

The Spiritual In Art Abstract Painting 1890 1985

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The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890 - 1985
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Bee Marcel Brion
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
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the seventeen essays in this provocative book provide a radical rethinking of abstraction from the symbolism that prefigured abstract art through the current manifestations of spiritual content in american and european painting

examines the role of the sacred in art and makes a compelling case for its continued contemporary relevance

this is the most thorough and detailed monograph on the artwork of raymond jonson he is one of many artists of the first half of the twentieth century who demonstrate the richness and diversity of an under appreciated period in the history of american art visualizing the spiritual was one of the fundamental goals of early abstract painting in the years before and during world war i artists turned to alternative spirituality the occult and mysticism believing that the pure use of line shape color light and texture could convey spiritual insight jonson was steadfastly dedicated to this goal for most of his career and he always believed that modernist and abstract styles were the most effective and compelling means of achieving it

it has long been an accepted assumption that the abstracted mode of visual representation that emerged in late antiquity reflected a collective shift from the outer directed and material world view of classical antiquity to an inner directed spiritual mentality informed by christianity the purpose of this volume is to offer a more nuanced and diverse image of the nature and meanings of abstraction and symbolism in late antique and early medieval art beyond normative interpretation models and from a number of different methodological and interpretative perspectives in ten chapters ten authors specialised in various fields of late antique and byzantine art explore the historiographical background of the spiritual interpretation paradigm neuroscientific and theological dimensions of christian visual aesthetics meanings and motive factors behind apparently wholly abstract and aniconic compositions symbolic motifs and schemes for visualising cosmic order and the cosmic state of christ and the re use of symbolic greco roman themes in christian contexts the result is a multi focal image of late antique abstraction and symbolism that illuminates the heterogeneity and complexity of the phenomena and of their study

this title represents pioneering research into an important but under researched current the three sections in the book are devoted

to the theosophical society theosophically influenced religious currents and the interaction between theosophy and surrounding culture

this volume chronicles the museum's story from its opening ten days after the stock market crash of 1929 in a few rented rooms in a midtown office building up to the present day in its new building on west fifty third and fifty fourth streets the book presents a pictorial and documentary review of each year and each important period of the museum's history it tells the story of how the museum of modern art new york began as a small set of art galleries inaugurated by three ladies of means who had a passion for modern art through a selection of photographs official documents letters quotations newspaper clippings cartoons and other ephemera the complex and multilayered history of the museum unfolds in a visual march through time revealing the extraordinary vision of a determined group of individuals who had the ability and courage to translate their vision into reality

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