



## Thomas Kinkade: The Artist in the Mall

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Often featuring lighthouses, bridges, or quaint country homes, Thomas Kinkade's soft-focus landscapes have permeated American visual culture during the past twenty years, appearing on everything from Bibles to bedsheets to credit cards. Kinkade sells his work through his shopping-mall galleries, QVC, the Internet, and Christian stores. He is quite possibly the most collected artist in the United States. While many art-world and academic critics have dismissed him as a passing fad or marketing phenomenon, the contributors to this collection do not. Instead, they explore his work and its impact on contemporary art as part of the broader history of American visual culture. They consider Kinkade's imagery and career in relation to nineteenth-century Currier and Ives prints and Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*, the collectibles market and the fine-art market, the Thomas Kinkade Museum and Cultural Center, and "The Village at Hiddenbrooke," a California housing development inspired by Kinkade's paintings. The conceptual artist Jeffrey Vallance, the curator of the first major museum exhibition of Kinkade's art and collectibles, recounts his experiences organizing that show. All of the contributors draw on art history, visual culture, and cultural studies as they seek to understand Kinkade's significance for both art and audiences. Along the way, they delve into questions about beauty, class, kitsch, religion, and taste in contemporary art.

*Contributors.* Julia Alderson, Alexis L. Boylan, Anna Brzyski, Seth Feman, Monica Kjellman-Chapin, Micki McElya, Karal Ann Marling, David Morgan, Christopher Pearson, Andrea Wolk Rager, Jeffrey Vallance

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