

Art in Context



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The various lenses--ethical, political, sexual, religious, and so forth--through which we may view art are often instrumental in giving us an appreciation of the work. In "Art in Context: Understanding Aesthetic Value," philosopher David Fenner presents a straightforward, accessible overview of the arguments about the importance of considering the relevant context in determining the true merit of a work of art. "Art in Context" is a systematic, historically situated, and historically evidenced attempt to demonstrate the importance of considering contexts that will, in the vast majority of cases, increase the aesthetic experience. While focusing on distance, detachment, aestheticism, art for art's sake, and formalism can at times be instructive and interesting, such approaches risk missing the larger and often central issue of the piece. Based on the findings of philosophers and critics, and on artwork throughout history, "Art in Context" provides a solid foundation for understanding and valuing a work of art in perspective as well as within the particular world in which it exists.

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目录:

[Art in Context 下载链接1](#)

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