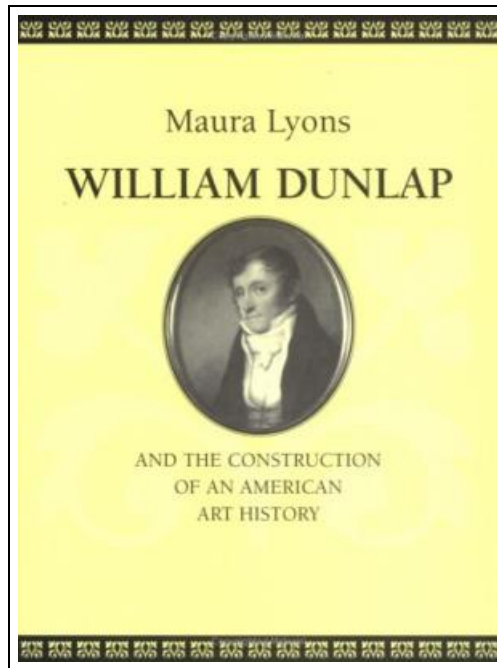


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University of Massachusetts Press, United States, 2005. Hardback. Condition: New. New. Language: English . Brand New Book. In this well-researched study, Maura Lyons addresses the question, What did the phrase American art mean in 1834 when William Dunlap published his two-volume History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States? Although Dunlap's book, replete with the biographies of nearly 300 visual artists, is seen today as a foundational text in the creation and construction of American art history, it had actually faded into obscurity by the end of the nineteenth century. Drawing on manuscript and periodical sources from the period, Lyons furnishes the first full-scale analysis of Dunlap's work, exploring the significance of his book for the American art world and for the nineteenth-century reading public. Tracing the History's origins, production, promotion, and reception, Lyons pushes beyond its current canonical status - the result of its twentieth-century rediscovery and revival - to reveal the uncertainty originally surrounding the venture. The History represented a speculative bid for cultural authority that grew out of the intersecting ambitions of its author, one wing of the nascent artistic profession, the burgeoning publishing industry, and the city of New York. By revealing the History as an entrepreneurial, partisan, and localized experiment, Lyons reinterprets the book's contents, elaborating on the roles assigned to the artists Benjamin West and John Trumbull and the book's championing of New York's National Academy of Design. Lyons's study thus illuminates the participation of the History in the process of framing a national culture in the United States during the early nineteenth century.



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