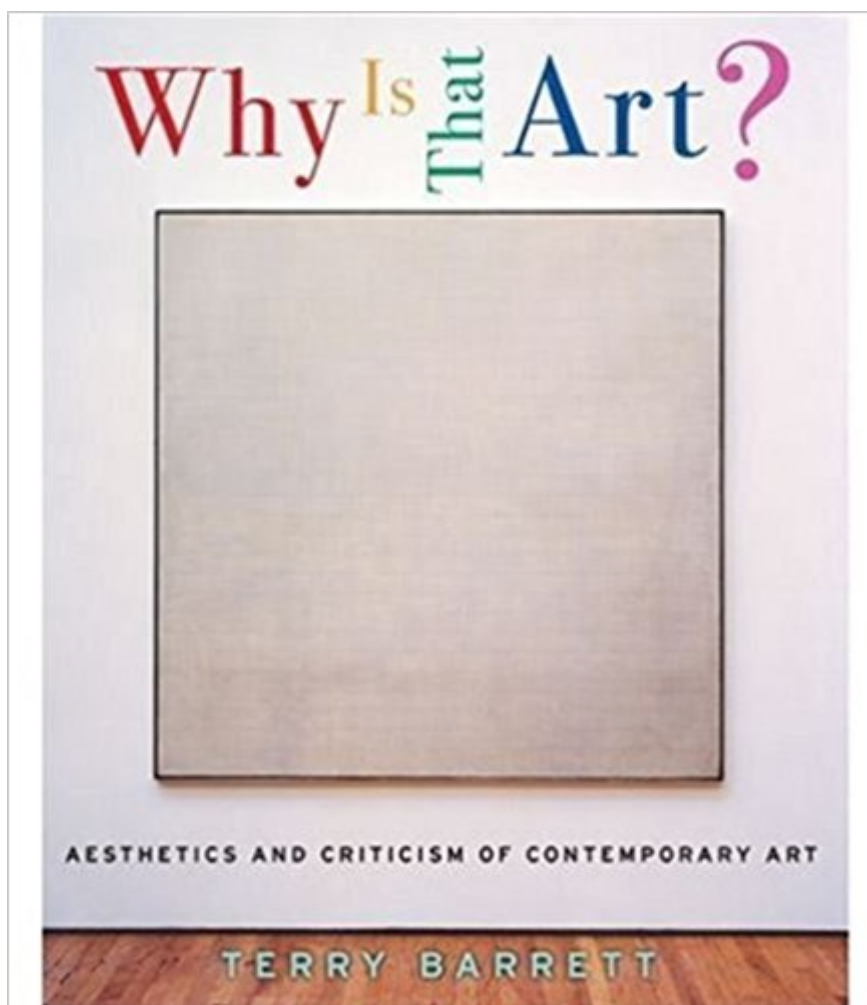


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# Why Is That Art?: Aesthetics And Criticism Of Contemporary Art



## Synopsis

Why Is That Art? addresses common questions that viewers raise about contemporary art: Why is that art? Why is it in an art museum? Who says it's art? If I did this, would it be art? Why is it good? Covering a broad, diverse, and engaging sampling of works--abstract and representational painting, monumental sculpture, performance art, video installations, films, and photographs--author Terry Barrett responds to these questions using three sources: the artists who created the works, philosophers of art, and art critics. Introducing students to a variety of established theories of art, he presents the traditional sets of criteria of Realism, Expressionism, and Formalism, which are in turn updated by recent sources of Poststructuralism. Barrett applies each of these theories to challenging works of contemporary art, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each mode of interpretation. He encourages students to consider many criteria when evaluating an artwork, to critically examine judgments made by others, and to make informed judgments of their own. Ideal for courses in aesthetics, art theory, art criticism, and the philosophy of art, Why Is That Art? is organized chronologically according to the history of aesthetics. It features sixty-seven illustrations (twenty-six in a full-color insert), discusses a wide range of American and European artists, and includes an exceptional overview of postmodern pluralism. This unique book will provide students with a newfound appreciation for contemporary art, scholarship, and reasoned argumentation, giving them the confidence to join the fascinating discourse on contemporary art.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Barrett is one of a very small number of non-philosophers who understands philosophical material

in aesthetics sufficiently to explain it appropriately and accurately in his writing."--Julie Van Camp, Professor of Philosophy, California State University, Long Beach" This book offers art students a lucid, comprehensive description of the various philosophical approaches to Western art and their relevance to contemporary art. . . . It uses interesting and relevant examples of artists' work, combined each time with a variety of critical responses to that work. This is the book's major strength and why it is particularly useful to students in studio art courses."--Timothy Van Laar, Professor of Art, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and coauthor of *Art with a Difference: Looking at Difficult and Unfamiliar Art and Active Sights: Art as Social Interaction*

Terry Barrett is a Professor of Art Education, Ohio State University.

This is a very dry book, difficult to follow. It is confusing if you have taken Fine Arts painting and sculpture courses and Art History courses in college as the terminology and interpretations are often very different. If you are an artist you may not enjoy trying to follow the tortuous delineations that art critics use in their analyses of art.

it helped a lot in my college 443 art history class. May want to read it more than once if you don't get it the first time.

Had no problems with this order.

I am an artist, and like the way this book presented the information about art. It is easy to comprehend and contains lots of good information.

I bought this textbook for a college course and was appalled to find an explicit picture of a couple engaged in intimacy, accompanied by a full explanation of anatomical and physical qualities of the photo. I found myself genuinely asking "Why is THAT art?" and closing the book. I know they're trying to show how modern art has evolved and all the mediums it includes, but this really took me off guard. The human body IS a very beautiful thing, but I don't need to see pictures of people in the throngs of intimacy to appreciate it. Nor do I think you can call that art, in my opinion. But I know others may not feel that same way. For what it's worth, they do show lots of other kinds of modern art that are interesting and noteworthy; but for me the explicit content pretty much ruined the rest of it. If you buy it, just be aware that it's there.

The item arrived in good time, and has a unique perspective on art, but some of the content is disturbing when it comes to specific moral aspects.

If I were taking a college course on why something is art according to the major art philosophers, then this would be the book. Instead I was looking for a book with some basic fundamentals of art. Not a bad book necessarily but not the book I wanted.

Why is that Art? I learned so much reading this book and as an art student I have referred back to its pages to clarify and find examples. The first chapter talked about the art worlds, critics, judgments, aesthetics, and artists. It opened my eyes up to critics and their real intent. The author Terry Barrett has done his research! Every chapter explains a different theory in art and gives three to four artists as examples for each theory. This book is packed with writings from philosophers, critics, art historians, and artist. Barrett really just compiled it all. I know I will look to this book for answers in the future. For a beginning artist, who wants to know more about the art world, I would say it is a must read.

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