

By Thijs Lijster

Benjamin and Adorno on Art and Art Criticism

Critique of Art

This book brings together two of the most important figures of twentieth-century criticism, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, to consider a topic that was central to their thinking: the place of and reason for art in society and culture. Thijs Lijster takes us through points of agreement and disagreement between the two on such key topics as the relationship between art and historical experience, between avant-garde art and mass culture, and between the intellectual and the public. He also addresses the continuing relevance of Benjamin and Adorno to ongoing debates in contemporary aesthetics, such as the end of art, the historical meaning of art, and the role of the critic.

"This much-needed book goes beyond the now familiar discussions of Benjamin and Adorno's personal relationship and the "dispute" over Benjamin's artwork essay to examine the complex interweaving of the two men's ideas and texts throughout the whole of each man's oeuvre. Lijster situates his examination within the pressing contemporary issue of the value of art, arguing that art functions as social critique and that art criticism is a necessary fulfilment of art's critical role."

Shierry Weber Nicholse, author of *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics*

"Thijs Lijster has written the most thorough and synoptic comparison of the aesthetic theories of Adorno and Benjamin to date. He has the capacity to take even the most complex materials, and render their essentials in limpid and penetrating prose -- which for writing on these authors is a rare talent. Lijster has the further skill of being a first rate art critic; with the consequence that he has the capacity to test the abstract claims of aesthetic theories against the recalcitrant realities of artistic materials. The result is a penetrating work of aesthetic theory and criticism."

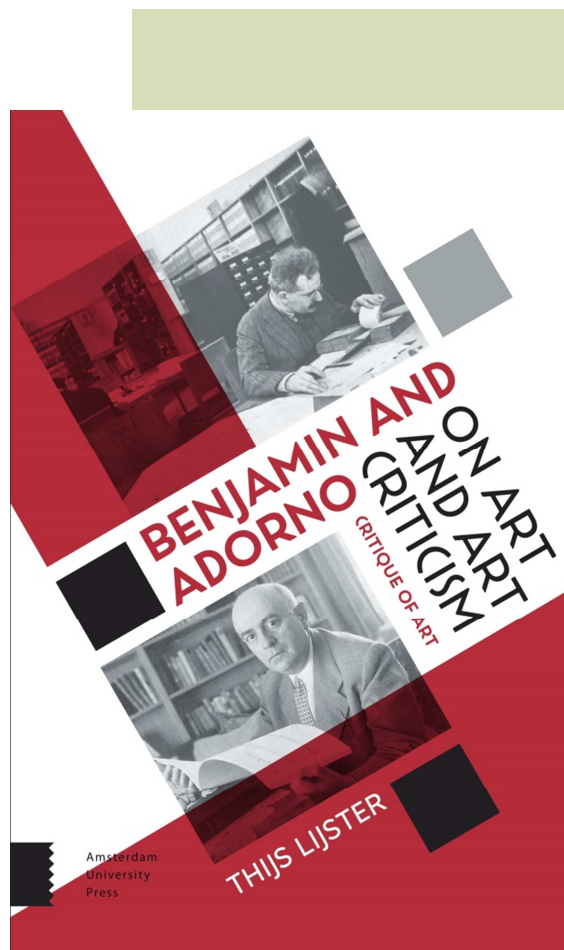
J.M. Bernstein, New School for Social Research

"In this vitally important and timely study, Thijs Lijster argues that the writings of Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno comprise a "Critical Model" in which can be found ideas that have fallen out of fashion in contemporary art theory and criticism. Such perspectives emphasize the utopian, emancipatory and critical potential of the artwork, which is to say, its power to break the spell of capital. As such art is to be viewed as the bearer of truth-content retrieved by a form of criticism that 'completes' the work itself."

Samir Gandesha

Amsterdam University Press
Nieuwe Prinsengracht 89
1018 VR Amsterdam

T +31 (0)20 420 00 50
info@aup.nl
marketing@aup.nl



Thijs Lijster teaches philosophy of art at the University of Groningen. He contributed to *Conceptions of Critique in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy* (eds. R. Sonderegger and K. De Boer, Palgrave 2012), *Institutional Attitudes. Instituting Art in a Flat World* (ed. P. Gielen, Valiz 2013) and *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 2nd edition (ed. M. Kelly, Oxford University Press 2014). He was awarded with the ABG/VN Essay Prize 2009, the Prize for Young Art Critics 2010 and the NWO/Boekman Dissertation Prize 2015.

July 2017
368 pages
Hardback
ISBN 978 94 6298 140 9
e-ISBN 978 90 4853 105 9
€99.00 / £80.00 / \$124.00
€98.99 / £79.99 / \$123.99

ORDER

Available to order through your local bookseller or on www.aup.nl.

www.aup.nl
facebook.com/AmsterdamUPress
twitter.com/AmsterdamUPress