



Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry : The Contemporaneity of Modernism

Charles Altieri



Charles Altieri's book sets modernist American poetry in a precise cultural context by analysing how major poets reacted to the challenge posed by modernist paintings' radical critique of traditional representational models for art. It argues that modernist poets have tended to resist the received values of their contemporary culture by finding idealising principles in modes of pure abstraction. It traces the use of such abstraction in literature from Wordsworth, through Baudelaire and Mallarmé, to T. S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, and Gertrude Stein. There are summary chapters also on Wallace Stevens and Ezra Pound, considerations of Cézanne and the Cubists, and a substantial theoretical discussion of the nature of abstract art.

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