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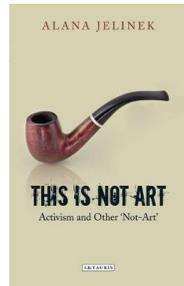
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This is Not Art: Activism and Other 'not-art'
Alana Jelinek

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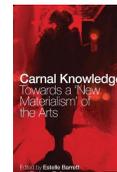
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Art is not political action. Art is not education. Art does not exist to make society stronger, or the world a better place. Art disrupts and resists the comfortable, the stiflingly familiar and the status quo, or it only serves to deaden a disenfranchised society further. So argues *This Is Not Art*, a radical and vigorous critique that debunks myths about art in order to celebrate its real and unique importance. With the postmodern deconstruction of now-outdated shibboleths such as 'genius', 'authenticity' and 'beauty', new and neoliberal myths about art have arisen to take their place: that art's value is primarily monetary as a prized and marketable commodity, or that art is important because it ameliorates social problems. These ideas are not only the province of art-dealers and power-brokers, but pervade the part of the artworld that defines itself as radical, political or ethical too. Highlighting the social mechanisms of legitimisation and dissemination that exclude the genuinely disruptive or defiant, *This Is Not Art* draws on Foucault and Marx to uncover an artworld obsessed with profit and from which diversity, individuality and freedom have been erased.

In the search for a new way to understand art's urgent importance, Alana Jelinek returns to the question of 'what is art?', retelling the history of art practice for our contemporary moment and exposing the ways in which neoliberal norms and values have seeped into every aspect of our lives. From the author's unique perspective as a practicing artist and theoretician, *This Is Not Art* offers not just a searing criticism of the artworld as it is, but a vision of a new way of understanding and practicing art - as the embodiment of power and agency within us, the possibility of thinking and acting differently, of finding new stories to tell.

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