

Diego Mantoan

The Road to Parnassus: Artist Strategies in Contemporary Art

Rise and Success of Glasgow Artist Douglas Gordon and of the wider YBA generation

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Prof. Dr. Tobias Vogt, Universität der Künste, College of Fine Arts, Berlin

Summary

How can one become a successful artist? Where should one start a career in the art world? What are useful strategies to achieve recognition in the art system? Such questions hoard in students' minds ever since entering art school and they probably chase every kind of art professional who is at an early career stage. "The Road to Parnassus" tries to understand what makes a good start in today's art world, who are influential players in the field and which strategies might apply. The swift career ascension of Glasgow artist Douglas Gordon – one of today's leading visual artists – and of the broader YBA generation that rose into worldwide prominence in the 1990s – Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas among the best known – serves as a convenient case to analyse contemporary artist strategies. This book takes a multidisciplinary approach – spanning from traditional art history, to sociology and economics – pursuing the reconstruction of the field of forces in art as intended by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Compared to previous publications on art system dynamics, such as Thompson's "The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark", this book offers an enhanced understanding of the factors that allow a young artist to enter the arena of contemporary art. The present research should help uncover the art system logic – which appears enigmatic to non-experts – revealing that artists are aware they need to consider global trends,

beat competitors and meet the demands of dealers, collectors, curators and museums. This book furthers existing contributions on the YBAs (for example Stallabrass' "High Art Lite"), offering innovative conclusions on recent British art, such as on the duality between London and Glasgow, the gender opposition among emerging artists and the predominance of resourceful authors.



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ARTIST STRATEGIES IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Rise and Success of Glasgow Artist Douglas Gordon and of the wider YBA generation
by Diego Mantoan

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About the author

Diego Mantoan is a research associate in art history and art economics at Ca'Foscari University in Venice and holds lectures at several renowned institutes in Europe such as Freie Universität Berlin and the University of Trento. He holds a BA and MA in Art's Management and Economics (Venice), a further MA in Art History (Trento) and a PhD in Art History (Berlin). In the period 2002 to 2008 he worked at the Venice Biennale, first being in charge of the marketing plan at the contemporary art exhibition, later as Jury Secretary. He could thus work alongside top curators such as Francesco Bonami and Hans Ulrich Obrist, as well as many other arts and culture celebrities such as film director Wim Wenders, visual artist Rirkrit Tiravanija and composer Arvo Pärt. In the last eight years he has been a professional archive curator for celebrated artists and museums in Germany. Amongst others, he has curated the archive of video-artist Douglas Gordon (Berlin), of the Julia Stoschek Foundation (Düsseldorf) and of painter Sigmar Polke (Cologne). He has a record of several scientific publications in the history of art and its economics, as well as of theatre plays and books, essays and reviews for newspapers and online magazines.

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