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Sommario/riassunto

Lawrence Alloway (1926-1990) was one of the most influential and widely respected (as well as prolific) art writers of the post-war years. His many books, catalogue essays and reviews manifest the changing paradigms of art away from the formal values of modernism towards the inclusiveness of the visual culture model in the 1950s, through the diversity and excesses of the 1960s, to the politicisation in the wake of 1968 and the Vietnam war, on to postmodern concerns in the 1970s. Alloway was in the right places at the right times. From his central involvement with the Independent Group and the ICA in London in the 1950s, he moved to New York, the new world centre of art, at the beginning of the 1960s. In the early 1970s he became deeply involved with the realist revival and the early feminist movement in art - Sylvia Sleigh, the painter, was his wife - and went on to write extensively about the gallery and art market as a system, examining the critic's role within this system. Positioning himself against the formalism and exclusivism associated with Clement Greenberg, Alloway was wholeheartedly committed to pluralism and diversity in both art and society. For him, art and criticism were always to be understood within a wider set of cultural, social and political concerns, with the emphasis on democracy, social inclusiveness, and freedom of expression. Art and Pluralism provides a close critical reading of Alloway's writings, and sets his work and thought within the cultural contexts of the London and New York art worlds from the 1950s through to the early 1980s. It is a fascinating study of one of the most significant art critics of the twentieth century.