



Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts

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Through a unique and stunning collection of paintings, sculpture, rare books, and works on paper, *Divine Mirrors* examines the complex relationship between sacred imagery and secular identity in the art of the Madonna.

This magnificent work--born from a multi-year project that included a museum exhibition, scholarly symposium, and reinstallation of a segment of the permanent collection of the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College--features the work of such renowned artists as Il Pintoricchio, Mantegna, Munch, and Léger, alongside fresh, undiscovered masters and little-known works of art. The book's fifty catalogue entries range from a rare thirteenth-century panel painting to a specially commissioned artwork exploring the intersection of religion and modern life.

This volume investigates everything from non-Western perceptions of European religious practices to the Virgin Mary's voice in musical composition. In the opening essay "The Many Names of the Mother of God" noted scholar Robert A. Orsi considers why images of Mary offer contemporary Americans such a powerful visual experience. Unlike paintings and sculptures created solely for aesthetic contemplation, Orsi writes, images of Mary are more than just artistic representations--they become for us an embodiment of the Virgin Mother herself. Then, moving into the historical realm, editor Melissa R. Katz guides us on a twenty-century chronological tour that explores the intersection of art history and world history in representations of Mary.

Katz's essay "Regarding Mary: Women's Lives Reflected in the Virgin's Image" takes the elements of Marian iconography most relevant to the study of art and weaves them together to provide a guide for modern audiences to engage with the religious origins of our common artistic legacy. Filled with fascinating information, this important work requires no particular background in art history, religion, or the Bible. Readers of all levels will be rewarded with an in-depth encounter of a remarkable and complex figure.

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