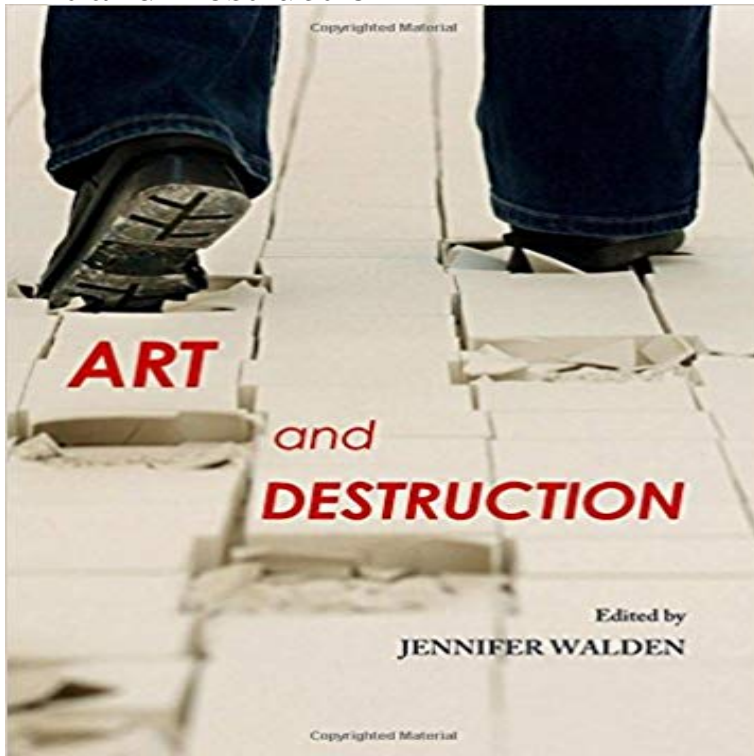


Art and Destruction



Most talk of and writing on art is about its relationship to creation and creativity. This of course takes various forms, but ultimately the creative act in the making of art works is a key issue. What happens when we put together art and destruction? This has been referenced in some major areas, such as that of art and iconoclasm and auto-destructive art movements. Less evident are accounts of more intimate, smaller scale destructive interventions into the world of the made or exhibited art object, or more singular and particularised approaches to the representation of mass destruction. This volume addresses these lacunae by bringing together some distinct and very different areas for enquiry which, nevertheless, share a theme of destruction and share an emphasis upon the history of twentieth and twenty-first century art making. Scholars and makers have come together to produce accounts of artists whose making is driven by the breaking of, or breaking down of, matter and medium as part of the creative materialisation of the idea, such as Richard Wentworth, Bourke de Vries, Cornelia Parker, to name some of those artists represented here, and, indeed in one case, how our very attempts to write about such practices are challenged by this making process. Other perspectives have engaged in critical study of various destructive interventions in galleries. Some of these, whether as actual staged actions in real time, or filmic representations of precarious objects, are understood as artistic acts in and of themselves. At the same time, an account included in this volume of certain contemporary iconoclasts, defacing or otherwise effecting destructive attempts upon canonised exhibited art works, reflects upon these destructive interventionists as self-styled artists claiming to add to the significance of works via acts of destruction. Yet other chapters provide a fresh outlook upon distinctive and unusual approaches to the

representation of destruction, in terms of the larger scale and landscape of artistic responses to mass destruction in times of war. This book will be of interest to readers keen to encounter the range of nuance, complexity and ambiguity applicable to the bringing together of art and destruction.

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