



# The Oxford History of Western Art

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## The Oxford History of Western Art From Oxford University Press

*The Oxford History of Western Art* is an innovative and challenging reappraisal of how the history of art can be presented and understood. Through a carefully devised modular structure, readers are given insights not only into how and why works of art were created, but also how works in different media relate to each other across time. Here--uniquely--is not the simple, linear "story" of art, but a rich series of stories, told from varying viewpoints.

Carefully selected groupings of pictures give readers a sense of the visual "texture" of the various periods and episodes covered. The 167 illustration groups, supported by explanatory text and picture captions, create a sequence of "visual tours"--not merely a procession of individually "great" works viewed in isolation, but juxtapositions of significant images that powerfully convey a sense of the visual environments in which works of art need to be viewed in order to be understood and appreciated. The aim throughout is to make the shape and nature of these visual presentations a stimulating and rewarding experience, allowing readers to become active participants in the process of interpretation and synthesis.

Another key feature of the narrative is the re-definition of traditional period boundaries. Rather than relying on conventional labels such as Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque, the book establishes five major phases of significant historical change that unlock longer and more meaningful continuities. This new framework shows how the major religious and secular functions of art have been forged, sustained, transformed, revived, and revolutionized over the ages; how the institutions of Church and State have consistently aspired to make art in their own image; and how the rise of art history itself has come to provide the dominant conceptual framework within which artists create, patrons patronize, collectors collect, galleries exhibit, dealers deal, and art historians write. Though the coverage of topics focuses on European notions of art and their transplantation and transformation in North America, space is also given to cross-fertilizations with other traditions---including the art of Latin America, the Soviet Union, India, Africa (and Afro-Caribbean), Australia, and Canada. Written by a team of 50 specialist authors working under the direction of renowned art historian Martin Kemp, *The Oxford History of Western Art* is a vibrant, vigorous, and revolutionary account of Western art serving both as an inspirational introduction for the general reader and an authoritative source of reference and guidance for students.

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## **The Oxford History of Western Art From Oxford University Press Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #1566784 in Books
- Published on: 2000-10-19
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.80" h x 2.00" w x 11.00" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 576 pages

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The dogmatic overviews of art that are the traditional texts for students in college-level survey classes and the occasional museum-goer are overthrown by this refreshing and accessible survey. Instead of foregone conclusions, renowned art historian Kemp and his 50 contributors (representing a diversity of backgrounds and specialties) offer an elasticized look at art and an understanding that poses as many questions as it answers. Instead of taking a purely visual approach (i.e., organized by style and medium along a linear chronology), Kemp focuses on social, religious and political history, occasionally showing art in situ and juxtaposing photos by subject matter, but without ignoring standard art historical pedagogy. The first section, for example, focuses on the classical art of ancient Greece and Rome, but includes a subsection on "Ancient Paradigms from Augustus to Mussolini." The final section, "Modernism and After," extends the book's western reach to include the art of the Soviet Union, Latin America and India, and discusses the roles of art museums and galleries and the evolving discipline of art history. "Ultimately, there is no reason to look at art," Kemp writes in the epilogue, "but many of us cannot stop doing it, and it clearly meets fundamental human needs visually, intellectually, and psychologically. This book is designed to assist in meeting those needs." And so it does. (Oct. 31)

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From [Booklist](#)

There have been numerous single-volume histories of Western art that squeeze 2,500 years of creativity into less than half that number of pages, using essentially the same chronological outline. Art historian Kemp and his 50 contributors have taken a more fluid and inclusive approach by establishing the context within which art is created and exhibited and eschewing conventional period designations for more socially oriented perspectives and thematic groupings. Specific media, such as prints, painting, stained glass, and altarpieces, are considered independently, and there is an in-depth discussion of the shift from the influence of the church to that of nations. Kemp and company do a tidy job of chronicling the rapid evolution in innovative form and image that took place between 1770 and 1914, the "era of revolutions"; and the section on the impact of the conquest of the Americas on both indigenous and European art is eye-opening. The modern era is intelligently sampled, with a strong photography section, but inevitably many facets are reduced to tantalizing glimpses, which, it is hoped, will instigate further study. *Donna Seaman*

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Review

`a radical new overview ... a challenging and informative survey'

Art Librarians Society News-Sheet no 144, May/June 2000

`" a rich hoard of colour iilustations, . . . one of the year's best art books: scholarly yet accessible and a pleaseure to look at."

Rupert Shortt, Financial Times 23/12/00

## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**Rodney Alvarez:**

This The Oxford History of Western Art book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get data which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This specific The Oxford History of Western Art without we realize teach the one who examining it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't be worry The Oxford History of Western Art can bring when you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even phone. This The Oxford History of Western Art having fine arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

**Mike Gray:**

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them household or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read any book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a e-book. The book The Oxford History of Western Art it is very good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. We were holding enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore very easily to read this book from a smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book provides high quality.

**Bobbie Burke:**

In this age globalization it is important to someone to obtain information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended for you is The Oxford History of Western Art this book consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented how can the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some exploration when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book suitable all of you.

**Diana Johnson:**

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