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## Playing at Home: The House in Contemporary Art (Art Since the '80s)

By Gill Perry



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**Playing at Home: The House in Contemporary Art (Art Since the '80s)** By Gill Perry

Art Since the '80s, a new series from Reaktion Books, seeks to offer compelling surveys of popular themes in contemporary art. In the first book in the series, Gill Perry reveals how the house and the idea of home have inspired a range of imaginative and playful works by artists across the globe. Exploring how artists have engaged with this theme in different contexts—from mobile homes and beach houses to haunted houses and broken homes—*Playing at Home* shows that our relationship with houses involves complex responses in which gender, race, class, and status overlap, and that through these relationships we turn a house into a home.

Perry looks at the works of numerous artists, including Tracey Emin, Rachel Whiteread, Michael Landy, Mike Kelley, and Peter Garfield, as well as the work of artists who travel across continents and see home as a shifting notion, such as Do-Ho-Suh and Song Dong. She also engages with the work of philosophers and cultural theorists from Walter Benjamin and Gaston Bachelard to Johan Huizinga and Henri Lefebvre, who inform our understanding of living and dwelling. Ultimately, she argues that irony, parody, and play are equally important in our interpretations of these works on the home. With over one hundred images, *Playing at Home* covers a wide range of art and media in a fascinating look at why there's no place like home.



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## Playing at Home: The House in Contemporary Art (Art Since the '80s) By Gill Perry Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #602222 in Books
- Published on: 2014-01-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .70" w x 6.00" l, 1.10 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 264 pages

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#### Review

“Gill Perry’s fascinating book considers what makes a house a home and why artists are repeatedly drawn to it as a motif. Chapters look at particular types of houses, from those that are haunted to beachside retreats and caravans. Rachel Whiteread’s *House* (1993) and Michael Landy’s *Semi-Detached* (2004) make appearances, and this well-illustrated volume goes on to include a wide range of art from around the globe.”  
(*Art Quarterly*)

“Perry has written a scholarly, readable, and timely survey of an important theme. This book reminds us of the capacity of art to deepen our understanding of a contested, contentious concept.”  
(*Art Newspaper*)

“A book that has readers demanding more is always praiseworthy, and Gil Perry’s ability to read a work of art, and explain it accessibly, while still honouring the artist’s often complex intentions, is both rare and valuable. For this alone *Playing at Home* is welcome.”  
(*Times Literary Supplement*)

#### About the Author

**Gill Perry** is professor of art history at the Open University, UK, and the author of *Women Artists and the Parisian Avant-Garde* and *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768–1820*.

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