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Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else (Exploded Views)

David Balzer

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Now that we 'curate' even lunch, what happens to the role of the connoisseur in contemporary culture?

'Curate' is now a buzzword, applied to everything from music festivals to artisanal cheese. Inside the art world, the curator reigns supreme, acting as the face of high-profile group shows and biennials in a way that can eclipse and assimilate the contributions of individual artists. Curatorial-studies programs continue to grow, and the business world is adopting curation as a means of adding value to content. Everyone, it seems, is a curator.

But what is a curator, exactly? And what does the explosive popularity of curating say about our culture's relationship with taste, labour and the avant-garde? In this vibrant, revelatory and original study, David Balzer travels through art history and around the globe to explore the cult of curation, from superstar curator Hans Ulrich Obrist's war with sleep to Subway's 'sandwich artists.' Recalling such landmark works of cultural criticism as Tom Wolfe's *The Painted Word* and John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, *Curationism* will change the way you look at art – and maybe even the way you see yourself.

'This is an unusual art book. It is a book you should read and one that you can. Balzer traces the history and current hegemony of curationism, a practice of jumped-up interior decorators who double as priests explaining the gospel to the unlettered masses. A good read, if you don't mind reading things that you don't want to know.' – Dave Hickey

David Balzer has contributed to publications including the *Believer*, *Modern Painters*, Artforum.com, and *The Globe and Mail*, and is the author of *Contrivances*, a short-fiction collection. He is currently Associate Editor at *Canadian Art* magazine. Balzer was born in Winnipeg and currently resides in Toronto, where he makes a living as a critic, editor and teacher.

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