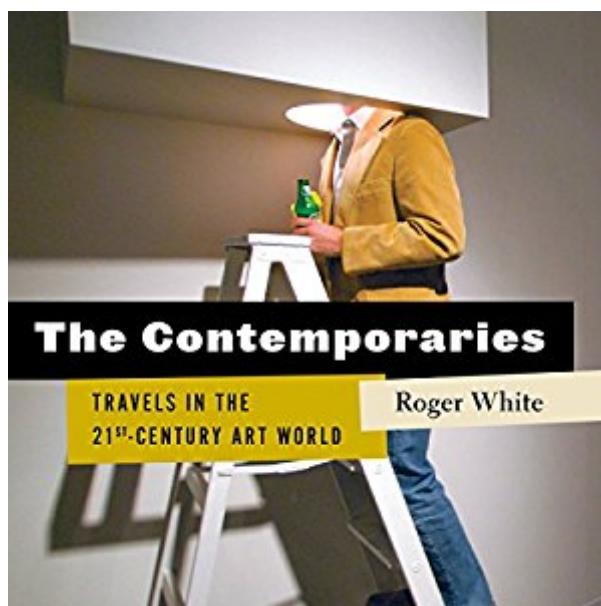


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# The Contemporaries: Travels In The 21st-Century Art World



## Synopsis

It's been nearly a century since Marcel Duchamp exhibited a urinal and called it art. Since then painting has been declared dead several times over, and contemporary art has now expanded to include just about any object, action, or event: dance routines, slideshows, functional hair salons, seemingly random accretions of waste. In the meantime being an artist has gone from a join-the-circus fantasy to a plausible vocation for scores of young people in America. But why - and how and by whom - does all this art get made? How is it evaluated? And for what, if anything, will today's artists be remembered? In *The Contemporaries*, Roger White, himself a young painter, serves as our spirited, skeptical guide through this diffuse, creative world. White takes us into the halls of the RISD graduate program, where students learn critical lessons that go far beyond how to apply paint to canvases. In New York we meet the neophytes who assist established artists - and who walk the fine line between "assistance" and "making the art". In Milwaukee White trails a group of friends trying to create a viable scene where rent is cheap but where the spotlight rarely shines. And he gives us an intimate perspective on three wildly different careers: that of Dana Schutz, an emerging star who is revitalizing painting; that of Mary Walling Blackburn, whose challenging art defies market forces; and that of Stephen Kaltenbach, a '70s wunderkind who is back on the critical radar, perhaps in spite of his own willful obscurity. From young artists trying to elbow their way in to those working hard at dropping out, White's essential audiobook offers a once-in-a-generation glimpse of the inner workings of the American art world at a moment of unparalleled ambition, uncertainty, and creative exuberance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The core of this book concerns the work of Dana Schutz, and conceptual artist Stephen Kaltenbach. The first half deals with MFA programs and the need, utility, expectations, and the like of such. Then some stuff about the modern state of art making, the un-credited role of assistants, etc., etc. Interesting enough to keep you going, but not anything you don't really already know on some level. Or rather what anybody interested enough in the topic to actually pick up this book and read it, wouldn't already know... The real take away gems are largely found in the author's historic command of the conceptual art movement and Stephen Kaltenbach's role in such. Contains an exhausting level of references and information.

An insider's view of how art is being made today, including illuminating profiles of selected artists and their working environments. The book is filled with personality and personalities, and White inserts enough background/historical perspective at judicious points to bring an art novice (like me) along for the ride without weighting the book down. I particularly liked the final chapter, a multi-threaded narrative with a fascinating multi-decade story at its heart that was as good a read as the best you find in, say, the New Yorker.

Intelligent, perceptive and extraordinarily well articulated - derived from 1st person interviews.. White's skill at writing almost exceeds his ability to paint. This a really enjoyable read.

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