



Walter De Maria: Meaningless Work

Jane McFadden

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As one of the most innovative artists of the last six decades, Walter De Maria challenged art in profound ways. He is known worldwide for his important sculptures such as Lightning Field, but his contributions to the practices of music, drawing, photography, and film have been largely forgotten. Featuring in-depth analysis of many previously unknown works and correspondence, this book offers the first major critical account of de Maria's broader range of interests.

In a 1960 score, Walter De Maria called for "meaningless work:" art that does not "accomplish a conventional purpose." He followed this call with a dizzying period of experimentation. The resulting work reflected shifts in how we understand the sites of art during an era of moon shots and road trips, of wars that moved from jungles into living rooms via electromagnetic waves. It helped us understand ourselves and how race, gender, and sexuality vie for space in the social realm. By bringing to light de Maria's lesser-known works, this book challenges established histories and methodologies for the art of the 1960s and '70s, while also exploring de Maria's own obsessions with art's uttermost possibilities.

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