



Cultural Offensive: America's Impact on British Art Since 1945

John A. Walker

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The vibrant fine arts and mass culture that the United States exported to Britain in the postwar period had a powerful and far-reaching impact on many British artists, art students and critics. In a fascinating social and cultural history covering the period from the 1940s to the 1990s, but with emphasis on the 1950s and 1960s, John A. Walker offers a scholarly but accessible account of America's Cold War cultural offensive and the role played by American artists living in Britain.

This is the first text to document in detail the variegated responses of British artists to postwar America and its art, criticism and mass media. Their reactions that ranged from Americanism – enthusiasm and compliance – to Anti-Americanism – criticism and resistance. Covering significant art movements such as Abstract Expressionism, the Independent Group and Pop Art, Walker synthesises information from hundreds of published sources and interviews to paint a vivid picture of a crucial period in British culture. Many of the critics, painters and sculptors featured – Lawrence Alloway, Peter Blake, Reyner Banham, Anthony Caro, Clement Greenberg, David Hockney, Richard Hamilton, R.B. Kitaj, John Latham, Claes Oldenburg, Eduardo Paolozzi, Herbert Read, Bridget Riley, Larry Rivers – are now internationally famous. The study is brought up to date with an overview of the decline in American influence during the 1980s and 1990s and the rise of Brit Art.

Illustrated throughout, this lively and perceptive account of the art world in Britain looks at the shocking and sometimes seductive impact of the art of the new world - and the gradual recovery of a sense of national and artistic identity in the second half of the twentieth century.

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