



Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art

By James Hall

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The understanding and enjoyment of a work of art depends as much on the story it depicts as on the artist's execution of it. But what were once biblical or classical commonplaces are not so readily recognizable today. This book relates in a succinct and readable way the themes, sacred and secular, on which the repertoire of Western art is based. Combined here in a single volume are religious, classical, and historical themes, figures of moral allegory, and characters from romantic poetry that appeared throughout paintings and sculpture in Western art before and after the Renaissance. More than just a dictionary, this text places these subjects in their narrative, historical, or mythological context and uses extensive cross-referencing to enhance and clarify the meanings of these themes for the reader.

The definitive work by which others are compared, this volume has become an indispensable handbook for students and general appreciators alike. This wholly redesigned second edition includes a new insert of images chosen by the author, as well as a new preface and index to highlight the ideas, beliefs, and social and religious customs that form the background of much of this subject matter.

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Editorial Review

Review

“It is clearly written, well arranged, and can be read for its own sake as a compendium of the image-making faculty of Western man. I would recommend it strongly to anyone who wishes to increase his interest and pleasure in visiting a picture gallery or turning over the illustrations of a book of art.”

—**Kenneth Clark**

“Of the several comparable dictionaries on the iconography of Western art . . . this one is by far the most satisfactory. . . . This much richer fund of material as well as the tightly packed and well-written entries convey much information. In all, an impressively erudite yet thoroughly useable dictionary for which students and faculty alike should be grateful.”

—**Choice**

“The volume is comprehensive to interested laymen, and should be quite useful for students and scholars. Entries pertain to persons, titles and pictures, and objects as attributes and symbols. Recurrent mythological, historical and religious themes are explored and allegorical, poetic, and saintly characters are also covered. Cross references and appropriate line drawings enhance the book's value. And because the entries are succinct and really absorbing, it's fun simply to browse through this dictionary. Highly recommended.”

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From the Back Cover

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Praise for the previous edition

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