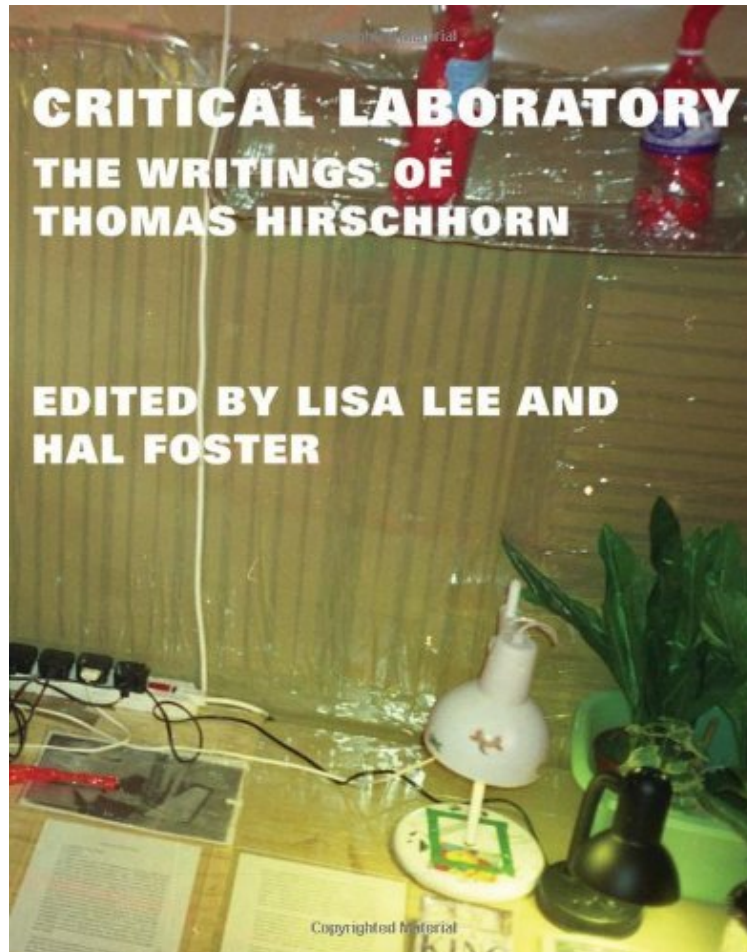


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## Critical Laboratory: The Writings of Thomas Hirschhorn (October Books)

*Thomas Hirschhorn, Lisa Lee, Hal Foster*  
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**Thomas Hirschhorn, Lisa Lee, Hal Foster : Critical Laboratory: The Writings of Thomas Hirschhorn (October Books)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Critical Laboratory: The Writings of Thomas Hirschhorn (October Books):

For the artist Thomas Hirschhorn, writing is a crucial tool at every stage of his artistic practice. From the first sketch of an idea to appeals to potential collaborators, from detailed documentation of projects to post-disassembly analysis, Hirschhorn's writings mark the trajectories of his work. This volume collects Hirschhorn's widely scattered texts, presenting many in English for the first time. In these writings, Hirschhorn discusses the full range of his art, from works on paper to the massive Presence and Production projects in public spaces. "Statements and Letters" address broad themes of aesthetic philosophy, politics, and art historical commitments. "Projects" consider specific artworks or

exhibitions. "Interviews" capture the artist in dialogue with Benjamin Buchloh, Jacques Rancière, and others. Throughout, certain continuities emerge: Hirschhorn's commitment to quotidian materials; the centrality of political and economic thinking in his work; and his commitment to art in the public sphere. Taken together, the texts serve to trace the artist's ideas and artistic strategies over the past two decades. Critical Laboratory also reproduces, in color, 33 *Ausstellungen im öffentlichen Raum 1998--1989*, an out-of-print catalog of Hirschhorn's earliest works in public space.

Every sentence Thomas Hirschhorn produces explodes the category of artists' writings. 'Energy = Yes! Quality = No!' is one of his principles. Reading this book takes us straight to the core of what it is that distinguishes our role as thinking beings. An overwhelming simplicity and clarity marks the way in which Hirschhorn elaborates his thoughts and reflections by specifically discussing his actions within the context of the world around him. The fact that form and its creation figure prominently in such unconventional ruminations is typically impish, unexpected and jolting. (Bice Curiger, editor and co-founder of Parkett; curator of the 2011 Venice Biennale) One comes to Thomas Hirschhorn's work with the sense that he is averse to those artistic strategies that often cloak an artist's work, and its intentions, in a veil of studied ambiguity. Against this tendency of dutiful obfuscation and systematization, his work is characterized by a directness of address, by a commitment to thought, and by the necessity to render a clear account of his passionate interest in the world. Critical Laboratory is a remarkable document of analytical precision that demonstrates thought in action. Hirschhorn's passionate voice and unvarnished insight ring true and clear. This book is destined to be a landmark; a primer for how an artist must act and create in the world, it will be a reference work for all future artists who see it as their duty to create dangerously in difficult times. (Okwui Enwezor, Director, Haus der Kunst, Munich) In this book, art historians Lee and Foster offer an expertly chosen collection of these disparate texts, many of which appear in English for the first time; His writings are not only engaging but often highly illuminating. For instance, an homage to Andy Warhol offers great insight into Hirschhorn's provocative use of violent war imagery. VERDICT Highly recommended to readers interested in Hirschhorn's work or artist writings more generally. (Library Journal) About the Author Thomas Hirschhorn (b. 1957) is a Swiss artist known for large sculptures and ambitious projects, often constructed of everyday, makeshift materials. Lisa Lee is a Harper Fellow and Collegiate Assistant Professor in the Humanities, Department of Art History, at the University of Chicago. Hal Foster is Townsend Martin '17 Professor of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University and the author of *Prosthetic Gods* (MIT Press) and other books.