



Reading between the Lions

The Art Institute's Book Club

www.artic.edu/bookclub

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Rebels In Paradise

1. On page 12, Marcel Duchamp tells *Los Angeles Times* art critic Henry Seldes that “great art can only come out of conditions of resistance.” Do you agree with this statement? Which artworks in the *Light Years* exhibition best support or refute this statement? Which artworks from the museum’s permanent collection substantiate or discredit this point?
2. Based on Drohojowska-Philp’s book, how would you characterize the Los Angeles art scene in the 1960s? How does the view presented by the book confirm or diverge from the impressions you derive by looking at the *Light Years* exhibition? Are these different art worlds, or the same art world under different descriptions?
3. Some of the artists in the exhibition are mentioned in the book, but many are not. What common themes do you see between the book and the exhibition?
4. What parts of the book did you find humorous? Why do you think the artists were using humor? Does it negate the seriousness of their artwork?
5. How do the tone and pace of the book influence how we understand the Conceptual Art movement? What, if anything, do you feel was missing from the story?
6. Which did you enjoy reading more: the historical or contemporary scenes? Why?
7. Drohojowska-Philp continually returns to the idea that Los Angeles artists felt outside the art history timeline and free from some of the constraints experienced by artists in New York. What do you think of the differences between these two artistic communities and the work they produced? Do these differences still exist? And how does Chicago’s situation compare?
8. What were the artists featured in *Light Years* trying to show in their photographs? What was their subject matter? What relationship do the artists in the exhibition and those in the catalogue have to photography?
9. Are the artists discussed in the book anti-intellectual or anti-academic? What about the artists whose work is on display in *Light Years*?
10. How has the role of the art press changed since the time of this book?
11. What role did art dealers play according to the book?
12. How would you characterize the attitudes about gender and sexuality held by the artists in *Rebels in Paradise*? Are these beliefs evident in their work? Do the artists in *Light Years* share these ideas?
13. Questions of self-presentation seem to have preoccupied the Los Angeles artists and the artists in the exhibition even more. How are their interests in “image” similar or different?

