



Leviathan and the Pilot Fish: Art + Politics

Terry A Fairman

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Art and politics don't mix, especially where artistic activity is controlled by authoritarian governments. But what if the creative impulse comes from the political commitment of the artist? *Leviathan and the Pilot Fish* attempts to argue the value and legitimacy of politically inspired art. Like Gaul or a good meal (though the whole is "less repas gourmand than amuse-bouche, with more bouche than amuse") the book is divided into three parts: Context, Concept and Content. As well as providing a structure for the work, the three parts reflect the author's approach to understanding contemporary art: You need to know about the background of the work - you can't "get it" by just looking at it! Context provides a biographic background to the writing of the book; how and why it came to be put together. Concept is a discussion concerning the nature of art and the role of the artist in society and considers, among other things, why a naive painting by Alfred Wallis is "Art", whilst an accomplished work by Jack Vettriano is "Not-art." Content makes up the bulk of the work, around forty reviews, written over the past dozen years or so, often revised and each brought up-to-date with an introductory commentary. The reviews deal with artists' and authors' responses to such issues as the climate crisis, immigration and migration, Palestine and the Middle East, war and international relations. They are often based on visits the author made with his wife to art fairs and biennials. The book is accompanied by an occasional blog @ leviathanandthepilotfish.blogspot.co.uk

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