



artist. It's Kusama's artistic embodiment of Dodgson's story, a book that is just as much about looking as it is about reading.

BASED IN TORONTO, YDESSA HENDELES IS AN ARTIST, CURATOR, AND COLLECTOR. HER FIRST SOLO SHOW, "THE BIRD THAT MADE THE BREEZE TO BLOW," WAS MOUNTED EARLIER THIS YEAR AT GALERIE JOHANN KÖNIG, BERLIN. (SEE CONTRIBUTORS.)

## YVE-ALAIN BOIS

Devin Fore's *Realism After Modernism: The Rehumanization of Art and Literature* (MIT Press) so completely reshuffles the deck of the antimodernist *rappel à l'ordre* sweeping through all cultural practices in Europe in the 1920s and '30s—from Picasso's neoclassicism and Matisse's Nice period to "socialist realism" in Russia—that the reader will barely notice its geographic confinement to Germany. But once discerned, the book's concerted focus will presumably only elicit calls for other studies expanding Fore's innovative model into other regions where this widespread cultural phenomenon took place, such as France, Italy, and Russia.

Fore demonstrates with brio that the so-called "return to order" was not at all a rewinding of the clock, nor a simple return to the classical humanism and anthropocentrism that had been programmatically eschewed by the radical experimentations of the historical avant-gardes (abstraction, readymade, sound poetry, plotless films and theatrical productions, montage, etc). There is indeed something like a "return of man" in the works analyzed here, but this man is no longer the individualist subject he had been before the advent of modernism and the cataclysm of World War I. In fact, the new subject put forth by the artists and writers addressed by Fore is deprived of agency, its body bereft of integrity. Drawing from the anthropological

***Realism After Modernism* shows that if the “new man” envisioned in the figurative practices of Weimar Germany might seem at the center of the universe, he is in fact a prosthetic man: a mere organ of that universe. —Yve-Alain Bois**

discourse of the interwar period, Fore shows that if the “new man” envisioned in the figurative practices of Weimar Germany might seem at the center of the universe, he is in fact a prosthetic man: He has become a mere organ of that universe, which is now fully one of techniques and media. Fore’s conclusion resonates powerfully with our own historical status in the Internet age and indeed the interwar discourses he engages are finding surprising echoes in current anthropology and media studies.

Aside from this anthropological bent, Fore’s greatest innovation is to treat his material not thematically but structurally, as it were—which is what allows him to dismantle the simple opposition of “figurative-reactionary” vs. “abstract-modernist-revolutionary,” a paradigm to whose seduction many of us (myself included) have succumbed at one point or another, particularly when dealing with the work of the Russian avant-garde. In five different case studies, each concerning a different medium (plus an epilogue dealing with the postwar period, devoted to Ernst Junger’s 1957 science-fiction novel *The Glass Bees*), Fore examines the deep structures at work in a whole range of artistic and literary productions—revealing along the way that, beyond superficial differences accounting for their medium specificity, those structures are eerily similar. From the reverse perspective of László Moholy-Nagy to the “gestus” of Brecht’s theater, from the involuted autobiographism of Carl Einstein to the physiognomic endeavor of John Heartfield’s work, each involves not a return to premodernist tropes, but a parody of them: a parody that—contradicting from within the manifest claims to a rehumanization of art—bears in itself the seeds of radical critique.

YVE-ALAIN BOIS IS PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY IN THE SCHOOL OF HISTORICAL STUDIES AT THE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, AND A CONTRIBUTING EDITOR OF *ARTFORUM*.

## GEOFF DYER

How quickly we take the unprecedented for granted! I’d never come across anything like Roberto Calasso’s

*The R  
Cadm  
transla  
it “tak  
second  
origins  
with K  
ambiti  
compe  
were u  
larly in  
Kafka  
book-i  
Chuck  
oursel  
that yo*

His  
and C  
McEw  
brillia  
with st  
and his  
Painte  
swirlin  
taking  
There  
Ingres  
desper  
and al  
Degas.