



The Self-Portrait: A Cultural History

James Hall

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Sheds new light on the long history of self-portraiture with fresh interpretations of famous examples and new works, ideas, and anecdotes

This broad cultural history of self-portraiture brilliantly maps the history of the genre, from the earliest myths of Narcissus and the Christian tradition of “bearing witness” to the prolific self-image-making of today’s contemporary artists.

Focusing on a perennially popular subject, the book tells the vivid history of works that offer insights into artists’ personal, psychological, and creative worlds. Topics include the importance of the medieval mirror craze in early self-portraiture; the confessional self-portraits of Titian and Michelangelo; the mystique of the artist’s studio, from Vermeer to Velázquez; the role of biography and geography for serial self-portraitists such as Courbet and Van Gogh; the multiple selves of modern and contemporary artists such as Cahun and Sherman; and recent developments in the era of globalization.

Comprehensive and beautifully illustrated, the book features the work of a wide range of artists including Beckmann, Caravaggio, Dürer, Gentileschi, Ghiberti, Giotto, Goya, Kahlo, Kauffman, Magritte, Mantegna, Picasso, Poussin, Raphael, Rembrandt and Van Eyck. The full range of the subject is explored, including comic and caricature self-portraits, “invented” or imaginary self-portraits, and important collections of self-portraiture such as that of the Medici. 120 illustrations in color and black and white

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