

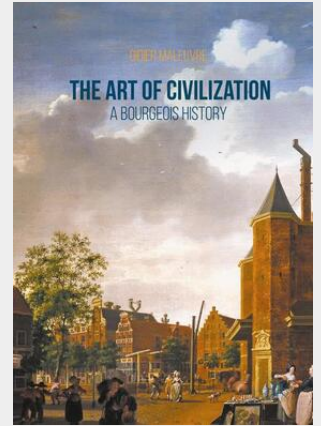
Maleuvre

## The Art of Civilization

A Bourgeois History

Didier Maleuvre argues that works of art in Western societies from Ancient Greece to the interconnected worlds of the Digital Age have served to rationalize and normalize an engagement with bourgeois civilization and the city. Maleuvre details that the history of art itself is the history civilization, giving rise to the particular aesthetics and critical attitudes of respective moments and movements in changing civilizations in a dialogical mode. Building a visual cultural account of shifting forms of culture, power, and subjectivity, Maleuvre illustrates how art gave a pattern and a language to the model of social authority rather than simply functioning as a reflective one. Through a broad cultural study of the relationship between humanity, art, and the culture of civilization, Maleuvre introduces a new set of paradigms that critique and affirm the relationship between humanity and art, arguing for it as an engine of social reproduction that transforms how culture is inhabited.

This book tells the story of how art since ancient Greece is inextricably linked to a particular place and social group: the city and its homegrown species, the bourgeois. Despite the fact that it has glorified the crown and the cross for most of its history; despite its mystical, lofty, or subversive aura; despite its oft-professed scorn of the down-to-earth bourgeoisie, in truth art has always been the product of craft and labor. As such it bears the imprint of the workshop and the independent mentality of producers. Breaking with a misty-eyed romantic view of art, The Art of Civilization shows how artistic expression in Western societies has helped the rise of a demystified and pragmatic mindset. Art indeed has civilized us, laying the groundwork for the historical victory of brain over brawn, of reason over mystique, and of productive bourgeois ways over the transcendental.



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