



Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art

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For Jacob Burckhardt, writing "The Civilisation of the Renaissance" in Italy in 1860, artistic purpose and commitment to beauty were defining characteristics of Italian Renaissance culture. Burckhardt's analysis has been widely accepted but little has been done to define the Renaissance concept of beauty. In this volume, 15 contributing scholars reveal that ways of perceiving, conceiving and creating beauty were as diverse as the cultural influences at work in the period, deriving from antique, medieval and more recent literature and philosophy, and from contemporary notions of morality and courtly behaviour. Approaches include discussion of contemporary critical terms and how these determined writers' appreciation of paintings, sculpture, architecture and costume; studies of the quest to create beauty in the work of artists such as Botticelli, Leonardo, Raphael, Parmigianino and Vasari; and the investigation of changes in the concept relating to the biological functioning of the eye and brain, or to technical innovations, like those found in Venetian glass. The volume is introduced by Elizabeth Cropper who offers an historical overview of art historians' study of the Renaissance concept of beauty. Many of the papers were first presented at the 1996 Association of Art Historians' conference.

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