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| 1. Record Nr.           | UNINA9910953186003321  |
| Autore                  | Koestle-Cate Jonathan  |
| Titolo                  | Art and the church : a fractious embrace : ecclesiastical encounters with contemporary art / / Jonathan Koestle-Cate   |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa      | London ; ; New York : , : Routledge, , 2016  |
| ISBN                    | 1-315-56795-4<br>1-317-17848-3<br>1-317-17847-5  |
| Edizione                | [1st ed.]  |
| Descrizione fisica      | 1 online resource (251 p.)   |
| Disciplina              | 704.9482   |
| Soggetti                | Christianity and art - History - 20th century<br>Christianity and art - History - 21st century<br>Art and society - History - 20th century<br>Art and society - History - 21st century   |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese  |
| Formato                 | Materiale a stampa   |
| Livello bibliografico   | Monografia   |
| Note generali           | Description based upon print version of record.  |
| Nota di bibliografia    | Includes bibliographical references and index.   |
| Nota di contenuto       | Art and the Church: A Fractious Embrace - Front Cover ; Art and the Church: A Fractious Embrace; Title Page; Copyright Page; Dedication; Contents; List of figures; Acknowledgements; Chapter 1: Porch; A Fractious Embrace; Renewed Ecclesiastical Encounters with Art; Conceptual Models: Categories as Points of Orientation; Encounter versus Recognition; Plotting a Route; Notes; Chapter 2: Nave; Event; Installation Art; Duration; Noisy Environments; Rhythms of Duration; Porosity; Immersive Fields; Spatial Practices: Zones; Notes; Chapter 3: Sanctuary; Sacred Space and Time<br>The Para-liturgical Art of Doris SalcedoNotes; Chapter 6: Transept; Morning Beams for the City of London; Obstacles and Challenges; Expanded Communities for Art; Artist, Context, Audience, Art; Notes; Chapter 7: Crypt; The Constitution of Subjectivities; The Badiouian Event; Approving the Art Event; Becoming-Animal; The Situated Void; The Truth of Art; Miracles Do Happen!; Ecclesiastical Miracles; Notes; Chapter 8: Apse; The Normative and the Exceptional; Cathedral Arts Policies; Ecclesiastical Frameworks; A Matter of Trust; The Possibilities of the Temporary; Cathedrals and the Visual Arts |

Sommario/riassunto

A vibrant critical exchange between contemporary art and Christianity is being increasingly prompted by an expanding programme of art installations and commissions for ecclesiastical spaces. Rather than 'religious art' reflecting Christian ideology, current practices frequently initiate projects that question the values and traditions of the host space, or present objects and events that challenge its visual conventions. In the light of these developments, this book asks what conditions are favourable to enhancing and expanding the possibilities of church-based art, and how can these conditions be addressed? What viable language or strategies can be formulated to understand and analyse art's role within the church? Focusing on concepts drawn from anthropology, comparative religion, art theory, theology and philosophy, this book formulates a lexicon of terms built around the notion of encounter in order to review the effective uses and experience of contemporary art in churches. The author concludes with the prognosis that art for the church has reached a critical and decisive phase in its history, testing the assumption that contemporary art should be a taken-for-granted element of modern church life. *Art and the Church: A Fractious Embrace* uniquely combines conceptual analysis, critical case studies and practical application in a rigorous and inventive manner, dealing specifically with contemporary art of the past twenty-five years, and the most recent developments in the church's policies for the arts.