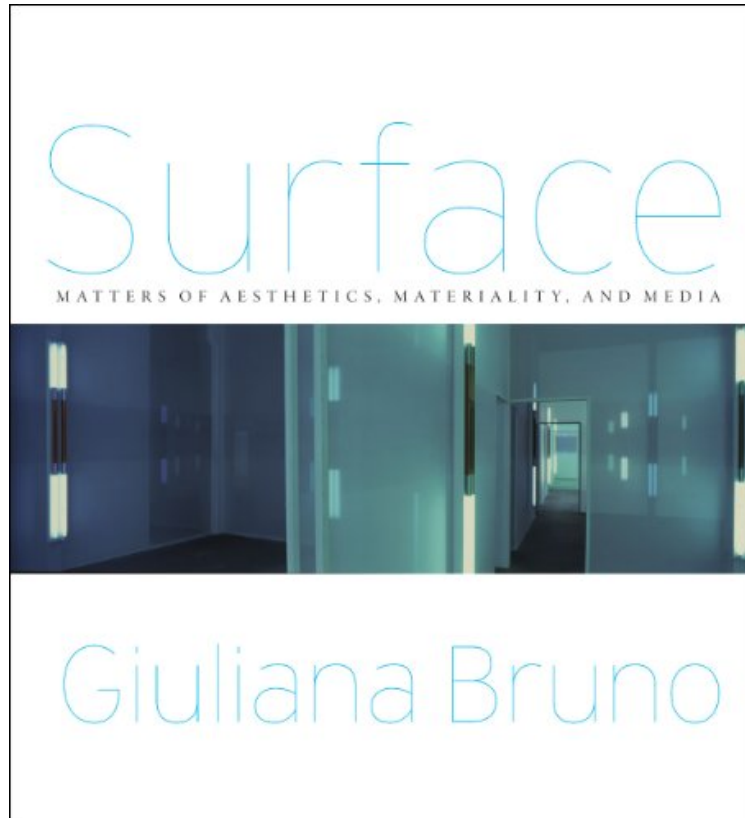


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Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media

Giuliana Bruno

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0 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Don't be afraid of Guiliana Bruno.By Lucio CrispinoBrilliant. As always.

What is the place of materialitythe expression or condition of physical substancein our visual age of rapidly changing materials and media? How is it fashioned in the arts or manifested in virtual forms? In *Surface*, cultural critic and theorist Giuliana Bruno deftly explores these questions, seeking to understand materiality in the contemporary world. Arguing that materiality is not a question of the materials themselves but rather the substance of material relations, Bruno investigates the space of those relations, examining how they appear on the surface of different mediaon film and video screens, in gallery installations, or on the skins of buildings and people. The object of visual studies, she contends, goes well beyond the image and engages the surface as a place of contact between people and art objects. As Bruno threads through these surface encounters, she unveils the fabrics of the visualthe textural qualities of works of art, whether manifested on canvas, wall, or screen. Illuminating the modern surface condition, she notes how faades are becoming virtual screens and the art of projection is reinvented on gallery walls. She traverses the light spaces of

artists Robert Irwin, James Turrell, Tacita Dean, and Anthony McCall; touches on the textured surfaces of Isaac Juliens and Wong Kar-wai's filmic screens; and travels across the surface materiality in the architectural practices of Diller Scofidio + Renfro and Herzog de Meuron to the art of Doris Salcedo and Rachel Whiteread, where the surface tension of media becomes concrete. In performing these critical operations on the surface, she articulates it as a site in which different forms of mediation, memory, and transformation can take place. Surveying object relations across art, architecture, fashion, design, film, and new media, *Surface* is a magisterial account of contemporary visual culture.

Screen theorythe use of screens specifically in technology-rich applications such as personal computinghas been the primary domain of new media scholars. Bruno extends and enriches the discourse by both carefully considering the material qualities of digital manifestations of the screen and integrating discussion of nondigital equivalents.