becomes invisible. The average undergraduate may well find his chapters unintelligible. On the other hand, if you are willing to roll up your sleeves and make the effort to understand him, he usually has something interesting to say.

Foster contributes almost 40 of the book's mini-chapters, more than Krauss and almost twice as many as either Bois or Buchloh. Accordingly, his name comes first in the list of authors. He writes about Dada, Surrealism, Minimalism and postmodernism—the subjects of his earlier books and essays. He also writes about fin de siècle Vienna, Paul Gauguin, Wilhelm Worringer, early abstract painting, Constructivism, the Bauhaus, machine-age art in America, Henry Moore, the Nazi attack on "degenerate" art, Jean Dubuffet and Jean Fautrier, the Situationist Interna-

tional, Jasper Johns, Pop art, eccentric abstraction, performance art, the rise of the not-for-profit art space, feminist art and theory of the 1970s, queer art of the 1980s, postcolonialism, African-American art, abject art, digital photography, and the pervasive role of installations and documentation on the international art scene today. Time and again, Foster fulfills the book's pedagogical mission by boiling complex questions down to essentials. Surveying the evolution of "advanced art" from 1960 to 2000, for instance, he suggests that it can best be understood as a "sequence of investigations":

> . . . first into the constituent elements of a traditional medium like painting, as in the self-critical modernist painting advocated by Clement Greenberg; then into the perceptual conditions of an art object defined in terms less of a given medium than of a given space, as in Minimalist art; then into the material basis of such artmaking and perceiving, as explored variously by Arte Povera, Process art, and Body art. Along the way, Conceptual art also shifted attention away from the specific conventions of painting and sculpture to the general questions of 'art as art' and 'art as an institution.'[17]

On the other hand, some of Foster's chapters have a muted, dutiful feeling. You get the feeling that he's picking up the slack for other authors who haven't completed their assignments.

Arnason's *History of Modern Art* begins with a survey of European art from the Renaissance through Impressionism; similarly Hunter and Jacobus begin their *Modern Art* with a review of modernism's origins in 19th-century art. In contrast, the narrative of *Art Since 1900* begins abruptly with chapters on fin de siècle Vienna and on early Matisse. In the absence of historical background, it will be unclear to students why these are important topics. The book's division into mini-chapters means that the reader must cope with constant starts and stops. There is very little sense of continuity, and the confusion is exacerbated by the authors' penchant for beginning their chapters *in medias res*: thus the chapter on Analytic Cubism begins with a pointless anecdote from 1911 and then backtracks to Braque's breakthrough paintings of 1908 (which are not, however, illustrated). Nonetheless, bit by bit, the narrative gains coherence, and by the time we get to 1914 (on p. 125) the basic argument becomes clear: Cubism is important because it gives birth to Constructivism and to Dada—rival movements, but both dedicated to the subversion of bourgeois art and society.[18] Constructivism, in particular, receives wonderfully detailed treatment: it is the subject of four mini-chapters ranging from its Russian inception to its English demise.

Once the story reaches 1945, most textbooks tend to focus on American art, following the progression from Abstract Expressionism through Pop art and Minimalism to postmodernism. For these decades, *Art Since 1900* tries instead to maintain an even balance between European and American practice; Bois, for instance, contributes two valuable chapters on French work of the 1950s and '60s. From 1970 onward, the authors were themselves important participants in the development of contemporary art, and their account of this period is especially detailed and opinionated.[19]

Unfortunately, the virtues of *Art Since 1900* are accompanied by equally striking flaws. Some of these are merely technical, and could easily be corrected in future editions. Key events are presented out of order, because they have been placed under earlier or later headings; for instance, we only learn about Bruce Glaser's famous 1964 interview with Frank Stella and Donald Judd in an entry on the situation of French art in 1967.[20] The numbering of the illustrations starts over again with each new mini-chapter, so that there is no way to cross-reference a discussion in one chapter with an image in another. For example, Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* is discussed but not illustrated on p. 506, as part of Bois's insightful essay on entropy in the art of the '60s, while it is illustrated but not discussed on p. 543 as part of Krauss's essay on site-specific art. There is virtually no discussion of modern architecture, which is given a detailed treatment in the volumes by Arnason and by Hunter and Jacobus. The bibliographies for individual chapters are too abbreviated and too slanted toward authors associated with *October*. Despite its "dialogical" ambitions, the book is strangely coy about the question of authorship: the author of each mini-chapter is identified by his or her initials in the tables of contents for individual decades, but not in the text itself or in the main table of contents. You have to keep flipping back and forth to be sure who wrote what. Equally annoying, the subject title of each entry—e.g., "Dada is launched"—is found only in small type at the bottom of the section's pages. Sometimes, individual years are commemorated with multiple mini-chapters each bearing the date, a lower-case letter and a subject title; these may be written by the same person or by several different authors.

Numerous major artists are missing, or are discussed so briefly that they might as well be absent. Giorgio di Chirico is covered only in passing, as part of an account of the linkage between Futurism and Fascism. The reader would never guess from this textbook that di Chirico exerted a huge influence on Dada, Surrealism and popular culture. The School of Paris has vanished, as has American art of the 1920s and '30s (other than Precisionism and photography) and Latin American art of the 1950s and '60s (except for the Brazilians Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark). Two potentially unfortunate omissions have been rectified by bringing in an uncredited outside author, Amy Dempsey, to write chapters on the Mexican muralists and on the Harlem Renaissance. (A former Krauss student, Dempsey is the author of a compact handbook titled *Art in the Modern Era*.)[21] Most astonishingly, there is no discussion of Picasso's work between 1921 and 1936 (other than a brief reference to his sculptures of 1929-30 in a section on David Smith), while Matisse's work of the years 1917 to 1930 is dismissed as part of a "reactionary trend."

These omissions are not accidental oversights. Rather, they are the expression of an ideological bias that profoundly shapes—indeed distorts—the narrative of *Art Since 1900*. No doubt the omission of Picasso's influential neo-classical work of the early 1920s could be explained (if not justified) by the authors' belief that the figurative revival of this era was not just artistically "reactionary" but also politically "antidemocratic."[22] But how are we to understand the absence of Picasso's paintings of the later 1920s and the 1930s, the "hybrid Cubist-Surrealist work" that Foster mentions as the stylistic model for *Guernica* but that is not otherwise discussed in *Art Since 1900*? From his interlace paintings of 1926-27 through the "bone-bathers" of 1929 and down to the glowing nudes of 1932 and the "weeping women" of the mid-1930s, these are immensely important and

While Hal Foster, Yve-Alain Bois and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh receive equal billing, the book clearly represents a summation of Rosalind Krauss's remarkable scope as critic and *chef d'école*.

influential works. In her discussion of dissident Surrealism, Krauss credits Miró's "rage against painting," evident in a 1930 relief covered with projecting nails, to the influence of Bataille's criticism.[23] But both Miró and Bataille were responding to Picasso's crude and violent pictures of the mid-1920s, such as the *Guitar* of 1926 in which Picasso had employed nails. Much of the imagery of later Surrealism derives from Picasso's 1928 adoption of the minotaur motif,[24] and the prehistory of Abstract Expressionism is inconceivable without the example of Picasso's 1932 *Girl Before a Mirror*, acquired by the Museum of Modern Art in 1938.

Why are these essential passages in modern art missing? The only explanation I can think of is that Picasso's work of these years is the preeminent modern example of artistic innovation as an expression of individual genius, and therefore falls under *October*'s interdiction on the idea of subjectivity. Krauss has famously expressed her antipathy to the biographical interpretation of Picasso's work, which sees the paintings and sculptures of these years as by-products of his scandalous love-life.[25] But to ignore the work for this reason is to throw out the baby with the bathwater: as Robert Rosenblum demonstrated many years ago, it is perfectly possible to discuss the erotic imagery of Picasso's work without getting lost in biographical details.[26]

A similar antipathy to the biographical and the subjective seems to lie behind the strange treatment of Robert Rauschenberg. His early works, such as *Automobile Tire Print* of 1953, pass muster, because they utilize "the indexical imprint . . . as a weapon against the expressive mark."[27] Seventy pages later, in a text box about Leo Steinberg's concept of the "flatbed picture plane," Krauss cites Steinberg's lyrical analysis of Rauschenberg's silkscreen paintings of the 1960s.[28] But neither the silkscreen paintings nor their revolutionary precursors, Rauschenberg's combines of the late 1950s, are reproduced or discussed in *Art Since 1900*. The problem, apparently, is that Rauschenberg's work is too subjective, too rooted in his own tastes and associations.[29] In contrast, Jasper Johns, Rauschenberg's chief artistic interlocutor of these years, is praised for his use of "conventional, depersonalized" elements," and his work is discussed (and reproduced) at length.[30]

The "social history" of art in the chapters written by Buchloh is almost as problematic as the omissions of his co-authors. Discussing work made from 1900 through 1960, he judges artists by the degree of their adherence to the "antiaesthetic" of Dadaism and Constructivism, which "replaces originality with technical reproduction . . . destroys a work's aura and the contemplative mode of aesthetic experience and replaces these with communicative action."[31] The "alogism,"

"shock" and "rupture" of avant-garde art are valuable because they accelerate the demise of bourgeois subjectivity. In contrast, Buchloh condemns the Neue Sachlichkeit painters as "cynical and melancholic" spokesmen for the "oligarchic bourgeoisie" and "rabid *petite bourgeoisie*" of the Weimar republic. After 1925, the goal of political effectiveness triumphs over the quest for a new formal language: now the task of the avant-garde is "to provide mass audiences with images of didactic information and politicization."[32] Elsewhere in the book, Foster acknowledges the argument, advanced by the Russian scholar Boris Groys, that the Constructivist ideal of a politicized avant-garde leads straight to the elevation of Stalin as, in Foster's words, "the epitome of the Constructivist engineer of culture," but he rejects Groys's argument as "reductive, indeed antimodernist."[33]

Buchloh's criteria of political correctness change after 1950. The new enemy is "postwar consumer culture"—in other words, the long economic boom that made the European and American proletariat into members of the middle class, writing *finis* to the dream of socialist revolution. By 1950, we are to believe, the worker has been brainwashed to see himself primarily as a consumer, held in thrall by the "spectacle" of mass entertainment and advertising.[34] Suddenly, the old bourgeois culture doesn't look so bad to Buchloh. He refers nostalgically to "the enlightenment culture of the bourgeois public sphere that has to be defended against the onrush of the forces of the culture industry."[35] Now that subjectivity is under siege, it has become a good thing. Diane Arbus, for instance, is praised for her "complex understanding of the fragility of the processes of subject formation, and the tragic consequences of their continuing destruction."[36]

For all his brilliance as a critic, Buchloh is hamstrung by the fact that his political and artistic ideals are only rarely in accordance. As he writes in his introduction:

> If [the social history of art] were to align its aesthetic judgment with the condition of political solidarity and class alliance, it would inevitably be left with only a few heroic figures in whom such a correlation between class-consciousness, agency, and revolutionary alliance could actually be ascertained. These examples would include Gustave Courbet and Honoré Daumier in the nineteenth century, Käthe Kollwitz and John Heartfield in the first half of the twentieth century, and artists such as Martha Rosler, Hans Haacke, and Allan Sekula in the second half of the twentieth century.[37]

Evidently, politics cannot be used as a yardstick of esthetic quality; in practice, however, Buchloh cannot resist the temptation to do this. The more fundamental problem here is that Buchloh and his co-authors have such a narrow and theoretical idea of social history that there is no way for *real* history, with its wealth of detail and its manifold links to art, to squeeze into their analyses. Picasso's relations to the social and political issues of his time, for instance, have been discussed by critics and historians including John Berger, Patricia Leighten, David Cottington, Jeffrey Weiss and Gertje Utley, but none of their ideas or discoveries is cited in *Art Since 1900*.[38]

Some exception should be made here for Foster. In many places, he follows *October*'s party line. As the book proceeds, however, he seems to depart from it more and more often. Maybe this is because he wrote so many more chapters than the other authors: the experience of absorbing and analyzing such a wide variety of art seems to have shaken his faith in his theoretical assumptions. Particularly, in his chapters on art after 1970, you seem to see Foster growing and changing as a critic, getting more flexible and more thoughtful.[39]

So what's a teacher to do—assign *Art Since 1900* or angrily reject it, like the critic for the *Wall Street Journal* who wrote: "I have a suggestion for the parents of high-school students: Find out whether the college that your child hopes to attend plans to assign 'Art Since 1900' in its art-history courses. If so, apply elsewhere."[40] The answer, of course, will depend partly on the teacher's tastes and politics. The intellectual intensity of *Art Since 1900* should engage undergraduates (and other readers) who are prepared to be challenged rather than spoon-fed. Its more conspicuous omissions will perhaps be rectified in the next edition, due out in about three years, and in the meantime the publisher, Thames and Hudson, is supplementing the textbook edition with a copy of a multimedia CD, *Art 20: The Thames and Hudson Multimedia Dictionary of Modern Art*, which includes reproductions of many of the missing works.

On the other hand, I wonder whether a big, ambitious textbook like *Art Since 1900* isn't in fact a kind of dinosaur. The rise of copyright clearinghouses now makes it possible for teachers to offer students custom-designed selections of readings, photocopied and bound between paper covers. It's still useful to have a textbook that serves as the backbone of a course, tying everything together, but there's no need for the textbook to be the students' only resource. If I were teaching a course on 20th-century art, I would probably assign Hunter and Jacobus's *Modern Art*, which has a shorter, pithier text than *Art Since 1900* and offers 877 illustrations compared to 637. To compensate for the lack of critical theory in *Modern Art*, I would put together a readings packet of essays by important critics, certainly including Krauss, Foster, Bois and Buchloh, but also covering writers such as Alfred Barr, Roland Barthes, Homi Bhaba, John Berger, Mel Bochner, Anna Chave, T.J. Clark, Thomas Crow, Carol Duncan, Michael Fried, Coco Fusco, Tamar Garb, Clement Greenberg, Eleanor Heartney, Fredric Jameson, Donald Judd, Allan Kaprow, Donald Kuspit, Lucy Lippard, Robert Morris, Cindy Nemser, Molly Nesbit, Linda Nochlin, Barbara Rose, Harold Rosenberg, Robert Rosenblum, Richard Shiff, Kenneth Silver, Robert Smithson, Leo Steinberg, Kirk Varnedoe and Anne Wagner. The students would be exposed to a wider spectrum of opinion—and they'd have more fun. □

These writers are no longer a band of rebels against the establishment. They *are* the establishment. Their works constitute a large part of the standard curriculum in modern art.

1. Rosalind E. Krauss, *Terminal Iron Works: The Sculpture of David Smith*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1971, pp. 23 and 25, and more generally the section titled "The Core of Objects," pp. 16-33. The theme of Cartesian consciousness returns in the title and essay of Krauss's later catalogue *Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem*, New York, Guggenheim Museum, 1994.
2. Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, New York, Viking, 1977, p. 270.
3. Krauss discusses Wittgenstein's influence in *Passages*, pp. 259-61, and on pp. 407 and 493-94 of *Art Since 1900* (hereafter *AS1900*). The influence on Minimalism of French authors and critics such as Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes is alluded to in *Passages*, p. 270, and in *AS1900*, pp. 499 and 671. On p. 540 of *AS1900*, Krauss quotes Robert Morris's influential 1966 description of the Minimalist object as taking "relationships out of the work" by making them "a function of space, light, and the viewer's field of vision."
4. On the relationship between existentialism and structuralism, see Bois's comments in "Roundtable: The predicament of contemporary art," *AS1900*, p. 671. Greenbergian formalism was attractive to Bois and other advanced French critics because, compared to the poetic effusions of existentialist art critics, it appeared bracingly objective and "structural."
5. See Krauss's groundbreaking essay, "Corpus Delicti," in Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, *L'Amour Fou: Photography and Surrealism*, exh. cat., Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, and New York, Abbeville Press, 1985, pp. 57-100, and Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss, *Formless: A User's Guide*, New York, Zone Books, 1997.
6. See the essays collected in Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1993, and *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1996.
7. See Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2000.
8. Bois recently accepted a chair at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton, N.J.
9. Richard Shiff at the University of Texas in Austin, T.J. Clark and Anne Wagner at Berkeley, Linda Nochlin and Robert Storr at the Institute of Fine Arts, Patricia Mainardi at the Graduate Center (CUNY) and Michael Fried at Johns Hopkins also head important centers for the graduate study of modern art. But the critical program of the *October* school is the broadest and most influential.
10. Arnason's *History of Modern Art* was first published in 1968 as a companion volume to H.W. Janson's venerable *History of Art*, which was being prepared for reprinting in a revised second edition in 1969. Both books were published by Prentice-Hall and Abrams, and have near-identical formats, typography and covers; however, where Janson covered 20th-century painting, sculpture and architecture in 49 pages, Arnason gave them over 600. *Modern Art* by Sam Hunter and John Jacobus (the latter wrote the chapters on architecture) was published in 1976. At first glance, both books would thus seem distinctly out of date. However, textbooks have more lives than cats. A second, enlarged edition of Arnason appeared in 1977; the fifth edition, published in 2003, carries the story up to about 1998. Similarly, the third edition of Hunter and Jacobus's book, published in 2004, covers contemporary art up through 2003. There is something incestuous about the world of textbooks. Both Arnason's *History of Modern Art* and Hunter and Jacobus's *Modern Art* were published by Prentice-Hall (now Pearson/Prentice-Hall). Daniel Wheeler, who updated the third (1986) edition of Arnason, is also responsible for the new chapters in the third edition of Hunter and Jacobus. (The new, fifth edition of Arnason was updated by Peter Kalb rather than by Wheeler.) In the interim, Wheeler published his own textbook called *Art Since Mid-Century* (Prentice-Hall, 1991) which now competes with Jonathan Fineberg's *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being* (Abrams, 1995; second ed., 2000). Meanwhile, Janson's *History of Art*, now in a "revised sixth edition," has been heavily rewritten by his son, Anthony F. Janson: the 20th century, extending to the present, is now allotted 160 pages. Similarly, *Gardner's Art through the Ages*, now in its 11th edition, devotes 140 pages to the 20th century. It should be noted that the current text of *Gardner's* is credited to Fred S. Kleiner, Christin J. Mamiya and Richard G. Tansey; as far as I can tell, nothing remains of the trim, eloquent text originally written by Helen Gardner in 1936.
11. The four volumes of the Open University series are *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting in the Nine-*

teenth Century; *Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century*; *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars*; and *Modernism in Dispute: Art Since the Forties*, all published by Yale University Press in 1993. The authors include Charles Harrison, Francis Frascina, Briony Fer, Tamar Garb and David Batchelor. Unlike the textbooks by Arnason and Hunter, these volumes have not been revised and updated, so their account of modern art ends 10 years ago.
12. Irritatingly, the authors of the theoretical introductions are not identified. Bois and Krauss seem to be responsible, respectively, for the essays titled "Formalism and structuralism" and "Poststructuralism and deconstruction." These are clear and helpful introductions to ideas that will recur through the book. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the other two essays, on psychoanalysis and on the social history of art. In both cases, the authors (presumably Foster and Buchloh) rush past the basics in order to get to the sophisticated critical issues that interest them. We hear about the theories of Lacan and Klein, but not about basic Freudian concepts such as repression, the id, ego and superego, or infantile sexuality; and there is no real explanation of castration anxiety or fetishism, concepts that will play an important role in later chapters. Similarly, in the essay on social theory we hear a great deal about Jürgen Habermas, Peter Bürger and T.J. Clark, but very little about Marx.
13. The division of *AS1900* by decades recalls the structure of Peter Selz's *Art in Our Times: A Pictorial History, 1890-1980*, New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and Harry N. Abrams, 1981, but the tightly focused chapters of individual essays in *AS1900* are quite different from Selz's synoptic discussions like "The 1910s: Painting" or "The 1930s: Architecture."
14. It seems odd that the writers of the *October* group, who are usually indifferent or even opposed to the cultural models deriving from new technologies (the Internet does not appear in the index) should have created a sort of hypertext. I suspect that the historic model here is Julio Cortázar's 1963 novel, *Hopscotch* (translated into English in 1966), which consisted of a series of disconnected chapters that could be read in different orders. Cortázar exerted an important influence on European and American culture in the 1960s, the period of Krauss's intellectual formation.
15. Krauss, "1959c: Postwar figuration," *AS1900*, p. 421.
16. Bois, "1917: Mondrian breaks through to abstraction," *AS1900*, p. 150.
17. Foster, "1992: The anthropological model," *AS1900*, p. 624. Unfortunately, this overview appears in a discussion of art ca. 1992; it would have been more helpful if inserted into a preface to the 1960s.
18. In her 1907 chapter on the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* and her 1911 and 1912 chapters on Cubism, Krauss provides a compressed summary of an enormous scholarly literature, to which she and Bois have been important contributors. The geometric language of Cubism is conventionally seen as the model for subsequent geometric abstraction, and this is discussed in the chapter "1913: Abstraction spreads across Europe," written by Foster. However, it is the next chapter, "1914: Tatlin's constructions and Duchamp's ready-mades" (also by Foster), that first sounds the themes that dominate the book's discussion of the 1920s and '30s, exploring the radical social, philosophical and phenomenological implications that the Constructivists and Dadaists discovered in Cubism. The themes are briefly adumbrated in Krauss's chapters, where she describes collage as "a revolution in Western representation that goes beyond the visual to extend to the literary, and past that into the political economy" (p. 113) and characterizes Picasso's Cubism, in contrast to Braque's, as the expression of a "horizontal" sensibility, "a bodily perspective declaring the tactile as separate from the visual" (p. 111).
19. Halfway through *AS1900*, after the discussion of European art in 1944, there is a roundtable discussion among the four authors (rather like something you might hear on PBS) on the topic of "art at mid-century." Unfortunately, the speakers mostly discuss issues in art of the era just after World War II, so the roundtable will probably mystify students who have not yet begun the second half of the book. The comparable roundtable at the end of *AS1900*, on "the predicament of contemporary art," is much more interesting. The authors disagree with one another about critical issues, finally generating the dialogue promised in the preface.
20. Bois, "1967c: French Conceptualist painting," *AS1900*, p. 515. Glaser's famous 1964 interview, published in *Art News*, September 1966, makes it into the narrative at this point only because Bois wants to refute Judd's "spiteful" remarks about European art.
21. The mini-chapters dated 1933 and 1943 are credited to "AD" rather than "HF," "RK," "BB" or "YAB," but the only explicit acknowledgment of Dempsey's role is on the copyright page, which includes the notice, "The publishers would like to thank Amy Dempsey for her assistance in the preparation of this book."
22. Foster, "1937a: European art and propaganda," *AS1900*, p. 284. Similarly, in their chapters on Futurism and its sequels, Krauss and Buchloh describe the metaphysical paintings of de Chirico, Carrà and Severini as "a harbinger of the later, gradual secession of fascist ideology from modernist practices" (p. 96). As scholars such as Emily Braun have demonstrated, the relationship between metaphysical painting and Fascism is more complex than this description would suggest; it is, in effect, the right-wing counterpart to the relationship between Constructivism and Stalinism.
23. Krauss, "1930b: Bataille's dissident Surrealism," *AS1900*, p. 246.
24. Ibid., p. 248. Krauss discusses the minotaur motif in Bataille and Man Ray without acknowledging Picasso's role in reviving it, or his breathtaking cover for the first issue of the journal *Minotaure*.
25. Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," *October*, Spring 1981; reprinted in Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1985, pp. 23-40.
26. See Robert Rosenblum, "Picasso and the Anatomy of Eroticism," in Gert Schiff, ed., *Picasso in Perspective*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1976, pp. 75-85.
27. Krauss, "1953: Cage, Rauschenberg, and the index," *AS1900*, p. 368.
28. Krauss, text box "Leo Steinberg (born 1920): the flatbed picture plane" in "1960b: Greenberg's modernism," *AS1900*, p. 442.
29. The omission of Rauschenberg's most important work is all the more surprising in that Douglas Crimp's famous essay, "On the Museum's Ruins," published in *October* in summer 1980, builds on Steinberg's analysis to identify the silkscreen paintings as the founding documents of postmodernism. The essay is reprinted in Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1993, pp. 44-64.
30. Hal Foster, "1958: Johns and Stella," *AS1900*, p. 404. It is also very curious that Krauss's chapter "1960b: Greenberg's modernism," pp. 439-44, contains reproductions of key works by Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland, artists championed by Greenberg and by his disciple Michael Fried, but no discussion of their work.
31. Buchloh, "The social history of art: models and concepts," *AS1900*, p. 25.
32. Buchloh, "1920: The Dada Fair," *AS1900*, p. 172, and "1925b: Neue Sachlichkeit painting," *AS1900*, p. 204.
33. Foster, "1937a: European art and propaganda," *AS1900*, p. 283.
34. Buchloh, "1964a: Beuys," *AS1900*, p. 482. Buchloh's guiding model here shifts from Peter Bürger to a composite of Theodor Adorno and Guy Debord.
35. Buchloh, "1972a: Broodthaers," *AS1900*, p. 549. This praise of the enlightened bourgeoisie is in striking contrast to Buchloh's earlier comments about the "New York School" photographers of the 1950s (principally Alexey Brodovitch and his students Richard Avedon and Irving Penn), who are slammed for their "melancholic invocation of the vanishing elitist bourgeois culture of the nineteenth [century]" (p. 426).
36. Buchloh, "1959d: New York School photography," *AS1900*, p. 431. See also Foster's praise of Felix Gonzalez-Torres for carving out "a lyrical-elegiac place for gay subjectivity and history," in his chapter "1987: Activist art," *AS1900*, p. 610.

The omission of Picasso's work of 1921-36 and the dismissal of Matisse's 1917-30 efforts as reflecting "a reactionary trend" are not accidents. They are the expression of an ideological bias.

37. Buchloh, "The social history of art: models and concepts," *AS1900*, p. 26. Ironically, the work of Käthe Kollwitz, one of the few 20th-century artists to make Buchloh's list of "heroic figures," is discussed in the surveys by Arnason and Hunter but not in *AS1900* (presumably because her art is not sufficiently modernist). What links the other 20th-century artists on Buchloh's list is their total lack of effectiveness as propagandists. Heartfield's political photomontages were done for the left-wing journal *AIZ*, intended to influence the German working class; but, as Buchloh himself notes, "The assumption that *AIZ* . . . would have a propagandistic effect turned out to be false since large numbers of the working class who had formerly voted Communist would vote for the Nazi party in 1933" (p. 172). The work of Rosler, Haacke and Sekula has reached a smaller, more elite audience than Heartfield's, and has probably had even less political effect. Buchloh knows this—he refers, in his chapter on "Photoconceptualism," to the pointlessness of "a naïve return to a political claim for photographic documentary" (p. 594). He just can't stop himself from asserting that such work has political value. Thus he praises Haacke for his "deneutralization and repoliticizing of photoconceptualist practices," and describes his famous photo-and-text piece, *Shapolski et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, as an essay "in the manner of muck-raking journalism" (p. 545). But Haacke's piece isn't journalism. It is "documentary style" art, like the 1930s photographs of Walker Evans (see Krauss's acute discussion on p. 278). Devoid of narrative explanation, and displayed in a gallery rather than the pages of the *Village Voice* or the *New York Times*, Haacke's piece had no discernable effect on city regulation of landlords, but it gave art-world patrons an agreeable sensation of moral superiority.
38. See John Berger, *The Success and Failure of Picasso*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1965; Patricia Leighten, *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897-1914*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989; Jeffrey Weiss, *The Popular Culture of Modern Art: Picasso, Duchamp, and Avant-Gardism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994; David Cottington, *Cubism in the Shadow of War: The Avant-Garde and Politics in Paris, 1905-1914*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998; Gertje Utley, *Picasso: The Communist Years*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000.
39. For instance, in his chapter "1984b: Postmodernism," Foster begins by replaying the art wars of the 1980s, opposing the "poststructuralist" (i.e., good) postmodernism of Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Sherrie Levine and Louise Lawler to the "neoconservative" (i.e., bad) postmodernism of Julian Schnabel, Anselm Kiefer and Francesco Clemente. Looking back, however, Foster comments that, despite their stylistic differences, both groups "tended to . . . shatter the notion of traditional representation," the former intentionally, the latter inadvertently (*AS1900*, p. 599). The heretical implication is that the two groups weren't so different after all, and that maybe artists such as Kiefer and Clemente were just as subversive—and important—as Kruger and Levine.
40. Eric Gibson, "At the Altar of the Obscure," *Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 11, 2005, p. W7.

Author: *Pepe Karmel is an associate professor of art history at New York University and has written widely on Picasso, Pollock, Minimalism and contemporary art.*