

Paint by Number



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What is the fascination of paint by numbers? Is it the intoxicating and compulsive act of filling in small pools of colour? Or the easy thrill of creating your own impressionist masterpiece? Or a fond nostalgia for a craze that cut across the nation boundaries and age groups? Invented in 1951 by Dan Robbins - based on an idea by Leonardo da Vinci to teach painting - the paint-by-number craze reached its zenith in the 1950s but continues on even as paints and kits are avidly collected, exhibited in galleries and traded on eBay. In this text art meets kitsch and popular and high cultures collide in a

collage of home economics, leisure time fun, and art education. The author revisits the hobby from the vantage point of the artists and entrepreneurs who created the popular paint kits, the critics who reviled them and the consumers who filled them in and hung them in their homes.

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