

Red aesthetics : Rodchenko, Brecht, Eisenstein (/review/10.5860/CHOICE.228034)

Cronan, Todd. (/search?exactauthor=Cronan, Todd) Rowman & Littlefield, 2022

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Red Aesthetics is the third volume in the "Cultural Studies and Marxism" series. The premise is that the current "global capitalist crisis" (p. ii) must elicit renewed critical interpretations at the intersection of cultural studies, critical political economy, and Marxism. In six chapters devoted primarily to the work of artist Alexander Rodchenko, filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, and dramatist Bertolt Brecht, Cronan (art history, Emory Univ.) engages in a rigorous Marxist analysis of artistic expression and its relation to society. Including copious references and quotes from a wide range of sources—including Hannah Arendt, Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, and Andrei Tarkovsky—the book questions critical attempts to decouple art from meaning in social analysis. Situated between the audience's demand for an accurate representation of social forces and a desire to enter a harmonious dream creation, Rodchenko, Eisenstein, and Brecht created an innovative "red aesthetic" that, if properly interpreted, reveals the actuality of class conflict in the contemporary world. Collateral issues include the relationship between class and race, for example, in Brecht's interpretation of political extremism in Nazi Germany. Acknowledging in the preface a debt to conferences, symposia, and critical engagement among colleagues, the book reads like an extended seminar. The discussions on Rodchenko and Eisenstein are accompanied by a selection of photographs.

Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students, researchers, faculty.

Reviewer: [W. C. Brumfield \(/search?reviewer=W. C. Brumfield\)](#), Tulane University

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: [Humanities \(/search?q=&sbj\[\]=hum\)](#)

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