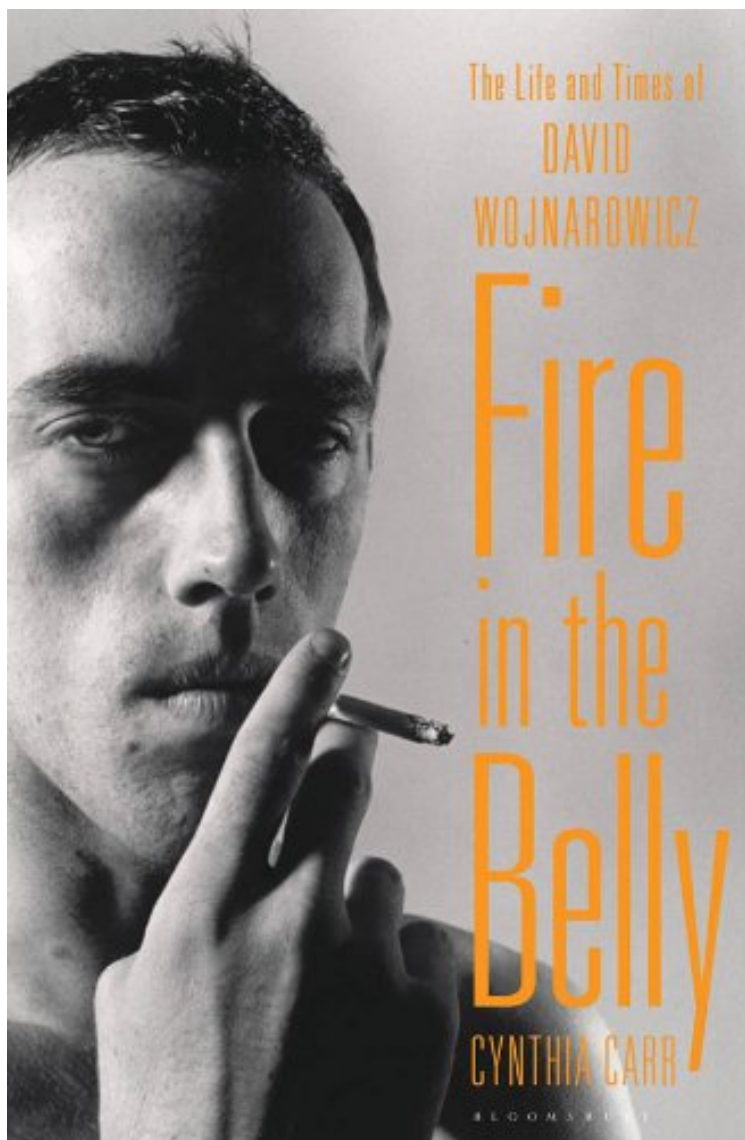


(Library ebook) Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz

## Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz

*Cynthia Carr*

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**Cynthia Carr : Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fire in the Belly: The Life and Times of David Wojnarowicz:

21 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Breathing Under Water By Michael Salcman Fire in the Belly, the first biography of David Wojnarowicz, is perhaps the saddest and most devastating book you will read this year. It contains graphic descriptions of the child abuse Wojnarowicz suffered in a completely dysfunctional family circle, his life on the streets as a hustler and male prostitute, his combustible personality and addictions to cocaine and heroin, his

poverty and hand-to-mouth existence. The book situates him in the context of the emerging East Village art scene, the arrival of the AIDS epidemic, the widespread loss of major cultural figures and the important legal battles Wojnarowicz fought on behalf of the First Amendment and the gay community. Somehow, out of all this turmoil, the visceral energy of Wojnarowicz's paintings, photographs, performance art, books and films, emerges with the power of revelation. Wojnarowicz was essentially self-taught but he had the support of a major artistic presence, photographer Peter Hujar, who served as mentor and muse, friend, critic and (briefly) lover. The sections on Hujar are so evocative that the book almost becomes a dual biography. Since Wojnarowicz's death in 1992, his reputation as the central figure in the East Village scene has soared and critical reception of his art has evolved; he is now the beneficiary of what is sure to remain the pioneering and standard biography of a truly significant artist. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Devastating, Inspiring By Buffy This book is an exhaustive look at the life of David Wojnarowicz. From the abusive parents and his life on the streets it's hard to see how he was going to make it through. But somehow he channeled his pain and anger into writing and then art. None of it is ever easy even when the success comes. And when things seem to finally be going in a happier direction the world around him seems to be collapsing with the newly emerging aids epidemic. I especially like the book for the insights it offers into the meaning and imagery of his visual art and for bringing the 80's east village art scene to life. His artwork seems to have taken a back seat to some of the splashier artists of the 1980's but for those interested in that period this is recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. And we are all the better for that By Customer This biography was so gripping, at times heartbreaking, at times hilarious, but always illuminating. David Wojnarowicz emerges as a complex person, and Carr doesn't shy away from showing all sides of this extraordinary artist. His road to becoming one of the most significant artists of the East Village artists' movement to his time atop the national art world was twisted and would have stymied most people. But the man that Carr presents in this unbelievably written account of his life did not let the darkness conquer his light. And we are all the better for that.

"[Fire in the Belly is] unimprovable as a biography-thorough, measured, beautifully written, loving but not uncritical-as a concentrated history of his times, and as a memorial." -Luc Sante, Bookforum David Wojnarowicz was an abused child, a teen runaway who barely finished high school, but he emerged as one of the most important voices of his generation. He found his tribe in New York's East Village, a neighborhood noted in the 1970s and '80s for drugs, blight, and a burgeoning art scene. His creativity spilled out in paintings, photographs, films, texts, installations, and in his life and its recounting-creating a sort of mythos around himself. His circle of East Village artists moved into the national spotlight just as the AIDS plague began its devastating advance, and as right-wing culture warriors reared their heads. As Wojnarowicz's reputation as an artist grew, so did his reputation as an agitator-because he dealt so openly with his homosexuality, so angrily with his circumstances as a Person With AIDS, and so fiercely with his would-be censors. Fire in the Belly is the untold story of a polarizing figure at a pivotal moment in American culture-and one of the most highly acclaimed biographies of the year.

From Bookforum Carr's book is unimprovable as a biography—thorough, measured, beautifully written, loving but not uncritical—as a concentrated history of his times, and as a memorial, presenting him in his entirety, twenty years dead but his ardor uncooled. — Luc Sante