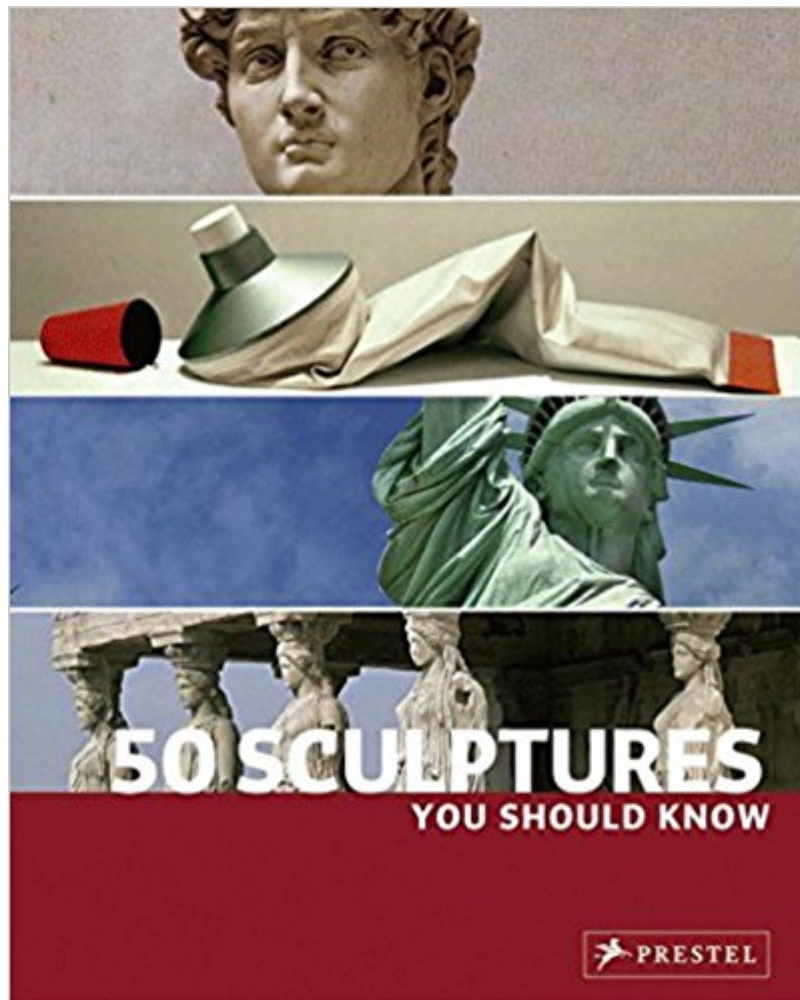




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50 Sculptures You Should Know (You Should Know (Prestel))



Synopsis

For centuries artists have been expressing their ideas, faith, passion, and rage in three-dimensional works that reflect historical eras, tell stories, reveal mysteries, and even create scandals. Starting from ancient times and continuing through the Classical, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Romantic, and Modern periods, this collection introduces readers to the artists and works that make sculpture such an exciting medium to explore. Among the artists included in the book are Michelangelo, Bernini, Rodin, Duchamp, Giacometti, Calder, Moore, Beuys, de Saint Phalle, and Bourgeois. From the Madonna of Essen, the oldest known sculpture of the Virgin Mary, to the sinuous metal sheets that make up Richard Serra's Matter of Time, each work is presented in spreads that offer beautiful photographs, biographical profiles of the artists, historical context, and anecdotal information. Broader texts describe various eras and styles as the book moves chronologically toward the present day, providing an art history lesson for everyone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For centuries artists have been expressing their ideas, faith, passion, and rage in three-dimensional works that reflect historical eras, tell stories, reveal mysteries, and even create scandals.

ISABEL KUHL is an art historian who lives in Barcelona, Spain. She is the author of numerous books on art. KLAUS REICHOLD is an art historian and the author of Buildings That Changed the World and Paintings That Changed the World (both by Prestel).

The basic format of this book is each sculpture receives between two and three pages, with at least one clear photograph of it, and possibly a second photograph, or photos of related pieces. The vast majority of the photos are half to a full page in size, allowing the details of the piece to be quite visible. Only a few photos are in black and white. There is also a timeline that runs along the top of most pages, which helps to provide a historical context. Each piece receives between three and four paragraphs, describing its history, construction, and current state. The author does a good job at giving the sculptures life by explaining their dynamic qualities. This book covers sculptures from Discus Thrower (Gr. Discobolus) from the 5th-century BC to The Matter of Time (Richard Serra) from the late 20th-century. Some of the other pieces featured are Gates of Paradise (Lorenzo Ghiberti), Commedia dell'Arte figures (Franz Anton Bustelli), and The Kiss (Constantin Brancusi). I found Victory of Samothrace, Pergamon Altar, and Trajan's Column the most interesting. There is a spelling mistake in the caption for an image of Charles the Bald (Holy Roman Emperor, AD 875-877), which mistakenly reads "Charles the Bad" (King of Navarre, AD 1349-1387). If you are not familiar with sculptures, this book serves as a good introduction, providing just enough to pique your interest, and keeps you wanting more.

Let me start by saying that I'm not an art historian. What bothers me about this book-- or any art book that sets about trying to tell you what the 'best' art works are-- is that you automatically are faced with the built-in bias of the authors. They are fun to read, just to see what the authors have chosen--and not chosen. I wish that the explanations would have talked more about why a particular sculpture was chosen for the book--what made the work a stand-out in its time, what is so important about this particular artist or work to include it. I was bothered by the limited nature of this book. Except for a few modern works, it is strictly European and mostly central European at that. It is as if there is no sculpture in the rest of the world worth bothering about. Should you buy this book? Sure, why not. It's cheap enough and the pictures are very well done. It is fun checking off which works you already know or have seen. It is a painless way of introducing art to your children --unless you object to them seeing nude sculptures.

I'm an art teacher and I love this series of books for making warm ups for my art kids. It's generally a good short description of the artwork or artist with some interesting facts and good pictures. This isn't the book for someone looking for something really in depth stuff but if you just want a brief refresher they are great.

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