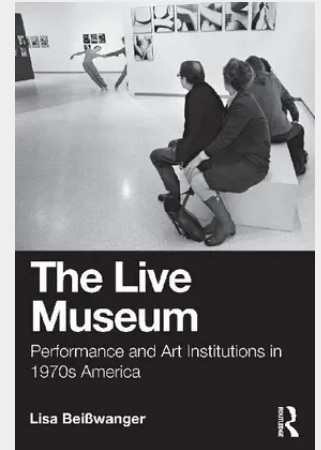


Beisswanger

The Live Museum

Performance and Art Institutions in 1970s America

The Live Museum uncovers the surprising history of live performances in US museums during the 1970s, exploring how and why both art and museums came alive in this era. It reframes this period as a pivotal moment when museums and artists co-created new possibilities for art in motion—an experiment that continues to shape the museum experience today. Drawing on meticulous archival research and in-depth case studies, this book examines landmark events across a range of institutions by figures such as Merce Cunningham, Laurie Anderson, Chris Burden, and even a cameo by Arnold Schwarzenegger, revealing a period of experimental energy as artists and museums negotiated, challenged, and inspired one another. Rejecting the notion that performance art is inherently anti-institutional, The Live Museum situates these developments within the broader cultural and political landscape, including the distribution of performance and public art funding. It shows how frictions between artists and museums spurred innovation: artists developed new formats and inventive modes of documentation, while institutions expanded programming, adapted to funding structures, and became more dynamic, responsive, and diverse. Iconoclastic yet rigorously historical, this book speaks to scholars and students of art history, performance studies, museum studies, and cultural history, as well as artists, curators, and cultural producers.



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