

b ook review

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Art and Law

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There are few books in English which treat art law as a discipline in its own right and these are primarily American art law text books. This book is a very welcome addition to this literature. It is a collection of essays that arose from a course of lectures and seminars given at the Catholic University of Louvain by a group of leading Belgian and Dutch art law experts. Unusually for a legal

text the book is handsomely illustrated—indeed it looks more like a coffee table art book than your average law book. The illustrations help the text come alive and each image (and there are many) has a helpful commentary which includes the art historical context.

The editors have tried to be as comprehensive as possible in their coverage of the subject, so although the book is a collection of essays there is a great deal of coherence to the book. The editors have divided the work into four substantial parts: 1—Art, Society and the Law (which helpfully sets the scene by putting art in its twenty-first century social and cultural context); 2—The Artist and his Artistic Creation (a substantial section dealing with obscenity, free speech and related issues, the social status of the artist, copyright and moral rights, digitising art works for preservation and archival purposes, and artist's resale right); 3—the Artwork and its Preservation (dealing with the sadly ever current issue of the destruction of art); and 4—The Artwork and its Circulation (a more practical section

as it deals among other things with artists' contracts, museum contracts and authenticity).

This is a book which any art lawyer will want to have and regularly dip into—either to find some useful commentary and background on a current issue, or simply to be challenged and refreshed by the wealth of critical material in the book and the fantastic images. The fact that the book is primarily written from a continental perspective adds value for any common lawyer reading the book, as it sheds light on areas where there is not necessarily much commentary in English. This is an excellent text, attractive and of considerable value to all those with an interest in the growing field of art law. The publishers, as well as the editors and contributors, are to be commended for investing the time, money and effort in publishing such a worthwhile and beautiful book.

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