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Craig Dworkin

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#1591704 in eBooks 2013-02-15 2013-02-15 File Name: B00BIOFLXI | File size: 40.Mb

Craig Dworkin : No Medium (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised No Medium (MIT Press):

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. PreciseBy Jack GalmitzSimply the single-most important book of cultural criticism to appear in the last decades, No Medium is a must for artists of all persuasions. Professor Dworkin is at home in discussing all the arts and has mastered European avant garde theory and resolved it into a language of his own. Every critic and artist should own a copy.2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. a must read for the readers of art on the edgeBy CustomerWriting about nothing , whether it be the absence of an image in art, text in literature or sound in music is a daunting task and not one for the faint hearted, Craig Dworkin is up to the job in hand

and has produced a thought provoking dissertation , with loads of references for those with energy to follow up.

In *No Medium*, Craig Dworkin looks at works that are blank, erased, clear, or silent, writing critically and substantively about works for which there would seem to be not only nothing to see but nothing to say. Examined closely, these ostensibly contentless works of art, literature, and music point to a new understanding of media and the limits of the artistic object. Dworkin considers works predicated on blank sheets of paper, from a fictional collection of poems in Jean Cocteau's *Orpheacute;e* to the actual publication of a ream of typing paper as a book of poetry; he compares Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased De Kooning Drawing* to the artist Nick Thurston's erased copy of Maurice Blanchot's *The Space of Literature* (in which only Thurston's marginalia were visible); and he scrutinizes the sexual politics of photographic representation and the implications of obscured or obliterated subjects of photographs. Reexamining the famous case of John Cage's *4'33"*, Dworkin links Cage's composition to Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*, Ken Friedman's *Zen for Record* (and Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film*), and other works, offering also a "guide to further listening" that surveys more than 100 scores and recordings of "silent" music. Dworkin argues that we should understand media not as blank, base things but as social events, and that there is no medium, understood in isolation, but only and always a plurality of media: interpretive activities taking place in socially inscribed space.

Craig Dworkin's social formalist commentaries and compendia are among the most telling works of criticism in our time. Both provocative and mesmerizing, Dworkin's detailed readings of forms, structures, and bibliographic codes (rather than themes and subject matter), with special attention to potentially unnoticed discrepancies, elucidates the warp and woof of a series of hard-core and uncanny art practices in which the 'remove of literature' (erasure of signal, voiding of medium, foregrounding of paratext) opens the floodgates of a sublimely nude poetics of blank: the noise of silence. (Charles Bernstein, Donald T. Regan Professor of English and Comparative Literature, University of Pennsylvania; author of *Attack of the Difficult Poems: Essays and Inventions*) Like Wallace Stevens' snow man, who parses 'nothing that is not there and the nothing that is,' Craig Dworkin faces up to this exquisite challenge, following the lead of an old Provencedal lyric 'to make a poetry of pure nothing.' With a mental agility commensurate with every unlikelihood it encounters, Dworkin is a connoisseur of details even where none would seem to exist. His keen eye (and ear) for the materiality behind non-appearance is a marvel: he is the Barnum of a peculiar new circus called *No Medium*. (Jed Rasula, Helen S. Lanier Distinguished Professor of English, University of Georgia, author of *Modernism and Poetic Inspiration: The Shadow Mouth*) When Craig Dworkin's *Reading the Illegible* appeared in 2003 it immediately became a seminal contribution to poetic discourse, one that I would read alongside Charles Olson's *Call Me Ishmael*, Susan Howe's *My Emily Dickinson*, Charles Bernstein's *Content's Dream*, and Jerome McGann's *Black Riders*. I've been looking forward to reading his next book ever since, and here it is, *No Medium*. No poet-critic today is writing with as much immediacy, economy, precision, and vitality as Craig Dworkin. And no one writes a more inspiring endnote -- don't skip 'em! (Kyle Schlesinger, Assistant Professor of Publishing, University of Houston-Victoria) *No Medium* is not only an admirable feat of painstaking research that puts into conversation an impressive range of artworks, both famous and obscure, but also a testament to the fact that for the industrious critic encountering an apparent absence there is always something interesting to say. (Michael Leong Hyperallergic) Dworkin's study of apparent anomalies that turn out to be representative exemplars rather than quirky curiosities is well worth attention. (Johanna Drucker Los Angeles of Books) About the Author Craig Dworkin, Professor in the English Department at the University of Utah, is the author of *Reading the Illegible* and the editor of *Language to Cover a Page: The Early Writings of Vito Acconci* (MIT Press).