

Picasso



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出版者:Yale Univ Pr

出版时间:2006-2

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780300104127

The starting point of this exciting new exploration of Picasso is not his life but his work, which is revealed as a series of interventions in the troubled history of early twentieth-century Europe. Christopher Green shows how these interventions are remarkable for the force with which they confront issues that remain vital and important for us today: race, cultural difference, modernity, sexuality and the discontents of civilization. The framework for Green's exploration is simple, yet enormously rich in its implications: the compulsion found in Picasso's work simultaneously to build architectures and to release himself from them. Architecture is used by Green to refer not merely to pictorial or sculptural structure, but to the architecture of knowledge and society: the structures of tradition, of racial, social and cultural distinction, of logic and of technology. He not only develops new ways of seeing the oscillation between order and disorder in Picasso's work, but moves outwards from it to reveal how it confronted and challenged the architectures of orthodoxy. The book opens with a completely fresh look at the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* in relation to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories of racial difference, and closes with Picasso's confronting the question of race even more directly in 1933, on the threshold of the Holocaust. The intervening chapters focus on the artist's early Cubism, his metal guitars of 1912 and 1924, and the work he made alongside the

Surrealists and their dissident opponents in contexts that open up the question of the avant-garde's relation to modern society, to national identity, to modernity and to the place of magic in a modern, demystified world. Each of these chapters, moreover, places the work in a different avant-garde context by bringing in one of the artists closest to Picasso in the period, thereby introducing new paths into the work not only of Picasso but also of the Douanier Rousseau, Georges Braque, Jacques Lipchitz and Joan Miro.

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