

Annotated Bibliography

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I have chosen a range of texts that I believe will deepen my understanding of why the practice of art, particularly contemporary performance art, is valuable in our society. Each book offers a unique perspective, contributing to a broader and more nuanced exploration of this theme. I hope to build a richer picture of how artistic practice functions not only as creative expression but also as a form of psychological exploration, philosophical inquiry, and human connection.

Irvin, S., 2022. *Immaterial: Rules in Contemporary Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This book feels useful for my dissertation because it talks about how contemporary art isn't just about physical objects anymore, but more about ideas, context, and experience. That connects really well to performance art, since performances often don't leave behind a solid artwork, just a memory or documentation. Irvin discusses how artists make meaning through actions or rules, which I think links to how performance art challenges what counts as art in the first place. I like how the book questions where the "value" of art comes from if it's not a material thing, because that's something I want to explore too. Some parts are a bit theoretical, but it helps me think about how artists use concepts instead of objects. Overall, it's giving me a good framework for understanding the non-material side of art and how that shapes its value today.

Wood, C., 2022. *Performance in Contemporary Art*. London: Tate Publishing.

This book is actually really helpful but also kind of frustrating because Wood explains performance art in such a broad way that it almost feels like everything could count as performance. Still, I think that's part of what makes it useful for my dissertation, since it shows how flexible and open contemporary art has become. She talks about artists using their bodies, time, and space instead of objects, which links directly to my focus on the values of contemporary art. I like how she connects performance to social and political ideas too, not just aesthetics, because it helps me think about what "value" means beyond money or materials. Sometimes it feels repetitive, but the examples of live works and how they're documented are really good. It's made me realise how performance challenges traditional art systems, even if the book makes it all sound more complicated than it probably needs to be.

Hegenbart, S. & Kölmel, M-J. (eds.), 2023. *Dada Data: Contemporary Art Practice in the Era of Post-Truth Politics*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts

This book is honestly a bit overwhelming because it's full of theory and dense writing, but it's still really interesting once you get into it. It links contemporary art to the chaos of information and truth today, which makes sense for my dissertation since performance often deals with real-time experiences and reactions. I like how it

connects back to Dada, because it shows how artists use absurdity and chance as a way to question meaning and value — something that's still happening now. Some of the essays feel like they're trying too hard to sound clever, but the main idea that art can respond to fake news and digital overload feels relevant. It helps me think about performance as a kind of resistance or commentary in a world that doesn't always value truth or authenticity. Even though it's quite heavy, it gives me good context for understanding art's critical role today.

Sherman, A. & Morrissey, C., 2017. What is art good for? The socio-epistemic value of art. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 11:411.

This article feels a bit too scientific at times, but it's actually really useful because it looks at art from a psychological and social angle instead of just theory or aesthetics. It focuses on how art helps people think, feel, and understand the world differently, which fits perfectly with my dissertation about the value of contemporary art. I like how it suggests that art's worth isn't only about beauty or money, but also about how it changes perception and knowledge. That connects to performance art really well, since performances often make the audience question their role or reflect on their emotions in the moment. Some of the neuroscience stuff goes over my head, but the idea that art has real cognitive and social benefits feels important. It's a different perspective that helps me argue that performance has real value even when it doesn't produce a physical object.

Vygotsky, L. S., 1974. *The Psychology of Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

This book is quite theoretical, but it offers a really useful foundation for understanding how people emotionally and mentally engage with art. Vygotsky focuses on how art affects the viewer's inner experience and how meaning is created through that interaction. Even though the book was written long before contemporary or performance art became common, the ideas still feel relevant. His discussion of emotion, perception, and creative expression helps me think about performance art as something that exists through experience rather than a physical object. I find it interesting how he connects psychological responses to the overall value of art, which links to my dissertation's theme of non-material worth. The language can be a bit complex at times, but the core ideas are really helpful for understanding how art communicates and impacts people beyond its surface form.