



Eroticism and Art (Oxford History of Art)

Alyce Mahon

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From the surreal eroticism of Salvador Dali to the kitsch eroticism of Jeff Koons, erotic art has always inflamed opinion and, even today, such images are considered provocative, dangerous, and unwelcome in the public sphere.

Now Alyce Mahon, the feisty Irish art historian, takes us on an imaginative and engaging tour of erotic art in all its forms, including painting, sculpture, video art, installation, performance art, and photography. Mahon explores eroticism from its most romantic to its most explicit: from Impressionist Paris where the naked body signaled the rise of a new, modern world, to the contemporary scene where artists use eroticism to address the politics of race, gender, and sexual orientation. The book examines some of the key movements and moments in modern art history: from the birth of Realism with Courbet in Paris, to the Surrealist subversion of taboo, to Nazi propaganda's use of the heroic nude, to the soft-porn of Pop art, to the vogue for carnality in contemporary art in Los Angeles, Paris, and London. Indeed, Mahon provides a concise history of art in the twentieth century through the lens of eroticism, offering original insights into works of art that do not sit easily within popular notions of taste and that have provoked controversy and calls for censorship. Her discussion includes the work of such European and American artists as Egon Schiele, Hans Bellmer, Robert Mapplethorpe, Nancy Goldin, Orlan, Franco B, and Annie Sprinkle.

With over a hundred illustrations, including sixty-five in full color, here is a strikingly written and stimulating history of eroticism in modern Western art.

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