Collage in Twentieth-Century Art, Literature, and Culture

Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, Frank O’Hara, and Bob Dylan

Rona Cran

‘Rona Cran’s study of this highly experimental technique – particularly its evolution in late modernism and early postmodernism – is rendered in clear and provocative language. Her book unfolds as artistically as a collage, the discovery apparent in the telling.’

Timothy Gray, CUNY – College of Staten Island

Emphasizing the diversity of collage in the twentieth century, Rona Cran’s book explores the role that it played in the work of Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, Frank O’Hara, and Bob Dylan. Collage’s catalytic effect, Cran argues, enabled each to overcome a crisis in representation that threatened to destabilize their work. Throughout, she shows that rigid definitions of collage severely limit our understanding of artists and writers who used it in non-traditional ways.

About the author: Rona Cran grew up in Kenya and now lives in east London. She received her doctorate from University College London.

Contents: Introduction: catalysing encounters; Habitat New York: Joseph Cornell’s ‘imaginative universe’; ‘Confusion hath fuck his masterpiece’: re-reading William Burroughs, from Junky to Nova Express; ‘Donc le poète est vraiment voleur du feu’: Frank O’Hara and the poetics of love and theft; Bob Dylan and collage: ‘a deliberate cultural jumble’; Conclusion: ‘yield us a new thought’; Bibliography; Index.

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