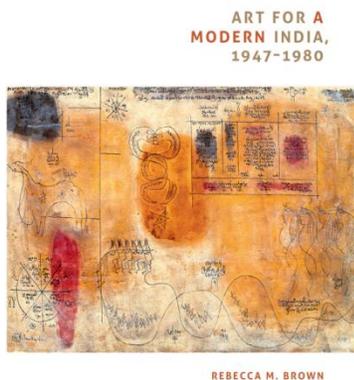


Art for a Modern India, 1947-1980 / Rebecca M. Brown. -(Objects/histories).--Durham, NC: Duke University Press, April 2009. -224 p.: ill. - ISBN 978-0-8223-4355-4 (library cl., alk. paper); ISBN 978-0-8223-4375-2 (pa., alk. paper): \$79.95 (cl.); \$22.95 (pa.).



Rebecca Brown's *Art for a Modern India, 1947-1980* takes a look at the modern artist in India and the perceived paradox of what it means to be both modern and Indian. Ranging from the films of Bollywood to oil paintings, sculpture, and architecture, Brown (a visiting associate professor of art history at John Hopkins University) delves into a variety of art forms to investigate how artists in modern India explore its visual culture. This book is not designed to be a survey of Indian art from 1947 to 1980 (although readers may wish it were), but instead it is a sampling of artists and their art and how it fits into post-independence modernity. Each chapter is broken down into a theme (authenticity, iconicity, narrative/time, science/technology, and urbanization) which is then closely analyzed with specific examples from art and

design.

In exploring the question of authenticity, Brown first investigates what is perceived as authentic India in architecture, painting, and film and addresses the idea of the rural village life conceived as "authentic India." The author then explores the progression of the icon following how the pre-independence symbols of Hindu, Christian, and historic figures gave way to the post-independence icon of national identity. Themes of narrative and time are also used by artists telling stories and visual narratives in order to examine the depiction of contemporary India as "existing simultaneously in the medieval or ancient era and the modern world" (p. 18).

Brown next investigates the ideas of science, technology, and industry and how modern advances in math and science have helped shape Indian art and architecture. Progressing from the rural and ending with the megalopolis, urbanization shapes the lives of its citizens and combines both hope and disillusionment. This tension serves as a metaphor for the "problematic in-between status of Indian modernism" (p. 132).

The book concludes with a review of the 1980s and after and discusses the question of the next generation of artists, patrons, and critics in relation to the new millennium, India's economic boom, women, new and cheaper technology, and the new gallery scene.

The book includes numerous black and white, as well as color images, footnotes, references, and an index. It is recommended for libraries with graduate programs in art history and for others looking to expand their modern and non-Western art history collections.

Melissa Aho, Evening & Circulation Supervisor, Bio-Medical Library, University of Minnesota, Ahox0017@umn.ed