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An examination of the influence of Plato's thought on contemporary art

LOS ANGELES — No thinker in the West has had a wider and more sustained influence than the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. From philosophy to drama, religion to politics, it is difficult to find a current cultural or social phenomenon that is not in some aspect indebted to the famous philosopher and the Platonic tradition. It should come as no surprise that contemporary artists continue to engage with and respond to the ideas of Plato.

Accompanying an exhibition at the Getty Villa, *Plato Contemporary: Artists' Visions* (Getty Publications, \$20.00, paper) brings together eleven renowned artists working in a variety of media—Paul Chan, Rachel Harrison, Huang Yong Ping, Mike Kelley, Jeff Koons, Joseph Kosuth, Paul McCarthy, Whitney McVeigh, Raymond Pettibon, Adrian Piper, and Michelangelo Pistoletto—all of whom have acknowledged the role of Plato in their artistic process.

Featuring candid interviews with the artists, this volume begins with an essay by the critic and curator Donatien Grau that contextualizes Plato in antiquity and in the present day. Contemporary art, Grau demonstrates, is Platonism stripped bare, and it allows us to reconsider Plato's philosophy as a deeply human construct, one that remains highly relevant today.

This book is published to coincide with an exhibition at the Getty Villa from April 18 to September 3, 2018.

DONATIEN GRAU holds doctoral degrees in comparative literature from the Université Paris– Sorbonne and in philosophy from the University of Oxford. He is a writer, curator, and cultural critic and has published widely on contemporary art.

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Donatien Grau

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