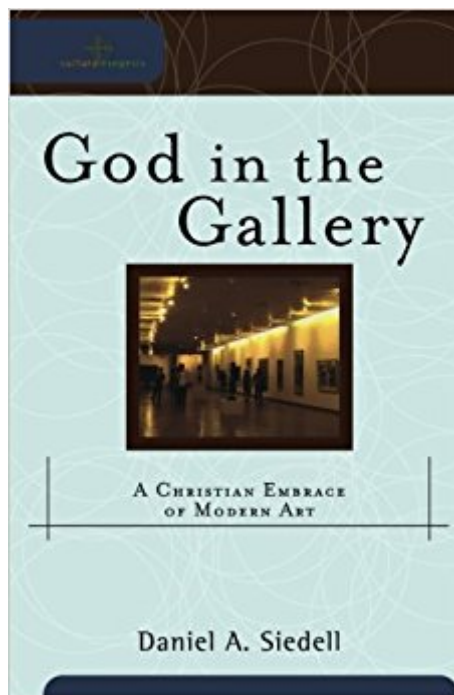




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# God In The Gallery: A Christian Embrace Of Modern Art (Cultural Exegesis)



## Synopsis

Is contemporary art a friend or foe of Christianity? Art historian, critic, and curator Daniel Siedell, addresses this question and presents a framework for interpreting art from a Christian worldview in *God in the Gallery: A Christian Embrace of Modern Art*. As such, it is an excellent companion to Francis Schaeffer's classic *Art and the Bible*. Divided into three parts "Theology," "History," and "Practice" *God in the Gallery* demonstrates that art is in conversation with and not opposed to the Christian faith. In addition, this book is beautifully enhanced with images from such artists as Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, Enrique MartÃ- nez Celaya, and others. Readers of this book will include professors, students, artists, and anyone interested in Christianity and culture.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Siedell likens Christians' encounter with modern and contemporary fine art to St. Paul's discovery of the altar to an unknown god on Mars Hill (Acts 17:23). Responding to those who have called for a separate Christian art (particularly Francis Schaeffer and H.R. Rookmaaker), he strives to reveal what modern art is only able to point to, not to name. Siedell uses his in-depth knowledge as former art curator and current assistant professor of art history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha to argue that perceptions of this legitimate cultural practice can be nourished by a robust Nicene Christianity. These disparate essays tackle subjects both ambitious (a history of modern art) and esoteric (a single work by artist Enrique MartÃ- nez Celaya; the conflict between art critics Harold

Rosenberg and Clement Greenberg). Siedell's love of contemporary art is obvious, but his sometimes abstruse writing doesn't always clarify his formidable subject; indeed, it may reinforce some Christians' view of modern art as unapproachable. His primary audience is clearly art specialists, whether students or professionals; Siedell's interesting thesis may not reach the larger audience it deserves. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Is contemporary art a friend or foe of Christianity? In *God in the Gallery* art historian, critic, and curator Daniel Siedell constructs a framework for interpreting modern art from a Christian worldview. He contends that art is not antithetical or hostile to Christianity but is in resonant dialogue with it. Siedell also examines the function of art criticism and the role of visual art in Christian worship and experience. "Dan Siedell is an exceptionally thoughtful and articulate observer of the very difficult intersection of religious belief and contemporary art. The book is full of unexpected and promising confluences. Here a reader will find the principal secular theorists of modernism, but this book is also 'nourished by Nicene Christianity' and informed by a wonderful range of authors, from Florensky, Levinas, and Wyschogrod to Seerveld, Wolterstorff, Walford, and Dyrness. This is a tremendous book, a genuine effort at dialogue in an arena marked by the near-complete absence of open exchange."--James Elkins, E. C. Chadbourne Chair in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism, School of the Art Institute of Chicago "God in the Gallery is a seminal work of interpretation, a guide for skeptics and faithful alike, in which Siedell offers a most profound, encouraging survey of contemporary art. An Emmaus Road encounter for those traveling on the path of contemporary art, Siedell's careful and loving attention paid to known and unknown artists will surely open our eyes. A must read for all of us laboring in the art world and in the arts academia."--Makoto Fujimura, artist; founder/creative director, International Arts Movement "Daniel Siedell's passionate appreciation for common grace is apparent on every page of *God in the Gallery*. This is a book that should be widely read not only for its penetrating account of the contemporary art world but also for its larger understanding of Christ and culture."--John Wilson, editor, *Books & Culture*

As the name suggests, Siedell's focus is visual art in general, and modern art in particular. This is a helpful book for those who have trouble understanding modern art, and especially for those who wonder if there is any point in a Christian engaging modern art. Siedell is knowledgeable (he has worked as a curator) and gracious. This book is part of Baker's Cultural Exegesis

series, which means that it is more on the scholarly side. The average reader will struggle a bit, but I would still recommend this book for those wanting to understand modern art. For my brief review on this book and most of the books out there on Christianity and the arts, see:  
[theologyforreallife.com/artsbooks](http://theologyforreallife.com/artsbooks)

Filled in a lot of gaps since college graduation in 1966!

I had to read this in a course at the Christian college where I attended undergraduate studio art school - we thoroughly discussed the text against a dozen other texts on faith and art and this is one that I will continue to refer to. While my classmates and I rarely agreed completely with an author we read, our goal was to explore literature and concepts that helped us work through our questions and challenges as artists who believe in God, and this book led to a lot of notes and writing for my final research paper. I am grateful for how much this author's work assisted my lifelong study of God, art, and what they mean in my life.

Opened my eyes to the importance of and purpose of modern art. Writing style is more academic, but still a good read for those interested in Christian art.

Dr. Siedell knows his stuff. His knowledge of art history is superb and his take on a religious gleaning of art is albeit risky (since spirituality is a taboo word in art camps) but much appreciated. An enjoyable read. I recommend.

This is a great book that tackles faith and art. The only thing that is a draw back is that for me it was a heavy read.

Could not understand it! Someone's dissertation ?

This book changed my life and outlook on faith. Before I read *God in the Gallery* I despised Contemporary Art, because I was a "literalist." I wanted every black and white and despised any art that claimed to be art outside of what Siedell refers to a "linguistified" art. I was obsessed with Art as communicating and not an event. After reading this text I have abandoned my view of Art and have embraced Contemporary and Modern Art. It has changed my Faith, but also I am entering into the Pastoral Ministry and because of this book I have made Contemporary and Modern Art a part of

many of my sermons. This book should be read by any person who believes art to be simply something that communicates words and thoughts. That is a gross misunderstanding. Thank you Daniel Siedell!

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