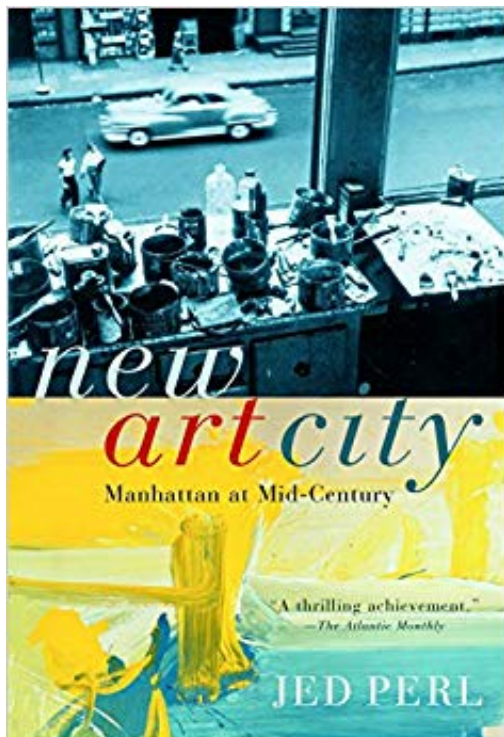


New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century *by* Jed Perl



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In this landmark work, Jed Perl captures the excitement of a generation of legendary artists—Jackson Pollack, Joseph Cornell, Robert Rauschenberg, and Ellsworth Kelly among them—who came to New York, mingled in its lofts and bars, and revolutionized American art. In a continuously arresting narrative, Perl also portrays such less well known figures as the galvanic teacher Hans Hofmann, the lyric expressionist Joan Mitchell, and the adventuresome realist Fairfield Porter, as well the writers, critics, and patrons who rounded out the artists' world. Brilliantly describing the intellectual crosscurrents of the time as well as the genius of dozens of artists, *New Art City* is indispensable for lovers of modern art and culture.



Reviews of the *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century* *by* Jed Perl

Alsantrius

Love the book.

Hono

The great tradition of his other works is kept here. For those interested in the Art City (of New York) this is a must.

JUST DO IT

Jed pearl so real

Yozshubei

Mr. Perl really lets you in on the 'secret' of the madcap world of the great artists of the last century.
-- Made me want to go right into the basement and construct something from scratch!

Tat

Jed Perl's **New Art City** is a dense, fact-filled, often opinionated volume detailing the gradual shift of the art-world's creative center from Paris to New York City throughout the 20th century. This is not a text for the casual browser: with the exception of a few biographical sketches of the artists discussed, Perl is not always a lively writer and the majority of **New Art City** is comprised of critical and philosophical reflections--his own and others'--on the art and art movements he discusses. That's all for the better if you're a serious student of art history, or an artist: you'll welcome Perls' serious and nuanced approach, even if some of his concerns go straight over your head.

Perls' focus is on the artists of what has come to be known as The New York School--deKooning, Pollock, Newman, Kline, etc--and their nominal mentor, Hans Hoffman, but he also covers the legacy these artists left on American art all the way through the Pop 60s and on into the mid-70s/80s. His discussion of the passionate and multitudinous responses and reactions to Abstract Expressionism leading to the "end of painting" and how artists sought a solution to the `crisis' between abstraction and representation--a crisis that continues to this day--is rich and thought-provoking. Perl deals mainly with the painters of this period, but also takes into consideration sculptors, critics, gallery owners, and museum directors whose activities helped change--literally--the face of modern art. Some figures, like deKooning and Pollock, will probably be familiar enough to readers but others like Fairfield Porter, Leland Bell, and Nell Blaine will more likely come as something of a revelation. The best thing Perl does in this critical history is to clearly fit this large cast of characters into the grand narrative of 20th century American art and the driving point of this text is that American art during this time became **the** vanguard of art in the world.

As noted, this is a dense and sometimes abstruse text, and I found the opening pages almost forbiddingly overwritten and overwrought with exclamatory adjectives, but Perl eventually settles down to a prose style that is, if not exactly user-friendly, is at least relatively free of unnecessary jargon and obfuscation. Another downside to the book is that the reproductions are in black-and-white, which I realize nowadays is a necessity to keep the book from costing five hundred bucks, but the result is that Perl seems to find it necessary to describe the paintings. Others may dissent, but I didn't find it particularly helpful to "read" about the electric greens, the volcanic reds, the aniline yellows, etc etc. Reading such tedious descriptions one can't help but be reminded of the old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words." And, indeed, a few thousand such words could have been removed from **New Art City** without sacrificing much.

In the end, though, this is a challenging and worthwhile read, a good companion, probably, for the deKooning biography that was released at roughly the same time, that goes a long way to explaining modern art and where in the big picture we stand in the world of art today.

Snake Rocking
unreadable.

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