



The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art

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It is still routinely repeated that representations of the unclothed body in the Middle Ages connoted a site of corruption and sin, in contrast to a new, distinctive, humanistic and even secularizing Renaissance appreciation. But as the contributors to this collection remind us, medieval imagery that incorporated nudity was varied, complex and nuanced. It was a time-honored category of representation that viewers had been accustomed to seeing in the most sacred contexts, but also an opportunity for dissent and transgression, and thus a source of conservative consternation. This volume discloses how nudity in medieval art staged a discourse about sex and gender that informs the iconography of the nude body in Western art up to the present day; in doing so, it offers new insight into the problematic role of the nude in the larger art historical narrative. Addressing a strangely neglected key issue in the history of art, this volume engages the issue of medieval representations of the unclothed human body on theoretical grounds and in a more global way than has been done previously. *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art* breaks ground by offering a variety of approaches to explore the meanings of both male and female nudity in European painting, manuscripts and sculpture ranging from the late antique era to the fifteenth century.

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