

Douglas Crimp

“Art News Parties: a Chapter from a Memoir of New York in the 1970s”

ABSTRACT

“Art News Parties” is a chapter of Douglas Crimp’s memoir-in-progress about New York in the 1970s, *Before Pictures*. The memoir weaves together stories of the two cultures that were central to his life at that time—gay liberation and the art that came to be called postmodernism. In this chapter, Crimp remembers his first work as an art critic, when he wrote for the oldest and most established American art magazine, *Art News*. *Art News* was famous for its support of Abstract Expression and for its preference for criticism written by poets, especially the important New York School poets John Ashbery, Barbara Guest, Frank O’Hara, and James Schuyler. But Crimp was not a poet, and he found the poets’ views about early-1970s art old-fashioned and off-putting. He nevertheless found the milieu convivial, especially as experienced at parties hosted by Ashbery, *Art News*’s executive editor. One of those parties led indirectly to Crimp’s meeting his first boyfriend, and so this chapter also tells the story of their relationship, including their shared cinephilia, their project to write a Moroccan cookbook, and their ill-fated vacation on Cape Cod.