



The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal

Caroline Hamilton, Michelle Kelly, Elaine Minor and Will Noonan

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The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal is an eclectic collection of essays from emerging academics who engage with the notion of refusal both as the embodiment of a resistance to conventional boundaries between academic disciplines, and as a concept with an underlying negative or reactive force that can be widely interpreted and applied. The applications of refusal outlined in this volume ranging from activism and the politics of cultural production through to problems of identity and knowledge classification raise questions about often-elided relationships of agency and complicity in routine experience. The sense of refusal that emerges from this book is perhaps most easily classified by what it is not namely, a prescriptive, conclusive, or unified account of what it is to reject, react, or work against any particular instance of theory or practice in any given domain. The value of a thematically-oriented collection like this is its ability to work across disciplines, media, and philosophical frameworks rather than limiting its focus to a narrow territory. According to Herbert Marcuse, refusal must not only be the guiding principle for all artistic creation, it must also be a manifestation of artistic creation itself. With this volume, we have attempted to compose a collection which is not only theoretically guided by refusal, but practically informed by it as well. The collection in itself constitutes, we hope, a constructive rejection of the usual constrictions of discipline and approach placed upon new scholars. 'This rich collection of essays on the political, aesthetic and ethical dimensions of that form of social action called refusal is an important contribution to our understanding of the tensions and contradictions of contemporary culture.' John Frow, Professor of English Literary Studies at the University of Melbourne

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