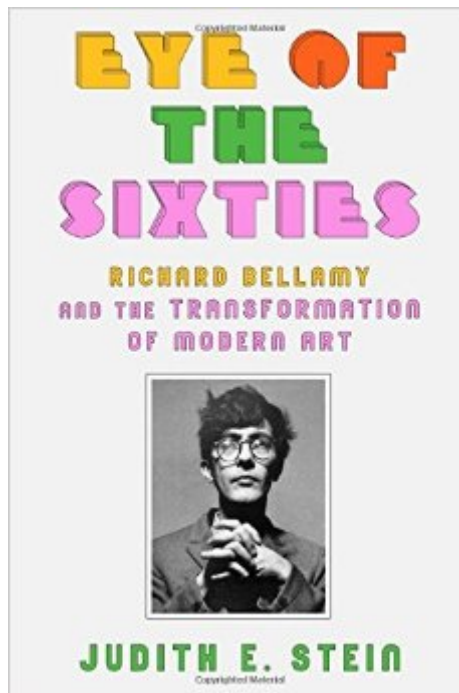


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Eye Of The Sixties: Richard Bellamy And The Transformation Of Modern Art



Synopsis

A man with a preternatural ability to find emerging artists, Richard Bellamy was one of the first advocates of pop art, minimalism, and conceptual art. The founder and director of the fabled Green Gallery on Fifty-Seventh Street, the witty, poetry-loving art lover became a legend of the avant-garde, showing the work of artists such as Mark di Suvero, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist, Donald Judd, and others. Born to an American father and a Chinese mother in a Cincinnati suburb, Bellamy moved to New York and made a life for himself between the Beat orbits of Provincetown and white-glove events such as the Guggenheim's opening gala. He partied with Norman Mailer, was friends with Diane Arbus and Yoko Ono, and frequently hosted or performed in Allan Kaprow's happenings. Always more concerned with art than with making a profit, Bellamy withdrew when the market mushroomed around him, letting his contemporaries and friends, such as Leo Castelli and Sidney Janis, capitalize on the stars he first discovered. Bellamy's life story is a fascinating window into the transformation of art in the late twentieth century. Based on decades of research and hundreds of interviews with artists, friends, dealers, and lovers, Judith Stein's *Eye of the Sixties* recovers the elusive Bellamy and tells the story of a counterculture that became the mainstream. --"Bellamy had an understanding of art and a very fine sense of discovery. There was nobody like him, I think. I certainly consider myself his pupil." --Leo Castelli

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Customer Reviews

Here is a wonderful read about the unusual and gifted Richard Bellamy, a rare kind of art dealer one

who loved the art more than the business. But here too is a snapshot of a young art world before the world turned contemporary art into a billion dollar industry. This is a book about people who made history and it is an important story to know and enjoy.

This is a wonderful book; beautifully researched and written by Judith Stein about one of the most important figures of the 60s New York art scene and one of the least known. Dick Bellamy was a priest caste art dealer; try and put those two images together today - it ain't gonna happen. This is a great feat - of love, curiosity and intelligence. Do yourself a favor and pick up a copy - NOW!!!

Complete history of the art world in New York in the '60's. Every page is exciting, bringing in artists whose work I know, but whose complicated relationships I didn't know. Very well written. It is unusual for a book in this genre to be a page turner, but this one is.

Miracles can't be explained. They can only be documented. In "Eye of the Sixties" Judith E. Stein scrupulously documents the uncanny prescience and Zen-hedonism (oxymoron intended) that made Richard Bellamy's career unique in the history of art merchants. The period Stein covers is one of the most fecund in modern cultural history. On one hand, the book shows the art market's sudden transformation into something as giddy and glamorous as Wall Street would become two decades later. On the other, we see artists doing their damndest to escape the clutches of convention and materialism--by making junk art, conflating such traditionally distinct mediums as dance, drama, sculpture and painting, recycling mass culture imagery, erasing signs of the artist's hand, making art at scales that couldn't be corralled in galleries or museums, and finally distilling aesthetic experience into the transmission of ineffable ideas. Within this seething, churning cultural landscape, the figure of Richard Bellamy seems to float like a butterfly. He was definitely on the artists' side. Yet his brilliant intuitions launched careers and fed movements integral to an art market boom he largely shunned. Along with the economic perils of his professional contradictions, Stein lets us glimpse some of the inner turbulence that accompanied the man's ability to quietly absorb the gist of all the conflicting stylistic impulses of the time. As someone who arrived in New York in the 1970s and stayed until 1990, I felt enlightened by the book's multifaceted descriptions of people, places and events I either knew at a later date or heard vaguely sketched as legends and rumors. I closed its pages saddened by an unexpected sense of loss. I wonder how it will read to people more distanced from the magic time and places "Eye of the Sixties" so lovingly describes.

I couldn't put this down. Richard Bellamy was central to the New York art world during the 60s, but did his best to be forgotten. He would have succeeded but for Stein's scrupulous and tireless, 20-year campaign of research, speaking with anyone who ever dealt with the legendary but eccentric art dealer, as well as combing through endless libraries and archives. In addition to giving a rounded picture of Bellamy and those with whom he interacted, it should be a useful reminder of just how few people were involved with contemporary art in NYC in the 1960s. Younger readers especially may find this hard to believe in light of today's ever-growing number of artists, galleries and art fairs.

Years in the making backed by the most granular research imaginable, Judith Stein weaves a compelling narrative about Dick Bellamy, a special man and his special times. Judith writes with a deft and subtle hand; choosing her words carefully one always knows how she feels which makes the experience of reading the book more intimate. Anyone who was around the art scene of the 60s, or wanted to be involved, or if you want to know MORE... refer here. The backstories are all revealed...

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