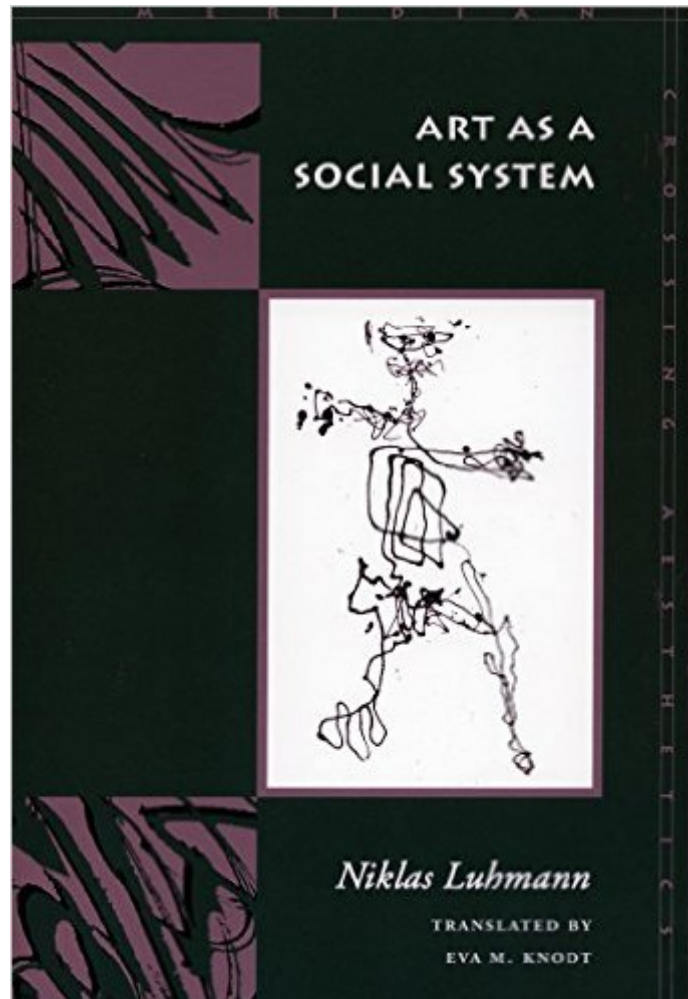# Art As A Social System (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)

Synopsis

This is the definitive analysis of art as a social and perceptual system by Germany's leading social theorist of the late twentieth century. It not only represents an important intellectual step in discussions of art—in its rigor and in its having refreshingly set itself the task of creating a set of distinctions for determining what counts as art that could be valid for those creating as well as those receiving art works—but it also represents an important advance in systems theory.Returning to the eighteenth-century notion of aesthetics as pertaining to the "knowledge of the senses," Luhmann begins with the idea that all art, including literature, is rooted in perception. He insists on the radical incommensurability between psychic systems (perception) and social systems (communication). Art is a special kind of communication that uses perceptions instead of language. It operates at the boundary between the social system and consciousness in ways that profoundly irritate communication while remaining strictly internal to the social.In seven densely argued chapters, Luhmann develops this basic premise in great historical and empirical detail. Framed by the general problem of art's status as a social system, each chapter elaborates, in both its synchronic and diachronic dimensions, a particular aspect of this problem. The consideration of art within the context of a theory of second-order observation leads to a reconceptualization of aesthetic form. The remaining chapters explore the question of the system's code, its function, and its evolution, concluding with an analysis of "self-description."Art as a Social System draws on a vast body of scholarship, combining the results of three decades of research in the social sciences, phenomenology, evolutionary biology, cybernetics, and information theory with an intimate knowledge of art history, literature, aesthetics, and contemporary literary theory. The book also engages virtually every major theorist of art and aesthetics from Baumgarten to Derrida.

Book Information

Best Sellers Rank: #179,885 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #19 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Social Theory   #109 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Aesthetics   #463 inÂ Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > Art

Customer Reviews

The scope and breadth of Luhmannâ ™s undertaking and analysis is truly astounding, and based on this â œastonishmentâ • alone, one might be tempted to call his writings in totality a work of art. â œ[T]o borrow a phrase from antiquity, the work of art is created for the sake of astonishment.â • (p. 40) Luhmann would no doubt have objected to such a description, blurring as it does the boundaries of differentiated subsystems which are operatively closed, according to the theory, a condition which â œmight be described as autonomy[,]â • meaning that â œwithin its boundaries, autopoiesis functions unconditionally, the only alternative being that the system ceases to exist.â • (p. 157) In this context, â œan autopoietic systemâ • is merely a â œself-determining processâ • of communication. (p. 11) Luhmann goes on to note that a â œsystem that partially relies on external elements or structures because it cannot operate without themâ ”a computer, for exampleâ ”is not an autopoietic system.â • (p. 157)This appears to be one of the more problematic aspects of Luhmannâ ™s theory, when he states in his conclusion that the â œart system . . . remains dependent on its social environment, and such dependencies (of an economic nature, for example) may increase.â • Luhmann attempts to mitigate (or ignore) this difficulty through the concept of â œstructural coupling[]â • such as â œbetween the nervous system and consciousness[.]â • (p. 8) Such connections â œbetween system and environment are presupposed.â • (p. 50; citing Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco Varela, The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding (Boston, 1992), pp. 75ff, 181ff) Indeed, â œartistic communication realizes specific forms of structural coupling between consciousness and society.â • (p.

Download to continue reading...

Art as a Social System (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) Files: Law and Media Technology (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) The Use of Bodies (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) Rogues: Two Essays on Reason (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics) Social Anxiety: Ultimate Guide to Overcoming Fear, Shyness, and Social Phobia to Achieve Success in All Social Situations (BONUS, Anxiety Relief, Social Anxiety Treatment) Social Security: Time for a Life of Leisure - The Guide of Secrets to Maximising Social Security Retirement Benefits and Planning Your Retirement (social ... disability, social security made simple) Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art Civil

War a Narrative; 3 Volumes: Fort Sumter to Perryville; Fredericksburg to Meridian; Red River to Appomattox Heavenly Streams: Meridian Theory in Nei Gong (Daoist Nei Gong) Qigong Meridian Self Massage - Complete Program for Improved Health, Pain Annihilation, and Swift Healing (Chi Powers for Modern Age Book 5) The Practical Application of Meridian Style Acupuncture The Civil War: A Narrative, Volume II, Fredericksburg to Meridian The Civil War: A Narrative: Volume 2: Fredericksburg to Meridian (Vintage Civil War Library) Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West Blood Meridian: Or the Evening Redness in the West Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders (Meridian) The Ghost in the Doll (Fox Meridian Book 6) Brooks/Cole Empowerment Series: Social Welfare Policy and Social Programs (SW 323K Social Welfare Programs, Policies, and Issues) Designing for Performance: Weighing Aesthetics and Speed