Willem de Kooning arrived in the United States in 1926 as a 22-year-old stowaway from Holland—soon to become a leading figure in the emergence of Abstract Expressionist painting in New York. This volume presents over 100 illustrations from each phase of de Koonings career, and describes the personal and art historical background behind his work and its critical reception. Sally Yard, author of Willem de Kooning: The First Twenty-Six Years in New York, details the progress of de Koonings career, from his brief stint as a WPA painter, to his first one-person exhibition of abstract work in 1948. Five years later, his series of women rendered in aggressive, lashing gestures stunned contemporaries, not only for their vehemence but for their supposed reversal in direction from pure abstraction to figuration. Of course, the alternation, struggle and intertwining between these two tendencies remained essential to de Koonings work over six decades (as he once commented, I was reading Kierkegaard and I came across the phrase To be pure is to will one thing. It made me sick.) Featuring some of de Koonings most remarkable writings, interviews with Harold Rosenberg and James T. Valliere, lavish illustrations and Yards accessible scholarly discussion, Willem de Kooning: Works, Writings, Interviews is invaluable for anyone seeking to understand the work and impact of this twentieth-century master.

My Personal Review: This book is a very good "compendio" about the complex "figura" of De Kooning. There are many of his first and unusual works, often ignored by other publications. It is a great contribution to the understanding of the panorama of the art scene of New York in the 50's.

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