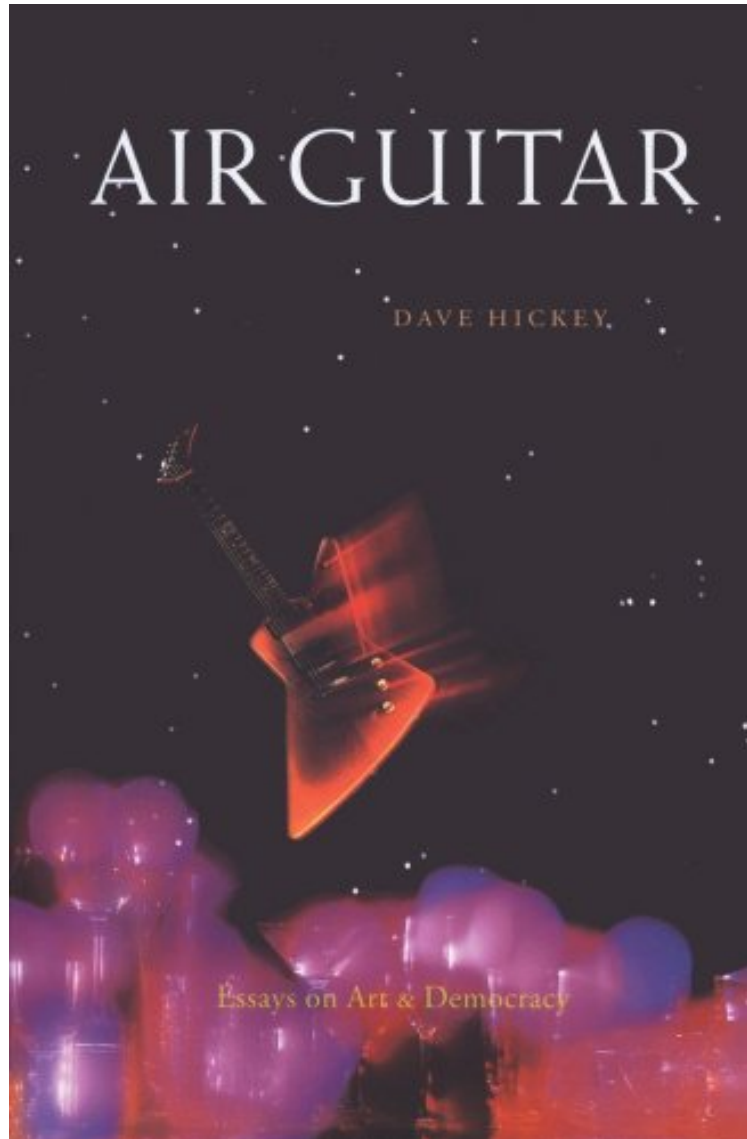


(Free and download) Air Guitar: Essays on Art Democracy

## Air Guitar: Essays on Art Democracy

*Dave Hickey*

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**Dave Hickey : Air Guitar: Essays on Art Democracy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Air Guitar: Essays on Art Democracy:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. a box of chocolates for those of us who like pop cultural criticismBy Fiona WebsterIf you are even the least bit interested in criticism that takes as its subject the pop culture of Americaespecially music and art, but also such things as television, basketball, and Las Vegasyou owe it to yourself to read this book. Dave Hickey is our Roland Barthes: he's not like a Left Bank philosopher, but rather he's a steely-eyed

fearless observer and analyst who agrees with Oscar Wilde's famous statement that art is useless. And long live our various forms of popular art, in their utter uselessness! =grin=Hickey is also a great deal of fun to read. I consumed these essays like a box of chocolates.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful writing, but content is scattershot and disorganizedBy RyanThis is a collection of critical essays on various American popular media from the back half of the 20th century. For those who came up anytime between the 60's and the late 80's, the topics will likely resonate, and the eulogies for celebrity figures will inspire fond nostalgia. Hickey has a clever insight for every topic under the sun, no matter how mundane it may seem; he exposes the subtle ideologies that we take for granted in familiar stories and songs.I am a little bit skeptical of the theme; "Art and Democracy" is far too broad a topic, and the seemingly random pop culture grab-bag represented here lacks unity. Air Guitar has some fantastic content, but as a collection, it never justifies its own necessity. Still, it has its worth as a course on how to write fluid, optimistic criticism (certainly absent from today's polemical internet media); or, simply, as an expertly-rendered nostalgia trip.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. but being as intelligent and cultured as he isBy cg3A book I've given to many people over the years. The writing, the insights, the humor are incomparable. Dave Hickey is a bit of a curmudgeon, but being as intelligent and cultured as he is, how could he not be.

The 23 essays (or "love songs") that make up the now classic volume *Air Guitar* trawl a "vast, invisible underground empire" of pleasure, through record stores, honky-tonks, art galleries, jazz clubs, cocktail lounges, surf shops and hot-rod stores, as restlessly on the move as the America they depict. *Air Guitar* pioneered a kind of plain-talking in cultural criticism, willingly subjective and always candid and direct. A valuable reading tool for art lovers, neophytes, students and teachers alike, Hickey's book--now in its eighth printing--has galvanized a generation of art lovers, with new takes on Norman Rockwell, Robert Mapplethorpe, Stan Brakhage, Andy Warhol and Perry Mason. In June 2009, *Newsweek* voted *Air Guitar* one of the top 50 books that "open a window on the times we live in, whether they deal directly with the issues of today or simply help us see ourselves in new and surprising ways," and described the book as "a seamless blend of criticism, personal history, and a deep appreciation for the sheer nuttiness of American life." Dave Hickey (born 1939) is one of today's most revered and widely read art writers. He has written for *Rolling Stone*, *Art News*, *Art in America*, *Artforum* and *Vanity Fair* among many others.

Dave Hickey's twenty-three "love songs," which make up *Air Guitar*, fly off the page to offer the reader a vista beyond the wasteland. In Hickey's "vast, invisible underground empire" of pleasure--record stores, honky-tonks, hot-rod shops, art galleries, jazz clubs, cocktail lounges, surf shops and the like--joy abounds and truth speaks. -- *The Nation*, Margaret Juhae Lee Finally obliged to theorize his impolite tastes, judgments and ideas, Hickey lays his prejudices a little barer than altogether becomes them. Even caught in that old trap, however, he's as good as it gets, starting with his prose. Although his diction is often highfalutin (he was doing a doctoral thesis about Foucault and Derrida way back in 1967), his rhythms aren't, and he's more than fluent in colloquial English--I mean, the guy can flat-out write. -- *Los Angeles Times Sunday Book*, Robert Christgau