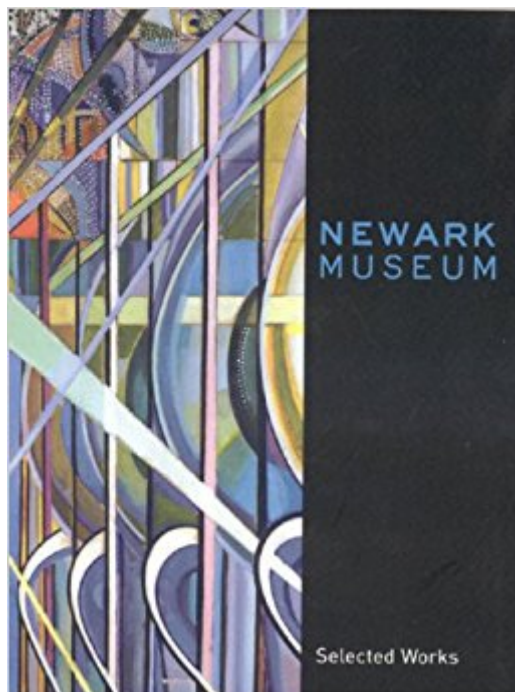


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Newark Museum: Selected Works



Synopsis

This fully illustrated book highlights the extensive and diverse collections of New Jersey's largest museum.

Book Information

Paperback: 168 pages

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Customer Reviews

Beth Venn is Senior Curator of American Art and Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Newark Museum.

The Newark (NJ) Museum has a good collection of American fine and decorative arts, including an enclosed sculpture garden and an attached Victorian home, as well as small, but educational, overviews of arts from other major regions and time periods, particularly strong in its representation of diverse Asian cultures. The Museum also has children's and science components. This well produced handbook printed in full color on glossy stock provides a very brief history of the art collection followed by entries showing and discussing a few choice objects. Necessarily selective in its coverage given the length of the volume compared to the depth of the collection, it nonetheless provides a useful introduction for those who have not yet had an opportunity to visit this solid regional institution and a useful aide-mémoire for those who know it.

When I recently visited the Newark Museum, I was very impressed by the collection of American art. I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to buy an art book of the collection. After a brief investigation, I discovered that this was the only the book currently in print of the Newark Museum's collection. I

was excited when I got the book in the mail, but once I cracked it open, disappointment began to kick in. The book begins with an interesting overview of the history of the museum, and then moves on to the section I was looking forward to the most: the American art section. I was appalled at how small this section was. A huge amount of the collection was left out of the book, and even the paintings that were reproduced were very small in size. For example, Joseph Stella's fantastic series of paintings "Voice of the City of New York" is printed in such a small size that you practically need a magnifying glass to look at it. In short, there is little love or respect given even to the few works from the American art wing that are represented in this book. The American art collection is, in my opinion, the most interesting and unique part of the Museum's collection. However, it seems that the folks running the museum today think that the museum should try to emulate the encyclopedic nature of museums like the Met by obtaining and emphasizing international art (e.g., Tibetan, Chinese, African, etc. art). It is a shame that the Newark Museum would rather promote artifacts from foreign nation, instead of the fantastic collection they own by American artists of all walks of life. Let's face it, if I want to go see Asian art, I'm not going to go see the tiny collection in Newark - I'd go to a place with a big collection like the Met. But I digress... In conclusion, "Newark Museum: Selected Works" is a poor-quality book that does not emphasize the truly great parts of the museum. Instead, this book pushes an agenda to create the illusion that the Newark Museum is a museum with an impressive international collection, at the cost of showcasing the gems of its American collection (the Ancient art section is about as big as a single bedroom, but has a section almost as big as the American section). If you want a book that shows off Newark's amazing American art collection, grab a copy of "American Art in the Newark Museum: Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture" published in 1981. Unfortunately about 80% of the paintings are reproduced in black and white, but the book is still a thousand times better than "Newark Museum: Selected Works"

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