



## What Is an Event?

*Robin Wagner-Pacifici*

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## **What Is an Event?** Robin Wagner-Pacifici

We live in a world of breaking news, where at almost any moment our everyday routine can be interrupted by a faraway event. Events are central to the way that individuals and societies experience life. Even life's inevitable moments—birth, death, love, and war—are almost always a surprise. Inspired by the cataclysmic events of September 11, Robin Wagner-Pacifici presents here a tour de force, an analysis of how events erupt and take off from the ground of ongoing, everyday life, and how they then move across time and landscape.

*What Is an Event?* ranges across several disciplines, systematically analyzing the ways that events emerge, take shape, gain momentum, flow, and even get bogged down. As an exploration of how events are constructed out of ruptures, it provides a mechanism for understanding eventful forms and flows, from the micro-level of individual life events to the macro-level of historical revolutions, contemporary terrorist attacks, and financial crises. Wagner-Pacifici takes a close look at a number of cases, both real and imagined, through the reports, personal narratives, paintings, iconic images, political posters, sculptures, and novels they generate and through which they live on. What is ultimately at stake for individuals and societies in events, Wagner-Pacifici argues, are identities, loyalties, social relationships, and our very experiences of time and space. *What Is an Event?* provides a way for us all—as social and political beings living through events, and as analysts reflecting upon them—to better understand what is at stake in the formations and flows of the events that mark and shape our lives.

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