



Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944-1964

Natalie Adamson



Painting, Politics and the Struggle for the École de Paris, 1944-1964 is the first book dedicated to the postwar or nouvelle École de Paris. It challenges the customary relegation of the École de Paris to the footnotes, not by arguing for some hitherto hidden merit for the art and ideas associated with this school, but by establishing how and why the École de Paris was a highly significant vehicle for artistic and political debate. The book presents a sustained historical study of how this school was constituted by the paintings of a diverse group of artists, by the combative field of art criticism, and by the curatorial policies of galleries and state exhibitions. By thoroughly mining the extensive resources of the newspaper and art journal press, gallery and government archives, artists' writings and interviews with surviving artists and art critics, the book traces the artists, exhibitions, and art critical debates that made the École de Paris a zone of aesthetic and political conflict. Through setting the École de Paris into its artistic, social, and political context, Natalie Adamson demonstrates how it functioned as the defining force in French postwar art in its defence of the tradition of easel painting, as well as an international point of reference for the expansion of modernism. In doing so, she presents a wholly new perspective on the vexed relationships between painting, politics, and national identity in France during the two decades following World War II.

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