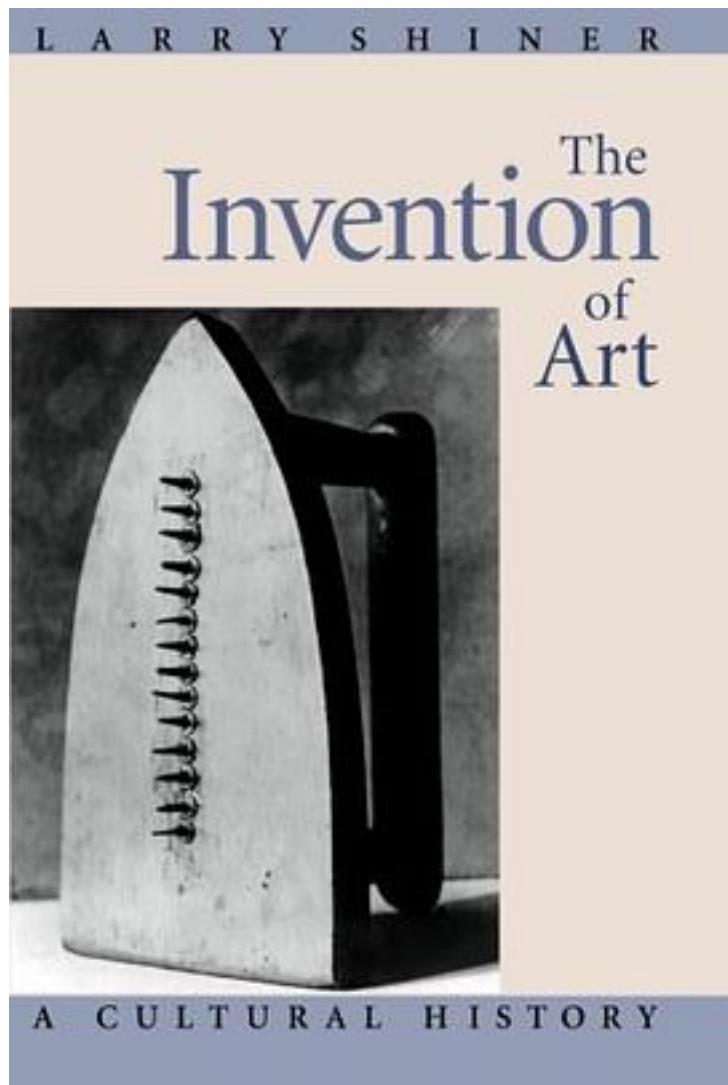


The Invention of Art



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We take enormous comfort in the notion that art began in ancient Greece, or maybe even the Renaissance, and that its progress can be traced through a long series of masterpieces. We believe even more firmly in the idea that art is transcendent and universal. With "The Invention of Art", Larry Shiner challenges these articles of faith and invites us to reconsider the history of art entirely. He argues that the category of fine art is a modern invention - that the lines drawn between art and craft design resulted from key social transformations in Europe during the long 18th century. According to Shiner, the idea of fine art was inextricably linked to the development of new market economies and the rise of the middle classes, both constituting enormous changes in Western culture. During this period, the art museum, a place where art could be viewed, digested and contemplated, first came into being. Meanwhile, critics became less interested in how art and literature functioned, and more fascinated with art's aesthetic worth. At the same time, the performance of classical music shifted from places of worship and political ceremonies to more secular and commercial venues where it could be listened to silently. And accompanying these institutional changes was the dissolution of the patronage system for producing art, and the advent of a new market system supported by consumers. "The Invention of Art" traces the rich tradition of opposition to these institutions. Shiner looks at works by thinkers as varied as Hogarth, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Emerson, Marx, Dewey and Benjamin. Ultimately, he shows how the modern system maintains its dominance through the assimilation of painters and musicians who resist it, and the distinctions it draws between artists and artisans, and high art and the crafts.

作者介绍:

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