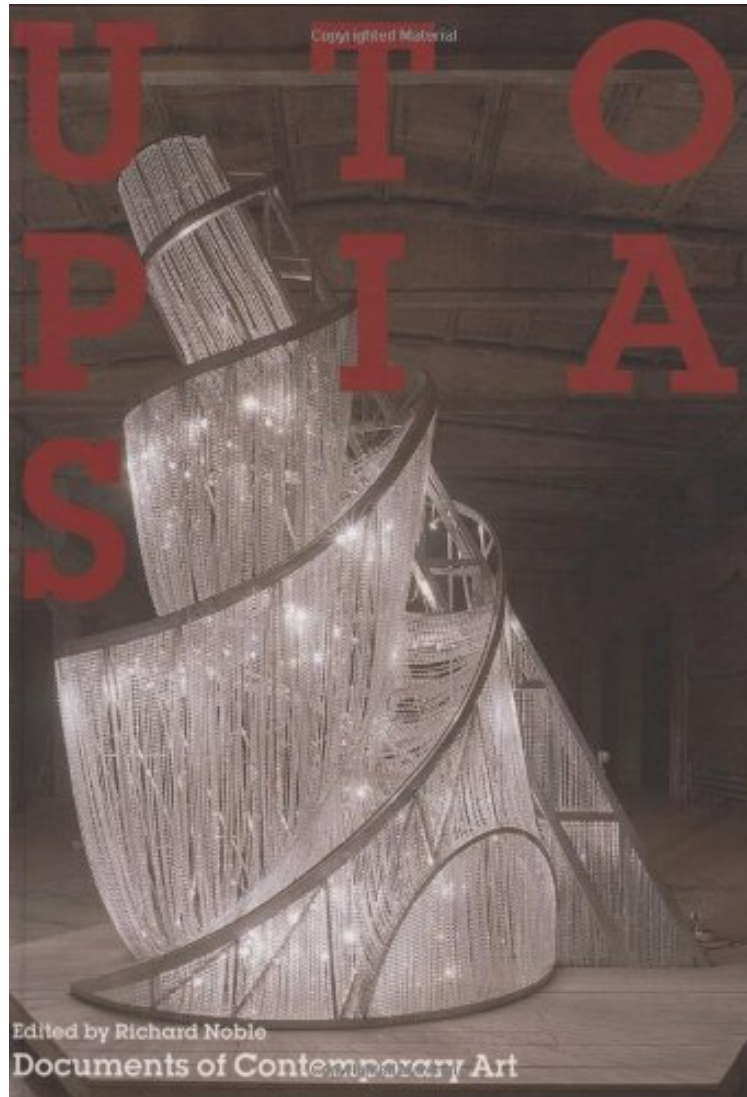


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Utopias (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art)

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From Richard Noble : Utopias (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Utopias (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. interesting read By Carol Riedel this a book of essay about the meanings and visions of utopia and distopias. interesting 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Lydia Elizalde Useful for academic references.

Utopian strategies in contemporary art seen in the context of the histories of utopian thinking and avant-garde art. Throughout its diverse manifestations, the utopian entails two related but contradictory elements: the aspiration to a better world, and the acknowledgement that its form may only ever live in our imaginations. Furthermore, we are haunted by the failures of utopian enterprise as we are inspired by the desire to repair the failed and build the new. Contemporary art reflects this general ambivalence. The utopian impulse informs politically activist and relational art, practices that fuse elements of art, design, and architecture, and collaborative projects aspiring to progressive social or political change. Two other tendencies have emerged in recent art: a looking backward to investigate the utopian elements of previous eras, and the imaginative modeling of alternative worlds as intimations of possibility. This anthology contextualizes these utopian currents in relation to political thought, viewing the utopian as a key term in the artistic lineage of modernity. It illuminates how the exploration of utopian themes in art today contributes to our understanding of contemporary cultures, and the possibilities for shaping their futures. Artists surveyed include Joseph Beuys, Paul Chan, Guy Debord, Jeremy Deller, Liam Gillick, Antony Gormley, Dan Graham, Thomas Hirschhorn, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Bodys Isek Kingelez, Paul McCarthy, Constant A. Nieuwenheys, Paul Noble, Nils Norman, Philippe Parreno, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, Superflex, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Mark Titchner, Atelier van Lieshout, Jeff Wall, Andy Warhol, Wochenklauser, Carey Young. Writers include Theodor Adorno, Jennifer Allen, Catherine Bernard, Ernst Bloch, Yve-Alain Bois, Nicolas Bourriaud, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Alex Farquharson, Hal Foster, Michel Foucault, Alison Green, Fredric Jameson, Rosalind Krauss, Hari Kunzru, Donald Kuspit, Dermis P. Leon, Karl Marx, Jeremy Millar, Thomas More, William Morris, Molly Nesbit, Hans Ulrich Obrist, George Orwell, Jacques Rancière, Stephanie Rosenthal, Beatrix Ru.

From Publishers Weekly This timely and well-chosen collection of texts on the notion of utopia examines the concept as a recurrent literary and theoretical trope and as it relates to contemporary artistic practice. Succinctly contextualized by Noble as an impulse or tendency rather than a place, utopia is examined from its earliest explicit articulation in Thomas Moore's 1516 eponymous text through its 19th-century entanglement with revolutionary aspirations in the work of Marx and Engels and its 20th-century negation in George Orwell's 1984. These provide the grounds for considerations on the significance of the avant-garde and the relationship between art and politics in its myriad activist and critical guises. While including such suspects as Adorno and Foucault, the book offers a perceptive selection of writings on and by such artists as Joseph Beuys, Liam Gillick and Thomas Hirschhorn, while critics are amply represented with superb pieces by the likes of Jan Verwoert on the avant-garde gesture and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh's infamous reading of Beuys as a historic self-mythologizer. Marred only by the brevity of the individual selections, this volume is essential reading for anyone interested in the art-world's current impasse between willful naiveté and postmodern cynicism. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. What truly distinguishes this volume is the manner in which it reveals that the imagination of a perfect society is the other half of a critique of society, and that the two halves rarely add up. Some of the authors project brilliant visions of the future, others seek to examine the contemporary blockages on the utopian impulse, while most investigate the confusion of what makes (or does not make) something utopian within the context of art. This excellent selection of pieces that in one way or another contemplate utopia will help renew interest in this most important of subjects. (Alex Alberro, Virginia Bloedel Wright Associate Professor of Art History, Barnard College and Columbia University) Richard Noble has brilliantly brought together a selection of writings by artists, political theorists, critics and philosophers in order to investigate the utopian in contemporary art and culture -- how art explores the impulse towards a better world, as well as how it plays out the intimation of a dystopian and dark universe so near to us. From canonical historical texts such as More's *Utopia* of 1516 and Marx and Engels' writings in the nineteenth century, to Orwell's 1949 dark vision of utopia gone sour in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*; from Adorno's avant-garde negativity to Debord and Constant's views of the total integration of art and political revolution in the 1950s and 1960s; from Beuys' view of a practical and realizable utopia of the 1970s, up to Pierre Huyghe, Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Philippe Parreno's views of relational communities and conviviality at the turn of this new century; this collection of essays and interviews provides insight and challenges us to imagine the twenty-first century with absolute freedom. (Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Chief Curator, Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Artistic Director, Documenta 13) This is an exceptionally stimulating book, helping explain why Utopia continues to mean 'Nowhere.' (Arthur C. Danto, Johnsonian Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Columbia University, and art critic, *The Nation*) This volume is essential reading for anyone interested in the art-world's current impasse between willful naiveté and postmodern cynicism. (Publishers Weekly) About the Author Richard Noble is a scholar of contemporary art, critical theory, and the interrelation of art and politics. He is a Lecturer in Fine Arts at Goldsmiths College, London.