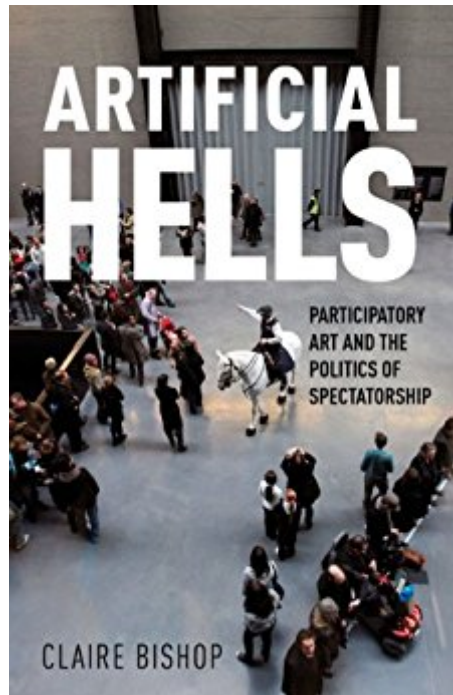


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# Artificial Hells: Participatory Art And The Politics Of Spectatorship



## Synopsis

A searing critique of participatory art by an iconoclastic historian. Since the 1990s, critics and curators have broadly accepted the notion that participatory art is the ultimate political art: that by encouraging an audience to take part an artist can promote new emancipatory social relations. Around the world, the champions of this form of expression are numerous, ranging from art historians such as Grant Kester, curators such as Nicolas Bourriaud and Nato Thompson, to performance theorists such as Shannon Jackson. *Artificial Hells* is the first historical and theoretical overview of socially engaged participatory art, known in the US as *œsocial practice*. • Claire Bishop follows the trajectory of twentieth-century art and examines key moments in the development of a participatory aesthetic. This itinerary takes in Futurism and Dada; the Situationist International; Happenings in Eastern Europe, Argentina and Paris; the 1970s Community Arts Movement; and the Artists Placement Group. It concludes with a discussion of long-term educational projects by contemporary artists such as Thomas Hirschhorn, Tania Bruguera, Paweł Althamer and Paul Chan. Since her controversial essay in *Artforum* in 2006, Claire Bishop has been one of the few to challenge the political and aesthetic ambitions of participatory art. In *Artificial Hells*, she not only scrutinizes the emancipatory claims made for these projects, but also provides an alternative to the ethical (rather than artistic) criteria invited by such artworks. *Artificial Hells* calls for a less prescriptive approach to art and politics, and for more compelling, troubling and bolder forms of participatory art and criticism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Unquestionably informative and chronologically coherent, Bishop's book is great for the advanced scholar or connoisseur of performance and socially engaged art. That said, there's a lot of information with tendrils across centuries as well as mediums, and the language is very forthright in presenting Bishop's opinions; so, it's potentially a bit daunting for those new to the subject.

Claire Bishop convincingly raises questions about "social practice" art by providing a detailed historical overview along with a thorough examination of contemporary work in the field. "Artificial Hells" successfully clarifies what art is and what it is not.

great for history and trauma

Artificial Hells is a must read book, not only for arts'followers. Bishop's point of view is a clever and unique one.

I can't read this book on my mac. I've chatted with tech support and they know its a problem but they can't fix it. I can't even select the book on Kindle for Mac or the whole thing freezes up. I've read bits of the book on my iPhone, and it seems like a great book, but I don't have any other way to publicly complain about this problem. Sorry Claire! Kindle Tech! Get your act together!!!

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